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# STRATEGIC COMMONING

Amalgamating the Right People at  
the Right Place and Time



MONIEK KAMM





Radboud Universiteit



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# **STRATEGIC COMMONING**

## **AMALGAMATING THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME**

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*“There have been times, lately, when I dearly wished that I could change the past. Well, I can’t, but I can change the present, so that when it becomes the past it will turn out to be a past worth having.”* Terry Pratchett, *I shall wear Midnight*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**CHAPTER 1. COLLABORATION IS KEY ..... 17**

- 1.1. Introducing community-based organizing ..... 17
- 1.2. Theoretical perspectives on community-based organizing for sustainability..... 19**
  - 1.2.1. Collective action for sustainable development..... 19
  - 1.2.2. Collective action strategies ..... 24
- 1.3. Research problem, objectives, and research question ..... 26
- 1.4. Research approach ..... 28
- 1.5. Thesis outline ..... 31

**CHAPTER 2. DIFFERENT SHADES OF STRATEGY: BLENDING PERSPECTIVES FROM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THEORY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION THEORY TO CONCEPTUALIZE STRATEGIC COMMONING. .... 35**

- Abstract ..... 35**
- 2.1. Introduction ..... 35**
- 2.2. Crafting collaborative strategies ..... 37**
  - 2.2.1. Do Entrepreneurial Communities strategize?..... 37
  - 2.2.2. Strategy development for sustainability..... 39
- 2.3. Strategy schools and strategy types ..... 41**
  - 2.3.1. Strategy schools ..... 41
  - 2.3.2. Strategy types ..... 45
- 2.4. Perspectives from strategy as practice: strategizing in pluralist contexts ..... 47**
- 2.5. Collective action and strategy development ..... 50**
  - 2.5.1. Collective Action Theory ..... 50
  - 2.5.2. Strategic Action Situation ..... 52
- 2.6. Discussion ..... 57**

**CHAPTER 3. STRATEGIC COMMONING: DIRECTIONS FROM LITERATURE ..... 61**

- Abstract ..... 61**
- 3.1. Introduction ..... 61**
- 3.2. Methodology ..... 63**
  - 3.2.1. Selecting key search words ..... 64
  - 3.2.2. Data sources ..... 64
  - 3.2.3. Selection of articles..... 65
  - 3.2.4. Analytical framework..... 67
- 3.3. Results ..... 68**
  - 3.3.1. Output of literature review..... 68
  - 3.3.2. General observations..... 69
  - 3.3.3. Collaborative strategy development ..... 72
  - 3.3.4. Factors of interest for collaborative strategy development ..... 73
- 3.4. Strategic Commoning: a conceptual process model ..... 75**
- 3.5. Conclusions and discussion ..... 79**

3.6. Limitations and reflection .....	80
<b>CHAPTER 4. CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATION: INTRODUCING GENERAL PROPERTIES AND A STRATEGIC-ORIENTED TYPOLOGY OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES.....</b>	<b>83</b>
Abstract .....	83
4.1. Introduction .....	83
4.2. Entrepreneurial Communities: collaborating for a sustainable future.....	86
4.3. Identifying variety in Entrepreneurial Communities .....	91
4.3.1. Diversifying community-based organizing .....	91
4.3.2. Theoretical perspectives on typologies .....	91
4.4. Crafting a conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities .....	94
4.4.1. Core elements.....	94
4.4.2. Contextual core element: strategic orientation.....	96
4.4.3. Structural core element: strategic approach .....	97
4.5. Conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.....	98
4.6. Limitations of the conceptual typology.....	101
4.7. Conclusions and discussion .....	101
<b>CHAPTER 5. RESEARCHING THE PRACTICE OF COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>105</b>
Abstract .....	105
5.1. Introduction .....	105
5.2. Methodological contemplations on case-based research.....	107
5.2.1. Qualitative research.....	107
5.2.2. The case study research.....	108
5.2.3. Comparative case study.....	109
5.3. Selecting the cases .....	110
5.3.1. Research population .....	110
5.3.2. Introducing the cases.....	112
5.4. Research design .....	116
5.4.1. Research structure.....	116
5.4.2. Data collection .....	118
5.4.3. Analysis .....	124
5.4.4. Open and axial coding.....	126
5.4.5. Constant comparison and synthesis .....	127
5.5. Methodological accountability .....	127
5.5.1. Quality in qualitative research.....	127
5.5.2. Methodological consistency and accountability.....	128
5.6. General reflections on the research design.....	132
<b>CHAPTER 6. DECONSTRUCTING THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGIC COMMONING.....</b>	<b>135</b>
Abstract .....	135
6.1. Introduction .....	135
6.2. Within-case analysis.....	139
6.2.1. Bommelerwaar .....	139

6.2.2. De Fruitmotor .....	142
6.2.3. Dirk de Derde .....	145
6.2.4. Energiecoöperatie WPN.....	148
6.2.5. Food Council MRA.....	151
6.2.6. Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland.....	153
6.2.7. Gloei.....	156
6.2.8. Go Clean.....	158
6.2.9. Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen .....	161
6.2.10. Noorden Duurzaam.....	164
6.2.11. Pak An .....	167
6.2.12. Voedselbos Ketelbroek .....	170
<b>6.3. Reflection and preliminary general findings .....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7. THE NATURE OF STRATEGIC COMMONING. CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC ACTION SITUATIONS IN TWELVE DUTCH ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES. 177</b>	
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>7.1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>7.2. Deconstructing strategic decisions .....</b>	<b>178</b>
7.2.1. Stage: community composition .....	179
7.2.2. Stage: problem definition .....	181
7.2.3. Stage: goal determination .....	182
7.2.4. Stage: collective actions.....	183
7.2.5. Stage: assessing outcomes.....	184
7.2.6. Synthesizing stages in Strategic Commoning.....	186
<b>7.3. External variables affecting strategic decision making .....</b>	<b>187</b>
7.3.1. Allocating external variables in practice .....	188
7.3.2. Attributes of the community .....	188
7.3.3. Biophysical conditions .....	192
7.3.4. Rules in use .....	195
7.3.5. Synthesis of stages and variables.....	198
<b>7.4. Synthesizing strategy types .....</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>7.5. Strategic modes of association .....</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>7.6. Reconsidering the archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities.....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>7.7. Conclusions and discussion .....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8. COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY MATTERS: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS .... 215</b>	
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>8.1. Summarizing the quest for understanding community-based strategic development .....</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>8.2. Strategic Commoning: a case-based framework .....</b>	<b>218</b>
8.2.1. Strategic Commoning in theory .....	218
8.2.2. Entrepreneurial Communities.....	219
8.2.3. Strategic Commoning in practice.....	219
8.2.5. Modes of Strategic Commoning .....	225
<b>8.3 Contributions to theory.....</b>	<b>227</b>
8.3.1. Contributions to Collective Action Theory.....	227
8.3.2. Theory building on community-based strategy development.....	228
8.3.3. Contribution to Strategy as Practice.....	229
<b>8.4. Contributions to practice.....</b>	<b>230</b>

<b>8.5. Reflections on methodology: contributions and limitations.....</b>	<b>231</b>
8.5.1. Research design .....	231
8.5.2. Reflecting on the research approach.....	233
8.5.3. Reflection on research quality .....	234
<b>8.6. Directions for future research .....</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>8.7. Implications for applied science and education .....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>8.8. Concluding remarks.....</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>241</b>
Academic publications .....	241
Professional publications, policy documents, reports.....	255
Master's Theses .....	258
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>259</b>
Appendix 1. Two examples of constructed timelines.....	260
Appendix 2. Generic topic list focus group interviews in Dutch .....	261
Appendix 3. Main written sources per case.....	263
Appendix 4. List of orientating and additional interviews.....	267
Appendix 5. Focus group interviews.....	268
<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>SAMENVATTING .....</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>278</b>
<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR .....</b>	<b>280</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1.1.** Conceptual framework of the research project  
**Figure 2.1.** Strategy as practice (adapted from Jarzabkowski et al., 2007)  
**Figure 2.2.** Framework envisioning strategic action situation related to external variables and (inter) actions (adapted from Ostrom, 2010)  
**Figure 2.3.** Strategic action situation: internal structure related to external variables (adapted from Ostrom, 2009)  
**Figure 2.4.** Rules in use related to the internal structure of a strategic action situation (adapted from Ostrom, 2005)  
**Figure 3.1.** Process model of collaborative strategic management (adapted from Clarke & Fuller, 2011)  
**Figure 3.2.** Initial conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning  
**Figure 3.3.** Conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning  
**Figure 4.1.** Positioning Entrepreneurial Communities (adapted from Gray & Purdy, 2018)  
**Figure 4.2.** Strategic Core element: Orientation  
**Figure 4.3.** Structural core element: Strategic Approach  
**Figure 4.4.** Conceptual strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities  
**Figure 5.1.** Cases situated in the Netherlands  
**Figure 5.2.** Structure of the research project  
**Figure 5.3.** Data collection per case  
**Figure 7.1.** Case-based process model of Strategic Commoning  
**Figure 8.1.** Framework for Strategic Commoning

## LIST OF TABLES

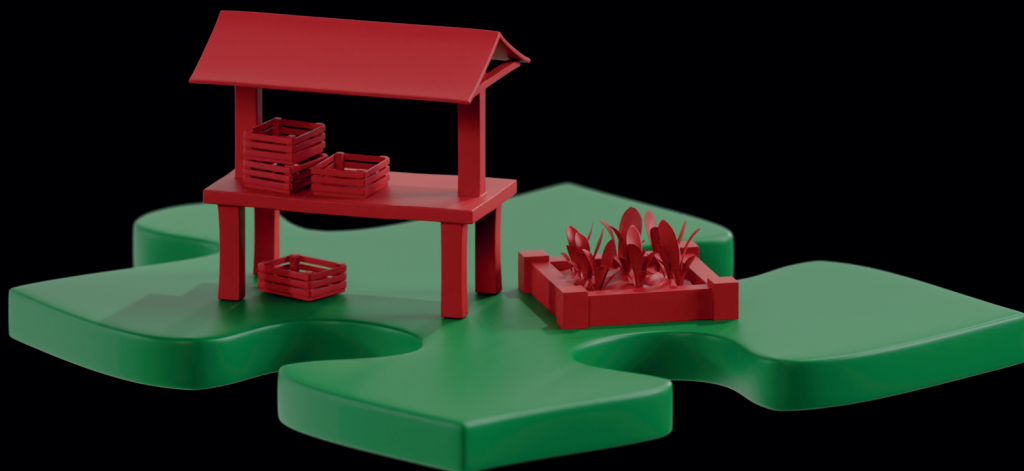
- Table 2.1.** Descriptive schools of strategy related to aspects of community-based strategizing  
**Table 2.2.** Strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985)  
**Table 2.3.** Institutional rule types (adapted from Ostrom, 2009)  
**Table 3.1.** Results of literature review  
**Table 3.2.** Analysis of results literature review  
**Table 4.1.** Universal properties of Entrepreneurial Communities  
**Table 4.2.** Archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities  
**Table 5.1.** Initial selection of cases related to conceptual strategic-oriented typology  
**Table 5.2.** Unit of analysis: Critical Strategic Action Situation  
**Table 5.3.** Overview of coding  
**Table 6.1.** Example of open coding of stages in collaborative strategy development  
**Table 6.2.** Example of open coding of external variables  
**Table 6.3.** Axial coding of types of strategies  
**Table 6.4.** Indicators for modes of association  
**Table 6.5.** Strategic Action Situation Bommelerwaard deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables  
**Table 6.6.** Strategic Action Situation De Fruitmotor deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables  
**Table 6.7.** Strategic Action Situation Dirk de Derde deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables  
**Table 6.8.** Strategic Action Situation Energiecoöperatie WPN deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables  
**Table 6.9.** Strategic Action Situation Food Council MRA deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables

- Table 6.10.** Strategic Action Situation GCR deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 6.11.** Strategic Action Situation Gloei deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 6.12.** Strategic Action Situation GoClean deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 6.13.** Strategic Action Situation Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 6.14.** Strategic Action Situation Noorden Duurzaam deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 6.15.** Strategic Action Situation Pak An deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 6.16.** Strategic Action Situation Voedselbos Ketelbroek deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables
- Table 7.1.** Organizational constructs in the sample
- Table 7.2.** Outcome types generated by cases in the sample
- Table 7.3.** Attributes of the community and biophysical conditions
- Table 7.4.** Updated strategy types
- Table 7.5.** Types of strategies in Entrepreneurial Communities
- Table 7.6** Strategy types over time related to conceptual strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities

# CHAPTER

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# 1



## CHAPTER 1. COLLABORATION IS KEY

### 1.1. Introducing community-based organizing

In 1949 the Parisian MP and Priest Henri-Antoine Grouès, better known as Abbé Pierre, started building temporary housing for the poor. Hiring clochards, former convicts, and other marginalized Parisians as builders was his solution to provide not only decent housing but also a means of income for the poor people of Paris. When the hired workers discovered that Abbé Pierre had raised donations to pay their salaries, they collectively decided to do otherwise. Alongside building houses, they started collecting rags and other trash and repairing and selling used goods. This way, they could build houses and provide a collective income by selling used clothing and goods at affordable prices. The first Emmaus community was born. A few years later, the Emmaus community started raising donations for the poor who were suffering badly during a particularly harsh winter. The Emmaus community now not only provided a livelihood and income for its community members but actively contributed to improving other people's lives. More Emmaus communities emerged in France and across the rest of the world. In 1969 Abbé Pierre called an international assembly during which the Universal Manifesto of the Emmaus movement was established. Emmaus groups from all over the world were invited to revise and discuss a draft manifesto. Abbé Pierre was very particular that the manifesto should respond "to the need for this to result in a founding text, brief but complete, which both guarantees unity for the most important issues while allowing freedom of application according to different contexts" (Emmaus International, 1969). Over seventy years after Abbé Pierre hired the first worker, Emmaus International is a worldwide association of over 400 communities that engage in "income-generating activities at the local level with people who have experienced social exclusion from accessing their fundamental rights and, through their collective action, demonstrate there are credible alternatives to injustice" (Emmaus International, 2019). The original Universal Manifesto still defines the foundations of contemporary national and local Emmaus communities and shapes their collective actions. Current actions include fighting homelessness, running social enterprises and recycling facilities, sustaining communities, contributing to research, advocating solidarity, supporting development projects, and personal development of all community members. The Universal Manifesto allows for local Emmaus communities to act independently and respond to local needs and developments.

As a student, I lived and worked as the coordinator in a Dutch Emmaus community in 1991 and 1992. I enjoyed the mix of community members that lived and worked in the community, and additional

volunteers from various walks of life and societal realms: students, pensioners, people reintegrating into work, but also people with steady jobs that wanted to do something meaningful in their spare time. In general, all volunteers were passionate about reducing waste, helping others, and expressing their views on society by engaging into collaborative actions. The community and its volunteers represented various skills and experiences and proved a valuable learning school for a student eager to contribute to sustainability. We collaborated with other Emmaus Communities in collecting, sorting, and selling used clothes and goods at affordable prices. Next to sustaining the community, we supported projects within and outside of the Netherlands with both financial and in-kind donations. The community members made decisions about community matters and about project support. Our decisions were always in line with our mission statement, which was firmly grounded in the Universal Manifesto written more than two decades earlier. Through the worldwide Emmaus International network, we were able to support other Emmaus communities both in kind and with financial donations. In 1992, while doing research in Chile for my master thesis, I had the privilege of visiting two of our sister communities in Santiago de Chile. The difference in the amount and quality of goods and housing was striking, as was the difference between poverty in the Netherlands and poverty in Chile. Nevertheless, the community spirit, the diversity of volunteers, and the people's motivation were the same, as were their collective actions grounded in the Universal Manifesto. While in Chile, I also visited projects in rural areas where local farmer communities had started housing, schooling, and sustainable farming projects. They felt inclined to do so to sustain access to and use of common grounds that their families had been tending for generations. Increasing parts of traditional farming lands and forests had been leased or sold to multi-national companies during the military regime of General Pinochet. As well as introducing farming on an industrial scale, multi-national companies dominated the market for agricultural supplies. For the benefit of these multi-national companies, infrastructural projects were conducted, e.g., the construction of waterworks that benefited commercial crops but severely hindered water supplies for the local farmers. By becoming self-organized to retain control over common grounds, the communities I visited resisted the pressure to adapt to large-scale mechanical farming and to hand over their lands and effectively become (not very well-paid) laborers for the then fast-growing Chilean agricultural industry. Supported by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the farmers' communities I visited revived traditional organic farming methods to stay independent. By becoming self-sufficient through organic farming, farmers could control what happened to their lands and crops. Collectively they built houses, schools, and community centers where, amongst other things, they organized courses in organic farming and healthy cooking. In doing so, they invested in long-term perspectives by providing education, houses, and jobs to young community members that otherwise would have left the region since jobs were becoming scarce due to large-scale industrial farming. The aim to stay in

charge of community grounds sparked a strong community spirit and required continuous involvement, commitment, and community development to remain prosperous.

The Emmaus and farmer communities I visited in Chile address complex, multi-layered, and interrelated issues that affect all community members and their immediate environment. These are issues for which there is no quick and straightforward solution: issues like poverty, exclusion, land grabbing, biodiversity loss, pollution, and various effects of overconsumption. Issues that we associate with the need for sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987; Elkington, 1997). Issues in demand of the mutual matching of issues and initiatives by multiple actors (Bauwens & Kostakis, 2015). The issues addressed by the communities mentioned above parallel the perception of Commons: here interpreted as natural, cultural, and knowledge resources accessible to and commonly held by all members of a society (De Moor, 2012; Conaty & Bollier, 2014; Ostrom, 1998, 2010b, 2011a). To address these issues, the communities organize and engage in collective actions (Ostrom, 1998, 2010b, 2011a).

## **1.2. Theoretical perspectives on community-based organizing for sustainability**

### ***1.2.1. Collective action for sustainable development***

In community-based organizational constructs such as the Emmaus and farmers communities in the previous section, community members contribute to common goals and share in the communities' revenues. In doing so, multiple values are simultaneously created. Economic values are created by providing a livelihood and an income. Social values are created by establishing self-supportive communities, providing different kinds and levels of education and work, but also by supporting others in a similar position. Ecologic values are created by recycling, organic farming, and addressing issues like waste management or accessibility of water and lands. In such communities, constituents collaboratively address complex issues and simultaneously create multiple values by organizing and engaging in collective actions. For planning and executing their collective actions, community members contribute knowledge, crafts, time, and means. They share the various benefits and values created by their joint efforts (Kamm et al., 2016). It is an almost quintessential example of multiple, collective, and shared value creation (Jonker & Faber, 2021). This research explores contemporary communities addressing issues related to sustainable development (Brundtland, 1987), guided by collaborative perspectives on an integral approach of societal, ecological, and economic developments (Elkington, 1997).

Sustainable development is a broad concept that addresses current and future problems that evolve from established ways of providing needs and goods now deemed unsustainable. Societal actors

must collaborate and reconnect with the earth's environmental development (Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015) for developing sustainable solutions. A drawback for sustainable change lies in the complexity of organizing sustainable solutions. Reconnecting our current, linear (Jonker & Faber, 2021) economic system with environmental development involves addressing interrelated and indivisible problems (Aldrich, 1976) considered too complex for individuals and organizations to solve by themselves.

Indivisible problems (Aldrich, 1976) in demand of sustainable solutions such as energy, agriculture, or global food systems are associated with wicked problems (Dentoni et al., 2012; Gray & Purdy, 2018; Faber & Jonker, 2015, 2021; Ritchey, 2013; Rittel & Webber, 1973; Weber & Khademian, 2008).

Wicked problems are difficult to define unambiguously and cannot be solved by traditional solutions (Peterson, 2009). They are rooted in multiple societal layers and become paired with multiple sources of knowledge and interests. Sustainable development requires a shift in established manners to structure and solve various wicked problems and is considered a "super-wicked" problem (Yearworth, 2015). Weber & Khademian (2008) identify three dimensions of wicked problems: 1) they are complex and in demand of a continuous, fluid decision-making process; 2) they are cross-cutting within and between problems, organizations, and domains; and 3) they require complicated solutions that affect multiple policy agendas. From a practice perspective, Bauwens & Kostakis (2015) and Barnes (2006) contribute a fourth and fifth dimension to wicked problems by observing that (4) wicked problems related to sustainable development are cross-cutting between natural, material, and immaterial resources; and (5) wicked problems are in demand of complicated solutions by multiple actors while influencing multiple agendas. These five dimensions indicate that solving wicked problems related to sustainable development requires 1) collaborations between multiple actors from different societal realms (see also Bryson et al., 2015; Head & Alfort, 2015; Kania & Kramer, 2013; Sol et al., 2013; Zellner & Campbell, 2015), and 2) a long-term perspective. In addition, Mintzberg et al. (2018) point out that addressing the sustainable challenges of our time requires the consolidation of strategies across multiple societal sectors and involves collaborative bottom-up learning. Ostrom (2010a) notes that global solutions must be supported by actions on a smaller scale and observes the influence of diverse networks that can respond to local issues while simultaneously coping with developments on a larger scale. We conclude that addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development requires collective action strategies involving multiple societal groups (Dentoni et al., 2012).

In addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development, new forms of community-based organizing have emerged from the start of the 21st century (Bollier & Helfrich, 2014; Gray & Purdy, 2018; Hess, 2008; Igalla et al., 2019; Mintzberg, 2015; Moulaert et al., 2014).

The Emmaus communities in Section 1.1. were started by and for the poor and homeless, and the Chilean farmers communities were initiated by and for farmer families. In contrast to the communities in Section 1.1., contemporary community-based organizational constructs addressing wicked problems are constituted of stakeholders from various societal realms. They collectively aim to address local issues related to sustainable development, such as sustainable food production, fossil- and emission-free energy production, or waste reduction. These issues parallel the notion of New (Hess, 2008) or Contemporary Commons (Bauwens et al., 2017; De Moor, 2012). The communities addressing wicked problems parallel Mintzberg's (2015a, 2015b) notion of plural sector communities. According to Mintzberg (2015a, 2015b, 2018), contemporary "worldly problems" (Mintzberg et al., 2018) demand the attention of respected governments in the public sector, responsible businesses in the private sector, and robust communities in the plural sector (Mintzberg, 2015a). Constituents in contemporary communities initiate actions associated with the private domain such as food or energy production (e.g., Bollier and Helfrich, 2012, 2015; Jonker, 2012) by organizing collective actions that are driven by and aim for multiple, collective, and shared value creation (Jonker & Faber, 2021). We postulate that the contemporary community-based forms of organizing that are addressed here parallel Ostrom's (see e.g., 2010b, 2011b) notion of Institutes for Collective Action (ICA). They are constituted of heterogeneous groups of constituents concretizing solutions to wicked problems by addressing them in a place-based context. Constituents from different societal realms (e.g., civilians, entrepreneurs, civil servants) unite around shared perspectives on value creation and collaborative governance of sustainable resources and services. Reacting to the demand for different uptakes on value, ownership, and organizing society in general, they experiment with collaborative forms of organizing from a systemic view on sustainable development as a collaborative effort addressed in a local context.

From 2015 to 2021, a purposive selection of 12 contemporary community-based forms of place-based organizing in the Netherlands has been studied. They are here introduced as *Entrepreneurial Communities*: place-based configurations of collective organizing constituted by actors from various societal realms engaging in collective actions to address wicked problems related to sustainable development.

Entrepreneurial Communities unite constituents from different backgrounds and different societal realms, resulting in heterogeneous configurations of place-bound and community-based organizing, addressing various issues in different manners and through different collaborative organizational constructs. Constituents craft place-based solutions for wicked problems that affect their environment. They consider the issues they collaboratively address, e.g., sustainable energy, biodiversity, and locally produced food, as common goods and services that must be organized in a



place-based context. They aim for collaborative governance of these commons. In doing so, they spark a new interest in “commoning” (Bollier, 2014; Bollier and Helfrich, 2015), indicating contemporary community-based initiatives developing collective actions to manage and preserve commonly shared resources and interests. The structural involvement of civilians and the need for professionalism to address distinct issues (e.g., building wind turbines or farming) result in collaborative configurations becoming a mixture of personal and professional involvement. While developing their collaborative approaches, Entrepreneurial Communities become breeding grounds for various manifestations of planning and executing place-bound collective actions aiming for multiple, collective, and shared value creation. Civilians’ demand for and involvement in place-based communities parallels governmental bodies and institutes’ changing perception of their role in public matters. From the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, governments in many European countries started to retreat from their central role in societal development (Ansell, 2000; Van Dam et al., 2014; Moulaert et al., 2014) and simultaneously started to encourage civilians to step in and organize actions and services in the public domain (e.g., Sociaal Economische Raad, 2017, Stamsnijder, 2014). This policy change has emerged throughout Western European countries in the past two decades and is associated with a transition from government to governance (Bevir et al., 2003; Van Dam et al., 2014; Rhodes, 1996). This change is accompanied by various grassroots innovation activities (Bollier & Helfrich, 2012, 2015; Martin & Upham, 2016; Smith et al., 2014) and shifts in the policy framework. Programs such as COP21 (UNFCCC, 2015) and UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) emphasize the importance of a cooperative, integrative approach to issues related to sustainability. The European Commission (European Commission, 2014; 2017) advocates the formation of multi-party collaborations that contribute to sustainable solutions and develop new business models (European Union, 2016). Policy documents (e.g., European Union, 2011, 2016; Studiegroep Openbaar Bestuur, 2016) address the importance of partnerships. National governments advocate the role of local and regional collaborations (Ansell, 2000; Horlings, 2015; Horlings & Marsden, 2012; Morgan, 1997). Governmental bodies advocate active citizenship (Van Dam, 2016; Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013) and launch social innovation programs (McGowan et al., 2017, Moulaert et al., 2014) encouraging civilians to organize actions in the public domain. Consequently, we are witnessing an increase in place-bound collaborative actions emerging around wicked problems associated with sustainable development (Ansell, 2008; Bollier & Helfrich, 2015; Horlings, 2015; Mintzberg 2015b; Sol et al., 2013; Van Dam et al., 2014). In the Netherlands, this is illustrated by a rise in community-based organizational constructs addressing wicked problems such as energy production (HIER opgewekt, 2021; Schwenke et al., 2020) or food production (Van Kampen, 2020).

Observations of contemporary place-based communities and literature on similar organizational constructs (e.g., Bovaird, 2007; Bollier & Helfrich 2012, 2015; Gray & Purdy; 2018; Igalla et al.,2019; Mintzberg, 2015a, 2015b; Kamm et al., 2016; Martin & Upham, 2016; Smith et al., 2014; Van Dam et al., 2014) confirm that these communities vary in structure, scope, and actions, as well as in prosperity and impact. We postulate that this variety is considerably affected by collaborative strategic choices contemplated by the constituents in these communities. The premise of this research is that place-based, community-based strategizing faces the challenge of simultaneously strategizing sustainable value creation and pioneering organizational constructs to support multiple value-creating collective actions addressing common objectives. This challenge is associated with two dimensions of social innovation: 1) value orientation and 2) institutionalization (see also Vicari Haddock & Tornaghi, 2014).

Ostrom (2010b) recommends a polycentric approach for the protection of common goods, emphasizing “the advantage of using local knowledge and learning from others who are also engaged in trial-and-error learning processes” (Ostrom, 2010b). According to Ostrom (2010b), collective-action problems can occur when constituents in a community focus on individual short-term beneficial outcomes instead of long-term collaborative perspectives. This friction between shared interests and competing self-interest is inherent to collaborative organizational constructs (Heery, 2010) since constituents from different backgrounds are bound to hold different perspectives (Moore, 2000; Simon, 1964). Such frictions may result in pluralistic organizational tensions induced by divergent strategic goals and interests (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006). From this perspective, the alignment of strategic goals is imperative for community-based organizing. The focus of this research project is on how constituents from various societal realms, united by their aim to address sustainable development from a local and supra-local perspective, align and shape strategies that direct their value-creating collective actions. Strategic management theory offers some perspectives for conceptualizing collaborative strategy development. However, strategic management theory predominantly addresses established for-profit organizational constructs. Collective action theory contributes to our understanding of the development of collective actions. It does not, however, provide insights on emerging strategy development in heterogeneous communities. For conceptualizing community-based strategy development, we integrate insights from both strategic management theory and collective action theory.

### **1.2.2. Collective action strategies**

Entrepreneurial Communities address wicked problems related to sustainable development that are in demand of collaborative solutions. Addressing sustainable development requires the integration of contemporary collective actions with future and transformational changes. To address sustainable development, constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities must integrate their long-term perspectives on sustainable development and multiple value creation while determining collective goals and planning actions (Simon, 1964; Mintzberg et al., 1998) to coordinate, align, and effectively organize their collective actions. In other words, collaborating constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities must engage in strategy development to address their long-term objectives.

Theory addresses various aspects and purposes of collaborations (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; De Moor, 2012; Gray & Purdy, 2018; Moulaert et al., 2014; Page et al., 2015). Community strategies often emerge from learning experiences involving all kinds of community constituents and, in general, require personal and collective commitment (Mintzberg et al., 2018). However, not much is known about the who, the what, and the how (Jarzabkowski et al., 2021) of strategy development in contemporary, multiple-value-driven communities. Various reports (e.g., Van der Heijden, 2016; HIER opgewekt, 2021; Narain & De Vries, 2015; Schwenke et al., 2020; Van Kampen, 2020) and professional publications (e.g., Bauwens et al., 2017; Bollier & Helfrich, 2014) addressing the practice of community-based organizing indicate that organizing collective action requires alignment on aspects such as community building, governance, goal setting, and planning. However, it is unclear whether and how these aspects interrelate in practice, and there is no concordance on how various manifestations of community-based organizing deal with them.

The form and nature of deliberate collaborations involving social groups (Kolehmainen et al., 2016) are found in publications addressing, e.g., community-based organizations (Igalla et al., 2019), social enterprises (Dees & Anderson, 2003; Eiselein & Dentchev, 2020; Diaz Gonzalez & Dentchev, 2021), public-private partnerships (Osborne, 2005), Communities of Practice (Wenger & Snyder, 2000), multi-stakeholder platforms (Faysse, 2006), or community-based business models (Jonker & Faber, 2021). In addition to developing new collaborative concepts, there is a renewed interest in established collaborative concepts such as, e.g., cooperatives (Como et al., 2016). Regarding collaboration, strategic management literature addresses issues such as the nature of the collaboration (e.g., Lozano, 2008; Selsky & Parker, 2005), the relationship between participants (e.g., Lozano, 2014; Ostrom, 2009, 2010b) motives (e.g., Wenger & Snyder, 2000), organizational structure (e.g., Camarinha-Matos & Boucher, 2012; Etkowitz & Ranga, 2010; Jonker & Faber, 2012; Leydesdorff, 2010), governance (e.g., Agranoff, 2006; Ostrom, 2011b), and revenues (e.g., Kania & Kramer, 2013; Kramer & Pfitzer, 2016). However, strategic management literature hardly addresses

factors that determine decision making, long-term goal setting, and planning in contemporary community-based organizational constructs.

Virtually all strategy scholars agree that choice making, decision making, and goal setting are essential elements of strategy development that can be recognized as patterns in decision-making streams (Mintzberg, 1987). Emerging strategy development in established organizations can be studied by detecting the development and breakdown of patterns for which Mintzberg (1978) recommends an exploratory and inductive approach of cases involving historical studies. Strategic management literature in general addresses strategy development in established, for-profit organizations. In contrast, strategic management literature does not address how constituents in emerging community-based organizational constructs make strategic decisions and whether this is, for example, a transactive (Hart, 1992) effort based on interaction and learning, whether it is a fluid and distributed process (Ocasio & Joseph, 2005), or whether it is the outcome of the joining of multiple, different strategies connected by shared beliefs, leading to a collective vision (Mintzberg et al., 2012).

Although not addressing community-based organizational constructs involving civilians, two concepts from strategy theory provide some direction for researching strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities: the learning school of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 2012) and the strategy as practice (SAP) approach (Denis et al., 2007; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Weiser et al., 2020; Whittington, 2006, Whittington et al., 2011)

The learning school of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 1998) studies unfolding strategy processes by analyzing how interaction results in organizational learning. A particularly interesting model within the learning school is the “Grassroots Model” of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 2009). According to the learning school, a strategy can root anywhere in an organization that accommodates learning processes. Mutual learning results in the adoption of patterns that can subsequently become organized. Noting that the strategy process tends to become indistinct in cooperative organizations, Mintzberg and Lampel (1999) suggest combining knowledge from different strategy scholars when researching real-life strategy formation. In addition, SAP provides footholds for studying strategy as a social practice that is the result of structured human actions (Whittington, 2007) emerging through the pro-active practices of organizational actors (Weiser et al., 2020). From this perspective, strategies that are shaped in practice can be observed by deconstructing the social order of organizational arrangements that shape the actions of organizational actors (Jarzabkowski et al., 2019). SAP scholars (Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Bromiley & Rau, 2014; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013) advocate a multi-framework approach for understanding how organizations form a strategy in practice. Denis et al. (2007) acknowledge that strategy research may encapsulate different disciplines, noting that developing strategies in practice in evolving pluralist organizations (Denis et

al., 2007; Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) is a long process motivated by values. Considering their multiple value-creating aspirations, this is undoubtedly the case for Entrepreneurial Communities, keeping in mind that strategic management theory predominantly, if not exclusively, addresses strategy development in established private and public organizations and does not address community-based collaborations involving civilians. Still, we feel that perspectives from strategy theory on learning organizations and strategizing in practice contribute to our exploration of community-based strategy development, here called Strategic Commoning, in practice.

### **1.3. Research problem, objectives, and research question**

This research project explores Strategic Commoning: community-based strategy development in contemporary place-bound and community-based forms of organizing called Entrepreneurial Communities. Collective action theory addresses coordination and governance of collective actions but does not explain *how* emerging communities determine their common objectives and the multiple value-creating actions they subsequently undertake. While collective action theory is pivotal for analyzing and explaining collective actions, it provides minimal support for conceptualizing strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities.

#### *Research gap 1:*

We cannot identify collective action theory addressing the structure and scope of strategy development in emerging community-based organizational constructs engaging in multiple value-creating collective actions.

Strategic management theory predominantly addresses established, profit-driven forms of organizing and fails to address strategy development in contemporary community-based forms of organizing involving civilians.

#### *Research gap 2:*

We cannot identify strategic management theory addressing structure and scope of strategy development in emerging community-based organizational constructs engaging in multiple value-creating collective actions.

Combining the observations summarized in the two research gaps brings us to the research problem addressed in this study.

*Research problem:*

Strategy development in contemporary place-based, community-based forms of organizing addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development is not explained by collective action theory or by strategic management theory.

*Research objective:*

This research aims to contribute to theory-building on community-based strategy development for place-based collective actions addressing wicked problems related to sustainability; here called Strategic Commoning.

Collective action theory does not explicitly address strategy formation in place-based, heterogeneous, and community-based forms of organizing, and neither does strategy literature. This research addresses this gap by examining the shape and scope of Strategic Commoning in Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands.

*Main research question:*

Finding that surprisingly little is known about the strategic endeavors of contemporary place-based communities, the main research question is:

What is the nature of Strategic Commoning: community-based strategy development addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development in a place-based context?

Two sub-questions address this main research question:

Sub-question 1: What is the structure of Strategic Commoning?

Sub-question 2: What variables determine the nature of Strategic Commoning?

*The subject of the research:*

The research question will be addressed by analyzing strategy development processes in contemporary Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands in a longitudinal comparative case study.

*Scientific and practical relevance:*

The *theoretical contribution* of this research is the extension of collective action theory (Ostrom, 2011b) with a strategic perspective grounded in qualitative, case-based research. In addition, this research contributes a community-based perspective to the “practice turn” (see e.g., Jarzabkowski et al., 2021; Weiser et al., 2020; Whittington, 2006) in strategic management literature

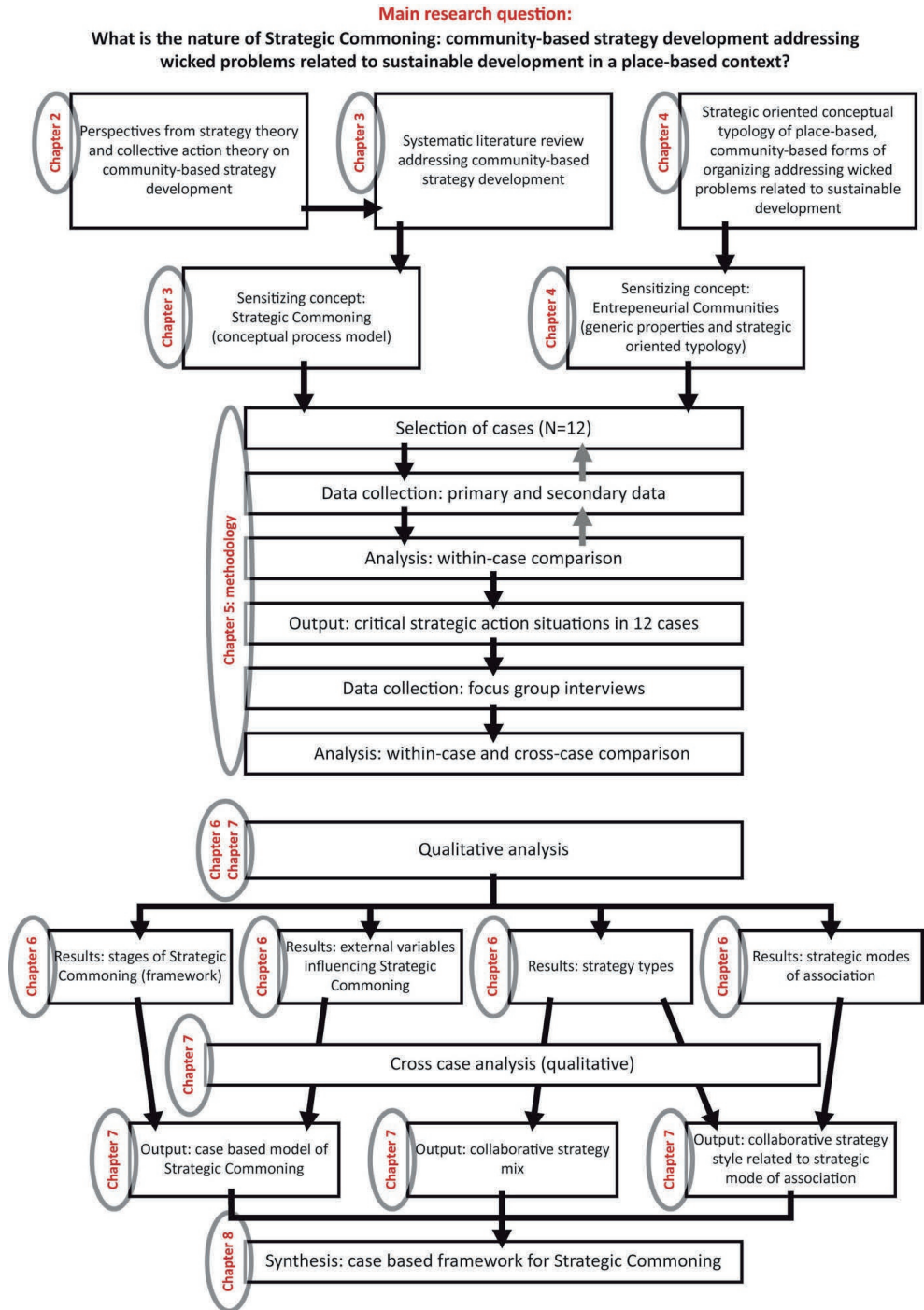
The *empirical contribution* of this research is the development of an explanatory framework for strategy development in place-bound heterogeneous communities.

The *practical relevance* of this research is the addition of a strategic perspective to the current societal and political debate on the community-based forms of organizing as drivers for place-based societal transition. Communities engaging in collective action to address wicked problems are regarded as crucial players for transitioning to a more sustainable society (see, e.g., Mintzberg, 2015a, 2015b). National (Kennisprogramma Duurzaam Door, 2013, 2017, 2020) and international programs such as Horizon 2020 (European Commission, 2014; 2017) and the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) emphasize the importance of and actively support collaboration between actors from different realms of society to address wicked problems. Understanding the nature of community-based strategizing is a first step in understanding how community-based strategy development evolves, what it entails, and whether and how it is influential to contemplating and executing collective actions.

#### **1.4. Research approach**

To answer the main research question, substantial (Fiss, 2011) context-related (Flyvbjerg, 2006) knowledge of community-based strategy development is required. Seidl & Whittington (2014) suggest broadening the scope for researching strategy in practice. Weiser et al. (2020) endorse this by expressing the need for research addressing the interplay of contemplating and executing strategies that simultaneously involve various organizational and hierarchical levels. In addition, Jarzabkowski et al. (2021) call for the active addressing and explaining of strategy practices in field sites. This motivates our choice for case-based research to address community-based strategy development regarding place-based solutions for wicked problems related to sustainable development, here called Strategic Commoning, in practice. Qualitative, interdisciplinary, and exploratory research has been accommodated to develop a theory grounded in data that addresses the practice of Strategic Commoning in contemporary Entrepreneurial Communities. Figure 1.1. provides a general overview of the research outline.

Figure 1.1.  
Conceptual framework of the research project





### *Literature research*

The research started by exploring two sensitizing concepts: Strategic Commoning and Entrepreneurial Communities. For conceptualizing Strategic Commoning, a first step is to establish how community-based strategy development is addressed in established strategic management theory and established collective action theory. A systematic literature review addressing contemporary academic publications results in a conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning. For conceptualizing the general properties of Entrepreneurial Communities, we draw on various organizational theories addressing multi-party collaborations, community-based organizing, and collective action. In addition, we conceptualize a two-dimensional typology of Entrepreneurial Communities grounded in strategic-oriented core elements derived from strategic management theory. The exploratory research focuses on diverse (Seawright & Gerring, 2008) cases for encompassing maximum variation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The conceptual and strategic-oriented typology has enabled the selection of a diverse sample of Entrepreneurial Communities that captures their presumed strategic variety.

### *Case-based research*

The methodological design of the case studies is grounded in an epistemological framework that deliberately combines two different qualitative approaches. The research adopts an interpretive approach (Avenier & Thomas, 2015) of the case studies and a configurative approach (Schneider & Wagemann, 2012) to integrate results into a case-based contribution to theory. The research aims to unravel and explain relations between components that determine community-based strategy development and the variables that affect them. We aim to provide foundations for developing a framework grounded in data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) that captures the shape and scope of Strategic Commoning. The comparative case study design transforms the cases into configurations of conditions for the occurrence (Berg-Schlosser et al., 2009) of Strategic Commoning. An information-oriented selection (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of 12 cases was selected for a longitudinal case study between 2015 and 2021. Within-case and cross-case analysis of strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities enables the development of a theory in practice (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) that accommodates the building of a general explanation (Yin, 2014) about community-based strategy development. A historical reconstruction (Mintzberg et al., 2009) of organizational development, decision making, goal setting, and progress towards goal achievement was made for each case through content analysis of notes, policy documents, newsletters, and social media. In addition, exploratory interviews (semi-structured and open) were conducted with selected respondents identified as involved with goal setting and decision-making processes within the cases. Based on this information, critical incidents regarding strategy development were selected to be discussed during

semi-structured focus group interviews. For each case, the focus group interview with actors responsible for integrative decision-making processes (Kania & Kramer, 2013) served as the primary unit of qualitative analysis. Components structuring Strategic Commoning and variables and strategy styles determining its nature and scope were eventually integrated into a case-based framework for Strategic Commoning.

### **1.5. Thesis outline**

This thesis consists of eight chapters presenting a longitudinal, qualitative exploration of Strategic Commoning in Entrepreneurial Communities. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are theoretical chapters, conceptualizing the two sensitizing concepts in this thesis: Strategic Commoning and Entrepreneurial Communities. Chapter 5 presents the methodological design of the comparative case study involving 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in The Netherlands. Chapter 6 presents the results of within-case analysis. In addition, Chapter 7 captures the cross-case analysis, resulting in a case-based process model of Strategic Commoning. Chapter 8 discusses the results of the research project. Figure 1.1. relates the chapters to the research design.

Chapter 2 addresses theoretical foundations for this research, adopting an interdisciplinary approach by integrating perspectives from SAP and collective action theory. Elements of the learning school of strategy and theory development on strategy development in pluralist contexts by SAP scholars contribute to an initial conceptualization of Strategic Commoning as a recursive and adaptive process shaped in practice. Collective action theory contributes distinct categories of external variables influential to this process.

Chapter 3 is a systematic literature review that develops our initial conceptualization of Strategic Commoning by analyzing academic articles from the last decade addressing community-based strategy formation. We propose a process model for Strategic Commoning by integrating results from established theory (Chapter 2) with contemporary contributions.

Chapter 4 presents the concept of Entrepreneurial Communities. We consider them to be distinct forms of collaborative organizing, integrating various community-based organizational constructs with multiple value-creating collective actions in a place-based context. We propose five general properties for Entrepreneurial Communities. In addition, we propose a strategic-oriented conceptual

typology that enables their diversification based on their strategic orientation on and general approach to wicked problems.

Chapter 5 addresses the methodological foundations and the design of our explorative and qualitative research and motivates research quality and data management. In order to address a novel organizational construct, we have conducted a longitudinal comparative case study. From 2015 to 2021, written and oral data regarding strategic decision making were collected and analyzed in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands.

Chapter 6 integrates the results from within-case analysis of pre-conceptualized stages in community-based strategic decision making in practice and results from analyzing external variables affecting community-based strategic decision making into a framework for Strategic Commoning.

Chapter 7 integrates results by within-case analysis, resulting in a case-based framework for Strategic Commoning. In addition, cross-case analysis demonstrates that strategic modes of association are relatable to distinct collaborative strategy styles which, in turn, are affecting, and affected by, configurations of variables influential to strategy development.

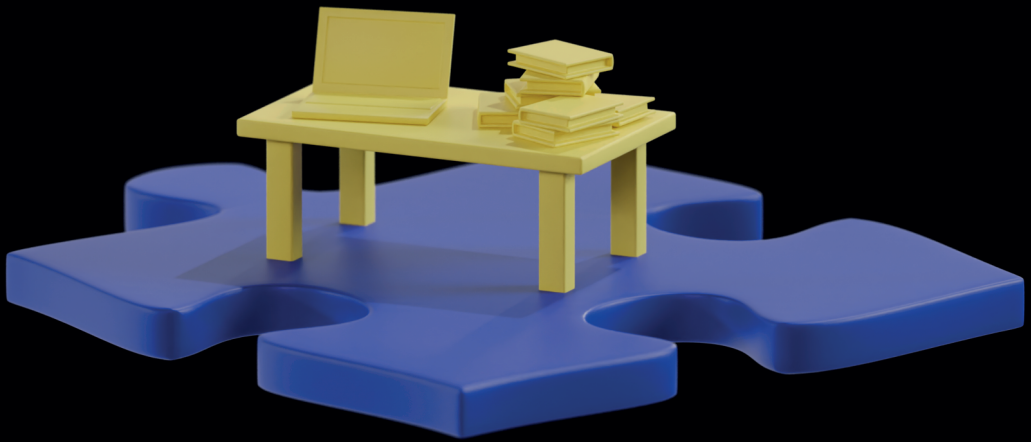
In conclusion, Chapter 8 visualizes the case-based Framework for Strategic Commoning. The contribution of this research project for theory building, future research, and practice is then addressed. In addition, the principal researcher reflects on the research process and the results.



# CHAPTER

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# 2



## **CHAPTER 2. DIFFERENT SHADES OF STRATEGY: BLENDING PERSPECTIVES FROM STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT THEORY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION THEORY TO CONCEPTUALIZE STRATEGIC COMMONING.**

### **Abstract**

Chapter 2 investigates theoretical footholds for the conceptualization of Strategic Commoning: community-based strategy development in contemporary place-bound and community-based forms of organizing. Addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development unfolds in a process entailing orientation, framing, community building, agenda setting, goal setting, decision making, and planning actions. By addressing wicked problems, contemporary community-based forms of organizing engage in processes that may be characterized as strategic since they require the long-term engagement of multiple collaborating parties addressing environmental changes. This research focuses on the nature of such community-based strategic endeavors. This second chapter explores how theory addresses collaborative strategy formation in community-based forms of organizing. Two perspectives are chosen to guide this exploration: the perspectives of strategic management theory and collective action theory. This chapter commences by exploring whether and how strategy theory addresses strategy development in collaborative organizational constructs. Next, the chapter explores what aspects of collective action theory provide insights in conceptualizing community-based strategy development. By merging these perspectives, we conceptualize Strategic Commoning, which is seen as an iterative and incremental process that is shaped in practice, and affected by multiple variables.

### **2.1. Introduction**

Multistakeholder collaborations in which civilians, organizations, and institutions engage in processes of collective action (Ostrom, 2009, 2011a) to address issues related to sustainable development are gaining momentum. Their rise is demonstrated by community-based initiatives addressing, e.g., food or energy production (see also Bollier & Helfrich, 2012; Cruz et al., 2021 Gray & Purdy, 2018; Hufen & Koppenjan, 2015; Igalla et al., 2019). Sustainability-oriented, local and supra-local, heterogeneous, and community-based collaborative constructs are here addressed as Entrepreneurial Communities (see also Chapters 1 and 4). To address their common goals, constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities engage in decision-making processes concerning framing, determining, and planning collective actions. Since sustainable development is a longitudinal process (see also Section 1.2.), this encapsulates contemplations of a strategic nature. The strategizing endeavors of Entrepreneurial

Communities are here framed as Strategic Commoning. It is unclear how constituents from various backgrounds merge their different motives and views into locally viable and practicable collaborative strategies.

Entrepreneurial Communities are heterogeneous by nature (see also Section 1.2.). In general, academic literature addresses heterogeneity as complicating or counterproductive to collaboration (Isaac & Walker, 1988; Kanbur, 1992; Libecap & Wiggins, 1984; Olson, 1965; Ostrom, 2010a; Seabright, 1993). This suggests that the variety of constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities may cause difficulties for crafting collaborative strategies. As pointed out in Section 1.2.1., heterogeneous collaborations are considered key in addressing sustainable development. Thus, we are interested to learn whether and how strategy development is influential to their progress.

Wood and Gray (1991) note that, in collaborative settings, issues like strategy formation occur at the inter-organizational domain level. This observation suggests that strategy formation in emerging community-based forms of organizing occurs between constituents. Wood and Gray (1991) also note that while strategy formation in collaborative settings occurs at an inter-organizational level, it is, in contrast, mainly being studied from the perspective of individual focal organizations. In addition, Gray & Purdy (2018) observe that collaborations that address sustainability are confronted with, among other issues, inadequate conceptual models, meager structured implementation, and failure when addressing critical processes.

In summary, not much is known about the strategic workings of heterogeneous community-based collaborations. A knowledge gap exists concerning strategy development in heterogeneous, community-based organizational constructs engaging in collective actions to address wicked problems related to sustainable development. This chapter seeks to fill this gap by exploring how theory addresses strategy development in emerging heterogeneous, place-based, community-based forms of organizing. On the one hand, strategic management theory is studied to conceptualize collaborative, collective, and community-based strategic decision making. On the other hand, collective action theory is studied to gain more insights into factors that are influential to decision making for collective actions. In doing so, Strategic Commoning is conceptualized from an interdisciplinary perspective by i) strategic management theory and ii) collective action theory.

The first step in conceptualizing Strategic Commoning establishes whether contemporary community-based forms of organizing are addressable as strategizing organizations. Section 2.2. explores various forms of community-based organizing from a strategic management perspective and contemplates whether and how strategizing properties can be attributed to such forms of organizing. Section 2.3. takes a strategic management perspective on the strategic development of

community-based organizing, drawing on established strategy literature to characterize community-based strategizing as an interactive and emergent process. Strategy theory establishes that community-based forms of organizing do engage in processes of strategy development. These processes can be observed and analyzed. Strategy theory further suggests that Strategic Commoning involves multiple styles of strategies. Section 2.4. examines community-based strategizing from the perspective of SAP. SAP offers perspectives on strategy development in pluralist contexts as a social practice resulting in different modes of association. However, strategy theory mainly addresses strategic development in established organizations that focus on single and financial value creation. In addition, Section 2.5. explores strategic perspectives on collective action. Collective action theory is deemed a crucial theoretical addition since it provides perspectives on elements that affect collective strategic decisions in collaborative constructs involved in accessibility and governance of Commons, which are here framed as Institutes of Collective Action (ICA) (Ostrom, 2011a). Merging perspectives from strategic management theory and collective action theory brings theoretical foundations for conceptualizing a strategic-oriented view on contemporary community-based organizational constructs addressing wicked problems. In conclusion, strategy theory and collective action theory provide footholds for characterizing and allocating Strategic Commoning.

## **2.2. Crafting collaborative strategies**

### ***2.2.1. Do Entrepreneurial Communities strategize?***

An initial step for conceptualizing community-based strategizing is to confirm that heterogeneous place-based, community-based forms of organizing are, indeed, strategizing. We find that academic strategic management literature addresses different manifestations of collaborative organizing. Mintzberg (2015a, 2015b) introduces and advocates the notion of the plural sector, indicating all conceivable social initiatives that are not owned by a state or by private investigators. According to Mintzberg (2015b), the plural sector is necessary for rebalancing society towards sustainable development. It is grounded in the notion of collective ownership of common property that is shared but not privately owned. Collective actions in the plural sector often include collaborations with public and private institutions (Mintzberg et al., 2018), resulting in various collaborations and partnerships. Examples of these are collaborative networks (e.g., Agranoff & McGuire, 1998; Camarinha-Matos et al., 2010), ecosystems (e.g., Adner, 2016; Bodin, 2017; Stam, 2015), cross-sector partnerships (e.g., Ber & Branzei, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005), cross-sector collaborations (e.g., Bryson et al., 2015; Page et al., 2015), communities of practice (e.g., Wenger & Snyder, 2000), or



multistakeholder platforms (e.g., Pinkse & Kolk, 2012; Young, 2011). However, strategic management literature seldom addresses the structural involvement of nonmarket constituents in such collaborations, let alone strategy development by communities predominantly constituted by nonmarket parties such as civilians.

Since the beginning of this century, there has been a steady rise in civilians organizing collective actions that address issues in the public domain (see also Section 1.2.). This rise corresponds with a rise in collaborations framed as Social Innovation (Moulaert et al., 2014), often interpreted as a consequence of a movement from governing to governance (Van Dam, 2016). From the perspective of governance, governmental bodies in various Western European countries retreat from organizing and funding various aspects of society. Simultaneously, governments advocate the involvement of the public in organizing the accessibility of distinct goods and services. This includes advocating the value-driven involvement of civilians in organizing place-based solutions for issues related to sustainable development.

The engagement of private and community-based initiatives aiming for sustainable solutions for local and supra-local demand results in an abundance of collaborations in, e.g., Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)), citizen initiatives (Igalla et al., 2019), social enterprises (Dentchev et al., 2016; Eiselein & Dentchev, 2020), Civic Driven Change (CDC) initiatives (Biekart & Fowler, 2009; Fowler & Biekart, 2017) and grassroots initiatives (Seyfang & Smith, 2007; Smith et al., 2014).

Contemporary community-based forms of organizing are driven by a collective aim to address sustainable development through multiple-value-creating actions. They experiment with various forms of organizing collective actions that address wicked problems associated with sustainable development in a place-based context. In practice, we (Kamm et al., 2016) observe a steady rise in place-based communities engaging in, e.g., energy production, food production, and waste management (see e.g., Bollier & Helfrich, 2015; HIER opgewekt, 2021; Schwenke et al., 2020; Van Kampen, 2020).

To address their goals, these community-based collaborations must in general interact with institutional actors from public and private domains (Mintzberg et al., 2018). To interact with such institutional actors, communities need to operate in institutionalized settings (Healey, 2015; Igalla et al., 2019) and act accordingly. They must adopt an addressable, legal form (e.g., cooperation) and conform to various rules and regulations. Consequently, they become institutionally embedded forms of organizing that may be reproduced in other place-based settings (Mintzberg, 2015b). From a strategic management perspective, they are addressable as value-creating organizational constructs that are bound to engage in processes of a strategic nature. Such processes involve

decision making and goal setting to determine what values the collaborating constituents (aspire to) create.

Hamel (1998) notes that organizations must satisfy five preconditions to realize new, emerging strategies: 1) *New Voices*: diversity created by new constituents and stakeholders from within the geographical periphery of an organization give way to a pluralistic process of strategy creation; 2) *New Conversations*: the diversity of the constituents leads to new conversations in which innovative insights emerge through sharing knowledge, views, and approaches to common goals; 3) *New Passions*: people will invest when there is an opportunity to create a unique future in which they can share new passions; 4) *New Perspectives*: for a new strategy to emerge, the constituents must be facilitated in developing new perspectives; and 5) *New Experiments*: organizations must be open to new experiments to learn about the effectiveness of possible strategies. All five preconditions can be related to Entrepreneurial Communities, indicating that Entrepreneurial Communities are strategizing forms of organizing and that community constituents need to make strategic decisions. Strategic decision making is observable by analyzing patterns in decision making streams (see, e.g., Mintzberg et al., 2009).

In addition, Harrison (1996) proposes five criteria to allocate strategic decisions: 1) they define a relationship between an organization and its environment; 2) they concern the organization as a whole; 3) they encompass an organization's primary functions; 4) they direct administrative and operational activities; 5) they are essential to long-term accomplishments. Following Harrison, we bring forward that strategic decision making in Entrepreneurial Communities: 1) is about anticipating the communities' environment, 2) relates to the whole community as well as 3) its aspired (key) role in addressing wicked problems, 4) gives direction to collective actions, and 5) is about concretizing long-time goals. These criteria provide direction for allocating strategic decisions, enabling exploration of the processes that bring them forth in Entrepreneurial Communities.

### ***2.2.2. Strategy development for sustainability***

The premise of this research is that strategy development in heterogeneous community-based forms or organizing does not adhere to a predetermined organizational infrastructure. Constituents unite around general, broad ideas and gradually refine those ideas into (strategic) plans and actions. Since some but certainly not all plans are based on long-term perspectives and related challenges inherent to sustainable development, a strategic perspective comes into play. Strategy development enables organizations to react to external changes (Mintzberg, 1987; Mintzberg et al., 2009; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Porter, 1996; Simon, 1993). The concept of strategy formation is primarily being discussed within the context of formal, profit-driven organizations (Mintzberg, 1987; Mintzberg &

Lampel, 1999). From this perspective, strategy development is a systematic approach to setting targets and future directions towards one or more predetermined organizational goals.

Strategy development is generally considered a hybrid between deliberate, planned processes and emergent, ad-hoc processes (Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999). Deliberate strategies are primarily defined by organizations with clearly defined objectives and a central directive body. Emergent strategies develop when multiple actors are involved in the definition of a general direction (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985), which in general appears to be the case in emerging collaborative organizational constructs. Observing patterns in decision-making streams (e.g., Mintzberg, 1987) allows for deconstructing and analyzing phases in strategic decision making. We deduce that community-based strategic decision making can also be deconstructed and analyzed by observing patterns in decision streams.

Mintzberg et al. (1976) define the essence of the strategic decision making process in three main phases: identification, development, and selection. From this, we deduce that strategic decision making in Entrepreneurial Communities is an emerging process that addresses the identification of wicked problems and selecting collective actions that address those wicked problems. This behavior shows parallels to general notions in strategic management regarding strategy development as a process of decision making, goal setting, and planning actions that enable organizations to react to external changes (Mintzberg, 1987; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Porter, 1996, 2005; Simon, 1993).

Strategy development in for-profit organizations usually results in business plans describing narrow financial targets and results. In contrast, strategy development in public and not-for-profit organizations results in policy plans that address broad societal targets, aiming for a long-term impact (Simon, 1993). The notion of strategy development as a distinct component within emerging community-based organizational constructs is not yet widespread. Strategic management literature merely addresses the private or public aspects of such collaborative organizational constructs (e.g., Bodin, 2017; Emerson et al., 2012). From this view, civilians are considered parties that may be consulted on policy plans, stakeholders that need to be informed at some stage, or the public that needs to act in a certain way. Strategic management perspectives on collaborations are in general restricted to non-market strategies (see e.g., Lyon, 2018; Voinea & Van Kranenburg, 2017). Non-market strategies generally address companies' contemplations on the advantages of involving distinct non-market parties (Raab & Kenis, 2009) or the risk of not involving stakeholders but do not address strategy development in community-based organizational constructs in which a firm is a mere constituent.

According to Moore (2000), opinions regarding strategy development in for-profit, not-for-profit, and public sector organizations may differ in defining sources of revenue and value perception. Thus, it is conceivable that in heterogeneous community-based organizations, perspectives and opinions regarding strategy development may diverge and even collide. Although communities are generally constituted by actors from different societal realms, these actors are united by their collective actions. However, it is unclear if, why, and how the different actors succeed in aligning their objectives. Simon (1964) deems it unlikely that interpersonal differences can be disregarded entirely in the organizational decision-making process in complex organizations. This observation is an indication that heterogeneity, e.g., by constituents from different societal realms that constitute a community, is influential to collaborative strategy development. As stated before, community-based organizing is welcomed as an integral approach to organizing multiple-value-creating collective actions by many governments. We argue that in addressing long-term sustainable goals, Entrepreneurial Communities engage in developing strategies that facilitate multiple value creation. However, there is no conclusive theory that addresses community-based strategy development. Knowledge of strategic management and collective action theories is required to better frame and understand strategy development in heterogeneous communities. The following sections assess insights from strategic management theory and collective action theory that contribute to our understanding of community-based strategy development.

### **2.3. Strategy schools and strategy types**

#### **2.3.1. Strategy schools**

This exploration of Strategic Commoning starts with assessing to what extent established strategy literature addresses aspects of collaborative strategy development and, more particularly, how this can be related to community-based forms of organizing. Mintzberg et al. (2009) introduce five descriptive schools of strategy that study unfolding strategy processes: 1) the learning school; 2) the power school; 3) the cultural school; 4) the environmental school; and 5) the configurational school. Below we discuss whether and how these five descriptive schools can be related to Entrepreneurial Communities.

#### *Learning School of Strategy*

Since a learning process is destined to happen for organizations in a novel situation (Mintzberg et al., 2009), it stands to reason that strategy development is a learning process for emerging community-

based forms of organizing. According to the learning school, strategy formation is an emergent process during which an organization learns from its actions and gradually adopts a pattern through learning that could be called a strategy. From this viewpoint, the strategizing process is the result of the interaction of constituents within an organization. It is, however, essential to realize that this does not imply that a collective learning process automatically leads to an emerging strategy. In order to learn, constituents must reflect, and the reflection must subsequently lead to conclusions resulting in new actions. Reflecting on a collaboration requires the ability of organizational sense-making (Weick et al., 2005). From the existing literature on the learning school of strategy, Mintzberg et al. (2009) conclude five premises:

- 1) Strategy formation is a process of learning over time
- 2) Strategy formation is a collective process
- 3) Anyone within an organization can take strategic initiatives
- 4) The strategy process can be managed by stimulating interaction, learning, and reflection
- 5) Strategies can represent past patterns and future plans and eventually become an inherent guide for organizational behavior.

These premises can easily be related to the incremental and collective processes during which constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities begin to identify wicked problems, develop approaches to address those wicked problems, and select ways in which to implement those approaches.

#### *Grassroots Model*

The “Grassroots Model” (Mintzberg et al., 2009; Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985) is a distinct model within the learning school. The Grassroots Model encourages a strategy to “grow” by allowing patterns to emerge. According to the Grassroots model, people anywhere in an organization can learn, and strategies can take root anywhere in an organization. Novel approaches may result in patterns that are adopted throughout the organization. These patterns subsequently become collectively organized. In the Grassroots Model, the governance or management of the process is critical in providing an environment where new strategies can flourish. However, the governing body also needs to recognize and address counterproductive patterns and unwelcome changes.

The learning school, in particular the Grassroots Model, offers direction for allocating Strategic Commoning by 1) studying patterns in decision making and 2) analyzing the governance of strategic decision making.

### *Power School of Strategy*

The Power School of Strategy perceives strategy as a means of influencing political agendas, not only by individual organizations but increasingly by conglomerates and networks. Within the Power School, Astley and Fombrun (1983) introduce Collective Strategy, laying the foundation for the idea of strategic alliances formed due to collaborative advantage.

Many contemporary community-based forms of organizing commence without an appointed “power base” within the organization, experimenting with horizontal organizational structures. Mintzberg et al. (2009) distinguish between the power that various constituents execute inside an organization and the power that the organization executes in its environment. Within evolving communities, both aspects may be explored by questioning who the decision-makers are and how the community becomes influential in its environment.

### *Cultural School of Strategy*

The Cultural School focuses on community building by sharing ideas and beliefs. Shared beliefs, visions, and passions form the organization as a community. From this viewpoint, strategy development is rooted in intentions that may not be explicitly evident to all community members. Mintzberg et al. (2009) put forward that, from a strategic management perspective, the notion of organizations as a community emerged in the 1980s. This, in turn, sparked the notion of strategy-as-practice (SAP) (see, e.g., Whittington, 2006; Weiser et al., 2020). SAP perceives strategy development as a practice based on social interaction that may evolve horizontally. SAP provides perspectives for addressing Strategic Commoning. Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) introduce the concept of strategy development in pluralistic settings, which will be further discussed in Section 2.4.

### *Environmental School of Strategy*

Although Strategic Commoning is all about sustainable changes in the immediate environment of Entrepreneurial Communities, the descriptive Environmental School of Strategy does not appear to be a fitting concept. The Environmental School puts forward that an existing organization adapts as a whole in response to changes in its environment. As this research addresses strategy development in novel and emerging organizational constructs, the Environmental School does not match our search for conceptualizing Strategic Commoning.

### *Configuration School of Strategy*

To the Configuration School, the organization’s stability is considered necessary. Whatever process of strategy development is most appropriate should be selected at the given time or in a given context.

Mintzberg et al. (2009) argue that various configurations of structure and power bring different views on strategy formation. A distinct configuration that shows parallels to Entrepreneurial Communities is the adhocracy (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985). First, adhocracies operate in a dynamic and complex environment, demanding sophisticated innovation and leading to unique outputs. Second, their aim to realize complex, unique output requires specific expertise and a multidisciplinary approach. Third, experts join temporary teams to develop projects. Fourth, the organization relies on mutual adjustments for coordination. Finally, decisions are subject to available information and the expertise that is required. The configuration school and, in particular, the notion of the adhocracy thus establishes that strategies can form in heterogeneous settings.

The descriptive schools of strategy are summarized in Table 2.1. The table distinguishes three elements of each school: i) what distinct elements of the school relate to Strategic Commoning; ii) how strategy development is perceived; and iii) when strategy development becomes manifest.

**Table 2.1.**  
*Descriptive schools of strategy related to aspects of community-based strategizing*

Strategy School	Learning	Power	Cultural	Environmental	Configuration
<b>Possible links to Strategic Commoning</b>	Grassroots model	Power inside and power by the organization	SAP	-	Adhocracy
<b>Strategy perceived as</b>	Learned patterns	Negotiation process to realize collaborative advantage	Collective process fueled by social interaction	Reactive process triggered by changes in the environment	Transformational process to adjust to a new state of being
<b>When can strategizing process occur</b>	Anytime anyone anticipates anything	Anytime when the influence of the collective is needed	When the collective feels the need to change	In response to changes in the environment	When perceived necessary for organizational change

The elements mentioned above provide initial clues to how strategy theory addresses aspects of Strategic Commoning by looking at the perception and the occurrence of strategy development. Interesting concepts for Strategic Commoning are the grassroots model, power inside and power by an organization, SAP, and adhocracy. Why is this of interest? The grassroots model suggests that strategy development can be allocated by studying patterns in decision making and by studying the governance of strategic decision making. The power school draws attention to strategic power within and by organizations. The notion of SAP offers the perspective of studying strategy development as a process shaped in practice by a community. The concept of adhocracy establishes the notion of strategy development in a complex, heterogeneous setting.

### 2.3.2. Strategy types

The descriptive schools of strategy offer some direction to characterizing Strategic Commoning. However, the schools of strategy do not address what kind of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 2009) may come into play in Strategic Commoning. The notion of different strategy types (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Mintzberg et al., 2009) offers further direction for characterizing different manifestations of Strategic Commoning. The eight strategy types are discussed below and linked to the notion of Strategic Commoning in Table 2.2. The premise here is that most strategy types are a hybrid between deliberate and emergent strategies. The strategy types represent such hybrids. The various styles range from (almost purely) deliberate to (almost wholly) emergent. They are presented in that order below in Table 2.2. The styles relate to the extent to which strategies are intended and thus deliberate, or whether they emerge when multiple actors are involved in defining a general direction and are thus more of an emerging nature (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Mintzberg and Westley (1992) note that such emergent strategies are observable as cyclical processes, converging and diverging around different themes that develop over time and with a changing configuration of actors in a specific context (often also in transition). Mintzberg et al. (2009) note that emergent strategies acknowledge the organizational capabilities of participants to experiment and learn.

The *planned* strategy is mostly deliberate. It originates in formalized planning cycles and appears of no interest to the emerging character of Strategic Commoning.

The *entrepreneurial* strategy emerges controlled by central leadership in a niche environment and originates in a central vision. At first, this style appears not to concur with Strategic Commoning. However, since there are communities that produce and trade assets and goods (such as energy or food), there is bound to be a form of entrepreneuring that gives room to emerging entrepreneurial strategies.

*Ideological* strategies originate in collective visions that are controlled normatively. Although community constituents might share ideals, the ideological strategy simply does not concur with the notion of Strategic Commoning, where multiple visions are democratically merged.

The *umbrella* strategy creates boundary conditions under which multiple actions from multiple actors can prosper and is conceivable as a form of Strategic Commoning.

*Process* strategy focuses on facilitating strategic processes as such, not on the issues that are addressed. Process strategies are imaginable when communities engage in project-based actions. Therefore, they might apply to Strategic Commoning.

*Unconnected* strategies evolve when constituents in an organizational configuration develop actions that have no immediate connection to the organizations' leading intentions and plans. Unconnected



strategies are imaginable when collective goals become too broadly defined, leaving room for Strategic Commoning based on individual interpretations and actions.

*Consensus* strategies emerge as a result of the mutual adjustment of goals and plans between different constituents. Consensus strategies appear to be an appropriate and prosperous form of Strategic Commoning.

*Imposed* strategies are mostly emergent and dictated by the environment in which an organization operates. Although communities emerge from a shared demand for change, they are not forced to follow a distinct path or route to address those changes, so it seems unlikely that Strategic Commoning involves imposed strategies. Table 2.2 arranges the styles of strategy from mostly deliberate to mostly emergent.

**Table 2.2.**  
*Strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985)*

Strategy style	Description
Planned	Based on formalized planning cycles. Intended and most deliberate
Entrepreneurial	Producing and/or trading communities
Ideological	Controlled vision
Process	Process facilitation
Umbrella	Multiple actions by multiple actors
Unconnected	Unconnected projects
Consensus	Mutual adjustment of goals and plans
Imposed	Dictated by changing environment. Unintended and most emergent

The strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Mintzberg et al., 2009) thus offer clues to what kinds of strategies (Mintzberg et al., 2009) may manifest in Entrepreneurial Communities. Strategy types characterize and direct general aspects of strategy development. We do not know yet what strategy types become manifest in collaborative strategy development. However, we suspect that heterogeneity might result in multiple strategy types present during strategic decision making. Following this, we suggest that distinct configurations of strategy types may be beneficial for developing multiple-value-creating collective actions. From a strategic perspective, it makes sense that strategic decisions should be aligned with strategy types. For instance, strategic decisions should support revenue-generating actions if a community aspires to an entrepreneurial and self-sustaining approach. However, since Strategic Commoning is a novel concept, it is as yet unclear whether and how this aligning of strategic decisions and strategy types happens in practice in emerging communities. In Entrepreneurial Communities, various constituents coming from different societal backgrounds address wicked problems in different manners. It stands to reason that this involves different strategy types within – but also across – specific Entrepreneurial Communities. Since Entrepreneurial Communities are novel organizational constructs, it is debatable whether the above-

mentioned strategic types suffice to address contemporary community-based strategy development. After all, strategy types have been developed in a different era for most established industrial organizations. We thus deem it conceivable that new strategy types occur in Entrepreneurial Communities. In addition, within heterogeneous forms of organizing, various constituents may represent or advocate for different strategy types. Whether this is the case can only be established by studying Strategic Commoning in practice.

#### **2.4. Perspectives from strategy as practice: strategizing in pluralist contexts**

A limitation of the theoretical approaches presented in the previous sections (2.2. and 2.3.) is that they take a “control” approach, studying strategy development from a structural control view (Weiser et al., 2020). This approach addresses the generally top-down development and implementation of strategies in established organizations with a clear managerial and governance structure. Also, studies addressing various aspects of the Schools of Strategy were predominantly published in American academic journals from the second half of the previous century onwards, when corporate strategic development mainly focused on quantitative, financial growth. Not surprisingly, much of the strategic management theory addresses top-down policies for creating financial value in established organizations. The exception here is the strand of literature that addresses strategy as practice (SAP). SAP contributes perspectives on strategizing in pluralistic contexts as a social process evolving in practice. Taking a more practice-based view on strategy, SAP emerged at the turn of the century. SAP challenges the dominant paradigm of top-down strategy formulation that appears separate from the practice of strategy implementation (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007). SAP advocates a broader conceptualization of the practitioners that craft and execute strategies. SAP scholars study how organizations conceive and act upon emerging strategic plans developed by stakeholders either within organizations or in more loosely coupled or ad-hoc configurations of people, having in common that they all work together in practice (Jarzabkowski, 2004, 2007; Weiser et al., 2020). SAP scholars perceive strategy as something that people do rather than something that organizations have (Whittington, 2003). SAP acknowledges that strategies can be the result of interactions between multiple constituents and may emerge horizontally. Moreover, SAP scholars (see, e.g., Bromiley and Rau, 2014; Jarzabkowski, 2008 Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Whittington, 2003, 2006) emphasize the importance of studying strategy development in-vivo. SAP recommends studying strategy development in practice as it emerges and not purely from a managerial view or from a more theoretical and conceptual view. From the perspective of SAP, strategy is a living, vibrant praxis that changes, develops, and adapts over time. Not surprisingly, SAP scholars draw attention to the interplay of praxis, practice, and practitioners (Jarzabkowski et al.,

2007; Whittington, 2006). *Praxis* denotes the “what”: the social construct of actions that are important from a strategic perspective, i.e., for the development of a community or its collective actions. *Practice* concerns the “how”: cognitive, behavioral, procedural, discursive, motivational, and physical efforts crafted into collective actions. *Practitioners* relates to the “who”: constituents shaping processes based on their backgrounds, their behavior, and the resources that they contribute (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006; Jarzabkowski et al., 2019). Figure 2.1 envisions this amalgamation of praxis, practice, and practitioners.

**Figure 2.1.**  
*Strategy as practice (adapted from Jarzabkowski et al., 2007)*

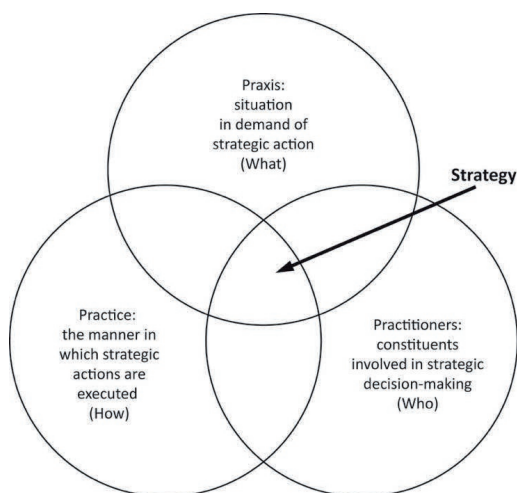


Figure 2.1. demonstrates the constant interaction of praxis, practice, and practitioners in organizations. From a practice perspective strategy development involves all three elements to align goals and actions. To understand how praxis, practice, and practitioners interact and result in strategy development, theories that explain (adaptive) organizational behavior, such as organizational sense-making (Balogun et al., 2014; Vaara & Whittington, 2012; Weick et al., 2005; Weiser et al., 2020) must be considered to clarify individual and group behavior in strategic decision making. Such a practice-based approach seems the best fit for exploring and elucidating Strategic Commoning since constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities engage in a continuous process of developing and reflecting on collective goals, plans, and actions. During this complex and “fuzzy” process, multiple, shared, and collective value creation (Jonker & Faber, 2021) comes into play.

Strategic Commoning may thus be characterized as both recursive and adaptive (Jarzabkowski, 2004; 2005) and must be studied in practice accordingly.

Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) note three significant problems hindering strategy development in pluralistic contexts. First, pluralistic organizations encompass diverse and possibly divergent cultures and interests, resulting in organizational tensions. These tensions may hinder the development of coherent strategies. Second, the pressure caused by pluralistic strategizing efforts demands the organizing capacity to handle such processes, which is not always available. In regulated firms, this generally results in tensions related to the pressure to follow multiple strategies to satisfy different strategic aspirations and not so much by internal pluralism.

The premise in this research is that internal pluralism affects the collaborative strategizing process within an organization. We bring forward that pluralistic community-based forms of organizing likely encounter the pressure to combine or align various and different strategies. Third, strategizing and organizing tensions hinder the alignment of coherent organizational structures and strategizing processes. According to Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006), how the collaborating parties address these problems results in three different modes of association for strategizing and organizing in pluralistic contexts. When multiple constituents represent multiple strategic interests, strategy development can develop into an interdependent, imbalanced, or destructive mode of association. Each mode of association affects the progress of strategic and organizational development.

In the interdependent mode, organizing and strategizing efforts complement each other, resulting in practices that respond to various strategic goals and strategies that respond to organizational pluralism. Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) emphasize that the interdependent mode is an ideal state that requires constant dialogue to retain strategic and organizational flexibility. This flexibility is necessary to react to mutual differences and changes that inevitably occur in a pluralistic context. If constituents do not succeed in aligning strategic interests, they are risking an imbalanced mode of association. This may result in a vicious circle of constantly adjusting strategies that prove ineffective. Constituents thus risk becoming “lost in strategizing”.

When constituents fail to align their strategic objectives, conflict may occur, resulting in ineffective strategies. Conflict is reflected in a destructive mode of association. If not resolved, a destructive mode of association may result in an organizations’ demise. According to Jarzabkowski & Fenton (2006), pluralistic organizations that acknowledge a destructive mode can either decide upon significant changes or terminate the organization. The modes of association must be regarded as a best-to-worse-case continuum (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006). Each stage encompasses different manifestations of strategizing and organizing, rooted in different manners of dealing with the problems mentioned above and accompanied by different managerial demands and risks.

Assuming the heterogeneous nature of Entrepreneurial Communities parallels a pluralist context representing various strategic views and approaches, we conclude that modes of association must occur and thus are observable in community-based strategy development. We bring forward that observing and analyzing modes of association enables further exploration of factors that influence, or are influenced by, modes of association.

## **2.5. Collective action and strategy development**

### ***2.5.1. Collective Action Theory***

In the previous sections, we have argued that the process of strategy formation in Entrepreneurial Communities does not follow a conventional, predetermined, and deliberate route but is emergent and shaped in practice by collaborating constituents who gradually refine a diversity of ideas into presumably shared goals and actions. These goals are operationalized in collective actions that, in turn, should contribute to an overarching objective: locally and collectively addressing one or more wicked problems associated with sustainable development. Simultaneously, the process of strategizing implies deliberate engagement in community-building to align goals and actions. Strategic management theory does not provide further clues for conceptualizing community-building aspects of strategy formation. To better understand how the practice of community-building relates to strategy development, we draw upon views from collective action theory in this section. As mentioned previously, most strategy theory addresses strategy processes in established, institutionalized forms of organizing like firms (see, e.g., Bodin, 2017; Emerson et al., 2012; Mintzberg et al., 2009; Mintzberg, 2015b). Firms mostly use the concept of strategy to address market behavior (e.g., Mintzberg, 1987; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999; Porter, 1996; Simon, 1993). According to Ostrom (2009), market behavior is generally addressed in microeconomic theory, while the political and sociological theory addresses organizational behavior. The first is not the object of this study, despite the exciting perspectives it might offer. The latter requires an explanatory framework that accommodates cross-institutional comparisons and evaluations (Ostrom, 2009) to understand how the interaction of various community members results in collaborative strategies that guide collective goals and actions. Collective action theory (see, e.g., Ostrom, 2010a, 2011b) offers a conceptual foundation for allocating and studying strategy development within emerging Entrepreneurial Communities by defining variables that shape and are shaped by collective actions. Ostrom (2010a) states that decisions are made independently in processes of collective action, but that the outcomes affect all involved. This notion demonstrates parallels to the amalgamation of

constituents involved in strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities. It also indicates that research addressing community-based strategy development should accommodate multi-level analysis of collective actions to differentiate various individual and community-level factors that influence strategic decision making.

The Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (IAD) (McGinnis, 2011; McGinnis & Ostrom, 2014; Ostrom, 2009, 2010b, 2011b;) enables multi-level analysis of collective action. Assessing the IAD, it is vital to realize that Ostrom (e.g., 2010a, 2011b) uses the term *institution* to define various social constructs in which individuals collaborate not in a structural-functional way but to realize various objectives simultaneously. In institutions<sup>1</sup>, individual and collaborative choices are guided and affected by written and unwritten rules. Rules entail implicit and explicit agreements on, e.g., responsibilities and procedures for organizational choice making. Thus, they should entail agreements on procedures for strategic choice making. For studying rules, it is essential to keep in mind that institutions generally operate simultaneously on multiple levels, e.g., strategic, governmental, member, organizational, or operational level. According to Ostrom (2009), decisions at one level of an institution are influenced by rules at another level. A change in strategic choice may, for instance, alter the nature of consecutive actions. In turn, the progress or outcome of collective actions or changes in the governing body may influence strategic choices. At each level, configurations of rules, constituents, and general circumstances occur. These complex settings of levels, rules, constituents, and circumstances can be observed through various analytical lenses. Ostrom (2009, 2011b) recommends that knowledge from various disciplines be applied and integrated when studying complex institutional arrangements. Hence, this research integrates strategic management theory and collective action theory to grasp the nature of community-based strategy development.

In the IAD, *Analysis* relates to deconstructing institutional contexts (McGinnis, 2011) into components that can be analyzed to understand how they interrelate, which in turn helps to understand how collective outcomes are established and handled. *Development* relates to institutional dynamics. According to Ostrom (2009), the theory is deliberately presented as a *framework*. She puts forward that frameworks are valuable for identifying general components for comparing theories. The framework allocates and orders the most relevant factors that come into play. Ostrom (2009) emphasizes that the IAD is not a theory or a model but a general framework that

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions are here perceived to be value-creating organizational constructs involving multiple constituents organized around a common objective.

can be applied for identifying universal elements. Thus, the IAD must not be interpreted as a model for designing collective actions.

The IAD offers metatheoretical conceptions of parts of Strategic Commoning that can be applied to compare different institutional configurations of Entrepreneurial Communities. The IAD envisions collective actions as action situations (Ostrom, 2011a, 2011b) influenced by multiple variables and interactions. When it comes to observing strategy development in practice, an action situation is a conceptual unit of analysis that encompasses both an action and the actors involved in that action. According to Ostrom (2010a, 2011b), actors in any action situation are constituents that act as individuals or as representatives of organizations. In an action situation, constituents decide to engage in collective actions (McGinnis, 2011). An action situation thus results in (patterns of) collective (inter)actions that eventually result in outcomes related to collective goals. Constituents evaluate actions and their outcomes, which may lead to adaptations in any stage of this process.

### ***2.5.2. Strategic Action Situation***

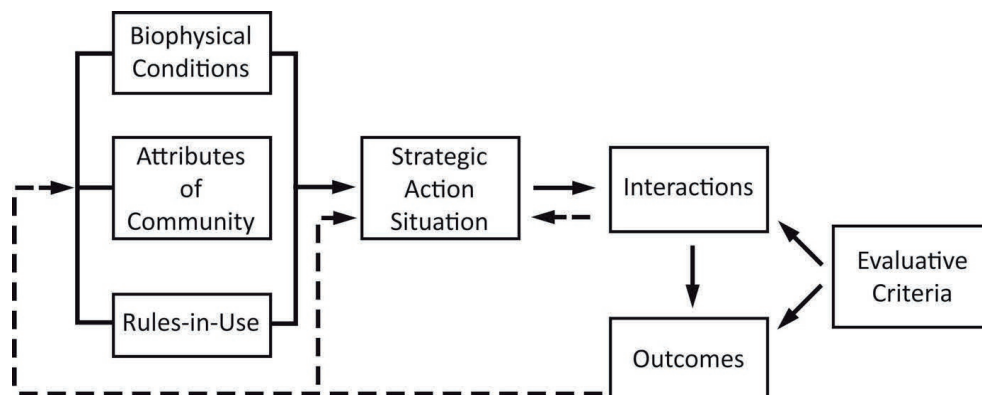
Within the IAD, strategies are considered individual- and collective-level choices inherent to the governance of action situations. Although the IAD does not directly address collaborative strategy development, the notion of collective-level choices indicates that strategy development is related to the governance of collective actions. Any action situation is a process in which constituents exchange information and make decisions resulting in collective actions and outcomes. This process is observable through patterns that emerge in constituents' information exchange. The notion that the action situation is observable suggests that analysis of community-level strategic-oriented actions accommodates the allocation and analysis of strategic decision making (Mintzberg et al., 2009). To differentiate community-level strategy development, we label an action situation related to decision making about collective-level strategy development as a strategic action situation. The strategic action situation is a "black box" (McGinnis, 2011), where strategic-oriented decisions are crafted by or on behalf of the community.

To assess whether decisions are about strategy development, the five criteria for strategic decisions mentioned in Section 2.2. can be applied: 1) anticipating the communities' environment, 2) relating to the whole community, as well as 3) its aspired (key) role in addressing wicked problems, 4) directing collective actions, and 5) concretizing long-time goals.

Following the IAD (Ostrom, 2010a, 2011b; McGinnis & Ostrom, 2014), the strategic action situation is envisioned as a framework in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2.

Framework envisioning strategic action situation related to external variables and (inter) actions (adapted from Ostrom, 2010b)



Ostrom (2005, 2011a) states that all action situations and their outcomes are induced and affected by external variables. Ostrom (2010a, 2011a, 2011b) recognizes three significant groups of external variables that affect any action situation: (i) biophysical conditions, (ii) attributes of the community, and (iii) rules in use. *Biophysical conditions* represent the physical area in which a community operates. The geographical and societal context determines issues that are being addressed and how they are addressed. On top of that, existing rules and regulations determine the legal form that a community can adopt, affecting the organizational structure. Distinct *attributes of a community* affect organizational features such as size, structure, and stability. According to Ostrom (2005), *rules in use* are instructions that shape an action situation. Such instructions are often formalized in protocols. However, protocols may differ from practice. In the IAD, rules in use are practice-based instructions that represent the actual flow of action situations.

According to Ostrom (see, e.g., 2010a, 2011b), constituents' choices in an action situation will differ depending on whether an action situation is unique, whether it occurs a known and finite number of times, or whether it occurs indefinitely. In addition, Ostrom (2005, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2013) subdivides constituents' assumptions in action situations into four clusters of variables: 1) the resources that constituents contribute; 2) how they evaluate both the context in which they operate and the possible actions that can be undertaken; 3) how they obtain, handle, retain, and make use of knowledge and information; and 4) the processes that are used to select what actions should be developed. Formal and informal rules generally direct the action situation. Ostrom (e.g., 2010a, 2011b) also notes that action situations are structured by seven common variables, as depicted in Figure 2.3.



Figure 2.3.

*Strategic action situation: internal structure related to external variables (adapted from Ostrom, 2009)*

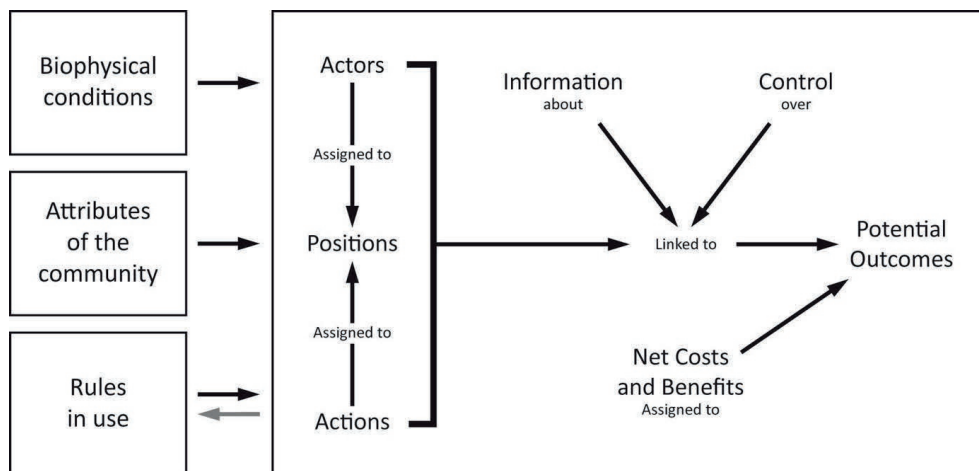


Figure 2.3. demonstrates that an action situation is induced or affected by the three overarching external variables' biophysical conditions, attributes of the community, and rules in use. Next, the seven internal variables that determine an action situation are: 1) the (combination of) constituents, 2) the positions that constituents (must) occupy in decision making, 3) the potential outcomes, 4) (allowable) actions that are carried out in the light of 5) information that constituents have about those actions, 6) the control that constituents have over the action at hand, and 7) the costs and benefits that constituents associate with actions and outcomes. From this, it follows that similar internal and external variables determine collaborative strategic decision making in a strategic action situation.

The IAD thus offers multiple, multi-layered variables to analyze an action situation. Strategy development is associated with organizations reacting to external changes (see also Section 2.2.). This study draws on external variables to further explore Strategic Commoning. More specifically, the study aims to find out what distinct variables affect strategy development. The premise here is that biophysical conditions give rise to the constitution of community-based organizing in the first place. After all, Entrepreneurial Communities craft place-based solutions for wicked problems related to sustainable development. Thus, biophysical conditions are regarded as a unique, case-specific given for each Entrepreneurial Community. Although biophysical conditions evoke collective actions, we do not know whether they affect strategy development.

As community-based organizing is still emerging and evolving, it stands to reason that attributes of the community also differ between Entrepreneurial Communities. After all, the composition of the constituents involved in strategic decision making may change. Thus, changing the attributes of the community may affect strategic decision making.

However, biophysical conditions and attributes of the community do not serve to allocate patterns in strategic decision making. To recognize such patterns, rules in use come into play representing the actual and institutionalized flow of strategy development.

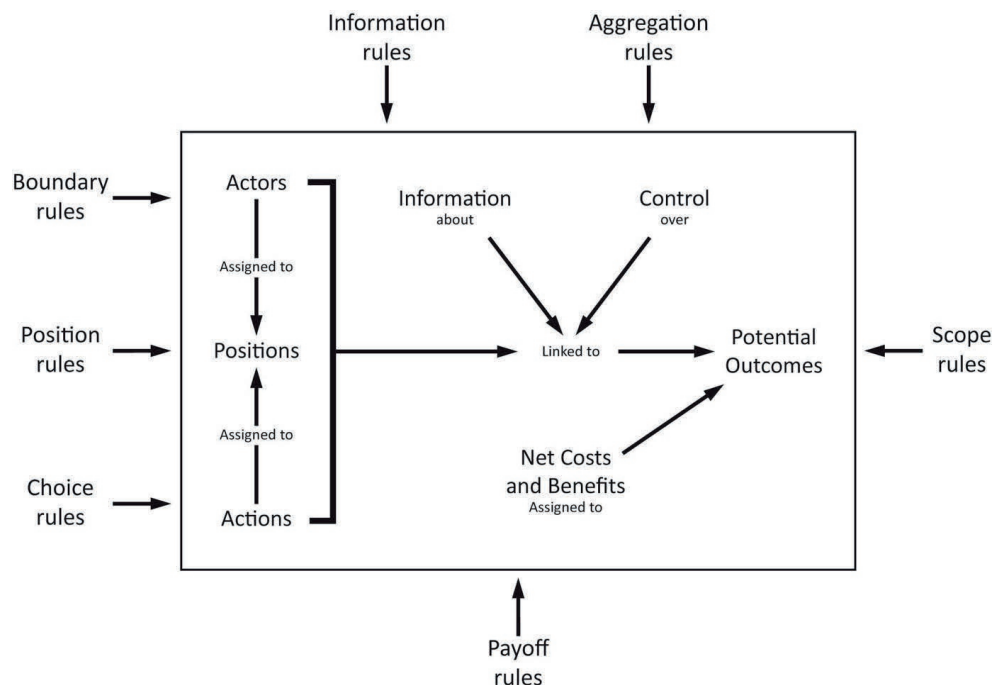
Ostrom (2010a, 2011a, 2011b, 2013) distinguishes three different levels of rules in use: 1) operational choice; 2) policy choice; and 3) constitutional choice. Operational choice relates to practical decisions and their outcomes. Policy choice, also referred to as collective choice (e.g., McGinnis, 2011), relates to rules and policy decisions that, in the end, determine operational choices. In other words: policy choice is about strategy development. Constitutional choice relates to rules that determine who gets to make decisions about what. The various levels of rules in use appear to be influential to strategic decision making in various levels. Each level of rules in use entails seven similar clusters of institutional rule types. These rule types directly affect (elements of) an action situation (Ostrom, 2005, 2010a, 2011b). The different institutional rule types are synthesized below in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3.**  
*Institutional rule types (adapted from Ostrom, 2009)*

<b>Rules</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Position</b>	The number of possible “positions” actors in the action situation can assume
<b>Boundary</b>	Abilities of individual constituents to access a particular position
<b>Choice</b>	The action capacity that comes with a particular position
<b>Aggregation</b>	Any rules on interactions between constituents that accumulate to outcomes
<b>Information</b>	Information and information channels available to constituents in their respective positions
<b>Pay-off</b>	Costs and benefits of participating in the action situation
<b>Scope</b>	Any criteria or requirements that must be considered when contemplating outcomes

Ostrom (e.g., 2005, 2011b) relates rules in use to distinct internal variables determining the internal structure of an action situation. This is depicted below in Figure 2.4. The notion that rules in use are critical to the internal structure of a strategic action situation indicates that collective choice rules and constitutional choice rules are key variables for recognizing and analyzing patterns in strategic decision making.

**Figure 2.4.**  
*Rules in use related to the internal structure of a strategic action situation (adapted from Ostrom, 2005)*



From Ostrom's (2010b, 2011a) notion that rules in use both induce and are affected by action situations, it follows that rules in use in a strategic action situation may influence decisions associated with strategy development. However, rules in use can also be the consequence of strategy development (see also Figure 2.3.). This suggests that determining and using rules in use is an adaptive and recursive process, shaped in practice, which corresponds with views from SAP on strategy development. Collective action theory and SAP thus complement each other when related to Strategic Commoning.

## 2.6. Conclusions

This chapter introduces a strategic-oriented view on contemporary community-based organizing for sustainability. There is no conclusive theory that directs the study of strategizing efforts in place-based heterogeneous collaborations. This chapter is a first attempt to fill this gap by aggregating findings from strategy theory and collective action theory.

Strategy theory confirms that Entrepreneurial Communities are value-creating organizational constructs capable of realizing new and emerging strategies. Strategy theory establishes that Strategic Commoning is an emerging and incremental process in a complex, heterogeneous setting.

The descriptive schools of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 2009) offer some direction for understanding strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities. The learning school (Mintzberg et al., 2009) suggests that strategy development can be allocated by observing patterns in decision making and by analyzing the governance of strategic decision making. The concept of adhocracy (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985) establishes the notion of strategy development in a complex, heterogeneous setting. Mintzberg and Waters (1985) introduce the notion of various strategy types that may direct community-based strategy development.

Strategy as practice (SAP) adds the perspective of studying strategy development as a community practice. SAP frames strategy development as an adaptive and recursive process between multiple constituents. According to SAP, strategy development results from the interplay between praxis, practice, and practitioners that must be studied in practice. According to SAP scholars, studying strategy development in practice calls for extending strategy research with disciplines that explain adaptive organizational behavior. This research does so by integrating SAP and collective action theory. The concept of the strategic action situation introduced in Section 2.5. provides directions for analyzing community-based strategy development in practice. In addition, the IAD offers ample directions for recognizing and analyzing rules in use that affect strategy development. Allocating and analyzing rules in use in strategic action situations in multiple Entrepreneurial Communities will serve to allocate patterns in strategic decision making. Combining elements from strategic management theory and collective action theory thus provides initial theoretical foundations for characterizing, allocating, and analyzing Strategic Commoning. Strategic management theory strongly suggests that strategy development is recognizable as patterns in decision making. Mintzberg (e.g. Mintzberg et al., 2009) contributes the concept of strategy types. SAP establishes that strategic-oriented collective actions should be studied in practice as they evolve. In addition, SAP contributes a strategic perspective to collective action theory by conceptualizing modes of association that occur when heterogeneous communities engage in strategic action situations.

## **2.6. Discussion**

Sustainable development is a wicked, perennial, and collaborative challenge that demands novel approaches and innovative solutions. The increase in heterogeneous collaborations addressing issues related to sustainable development parallels the importance accredited to collaborative contributions to sustainability (see, e.g., Bauwens & Kostakis, 2015; Bauwens et al., 2017; Bollier & Helfrich, 2015; Gray & Purdy, 2018; Morris & Miller-Stevens, 2016; Raab & Kenis, 2009). Noticing the demand for collaborative solutions it is somewhat surprising that little is known about developing strategies that support collaborations between various partners trying to address these issues in a

place-based context. More particularly, it remains unclear how a diverse group of people, motivated by diverse objectives and motives, craft a common path and a collaborative strategy. We have called this collaborative strategizing “Strategic Commoning”. Although strategic management theory, particularly SAP, provides clues for addressing the process leading to Strategic Commoning, mainstream strategic management theorists still focus on strategy development in established, profit-driven organizations. In for-profit organizations, the infrastructure for strategy development is generally determined by the existing organizational hierarchy (Mintzberg, 1987; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999). It stands to reason that in emerging and heterogeneous community-based constructs, such infrastructure is absent. Thus, although strategy theory helps characterize strategy development in heterogeneous community-based constructs, it does not address the workings of strategizing processes in such constructs. In contrast, collective action theory does address and analyze emerging community-based constructs (see, e.g., Bauwens, 2005, 2010; Bauwens & Kostakis, 2015; Bauwens et al., 2017; Bollier, 2014; Bollier & Helfrich, 2012, 2015) as a driver for sustainability-oriented innovation but does not address strategy development as a distinct issue. Thus, insights from collective action theory are vital to our conceptualization of community-based strategic decision making. By merging insights from both strategy theory and collective action theory, this chapter postulates that strategy development is an essential aspect of emerging community-based organizational constructs.

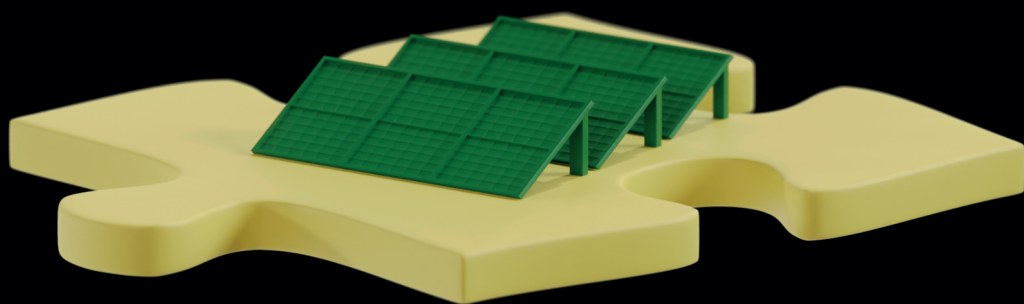
For this initial conceptualization of Strategic Commoning, we have drawn on strategic management theory and collective action theory. The established strategic management theory we have explored in this chapter mainly addresses conventional forms of organizing a single, monetary value proposition. In contrast, Entrepreneurial Communities are collaborative organizational constructs grounded in multiple, collective, and shared value creation in demand of multiple novel value-oriented views on strategy. We merged elements of strategic management theory with insights from collective action theory to conceptualize variables that may influence community-based strategy development. The next step is to assess whether contemporary academic literature offers further directions for exploring the concept of Strategic Commoning. This will be addressed in the next chapter.



# CHAPTER

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# 3



## CHAPTER 3. STRATEGIC COMMONING: DIRECTIONS FROM LITERATURE

### Abstract

Entrepreneurial Communities address wicked problems related to sustainability that require the mutual matching of issues and initiatives by various constituents. Before engaging in collective actions, constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities identify wicked problems, establish goals, select actions, and anticipate outcomes of those actions. This behavior shows parallels to the notion of strategy development.

Chapter 2 has brought forward that established strategic management theory and collective action theory suggest possible directions for characterizing Strategic Commoning. To update insights from both disciplines, Chapter 3 explores contemporary theoretical and empirical contributions that contribute to our understanding of strategy development in heterogeneous collaborative constructs. For this, a systematic literature review of an interdisciplinary nature has been performed, integrating contemporary academic articles on strategy formation in multi-party settings from organizational and management sciences and contemporary academic articles on collective action that address (aspects of) strategy development. The review presented here results in a conceptual process model for Strategic Commoning in Entrepreneurial Communities.

### 3.1. Introduction

In Entrepreneurial Communities, civilians collaborate with actors from other realms of society to address wicked problems related to local interpretations of sustainable development. The involvement of civilians results in organizational configurations that become a mixture of personal and professional engagement. We assume that mixture affects Entrepreneurial Communities' strategies. An initial exploration of strategy theory and collective action theory (see Chapter 2) shows that Strategic Commoning is an adaptive and recursive process, shaped in practice and evolving in complex, heterogeneous settings. Drawing on the IAD (Ostrom, 2011a, 2011b), Strategic Commoning is conceptualized in Chapter 2 as a strategic action situation (Figure 2.2.) induced by a community and determined and affected by external variables. Our initial exploration of strategic management theory and collective action theory in Chapter 2 shows that both strands of literature seemingly fall short in addressing community-based strategy development in general, let alone revealing distinct aspects that determine and affect Strategic Commoning. Established strategy theory generally addresses the behavior of distinct groups of people (e.g., managers, workers, consumers) within



particular forms of organizing (e.g., companies, private partnerships, specific stakeholders in society). These strategies often serve to optimize one single, usually financial, value. However, strategy theory hardly addresses collaborations instigated by civilians (see also Section 2.2.1.). We see collective action theory as a valuable addition to understanding collaborative organizing by distinct societal groups (e.g., employees, farmers, indigenous groups), but it does not address strategy formation processes in heterogeneous organizational constructs organizing multiple-value-creating collective actions. We acknowledge the reciprocal enrichment in the amalgamation of both lines of thinking. In addition, valuable insights based on practice come from professionals addressing community-based organizing from a practice perspective (e.g., Bauwens & Kostakis, 2015; Kaats & Opheij, 2012; Lamberigts & Schipper, 2015) and practice-based experiences with community-based organizing for sustainable development (e.g., Bollier & Helfrich, 2015). Unfortunately, non-academic publications are not structurally indexed, let alone recognized by academia as being a valuable source of information. Consequently, they do not fit the formal aim of this Chapter to expand knowledge of academic contributions that can help to further conceptualize Strategic Commoning.

There appears to have been a steady rise in community-based initiatives since the first decade of this century. Various scholars link this to governments withdrawing from the public domain and challenging civilians as well as private parties to organize issues such as energy, mobility, or waste management (e.g., Healey, 2015; Jaeger-Eerben et al., 2015; Pattison et al., 2021). According to Nichols et al. (2015), this withdrawal by governmental institutions parallels a new phase in social innovation (Moulaert et al., 2014) by addressing societal change from a systemic perspective. According to the OECD (2011), social innovation addresses needs that are not provided by the market but also the development of new, meaningful ways to contribute to society. From this perspective, social innovation has given room to community initiatives (e.g., Igalla et al. 2019; Van Dam et al., 2014). This is probably enhanced by the simultaneously increasing accessibility and ease of use of the Internet and related sprawling social media (Mintzberg, 2015b), making it easier for people and communities to exchange and publish their needs, expectations, and endeavors. This has not been further investigated within the realm of this research, and therefore we will not speculate on this matter. Community-based initiatives experimenting with new and meaningful ways to contribute to sustainable development are on the rise (HIER opgewekt, 2021). Academic publications addressing (aspects of) social innovation have notably been rising since 2006 (MacGowan et al., 2015). Following the conceptualization of New Commons (Hess, 2008), Ruiz-Ballesteros & Gual (2012) denote an increasing interest in community-based management of resources, challenged by the demand for integrating market and state logic. Bollier (2014) notes an increase in interest in the Commons while Mintzberg (2015a, 2015b) advocates acknowledgment of plural sector organizations

as key players for a sustainable transition. To summarize, academic publications addressing community-based organizing for sustainability have been rising since the second half of the first decade of this century. This rise motivates our choice for a literature review spanning the years 2005 to 2020 to determine whether and how contemporary literature addresses strategy development in community-based organizational constructs.

In addition to our conceptualization of Strategic Commoning based on established academic theory in Chapter 2, this chapter questions whether and how contemporary academic literature provides footholds for addressing collaborative strategy development in heterogeneous, community-based forms of organizing. Section 3.2. reviews the methodology adopted to conduct a systematic literature research. Section 3.3. addresses the analysis that resulted in 27 journal articles from 18 journals spanning 15 years. Section 3.4. discusses the search results, showing that contemporary publications addressing community-based forms of organizing are published in many different research areas, addressing this still-emerging phenomenon from an abundance of disciplines and viewpoints. It shows that these publications seldom directly address (aspects of) collaborative strategy development in community-based multi-party settings. Based on the findings of the literature review, a conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning is presented in Section 3.5. Section 3.6. discusses the results from the literature review and Section 3.7. discusses the limitations of the literature review and reflects on the contribution of contemporary literature to the exploration of Strategic Commoning.

### **3.2. Methodology**

A systematic literature review was performed to establish an overview of recent articles that provide insights into (aspects of) Strategic Commoning. The assumption here is that Entrepreneurial Communities are emerging and developing forms of organizing. Following strategy as practice (SAP, see also Section 2.4.), the underlying organizational concepts are studied from different academic disciplines to encapsulate the richness of the phenomenon being explored. As a consequence, the literature research adopts an interdisciplinary approach. Considering the growing attention in academic literature for community-based organizing since the early years of this century (see also Section 3.1.) we are looking for contemporary (2005–2020) footholds in a selection of social science journals addressing strategic management of collaborative organizational constructs, and a selection of collective action literature.

### **3.2.1. Selecting key search words**

The search was guided by the two sensitizing concepts introduced in Chapter 1: (i) Strategic Commoning and (ii) Entrepreneurial Communities. An orientating Google Scholar search of both sensitizing concepts and the amalgamated notion of “community-based strategizing” did not show any results. Therefore, relevant sets of keywords were established using author-provided keywords from theory sourced for the initial conceptualization of Strategic Commoning presented in Chapter 2.

For the sensitizing concept Strategic Commoning the following eight search terms were selected: “collective strategy”, “distributive strategy”, “integrat\* strategy”, “cooperative strateg\*”, “strategy formation”, “strategic planning”, “strategic decision making”, and “strategizing”. Although strategy formation may be addressed by keywords such as “policy” or “mission”, the decision was made to leave these out of the search. The abundance of contexts in which these topics are used would broaden the search far too much. For the sensitizing concept Entrepreneurial Communities, eight key terms were selected: “collaboration”, “collaborative community\*”, “collaborative network\*”, “commons”, “community\*”, “cooperative network\*”, “collective action”, and “loosely coupled networks”.

Keywords relating to Strategic Commoning were combined, one by one, with keywords relating to Entrepreneurial Communities using the Boolean operator AND. In total this resulted in a set of 56 keywords used to carry out the second literature search.

### **3.2.2. Data sources**

Data were sourced from three databases. Two databases were used from the Web of Science (WoS) (<https://www.webofknowledge.com>): the WoS Social Sciences Citation Index and WoS Emerging Sources Citation Index. The WoS Social Sciences Citation Index encompasses all major indexed academic journals in the social sciences, including disciplines such as strategic management and organizational science. Since the search addresses a new phenomenon that may be addressed in emerging research fields and new journals, a second search was performed in the WoS Emerging Sources Citation Index. This database contains peer-reviewed publications in emerging scientific fields that have been published since 2015. The addition of WoS Emerging Sources Citation Index enabled an identical search in established and emerging journals which we deemed necessary for addressing the Strategic Commoning phenomenon. In addition, a similar search was performed in the Digital Library of the Commons (DLC) (<https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc>), an academic database dedicated to publications that address collective action. DLC provides access to peer-reviewed publications on this topic from various journals. Unfortunately, we could not identify a comparable

database for professional literature. From the perspective of internal validity, professional literature unfortunately had to be left out of this endeavor to further conceptualize Strategic Commoning based on a literature review using multiple academic sources.

### **3.2.3. Selection of articles**

The selection spans a period from January 2005 to January 2020 (see also Section 3.1.). The search was conducted in academic and peer-reviewed publications in the English language. Keywords relating to the sensitizing concept of Strategic Commoning (see also Chapter 2) were combined with keywords relating to the sensitizing concept of Entrepreneurial Communities (see also Chapter 4) using the Boolean operator AND. Findings were refined by deselecting irrelevant journal categories but including journals that address (aspects of) collaborative community development.

Using the WoS advanced search options, initial WoS results were narrowed down to journal articles from the following WoS journal categories: management, business, economics, environmental studies, public administration, social sciences interdisciplinary, urban studies, planning studies, multidisciplinary science, area studies, geography, agriculture interdisciplinary.

DLC's search options allow for selecting journal articles based on keywords, but DLC does not offer the possibility of deselecting journal categories. As a consequence, initial results from DLC were manually narrowed down to journals from similar categories.

After removing redundancies, results were further narrowed down by textual analysis of the abstracts of the 287 remaining WoS articles and 210 remaining DLC articles to determine whether they address, or relate to, the conceptualization of Strategic Commoning Entrepreneurial Communities. Reasons for exclusion were irrelevant research field; unrelated topic (e.g., urban cemetery planning); use of community topic in irrelevant context (e.g., community building in universities); and use of strategy formation in irrelevant context (e.g., deliberate strategies of multinational industrial innovation clusters). This research outcome refinement resulted in the exclusion of the majority of the articles. The remaining 26 WoS and 12 DLC articles were imported in Mendeley for full content analysis. The textual analysis revealed that 11 more articles were too far off-topic (e.g., clustering of libraries) or did not address strategy development in a collaborative setting at all. The structured literature review eventually resulted in 15 articles from WoS and 12 articles from DLC: a final selection of 27 articles from 18 different journals. Table 3.1. below recapitulates the results of the search.

**Table 3.1.**  
Results of literature review

Author(s)	Year	Title	Journal
Abel et al.	2016	Building resilient pathways to transformation when “no one is in charge”: Insights from Australia’s Murray-Darling basin	Ecology and Society
Adner	2016	Ecosystem as Structure: An Actionable Construct for Strategy	Journal of Management
Bates et al.	2013	The influence of multilevel governance systems on the development and implementation of climate adaptation practices within organizations in Australia	Ecology and Society
Binder et al.	2013	Frameworks for analyzing social-ecological systems	Ecology and Society
Calabretta et al.	2017	The Interplay between Intuition and Rationality in Strategic Decision Making: A Paradox Perspective	Organization studies
Čiegis & Gineitiene	2008	Participatory aspects of strategic sustainable development planning in local communities: Experience of Lithuania	Technological and Economic Development of Economy
Clarke & Fuller	2011	Collaborative Strategic Management: Strategy Formulation and Implementation by Multi-Organizational Cross-Sector Social Partnerships	Journal of Business Ethics
Delgado-Serrano & Ramos	2015	Making Ostrom’s framework applicable to characterise social ecological systems at the local level	International Journal of the Commons
Fortunato & Alter	2015	Community entrepreneurship development: an introduction	Community Development
Loibl & Walz	2010	Generic regional development strategies from local stakeholders’ scenarios – an alpine village experience	Ecology and Society
Marquardt & Pappalardo	2014	Overcoming challenges of evaluating integrated endogenous rural development and partnership interventions – A worthwhile exercise?	Landbauforschung
Moizer & Tracy	2010	Strategy Making in Social Enterprise: The Role of Resource Allocation and its Effects on Organizational Sustainability	Systems Research and Behavioral Science
Moyano et al.	2008	Environmental Policy, Public Opinion and Global Climate Change in Southern Europe: The Case of Andalusia	Open Environmental Sciences
Ogden & Innes	2009	Application of structured decision making to an assessment of climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation options for sustainable forest management	Ecology and Society
Olsson et al.	2007	Enhancing the fit through adaptive co-management: Creating and maintaining bridging functions for matching scales in the Kristianstads Vattenrike Biosphere Reserve, Sweden	Ecology and Society
Owen et al.	2007	Bridging the gap: An attempt to reconcile strategic planning and very local community-based planning in rural England	Local Government Studies
Perić et al.	2016	Leveraging small-scale sport events: Challenges of organising, delivering and managing sustainable outcomes in rural communities, the case of Gorski kotar, Croatia	Sustainability
Pittz & Intindola	2015	Exploring absorptive capacity in cross-sector social partnerships	Management Decision
Potluka et al.	2017	Non-profit leadership at local level: Reflections from Central and Eastern Europe	Local Economy
Ramírez & Selsky	2016	Strategic Planning in Turbulent Environments: A Social Ecology Approach to Scenarios	Long Range Planning
Randhir	2016	Globalization impacts on local commons: Multiscale strategies for socioeconomic and ecological resilience	International Journal of the Commons
Rautanen et al.	2017	Community-driven multiple use water services: Lessons learned by the rural village water resources management project in Nepal	Water Alternatives

Schauppenlehner-Kloyber & Penker	2016	Between participation and collective action – from occasional liaisons towards long-term co-management for urban resilience	Sustainability
Tavella & Papadopoulos	2017	Applying OR to problem situations within community organisations: A case in a Danish non-profit, member-driven food cooperative	European Journal of Operational Research
Tietjen & Jörgensen	2013	Translating a wicked problem: A strategic planning approach to rural shrinkage in Denmark	Landscape and Urban Planning
Wiek & Walter	2009	A transdisciplinary approach for formalized integrated planning and decision making in complex systems	European Journal of Operational Research
Williams & Tai	2016	A multi-tier social-ecological system analysis of protected areas co-management in Belize	Sustainability

All articles in the final selection address aspects of strategy development in place-bound multi-party collaborations, although the collaborations addressed are not necessarily community-based.

Considering the limited result – 27 peer-reviewed articles from 18 journals spanning 15 years – generic conclusions from this literature review must be considered cautiously.

A general observation is that contemporary peer-reviewed literature addressing (aspects of) community-based strategy formation in communities was predominantly published in the last decade and came from a variety of disciplines. Journals publishing on issues related to sustainability, collaborative organizing, and decentralized planning slightly dominate the results. Surprisingly, only three journals addressing strategic management are represented in the final selection. Due to the underrepresentation of strategic management journals in our final selection it might be argued that the results do not reflect contemporary perspectives on community-based strategy formation from a strategic management perspective. Thus, the resulting articles reflect our findings in Chapter 2 that strategy theory predominantly addresses established forms of organizing and that the notion of collaborative, community-based strategy development is not yet commonplace in strategic management theory.

### **3.2.4. Analytical framework**

As outlined in Chapter 2, Strategic Commoning is an emerging and incremental process shaped in practice and affected by external variables. Strategy development can be allocated by analyzing patterns in streams of strategic decision making (see, e.g., Mintzberg et al., 2009). From collective action theory (e.g., Ostrom, 2011b), we derive the methodological notion that these patterns are detectable by allocating rules in use (Mc Ginnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2009, 2011b): written and unwritten rules and regulations that facilitate decision making regarding collective actions. From this it follows that collaborative strategy development can be allocated by looking for patterns that indicate rules in use applied for strategic decision making. This motivated our choice to adopt a deductive analytical perspective based on the three levels of rules in use defined by Ostrom (see also Section

2.5.2.): operational choice, collective choice, and constitutional choice. This resulted in selecting the following article categories:

- 1) articles addressing (aspects of) collaborative strategy development in general
- 2) articles addressing (aspects of) operational choice
- 3) articles addressing (aspects of) collective choice
- 4) articles addressing (aspects of) constitutional choice
- 5) remainder articles.

The “remainder” category was used for articles that did not fit into any other categories. The articles in this category generally discuss the strategic advantages of use or adaptation of existing or new organizational frameworks or models in a distinct setting, but do not address strategy development.

Results thus come from qualitative analysis of a limited selection of peer-reviewed articles; however, this limited selection does address aspects of Strategic Commoning. Therefore, the final selection of articles provides some answers to our questions regarding Strategic Commoning in contemporary literature. By using the WoS Social Sciences Citation Index and the WoS Emerging Sources Citation Index, relevant established and emerging strategy and management journals and journals dedicated to organizational constructs were included in our search. To prevent missing out on relevant publications regarding community-based organizing, we included a search in DLC since this database is dedicated to publications addressing all conceivable aspects of collective action. We deliberately used keywords provided by theory that directly relate to strategy development since we aim to conceptualize community-based strategy development from a strategic lens. We are aware of various interesting professional publications addressing aspects of collective action that we associate with strategy formation. However, professional publications are not peer-reviewed and not indexed in databases comparable to the databases in this search, making it practically impossible to craft a comparable overview. Thus, notwithstanding the value we contribute to professional authors addressing community-based organizing, we had to exclude professional publications from this systematic literature review from the perspective of internal validity.

### **3.3. Results**

#### ***3.3.1. Output of literature review***

Analysis of 27 articles addressing strategy formation in collaborative settings resulted in general observations on how academic literature addresses strategy development in collaborative settings and in findings that contribute to the conceptualization of Strategic Commoning in a process model.

The final results of the literature review after a systematic content analysis are synthesized in Table 3.2. on the next page.

### **3.3.2. General observations**

Results demonstrate that contemporary academic literature adopts various definitions and viewpoints on multi-stakeholder collaborations and collaborative strategizing concepts. A second general observation is that collaborative strategy development is seldom the focal point of articles in the final selection. Instead, most articles discuss strategy development, strategic choice, or strategic planning as an integral part of existing or new models and frameworks for researching and analyzing multi-party collaborations or developing guidelines to manage such constructs (e.g., Binder et al., 2013; Loibl & Walz, 2010; Owen et al., 2007). From the 27 articles in our final selection, 17 are based upon case-based research. Thus, a third general observation is that in our final selection, multi-stakeholder collaborations are predominantly addressed in case studies. A final general observation is that contemporary literature offers no finite format, concept, model or theoretical framework for strategy development that applies to community-based organizational constructs. Čiegis and Gineitienės' (2008) notion that there is no general methodology for strategic planning for communities that address sustainable development supports this conclusion. Still, the systematic literature review contributes to our conceptualization of Strategic Commoning by proposing a process model for collaborative strategic management and variables influential to joint strategy development.

A major finding from our literature review is Clarke and Fuller's (2011) conceptual process model of collaborative strategic management for multi-organizational cross-sector social partnerships (CSSP). The process model of collaborative strategic management (Clarke & Fuller, 2011) helps us to conceptualize community-based strategy development as a process. In addition, other articles that resulted from the literature review contributed various factors of interest to this process. In addition, we note that three publications address the Social Ecological Systems (SES) framework which is an adaptation of Ostrom's (2011a, 2011b) Institutional Development and Analysis Framework, confirming that the IAD framework is adaptable and applicable for studying community-based collaborations, as suggested in Section 2.5. However, the articles in the "remainder" category do not relate to community-based strategy formation and thus do not further contribute to our conceptualization of Strategic Commoning.



**Table 3.2.**  
*Analysis of results literature review*

Author(s)	Year	Strategy development process	Operational choice	Collective choice	Rules in use	Constitutional choice	Remainder
Abel et al.	2016			Adaptation pathways			
Adner	2016		Ecosystem strategy				
Bates et al.	2013				Forums for multilevel governance		
Binder et al.	2013						Frameworks for analyzing social-ecological systems (SES)
Calabretta et al.	2017			Intuition and rationality in strategic decision making			
Čiegis & Gineitiene	2008		Community sustainable development planning process				
Clarke & Fuller	2011	Process model of collective strategy formation					
Delgado-Serrano & Ramos	2015						Adaptation of SES framework
Fortunato & Alter	2015		Community entrepreneurship strategies				
Loibl & Walz	2010			Generic strategies for regional development			
Marquardt & Pappalardo	2014		Evaluating integrated endogenous rural development and partnership interventions				
Moizer & Tracy	2010		Resource allocation				
Moyano et al.	2008			Interaction between public opinion and policies for mitigating global environmental change under sub-national (regional) scenarios			

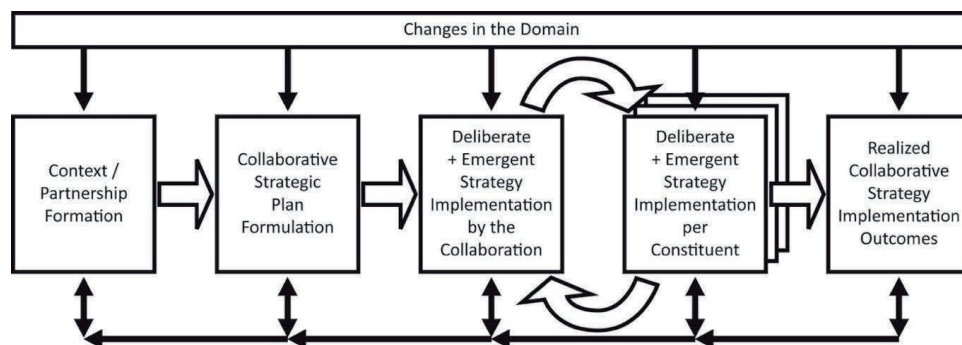
Ogden & Innes	2009	Model for anticipating knowledge within a community	Adaptive co-management
Olsson et al.	2007	Community-based planning	
Owen et al.	2007	Analyzing social impact on a local scale	
Perić et al.	2016		
Pittz & Intindola	2015	Strategic views on the absorptive capacity of cross-sector social partnerships	
Potuka et al.	2017		Place-based leadership
Ramírez & Selsky	2016	Causal Textures Theory related to strategic planning in turbulent environments	
Randhir	2016	Multiscale adaptation strategies to increase the resilience of local commons	
Rautanen et al.	2017		Community institutions
Schauppenlehner-Kloyber & Penker	2016		Collective management of urban commons
Tavella & Papadopoulos	2017	Community operational research	
Tietjen & Jörgensen	2013	Strategic planning, strategic reframing	
Wiek & Walter	2009	Cross-sectoral Integrated planning and decision making	
Williams & Tai	2016		Applying SES framework to analyze co-management of protected areas

### 3.3.3. Collaborative strategy development

Clarke and Fuller (2011) conceptualize collaborative strategy development as a joint effort to determine a vision and “long-term collaborative goals for addressing a given social problem, along with the adoption of both organizational and collective courses of action and the allocation of resources to carry out these courses of action” (Clarke & Fuller, 2011, p.86). Their process model of collaborative strategic management addresses the formulation and implementation of collaborative strategic plans on both the collaborative and the individual partner-organization levels. Clarke and Fuller (2011) depict collaborative strategy development as an adaptive and recursive process influenced by changes in the domain in which a collaboration operates. The model of Clarke and Fuller (2011) is depicted in Figure 3.1. and explicated below

**Figure. 3.1.**

*Process model of collaborative strategic management (adapted from Clarke & Fuller, 2011)*



The first stage in Clarke and Fuller’s (2011) process model is forming a collaboration. Clarke and Fuller (2011) emphasize that it is vital to understand the origins and motivations of the collaborating partners during this initial stage and to have some knowledge and concurrence on organizational aspects, including decision making, processes, and communication structures. The stage of strategic plan formulation involves decision making on vision, mission, and value statements and the definition of collaborative objectives. During the implementation stage, collective and individual actions coincide, whereby collective actions address mutual and broad strategic objectives, and individual constituents address operational and organizational-specific objectives. This is depicted in Figure 3.1 as two interconnected and revolving stages. Tietjen and Jorgensen (2013) confirm this by stating a need to differentiate between long-term strategic development visions and short-term strategic projects. In order to become strategic, short-term projects should contribute to envisioned directions while simultaneously allowing evaluation and adjustment of the overall vision.

The final stage in Clarke and Fullers' (2011) conceptual process model refers to the results of the strategizing process. Marquardt and Pappalardo (2014) emphasize the importance of carefully selected monitoring and evaluation procedures to establish results as both impact and added value. Clarke and Fuller (2011) suggest six different types of outcomes: 1) Plan-specific outcomes directly related to the collaborative strategic plan (for Entrepreneurial Communities, these outcomes relate to their transformational or sustainability-oriented goals); 2) Process-specific outcomes altering the formation, design, and implementation of the collaboration; 3) Partner-specific outcomes altering organizational behavior or structure of individual constituents; 4) Outside stakeholder-specific outcomes that involve changes in the inter-organizational relationships between constituents and stakeholders that do not participate in the collaboration; 5) Person-specific outcomes that affect individuals involved in the collaboration; and 6) Context-specific outcomes that go beyond the objectives of the collaboration. Feedback loops indicate the recursive and adaptive character of the collaborative strategy process. Results and outcomes may thus require adaptations in constituents, goals, and actions. Such adaptations may be sparked as a result of the collaboration itself. However, they are also influenced by external factors, depicted as changes in the domain that can affect different stages of the strategy development process at different times. This observation shows parallels to the cyclical character of the Strategic Action Situation influenced by external factors as depicted in Chapter 2 (Figure. 2.2.).

Cases addressed by Clarke and Fuller (2011) were deliberate partnerships initiated by public and private partners. However, as pointed out before, civilians bring the added dimension of personal involvement to multi-stakeholder collaborations. A process model of collaborative strategy in Entrepreneurial Communities should thus encompass this dimension.

It is important to observe that in Clarke and Fuller's (2011) process model (Figure.3.1.), strategy formation is depicted as a single stage, while this research project aims to deconstruct the process of strategy development itself. Still, the process model of collaborative strategic management (Clarke & Fuller, 2011) is a valuable addition to the conceptualization of Strategic Commoning since it helps to deconstruct strategic deliberations and to envision them as stages in a process.

### ***3.3.4. Factors of interest for collaborative strategy development***

The results of the literature review in general and more particularly the input of Clarke and Fuller's (2011) process model suggest three overarching factors of interest that must be considered to better understand the process of Strategic Commoning in Entrepreneurial Communities.

First, the results from the literature review confirm that different views, positions, and motives come into play when various constituents are involved in decision-making processes. This reflects Ostrom's (e.g., 2011b) notion of attributes of the community as an external variable influencing collective action. The results of our literature review suggest that heterogeneity may hinder fluent decision-making procedures related to strategic development. This can be reflected internally but also when interacting with the physical environment. Owen et al. (2007) denote possible frictions between top-down and bottom-up views on collaborative decision making. Timely recognition of existing pre-assumptions within both the community and the community's environment helps prevent significant misunderstandings. Thus, contextual knowledge about constituents, their knowledge, and their approach to decision making is essential in avoiding mutual misunderstandings that may hinder strategic decision-making processes. This parallels Ostrom's (2011b) notion of attributes of the community affecting a strategic action situation (see also Section 2.5.). Contextual knowledge about the environment in which a community operates is equally essential. From this it follows that biophysical conditions (McGinnis, 2011; Ostrom, 2010b, 2011b) affect collaborative strategy development. This first factor of interest found in contemporary literature thus parallels and as such reinforces findings from collective action theory regarding the role of external variables that affect a strategic action situation: attributes of the community and biophysical conditions.

The second factor of interest can be derived from the observable dichotomies in long-term visions and short-term collective actions and projects. As mentioned earlier, sustainable development is an enduring and continually recurring process. Addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development demands stable long-term visions and, subsequently, overarching long-term strategy development. At the same time, and observable in many cases, achieving strategic goals involves both long-term and short-term collective actions, while constituents are still shaping their collaboration almost on a day-to-day basis (see also Clarke & Fuller, 2011; Tietjen & Jorgensen, 2013). This poses the risk of blurring the balance and contribution of collective actions as a means to achieving long-term strategic goals. As a result, collective actions addressing collaborative strategic goals become regarded as strategic goals in themselves. Confusion on means and goals may hinder long-term strategy development. A community can accommodate awareness of the co-existence of long-term strategy and short-term objectives and how the two relate through rules in use (McGinnis, 2011, Ostrom, 1996, 2010a, 2011b) that specify the values of the functional components of an action situation.

Tietjen and Jorgensen (2013) emphasize the importance of governance in strategic planning for 1) facilitating collaborative processes involving different constituents, 2) integrating transdisciplinary knowledge, and 3) enabling alignment of strategy across multiple levels (Tietjen & Jorgensen, 2013,

p.30). Again, these aspects can be directed by rules in use (Ostrom, 2010a, 2011b) that shape strategic decision making, as discussed in Section 2.5.

Thus, the second factor of interest emerging from the literature reinforces attention for rules in use (Ostrom, 2010a, 2011b).

The third factor of interest appears between collaborative actions and interests and individual actions and interests. If not recognized and taken into account, there is a continuous interaction – if not to say struggle – between these two, leading to possible, if not chronic, misunderstandings between the involved constituents. Both collective and individual interests and motivations should thus be acknowledged during collaborative strategy formation processes. Calabretta et al. (2017) provide some direction for dealing with this factor of interest. Discussing decision-making tensions in innovation projects, they propose a framework for dealing with the duality between intuition and rationality in decision making. This third factor of interest thus relates to Ostrom's notion (e.g., 2010b) of variables that affect decisions of individual actors in an action situation mentioned in Section 2.5. and is related to the external variable attributes of the community.

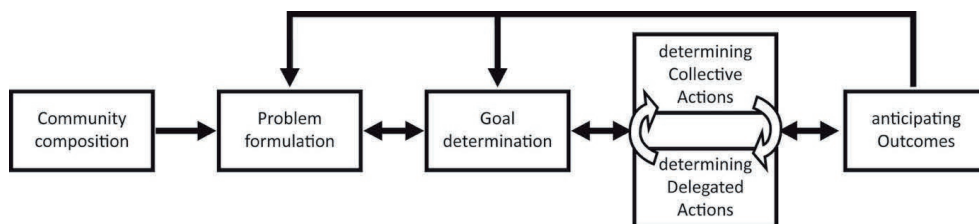
The results from our systematic literature review thus bring forward three factors of interest for Strategic Commoning: (a) governing a variety of views, positions, and motives, (b) balancing long-term visions and short-term collective actions, and (c) juggling with collaborative actions and interests and individual actions and interests. These factors demonstrate and underpin the idea proposed in collective action theory that external variables affect a strategic action situation, as discussed in Section 2.5. The complexity and dichotomous nature of these variables seem to indicate that Strategic Commoning's governance is demanding. According to Tietjen and Jorgensen (2013) a certain degree of managerial skill is required for governing community-based strategy development.

### **3.4. Strategic Commoning: a conceptual process model**

The results from the literature review contribute to understanding the existing theory on emergent strategy formation processes in multi-stakeholder collaborations. Gray & Purdy (2018) put forward that collaborative partnerships addressing sustainability are confronted with, among other things, inadequate and incongruent conceptual models. We suggest capturing the strategic action situation in a process model that serves to capture and analyze strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities. Based on the conceptualization of the strategic action situation presented in Chapter 2 and the additional contemporary literature addressed in this chapter, we propose an initial process model for community-based strategy development below in Figure 3.2. as a first step in conceptualizing a complete process model of Strategic Commoning.

Figure 3.2.

Initial conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning



The initial process model above is rooted in Clarke and Fullers' 2011 process model of collaborative strategic management. Their process model follows the premise from strategy theory (see also Chapter 2) that strategic-oriented choices in emerging forms of organizing are recognizable as observable decision-making patterns.

Our proposed conceptual process model depicts six interconnected stages: (i) community composition; (ii) problem formulation; (iii) determining goals; the superimposed stages of (iv) determining collective and (v) delegated actions; and (vi) anticipating outcomes. In addition, feedback loops represent the recursive and adaptive character of strategy development, indicating that the outcomes of stages may influence previous stages. We will briefly elaborate on each of the stages below.

The first stage in the process model is *Community composition*. This stage relates to the community or a group within the community engaged in the strategic decision making at hand. The composition of community members is influenced by the knowledge, skills, and views that individual constituents bring. The premise here is that in emerging organizational constructs, the community cannot be regarded as a given; constituents are crafting their community "on the go" and need to get acquainted with other constituents' knowledge, skills, and views. The constellation of constituents affects how problems are formulated and addressed. Characteristics of the group of constituents involved in strategic decision making are bound to differ and change as a community evolves. This corresponds with the first factor of interest noted in Section 3.3.4. and relates to the notion of attributes of the community (McGinnis 2011; Ostrom, 2010b, 2011b) that affect strategic action situations.

In the second stage: *Problem formulation*, the collaborating constituents define one or more issues they want to address via collective actions. For a coherent strategizing process, contextual knowledge about the problem domain and the participating constituents should be considered at this stage. Again, this corresponds with attributes of the community but also with the notion of the

biophysical world as an external variable (McGinnis 2011; Ostrom, 2011b), as discussed in Sections 2.5. and 3.3.4.

The third stage in the conceptual process model is the *Goal definition* stage, representing the decision-making processes that determine the strategic action situation's objective or objectives. Here the assumption is that in emerging communities, discussing long-term visions and determining strategic goals coincide. Awareness of the nature of the decision at hand and variables that influence the communities' decision-making processes is crucial for understanding strategic choices at this stage. The goal definition stage eventually results in planning collective actions to address the determined goals. These actions are depicted as the superimposed fourth and fifth stages *determining collective actions* and *determining delegated actions*. Such actions could be projects, the production of means and goods, or facilitating transformational processes. Actions may involve the community as a whole or may be delegated to a selection of constituents (e.g., project groups). At least some of the actions likely involve third parties. Differences in the scope and scale of actions and the intended outcomes should be apparent to all community members.

The sixth and final stage of the conceptual process model anticipates the outcome stage and incorporates evaluative mechanisms in strategy development. Assuming that collective actions are initiated to address long-term goals associated with sustainable development, it stands to reason that a community should assess whether their collective actions do indeed result in outcomes that contribute to sustainable development.

Marquardt & Pappalardo (2014) note the importance of purposeful and profound monitoring and evaluation criteria to formulate effective feedback. Clarke and Fuller's (2011) suggestion of six different result types is a valuable addition to this stage. It facilitates determining the scope of, and possibly anticipating, various outcomes in advance. Following both Clarke and Fuller's (2011) and Ostrom's (e.g., 2009, 2010a) arguments, we argue that in any strategic action situation, anticipating the outcomes of decision-making processes may lead to adaptations in goals and possibly even in the problem formulation. Feedback loops indicate this in the (initial) process model.

#### *Frictions in the conceptual model*

Clarke and Fullers' (2011) notion of changes in the domain of collaborative strategic management and the three factors of interest discussed in Section 3.3.4. complement Ostrom's (e.g., 2011a, 2011b) notion of external variables that affect an action situation (see also Chapter 2) and confirm that multiple external variables affect Strategic Commoning. The first factor of interest addresses possible frictions between community members and relates to assessing collaborative objectives. These frictions demand contextual knowledge about constituents and contextual knowledge about the environment in which a community operates. This corresponds with the notion of two

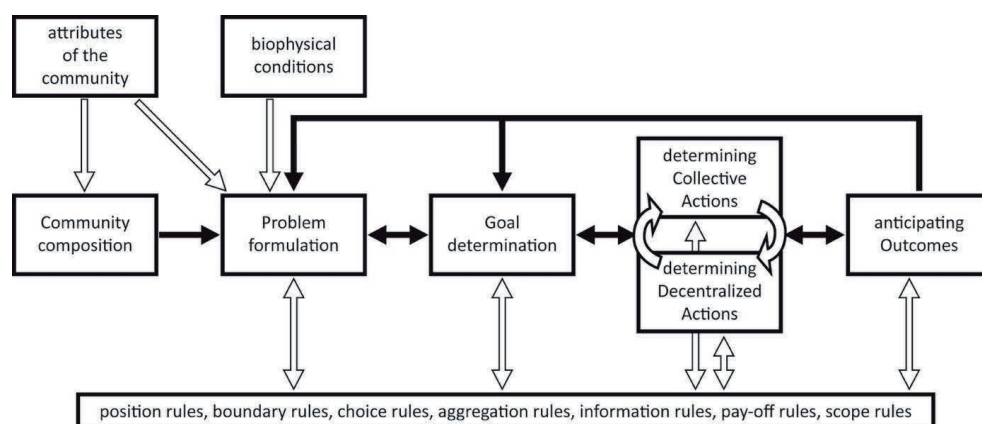


consecutive external variables in the IAD that affect a strategic action situation: attributes of the community and biophysical conditions. The second factor of interest relates to possible frictions between long-term visions and short-term collective actions. Finally, the third factor of interest relates to possible frictions between collaborative actions and interests and individual actions and interests. These dichotomies relate to two levels of rules in use (Ostrom, 2011a, 2011b) that affect an action situation: collective choice and constitutional choice (see Section 2.5.). Factors of interest found in contemporary literature are related to Ostrom's (2009, 2010b) external variables that affect a strategic action situation to complement the initial process model presented above.

These observations result in the conceptual model of Strategic Commoning depicted in Figure 3.3. below. The model demonstrates that strategy development and community development are entangled. Integrating the factors of interest found by structured literature in the conceptual model, we here propose that attributes of the community affect the stage of community formation since the constellation of constituents determines the constitution of the community. Next, the model envisions that biophysical conditions affect both community formation and problem formulation. In addition, we integrate the notion that rules in use appear to structure the iterative processes of strategy development that follow from formulating a problem and addressing this problem by collective action(s). Since we do not know what rules in use are applied in Strategic Commoning in practice, we propose them as an overarching variable that may affect and may be affected by any stage in a strategic action situation.

**Figure 3.3.**

*Conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning*



Adding external variables that affect community formulation and problem formulation, and adding rules in use that influence, and may be affected by, stages in the strategic action situation helps capture Strategic Commoning in a conceptual process model. The model integrates established theory and contemporary literature on strategy development in community-based organizational constructs. The presented conceptual process model provides footholds for recognizing, deconstructing, and analyzing processes of Strategic Commoning in Entrepreneurial Communities. However, although Ostrom (e.g., 2009, 2010a, 2011b) provides an exploratory overview of institutional rule types (see Figure 2.3.) that come into play in organizing collective action (see also Section 2.5.), we do not know what distinct rules in use are related to Strategic Commoning. Nor do we know what attributes of the community and what biophysical conditions determine Strategic Commoning. The nature and scope of external variables influencing Strategic Commoning will be further investigated in case-based research.

### **3.5. Conclusions and discussion**

Community-based organizational constructs, here called Entrepreneurial Communities, are considered parties of significant interest and impact in addressing issues related to sustainable development. They bring personal involvement and a place-based perspective to the challenge of addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development. To determine, plan, and direct their collective actions, Entrepreneurial Communities' constituents engage in Strategic Commoning. Contemporary academic literature that conceptualizes aspects of Strategic Commoning is scarce, dispersed, and seldom addresses Strategic Commoning as a focal point of collaborative endeavors to address sustainability. Collaborations are studied from various disciplines and viewpoints, and there is no straightforward conceptual model or coherent method for exploring, let alone establishing, strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities. Considering the increasing attention that community-based initiatives receive from policymakers, in professional literature, and the media and social media, it may well be a matter of time before academic literature is enriched with further contributions exploring the strategizing properties of heterogeneous community-based organizational constructs.

Our findings from systematic literature research spanning from 2005 to 2020 confirm that community-based strategy development is of a processual and cyclical nature and is influenced by multiple external variables. Clarke and Fullers' (2011) process model of collaborative strategic management contributes significantly to our understanding of community-based strategy development. Their process model appoints collaborative strategy development as a distinct,

recursive, and adaptive process that involves amalgamating collective and individual actions while simultaneously addressing strategic, operational, and organizational objectives. This chapter contributes to theory building on strategy development in community-based organizational constructs by aggregating findings from theory and contemporary literature into an enriched process model of Strategic Commoning. Our proposed conceptual process model accommodates the recognition of stages in the strategy formation process and helps recognize and analyze variables that shape and affect these stages. We will be using this conceptual model in the next step of our research when conducting a series of case-based analyses.

### **3.6. Limitations and reflection**

The results of the literature review must be regarded with caution. An apparent first general limitation is the outcome of the literature review. From the limited results of our systematic literature review, we deduce that the notion of collaborative strategy development in developing heterogeneous community-based collaborative actions is underexposed, if not absent, in the current debate on crafting multiple-value-creating collaborations. While in terms of concordant databases, sensitizing concepts, and keywords, great care was taken to conduct a valid search, yet the results remain scarce, which suggests that the notion of collaborative strategy development as an important factor in developing community-based collective actions is not widespread in academic literature. To some extent, this is disappointing since academic literature is thus of little help in our endeavor to conceptualize and understand the nature of community-based strategizing for sustainability. The limited findings from the literature confirm that case-based research is imperative to better understand how collaborating constituents from various backgrounds craft strategies that guide multiple-value-creating collective actions.

A second general limitation is that the final selection of the articles predominantly relates to collaborative constructs in so-called Western societies. It goes without saying that communities have been and are engaging in collective actions all over the world. So why is this not reflected in the literature research? It has to be noted here that there is a whole strand of authors from Latin America publishing about different organizational aspects of social movements that show parallels to Entrepreneurial Communities. Latin America has a long and rich tradition of marginalized groups empowering themselves to take matters into their own hands and learn by doing (see, e.g., Almeida & Cordero Ulate, 2015; Escobar, 2018; Freire, 1970; Huizer, 1969). The initial results of the literature review suggest that a fair amount of contemporary journal contributions on the evolution of social movements in Latin America are published in Spanish and Portuguese with only abstracts in English. They were excluded from the search in advance due to the researchers' inability to grasp their

content to the fullest. Also, we are aware that there is a growing strand of literature addressing community-based developments in African and Asian countries (see, e.g., Fowler & Biekart, 2017; Yunus et al, 2010). Presumably, this literature does not address strategizing aspects as no articles addressing developments in these parts of the world relevant for our research came forward in the results of this literature review. The results of the literature research thus lack insights based on community-based organizing in non-Western countries. The lack of publications addressing strategy development in non-Western communities is a severe yet unavoidable limitation given the choice that was made earlier to conduct the search in only English-based publications. Still, this hinders our understanding of cultural aspects that undoubtedly shape community structures and decision-making processes. Communities in non-Western parts of the world have dealt with accessing and governing commons for a lot longer than emerging Entrepreneurial Communities in Western countries. Experiences from communities in non-Western countries undoubtedly bring different perspectives and experiences of collaborative strategy development that enrich the debate. We therefore recommend that non-Western experiences with Strategic Commoning be addressed in future internationally linked research projects.

Case-based research is our next step in exploring how community-based strategy development evolves. Such research needs to accommodate observations of strategizing processes. The proposed conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning offers ample direction for exploring strategy development processes in Entrepreneurial Communities. Detecting and analyzing stages in the strategy formation process and identifying distinct external variables that affect these stages ultimately sheds light on structures and conditions that shape and structure community-based strategies to address wicked problems related to sustainability. This will be addressed in case-based research that incorporates the expected variety in community-based organizational constructs. In order to address this expected organizational breadth, a strategic-oriented classification of Entrepreneurial Communities is proposed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER

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# 4



## **CHAPTER 4. CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNITY-BASED COLLABORATION: INTRODUCING GENERAL PROPERTIES AND A STRATEGIC-ORIENTED TYPOLOGY OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES**

### **Abstract**

Chapter 4 presents the concept of Entrepreneurial Communities as distinctive institutes for collective action (Ostrom, 1996, 2010a, 2010b, 2011b). Entrepreneurial Communities are configurations of community-based organizing that operate in a place-bound, local and supra-local setting. They are constituted of civilians, organizations, and institutions engaging in collective actions to address wicked problems related to sustainable development. This chapter conceptualizes Entrepreneurial Communities by proposing five general properties that distinguish Entrepreneurial Communities from other collaborative organizational constructs. In addition, for the exploration of their strategizing efforts, a conceptual, two-dimensional typology is proposed. Adopting a strategic perspective, the typology is grounded in two strategic-oriented core elements: the structural element Approach and the contextual element Orientation. When juxtapositioning these core elements, the result is a two-dimensional conceptual typology of four archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities. The presented typology enables the classification of Entrepreneurial Communities based on their strategizing properties.

### **4.1. Introduction**

Incidental and structural collaborations between people to ensure both individual and mutual goals have always existed. Striving for sustainable development, which is regarded here as a complex, wicked problem, new community-based forms of organizing emerge. We have named them Entrepreneurial Communities. They unite various constituents from different societal realms, developing mainly new and collaborative perspectives on organizing a diversity of value-creating actions in their immediate environment in response to addressing the challenge of sustainable development.

Community-based collaborations are acknowledged as breeding grounds for place-based approaches to issues related to sustainable development (see, e.g., UNFCCC, 2015; European Commission, 2014; 2017). This is reflected by governmental bodies involving heterogeneous networks (Bodin, 2017; Bovaird, 2007) in policy development for multiple purposes while emphasizing the importance of civilians collaborating to address issues in the public domain from the perspective of “active

citizenship” (Van Dam et al., 2014). However, collaborations that involve civilians do not solely address issues in the public domain. Various manifestations of collaborative and community-based organizing emerge and develop in divergent contexts (Igalla et al. 2019; Kamm et al., 2016; Van Dam et al., 2014). To realize their objectives, constituents in community-based organizational constructs engage in collaborative processes and routines (Jarzabkowski, 2004) of decision making, goal setting, and planning actions. Such actions are mainly attributed to established organizations (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Hart, 1992; Mintzberg et al., 2009). Decision making in heterogeneous forms of organizing depends on the mutual matching of initiatives and issues by various constituents (Bodin, 2017; Gray & Purdy, 2018; Ocasio & Joseph, 2005). Assuming the focus on sustainable development requires a long-term and multi-goal perspective on wicked problems, decision making efforts addressing sustainability are bound to be driven by collaborative strategic choices that direct collective actions, which we frame here, and inspired by Elinor Ostrom, as Strategic Commoning.

This chapter discusses various theoretical perspectives on place-bound, community-based organizing labeled here as Entrepreneurial Communities. This research perceives Entrepreneurial Communities to be strategizing entities that engage in Strategic Commoning. Strategic Commoning is seen as a recursive and adaptive process shaped by rules in use by the collaborating parties in that process (see also Chapters 2 and 3). Strategic Commoning is, therefore, a process of “learning by doing”. Although constituents join Entrepreneurial Communities to engage in collective actions, this does not imply that there is common ground on which actions should be addressed and in what manner. As outlined in Section 2.2., actors from various backgrounds will likely think differently about similar issues, goals, approaches, tactics, and actions. Thus, for understanding how collaborative strategies are crafted, we must observe various community-based forms of organizing, the various goals they address, and how they do so (Bollier & Helfrich, 2015; Kamm et al., 2016). This chapter proposes and discusses five general properties for Entrepreneurial Communities: i) place-based; ii) sustainable development-oriented; iii) heterogeneous; iv) multiple-value focused; v) organizational pioneering. Next to appointing general properties, we propose a conceptual model based on two strategic-oriented dimensions leading to a typology of four strategic archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities. Such a typology will enable diversification of Entrepreneurial Communities based on distinct strategizing properties associated with collaborative approaches of sustainable development. This, in turn, will accommodate us to select a diverse sample of Entrepreneurial Communities for our intended comparative case study. To capture Entrepreneurial Communities’ expected strategic breadth (Barnett et al., 1990), we need to diversify various strategic approaches at hand in Entrepreneurial Communities. Together with their organizational development, their strategy

development is shaped in and through practice (see also Chapter 2). To enable the diversification that is characteristic of practice, we propose a conceptual typology.

Theoretical typologies (Fiss, 2011) are common constructs providing a specific form of theory building. Developing a typology is a first step in exploring our research topic, since, in this research, we are building theories for sensitizing concepts that, from an academic perspective, are underdeveloped. Here the typology is developed to determine the strategizing properties of organizations. Examples of strategic-oriented typologies are the strategy schools (Mintzberg et al., 2009) and the strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) discussed in Chapter 2 that classify strategic directions.

Typologies have served to theorize distinct types of collective action such as natural, cultural, and intellectual Commons (Ostrom, 2009, 2010a) or New Commons (Hess, 2008; Bauwens & Kostakis, 2015 Bauwens et al., 2017; Bollier, 2014) and other multi-party organizational configurations (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Schotanus & Telgen, 2007; Wenger, 1998).

The typology proposed here is grounded in the second of the five universal properties mentioned above: the sustainable development-oriented character of Entrepreneurial Communities. From the researcher's perspective, this is considered to be strongly related to the strategic orientation and strategic approach of Entrepreneurial Communities. Sustainability is a broad concept; issues related to sustainable development are associated with wicked problems (Gray & Purdy, 2018 Roberts, 2000; Weber & Khademian, 2008). Such issues require collective action strategies by multiple societal groups (Dentoni et al., 2012), developing diverse long-term and strategic perspectives. Here we propose to develop such a conceptual typology based on a distinction of four strategic-oriented ideal types of Entrepreneurial Communities: (i) single issue endeavor, (ii) multiple issue endeavor, (iii) advocating coaction, and (iv) colligating coaction.

The five general properties proposed in this chapter allow for recognizing Entrepreneurial Communities in all their abundance. In addition, the presented two-dimensional strategic-oriented typology enables us to classify Entrepreneurial Communities based on their strategic orientation and strategic approach. The here conceptualized two-dimensional typology contributes to the development of a strategic perspective. It determines four ideal types that enable the classification of Entrepreneurial Communities based on their strategic orientation.

This chapter is structured as follows: Section 4.2. gives a concise overview of theories on multi-party collaborations, community-based organizing, and collective action, appointing five general properties of Entrepreneurial Communities. Section 4.3. discusses theoretical foundations for developing a



multidimensional and polythetic typology. Section 4.4. addresses the methodological foundations underlying the proposed typology. Section 4.5. presents the conceptual typology for Entrepreneurial Communities based on two core dimensions, introducing four archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities: (a) single issue endeavor, (b) multiple issue endeavor, (c) advocating coaction, and (d) colligating coaction. In addition, Section 4.6. discusses the limitations of the proposed conceptual typology. Section 4.7. summarizes the results of our endeavor to characterize and diversify Entrepreneurial Communities and discusses the applicability and added value of the typology for case-based research.

#### **4.2. Entrepreneurial Communities: collaborating for a sustainable future**

In collaborative constructs, the quality of the collaboration between the constituents is critical. Wood and Gray (1991) consider a collaboration to “occur when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engages in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (Wood & Gray, 1991, p.146). Collaborations are considered complex, dynamic, sometimes controversial, multilevel systems (Bryson et al., 2006, 2015; Morris & Miller-Stevens, 2016).

The focus here on heterogeneous collaborations addressing wicked problems follows from the premise that effective collaboration between multiple actors from different societal realms is crucial when addressing issues related to sustainable development (see also Batie, 2008; Bryson et al., 2015; Dentoni et al., 2012; Kania & Kramer, 2013). Addressing issues related to sustainable development is here characterized as a collaborative effort that 1) involves multiple actors from different realms of society (see also Bryson et al., 2015; Gray & Purdy, 2018; Kania & Kramer, 2013; Sol et al., 2013) and 2) requires these actors to engage in mutual processes that enable them to collaboratively coordinate and align activities addressing sustainable goals for their mutual benefit (see also Chapter 2). Gray’s (1985) conceptualization of these multi-stakeholder partnerships contributes four foci to analyze such heterogeneous collaborations. First, Gray (1985) focuses on the domain-level or issue-level (Gray & Purdy, 2018) development. She analyzes relationships between actors within inter-organizational collaborations that evolve around distinct issues in demand of collaborations between actors from various societal domains. The domain-level shows parallels to Ostrom’s (2010b, 2011a) biophysical conditions affecting collective actions (see also Chapters 2 and 3). Second, Gray addresses “under-organized domains” (Gray, 1985). According to Gray, conditions that underlie collaborations must be studied to understand the workings of those collaborations. These conditions also parallel Ostrom’s (2010b, 2011b) notion of attributes of the community affecting collective

actions (see also Chapters 2 and 3). Third, Gray studies collaborations that address wicked problems (Gray & Purdy, 2018; Morris & Miller-Stevens, 2016) that cannot be handled by single organizational entities or individuals and consequently require the involvement of multiple actors. Finally, Gray adopts a process-oriented approach. She assumes that the collaborating parties' relationships affect and shape the domain they address while working on it (Gray, 1985; Morris & Miller-Stevens, 2016). This corresponds with the notion of strategy as practice (see also Section 2.4.), indicating that in Entrepreneurial Communities, strategy development and organizational development are iterative and intertwined processes. From a long-term perspective on sustainable change, constituents engage in collaborations that contribute to processes of change. We put forward (see also Chapter 2) that to create change, processes of a strategic nature are required that are developed over time by the collaborating constituents in Entrepreneurial Communities.

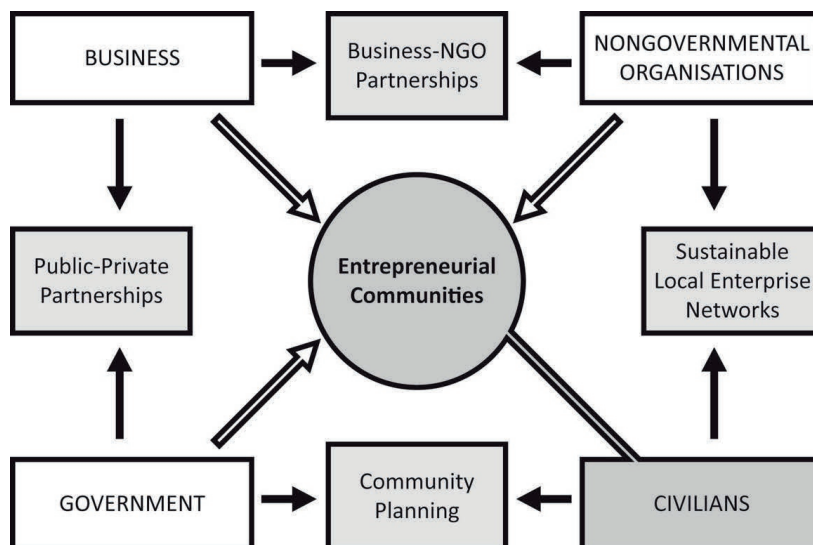
Simultaneously a large societal movement has a driving effect on the emergence of and collaboration in Entrepreneurial Communities. From the first decade of this century on, there is a trend in Western European countries associated with the shift from governing to governance (Van Dam, 2016), also referred to as Social Innovation (Moulaert et al., 2014). This trend implies states retreating from providing services and support in the public domain and shifting responsibilities for providing public goods and services to the communities involved (Igalla et al., 2019). Consequently, there is an increase in civilians that engage in collaborative actions to address various complex issues they encounter in society. Moulaert et al. (2014) note that social problems addressed by civilians become increasingly more complex. Igalla et al. (2019) note the emergence of self-organizations formed by civilians mobilizing resources and defining and initiating community projects. Mintzberg (2015a, 2015b) emphasizes the importance of plural sector organizations addressing local issues. Civilians, often perceived as non-professional constituents, bring a new dimension to traditional, value-creating forms of organizing. Civilians can alter established societal conventions (Van Dam, 2016) by introducing personal involvement into multi-stakeholder collaborations. Civilians embody place-based ways of organizing (Healey, 2015; Mintzberg, 2015a), appreciating and promoting the provision of goods and services from their supra-local environment (Healey, 2015) as a means to address sustainability. They feel connected to their environment and are willing to invest in it (Van Dam, 2016). This place-boundedness appears to be beneficial for accumulating and governing resources and skills into collective actions. Collaboration is enhanced by digital platforms (Barnes, 2006; Bauwens & Niaros, 2017; Mintzberg, 2015b) that offer accessible means of communication between the collaborating parties and enable interaction with like-minded initiatives and stakeholders.

The Entrepreneurial Communities addressed in this research are comparable to the initiatives mentioned above in that they unite various constituents to address complex problems for the community. However, there is a difference: the communities in this research do not solely address issues in the public domain. Instead, they address various wicked problems that they relate to sustainable development in their local and supra-local environment. Consequently, their objectives do not lie in solving current needs in the public domain but are intra- and inter-generational, indicating that they aim to develop collective actions that affect all members of current but also future society (see also: Holden & Linnerud, 2007; Mehmood & Parra, 2014) by initiating or accelerating systemic change. This change is, in general, addressed by striving for accessibility and a fair distribution of sustainable services and goods. While doing so, they consciously connect their present collective actions to future generations. They invest various means and resources such as time, energy, skills, and money, contributing a variety of collaborative solutions for the wicked problems they address. Views on organizational and operational issues such as planning, governing, and executing collective actions may differ. Still, constituents choose to join community-based collaborations because they recognize the added value of addressing complex issues as a collective. In doing so, they benefit from multiple, collective, and shared value creation (Jonker & Faber, 2021). These initiatives often address issues that demand collaboration with institutionalized organizations such as governments, businesses, and NGOs (Igalla et al., 2019; Mintzberg et al., 2018).

According to Gray & Purdy (2018), multi-stakeholder partnerships occur when three or more generic actor types collaborate. Gray & Purdy (2018) identify four generic types of actors that may be involved in such multi-party collaborations: businesses, governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) formed by civilians. Between these actors, distinct bilateral collaborations exist in practice. From this perspective, we frame Entrepreneurial Communities as community-based collaborative constructs where civilians collaborate with at least two other generic types of actors, as mentioned by Gray & Purdy (2018). This is envisioned below in Figure 4.1. In addition, to characterize the issues addressed by Entrepreneurial Communities, this research adopts Ostrom's (1998, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) perspective on Institutes of Collective Action (ICA) that establish access to and management of Commons (Conaty & Bollier, 2014; Ostrom, 1998, 2011a). Commons are natural, cultural, and knowledge resources accessible to and managed by all members of a society (Conaty & Bollier, 2014; De Moor, 2012; Ostrom, 2010b, 2011a).

Figure 4.1.

*Positioning Entrepreneurial Communities (adapted from Gray & Purdy, 2018)*



Entrepreneurial Communities address issues that resemble concepts in both academic and professional literature of evolving New Commons (Hess, 2008) or Contemporary Commons (Bauwens et al., 2017; De Moor, 2012). New Commons refers to multi-stakeholder collaborations that evolve around gradually integrating views on establishing sustainable economic, ecological, and social values (Elkington, 1997). To realize these values, collaborating constituents engage in collective actions. This behavior requires contemplating community goals and anticipating actions to realize those goals. Such collective behavior is interpreted here as a process of strategy development (Simon, 1964; Mintzberg et al., 1998) and is called Strategic Commoning (see also Chapters 2 and 3).

It is evident that this research investigates Strategic Commoning in Entrepreneurial Communities: place-based, heterogeneous, and community-based collaborations formed by civilians collaborating with actors from other realms of society to create multiple values to contribute to sustainable development. Building on previous work (Kamm et al., 2016), we summarize the above, leading to identifying five universal properties that identify Entrepreneurial Communities. These are: (i) place-based; (ii) sustainable development-oriented; (iii) heterogeneous; (iv) multiple-value focused; (v) organizational pioneering. These properties are presented below in Table 4.1:

**Table 4.1.**  
*Universal properties of Entrepreneurial Communities*

Universal Property	Description
<b>Place-based</b>	Constituents engage in context-bound actions that affect their immediate environment.
<b>Sustainable Development oriented</b>	Sustainable Development is a complex and broad theme that requires solutions that contribute to a long-term transition. Entrepreneurial Communities develop various approaches to address these issues, from concrete, physical projects to advocating activities that bear a political dimension. These approaches inevitably become strategic.
<b>Heterogeneous</b>	Entrepreneurial Communities are organizational configurations where various societal realms meet; civilians collaborate with businesses, governmental bodies, or non-governmental organizations, resulting in an internal diversity of constituents.
<b>Multiple value focus</b>	In Entrepreneurial Communities, multiple constituents invest various sources such as time, money, knowledge, and networks centered around a common perception about the importance of collaboration to address sustainable development. This results in collective actions for multiple, collective, and shared value creation.
<b>Organizational pioneering</b>	Entrepreneurial Communities adhere to novel community-based organizational constructs whereby constituents are “learning by doing”.

The five properties proposed here serve to identify Entrepreneurial Communities as distinct organizational configurations. Yet the properties are too unspecific to categorize individual communities, let alone their diversity in organizational forms, issues addressed, and approaches to addressing those issues. The premise here is that Entrepreneurial Communities evolve to address wicked problems from a collaborative and place-based perspective, adopting organizational constellations that seem fit for their purpose. As a result, Entrepreneurial Communities operate under different organizational forms (e.g., cooperative, association, NGO), addressing various issues. Since we aim to understand the nature of the strategic endeavors that come with community-based organizing, case-based research must address the strategic breadth within this myriad of collaborative organizational constructs. Thus, to address the expected variance in Strategic Commoning, a theoretically grounded typology is hereafter developed and proposed that enables a strategic-oriented classification of Entrepreneurial Communities.

Developing a conceptual typology is an established research approach that provides theoretically meaningful categories that differentiate complex examples of phenomena (Doty and Huber, 1993; Doty and Glick, 1994; Fiss, 2007, 2011). Differentiating strategic-oriented types of Entrepreneurial Communities is highly relevant for case study research. First, a typology provides a means for selecting cases based on various strategic-oriented features. Second, a strategic-oriented typology enables the comparison of differences in the evolution of community-based strategies in a variety

of Entrepreneurial Communities. Third, and certainly not last, it is beneficial for understanding the nature of community-based strategy development.

### **4.3. Identifying variety in Entrepreneurial Communities**

#### ***4.3.1. Diversifying community-based organizing***

This section addressed the development of a theoretically grounded or conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities. The fundamental question addressed here is: what (ideal) types of Entrepreneurial Communities are distinguishable from a strategic orientation? This question is relevant since no existing classifications address collaborative organizational constructs from a strategic perspective. We feel the need to grasp the strategic variety in emerging collaborative constructs to understand the nature and scope of their strategizing endeavors.

To answer this question, a conceptual typology is presented that builds on the previously introduced universal properties with strategic variety. As a result, we propose a typological theory in the form of a conceptual typology that enables the classification and understanding of the variety in the population of Entrepreneurial Communities, based on their strategic properties.

#### ***4.3.2. Theoretical perspectives on typologies***

Typologies serve to analyze complex social constructs (Kluge, 2000) and result from processes of clustering based on common attributes that apply to all members of a group, the latter not referring to social groups but to groups of attributes. Every single type within a typology represents a distinct combination of these attributes. A well-developed typology should combine a minimum number of types with a maximum homogeneity within each type (Bailey, 1973). Fiss (2007, 2011) and Doty and Glick (1994) emphasize the importance of typologies for developing a theory. Since the aim of this research is to develop a grounded theory of the process of strategizing in Entrepreneurial Communities, using a conceptual typology seems the proper method.

Since we aim to diversify collaborative constructs crafted by people, we adopt a sociological perspective for our typology. From this sociological perspective, two major approaches to typologies exist (Bailey, 1973). First, the empirical or extracting typology (McKinney, 1969) applies quantitative methods to derive a typology from data without prior conceptualization. These are meant to maximize correlation and minimize variation (Bailey, 1973). An empirically based typology is also

known as a taxonomy (Doty and Glick, 1994; Fiss, 2011). Doty and Glick characterize taxonomies as classification systems that result in specific, mutually exclusive categorized sets of phenomena. A well-known example is the Linnaean (1773) taxonomy of plants, animals, and minerals. Second, the heuristic typology finds its base in theoretical, conceptual constructs (Bailey, 1973). Heuristic typologies take shape by analyzing meaningful relationships that occur within and in-between types that are theoretically informed. Two heuristic approaches can be distinguished. According to Bailey (1973), the ideal or pure (Weber, 1948) type is the most profound heuristic type. In this approach, dimensions are formed by eliminating all features considered to be unnecessary to a phenomenon. The remaining features are then conceptualized in their purest form to create a framework of theoretical dimensions (Bailey, 1973), which leads to an ideal type derived from real-life situations. A second heuristic approach is the constructed type (McKinney, 1969) based on pre-conceptualized characteristics. Constructed types developed on purpose within the frame of a research project result in predetermined ideal types. They are applied by a wide variety of academic disciplines to study social constructs.

Doty and Glick (1994) emphasize that ideal types are theoretically conceived abstractions of reality that may result in variables specified by the researcher. Although this is helpful to researchers aiming for a typology that concurs with their research objectives, it also implies that ideal types will rarely correspond completely with empirical data. This observation corresponds with McKinney's (1969) notion that typologies, by their very nature, can never fit perfectly to empirical data but should be developed for a maximum fit with the intended data. Doty and Glick (1994) point out three substantial implications of introducing ideal types. First, ideal types represent conceptualized forms that may not exist in real life. Second, the complexity of ideal types requires a multidimensional description. Third, ideal types represent a unique combination of dimensions rather than mere categories of cases.

Heuristic typologies can be monothetic or polythetic (Bailey, 1973; Fiss, 2011; Kluge, 2000). Monothetic typologies are based on identical features: all members in a group have the same features, and the set of features related to a type is considered sufficient. Each type consists of a unique configuration of variables. The biological classification of species introduced by Linnaeus (1773), introducing an initial division between animals, plants, and minerals, is a quintessential example. Types in polythetic typologies are formed by configurations of variables (Doty and Glick, 1994; Fiss, 2011). For example, the Linnaean archetype "plant" consists of many varieties that each encapsulate multiple polythetic types themselves. Hence, polythetic typologies do not necessarily build on Weber's (1948) pure types and show similarities to the notion of the fuzzy sets (e.g., Berg-

Schlosser et al., 2009; Doty and Glick, 1994; Fiss, 2011; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012; Ragin, 2009). Polythetic typologies allow for the grouping of similar but not identical specimens, which, in turn, enables the analysis of configurations that determine a distinct type. Polythetic typologies ensure greater parsimony and are considered superior to other typologies for assigning specimens to a type (Bailey, 1973; Fiss, 2007, 2011). According to Fiss (2011), such typologies are theoretically attractive because they accommodate the determination of complex constructs and multiple levels of causal complexity.

The aim of this research to capture the multi-formity of Strategic Commoning motivates our choice to construct a polythetic conceptual typology leading to ideal types that are theoretically conceived abstractions of reality enabling investigation of the strategizing processes within various manifestations of community-based organizing. This requires a framework that 1) enables the relating of Entrepreneurial Communities to strategic-oriented features and 2) allows for comparing Entrepreneurial Communities that appear similar but are not identical (Bailey, 1973; McKinney, 1969).

#### *Constructing a typology*

Typologies are grounded in the development of an “attribute space” (Kluge, 2000). The attribute space is determined by a deliberate selection of attributes and their dimensions. The attribute space represents an overview of all theoretically conceivable combinations. However, not every combination is likely to occur in reality. Therefore, single fields in the attribute space are conceptualized in ideal types (Kluge, 2000). The dimensions that shape ideal types are conceptualized in “first-order constructs” (Doty and Glick, 1994), indicating the underlying, theoretically grounded, contextual, and structural elements that form the foundation of a typology.

Doty and Glick (1994) identify three main criteria for the development of a theoretically grounded typology: (i) the identification of constructs, (ii) the specification of relationships among these constructs, and (iii) the falsifiability of these relationships. We apply these three criteria to construct and relate ideal types in our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.

The first two criteria: (i) constructing ideal types, and (ii) relating these ideal types, are divided by Kluge into four dimensions: (i) development of relevant analytical dimensions, (ii) grouping of cases and analysis of empirical regularities, (iii) analysis of meaningful relationships and type construction, and (iv) characterization of the constructed types.



The third criterion identified by Doty and Glick (1994) is falsifiability, indicating that all attributes associated with the ideal types and the relationships between them must be testable and subject to empirical refutation (Bacharach, 1989; Doty & Glick, 1994). According to Bacharach (1989), falsifiability can be ensured by defining operationally specific coherent variables. Such variables must be valid, non-continuous, and reliable. Furthermore, Doty and Glick (1994) suggest that predictions associated with ideal types are falsifiable by determining deviations between ideal types and cases. These deviations can be used to predict dependent variables. Theory thus suggests that real-life cases are likely to differ from ideal types and that these differences serve to allocate dependent variables. Since we aim to develop a strategic-oriented typology, the premise here is that analyzing differences between ideal types and cases will provide insights into variables that affect Strategic Commoning.

A conceptual typology based on core elements that are grounded in theory is thus a valuable framework to classify Entrepreneurial Communities. The conceptual typology needs to represent maximum fit with intended data (McKinney, 1969). Since we aim to understand strategizing endeavors, it must be grounded in pre-conceptualized strategizing features of contemporary Entrepreneurial Communities. In this research, this is assured by developing a theoretical set of two core elements addressing the strategizing properties of Entrepreneurial Communities. The core elements in our conceptual typology represent variables that indicate a robust causal relationship with strategic action situations (see also Chapter 2). In the next section, we address the conceptualization of the core elements of our conceptual typology.

#### **4.4. Crafting a conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities**

##### **4.4.1. Core elements**

The conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities is constructed using two dimensions for the core elements: 1) the contextual element strategic orientation and 2) the structural element approach. These are inspired by Mintzberg's (1987) concept of context-bound and structure-bound organizational strategies (Mintzberg, 1987; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985), which identifies strategies based on variety in context and in the manner that processes are shaped to guide and direct interactions with the context. The *strategic orientation* dimension identifies the distinction between single and multiple issue orientations related to the issue-oriented context in which a community

evolves. The *approach* dimension emphasizes how addressing these issues is shaped in practice by a community.

Sustainable development is a complex and broad concept that is prone to different views and perceptions. There is a tendency to narrow down the complexity of such capacious conceptions by issue-related classifications such as Elkington's (1997) People, Planet, and Profit; Ostrom's (1998, 2010a, 2011a, 2011b) natural, cultural, and knowledge Commons or the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015). Sustainability-related issues such as climate change, plastic soup, or health are considered wicked problems (Weber & Khademian, 2008) indicating complex and ever-changing problems that pose societal challenges. Sustainable development is an example of a super wicked problem (Pryshlakivsky & Searcy, 2013; Dentoni et al., 2012). Wicked problems are rooted in multiple societal layers and domains and associated with interests and, in general, in demand for collaborative solutions (Head & Alford, 2014; Zellner & Campbell, 2015). Organizations are inclined to concretize such complex problems into topics they can relate to in terms of the so-called business or value proposition (Jonker & Faber, 2021), such as contributing solutions for energy, waste, or education. However, a classification based on the topics that communities address does not help determine Entrepreneurial Communities' strategic orientation. For one, a wicked problem like energy or agriculture can become addressed from different angles and by different approaches. Also, next to a plethora of wicked problems that are or may be addressed by collaborative constructs, many Entrepreneurial Communities practice diversification by addressing combinations of connected or unconnected topics related to sustainable development. Thus, classifying them solely based on single topics is complicated and appears incorrect regarding the richness of the issues at stake. It should not come as a surprise that some Entrepreneurial Communities do not specify or confine their perception of sustainable development, opening up to various perceptions and solutions. In practice, an amalgamation of community-based organizational constructs emerges that addresses many issues related to sustainability in demand of a collaborative, place-based solution as perceived by the parties involved in the collaboration at hand. A classification based on (combinations of) various issues addressed simultaneously would lead to an inexhaustible enumeration of issues and even more combinations of issues.

From the perspective of organization theory, community-based organizing might be classified according to formal organizational constructs such as a firm, a cooperative, or an NGO. Again, we feel that such a classification falls short in grasping the strategizing properties of collaborative organizational constructs. Community-based organizing comes in many forms, shapes, and

organizational constructs that are in progress and prone to change. To become addressable organizational constructs, communities need to adopt a formal organizational construct which comes with various rules, regulations, and obligations (e.g., subscription to chamber of commerce and paying taxes). National law dictates the organizational forms that are available to community-based constructs. In general, the existing organizational forms do not match the collaborative and multiple-value-creating aspirations of an Entrepreneurial Community. Within legal boundaries, individual communities aim to customize existing organizational forms, resulting in various organizational constructs that may or may not exhibit similar strategies. This diverse and dynamic organizational field hinders the development of a typology based on organizational format. Topical or organizational classifications do not match our aim to catch the strategic breadth of Entrepreneurial Communities. For developing a typology that captures this strategic breadth, we draw on strategy theory.

#### ***4.4.2. Contextual core element: strategic orientation***

There is an aligning strategic-oriented difference between Entrepreneurial Communities addressing one or multiple issues. The pluralistic, heterogeneous nature of Entrepreneurial Communities indicates that their strategizing processes are shaped by the divergent aims and goals of the various parties involved (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006). Addressing wicked problems is a complex process that influences multiple agendas and requires complex solutions by multiple actors bringing their perspectives. In Entrepreneurial Communities, identifying a common focus and determining possible directions to respond (Simon, 1993) takes shape in a pluralistic context (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) formed by configurations of actors. Addressing a wicked problem by developing collaborative strategies is challenging (Roberts, 2010). Constituents from various societal realms need to interact, align goals and constitute organizational and operational procedures to engage in collective actions. Selecting a particular wicked problem is bound to bring some issue-related focus to actors, perspectives, agendas, and, for that matter, strategies.

In contrast, addressing multiple issues inevitably broadens the spectrum of actors, perspectives, agendas, and strategizing processes involved, making the achievement of synergy more complex and time-consuming (Roberts, 2000).

Strategizing consequences of addressing a single issue thus are likely to differ from the strategizing consequences of addressing multiple issues. The complexity and diversity regarding the issues addressed affect the complexity and scope of corresponding strategizing processes. To address this in a conceptual typology, we propose two opposing dimensions of the strategic core element "Orientation" as single-issue versus multiple-issue.

**Figure 4.2.**  
*Strategic core element: Orientation*



The contextual core element “Orientation” (Figure 4.2.) is represented by a continuum, stretching from Entrepreneurial Communities that address a particular wicked problem to Entrepreneurial Communities that address various wicked problems.

#### **4.4.3. Structural core element: strategic approach**

Subdividing Entrepreneurial Communities according to a singular dimension representing their orientation regarding wicked problems does not suffice to classify them in the desired polythetic typology. For a second dimension, we consider the essence of their approach of the wicked problem(s) they address. There are numerous complementary and opposing views on what actions should be organized in order to realize long-term sustainable changes. Such views stretch from practice-driven projects that result in concrete, physical output (e.g., developing a community-owned solar park) to lobbying and advocacy. As Entrepreneurial Communities represent a broad amalgamation of constituents, it is understandable that all of these different perspectives may be present, accumulating in a wide variety of intended and executed collective actions. Framing problems and collaborative solutions (Gray & Purdy, 2018), choosing and shaping an approach, and subsequently planning and developing collective actions following this approach, are here considered core strategic activities. While virtually all Entrepreneurial Communities strive for long-term, transformational, and processual changes, their contributions to such changes can differ. On the one hand, some organizations choose to engage in the development and execution of one or more physical, delimited, and issue-related projects as a means to contribute to sustainable development (Smith et al., 2014; Tietjen & Jørgensen, 2013). On the other hand, some organizations focus on lobby and advocacy to facilitate transformational processes (e.g., Meadowcroft, 2009; Hopwood et al., 2005; Senge et al., 2007). In many organizations, a mixture of both becomes manifest. The choice of action(s) is determined by multiple factors, including the community's operating scale and the framing by constituents of issues and solutions (Gray & Purdy, 2018). Based on these differences, we propose two opposing dimensions for the structural core element “approach”: project execution and process facilitation.

**Figure 4.3.**  
Structural core element: Strategic Approach



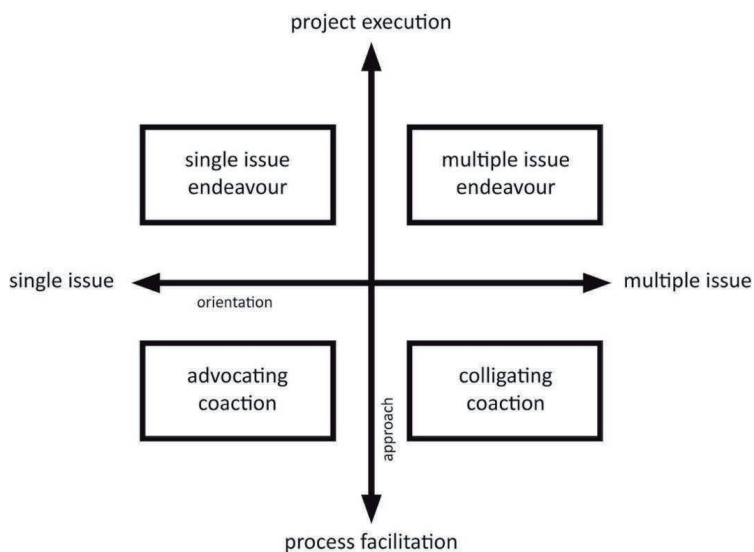
The structural core element “Approach” also represents a continuum, stretching from executing tangible projects to process facilitation.

The here proposed core elements do not address distinct organizational formats, distinct constellations of constituents, and particular wicked problems. They anticipate the universal strategizing properties of Entrepreneurial Communities, as well as their expected variety.

#### 4.5. Conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities

Juxta positioning the contextual core element “orientation” and the structural core element “approach” results in a two-dimensional table. It enables the grouping of Entrepreneurial Communities that demonstrate similarities but are not identical. The thus constructed two-dimensional table offers an initial typology of four archetypes: (a) single issue endeavor, (b) multiple issue endeavor, (c) advocating coaction, and (d) colligating coaction. This initial typology is represented in Figure 4.4. and the four archetypes are set out below.

**Figure 4.4.**  
Conceptual strategic oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities



*Archetype: single issue endeavor*

The *single issue endeavor* archetype represents Entrepreneurial Communities that focus on a clearly defined, single issue (e.g., energy or food) and do so by initiating and engaging in physical projects that contribute to solutions associated with this issue (e.g., solar plant or food forest). In order to realize their project goals, they engage in organized and often formalized collaborations with stakeholders in the public and private domains. Constituents relate a substantive goal (e.g., accessibility to fossil-free energy or sustainable food production) to their sustainable mission or vision. Strategies to accomplish this goal anticipate the execution of tangible collective actions. Civil energy cooperatives (see e.g., HIER opgewekt, 2021) generating sustainable energy through local and supra-local wind or solar energy projects set a tangible example of this archetype.

*Archetype: multiple issue endeavor*

The *multiple issue endeavor* archetype indicates Entrepreneurial Communities that address their long-term vision on establishing multiple place-based solutions for sustainable development by initiating, organizing, and engaging in multiple physical projects that address multiple issues. Collaborating constituents determine various objectives as well as projects that are undertaken to realize those objectives. The community can decide to implement various projects addressing multiple issues simultaneously or address issues one by one. Examples of this archetype are “territorial coops” (see, e.g., Fonte & Cucco, 2017; Westerink et al., 2013) that address a distinct region as an ecosystem that benefits from regional, collaborative, and integrative projects addressing multiple issues such as energy, food, or well-being.

*Archetype: colligating coaction*

The *colligating coaction* archetype represents Entrepreneurial Communities that address sustainable development as an integrated process that requires a systemic change. They aim to facilitate such change on a supra-local scale by opening up and connecting existing networks and advocating the exchange and collaboration of aims, visions, ideas, and projects. This archetype aims to function as a supra-local hub, connecting, informing, and facilitating constituents to engage in various collaborative projects. Comparable to for-benefit associations (Bauwens et al., 2017), they operate from the premise that an abundance of knowledge regarding transformational change needs infrastructure to cooperate.

*Archetype: advocating coaction*

The *advocating coaction* archetype refers to Entrepreneurial Communities that operate as community-based coalitions advocating a clear, single issue. They connect stakeholders and initiate

action plans that address this issue. They resemble Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in their aim to advocate collaboration and facilitate stakeholders to engage in projects and activities to address their central issue. Local Food Councils aiming to ensure local and supra-local or regional cycles of food production and consumption illustrate this archetype.

The conceptual typology develops our initial conceptualization of Entrepreneurial Communities by distinguishing strategic-oriented archetypes within organizational constructs that answer all five universal properties. Thus, all organizations that satisfy the five universal properties proposed in Section 4.2. are considered Entrepreneurial Communities. In order to capture their expected strategic breadth, we diversify them by applying our conceptual typology.

To summarize, Entrepreneurial Communities are place-based, sustainable development oriented, and heterogeneous. They are multiple-value focused, and organizational pioneering forms of community-based organizing. Their strategic breadth is captured in a conceptual, strategic-oriented typology synthesized below in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2.**  
*Archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities*

Archetype	Single issue endeavor	Advocating coercion	Multiple issue endeavor	Colligating coercion
<b>Approach</b>	Single Issue	Single Issue	Multiple Issues	Multiple Issues
<b>Orientation</b>	Project execution	Process facilitation	Project execution	Process facilitation

The above-constructed ideal types are conceptualized community-based organizational forms (Doty and Glick, 1984). We expect to find Entrepreneurial Communities that demonstrate similarities to the ideal types, but since a constructed typology is never a perfect fit to empirical data (McKinney, 1969), we do not expect to find Entrepreneurial Communities that correspond entirely with the here-proposed archetypes. According to Doty and Glick (1994), deviations serve to contemplate how distinct variables affect strategy development within different strategic-oriented archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities. Thus, we anticipate deviations in practice that will help us understand Entrepreneurial Communities' strategic similarities and differences. Due to varying configurations of factors that are influential to organizational, goal setting, and decision-making properties, we expect to find that different archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities are inclined to engage in various strategy-formation processes. Understanding how their collaborative strategizing processes evolve and whether and how these processes are affected by distinct variables is a first step in understanding the nature of community-based strategizing for sustainability.

#### **4.6. Limitations of the conceptual typology**

The proposed strategic-oriented conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities helps distinguishing observable strategic-oriented differences in existing Entrepreneurial Communities. However, the proposed typology does not scale the proposed dimensions. In other words, it does not provide scales that position Entrepreneurial Communities alongside the relevant archetypes. Due to the expected variety in issues addressed by Entrepreneurial Communities, the manner in which, and the degree to which they address such issues, it is difficult to contemplate such scales. We expect that case-based comparison of various archetypes will help to establish variables that determine or affect the strategic direction. Whether and how such variables provide input for scaling the dimensions and whether scaling the dimensions contributes to contemplating Entrepreneurial Communities' strategic endeavors, must be established by practice-based research. Determining variables that affect Strategic Commoning may enhance our conceptual typology with additional elements (Doty and Glick, 1994; Fiss, 2011) that contribute to hypothesizing how strategic-oriented attributes of Entrepreneurial Communities relate to each other and how existing Entrepreneurial Communities relate to the here-proposed ideal types. For example, we suspect that multiple, and possibly new, strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) are influential to strategic directions adopted by Entrepreneurial Communities (see also Section 2.3.2.). However, we do not know whether strategy types are influential to the archetypes in our conceptual typology. Without case-based research, we cannot understand what strategy types are directing communities' collective actions. Whether and how strategy types or configurations of strategy types affect our theoretically conceived strategic archetypes must be further investigated by putting the presented theoretical typology to the test in a comparative case study.

The typology also does not articulate what actual strategies are utilized by Entrepreneurial Communities. Again, without any further case-based research, it is near impossible to determine whether the chosen and executed strategies may augment the proposed strategic-oriented classification of Entrepreneurial Communities.

#### **4.7. Conclusions and discussion**

Community-based organizing addressing sustainability in a place-based context is on the rise, resulting in an abundance of collaborations under various names and (formalized) structures: networks, cooperatives, businesses, tables, movements, foundations, associations, etcetera. This abundance of organizational constructs addresses various issues related to sustainability in multiple ways. They are all protagonists in the development of solutions that contribute to sustainable



development. There is no overarching definition that addresses this phenomenon of heterogeneous, place-based, and community-based organizing for sustainability, let alone the strategizing endeavors of these communities. To address this, we have conceptualized and proposed five universal properties to enable recognition of all emerging community-based organizational constructs addressing sustainability in a place-based context. Finding that diversification based on formal organizational constructs, or categories of issues addressed, does not suffice to cover the sustainability-oriented and collaborative essence of Entrepreneurial Communities, we have added a conceptual typology that distinguishes them from a strategic perspective.

Entrepreneurial Communities are breeding grounds for Strategic Commoning. Their novel and experimental character makes them frontrunners in developing new and often unconventional forms of community-based organizing and entrepreneuring. As discussed in Section 4.1., collaborative organizational constructs are considered pivotal for place-based sustainable development; by civilians taking sustainable matters into their own hands but also by governmental institutions. Sustainable development is an intra- and inter-generational endeavor in demand of long-term commitment. From this it follows that communities should act strategically to address long-term sustainable objectives. However, articulated strategy development does not generally appear to be on top of the to-do list of emerging community-based organizational constructs. In addition, community-based organizational constructs are hardly addressed from the perspective of their strategy development, as demonstrated by the limited results of the literature review in Chapter 3. From the perspective of this research, strategy development is an underestimated and overlooked factor in community-based organizing for sustainability. Understanding how collaborative strategy development processes evolve in Entrepreneurial Communities and how they are affected by distinct variables is a first step in understanding the nature of community-based strategy development for sustainability. To do so, we need to grasp the strategic breadth that we expect to find in Entrepreneurial Communities due to their variety.

The conceptual typology was constructed from our aim to further contribute to theory regarding community-based strategizing for sustainability by developing and executing case-based research. Grounded in theory, we have constructed a concept to classify another concept: we constructed universal properties and a conceptual typology for community-based forms of organizing to further investigate our conceptualization of Strategic Commoning. The five general properties that differentiate Entrepreneurial Communities from other collaborative organizational constructs are (i) place-based, (ii) sustainable development-oriented, (iii) heterogeneous, (iv) multiple-value-focused, and (v) organizational pioneering.

The strategic breadth of Entrepreneurial Communities is captured by a conceptual two-dimensional typology based on two core elements: 1) strategic approach, and 2) strategic orientation. Four

archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities are proposed: single issue endeavor, advocating coaction, multiple issue endeavor, and colligating coaction.

From the perspective of justifiability (see also Section 4.2.), the here-proposed conceptual typology is bound to demonstrate deviations between ideal types and cases. Ostrom (2005, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2013) brings forward that the systems in which communities develop change over time, indicating that variables affecting strategy development may change over time. From this it follows that Entrepreneurial Communities may be subject to strategic changes. Although this is not uncommon for new organizations, recognizing and reacting to such changes in practice is stressful and time-consuming. A strategic-oriented typology may prove valuable in allocating and addressing whether possible frictions in a community are of a strategic nature. It is conceivable that collective actions do not prosper because executed strategy does not match an organizations' strategic orientation or structural approach. Whether such situations occur can only be established in practice.

The proposed conceptual typology contributes to theory-building on Strategic Commoning by enabling the detection and classification of strategic variety in Entrepreneurial Communities. From the perspective of our research, this is beneficial for selecting a diverse sample for a longitudinal comparative case study. The five general properties of Entrepreneurial Communities serve to recognize and allocate these distinct community-based organizational constructs. In addition, the conceptual typology serves to diversify them according to their strategic orientations and their structural approaches of multiple-value-creating collective actions. Including all four archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities in case-based research thus ensures that different strategic orientations and approaches are represented in the sample. Practice-based research, in turn, will contribute empirical refinement to this conceptual typology and consequentially serves to better understand strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities. By applying the here-presented conceptual typology to multiple cases, we aim to determine the practice of community-based strategy development in various settings. We expect to find a strong relationship between distinct manifestations of Strategic Commoning and distinct archetypes within the proposed typology. It only stands to reason that, for instance, a community that engages in voluminous tangible actions such as building sustainable houses is likely to strategize – and organize – its collaborative objectives differently from a community that wishes to encourage debate on social inclusion.

Applying the typology in a comparative case study is the next step in research. Including all four archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities in a comparative case study ensures that different strategic approaches and strategic orientations are represented. Based on the findings from our longitudinal comparative case study, Chapter 7 eventually discusses the results of practice-based refinement of the typology.

# CHAPTER

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# 5



## **CHAPTER 5. RESEARCHING THE PRACTICE OF COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Abstract**

This chapter starts by briefly re-addressing the theoretical background of this research, and then presents the methodological approach chosen for developing a longitudinal comparative case study to explore the development of collaborative strategy in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands between 2015 and 2020. These cases were selected to be the subject of the field research since they were all engaged in processes we associate with the concept of Strategic Commoning. As discussed in previous chapters, we understand this to be a process of collaborative strategy development for community-based collective actions. The primary purpose of this research is to explore the nature of Strategic Commoning in depth. Understanding this phenomenon requires studying collaborative strategy processes in practice. An explorative and qualitative research approach was developed to allocate and analyze strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities. Rooted in Grounded Theory, a comparative case study was designed and performed using multiple data sources and peer-reviewed analysis. Based on multiple data sources, a timeline was constructed for each case to allocate strategic action situations. Strategic action situations were subsequently discussed during semi-structured focus group interviews with decision-makers. The analysis of strategic action situations is eventually synthesized into a theoretically grounded, practice-based theory on the nature of collaborative strategy development in place-based communities. This is labeled as Strategic Commoning. In addition to methodological foundations, this chapter briefly introduces the selected cases and then elaborates on the operationalized data collection analysis. Finally, we reflect on the nature of the used qualitative research design, the methodological approach of the used case-based research, and the criteria applied to assure the quality of the research.

### **5.1. Introduction**

Existing theoretical perspectives on strategy development in community-based organizational constructs have been explored in Chapters 2 and 3 to conceptualize the central notion of Strategic Commoning as an incremental and iterative process, shaped in practice and influenced by external variables. This process is observable by allocating patterns in strategic decision making (Mintzberg, 1978) that occur as strategic action situations. As this research focuses on strategy development in

various heterogeneous collaborative settings, multiple aspects of collaboration come into play. To capture the richness of these actual empirical settings, Morris and Miller-Stevens (2016) advocate a cross-disciplinary approach to gain knowledge on inter-organizational aspects of collaboration. In addition, Strategy as Practice (SAP) scholars (e.g., Whittington, 2003, 2007; Bromiley & Rau, 2014; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013) recommend broadening the scope of strategy research with other disciplines to incorporate aspects of praxis and practitioners. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, in this research, strategic perspectives on collaborative organizing are broadened by regarding contemporary Entrepreneurial Communities as Institutes for Collective Action (ICA) (Ostrom, 2009, 2010a, 2011). A research design allowing observation of strategic action situations facilitates focusing on interactions between participants in which strategy formation is due to stand central and analyzes the outcomes of these interactions (Ostrom, 2005, 2010b, 2011a).

Comparative case-based research appears to be the right approach for acquiring a profound understanding of the phenomenon of Strategic Commoning. Consequently, such an approach was chosen and designed to analyze strategic action situations in multiple Entrepreneurial Communities. To check, enhance, and refine findings from theory, the comparative case study aims to generate empirically informed insights to articulate a (local) theory (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Eisenhardt, 1989 Yin, 2014) based on a purposive selection (Boeije, 2010) of cases. From an epistemological perspective, we assume that people continually construct and reconstruct collaborations through interactions and subsequent action patterns. This leads to locally grounded configurations of valid and applicable knowledge. To observe and analyze this local knowledge, a methodological multi-source and peer-reviewed approach should be adopted. Here this is done by building the research on methodological principles derived from the Grounded Theory (GT) approach. This enables critical assessment of the reliability and validity of case-based knowledge developed through the performed research, ultimately leading to insights into how this knowledge plays a role in the strategizing processes in Entrepreneurial Communities.

The amalgamation of these considerations results in the following design of this chapter. Section 5.2. discusses some theoretical contemplations regarding the longitudinal field research that was conducted in 12 cases in the Netherlands between 2015 and 2020. Section 5.3. addresses the methodological design principles of the comparative case study and provides a brief introduction of the cases that participated in this research. Section 5.4. addresses the systematic nature of the data collection, and Section 5.5. looks at the data analysis. Section 5.6. addresses issues concerning methodological accountability and reliability. The concluding Section 5.7. discusses the pros and cons of the qualitative and explorative research design used.

## 5.2. Methodological contemplations on case-based research

The comparative case study starts from two dominant premises. The first premise is that Strategic Commoning is an iterative and incremental process shaped in practice over time and influenced by the various contextual factors. The second premise is that Entrepreneurial Communities are social constructs (Searle, 1995) formed intentionally by a variety of constituents. Exploring the processes these emerging constructs engage in requires an inductive and qualitative research design that captivates related empirical patterns (Boeije, 2010). In this research, the focus will be on allocating and analyzing patterns that indicate strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities.

### 5.2.1. Qualitative research

Considering strategy formation to be a sequential process of decisions (Mintzberg, 1978; Simon, 1959; 1993), this research adopts a processual approach (Whittington, 2001) for studying Strategic Commoning in practice. Johnson et al. (2003) derive three significant contributions from the processual approach:

- 1) The recognition of strategy as an organizational phenomenon, identifying aspects such as internal politics and organizational tensions to be contributors to strategy development.
- 2) Observing organizations engaged in the process of strategizing as social constructs and bringing socio-cognitive perspectives to strategy research.
- 3) The selection of a small sample of cases to perform an in-depth case study to gain grounded knowledge of the actual process of strategizing.

The first two of these contributions correspond with findings from theory presented in Chapters 2 and 3. The third contribution supports the choice for a case-based research approach. A processual approach to observe how constituents craft strategy in their organizational setting results in a research design that accommodates direct contact and close observation of the actors involved in the actual strategizing processes (Johnson et al., 2003; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Whittington, 2007). In emerging organizational configurations such as Entrepreneurial Communities, this implies concrete observations of praxis, practice, and practitioners (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 2006, 2007; Whittington et al., 2011). These arguments motivate the choice for a qualitative and explorative research approach.

Following Boeije (2010), the interpretation of qualitative research is here directed by three key elements:

- 1) Looking for meaning in social behavior
- 2) Research methods that allow for flexibility and involve in-person contact

3) Generating qualitative findings that allow for (i) the interpretation of actions while preserving the meaning of participants, and (ii) connecting macroscopic and microscopic data.

Qualitative research is interpreted here as exploring the diversity and richness of a particular phenomenon in a particular context (Kumar, 2014). In this study, such a qualitative approach was adopted, enabling us to systematically explore the phenomenon of Strategic Commoning within the social construct of Entrepreneurial Communities. Both the phenomenon and the social construct are emerging in uncertain times, and they are bound to change over time. Emerging strategy development can be observed as a cyclical, recurrent process, converging and/or diverging around different themes over time (Mintzberg & Westley, 1992). This implies studying the strategy formation process phenomenon over time. Mintzberg (1978) recommends an exploratory and inductive approach of cases involving reconstructive historical studies that enable the detection of decision-making moments and recognition of patterns in the development of these decision-making moments. Multiple varieties of both the phenomenon and the social construct come into play over time that are addressed here by a longitudinal comparative case study involving historical reconstruction of emerging processes of Strategic Commoning in multiple Entrepreneurial Communities.

### **5.2.2. The case study research**

The research foundations of the case study used are rooted in methodological perspectives derived from Grounded Theory (GT) (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). GT offers a systematic qualitative data analysis approach based on constant comparison and information saturation to deduce the logic of behavior in a local setting. The central assumption of GT is that people collaborating in a particular context, often with a plurality of aims, develop a locally fitting way of thinking and acting which could be seen in a way as a local *theory*. In this research, such practice-based theory is generated to check and refine previous findings derived from strategic management theory and collective action theory presented in Chapters 2 and 3. In order to observe the phenomenon at hand, data need to be systematically generated (Boeije, 2010), followed by a systematic analysis in order to deepen findings from theory (see Chapters 2 and 3) by theoretical sampling (Boeije, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The comparative case study adopted an open, flexible method of data collection (Boeije, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Kumar, 2014). The data collection involved desk research (case-based document analysis) and direct contact (observations, interviews, focus groups, participating in seminars) with the various communities of constituents engaged in collaborative strategy development in the 12 cases. Over time, this multi-source data-collection approach resulted in rich, descriptive data that multiple teams of researchers interpreted through constant comparison

(Boeije, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). This involved open (inductive) and axial (deductive) coding processes to generate findings that enabled us to enhance the initial theory-based conceptualization of Strategic Commoning presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

### **5.2.3. Comparative case study**

Studying strategic action situations in practice allows the researcher to unravel how praxis, practice, and practitioners (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007; Whittington, 2007; Whittington et al., 2011) shape Strategic Commoning. Since Entrepreneurial Communities represent novel and heterogeneous forms of organizing, some further direction is needed to guide the observation of praxis, practice, and practitioners. A descriptive and explanatory comparative case study seems to be the most fitting approach that enables the observation of processes over time and in a particular context to understand how phenomena relate (Bleijenbergh, 2015). In addition, the objective of allocating and exploring strategic action situations in multiple real-life cases serves to explore and refine (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999) the theoretical conceptualization of Strategic Commoning presented in Chapters 2 and 3. A case study is here interpreted as “an empirical inquiry that serves to explore a contemporary phenomenon (“the case”) in-depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident” (Yin, 2014, p.16). A case study must address a bounded subject that is representative or atypical (Kumar, 2014) of the phenomenon the researcher wishes to explore. A case can be, among other things, a group, a community, an instance, or an event (Kumar, 2014). In this research, a case is a single Entrepreneurial Community engaging in strategy development. Comparative case studies systematically compare multiple cases that represent the same phenomenon. Comparing cases is an established way of strengthening qualitative analysis (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999; Kumar, 2014; Yin, 2014) and is often used for comparing regional developments (Krehl & Weck, 2020). A comparative case study is considered a suitable method for analyzing place-based, community-based forms of organizing i.e., Entrepreneurial Communities. Comparative case-based research allows for within-case comparison and cross-case comparison. Within-case comparison of various data that indicate strategy development allows for transforming cases into configurations of conditions (Ostrom, 2005, 2011b) for the occurrence (Berg-Schlusser et al., 2009) of strategic action situations (see also Chapter 2). Cross-case comparison of various cases subsequently accommodates the refinement of elements of the theoretical conceptualization of Strategic Commoning by providing a general explanation that is grounded in multiple cases. These observations support the choice of designing a qualitative, comparative, longitudinal case study.



### 5.3. Selecting the cases

#### 5.3.1. Research population

The research focuses on how community-based organizations address issues related to sustainable development in their place-based context. It goes without saying that legislation, rules, and regulation for collaborative organizational constructs differ by country but also by region. Thus, institutional differences affect organizational and operational aspects and hamper a (strategic-oriented) just or pure comparison of emerging forms of community-based organizing in different settings.

For the conceptualization and selection of cases, the theoretical construct or time-based criterion (Bartlet, 2017; Ragin, 1999) was defined as “Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands that have emerged since 2010”. This criterion ensures the selection of Entrepreneurial Communities that became active within a timeframe when local and regional governments in the Netherlands embraced Social Innovation. As already addressed in Section 2.2.1., governments at that time started experimenting with innovative governance approaches encouraging civilians to engage in, for example, climate mitigation, self-management of energy systems, or food cooperatives.

Five general properties of Entrepreneurial Communities outlined in Chapter 4 determine the identification of the research population: (i) Place-based, (ii) Sustainable Development oriented, (iii) Heterogeneous, (iv) Multiple value focused, (v) Organizational pioneering. In addition, a theoretically informed typology distinguishing four archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities was proposed in Chapter 4. The typology enabled selecting a sample of 12 cases that is both rich in diversity and representative of the various archetypes of the typology. For each archetype, three cases were selected. All cases in the sample were required to have (i) an addressable organizational level and (ii) a governing body responsible for initiating and facilitating strategic action situations. These criteria ensured sourcing cases that were actively shaping and governing collective actions. The premise here is that a community engaged in concrete collective actions that address future (sustainable) goals must demonstrate some level of organization and provoke actions associated with strategy such as goal setting and planning.

The variance of cases allows for relating the theoretical constructs presented in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 to a broad range of contemporary communities in a small but representative sample (Eisenhardt, 1989). For each dimension of the theoretically informed typology (see Chapter 4), three cases were selected to ensure variety. Thus, the total number of cases is 12. Cases were identified by 1) orientating desk research, looking for community-based initiatives in the news and social media, 2)

via the DuurzaamDoor network from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), and finally 3) via the network of the principal researcher. The principal researcher has professionally worked as a consultant and trainer for local and regional networks addressing sustainable development and is therefore acquainted with various community-based initiatives that demonstrate the general properties of Entrepreneurial Communities (Chapter 4).

The final selection of cases was based on initially sourced, publicly available data on place-based communities. The diversity and novelty of the phenomenon at hand required anticipating a research subject being dynamic over time while cases were initially selected based on a typology grounded in theory. As a result, there was no guarantee in advance that the initial selection of cases in practice would provide access to all necessary data. Keeping in mind the explorative nature of the research and the principles of theoretical sampling (Boeije, 2010), not all cases were selected and approached with a request to participate simultaneously. The choice of a flexible research design allowed new cases to be added during the five-year research period. This proved imperative since various cases went through quite some turmoil, and some even were terminated. At the very start of the field research, 11 possible cases were approached. It turned out that three had already ceased to exist. As a result, the research started by following eight cases. By applying theoretical selection (Boeije, 2010), the sample was enlarged to 12 cases during the research period. Four so-called *negative* (Boeije, 2010) or *deviant* (Lijphart, 1975) cases were included in the sample that enabled the corroboration of provisional findings. Deliberately including anomalous cases is an established way of strengthening qualitative research findings (Boeije, 2002, 2010). Two types of cases were considered deviant: 1) cases that did not succeed in developing successful strategies, i.e., that did not engage successfully in Strategic Commoning, and 2) cases that were not initiated by a community of civilians but by, e.g., a local government. In adding such cases we were aiming to capture possible motives for initiating collective actions as well as various goal perspectives. Two cases that ceased to exist during the research period were considered deviant. Their demise was interpreted as a result of unsuccessful collaborative strategy development. Two additional cases were approached as deviant that did not intentionally commence as communities but evolved into community-based organizations. By adding deviant cases, the small (N=12) sample represents a variety of organizational constructs in the Netherlands addressable as Entrepreneurial Communities. Initially, for each archetype of the conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities presented in Section 4.5., three cases were selected, as demonstrated in Table 5.1. below. It has to be noted here that some cases changed their archetype during the research period due to strategic decision making based on new developments or insights. Chapter 7 examines the various strategic considerations that inspired these changes.

**Table 5.1.**  
*Initial selection of cases related to conceptual strategic-oriented typology*

Archetype	Single issue endeavor	Advocating coaction	Multiple issue endeavor	Colligating coaction
<b>Approach</b>	Single issue	Single issue	Multiple issue	Multiple issue
<b>Orientation</b>	Project execution	Process facilitation	Project execution	Process facilitation
<b>Cases</b>	Energiecoöperatie WPN	Foodcouncil MRA	Bommelerwaar	Noorden Duurzaam
	De Fruitmotor	Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen	Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland	DirkIII
	Voedselbos Ketelbroek	GoClean	Pak An	Gloei

The cases represent different approaches to sustainability, address different topics, and are governed in different manners. Also, the sample represents different settings in which Entrepreneurial Communities emerge. To enhance generalizability, nine cases were sourced in the Dutch province of Gelderland, which actively advocates and supports community projects that address sustainability. Since Dutch provinces use partly autonomous sustainability policies, sourcing cases in one province indicates a level playing field in getting access to supra-local governmental programs and subsidies.

Three cases operate in urbanized areas. Since there is a steady increase in energy co-ops in the Netherlands, one energy co-op and two cases that prioritize energy projects were included. From the perspective of inclusiveness, one case with a focus on diversity in sustainability was deliberately included. Also, one case is governed by an all-female board, although the case was not selected because of this. In conclusion, to a large extent, the sample is a varied and accurate representation of contemporary Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands.

### **5.3.2. Introducing the cases**

This section briefly introduces all selected cases in alphabetical order by their name and their general aim or goal. Figure 5.1. indicates the areas where the communities are situated.

*Coöperatie Bommelerwaar* (<https://www.bommelerwaar.nl>) was founded in 2016. It is a cooperative of residents and entrepreneurs in the Bommelerwaar region. The cooperative's initial ambition was to aim for a multiple-value-driven regional economy, but in 2019 the focus shifted to sustainable energy projects.

*De Fruitmotor* (<https://www.fruitmotor.nl>) commenced in 2015. It is a chain cooperative aiming to improve and restore biodiversity in the Betuwe region by limiting food waste, enhancing biodiversity, contributing to research projects, and providing policy advice.

*Dirk de Derde* Foundation was founded in 2013 and terminated in 2018. The initiators aimed for a multiple-value-driven regional economy in the Betuwe region by connecting existing and new thematic networks into a strengthening meshwork.

*Energiecoöperatie WPN* (<https://www.energiecoöperatiewpn.nl>) is an energy co-op founded in 2013 for and by civilians in the Nijmegen area that aims to support a transition to local, sustainable energy production by establishing renewable energy sources and supporting civilians in transforming to sustainable energy sources.

*Food Council MRA (Metropoolregio Amsterdam)* (<https://www.foodcouncilmra.nl/>) is a networking NGO run by volunteers established in 2017 to facilitate access to production, retail, and consumption of healthy and sustainable food in the Amsterdam region. An overarching foundation was established in 2021.

*Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland (GCR)* (<https://www.gcrivierenland.nl>) started in 2014 as an umbrella organization for citizen initiatives to enhance a regional circular economy in the Rivierenland region. GCR changed their focus to sustainable energy projects, representing community energy projects in the Regional Energy Strategy (RES).

*Gloei Peel en Maas* was a cooperative network initiated in 2010 by the Peel en Maas municipality. The municipality facilitated and partly funded a community network to commence and support community projects related to sustainable development. However, the organization eventually suffered from opposing internal views and was terminated by the municipality in 2019.

*Go Clean de Liemers Foundation* (<https://www.goclean.nl>) was established in 2016 and evolved from litter picking into a community-based and data-driven initiative to diminish littering in the De Liemers area by collecting, sorting and analyzing litter streams to provide information on sources of litter to governmental bodies and companies. The increasing demand from municipalities for this approach resulted in the board deciding to go professional as Go Clean Ltd. in 2020.

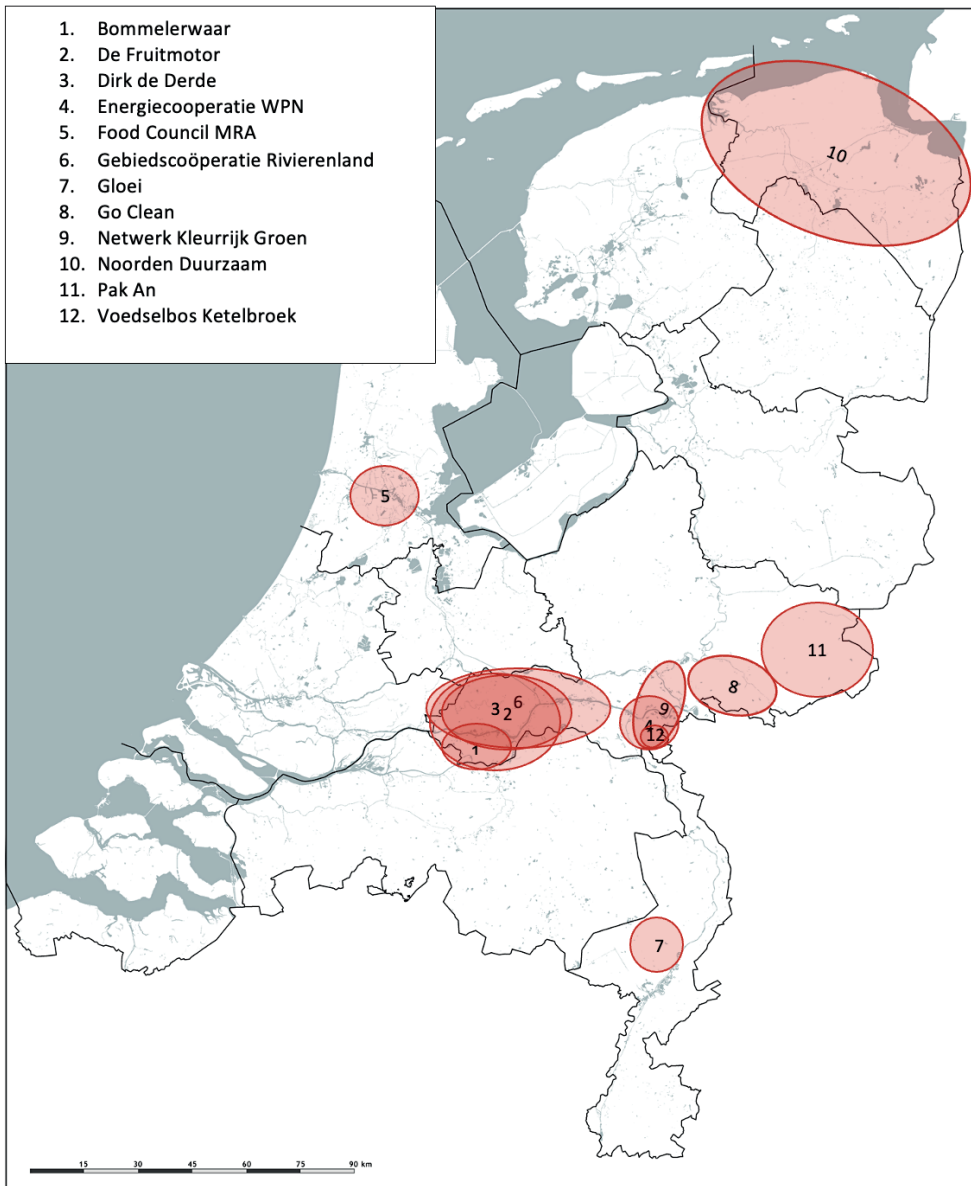
*Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen* (<https://www.bureauwijland.nl/index.php/kleurrijk-groen>) was initiated in 2017 by a group of civilians with international roots in the Nijmegen area. The aim is to establish diversity and inclusiveness in predominantly “white” actions and organizations addressing sustainable development. The network is run by volunteers and facilitated by Bureau Wijland, a consultancy specialized in inclusiveness.

*Pak An foundation* (<https://www.anpakken.nl/>) was founded in 2016 by two collaborating enterprises to support various initiatives in the Achterhoek region as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility policy. A small and professional project staff coordinates project support. An extensive community of honorary coaches and a strong network are available to support projects selected by the governing board.

*Noorden Duurzaam Association* (<https://www.noordenduurzaam.nl>) was initiated in 2012 to enhance sustainable development in the Northern part of the Netherlands. Noorden Duurzaam is a platform for accelerating and upscaling transitions by experimental forms of democratic decision making that encompass all realms of society. For this, the concept of table democracy has been developed.

*Voedselbos Ketelbroek* (<https://www.facebook.com/foodforestketelbroek>) started in 2009 as a partnership experimenting with agroforestry in the Nijmegen region. Its aim is to enable a transition in agriculture by demonstrating the benefits of permaculture and knowledge sharing. The initiators are co-founders of the Dutch Voedselbosbouw Foundation (<https://www.voedselbosbouw.org>).

**Figure 5.1.**  
Cases situated in the Netherlands



Adapted from Van Aalst (2007) Nederlandse provinciegrenzen. CC BY 2.5. NL

## 5.4. Research design

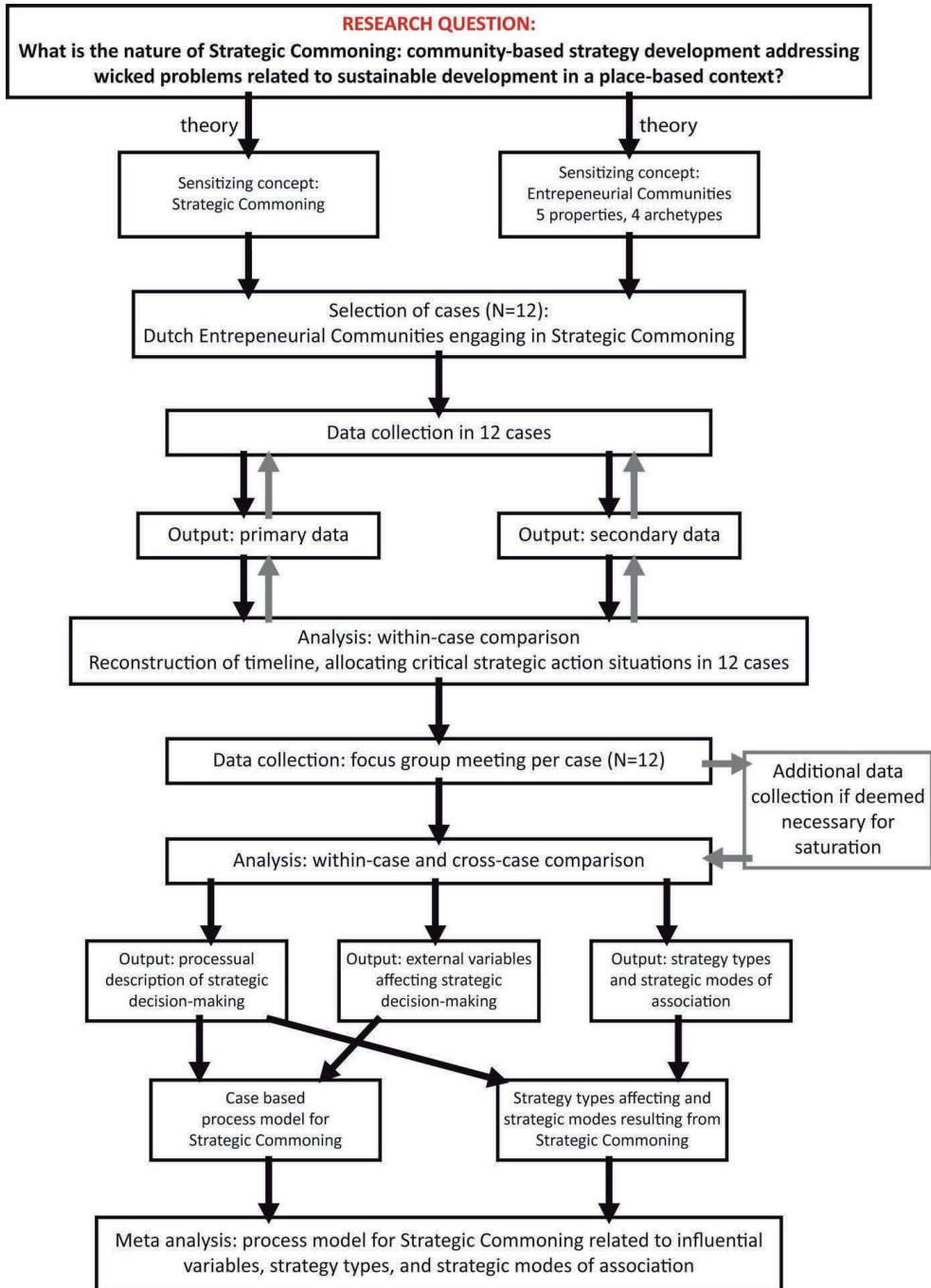
### 5.4.1. Research structure

The research project started with an orientation on academic and professional literature, resulting in the conceptualization of a process model for strategic action situations, presented in Chapter 2. The conceptual process model provides footholds for determining and exploring stages in strategic action situations and observing and analyzing external variables that affect strategic decision making.

The research started by conceptualizing two sensitizing concepts (Blumer, 1954). They are theoretical constructs that conceptualize: (i) strategic action situations, captured in a conceptual process model (Chapters 2 and 3); and (ii) Entrepreneurial Communities, captured in a conceptual typology (Chapter 4). These two constructs were the starting point for the qualitative, exploratory, comparative case study. The comparative case study design facilitated collecting written and oral data related to strategic action situations in 12 (N=12) selected cases. Within-case and cross-case constant comparison (Boeije, 2010) was applied to recognize and analyze patterns in strategic action situations in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities (see Section 5.4.3.).

This iterative process of constant comparison eventually results in a case-based process model of Strategic Commoning representing stages in community-based strategic decision making, and analysis of variables affecting those stages. In addition, strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) and strategic modes of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) have been analyzed. Finally, we reconsidered the initial strategic-oriented typology presented in Chapter 4. The conceptual model presented in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.1.) envisions the research aim. In addition, the structure of the research project is envisioned below in Figure 5.2. Sections 5.4.2. and 5.4.3. explicate the research design. The research design focuses on data collection related to the emergence, progress, and role of strategy development. It facilitates 1) capturing practitioners engaged in the process of Strategic Commoning by allocating strategic action situations, and 2) detecting external variables that are conditional to the praxis of Strategic Commoning. In addition, 3) strategy types and 4) strategic modes of association are accredited. Results are compared to and merged with the conceptual process model of strategic action situations presented in Chapter 2. This results in the case-based process model of strategic action situations presented in Chapter 7.

Figure 5.2.  
Structure of the research project



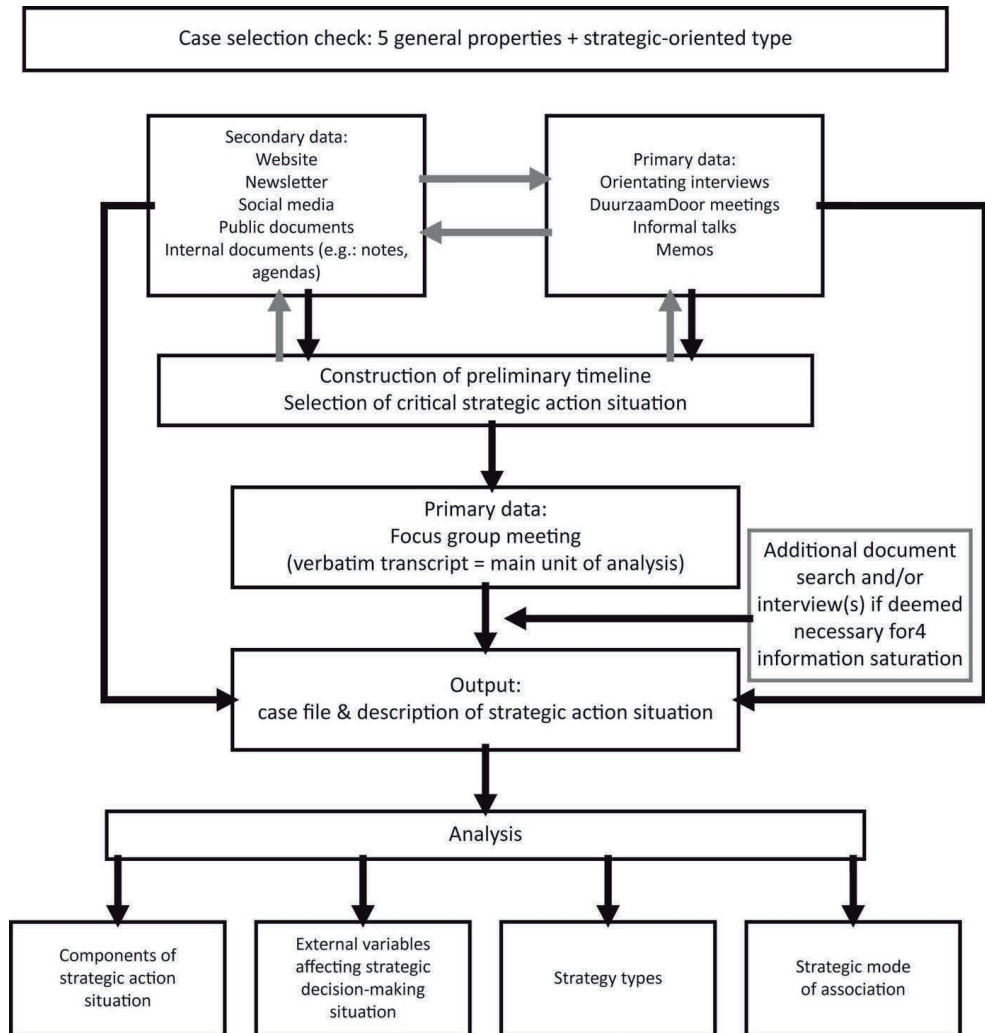


#### **5.4.2. Data collection**

Given the selection of cases, it is evident that the structure and scope of cases differ, as do the structure and scope of their strategic action situations. This difference calls for data collection using various qualitative methods. In this research, written data were sourced from professional literature, case-based document research, and media and social media research. In addition, oral data were sourced from interviews and focus groups. The unit of analysis is *strategic action situations* (see Section 2.5.2.), here defined as a process of collaborative strategic decision making by a community addressing a wicked problem related to sustainable development. For each case, strategic action situations were allocated through strategic-oriented historical reconstruction of decision making related to collective actions. Critical Incident Technique (Cope & Watts, 2000; Flanagan, 1954; Kain, 2003) was applied to select a “critical” strategic action situation: a recent or contemporary strategic decision-making process. For each case, a conclusive focus group meeting addressing the selected critical strategic action situation served as the main unit of analysis.

The choice of multiple methods and sources is motivated by the aim to constitute elaborate descriptions of the phenomenon studied: strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities. The aim is to explore a distinct strategic action situation embedded in the broad range of community-level choices that occur over time in each case. This enables the researcher to keep track of the progress of strategy development in practice for each case. Administering multiple data collection methods by combining multiple data sources serves to allocate and integrate multiple perspectives on strategy development within each case. Using multiple data sourcing methods is an established method to ensure reliability by enabling data source triangulation (Boeije, 2010; Yin, 2014) and methodological triangulation. To ensure quality and homogeneity of data, a generic topic list (Appendix 2) was constructed that could be customized for each case. The topic list guided the document search and supplemental individual interviews to the point of saturation. Considering the emerging status of the cases, the output of data sourcing differs. This is because the Entrepreneurial Communities’ degree of organization differs. As a result, available internal and public documents differ per case, as does media coverage of each case. Data collection and analysis per case is outlined below in Figure 5.3. Information saturation was considered achieved when a timeline could be completed to identify critical strategic action situations for each case. Based on these outcomes, the conclusive focus group interview was conducted with constituents responsible for strategic decision making.

**Figure 5.3.**  
Data collection per case



#### *Secondary data: documents*

Document research of internal and public documents encompasses policy documents, notes, newsletters, websites, and social media. Emerging communities are seldom in a position to prioritize and administer an extensive administration, a well-documented organizational structure, an accessible archive, or a professional communication plan. As a result, the quantity, topicality, and availability of documents differ per case. In some cases, available internal documents were little more than standardized and formal founding documents (e.g., subscription to the Chamber of Commerce, statutes, or memoranda of association). First, available documents were used to develop

a timeline representing an initial and conceptual historical reconstruction of the community, containing a chronological overview of its strategic action situations. They were then used to establish whether and how strategic decision making was embedded and formalized in organizational structure.

*Secondary data: websites and social media*

Most cases in the sample depended on volunteers primarily concerned with collective actions and engaging constituents and stakeholders in these collective actions. Having no, or limited access to, professional staff implies that the same volunteers generally carry out multiple operational and administrative tasks, as well as external communication. Managing all these tasks is time-consuming, and as a result, media coverage (e.g., websites and social media platform accounts) of cases is not always up to date. Still, sourcing social media has proven a valuable data source in this research. Communities generally use their websites and platforms like Facebook or LinkedIn to communicate about their plans, collective actions, agendas or achievements (e.g., <https://www.foodcouncilmra.nl/agenda-events>, 21.05.17; <https://goclean.nl/nieuws/>, 21.05.17). Thus, when up to date, social media give a fair amount of insight into whether and how plans, actions, and achievements align with long-term goals.

*Primary data: individual semi-structured interviews*

If deemed necessary in the light of information saturation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected respondents in various cases. Semi-structured interviews enable customization of information collection (Bleijenbergh, 2015) in order to direct and complete the process of information saturation (Boeije, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Kumar, 2014). Information saturation indicates that no new information regarding strategic action situations is revealed through semi-structured interviews or additional documents. The interviews addressed the respondents' perception of the general approach by the community of strategic action situations and provided detailed information on organizational foundations or a preselected action situation. A topic list guided the interviews.

*Additional data: participating in the DuurzaamDoor network*

In addition to the various data-gathering and research activities described previously, additional sources of information were also available. During the research period, the principal researcher was a member of the Duurzaam Door Participatory Roundtable for Regional Networks (PTRN) of RVO. PTRN hosted regular meetings to discuss developments and topics of interest and concern to contemporary community-based forms of organizing. Partaking in the PTRN gave the principal

researcher access to institutional and governmental policy developments and related documents of interest to Entrepreneurial Communities. Furthermore, and maybe even more importantly, the membership of PTRN facilitated contact with community constituents from various cases in the research sample and to other Entrepreneurial Communities.

*Primary data: observations – not used in analysis*

The initial research design incorporated attending and observing general meetings (e.g., general assemblies) of all cases. However, joining comparable meetings for all cases appeared practically impossible during the research period. Furthermore, meetings differed in scope and structure, which hindered systematic and elaborate data sourcing from these meetings. Two cases ceased to exist before the observation of a general meeting was conducted. Since most observations were planned for 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic that engulfed the Netherlands in early 2020 severely influenced the possibility of observing those (general) meetings. Not all cases did organize online meetings that were accessible to the researcher. Observational data of communities' meetings or assemblies were therefore incomparable and have not been used for analysis.

*Primary data: focus group interview*

For analysis of critical strategic incidents, the researchers needed to be able to locate strategic decisions. To do so, the researchers attributed substantive strategic goals to each case, grounded in documents that refer to purpose, mission, vision, goals, or working method. For triangulation, annual reports and media and social media were consulted, checking what actions align with or contribute to strategic goals. The researchers interpreted these actions as strategic actions. Since all communities involved in the research have encountered debate regarding changes in focus, approach, general direction, or scope of collective actions, critical strategic incidents were detectable in all cases. The information on those critical strategic incidents thus acquired was used to construct a timeline for all 12 cases, indicating critical strategic incidents: moments of decision making that are considered critical from a strategic perspective.

For each case, a preliminary timeline was constructed from the start of the initiative. Some cases went through severe strategic changes during the research period, providing insights into critical strategic action situations while they were happening. Following the Critical Incident Technique (Cope & Watts, 2000; Flanagan, 1954; Kain, 2003), for each case, a critical strategic action situation (see also Section 2.5.2.) was selected from the timeline. For some cases, this was a critical strategic action situation in the past that led to observable strategic changes, i.e., changes in goal formulation or different collective action approaches. For others, it was a recent strategic development that

occurred during the research period and was still developing during the research period. This enabled the principal researcher to follow critical strategic changes while they were happening. Annual reports and social media served to keep up with results and outcomes of strategy development up to 2021. The selected strategic action situations are summarized in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2.**  
*Unit of Analysis: Critical strategic action situation*

Case	Critical strategic action situation	Duration of critical strategic incident
<b>Bommelerwaard</b>	Change in strategic focus: from integral systems change to providing sustainable energy	2019
<b>De Fruitmotor</b>	End of temporary (flash) cooperative: implementation of new community structure	2017–2019
<b>Dirk de Derde</b>	Fragmentation of actions	2015–2018
<b>Energiecoöperatie WPN</b>	Unbundling community actions and energy production projects	2018–2019
<b>Food Council MRA</b>	Change in organizational structure to address goals more effectively	2019–2021
<b>Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland</b>	Prioritization in scope: from integral systems change to representing all community members in RES	2018–2021
<b>Gloei</b>	Fragmentation, plans of interim board for reorganization	2016–2019
<b>Go Clean</b>	Coping with growing demand by municipalities, foundation of Ltd.	2019–2020
<b>Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen</b>	Consolidation and expansion of the network after initial success	From 2019
<b>Noorden Duurzaam</b>	Advocating and consolidating table democracy	From 2017
<b>Pak An</b>	Five-year evaluation, enhancing focus on organizational scope / nature of supported projects	2019–2020
<b>Voedselbos Ketelbroek</b>	Dealing with demand for permaculture	From 2016

Critical strategic incidents selected by the principal researcher were discussed during a focus group interview for each case. Respondents for these focus groups were selected that were or had been directly involved in the selected critical incidents. The selected respondents were approached for a final, semi-structured, focus group interview. This focus group interview served as the primary unit of analysis for each case. The aim of the focus group interview was: 1) to discuss organizational strategy development in general, 2) to discuss the selected critical strategic action situation, 3) to discuss – and, if necessary – complement the preliminary timeline, and 4) to check whether the researcher had accessed all relevant secondary data.

Due to differences in organizational structure per case, the number of respondents in focus group interviews ranged from two up to five respondents. For one deviant case, two separate interviews with the professional project coordinator were conducted instead of a focus group interview. This case was deliberately considered deviant since it was initiated by companies and is managed by a

professional project staff. Since the case was added late to the sample, it was the only case for which a focus group meeting was planned online during the COVID-19 pandemic due to lockdown. However, from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff and the board became very much engaged in actions to relieve societal effects of lockdown. As a consequence, they lacked the time to prepare and gather for an online focus group meeting. This deviant case was added to the sample to assess whether and how its strategic decision making differs from cases initiated and run by civilians. The interviews with the professional coordinator and the available public data were deemed sufficient for this specific purpose by multiple researchers. Therefore, the principal researcher decided to include this case in the analysis, although only one constituent was interviewed.

During focus group meetings, the preliminary timeline, presented on a large sheet of paper, served as a basis for the focus group meeting. Respondents were invited to make notes or draw on the timeline, each respondent using a different color to write with. For some cases, this resulted in additions to the timeline, others merely established the selected strategic action situation.

The researcher directed the semi-structured focus group meeting using a predetermined topic list (Appendix 2). The timeline discussed by respondents, and notes taken by the researchers during focus group interviews, served as additional memos. The generic topic list was adapted and optimized for each interview and in-between cases to enhance information saturation per case. A record of this was kept through methodological memos.

#### *Primary data: memos*

In qualitative research, memos (e.g., Schatzman & Strauss, 1973; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) serve to ascertain the quality of and to monitor the research process. During all stages of data collection, memo writing (Boeije, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss, 1978) was applied. Memos served as a chronological overview of decisions made during the collection and analysis of data and guided actions during the research.

*Theoretical memos* were applied to explain how the theory was derived from the data.

*Methodological memos* were used for analytical tracking (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) of the methodological evolution of the research project.

*Observational memos* served to describe observations of the cases during the research project.

Memos were dated and filed to serve as textual data in the research project.

### 5.4.3. Analysis

For qualitative case study research encompassing multiple cases, scholars (e.g., Boeije, 2002, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989; Fiss; 2007; Yin, 2014) recommend starting with within-case data analysis for the compression of data followed by cross-case comparison. This analysis follows this approach.

#### *Data preparation*

Before analysis, raw written and oral data were prepared and transformed into meaningful information (Boeije, 2009). To assess data as meaningful information, data from each case was stored as a sub-project. The following data were stored per case:

- 1) Secondary data providing general information on the case
- 2) Secondary data providing specific information about strategic action situations (e.g., notes of strategic-oriented meetings)
- 3) A constructed timeline containing a chronological overview of strategic action situations
- 4) Anonymous verbatim transcript of focus group interview
- 5) Theoretical, methodological, and observational memos
- 6) Verbatim transcripts of additional interviews

Secondary data of cases were predominantly available in Dutch. Primary data – interviews and focus group interviews – were also conducted in Dutch. Oral data were transformed into written data by verbatim transcripts in Dutch to ensure a minimum of information loss during data collection.

An overview of written data sources per case is provided in Appendix 3.

#### *Unit of observation and unit of analysis*

The unit of observation was defined as “critical strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities”. Here the assumption is that strategic action situations can be allocated through a historical reconstruction (see e.g., Mintzberg, 1978) and that they are observable as critical incidents (Butterfield et al., 2005; Flanagan, 1954; Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008; Schoemaker & Jonker, 2005).

More specifically, they can be recognized by Harrison’s (1996) criteria for strategic decision making (see also Chapter 2): 1) defining a relationship between the community at hand and its environment; 2) concerning the community as a whole; 3) encompassing the communities’ primary functions; 4) directing administrative and operational activities; 5) necessary to long-term accomplishments.

Regarding the 12 cases that participated in the longitudinal comparative case study, allocating strategic decision making is challenging since no single case has articulated distinct strategy development procedures or a specified strategic plan. The communities in the sample do not explicitly mention, document, or evaluate a community strategy. However, all cases are sensitive to changes, frictions, or new directions that must be addressed. Analysis of formalized documents –

statutes, bylaws, agendas, and notes – unveils that in all cases, patterns are observable that indicate strategic decision making. This allows for the analysis of patterns in these strategic action situations. Patterns were detected by analyzing documents and information retrieved from additional individual interviews. Since not all cases were well documented, the number of additional interviews varies per case. For some cases, one additional interview sufficed for information or confirmation on founding, early progress, and decision-making procedures. For other cases, various respondents were interviewed, some even multiple times, in order to establish information saturation on strategic decision-making procedures. Appendix 4 presents an overview of all additional interviews. For each case, analysis of initially sourced data served to prepare a preliminary timeline and to select a critical strategic action situation to discuss during the main unit of analysis: the focus group interview. During the focus group interviews, respondents were encouraged to make notes on a large sheet of paper representing a timeline. This ensured confirmation of and some additions to the preconstructed timeline. In addition, after each focus group meeting, the researcher wrote a memo capturing distinct aspects of the meeting, such as whether all invited respondents had joined the meeting, and the meeting setting, for example at respondents' homes or community offices. Verbatim transcripts of focus group interviews were subsequently used as the main unit of analysis. By applying constant comparison, patterns in the strategic action situations at hand were allocated as well as variables that affect or are affected by these strategic action situations. Analysis of patterns and variables per case resulted in:

- 1) A description and depiction of the selected strategic action situation as a process deconstructed in stages (Clarke & Fuller, 2011).
- 2) An overview of external variables (Ostrom, 2011b) that affect the strategic action situation at hand.
- 3) An overview of strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) that come into play in the strategic action situation.
- 4) An indication of the strategic modes of orientation (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) that have been attributed.

Results from 12 cases were eventually synthesized in a theoretically grounded, practice-based theory (e.g., Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Eisenhardt, 19989, Yin, 2014) on the nature of collaborative strategy development in place-based communities: Strategic Commoning.



#### 5.4.4. Open and axial coding

This research project adopts general principles of qualitative analysis by segmenting & reassembling (Boeije, 2010) data. First, verbatim transcripts of the focus group interviews were transformed into textual data. Next, transcripts went through an iterative process of open and axial coding by multiple researchers. The codes that were generated in this way allow for cross-case comparison of strategic action situations and the strategic-oriented variables that affect them.

After preparation, the transcripts of the focus group meetings were segmented into parts that are relevant and meaningful (Boeije, 2010) for deconstructing and analyzing strategic action situations. Coding of data (Boeije, 2010; Charmaz, 2008; Kumar, 2014) was applied to subdivide the prepared data into meaningful parts suitable for analysis. During multiple stages of analysis, codes were attributed to determine categories representing aspects of Strategic Commoning grounded in theory: stages, external variables, strategy types, and strategic modes of association (see also Chapters 2 and 3). Raw data was initially organized using open coding. For this, fragments of data were selected and compared that relate to aspects of Strategic Commoning. Thus, the coding process was partly inductive but guided by addressing the sensitizing concept of Strategic Commoning. Axial coding, called deductive or focused coding (Charmaz, 2008), was subsequently applied to synthesize coded data into salient categories and subcategories.

A final step in the coding process was selective or theoretical coding (Boeije, 2010; Charmaz, 2008), aiming to connect categories. Selective coding was eventually applied to appoint core categories (Strauss & Corbin, 2012) that represent stages in strategic action situations and core categories representing external variables that influence these stages. Table 5.3. summarizes the coding process.

**Table 5.3.**  
*Overview of coding*

Source	Coding	Output
Primary and secondary data	Open coding	Categories: strategy development process, strategic action situation, critical incidents
Verbatim transcript of focusgroup	Axial coding guided by sensitizing concepts from theory	Categories: strategy development process, external variable
Strategy development process, external variable, strategy style	Axial coding	Categories: stages of strategy development process, external variables: attributes of community, biophysical conditions, rules in use; strategy style
Stages of strategy development process, rules in use, strategy styles	Selective coding: reassembling categories into core categories	Process model of strategy development; external variables influencing stages of the process model, strategy styles, strategic modes of association

#### **5.4.5. Constant comparison and synthesis**

The core of the qualitative analyzing process in a comparative case study is within-case and cross-case constant comparison (Boeije, 2002, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss 1978). Constant comparison and theoretical sampling are regarded as inseparable (Boeije, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) to respond to queries that have risen from analyzing and reflecting on (previously collected) data. Constant comparison addresses, for example, segmentation of data, interrelating categories, and interpretations of concepts.

Constant comparison implies that data are constantly compared with newly acquired data for analysis. It is a cyclical process of comparing and reflecting on data that may be repeated multiple times until saturation. Saturation was accomplished when no new information that was deemed necessary for analysis could be acquired. Constant comparison of within-case and cross-case data enabled the development of a theory based on analysis of various qualitative data about strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities. This theory is visualized in a case-based framework representing the process of strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities.

The core categories that emerged from data analysis were synthesized into:

- 1) A case-based process model of strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities.
- 2) An overview of external variables influential to strategic decision making.
- 3) An overview of strategy types that have been observed in Strategic Commoning.
- 4) Strategic modes of association that have been attributed to the cases.

The results of the analysis are presented and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

### **5.5. Methodological accountability**

#### **5.5.1. Quality in qualitative research**

This explorative qualitative research reveals a theoretical construct labeled as Strategic Commoning by researching a small sample (N=12) of cases. The sample of cases is diverse and dynamic (see also Section 5.3.1.). Cases were prone to changes during the research period. This demanded a rigorous review of the quality of the research by reflecting on issues like reliability and validity. There are different perceptions of reliability and validity in quantitative and qualitative research (e.g., Boeije, 2010; Kumar; 2014). Boeije (2010) argues that perspectives on quality in qualitative research link back to the ontological and epistemological assumptions at the start of the research, i.e. the researcher's perspective on social reality and the function of the research. Quantitative researchers

can adopt a rather constructivist perspective on quality in research. From a quantitative perspective, research methodology is considered a tool for collecting empirical data that must be value-free and impartial. In this perspective, validity is achieved by standardization of measuring tools and repeatability of measurements. This is worth striving for, but as Boeije (2010) points out, this is never completely achievable in explorative research. A qualitative researcher can never fully anticipate explorative field research and must be able to react to unexpected situations. Social situations change over time, especially when addressing a novel and dynamic research subject such as Entrepreneurial Communities and may affect the social constructs researched. This hinders the exact replicability of the research at hand and calls for flexibility and even creativity in data collection. Another perspective on quality in qualitative research is rooted in postmodernism and questions the legitimacy of the research (Boeije, 2010). From this perspective, it is essential to evaluate the role of the researcher. This results in a different perspective on research quality, emphasizing criteria such as confirmability, transferability, dependability, and credibility (Boeije, 2010; Kumar, 2014). Trochim and Donnelly (2002) bring forward that these criteria more or less parallel the more constructivist criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

This research adopts a third perspective that is related to the two perspectives above. Validity and reliability are viewed as necessary, worthy aims (Boeije, 2010), but procedures to address reliability and validity must fit the explorative nature of the research. According to Boeije (2010), researchers adopting this third view should consider and address how the research process affects the research results. Corbin and Strauss (2015) put forward the idea that reliability and validity must constantly be evaluated during qualitative research. Boeije (2010) and Seale (1999) suggest methodological transparency to achieve this. From this third perspective, steps that have been taken to ensure the quality, validity, and reliability of this research are elucidated in the next paragraph.

### ***5.5.2. Methodological consistency and accountability***

Sections 5.2., 5.3., and 5.4. discuss the qualitative research design. The explorative and qualitative nature of the research calls for a discourse on the quality of the research. This discourse starts by documenting all steps in the data collection. Collected data were prepared, analyzed, and synthesized using software programs such as Word, Excel, and Mendeley. Coding was executed with significant consideration, and the process of coding was documented. As the research focuses on Dutch cases, all raw textual and non-textual data is in Dutch. Spoken data were transformed into written data by verbatim transcripts. For minimal information loss, verbatim transcripts were provided in Dutch for analysis by multiple Dutch researchers. Only after analysis, results were translated into English. Original and prepared data and analyses have been archived within the

Saxion Research Data Management System provided by Saxion UAS. To ensure research quality, the researcher has applied various methods that ascertain the validity, reliability, consistency, and transferability of the research. These are explicated below.

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation ensures that multiple methods are applied, and multiple viewpoints are adopted to investigate a phenomenon (Boeije, 2009).

*Theoretical triangulation* was established by adopting perspectives from strategic management theory and collective action theory.

*Methodological triangulation* was established by applying multiple qualitative research methods during data collection for sourcing primary and secondary data: interviews, focus group meetings, and document research.

Methodological triangulation also ensures *data source triangulation* in this research. Multiple data sources were used for each case (see also Section 5.2.2.). Using multiple data sources allows checking for consistency and establishing information saturation.

*Investigator triangulation* (Boeije, 2010; Yin, 2014) is an established method to ensure objectivity in data collection and analysis. Multiple researchers participated in the coding process to ensure that emerging coding categories were developed in a transparent and valid coding process. During the research period eight master thesis students from Nijmegen School of Management participated in data collection and data analysis (Beijen, 2021; Brantjes, 2020; De Bree, 2017; Cuppers, 2021; Euwes, 2021; Hillenaar, 2020; Kock, 2019; Van de Warenburg, 2020). During 2020 and 2021, two separate groups of master students independently coded and analyzed the main unit of analysis: the focus group interviews. They discussed the results with the principal researcher during multiple coding sessions. Thus, multiple researchers participated in constant comparison by multiple, alternating rounds of data collection, coding, and analysis. This approach ensures *inter-rater reliability* (Boeije, 2010) by cross-checking coding strategies. Also, it limits *researcher bias*, as multiple independent researchers approached and evaluated theory, research design, cases, and data.

### *Source anonymity*

The anonymity of sources is deemed necessary for several reasons. First, guaranteeing anonymity ensures that respondents can speak out freely during interviews. Second, to ensure that data analysis is unbiased, respondents must not be linked to categories during analysis. During analysis, source anonymity was guaranteed by transforming all information that can identify individual participants to anonymous data. Names and other identifiers were removed from interview

transcripts using coded pseudonyms. This anonymity guarantees confidentiality to respondents. For presenting research results, communities' names have been maintained in Chapters 6 and 7.

#### *Methodological transparency*

Methodological accountability (Boeije, 2009) in qualitative research is generally supported by providing an accurate overview of all stages of the research process. According to Boeije (2009), this is linked to the transferability of the research: using the same procedures should result in similar results. However, within this explorative qualitative research, there is a twist. Since all the cases are unique and prone to changes, the research has adopted an open and flexible approach to data collection (see also Section 5.3.1.). For example, interviews and focus group interviews were semi-structured. They were guided by a topic list and partly dependent on flexibility by the researcher. It stands to reason that another researcher might have handled parts of such sessions differently. Therefore, procedures and data collection cannot be reproduced in precisely the same manner by another researcher. However, several steps were taken to ensure methodological accountability and transparency (Boeije, 2009) in both data collection and analysis. They are accounted for below.

#### *Topic list*

For data collection, an extensive topic list (Boeije, 2010; Mason, 2002) was designed that served as a universal checklist for all cases (Appendix 2). The choice of a topic list was motivated by the variety of cases and the variety of available data for each case. Using an emergent topic list (i) minimizes instant improvisation, (ii) focuses data collection, (iii) enables the processing of previous data collection, and (iv) serves to structure data analysis (Boeije, 2010). Following the principles of constant comparison, the topic list was adjusted several times during the research period and served as a checklist during focus group interviews. Thus, the topic list ensured that data were available that provided similar information on strategic action situations for all cases.

#### *Memos*

During the research period, methodological and analytical memos (see also Section 5.4.2.) were written to keep track of steps and deliberations regarding data collection and analysis. These have been documented and filed.

#### *External validation*

External validation or generalizability (Boeije, 2010; Kumar, 2014) relates to the extent to which findings from the cases apply to other settings. For generalizability, the research should be conducted in different cases while demonstrating the same results. The generalizability of cases is

challenging when addressing a small and deliberately diverse sample of a novel construct. As discussed in Section 5.2.1., this challenge was addressed by applying the theoretical typology presented in Chapter 4 to select a diverse group of cases that allowed for *theoretical generalization* (Boeije, 2010; Smaling, 2003). Thus, the deliberate diversity of cases served to help construct the theory. More cases could be analyzed in the same manner to enhance external validation.

#### *Member validation*

Member validation (Boeije, 2010) relates to the reliability of respondents and has been established in several ways. When doing qualitative research, there is always a risk that participating in the research may affect respondents' reactions. This is generally known as the much-debated Hawthorne effect (see e.g., Adair, 1984). When first approaching the cases, it became clear that some of the constituents were not familiar with the concept of strategic development and had difficulties relating this to their actions. Consequently, the researcher took time at the start of interviews and focus group interviews to explicate the meaning of strategy development in the light of the research. During the focus group meetings, the reconstructed timeline was presented and discussed, enabling respondents to react and adjust collectively. Initial findings of the research were presented to respondents during a working conference in June 2020, enabling them to react and provide feedback. When deemed necessary, additional interviews were conducted for information saturation. Thus, the perceptions of respondents were checked by other respondents from the same case. Also, written data and social media were used to verify respondents' statements and vice versa. For example: many cases use social media to communicate about their manner of working and the progress of their actions, and have published statutes, project plans, and annual reports on their websites. In addition, analysis of data by multiple researchers enabled independent evaluation of consistency in data, including respondents' statements, for member validation.

#### *Researcher bias*

Limiting researcher bias is considered important for this research. There is always a risk that the researchers' perceptions could influence respondents or results in qualitative research. Before becoming a researcher and lecturer in Business Economics, the principal researcher worked for a long time as a professional in policy development, consultancy, and training regarding collaborative organizing. As a student, she became engaged in community-based organizing (see also Section 1.1.) and she has been personally involved in various collaborative and community-based organizational constructs ever since. Cases were partly sourced via her professional and personal network (see also Section 5.3.1.). On the one hand, this calls for a rigorous reflection on the researchers' role and ensuring that her personal experiences and views did not influence data collection and analysis. On

the other hand, her prior experience motivated her choice for engaging in this research project in the first place and enabled the researcher to anticipate the challenges of her dynamic research subject. Her experiences with collaborative organizational constructs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) resulted in the deliberate choice of a longitudinal, explorative, and qualitative research approach. In Chapter 8, the researcher reflects on the research process and the researchers' role.

## **5.6. General reflections on the research design**

After conceptualizing the sensitizing concepts of Strategic Commoning and Entrepreneurial Communities from theory, case-based research was applied to explore the nature of Strategic Commoning in practice. The methodological design of this research therefore reflects a qualitative, explorative, comparative case study. Using the five general properties for Entrepreneurial Communities and the strategic-oriented theoretical typology presented in Chapter 4, 12 cases in the Netherlands were selected for case-based research. These cases were studied and documented during a longitudinal comparative case study from 2015 to 2020. For each case, various primary and secondary written and oral data were documented. Qualitative analysis and constant comparison were applied to transform cases into conditions for Strategic Commoning that are further described and analyzed in Chapters 6 and 7.

The conceptualization of the subject of this research – Strategic Commoning – was motivated by general observations of the proportional emergence of sustainability-oriented community-based organizations. The research question was sparked by practice and is rooted in the theoretical-grounded conceptualization of Strategic Commoning. Orientation on theoretical footholds merged with orientation on possible cases. During the research period, all cases went through periods of change. This enabled the researcher to witness the strategic aspects of such changes in practice. In most cases, the governing body and the constellation of members changed during the research period. As a result, not all initial respondents were available for the concluding focus group interviews. Thus, Entrepreneurial Communities are represented in this research by a dynamic sample prone to internal and external changes. Although this represents the dynamics surrounding all starting organizations, it called for flexibility and creativity in the research approach to ensure that data collection for each case sufficed to guarantee information saturation. Data collection and analysis have been divided into two steps. As the first step, data were sourced and analyzed for historical reconstruction of strategic action situations. As the second step, a conclusive focus group interview was conducted with constituents involved in the governance of selected strategic action situations.

The cases were partly sourced through the professional and personal network of the principal researcher. She has become a community member in some cases, which provided valuable member access to their internal documents. However, for the duration of data collection and analysis, the researcher refrained from joining the discussions and decisions of these communities.

Respondents deem the research relevant. In general, respondents distinctly welcomed the sharing and exchange of experiences and contemplations. Their willingness to share made valuable data accessible. Also, it made the research period an enjoyable and inspiring experience, providing access to novel ways of community-based organizing as they emerged. This research only reflects a fraction of the innovative and creative collective actions, but also the profound discussions on value creation, the enthusiasm, the eagerness to share and co-create, and the sheer energy that comes with prosperous collective actions. In a setting like this, it is conceivable that the researcher might become biased towards familiar cases. Such researcher bias must be ruled out during data collection and analysis. The accountability, validity, and objectivity of the research have been discussed in Section 5.5. In addition, the researcher reflects on her role in the research process in Chapter 8.

In conclusion, the explorative character of the research was challenging but revealed valuable findings on the nature and role of Strategic Commoning that are presented and discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.



# CHAPTER

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# 6



## **CHAPTER 6. DECONSTRUCTING THE PRACTICE OF STRATEGIC COMMONING.**

### **Abstract**

Chapter 6 summarizes the results of a within-case analysis of strategy development in 12 Dutch Entrepreneurial Communities. Based on document research and transcripts of focus group interviews, a selected strategic action situation has been analyzed for each case. Results from within-case analysis consisting of multiple rounds of axial coding by multiple researchers have been synthesized and summarized into: i) stages in strategy development, and ii) external variables that affect those stages. This is followed by contemplating: iii) strategy types that have been recognized and iv) the communities' strategic mode of association.

### **6.1. Introduction**

Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation conceptualize Strategic Commoning from the perspectives of strategic management theory and collective action theory. Chapters 6 and 7 present the results of a comparative case study addressing strategy development processes in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands. Various written and oral data were sourced for within-case analysis (see also Chapter 5). For each case, focus group interviews with constituents responsible for governing strategic decisions served as the primary unit of analysis. Appendices 3, 4 and 5 provide an overview of the available data sources used for each case. Existing documents (e.g., statutes, bylaws, annual reports, agendas, and notes of meetings), websites and social media were analyzed to articulate generic strategic goals and to allocate constituents responsible for strategic decision making. Although cases follow statutory procedures for decision-making, the extent to which this decision making is structured and documented differs for each case. In practice, cases act strategically, and their strategic decisions can be deconstructed and analyzed. Chapter 5 presents the methodological foundations for analyzing strategic decisions in the sample by detection and coding patterns in strategic decision making. This chapter examines the structure of community-based strategic decision making.

Section 6.2. presents the results from within-case analysis of strategic decisions in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands. Section 6.3. discusses general findings and limitations. Through several qualitative coding rounds (see Chapter 5) by multiple researchers, four elements of strategy development were analyzed: i) stages in strategy development, ii) variables affecting strategy development, iii) strategy types, and iv) the strategic mode of association attributed to the community at hand. In addition, we contemplate changes in the strategic archetypes we attributed to the Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample (see also Chapters 4 and 5).

**Table 6.1.**  
Examples of open coding of stages in collaborative strategy development

Fragment (anonymous)	Indicator	Category	Stage
<i>"We'd love to have a new board member. But all consider it very challenging. A lot happens and we know something about everything. It is hard to intervene."</i>	Constellation of board Current board dominant Acknowledging own position	Constellation of governing body	Community composition
<i>"We noticed many small initiatives getting stuck. Because they did not have sufficient connections to really get through. This indicates we must do what we believe is best: more collaboration to establish impact."</i>	Anticipating the need for collaborative solutions	Assessing problem	Problem
<i>"We took a strategic decision to focus on education, and to do so structurally. That way we can get hired."</i>	Focusing on revenue-generating actions	Assessing objectives Strategy	Goal
<i>"Wind, solar, education and neighborhood projects, rooted in the knowledge within the cooperative."</i>	Community projects	Determining collaborative actions	Actions
<i>"...on different levels people are communicating, which results in incentives for new initiatives..."</i>	Additional results	Environmental-centric outcome	Outcome

### Stages

Data were deconstructed through several rounds of open (inductive) and axial (deductive) coding. For analysis of the selected strategic action situation, axial codes were eventually synthesized into categories that parallel the stages of the conceptual process model of

Strategic Commoning: community formation stage, problem definition stage, goal setting stage, determining collective actions, and outcome assessment stage (see also Section 3.5.). Examples of the coding of stages are summarized in Table 6.1. below.

### *External variables*

For analysis of factors affecting the selected strategic action situation, factors mentioned by respondents to be affecting the strategic decision at hand were synthesized into categories that parallel Ostrom's (2011a, 2011b) external variables affecting any action situation. Document analysis demonstrates that in all cases, rules in use have been formalized in statutes and house rules. Governing boards take great care to administer rules in use regarding decision making, and strategic decisions are documented. However, during the individual interviews and focus group interviews, respondents seldom referred to rules in use. The majority of the cases have taken great efforts to regulate decision making in a transparent manner, which is established by analyzing the execution of documented procedures. Examples of coding of external variables are presented below in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2.**  
*Examples of open coding of external variables*

<b>Fragment (anonymous)</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Variable</b>
<i>"Everyone has their talents and their time. You can't keep full control"</i>	Acknowledging variety in constituents	Heterogeneity	Attribute of the community
<i>"Pressure is quickly exerted on you in a subtle manner to focus on their objectives"</i>	Influence of funding institutions	Availability and conditions for resources	Biophysical conditions
<i>"We have a fixed schedule for the board meeting in which all agenda items from finance to the progress of neighborhood projects are listed"</i>	Availability of information	Aggregation rules	Rules in use

### *Strategy types*

For determining whether and what strategy types occur in community-based forms of organizing, axial codes were inspired by types of strategies that were developed by Mintzberg and Waters (Mintzberg et al., 2009; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Table 6.3. below summarizes the axial codes that were administered.

**Table 6.3.**  
*Axial coding of types of strategies*

<b>Category: strategy type</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Planned</b>  most deliberate	Articulated strategic goals & plans Formal control by central leadership Anticipating predictable environment Deliberate
<b>Entrepreneurial</b>	Articulated central vision Concurrence on generic goal(s) by single directive body Revenue generating collective actions Signs of entrepreneurship (e.g., sales) Anticipating niche environment Broadly deliberate, emergent in orientation
<b>Ideological</b>	Articulated shared beliefs Powerful / inflexible / collective vision directs actions Normative control Pro-active towards environment Rather deliberate
<b>Umbrella</b>	Articulated constraints determine boundaries Leadership determines targets and boundaries of actions Complex, uncertain environment Deliberate perspective, emerging positions
<b>Process</b>	Articulated processual goals Central leadership in control of the process that guides actions Constituents organize details Complex environment Partly deliberate, partly emergent
<b>Unconnected</b>	Various divergent strategies at once Loosely coupled (groups of) constituents engaging in their own actions Absent, unclear, or debated common intentions Organizationally emergent
<b>Consensus</b>	Unclear general goals Converging collective actions in the absence of directive common intentions Mutual adjustment by constituents Rather emergent
<b>Imposed</b>  most emergent	Strategy articulated by environment Third parties direct / induce actions Emergent: determined by third parties
<b>Additional?</b>	Additional

Table 6.3. recapitulates the axial codes regarding strategy types that were administered to verbatim transcripts of focus group meetings, leaving an “additional” category for indicators that could not be related to one of the types proposed by theory.

#### *Strategic mode of association*

Lastly, we attributed a strategic mode of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) to each case by axial coding. For this we looked at factors like organizational stability and continuity, but also

whether and how collective actions match strategic goals. Indicators we deduced from theory are summarized below in Table 6.4.

**Table 6.4.**  
*Indicators for modes of association*

<b>Mode of association</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Interdependent</b>	Matching goals and interests Strategic and organizational development mutually reinforcing Actions match multiple strategic goals Multiple values are created on behalf of multiple groups of constituents
<b>Imbalanced</b>	Diverging goals and interests Strategic and organizational development hinder each other Inability to meet strategic objectives Unstable organization
<b>Destructive</b>	Extreme pluralism: opposing and eventual conflicting goals and interests Strategic and organizational development blocked Declining organization

## 6.2. Within-case analysis

This section summarizes the within-case analysis, each case commencing with a brief overview of the critical strategic action situation that was selected for analysis. This is followed by a brief description of aspects of the strategic decision-making at hand. Each case description concludes the decision-making procedure, and the initial strategic oriented archetype that was attributed to the case. This is followed by a concise description of the main results and concluded with an overview of external factors of influence on stages in strategic decision-making.

### 6.2.1. Bommelerwaar

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Change in strategic focus: from regional integral systems change to providing sustainable energy in the region
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	2019–2021, prepared by board, accorded by general assembly in 2021
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Bommelerwaar was approached as a case corresponding with the colligating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities. During the research period, the community decided to focus on a single issue and to engage in revenue-generating actions, thus shifting towards the single issue endeavor archetype by the end of the research period.

Bommelerwaard was established in 2016 as the first “gebiedscoöperatie” (area-centric cooperative) in the Netherlands. Inspired by the Rhineland Business Model (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2013), the cooperative pioneered the “Rhineland Area Arrangement” (Ravenhorst & Spronck, 2018;) to address sustainability as a long-term and multiple-value-driven endeavor demanding collaboration between various societal realms on a regional level. The main purpose of Bommelerwaard was to address systems change by making the Bommelerwaard region energy neutral, self-sufficient in basic needs, financially independent, socially connected, waste free, nature inclusive, water safe, and life-course resistant (Bommelerwaard, 2016). The cooperative pioneered distinctly value-driven statutes to ensure that the multiple-value-creating perspective would endure. In practice, addressing and connecting multiple sectors by various collective actions proved challenging, resulting in friction and in one of the initiators leaving the board. In 2019 the then new board opted for maintaining the initial, value-driven statutes but decided on a deliberate change in strategic focus: from integral systems change to collective actions addressing availability and accessibility of sustainable energy sources in the region.

*“It is sun, wind, and sustainable. If the organization is on the right track, we will consider other themes. However, currently that is postponed” (Bommelerwaard, focus group interview, 2019).*

During 2019, the board set various operational goals regarding collective actions focusing on sustainable energy production and consumption: expanding the cooperative by attracting more members and initiating new projects for the production and consumption of energy; informing stakeholders and the general public and becoming acknowledged as a leading organization in the regional sustainable energy market. The general assembly accorded this approach in 2020.

The five-year lustrum in 2021 reported over 250 cooperative members, various solar roof projects, initiation of a wind-turbine park, being acknowledged and consulted as an essential player, and structural cooperation with a national provider of sustainable energy, enabling an increase in energy projects. Community goals and collective action outcomes are documented in annual plans and reports. Outcomes corresponding with the operational goals set in 2019 are here interpreted as plan-centric. The strategic choice to focus on goals

and outcomes results in process-centric outcomes, while partner-centric outcomes are created through collaborations with stakeholders in the region. For realizing the intended value creation, Bommelerwaar invests deliberately and actively in engaging members in becoming active in the community. They are consulted regarding new plans, realizing partner-centric goals.

Its initial broad, multiple-value-oriented vision positions the communities' strategy as the process type. Revenue generating actions like producing energy are indicators for the entrepreneuring strategy type. Some other aspects have been analyzed that are influential to strategic choice but do not match the known strategy types. Bommelerwaar was the first case to effectuate statutes that support the perspective that the main purpose of the community is to realize multiple and shared value creation for the whole region through collaboration. These value-driven statutes formalize a systemic perspective of the region in which the community operates. This in turn enables a formalized organizational structure for addressing the region as a multiple-value-creating system. In maintaining the statutes and putting a strong focus on community development, both value-orientation and community development become strategic.

Over time, board members recognized an imbalance caused by frictions that occurred due to diverging views on the purpose of, and actions by, the community. By reassessing the strategic focus, the community transformed from an imbalanced strategic mode of association to an interdependent strategic mode of association.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.5. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and indicators for external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.5.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Bommelerwaar deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Variety in constituents' background *Reassessing values: focus on energy *Professional	*Constituents' ability to contribute to actions *Constituents' vision on organizing sustainability	*Constituents' capacities *Constituents' knowledge *Constituents' experience *Constituents' networks	*Constituents' ability and motivation contribute to collective actions	*Increasing the number of active constituents *Collective focus



	background of constituents		*Aiming to lead by example		
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Available assets	*Acting within the boundaries of the region	*Scope and nature of energy projects *Momentum for approaching stakeholders *Creating linkages *Interdependency	*Scope and nature of energy projects *Momentum for approaching stakeholders *Creating linkages *Interdependency *Need for generating assets *External funding	*Creating impact beyond the community *Leading by example *Connecting stakeholders *Interdependency in the region
<b>Rules in use</b>		*Information: consultation of community members	*Choice: general assembly decides on new focus		

### 6.2.2. De Fruitmotor

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Structuring and establishing chain cooperative
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	Flash cooperative period 2016–2019, new cooperative structure accorded by the general assembly in 2018, new cooperative structure implemented 2019, chain cooperative effected in new statutes, 2020
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	The De Fruitmotor cooperative was approached as a case that corresponds with the single issue endeavor archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.

The De Fruitmotor cooperative was launched in 2013 to enhance biodiversity in the Betuwe region. De Fruitmotor started producing and selling juices and ciders from regionally sourced fruits that would otherwise go to waste. Revenues were invested in supporting collaborating fruit growers to adopt sustainable fruit growing methods and enhance biodiversity. The initial board members used their extensive personal networks to advocate for the cooperative and its purpose. De Fruitmotor quickly became an example of circular, community-based transformation in fruit growth and food production.

After initial success, the board felt the need for a stronger focus on involving various stakeholders in contributing to regional systemic change through circular food chains through regenerative land use and a sustainable fruit production chain.

*“...from the start we wanted to connect fruit growers and consumers”* (De Fruitmotor, focus group, 2019).

From the perspective of the board members, this can only be achieved by pioneering from a shared value perception. The area is somewhat known for being headstrong and wary of collaboration outside one's network. The cooperative aspired to become financially sustainable to demonstrate that sustainable fruit growth while prioritizing sustainable value creation is profitable business. The cooperative adopted the temporary concept of the "flash cooperative" (Van Bekkum, personal communication, 2019), which enables acceleration of the organizational development of a community. A flash cooperative construction is adopted for approximately three years. Elaborate decision-making structures like organizing a general assembly are temporarily put on hold, enabling a board to act fast in putting up a community structure and configuring strategic goals. After approximately two years, the board starts implementing the novel community construct, and after three years, the full cooperative must be established by general assembly.

*"You need all the shackles in the chain. Thus, you have to come up with fitting categories, since a grower has different needs and wants in a cooperative than a consumer"* (De Fruitmotor, focus group, 2019).

Using the flash cooperative structure, the board of De Fruitmotor designed a detailed community structure and developed a plan for the development of the cooperative while simultaneously innovating the business model to generate the assets necessary to create and sustain the chain cooperative. Community structure and plans for the full chain cooperative were accorded by the general assembly in 2019 and effected in 2020.

De Fruitmotor has evolved into a chain cooperative contributing to regenerative agriculture in the Betuwe region. The cooperative distinguishes between seven membership types, four of which are considered chain partners directly contributing to the fruit chain: fruit growers, producers, retailers, and consumers. Strategic decisions are prepared by delegations of member types and discussed and accorded by the community council. The cooperative distinguishes various membership types with proportional voting rights. In accordance with its aim to contribute to systemic change, the cooperative has set up a center of expertise in circular agriculture, collaborating with research institutions.

Goals are articulated in an operational plan and in year plans. Progress is evaluated in annual reports, resulting in plan-centric outcomes. Process-centric outcomes are generated by establishing organizational change. In establishing new, multiple-value-creating collaborations, partner-centric and outside-stakeholder-centric outcomes are generated.

De Fruitmotors' collective actions are embedded in its mission and vision and addressed by year plans for which a member council is consulted, thus demonstrating elements of the planned strategy type. However, the plan becomes process-centric by engaging in and establishing organizational changes and processual goals. The community demonstrates clear signs of entrepreneurship and taps into a niche market with its circular regional products, thus the Entrepreneurial strategy type is recognized as well.

*"...we felt the need for establishing a decent business structure for otherwise we would no longer have existed after two years" (De Fruitmotor, focus group, 2019).*

The community demonstrates a strong belief in the necessity of systems change and the added value of collaboration for this. Community members and stakeholders are engaged in various activities that prioritize ecological and social value creation. From this perspective, its strategy becomes community-oriented and value-oriented.

By developing the chain cooperative structure, strategic and organizational development reinforce each other while multiple strategic and operational goals are met. De Fruitmotor operates a transparent value perspective for all community members and stakeholders and the community demonstrates an interdependent mode of association.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.6. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.6.**  
*Strategic Action Situation De Fruitmotor deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Variance in community members *Flash cooperative: board decides *Recruiting new board members	*Addressing variance in community members *Intrinsic motivation *Member categories	*Agreeing on chain cooperative as optimal solution  *Economic viability  *Focus on systems change  *Inclusiveness: anyone can contribute to the area	*Constituents' Competencies *Availability of volunteers *Developing membership categories *Alignment in fruit sector through collective action. *Investing knowledge and network	*Focus on systems change *Alignment through action *Inclusiveness *Investing knowledge and network *Staying innovative

			*Leading by example	*Shared aim for innovation of fruit sector	
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Operating within existing legal & institutional structures *Properties of fruit sector	*Stakeholders must acknowledge urgency *Being acknowledged for contributing solutions *Availability of networks *Willingness in the region to cooperate	*Leading by example *Changing the fruit sector *Advocating chain solutions	*Third-party funding *Availability of subsidies *Existing legal structures *Distinct features and culture of the region *Properties of the fruit sector	*Addressing sustainable agriculture from a place-bound perspective
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Position: end of flash cooperative period *Information: transparence	*Choice: influence of new board members	*Scope: establishing chain cooperative with proportional voting	*Information: involving constituents *Scope: establishing community structure	*Scope: establishing chain cooperative *Pay-off: clear vision on sharing revenues

### 6.2.3. Dirk de Derde

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Fragmentation of actions prompted discussion on continuity during 2017
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	Board meetings from 2015–2017
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Dirk de Derde was approached as a case that corresponded with the multiple issue endeavor archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities

Foundation Dirk de Derde was established in 2013 by five civilians aiming to create a meshwork for regional sustainable transformation by interconnecting actors from the “golden pentagon” (Focusgroup Dirk de Derde, 2017): enterprises, government, civilians, finance institutions, and knowledge institutions. No general organizational structure was adopted. The initiators considered themselves quartermasters aiming for an “organic development” (Focusgroup Dirk de Derde, 2017) of value-driven collaborations between actors from the golden pentagon. During 2013 and 2014, six working conferences were organized for stakeholders from the golden pentagon. This resulted in various new collaborations in the region addressing sustainability-related topics such as energy, food, land use, mobility, and education.

*“In the area, there are small, fragmented initiatives, and we wanted to bring those together, establishing a movement and a fundament”* (Dirk de Derde, focus group, 2017).

Although new collaborations emerged, they only marginally interconnected into an integrated approach of wicked problems in the area. From the focus group interview (2017) four main reasons emerge:

1) Diverging interests by the quartermasters. From 2014, board members became personally occupied in organizing various new collaborations that resulted from the working groups. It was felt that board members prioritized the collaborations they were involved in. This eventually resulted in tensions and one board member leaving. In 2015 the remaining board members decided to halt Dirk de Derde. During 2017 the remaining board members organized several meetings to assess the future of Dirk de Derde.

*“There is tension, but also mismatch of certain values among us”* (Dirk de Derde, focus group, 2017).

2) Insufficient focus on organizational development. Autonomous projects became prioritized by board members at the cost of operationalizing the aspired golden pentagon “meshwork”.

*“We lacked the critical ability to organize”* (Dirk de Derde, focus group, 2017).

3) Insufficient governmental and financial support. Dirk de Derde did not pursue developing revenue-generating collective actions. From the quartermasters’ perspective, governmental and financial support was consequential to an integral, multiple-value-driven collaboration in the golden pentagon. However, institutions considered Dirk de Derde an experimental think tank rather than a supportive structure for sustainable regional development. This hindered the acquisition of subsidies. Autonomous projects by autonomous organizations were able to acquire funding, but no funding could be acquired to cover structural costs for the foundation.

4) Unfamiliarity with the perspective of systemic change by aspired key actors from the golden pentagon. The quartermasters felt confronted with opposition to their integral approach of sustainable development.

*“The municipality agrees when it has a small scope such as a street barbeque, but when you participate with education, the fundamental things, they see you as a threat”* (Dirk de Derde, focus group, 2017).

During the meetings in 2017, the board members concluded that their intentions could be realized more effectively in the various collaborations that had emerged instead of investing more time in an overarching structure. The decision was made to disband Dirk de Derde. This was effected in early 2018. Their experiences with Dirk de Derde motivated various board members to address possible strategic and organizational tensions from the start in their new endeavors. Thus, although intended processual outcomes could not be met, to some extent Dirk de Derde realized person-centric and environmental-centric outcomes. Two communities that evolved from Dirk de Derde are also addressed in this research: Gebiedscoöperatie Riverienland and De Fruitmotor.

*“The cooperatives that emerged from Dirk de Derde have no idea Dirk underlies them” (Dirk de Derde, focus group, 2017).*

From a strategic perspective, the process and umbrella types are attributed to Dirk de Derde. The initiators aimed for an organic development of a collaborative process whereby Dirk de Derde served as an umbrella organization connecting various societal realms in place-based collective actions. The initiative to connect multiple societal realms was strongly embedded in the shared perspective on the golden pentagon, resulting in the multiple-value-creation perspective becoming strategic. Although the quartermasters agreed on their perspective on systemic change on a regional level, the various collaborations that evolved became dominant and time consuming for individual board members. This eventually resulted in unconnected strategies. Due to different priorities, an imbalanced strategic mode of association occurred which eventually became destructive, resulting in the demise of Dirk de Derde.

*“The five of us wanted to become a bigger us. But that became them and us” (Dirk de Derde, focus group, 2017).*

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.7. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and indicators for external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.7.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Dirk de Derde deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes Process
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Counterproductive heterogeneity within board *Lack of organizational capacity. *Value Alignment: "golden pentagon"	*Diverging priorities. *Complexity of addressing multiple values. *Searching for collaborative identity	*Various goals addressed by multiple new collaborations *Lack of organizational capacity *Divergence in value orientation	*Diverging collective actions *New collaborations at the cost of organizational capacity	*Autonomous collaborations continue *Divergence in value orientation
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Institutions critical of participating in "golden pentagon"	*Resource dependency: no funding of structural costs *Unsupportive institutions *Physical environment: area-wide collaborations are rare	*Resource dependency: assessing future funding possibilities, assessing future actions	*Legal context: organizational form *Resource dependency: anticipating insufficient institutional support	* No funding available for structural costs *Institutions unwilling to participate *Initiated collaborations become new stakeholders in the region.
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Position: divergence *Information: different interests	*Boundary: loosely coupled network	*Choice: regulated by statutes *Aggregation: democratic decision-making process favored Pay off		*Pay-off: sparked new organizations in the area

#### 6.2.4. *Energiecoöperatie WPN*

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Unbundling community actions and energy production
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	2018 and 2019. Decision making prepared by board. Accorded 2019 by general assembly, effected 2019
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Energiecoöperatie WPN was approached as a case that corresponds with the single issue endeavor archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.

The Windpower Nijmegen cooperative was founded in 2013 by civilians aiming to make local and emission-free energy production accessible to consumers in the Nijmegen area. Supported by the municipality of Nijmegen, a cooperative community construct was established. Over a thousand inhabitants from the Nijmegen region own a local wind farm through shareholder construction. The electricity that is produced is sold. Benefits will eventually be restituted to shareholders but are initially invested in organizational development and funding of community initiatives in the

neighborhoods surrounding the wind farm. A solar park, also co-funded by shareholders, is scheduled from 2022. The board and various working groups prepare strategic and major operational decisions. Voting is regulated by statutes and house rules and takes place during general assemblies. In the early years, there was an operational focus on development and funding of the wind farm. Various organizational constructs emerged within the cooperative: a consultancy for building and maintaining the wind turbine park, a shareholder construction for crowdfunding, and a foundation for investing revenues in various projects in the surroundings of the wind-turbine park. Different membership categories with proportional voting rights were introduced: members, shareholders, and donors. This proved a prosperous construct for quickly realizing the wind turbine park but also resulted in energy production taking center stage instead of being the output of collective actions. It was felt that the various organizational constructs confused the purpose of the cooperative.

*“A number of community members and initiators became professionally involved and dependent on the development of the organization and the projects for their own livelihood”* (Energiecoöperatie WPN, focus group, 2020).

It was also felt that the public perceived the wind turbine park to be the main purpose of the cooperative, while it was intended as a means to demonstrate operational output. New board members were attracted to addressing these issues. From 2016, the board initiated a strategic discussion to reassess strategic and operational goals and discuss the unbundling of energy production and community development.

*“...it became clear that we’re in a process of decoupling. And we have to address that because there was a fair amount of pressure to operate as a collective”* (Energiecoöperatie WPN, focus group, 2020).

In 2019 the updated organizational construct with a clear division in roles and responsibilities was accorded by the general assembly. Organizing and structuring community development from a shared value perspective is considered essential in making sustainable energy accessible to all inhabitants in the area. To accentuate this, the new name Energiecoöperatie WPN was adopted by the general assembly and formalized in 2020.

*“Everything we do and decide eventually comes from the mission-driven organization”* (Energiecoöperatie WPN, focus group interview, 2020).



By re-establishing the substantive goals of developing a community through reorganizing the community structure, and by enhancing accessibility to local sustainable energy production by initiating the solar park, plan-centric outcomes have been established. Reorganizing the community also indicates process-centric outcomes. Actions generate multiple value constituents for partner organizations and for the surrounding neighborhoods, indicating that partner-centric and outside stakeholder-centric outcomes have been realized.

From a strategic perspective, the entrepreneurial and the process type have been recognized. Initiated by the board, the community has reassessed its central vision and articulated various processual goals in community development. The community generates revenues through the sale of sustainable energy. Being one of the first energy cooperatives in the Netherlands, it addressed a niche in the energy market. The community manages various projects through working groups under an articulated governance structure. Transparent procedures have been established to ensure that community development takes center stage, and not the energy projects. Thus, community development becomes strategic output.

Energiecoöperatie WPN reacted to an imbalance between organizational purpose and revenue-generating actions by engaging in a process to match goals and interests. The organizational structure was redefined to better align actions with community development. The current mode of association is considered interdependent. Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.8. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and indicators for external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.8.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Energiecoöperatie WPN deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*New board members attracted to address organizational change *Community development is key	*Various organizational constructs confuse community development *Diverging interests within the community	*Focus on community values, community purpose, and Community Involvement:	*Community members involved in community development *Availability of competencies	*New organizational structure involves community members, new name represents the collaborative scope *Leading by example *Being part of a transformative movement
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Availability of funding & support by	*Organizational form in demand of collaborative	*Physical environment	*Physical environment *Stakeholders	*Physical environment *Stakeholders

	existing institutions	scope and structure *Changing role of energy production *Emergence of similar initiatives: change in focus	*Opposition to solar plant	*Resources	
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Aggregation: influential community members *Position: roles and responsibilities	*Information: being careful with top-down communication *Position: structure of decision making *Boundary: governing complex situations	*Aggregation: voting *Position: roles and responsibilities	*Scope: informing various member types	*Position: roles and responsibilities

### 6.2.5. Food Council MRA

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Establishing a fitting organizational structure
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	2019–2021 by initiators, overarching foundation established 2021
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Food Council MRA is approached as a case that corresponds with the advocating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities

Two civilians initiated the Food Council for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region in 2017 as a platform for contemplating and experimenting with a systemic approach to circular food production and consumption in the Amsterdam region. Noticing the abundance of actors and initiatives in the food sector, the initiators felt that collaboration was needed to develop an integral approach to address food sustainability in the complex metropolitan environment.

*“The gap is there. Physical and in words. Between the global and local network. The local network is bursting with small initiatives”* (Food Council MRA, focus group interview, 2019).

Food Council MRA initiated a conference addressing the roles and impact of food production and consumption in the metropolitan area, aiming to connect existing initiatives, institutions, and organizations to transition to a more sustainable food system. After the initial success of the conference, the initiators consciously engaged in a process of contemplating an organizational construct for enabling the exchange and development of ideas and initiatives from a systemic perspective.

*“It all went very organically (...). We started an adventure where it was not clear where we were going, where we might end up and how we could implement that”* (Food Council MRA, focus group interview, 2019).

The initiators consulted various stakeholders and aspiring partners while simultaneously setting up a small project bureau run by volunteers developing and participating in various practical and research projects. After much contemplation, the initiators concluded that the – initially aspired to – organizational construct of a cooperative proved difficult to effectively address the overarching vision and mission in the complex environment of the metropolitan area. Eventually, an overarching foundation was established and formalized in 2021. Food council MRA now operates under Stichting (foundation) A Matter of Food. An operational team coordinates various actions addressing systemic change in the metropolitan food chain, among which collaborations with various organizations, and hosts a research center that cooperates with various Dutch universities.

By establishing and formalizing its organizational structure, Food Council MRA realized process-centric outcomes. By initiating and developing projects and debate, partner-centric and outside stakeholder-centric outcomes are being generated. The plan to establish a community was abandoned while engaging in a process to establish an organizational construct that best serves the perspective and the advocating role that Food Council MRA aspires to. From a strategic perspective, the processual type is recognized. Food council MRA has articulated various processual goals. Actions are coordinated by the operational team and developed by project teams involving various stakeholders, whereby Food Council MRA functions as an umbrella for deliberations, actions, and research addressing systems change. Food Council MRA’s organizational structure and strategy were adapted to best serve its multiple-value-creating perspective on sustainable land use. Thus, the development of a shared value perspective becomes strategic.

Regarding the strategic mode of association, a balance between strategic goals and organizational structure has carefully been crafted and is constantly monitored by the initiators. By establishing a foundation, various sources, partners, and funding opportunities become available. This allows Food Council MRA to gradually execute more actions when funding is available. This way, imbalance in strategic output due to inadequate resources becomes addressed.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.9. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.9.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Food Council MRA deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes Process centric
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Operating independent *Collaboration to address systemic change	*How to address heterogeneous metropolitan community *Contemplating fitting organizational form	*Heterogeneity *Degree of influence	*Uncertainty on strategic choice *Considering diversity an asset *Recruiting volunteers	*Heterogeneity *Organizational capacity *Value alignment
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Role of stakeholders *Collaboration *Dynamics of metropolitan area	*Too many initiatives operating counterproductive *Variety in stakeholders *Municipal policy	*Connecting to stakeholders *Resource dependency *Momentum	*Available organizational structures *Availability of resources	
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Position: initiators determine structure *Information: sharing of information based on mutual trust	*Position: contemplating effective community structure	*Position: initiators determine community structure		

### 6.2.6. Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Prioritization in scope: from integral systems change to representing all community members in Regional Energy Strategy (RES)
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	2019–2020 by the board, accorded by general assembly 2021
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland (GCR) was approached as a case corresponding to the colligating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities. By changing focus to developing revenue-generating actions addressing a single theme, GCR went from the colligating coaction archetype to the single issue endeavor archetype.

Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland (GCR) is a cooperative that emerged from Dirk de Derde (see section 6.2.3.). GCR started out in 2016 as a cooperative for uniting various community initiatives in the Rivierenland region. Six interconnected themes were selected from an integral perspective on systemic change: energy, mobility, food, housing, social cohesion, and finance.

*“The economy in this region is nothing more than a meshwork of sectors. And I believe that we have the capacity to arrange that in an integral and tactful manner”* (GCR, focus group interview, 2019).

Having experienced the effect of diverging goals and priorities and a lack of organizational capacity that resulted in the demise of Dirk de Derde, the initiators of GCR decided upon a different approach by adopting the temporary status of “flash cooperative” (see also Section 6.2.2.) from 2017 to 2020. During this time, an organizational construct was gradually developed for encapsulating various autonomous community initiatives in the region for which GCR acts as a representative and advocate.

*“We must have the basics in order”* (GCR, focus group interview, 2019).

Developments were accelerated by prioritizing energy as a central theme. GCR represents a network of civilian initiatives vital for developing and implementing the integral Regional Energy Strategy (RES) that all Dutch regions must implement as a result of legislation on climate adaptation. By becoming an established partner in RES in 2020, GCR operates in the “interspace” between citizens’ initiatives, municipalities and regional government, advocating the role of civilians in climate adaptation. In 2021 this new role and community structure were established in new statutes.

*“...the interspace. That is where we need to learn. That is where the knowledge level is. We explain the basics there for better collaborations”* (GCR, focus group interview, 2019).

Establishing a collaborative construct to represent bottom-up initiatives in RES is a plan-centric outcome. Process centric outcomes are realized by involving bottom-up initiatives in RES and effectively contributing to new networks for sustainable energy. Partner-centric outcomes are generated for the initiatives united in GCR. Through RES, outside-stakeholder-centric outcomes are generated. From a strategic perspective, the process type is attributed since GCR aims for a processual change by involving civilians in energy transition. By acting upon the development of RES, GCR anticipated a niche. GCR demonstrates an entrepreneurial strategy type by developing revenue-generating actions through partnering with local energy cooperatives and financial institutions. Next to this, the board members in charge of organizational development articulate a multiple-value-oriented vision, emphasizing the role of bottom-up initiatives in systemic change and the importance of establishing an active community.

“We do it together, and I think that is the power of this civilian network” (GCR, focus group interview, 2019).

GCR redirected strategic focus to collective actions that are beneficial for civilian initiatives addressing sustainable energy production in the region, matching goals and interests of various constituents and stakeholders in the region. In doing so, GCR halted an imbalanced mode of association and conceptualized an interdependent strategic mode of association.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.10. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.10.**  
*Strategic Action Situation GCR deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Characteristics and competencies of board *Mutual trust	*Concordance within the community *Representation *Learning from the past	*Representing bottom-up initiatives	*Being proactive *Generating revenues *Straightforward thinking & acting *Anticipating diversity	* Community members important for execution of RES
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Legal and political environment must initiate and execute RES	*Concordance with stakeholders: representing small-scale energy projects	*Becoming acknowledged by stakeholders *Becoming a protagonist in RES	*Existing legal and political structures: anticipating RES *Anticipating resources through consultancy	*Anticipating the need for civilians in RES
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Position: roles within the board	*Information: access to knowledge and network			*Payoff: future role of GCR

### 6.2.7. Gloei

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Reorganization to address fragmentation
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	2017–2019, prepared by consecutive interim boards. Final vote by general assembly to terminate the community
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Gloi Peel en Maas was approached as a case that corresponded with the colligating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities

Gloi Peel en Maas was a community established in 2013 to amalgamate social innovation and the demand for sustainable development. Gloei was the formalized progress of initial, unstructured public consultations. The aim was to generate a collaborative process where constituents would craft strategies and loosely coupled collective actions. Gloei acted as a platform where civilians, local organizations and institutions, entrepreneurs, and the municipality could exchange ideas and develop projects addressing social innovation and sustainable development. Structural costs were funded by the municipality and the local branch of a bank, enabling the community to focus solely on collective actions at the start. From 2013 to 2016, Gloei was being acknowledged internationally as an innovative and prosperous experiment in governance (Cense, 2017).

*“On one side, we have the cooperative, which is the board, and underneath that is the movement, the swarm formed by that mass, which really should develop with as little structure as possible”* (Gloi, focus group interview, 2017).

Funded by the municipality and a local bank, ideas were developed into projects by working groups on a reciprocal basis with constituents mutually contributing and benefitting and prosperous projects sharing their revenues by reinvesting in the community.

Community projects initiated by Gloei flourished initially, but various autonomous projects by community members became a source of conflict since not all working groups could concretize reciprocity in the process. This resulted in increasing unclarity and debate on the status and purpose of Gloei, a decline in community members, and a decline in funding.

Since involving the community had been the main goal at the start of Gloei, an interim board was installed in 2016 to reorganize and revive the community.

*“We had conversations with groups of members. The diagnosis is that there is a need for structure, trust-building activities. What is also needed: a mother–daughter relationship. And more communication” (Gloei, focus group interview, 2017).*

Several impulses and new directions were discussed, and consultation rounds with constituents were organized. From 2017 the interim board mainly focused on solving immediate operational problems, establishing financial accountability by delivering reports to the municipality, and consulting the network to develop a new policy plan.

This gave room to unconnected strategies, which eventually resulted in organizational tensions due to various interpretations of the purpose of Gloei. Within the interim board appointed to address these tensions, various strategies were discussed but could not be aligned, resulting in more tensions. Within the community, discussion about conflicting interests continued. Eventually, structural funding by the municipality was withdrawn and the community was disbanded in 2019.

In the early years (2013–2016), Gloei was “leading by example” and generated partner-centric and outside-stakeholder-centric outcomes. Due to decline and eventual termination, plan and process-centric outcomes on structural community involvement through Gloei could not be met.

From a strategic perspective, Gloei combined the process and umbrella types, aiming to spark and connect community involvement in various domains. The main goal of the municipality was to create a grounded platform for addressing three core values of the municipality of Peel en Maas: diversity, sustainability, and governance. Gloei was initiated to create social and ecological value by facilitating the development of various community initiatives contributing to the local economy, social cohesion, and well-being. This worked well at the start. Meetings were organized where all constituents could contribute ideas and deliberate on core values. Working groups were formed to support projects considered fruitful by the community. However, some projects became dominant, and over time it became unclear to constituents and stakeholders how projects related to a general focus. Loosely coupled working groups held different interpretations of how the platform should address its main goal. In the absence of an articulated general direction and structure, various constituents started employing various approaches, resulting in unconnected strategies.

After initial success, an imbalanced strategic mode of association became apparent that compelled a reorganization. However, the reorganization failed. An imbalanced mode of association evolved in a destructive strategic mode of association. Conflicts within the community led to debate on the scope



and purpose of the community. Eventually the community itself became a source of conflict and was disbanded by the municipality. Gloei was initiated by the municipality as an experiment in social innovation, resulting in a symbiotic relationship that was interpreted differently by successive city councils but also by successive boards.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.11. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.11.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Gloei deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Board represents various disciplines' represented capacity *Practice-based learning	*Frictions due to conflicting interests *Conflicting views and actions	*No concurrence on purpose and actions	*No concurrence on purpose and actions	*Different interests
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Availability of knowledge and network in the region. * Dependent on municipality	*Institutions influential through funding *Change in local political environment	*Being acknowledged by stakeholders *Physical environment	*Other initiatives addressing the same topic	*Political changes in city council *Eagerness to invest in the community
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Information: different interests	*Position: unclarity on roles and responsibilities	*Scope: conflicting interests and opinions *Aggregation: voting system	*Boundary: reorganization to avoid imminent prorogation	*Scope: different opinions on viability *Payoff: who benefits

### 6.2.8. Go Clean

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Foundation of Ltd. to cope with growing demand by municipalities
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	By the board in 2019, effected in 2020
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Go Clean De Liemers was approached as a case corresponding with the advocating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities. Due to organizational changes, towards the end of the research Go Clean corresponded with the single issue endeavor archetype.

GoClean Foundation was initiated in 2016 to organize litter picking communities for volunteers picking and separating litter, thus cleaning up their neighborhood and enabling recycling of various litter types. Noticing that areas that were cleaned by volunteers quickly became littered again, the board realized that GoClean was addressing consequences instead of causes.

*"...move away from combating the system and start addressing the source" (Go Clean, focus group interview, 2020).*

The two founding board members contemplated a new focus. The board was expanded in 2019 with a third board member with a professional career in business.

*"... since it is a big financial burden, we decided we could not leave it to the foundation. That is why the private company was set up, independent from it" (Go Clean, focus group interview, 2020).*

A business plan was developed from a new strategic focus: combating the sources of litter. Litter is no longer just collected, it is simultaneously registered in an app, providing information on types, sources, and frequency of litter to governmental bodies and other stakeholders involved in litter prevention. Next to the foundation, a private Limited company was founded in 2020, providing revenues to invest in the expanding actions of the community. GoClean Ltd. provides various paid services to municipalities and other organizations for supporting local communities in combating litter and eliminating litter sources. Next to process facilitation, the company hosts a webshop selling various devices for collecting litter. Some of these devices are developed by volunteers.

*"That is where the focus is: the government. That is our specific aim. You only find that out after you are working with the matter" (Go Clean, focus group interview, 2020).*

Plan-centric outcomes are generated partly by becoming entrepreneurs, enabling generating revenues to support collective actions in collaboration with municipalities. Process-centric outcomes of the strategic action situation are realized by generating ecological and social values through establishing litter-picking communities and through generating and providing data. Go Clean's change in strategic focus from collecting litter to addressing litter involves collaboration with various communities, organizations, and institutions, here perceived to be partner-centric and outside stakeholder-centric outcomes.

GoClean has an articulated central vision, and there is concurrence on substantive goals by the governing board. From a strategic perspective, the entrepreneurial style appears dominant. The organization engages in revenue-generating actions and operates in a niche environment by addressing sources of litter instead of just cleaning up. The process style is recognized since the organization aims to address a processual change in attitudes towards litter. In addition, community building is an integral part of Go Cleans' strategy. Litter-picking communities are at the heart of Go Cleans' approach. Volunteers are consulted and involved in developing effective litter cleaning routes.

*"With the program we offer, we try and tell local government to collaborate with civilians. Do not do it individually, but involve the enthusiastic group in your region, collaborate with them and look for a solution"* (Go Clean, focus group interview, 2020).

Go Clean demonstrates an interdependent strategic mode of association. The initial foundation took the opportunity to upscale its actions, and consequently its impact, by establishing a Ltd. company for generating revenues. This enables the organization to operate independently and become a project partner for various institutions, matching strategic and organizational goals. Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.12. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.12.**

*Strategic Action Situation Go Clean deconstructed in stages and external variables affecting them*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Enhancing variety in the board	*Organizational capacity to address growing demand	*Aligning views on upscaling *Value alignment: addressing sources of litter	*Expertise of board members and volunteers.	*Focus on establishing and measuring impact *Social value creation through litter picking
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Stakeholders *Resource dependency *Legal and political environment,	*Acquiring third party funding to expand collective actions *Anticipating on interest in Go Clean method *Operating within existing	*Interests and characteristics of stakeholders *Becoming acknowledged by other organizations *Momentum	*Matching with stakeholders* *Becoming effective *Need for independence	*Resource dependency *Anticipating legislation on preventing litter

Rules in use	structures of power *Anticipating legal constructs for preventing litter	*Aggregation: choice-making and responsibilities in Ltd. company	*Aggregation: developing fitting structure for Ltd.	*Payoff: upscaling
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### 6.2.9. Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Consolidation and expansion of the network after initial success
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	2019 by steering committee
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Network Kleurrijk Groen was approached as a case that corresponds with the advocating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.

Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen was initiated in 2017 to advocate inclusiveness in sustainable development. Perceiving the debate on sustainable development to be a predominantly “white” affair, Kleurrijk Groen established a community of “colorful green ambassadors” that encourage and empower civilians from various ethnic and social-economic backgrounds to engage in actions that contribute to sustainable development. The network emerged in response to the city of Nijmegen becoming European Green Capital 2018. The municipality advocated an inclusive campaign. The network founders wanted to make sure that the Green Capital campaign in Nijmegen became an inclusive event.

*“The objective was broadening the perception on sustainability”* (Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen, focus group interview, 2019).

Supported by Bureau Wijland, a consultancy for inclusive and sustainable projects, various projects and actions were launched during 2018, creating awareness about climate change in various communities considered difficult to reach by the local government. The prosperity of Kleurrijk Groen’s actions resulted in the continuation of the network after 2018, governed by a steering committee and facilitated and supported by a project team of Bureau Wijland. Netwerk Kleurrijk

Groen thus is not a formal, independent organization. The Network operates as an independent project.

While addressing, consulting and empowering various ethnic groups regarding local sustainable development was the main aim at the start, by 2021 all ethnic and social groups missing out on sustainable development became addressed in programs and actions.

*“...a large group of people, and I’m not talking about ethnicity but also original residents from this country, they’re not aware”* (Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen, focus group interview, 2019).

Funded by the municipality and the province, a customized sustainability course was developed for members of the steering committee and representatives of ethnic communities to become the first “Colorful Green Ambassadors” while simultaneously developing and creating a shared value perspective and contemplating collective actions for the network.

*“The vision creation is dynamic, every time something else was added. (...) confrontation has helped to make choices, to mean something”* (Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen, focus group interview, 2019).

The network has continued to initiate distinct actions to unite and empower various communities in addressing sustainable development. Partly funded by municipalities and the province, Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen advocates, trains, and supports “Colorful Green Ambassadors” for inclusiveness in sustainability that, on the one hand, participate in predominantly white sustainability networks and, on the other hand, provide sustainability-oriented actions and support for various communities. Examples of these are green children’s playgrounds, the development of a “Colourful Green Foodforest”, a healthy cooking course on local tv (<https://www.bureauwijland.nl/index.php/kleurrijk-koken/>, 14.01.22), and a multi-ethnic allotment that hosts an annual inclusive harvest festival. For these actions, structural collaboration with various local, regional, and national environmental organizations and institutions has been established.

*“To effectuate decoloration in the sector, you need to find partnerships”* (Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen, focus group interview, 2019).

Since the network was initially intended for the duration of the Green Capital campaign, the steering committee only started to consider long-term planning from 2019 onwards. The steering committee

discussed and developed a shared perspective on the organic development of the network while locating opportunities and supporting and initiating actions, resulting in process-centric outcomes while the network evolves. Partner-centric, outside-stakeholder-centric and person-centric outcomes are generated by creating awareness, supporting various communities, training ambassadors and coaches, and advocating inclusiveness.

From a strategic perspective, the processual type is considered dominant. Distinct processual goals regarding inclusiveness are articulated by the steering committee and developed into projects by the project manager of Bureau Wijland, who is also in charge of acquiring project funding. The supporting Bureau Wijland constantly needs to acquire funding for collective actions by Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen. Initially, the network was established for one year, thus no long-term strategy involving funding was intended. In general, local governments have cut down on supportive social programs, directly or indirectly affecting the minority groups addressed by Network Kleurrijk Groen. Continuation and speed of the process by expanding the network thus is affected by resource dependency.

Network Kleurrijk Groen operates in a niche market by tapping into the demand by governmental bodies for inclusiveness in sustainable development. By generating project support from governments and partner organizations, envisioned in project plans, and partly coordinated by a professional project manager, the entrepreneurial type is to some extent recognized but is not considered dominant for the networks' strategy. However pivotal for its collective actions, acquiring funding is considered part of bureau Wijland's project support and not a network strategy.

Steering committee members perceive themselves to be ideological in their shared perspective on an inclusive society in a complex environment, but they consciously initiate debate to develop a shared value perspective. Thus, the ideological type is not attributed. In developing general goals through constant mutual adjustment by the members of the steering committee, the consensus type is recognized. In addition, the steering committee expresses a strong focus on community development and emphasizes the importance of their shared perspective on inclusiveness in both the community and its collective actions. Within the steering committee, there is a shared and directive vision on the purpose of the network. Collaborative actions take shape as projects and are developed by the steering committee. In this respect, the strategic mode of association is considered interdependent. Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen expands slowly. Funding and planning of actions depends on funding and support via partner Bureau Wijland. This appears to indicate a mismatch between ambitions and actions, since the network is dependent on Bureau Wijland for acquiring external funding. Bureau Wijland in turn is dependent on funding by local and regional governments for projects and campaigns enhancing inclusiveness. From this perspective, there is a deliberate symbiotic relationship between Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen and Bureau Wijland.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.13. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.13.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Kleurrijk Groen deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Inclusiveness is key *Steering committee representing various ethnic communities *Strong personal drive and involvement of community members	*Anticipating demand for inclusiveness in sustainability *Developing long-term perspective	*Aligning vision and mission *Leading by example	*Heterogeneity in target groups requires heterogeneity in approach	*Heterogeneity, organizational capacity, value alignment
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Established sustainability networks predominantly white *Insufficient Stakeholders, Resource dependency, Legal and political environment, Physical environment	*Established sustainability networks predominantly white *Stakeholders, Resource dependency, Legal and political environment, Physical environment	*Accessing stakeholders *Custom-made approach	*Momentum *Green ambassadors key in reaching out to societal groups *Advocacy	*Expanding the network *Accessing new ambassadors *Acknowledgement
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Position: leading by example		*Choice: steering group decides		*Scope: meeting funding requirements

### 6.2.10. Noorden Duurzaam

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Establishing and consolidating the concept of table democracy
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	Ongoing, prepared by board, vote by general assembly
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Noorden Duurzaam was approached as a case that corresponds with the multiple issue endeavor archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities. During the research period, the organization shifted towards the advocating coaction type.

Vereniging Noorden Duurzaam was established in 2013 as a union of organizations and civilians aiming to accelerate the transition to sustainability. Noorden Duurzaam operates mainly in the Northern provinces of the Netherlands. Noorden Duurzaam introduced and advocates “table democracy”: a new governance system for developing customized sustainable solutions with involved actors from different realms of society. Noorden Duurzaam developed the table democracy for operating effectively in the interspace between bottom-up sustainability initiatives and established organizations and institutions that generally yield top-down policies. From 2017 on, there was a focus on enhancing and establishing the table democracy.

*“In the inter-space, where collaboration could accelerate, you don’t encounter as many concepts and initiatives. That is the gap in the market on which the union focuses”* (Noorden Duurzaam, focus group interview, 2019).

Noorden Duurzaam introduced the table democracy to address the complexity of sustainable and social development due to the involvement of many societal realms. Board members of Noorden Duurzaam advocate the perspective that a systemic change can only be achieved by pioneering and changing the design and structure of policy development throughout society. The table democracy is Noorden Duurzaam’s answer to social innovation. Four types of tables are distinguished based on (i) theme, (ii) sector, (iii) a combination of the two, and (iv) the region in which the table is active. The various tables contribute proportional fees to the union and have proportional voting rights in the general assembly. Noorden Duurzaam invests in and contributes to community structure by providing structure, tools, and procedures for tables. The board discusses and initiates various attempts to enhance the table democracy by facilitating collaboration, e.g., via TafelAtlas, an online database of sustainability initiatives in the region.

*“We are interested in helping those parties, in breaking barriers which were put up by politics, to be able to discuss these”* (Noorden Duurzaam, focus group interview, 2019).

A long-term plan-centric outcome is anticipated in addressing systems change by developing and practicing new governance structures. However, there is still debate on how to effectuate this plan-centric outcome. Process-centric outcomes are realized by developing the concept of the table democracy and adapting the organization towards advocating table democracy. Various tables have been established that operate in the region, indicating partner-centric outcomes. Noorden Duurzaam supports organizations and other regions in applying the table democracy, thus realizing outside



stakeholder-centric outcomes. Various rules and regulations apply for tables to ensure that the concept is used correctly.

*“Control is a strong word, but we definitely do nudge. We have a lot of requirements we set for a table”* (Noorden Duurzaam, focus group interview, 2019).

From a strategic perspective, the process type and the umbrella type are recognized. Noorden Duurzaam aims to facilitate a process towards value-oriented governance systems. Projects and tools are crafted from the perspective of systemic change. Operating in a complex environment, tables operate relatively independently but contribute to table democracy, guided by procedures developed by the community.

The table democracy is an extensively developed and tested protocol for inclusive and value-driven decision making. Although various local and supra local organizations have adopted aspects and procedures from the table democracy, effecting the table democracy to its fullest proves challenging since it is an unfamiliar concept to many. The board is in an ongoing process of contemplating a strategy for a region-wide implementation of the table democracy, but this strategic objective has not yet been met.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.14. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.14.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Noorden Duurzaam deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Engagement of non-board members	*Changes in board result in changing viewpoints on implementing table democracy *Different views advocating different approaches of transition (pragmatic/theoretical)		*Unclarity on how to enhance use of table structure * Consolidating temporary engagement from novel tables and members	*Current impact of decentral tables unclear
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>	*Community is area-bound * Local and thematic tables address a variety of topics	*Existing institutions wary of experimenting with new structures. *Addressing multiple societal realms at once	*Becoming acknowledged *Advocating urgency of change in the region	*Collaborating with various stakeholders from various societal realms	*Lack of eagerness from institutions to address

	*Willingness by third parties to cooperate	*Collaborating with stakeholders	*Existing sustainability-oriented organizations in the region	systemic change
Rules in use	*Information: unfamiliarity with table democracy	*Choice: by general assembly *Aggregation: involving members		

### 6.2.11. Pak An

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Five-year evaluation, enhancing focus on organizational scope and nature of supported projects
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	Ongoing, prepared by the operational team, accorded by board
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Stichting Pak An was approached as a case that corresponded with the colligating coaction archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities. During the research Pak An adopted a sharper focus and the archetype changed to single issue endeavor.

Stichting (foundation) Pak An was established in 2016 by two companies to address quality of life in the rural Achterhoek region, which is considered a shrinking area. The foundation kickstarts initiatives that contribute to a dynamic region through a large community of coaches and incidental funding through a revolving fund. Pak An supports new developments for a dynamic and sustainable region.

*“...the only framework we stand by is: is the Achterhoek region improved by this plan?”* (L. Commandeur, personal communication, 28.10.19).

Project support is coordinated and facilitated by a small team of professionals selecting projects and connecting coaches to selected projects. Procedures for application are straightforward. Literally anyone can apply for support via the website. The operational team assesses applications and selects projects for support that are subsequently discussed by an assessment committee and accorded by the board. The operational team selects and appoints a coach for each accorded application. Coaches contribute their knowledge, expertise, and network. The coaches' commitment is deemed essential for the prosperity of both organization and project support.

*“There must be a personal motivation. Otherwise, you will not run faster. Otherwise, you will not volunteer for something”* (L.Commandeur, personal communication, 28.10.19).

The straightforward approach of Pak An is consciously chosen, but the organization is open to constant improvement. This is considered inherent to the evolving nature of the organization.

*“The first priority must constantly be: how do we contribute. That probably means that we need to reinvent ourselves in three years’ time. For now, we also assess over and over again: this appears to work but is it really working? And what else can we contribute?”*  
(L.Commandeur, personal communication, 28.10.19).

The operational team and the board reassessed purpose and organizational focus from 2019 onwards. This resulted in a stronger focus on actions that increase entrepreneurship and employment opportunities and motivate adolescents and young adults to stay in the area for education and job opportunities.

*“We want to assess where we are embedded in the region and where not at all. That’s another step. After that, we simply ask a lot of questions: Is this what you expected? Is there something else that we can do?”* (L.Commandeur, personal communication, 28.10.19).

From the start, Pak An aimed to spark processes for improving the area. In encouraging and supporting innovative projects, process-centric outcomes are generated. Coaches, the founding enterprises, but also entrepreneurs and projects supported by Pak An benefit from collaborating with Pak An, resulting in partner-centric and outside stakeholder-centric outcomes.

The plan was to gradually evolve a supportive network. From a strategic perspective, this answers to the plan-centric strategy type. For establishing the network of coaches and projects, Pak An has articulated processual goals and has developed an organizational construct to guide supportive actions by the community of coaches. The initial success drives the organization to become a structural factor in the region, aiming to address long-term structural changes to keep the area prosperous and attractive. To some extent, the entrepreneurial type is recognized. Pak An has created its own niche and has acquired project funding by the EU and the province. However, the entrepreneurial strategy type is not deemed dominant since the organization is not involved in revenue-generating actions. Investing in the selection process for project support, constantly contemplating the needs of

organizations in the region, and expanding and supporting the community of coaches are deemed crucial in addressing the organization's mission, thus community development becomes strategic.

Pak An operates effectively in matching goals and interests and by contemplating how strategic and organizational development can be mutually reinforcing. Procedures are transparent and communication between project bureau, committee and board is open and based on mutual trust. Pak An demonstrates an interdependent mode of association. Although operating independently Pak An is facilitated and financed by founding companies Grolsch and Feestfabriek. Their aim is to establish social impact through Pak An. Thus, there is a symbiotic relationship between Pak An and its founders.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.15. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.15.**

*Strategic Action Situation Pak An deconstructed in stages and indicators for external variables*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Shared values: encouraging regional development, working outside existing structures *Alignment on informal approach *Transparency	*Striving for inclusiveness: addressing lack of young community members	*Aligning various interests	*Heterogeneity: networks & experience of coaches *Availability of professional knowledge *Transparency	*Contributing to sustainable changes in the area *Various interests
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>		*Demographic: shrinking area	*Collaboration with stakeholders in the area is key	*Anticipating the cultural environment	*Resource dependency: structural funding & project funding
<b>Rules in use mentioned by respondent</b>	*Aggregation: between project bureau, assessment committee and board	*Scope: area must benefit	*Position: project bureau, assessment committee and board	*Boundary: selecting coaches	

### 6.2.12. Voedselbos Ketelbroek

<b>Critical strategic action situation</b>	Dealing with increasing demand for permaculture from 2015 onwards
<b>Strategic decision making</b>	Ongoing. By owners for food forest, by board for food forest foundation
<b>Strategic oriented archetype</b>	Voedselbos Ketelbroek was approached as a case that corresponds with the single issue endeavor archetype of our conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.

Voedselbos Ketelbroek is a small (2.4 ha) food forest located near Nijmegen, owned by a partnership of two owners. A field purchased in 2009 was slowly transformed into an experimental food forest to gain knowledge on permaculture. The initiators wanted to put their shared vision on balancing agriculture and ecology and a drive to operate independently into practice by pioneering a step-by-step approach of permaculture.

*“We developed the concept after we bought the land. So there was no ready-made plan. We knew: we are pioneering”* (Voedselbos Ketelbroek, focus group interview, 2019).

In the early years, the partnership operated in silence, focusing on developing their food forest and simultaneously developing expertise on permaculture in practice. This proved challenging since institutions are unfamiliar with combining agriculture and forestry.

*“Next I looked at the funding possibilities. And those were for agricultural systems, but not our system. Those were for nature management, but not for our type of nature”* (Voedselbos Ketelbroek, focus group interview, 2019).

Over time the former field transformed into a productive forest. Ketelbroek increasingly became acknowledged as an interesting and prosperous pilot, demonstrating that aligning agriculture and forestry is viable.

In recent years Voedselbos Ketelbroek took center stage as a frontrunner in permaculture by initiating and supporting an expanding community interested in various aspects of permaculture. Ketelbroek collaborates with a restaurant, caterers, and a brewery in the Nijmegen region. Also, a school garden project is facilitated. Ketelbroek offers guided tours to individuals and organizations interested in food forestry.

The interest in developing foodforests and the demand for expertise in food forestry have snowballed in the past decade. Being the only deliberate and functional foodforest at the time, Ketelbroek got too many requests for support, compelling the initiators to a two-track solution.

While Voedselbos Ketelbroek remained a partnership, a separate foundation for permaculture was founded in 2016 for addressing the demand for expertise. Stichting Voedselbosbouw Nederland (Dutch Foodforestry foundation, VBNL) focuses on developing food forests and sharing expertise. The foundation aims to establish 150 ha of food forestry in the Netherlands by 2023. Together with researchers assessing changes in biodiversity and soil conditions in Ketelbroek, tools are developed for assessing the results and impact of food forestry. From 2021 on, VBNL governs the National Monitoring Program for Foodforests.

Voedselbos Ketelbroek generates process-centric outcomes by developing, advocating, and supporting permaculture. Through various collaborations on a local scale and in the context of VBNL, partner-centric and outside stakeholder-centric outcomes are generated. From a strategic perspective, the entrepreneurial type is recognized. Voedselbos Ketelbroek operates from an articulated central vision. The initiators emphasize that permaculture is a process developed in practice.

*“We put money in second place. Biodiversity first, together with water management. We want people to treat the landscape better and improve it”* (focus group interview, 2019).

There is concurrence on goals by the owners, and there is concurrence on partners. The organization is involved in revenue-generating actions and sales and pioneered a niche approach in a niche market. Next to this, the initiators of Voedselbos Ketelbroek emphasize the importance of crafting a movement for permaculture based on value alignment in addressing wicked problems like biodiversity. The prosperous practice of Ketelbroek enabled the next step in advocating permaculture by establishing VBNL, indicating a processual strategic type. By demonstrating in practice that soil conditions can change by introducing agroforestry, and inspiring a movement that realizes food forests, environmental-centric goals are notably becoming established as well, but these are here interpreted as plan-centric outcomes.

*“We explicitly captured that in the statutes: we want to put time and energy in the agriculture switchover”* (Voedselbos Ketelbroek, focus group interview, 2019).

The shared value perspective on the processual development of food forestry aligns with an independent, entrepreneurial approach, enabling Ketelbroek to collaborate with various stakeholders to develop a food forest, generate revenues and expand the food forestry movement.

Voedselbos Ketelbroek creates multiple values by effectively addressing various strategic goals while realizing tangible outputs. The strategic decisions regarding the food forest are taken by the initiators and based on mutual trust. Demands from the expanding community of food forests are addressed via the foundation. A balance has been realized between developing and managing a food forest in practice, and supporting the expanding network of food forests. This is here associated with an interdependent strategic mode of association.

Based on analysis of the focus group interview, Table 6.16. summarizes the stages in strategic decision making and external variables affecting the decision, as addressed during the focus group interview.

**Table 6.16.**  
*Strategic Action Situation Voedselbos Ketelbroek deconstructed in stages and external variables affecting them*

Stages > ----- External variables v	Community composition	Problem definition	Goal determination	(Appointing) actions	(Assessing) outcomes
<b>Attributes of community</b>	*Deliberate focus on restoration of biodiversity *Independency *Mutual trust	*Coping with growing demand	*Deliberate focus on restoration of biodiversity	*Deliberate focus on restoration of biodiversity	*Differentiating scope and actions: food forest and foundation *Assessing and measuring impact
<b>Biophysical conditions</b>		*Increase in interest in permaculture *Resource dependency: counterproductive subsidies *Existing institutions, rules and regulations	*Matching with stakeholders	*Connecting with the neighborhood *Regulating visitors *Disseminating knowledge	*Momentum for permaculture: media attention, public debate. *Dependency of new foodforests on legislation and funding *Collaboration with research institutions to address impact
<b>Rules in use</b>	*Position: organization based on mutual trust		*Aggregation: differentiating food forest and foundation	*Aggregation: differentiating food forest and foundation	

### 6.3. Reflection and preliminary general findings

Since place-bound, community-based strategy formation is seldom addressed in academic literature (see also Chapters 2 and 3), we have chosen an explorative research design to capture general

features of community-based strategy development. Strategic Action Situations that occurred in a diverse sample of Entrepreneurial Communities have been analyzed. Considering the deliberate variance of the sample (see Section 5.3.) and the organizational changes that occurred during the longitudinal case-based research, this proved somewhat challenging in practice. In general, the communities in the sample have articulated a central mission and a working method. They are not obliged but also not accustomed to developing and publishing dedicated strategic plans. Our qualitative analysis demonstrates that, in general, cases act strategically in practice, and their strategic decisions can be deconstructed and analyzed.

Although strategy development is seldom acknowledged and addressed as a distinct collective action, the focus group interviews demonstrate that in the majority of cases there is concurrence on substantive strategic goals. Discussions or evaluations regarding substantive strategic goals are generally induced, prepared, and facilitated by the governing board. Virtually all cases administer regulated and formalized consultation and decision-making procedures, enabling community members to contemplate collective actions contributing to substantive strategic goals. This allows for distinguishing patterns in strategic action situations, and the subsequent analysis of those patterns. In communities with a formalized membership structure, co-decision procedures are prepared by the governing body to be discussed in general assemblies, where constituents vote on proposed decisions and actions. In cases that do not have a formalized membership structure, strategic decisions are made by the governing board. Our analysis thus confirms Mintzberg's (e.g., Mintzberg, 1978) recommendation to distinguish and analyze patterns in decision making for accessing strategic decision making. Analysis focused on a selected strategic decision process per case but in practice cases were permanently confronted with multiple strategic and operational decisions at any time during the research period. Stages in collaborative strategy development as suggested by Clarke and Fuller (see also Chapter 3) are thus recognized in practice; however, instead of evolving sequentially those stages interact dynamically and may induce or be susceptible to other decisions and developments. For instance, during a strategic action situation, the constellation of decision makers may change, bringing new perspectives which may result in different or additional goals, actions, and outcomes. On top of that, a major strategic action may involve multiple strategic decisions by multiple organizational layers.

Nine out of 12 cases underwent notable strategic and organizational changes during the research period. Since the sample consisted of emerging communities that are evolving in practice, it is no surprise that influential changes and adaptations were noted. The analyzed strategic action situations that evolved around organizational changes strongly suggest that communities seek to match their strategies and, when deemed necessary, their organizational structure to match their



substantive goals. Learning by doing, Entrepreneurial Communities craft their strategies and actions driven by the aim to maximize their impact.

Next to establishing stages in strategic decision making, analysis focused on variables influential to strategic decision making. During focus group interviews respondents mentioned a plethora of variables. Through axial coding the variables relatable to the strategic decision at hand were related to the three overarching external variables as proposed by Ostrom (2011b). The concept of external variables affecting a strategic action situation serves well for an initial division between influence on strategy development by constituents, influence by contextual factors, and influence by rules and regulations. During analysis, we found that the constellation of constituents is influential to the character and progress of a community, and communities are susceptible to changes through changes in the constellation of the board or the community itself. Thus, in all cases, attributes of the community determine the scope of a community. Considering the concept of biophysical conditions, we found that these affect a community in two main ways. First, biophysical conditions induce place-bound collective actions for transformative changes in the physical environment. Next, biophysical conditions such as legislation or availability of funding may affect or determine the course of actions. Lastly, the concept of rules in use proved useful in determining what internal rules and regulations are practiced to structure decision making, even if decision making is not widely documented.

By analyzing strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) we find that all cases utilize multiple strategy types. However, next to demonstrating characteristics of established strategy types, communities in the sample appear to “strategize” multiple value creation and community building. Both multiple value creation and community building are here considered a strategic approach for addressing wicked problems.

Regarding the strategic modes of association, all three modes of association suggested by Jarzabkowski & Fenton (2006) have been allocated. The case-based results suggest that communities in the sample implicitly capture their strategic mode of association and, in general, contemplate changes when the strategic mode of association is imbalanced. An interesting observation in three cases is the symbiotic relationship they keep with founding or supporting organizations. This symbiotic relationship differs from the project-based subsidies that many communities and, for that matter, other organizations, acquire. Here, a symbiotic relationship indicates that a community would not exist without structural support of funding by one or more organizations. Strategic and organizational development become entangled with and susceptible to strategic goals of these structural partners. Not all communities strive for financial independence; however, all communities

need structural resources to run their organization. Prosperous cases suggest that Entrepreneurial Communities do not necessarily need to operate independently if strategic goals match those of their structural partners.

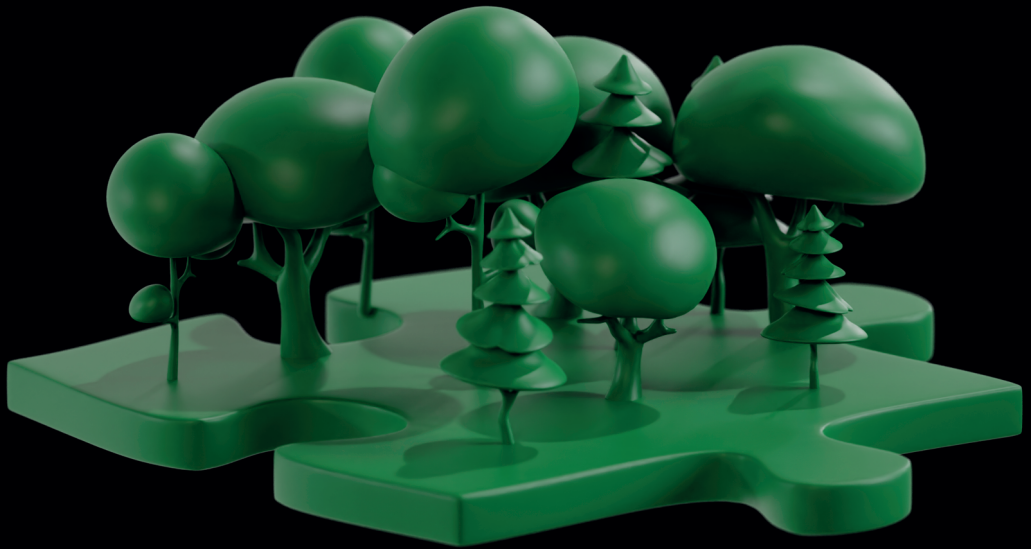
Integrating concepts from strategic management theory and collective action theory proves fruitful for conceptualizing strategic aspects of community-based collective action (see also Chapters 2, 3, and 4). Merging our multidisciplinary conceptualization with longitudinal case-based research in turn proved fruitful for allocating and analyzing distinct aspects of Strategic Commoning. Thus, analysis of a distinct strategic action situation helps understand community-based strategy development in the community at hand.

The case-based analysis presented in this chapter is grounded in strategic management and collective action theory. It allows for understanding the shape and structure of community-based strategic decision making in individual Entrepreneurial Communities. The longitudinal and qualitative case-based research resulted in rich, case-based data on the nature and scope of Strategic Commoning in selected cases. Chapter 7 addresses the subsequent cross-case analysis, synthesizing case-based findings in a general, case-based process model of Strategic Commoning.

# CHAPTER

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# 7



## **CHAPTER 7. THE NATURE OF STRATEGIC COMMONING. CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC ACTION SITUATIONS IN TWELVE DUTCH ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES**

### **Abstract**

Chapter 7 addresses the scope and nature of Strategic Commoning by cross-case analysis of selected strategic action situations in 12 Dutch Entrepreneurial Communities. Following case-based analysis presented in the previous chapter, this chapter compares strategic action making in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities to capture the general properties of Strategic Commoning. Case-based results from qualitative analyses of written and oral data is synthesized in four further steps. First, we reassess the conceptual model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 3.3) presented in Chapter 3. In addition, we synthesize external variables into the main types of attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use (Ostrom, 2011b). In addition, we examine what strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) are employed in community-based strategic decision making. We suggest two additional strategy types. We relate the attributed strategy types to the strategic mode of association in each case. In addition, we discuss whether and how configurations of strategy types are associated with the strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities presented in Chapter 4. Over time, addressing a single issue and engaging in revenue-generating collective actions became favored.

Our analysis demonstrates that Entrepreneurial Communities carry out comparative configurations of strategy types. Configurations of strategy types may change over time when a community evolves and adapts.

### **7.1. Introduction**

This research project conceptualizes Strategic Commoning by integrating findings from strategic management theory and collective action theory into a process model. Selected strategic action situations have been deconstructed by qualitative analysis. Case-based results are presented in Chapter 6. Qualitative analysis recognizes five interconnected stages of community-based strategic decision making established in each case as distinct contextual factors that affect and regulate them. In addition to analyzing the structure of Strategic Commoning in separate cases in the previous chapter, this chapter analyzes the nature of Strategic Commoning by synthesizing results in cross-

case analysis. Theory suggests (see Chapter 2) that different kinds of strategies (Mintzberg et al., 2009) may manifest within Entrepreneurial Communities and that Strategic Commoning may entail multiple strategic directions simultaneously. Strategy As Practice (SAP) contributes the notion of the strategic mode of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) resulting from the degree of strategic alignment within a community. Comparing and synthesizing case-based results, this chapter further explores these two concepts in the context of Entrepreneurial Communities. Results demonstrate configurations of strategy types as mentioned by Mintzberg & Waters (1985) enhanced by the introduction of two additional strategy styles that manifest in community-based strategy formation. Section 7.2. explores the stages in community-based strategy development. Section 7.3. synthesizes contextual factors into 10 distinct external variables affecting strategic decision making. Section 7.4. synthesizes various strategy types that were attributed to the cases. Results indicate that over time, strategy types utilized by communities can change. Section 7.5. analyzes and discusses various strategic modes of association attributed to the cases, noting that multiple cases deliberately changed their strategic mode of association. Meta-analysis links strategic modes of association to configurations of strategy styles.

Observing the results from our analysis, Section 7.6. assesses whether the conceptual typology introduced in Chapter 4 is still viable and discusses the strategic changes that cases went through. Section 7.7. discusses limitations and implications of the analysis presented in this chapter.

## **7.2. Deconstructing strategic decisions**

This section presents the synthesis of stages in community-based strategy development in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands. Data were deconstructed through several rounds of inductive and axial coding (see also Chapter 5). Document analysis was applied for triangulation of data retrieved from the main unit of analysis: focus groups discussing the historical reconstruction of a selected strategic action situation. For analysis of the strategic decision process, axial codes were eventually synthesized into categories that parallel the stages of the conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning: community formation stage, problem definition stage, goal setting stage, determining collective actions, and outcome assessment stage (see also Section 3.5.). The results are presented below.

### **7.2.1. Stage: community composition**

The stage of community composition relates to the constituents involved in strategic decision making. The dynamic constellation of a heterogeneous group representing multiple visions, experiences, and stakes in strategic decision-making is an essential aspect of Strategic Commoning. Since the sample represents new organizational constructs addressing complex issues, it seems inevitable that communities evolve and adapt, attracting new constituents that partake in decision making. In most cases, the amalgamation of constituents involved in strategic decision making has changed during the research period. Cases deliberately and constantly recruit new constituents and partners but communities also lose members along the way. Consequentially, the constellation of constituents is constantly evolving and changing. A change in constituents may encompass a shift in decision making: the constellation of constituents represents a constellation of skills, knowledge, experience, and network that invariably affects a communities' emerging strategy development. Governing boards reflect these changes. Board members are recruited within and outside the community. Thus, not all board members start as community members. Board members in the focus group interviews express an open mind to changes. They are aware of, and even welcome that new board members may spark strategic discussion. Potential candidates are approached for their distinct expertise and network.

In their relatively short period of existence (<10 years), boards have changed in nine out of 12 cases. Some board members left due to common and natural causes (e.g., end of regular governance period, lack of time, but sadly also the passing away of a board member), but some board members also left due to frictions. Frictions caused by differing views and preferences regarding what collective actions should be initiated and how those collective actions contribute to substantive goals were interpreted as frictions of a strategic nature.

Changes in the community and changes in the board induce and are sometimes induced by changes in planning, development, and execution of collective actions. New constituents and new board members bring new perspectives, practices, and expertise to the community. This, in turn, may affect strategic decisions and subsequent collective actions.

Seven out of 12 cases yield a formalized co-decision structure, indicating that all community members are consulted and have a vote in strategic decision making. Not surprisingly, these cases have adopted a cooperative or union structure that formally requires co-decision by community members. Co-decision is structured via general assembly involving a representation of all community members and generally taking place once or twice a year.

All cases are pioneering with organizational models and governance structures. Organizational structures are bound and restricted to the legal forms of organizing existing in The Netherlands. The adopted legal form comes with various formalities that invariably influence a communities' formal

structure. Standardized statutes establish, among other things, who is in charge and consequently who is responsible for organizing decision making, but also how decision making is formalized. During the research period, the legal entity of the cooperative was preferred by communities that generate and share revenues. Generic cooperative statutes refer to purpose and revenues from an economic perspective (Galle, 2012; NCR, 2015). Entrepreneurial Communities feel constrained by this sole economic perspective. Consequentially, various cases experiment with organizational constructs and revenue models within the boundaries of the existing legal entities. Cases pioneered two additions to the concept of the cooperative in the sample (see also Section 6.2.): the flash cooperative and the chain cooperative. Table 7.1. below summarizes the main differences in membership and decision-making structures within the sample.

**Table 7.1.**  
*Organizational constructs in the sample*

<b>Organizational form</b>	<b>Membership structure</b>	<b>Strategic decision making</b>
<b>Cooperative (5)</b>	Members participate in value creation and benefit from revenues	Prepared by the board. Discussed and accorded by the general assembly
<b>Flash cooperative (2)</b>	Members participate in value creation and benefit from revenues	By board for the duration of the flash cooperative
<b>Chain cooperative (1)</b>	Members participate in value creation and benefit from revenues	Delegated to various groups of cooperative members (such as producers, retail, consumers), discussed and accorded by the general assembly
<b>Foundation (4)</b>	No membership structure	Prepared by the operational team, discussed and accorded by the board
<b>Union (1)</b>	Members participate in decision making	Prepared by the board. Discussed and accorded by the general assembly
<b>Partnership* (1)</b>	Owned by two founding directors	Board of directors
<b>NGO *(1)</b>	No membership structure, but volunteers are welcomed	Board and operational team
<b>Ltd. ** (1)</b>	Owned by founding directors	Board of directors
<b>Network (1)</b>	Network members approached by initiators. Members become ambassadors, enlarging the network	Steering committee

\* foundation initiated by community

\*\* expansion of community

The following organizational constructs are present in the sample: five cooperatives, two of which adopted the flash cooperative structure with one of these two developing a chain cooperative; four foundations, two of which were founded to enable upscaling of actions; one union; one partnership

that also initiated a foundation; one non-governmental organization (NGO) with the legal status of a foundation; and one network without a formal legal status that is facilitated and supported by a consultancy. These organizational forms are grounded in existing rules and regulations that formalized organizations in the Netherlands must adhere to. Simultaneously, as pointed out earlier in this section, communities are innovating existing organizational constructs within legal boundaries. During the research period, six communities changed their initial governance structure. Nine communities changed their organizational structure. Two communities ceased to exist. Not one of the cases changed its initial mission and generic, multiple-value-oriented goals. However, sometimes a temporary focus on distinct aspects was prioritized, sometimes supported by a temporary flash cooperative structure.

### **7.2.2. Stage: problem definition**

The purpose of Entrepreneurial Communities is to address common goals: wicked problems related to sustainable development. All cases in the sample came into existence to address such wicked problems affecting the region in which the cases operate. Respondents, in general, perceive their communities' collective actions to contribute practical solutions to a commonly perceived wicked problem (e.g., unsustainable food production, ineffective waste management, absent inclusiveness). Wicked problems are complex and multi-layered (see also Section 1.2.). Entrepreneurial Communities deconstruct wicked problems into addressable and comprehensible solutions (e.g., agroforestry, registering litter, empowerment). The development and implementation of these solutions must be planned, organized, and executed, indicating that strategic decisions come into play. Strategic decision making commences with assessing and reassessing wicked problems affecting or troubling the community. Since the communities are still evolving and become involved in multiple projects, multiple strategic and operational problems are being assessed at any given time. Various procedures to generate input for defining partial problems and discussing solutions and the subsequent collective actions have been observed in the sample. In general, all constituents of a community can propose new topics and discuss new problems related to substantive goals. Governing boards are responsible for organizing (approval of) strategic decision making by the general assembly. Although not mentioned in focus group interviews, document analysis demonstrates that information rules are used for procedures of assessing and advocating problems. Communities with a formalized membership structure (e.g., cooperatives) adhere to established procedures for the consultation of constituents, documented in agendas and notes of board meetings, year plans, and general assemblies. Information on such procedures is made available to



all community members. Communities also seek input by engaging in public debate, experiments, organizing brainstorming sessions, and attending conferences to deliberate issues that need to be addressed. Respondents in the focus group interviews deem it essential for community constituents and stakeholders to address wicked problems from a mutual perception of and shared perspective on collective solutions. Collective actions are intended to contribute to the communities' substantive goal, but also to mirror novel collaborative manners of allocating, defining, and addressing problems.

### **7.2.3. Stage: goal determination**

In general, communities address multiple strategic goals at once in collective actions that, in the end, must contribute to the communities' sustainability-oriented mission or vision. A mixture is observed in the sample of project goals relating to executing collective actions, and general community goals for establishing multiple value creation. This mixture of concretizing generic community goals into collective actions and aiming for multiple-value-creating output appears to be inherent to Entrepreneurial Communities. In addition, respondents mention that pioneering novel collaborative constructs is necessary to establish a transition. Addressing community development as an additional goal indicates that collective action is a critical, strategic element in providing collaborative solutions to the wicked problems addressed.

Generic community goals are addressed in various documents that describe a community's purpose, such as mission statements, vision documents, and statutes. Eleven out of 12 cases yield an organizational form requiring statutes. Statutes are compulsory for legal entities in the Netherlands. They must be established by notarial deed and must be registered by the Chamber of Commerce ([www.ondernemersplein.kvk.nl/statuten-opstellen-wijzigen-en-opvragen](http://www.ondernemersplein.kvk.nl/statuten-opstellen-wijzigen-en-opvragen), 22.01.15). Statutes describe the main goal and principles of an organization. In their statutes, organizations formalize and explain their purpose, goal, or mission. Changing of board members and changes in organizational goals or scope must be established by notarial deed. Respondents express different uptakes on the function of statutes. Most cases started with standardized statutes that most respondents associate with required formalities. However, during the research period, various cases began to reconsider statutes. A new development that has been observed is the design of statutes embedded in the value perception of a community. Bommelerwaard (Bommelerwaard, 2016) was the first case to effectuate statutes that support the perspective that the main purpose of the community is to realize multiple and shared value creation for the whole region through collaboration. These statutes formalize a systemic perspective of the region in which a community operates, enabling a formalized organizational structure for addressing the region as a multiple-

value-creating system and generating various, sustainable revenues. Four other cases adopted a similar approach during the research period, effectuating their value-driven perspectives by embedding them in customized statutes or bylaws.

#### **7.2.4. Stage: collective actions**

In general, cases adopt an open structure, encouraging constituents and stakeholders to suggest and partake in collective actions that are considered supportive to a communities' substantive goals. Communities in the sample use a mix of actions addressing strategic goals, and actions addressing operational goals. From a strategic perspective, communities plan, deliberate, and discuss collective actions to address wicked problems, and actions to develop and strengthen the community. Analysis strongly suggests that community development can become a strategic goal itself. In general, collective actions are organized via decentralized structures such as working groups or project groups that propose and prepare collective actions on behalf of the community. These actions must align with generic community goals but also with the organizational capacity of the community. Depending on the scope, projects prepared by working groups must be accorded by the board or the general assembly. Cases, in general, confine themselves to actions they associate with their substantive goal but differ in the extent to which they assess in advance whether and how actions contribute to a general goal, vision, or mission. Virtually all respondents in the focus group interviews refer to the responsibility to check whether (proposed) actions align with generic strategic goals. However, procedures or instructions on how to assess this alignment are rare. Respondents from three cases mention a steering committee or advisory board, which serves as an overarching body for judging whether proposed actions align with community goals, mission, or vision.

In general, cases adopt an open structure, encouraging constituents and stakeholders to suggest and contribute to collective actions. Collective and delegated actions are deemed equally necessary and even inseparable and various community members are involved in deciding what actions should be executed. Most cases in the sample feel constrained to engage in structural funding of actions by third parties such as financial institutions or governmental bodies. Respondents in all focus group interviews express the aim for independence but acknowledge the need for funding, not only of distinct collective actions but also of the structural costs of running an organization. In general, communities that turn down structural outside funding mention the strategic risk that funding institutions may interfere in goal orientation, but time, expertise, and lack of co-funding required for most applications are also mentioned.

### **7.2.5. Stage: assessing outcomes**

When communities contemplate collective actions, they anticipate the expected outcomes of those actions. From a strategic perspective, outcomes must contribute to substantive community goals. Although procedures for concretizing the output are deemed necessary by all respondents, most cases encounter difficulties in assessing expected outcomes in advance. The communities in the sample have no standardized procedures for determining whether and how decisions and actions contribute to overarching long-term goals associated with sustainable development.

In all focus group meetings, respondents refer to the added value their community provides for sustainable development of their region. Respondents express the need for assessing objectifiable social or environmental output but encounter difficulties in doing so, possibly due to the lack of standardized procedures available to them for assessing outcomes in advance and monitoring their progress.

From the focus group interviews, it becomes clear that contemplating in advance in what way concrete outcomes of collective actions contribute to generic strategic goals is not general practice. No standardized procedures for assessing progress with regards to generic strategic goals were mentioned by respondents. Since there are no standardized or required protocols to assess other than financial outputs, communities in the sample have engaged in experiments to concretize output related to sustainability. Three cases have pioneered novel ways of assessing and determining their impact. They provide data for various research institutions.

In general, cases involved in revenue-generating collective actions (e.g., production and sale of energy or food) demonstrate more consideration in assessing and discussing multiple-value aspects of collective actions in advance.

Analysis of goals addressed by the cases reveals that communities anticipate and realize various outcome types as proposed by Clarke and Fuller (2011) (see also Section 3.3.). For analysis of Strategic Commoning, we examined to what extent these various outcome types guide strategic decisions.

*Plan-centric outcomes* are anticipated outcomes that contribute to generic goals. Since the communities in the sample have transcending and time-demanding goals related to systemic change, it was virtually impossible for them to realize plan-centric goals within the timespan of this research. It is too early to assess plan-centric outcomes with regards to sustainable development or systemic change. However, it is possible to assess whether decisions, collective actions, and preliminary results of those actions are relatable to general goals. Six cases demonstrate results that are contributing to their generic goals. Their collective actions are embedded in annual plans guided by articulated strategic goals.

*Process-centric outcomes* relate to and result in adaptations in organizing collective actions. All cases consider development of their community and advocating sustainable development key to executing their collective actions. Ten cases actively invest in community development, anticipating and engaging in changes in organizational structure. Process-centric outcomes have been realized by most communities in the sample. The two communities that ceased to exist seemed to entice collaborative processes at the start but were not successful towards the end. This is here interpreted as not having established process-centric outcomes.

*Partner-centric outcomes*, here interpreted as *community-centric outcomes*, relate to mutual learning and changes in organizational behavior within the community. All cases deliberate on community development. Eleven out of 12 cases demonstrate community-centric outcomes: they adjust or have adjusted their community structure in practice, partly to operate more strategically.

*Person-centric outcomes* relate to individual constituents. Since all communities in the sample demand input and skills from constituents, it may be argued here that constituents in all communities generate personal results: by joining the community they benefit directly or indirectly from its actions. For assessing and synthesizing person-centric outcomes we distinctly looked at fragments referring to objectifiable outcomes. Respondents in nine out of 12 cases appoint various benefits of strategic decisions for individual constituents. For cooperatives, these benefits take form in shared revenues. For others, the community has affected their personal life or professional career, e.g., by becoming a volunteer or professional.

*Outside stakeholder-centric outcomes* relate to the goals of prominent stakeholders (e.g., funding institutions, local government). All communities are involved in collaborations with outside stakeholders. Networking is invariably at the core of their interaction with their environment, i.e., a strategic endeavor. Various structural relationships are observed with outside stakeholders: governing institutions, funding institutions, chain partners, clients, and residents in the regions where communities operate. In general, respondents in the focus groups demonstrate an understanding of the potential network of the community, and communities actively approach stakeholders. Five communities explicitly target outside stakeholders with their collective actions. Respondents in the focus group interviews generally appraise the community's independence and do not want to be constrained by the rules and requirements of third parties.

*Environmental-centric outcomes* relate to unexpected ecological, economic, and social environments beyond the context of the substantive goals addressed by the community. Since the communities in

the sample eventually address systemic change from a long-term, multiple-value-oriented perspective, it may be argued that they all ultimately strive for environmental-centric outcomes. Within the sample, we attributed environmental-centric outcomes to two cases that demonstrated unintended environmental-centric outcomes. Gloei initially led by example, but its demise caused frictions and discussion beyond the community. GoClean started as a litter-picking initiative aiming for a clean local environment, and partly evolved into a professional organization for organizing litter-picking communities.

Table 7.2. below synthesizes the outcome types that were attributed to the cases in the sample

**Table 7.2.**  
*Outcome types generated by cases in the sample*

Case >	Bomm 2021	DFrui 2021	DirkIII 2018	EWPn 2021	FCMR 2021	GCR 2021	Gloei 2019	GoCl 2021	NKG 2021	NoDu 2021	PakAn 2021	VoKe 2021
Outcome v												
Plan	X	X		X		X		X			X	
Process	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Community	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Outs. Stake.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Person	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	
Environ.		X		X		X	X	X				

Table 7.2. demonstrates that all cases in the sample have generated partner-centric and outside-stakeholder-centric outcomes. In addition, process-centric outcomes have been established by all cases that are still active.

### **7.2.6. Synthesizing stages in Strategic Commoning**

Analysis of critical strategic action situations in Entrepreneurial Communities demonstrates that at any given time, multiple contemplations concerning both organizational goals and organizational development and are in demand of decision making. Decisions become strategic when they 1) define a relationship between the community at hand and its environment; 2) concern the community as a whole; 3) encompass the communities' primary functions; 4) direct administrative and operational activities, and 5) are essential to long-term accomplishments.

The Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample follow procedures for strategic decision making that parallel stages in the conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning proposed in Chapter 3. The extent to which this decision making is structured and formalized differs. In general, the governing body is responsible for preparing and facilitating strategic decision making. The general assembly

must formally approve strategic decisions in communities with a formalized membership structure (e.g., cooperatives). In communities without such a structure, strategic decisions are approved by the governing board.

Analysis of critical strategic incidents in Entrepreneurial Communities confirms that strategic decision making is processual and is being developed in practice. Although the stages of the conceptual process model in strategic decision making (Figure 3.3.) are detectable in each strategic action situation that was analyzed, in practice, the stages are far more interconnected than the theory suggests. In all cases, strategic decision making manifests as an ongoing process, each stage representing aspects of collaboration that must be considered during strategic decision-making: who are deciding; what is the collective problem that needs to be addressed by decision making; how does that relate to generic goals; what actions are considered fit to solve the problem; and in what way do these actions contribute to generic goals.

During the five-year research period, strategic decision making in the cases manifested as a continuous and, to a great extent, subconscious process. Communities constantly reflect on processes and manners to align goals and collective actions whereby one decision may affect the next. In general, governing bodies are responsible for initiating decisions that result in both collective and decentralized actions. Decentralized actions are perceived necessary for developing collective actions, and respondents consider collective and delegated actions equally important. Thus, from a practice-based perspective, the superimposed conceptual stages of "collective actions" and "delegated actions" in the conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 3.3.) become synthesized in practice to a single stage of assessing collective actions performed by various constellations of constituents.

Cross-case comparison confirms the theoretical foundations of this research (see also Chapter 2) by demonstrating that strategy development and community development become entangled in Entrepreneurial Communities. Even stronger, analysis suggests that community development becomes strategic. The entanglement of strategic and organizational development is considered inherent to the dynamics of emerging Entrepreneurial Communities by respondents.

### **7.3. External variables affecting strategic decision making**

As presented in Section 7.2., the stages in strategic decision making conceptualized in Chapter 3 have been recognized in all cases. Analysis of these stages demonstrates that strategic decision making is an ongoing interaction between components rather than a chronological, adaptive, and recursive

process. At any given time, decision-makers in Entrepreneurial Communities are confronted with multiple and different contemplations regarding strategic decision making.

Cases differ in how they address these contemplations. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, theory (see, e.g., Clarke and Fuller, 2011; Ostrom, 2010a, 2010b) suggests that strategic decisions are induced and affected by various contextual factors. Drawing on Ostrom's classification of external variables into attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use, this section synthesizes variables that have been found to affect the majority of selected strategic action situations in the sample.

### ***7.3.1. Allocating external variables in practice***

External factors affecting Strategic Commoning were allocated through qualitative analysis (see also Chapter 5). For analysis of the strategic decision-making process, axial codes were eventually synthesized into categories that parallel Ostrom's (2010b, 2011b) notion of external variables that affect action situations (see also Chapter 2). Attributes of the community and biophysical Conditions (Ostrom, 2010b, 2011b) affecting Strategic Commoning were analyzed using transcripts of focus group interviews with all respondents. Rules in use were derived from an analysis of formal documents regarding organizational structure provided by the cases. Case-based results are disseminated in Chapter 6. The sample was purposively chosen for its variance. Both case-specific and generalizable variables have been found. Statements by respondents regarding factors influential to strategic decision making were often endorsed by other respondents. During analysis, attributes of the community and biophysical conditions that were addressed in all focus group interviews by multiple respondents were interpreted as influential to Strategic Commoning in general. Variables were addressed by multiple respondents and in the majority of cases were interpreted as feasibly influential. Variables that were mentioned by respondents from fewer than five cases were considered case-specific. In general, such variables were touched upon by individual respondents from one to three cases. Since they might be interpreted as the opinion of individual respondents, such variables have not been included in the cross-case analysis below.

### ***7.3.2. Attributes of the community***

Analysis of the focus group interviews results in various variables interpretable as attributes of the community that are considered critical for strategic decision making by respondents. Synthesizing these variables results in three overarching attributes of the community considered influential to

strategic decision making in all cases: value alignment, heterogeneity, and organizational capacity. They are outlined below.

*Value alignment* is by far the most mentioned variable related to strategic decision making. Value alignment is considered influential to all five stages in strategic decision making.

References from respondents to value alignment were synthesized into three indicators:

- 1) Constituents' visions on sustainable development, indicating, e.g., discussion or concordance on aspects of multiple value creation
- 2) Constituents' concordance with substantive mission, vision, or goals, but also the purpose of the community
- 3) Constituents' contemplations on organizing and establishing value alignment, indicating concordance with and contributing to the approach developed by the community.

In general, communities invest time in aligning operational aspects of value creation, such as resource management. Respondents in all focus group interviews address value alignment multiple times and in various ways. In general, respondents endorse statements by other respondents regarding value perceptions guiding the community. Respondents acknowledge that value perceptions are influential in discussing and deciding upon goals and planning collective actions. Like-mindedness in value perceptions is deemed important. Strategic decisions cannot be made without complying with established decision making structures requiring, e.g., most constituents to concord on plans and collective actions during general meetings. In general, respondents demonstrate awareness that new constituents may bring new value perceptions and that inadequate value alignment may cause frictions resulting in a lack of progress or even conflict. Respondents associate value alignment with mutual trust, expressing that collaborating from a shared value paradigm is vital to them.

*Heterogeneity* is the second attribute of the community that is discussed in various ways by all respondents in all focus group interviews. Respondents associate indicators for heterogeneity with all five stages of strategic decision making.

References from respondents to heterogeneity were synthesized into two main indicators:

- 1) Diversity in community constituents, relating to societal groups, societal realms, age, and gender, but also vision, and societal positions of constituents.
- 2) Constituents' backgrounds, relating to aspects such as education, prior occupation, knowledge, skills, and interests.



Constituents' prior knowledge and (professional) background are influential to their strategic decision making, which in turn is consequential for their collective actions. The communities in the sample open up to new inputs and welcome and actively approach individuals and organizations in their region willing to join and contribute to the community, whether as a community member or as a stakeholder. The resulting heterogeneity is influential to their strategic decision making. Constituents represent a variety of societal and cultural backgrounds and education, and in general have other, principal, occupations besides operating within the community. However, initiators may be or become professionally involved. This appears consequential to the cases engaging in revenue-generating actions. For instance, entrepreneurial strategies require entrepreneuring skills and anticipating a market.

Respondents in the focus group interviews favor and appraise a mix of constituents representing different skills and networks as an important asset to their community and in particular its governing board. Respondents deem a variety of knowledge (e.g., on sustainable development), organizational skills (e.g., leadership, administration, fundraising, being entrepreneurial), and experience in the governing board essential for contemplating and organizing the systems change they ultimately aspire to. In various cases, heterogeneity is embedded in the community structure. However, respondents are aware that the variety of respondents may also pose a risk, referring to different levels of involvement in decision making and collective actions, different interests, and different value perspectives. Frictions that resulted from such differences in the past are addressed by adjusting internal structures and procedures, and endorsing transparency and community involvement in strategic decision making. This is structured in rules in use. Learning by doing, rules in use are adjusted, confirming Ostrom's (2011b) notion that external variables may change over time.

A third attribute of the community mentioned in all focus group interviews is *organizational capacity*. Respondents in the focus group interviews associate organizational capacity with three stages in strategic decision making: community formation, assessing collective actions, and anticipating outcomes.

References from respondents to organizational capacity were synthesized into four indicators:

- 1) Competences – indicating individual qualities of constituents, e.g., being critical, entrepreneurial, active, and influential but also being available and intrinsically motivated for involvement in the community.
- 2) Knowledge – indicating professional knowledge, e.g., on running a business, and the level of knowledge regarding the issues that are addressed by the community, e.g., energy or diversity.
- 3) Experience – indicating the availability of competencies such as leadership or dealing with stakeholders and prior experience in organizing collective action.

4) Networks – indicating the networks that constituents have access to. Respondents mention that constituents may provide access through their networks to stakeholders, partners, or funding. A second topic addressed by this indicator is the amount of prestige or influence that constituents exercise through their positions within external parties.

The Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample are still evolving, and they need to take decisions on collective actions and organizational development simultaneously. Next to this, Entrepreneurial Communities are initiated from a drive to invoke change and not to run a business. Thus, organizing collective actions depends heavily on the constituents' contributions of time, skills, and knowledge necessary for organizing and structuring the community (and consequently its strategy development) and generating the resources required for running a community and executing collective actions. As touched upon in Section 7.2., in most cases, the governing board is responsible for structuring the community and its decision-making processes. However, the board relies on constituents for input. Respondents link internal organizational capacity to heterogeneity since a variety of knowledge, skills, and experience is in demand for running the community and consequentially governing its strategic decision making.

Respondents refer not only to practical contributions of community members but also to individual characteristics of constituents mentioning being critical, being entrepreneurial, contributing actively, and being influential in networks. Motivation is deemed important for presence at formal decision-making moments, e.g., general meetings. Limited availability of constituents due to other occupations and different priorities are mentioned multiple times when referring to limited contributions from individual participants.

Synthesizing attributes of the community demonstrates that all cases depend on availability of various competencies such as leadership, communication, and professional knowledge. All respondents consider availability or lack of such competencies within the community influential to organizational progress and strategic output. Regarding the governance of strategic decisions, respondents deem leadership skills an important asset that allows the organization to structure and implement decision-making procedures, providing clarity for all constituents. Communication and networking skills are regarded as important for informing, motivating, and activating constituents but also stakeholders. The three synthesized attributes of the community are considered significant to strategic decision making in all cases. Various other attributes of the community that were mentioned incidentally by respondents from one or two cases were considered too case specific for the aim of this research.

### **7.3.3. Biophysical conditions**

Respondents from all cases position stakeholders as a vital variable for their communities. All respondents address this variable in all focus group interviews. Resource dependency, legal and institutional context, and place-boundedness are mentioned by respondents from at least half of the cases. Since the aim of this research is to develop a general theory on Strategic Commoning, only biophysical conditions that were mentioned by at least half of the cases are presented below. Other biophysical conditions that were mentioned incidentally by respondents were considered too case-specific for extrapolating results.

#### *Stakeholders*

Collaborations with and interests of (existing and potential) stakeholders were discussed in all focus group interviews. References from respondents to stakeholders were synthesized into three indicators:

- 1) Positioning stakeholders, indicating assessing the role and influence of stakeholders and the community's influence on stakeholders.
- 2) Collaboration with stakeholders, indicating incidental and structural collaborations with existing stakeholders, approaching potential stakeholders, and being approached by stakeholders.
- 3) Positioning similar initiatives, indicating interactions with organizations that address similar goals, e.g., collaboration, consolidation, and exchange of expertise.

All respondents are affirmative that collaboration is an integral part of their collective actions. Communities need collaborations to develop prosperous collective actions. Assessing and accessing stakeholders is considered important by respondents for the prosperity of the community and its collective actions. Respondents mention the importance of collaborations with different societal realms for aligning value perspectives, cocreation, and establishing synergy on actions addressing sustainable future of the area.

From the perspective of systemic change, respondents deem it is essential for their community to be or become considered and acknowledged as an important actor in regional and sustainability-oriented developments.

All cases keep an open mind to existing and new collaborations and are eager to exchange visions and work methods with other organizations. All respondents are well informed about developments in their region that are relevant to their community. They actively assess potential stakeholders and initiate various collaborations that are beneficial to their collective actions. Some collaborations are perceived to be inevitable, e.g., collaborating with governmental institutions to acquire access to regional agendas or funding. Respondents indicate that their communities are generally considerate

in selecting incidental and structural collaborations, mentioning that investing time and money is critical for considering partnerships.

Three communities in the sample (see also Section 6.2.) demonstrate a “symbiotic” relationship with the principal stakeholders that initiated them. These communities get structural, financial and operational support from founding organizations. From a strategic perspective, there is an interdependence between these communities and their principal stakeholders. While the communities benefit from professional and financial support and networks, their collective actions are considered supportive for founding organizations’ sustainability policies. However, this comes with the risk of an imbalance or even collapse of the community when sustainability policies of principal stakeholders change.

### *Resources*

The biophysical condition Resources is synthesized from fragments indicating the various manners in which communities deliberate, and generate, resources or obtain revenues. Resources is mentioned multiple times by all respondents in 10 out of 12 cases.

References from respondents to stakeholders were synthesized into two indicators:

- 1) Funding collective actions, indicating various manners to obtain financial resources necessary to execute actions through income-generating collective actions (e.g., product sale), subscription fees, or structural or incidental, public or private funding
- 2) Facilitating collective actions, indicating various in-kind donations, e.g., free use of meeting spaces or office support but also media support.

Entrepreneurial Communities in general demonstrate an integral perception of the resources they need. Time, skills, knowledge, and experience contributed by constituents and stakeholders are considered valuable resources for collective actions. However, next to contributions in kind by constituents, communities rely on revenue-generating actions, funding, or a combination of these two to cover the inevitable and structural costs of running a community, organizing decision making, and engaging in collective actions.

Communities that are involved in revenue-generating collective actions must be able to make investments. Since cases generally operate outside established constructs for financing novel endeavors (e.g., loans from financial institutions), various cases have developed customized models for obtaining and sharing revenues.

Seven out of 12 cases are (partially) dependent on funding by public or private parties to execute their collective actions. Respondents value the independence of their community, expressing that collaboration with funding or facilitating parties is only acceptable when the community continues on its own terms and feels no pressure by third parties to divert from its substantive goals. However, not

all cases have achieved this desired level of independence and must balance influence on collective actions by funding or facilitating parties. As already touched upon in this section, funding constructions may result in symbiotic relationships with principal partners.

#### *Legal and institutional context*

“Legal and institutional context” was synthesized from fragments referring to existing structures and regulations that the community must adhere to. Indicators for legal and institutional context are:

- 1) Legal structures, indicating allowable organizational structures, legislation, and legislative power.
- 2) Institutional structures, indicating influence by established parties and organizations and structures of existing systems (e.g., supply chains), and power executed by various organizations (e.g., municipality).
- 3) Political environment, indicating the interest (or lack of interest) and support by (governmental) institutions, political influence, but also public debate and societal pressure.

Although Entrepreneurial Communities are pioneering organizational constructs, they operate within existing legal structures. Organizational forms are confined by existing legal formats (e.g., cooperative or union) and bound by rules and regulations that organizations must confer to.

Existing legal structures partly determine strategic decision making due to statutory requirements within a chosen legal structure (e.g., the number of board members and the amount of voting attendants in a general assembly). In addition, respondents mention legislation being both constructive and obstructive to their collective actions. Next to legal structures, existing organizational constructs and networks are influential to strategic decision making. In general, addressing wicked problems entails addressing systems change and all cases deem this their ultimate goal. All cases discuss changes in value perceptions and, ultimately, organizational changes in existing structures, e.g., supply chains. Respondents mention conflicting interests when referring to institutions and private parties and express the need to concur with existing organizational networks and structures when contemplating strategy development. Regarding politics, respondents indicate that changing local, provincial, and national politics are influential to funding, facilitation, and collaboration.

#### *Place-boundedness*

Place-boundedness is a biophysical condition that relates to the physical environment of a community.

Indicators for place-bound are

- 1) Physical environment, indicating the region or local or supra-local area in which a community operates.
- 2) Demographic characteristics regarding the population of the region.

3) Cultural environment, indicating distinct properties associated with the region in which a community operates, opinions regarding collaborations associated with the regional or local culture, and (social) awareness within the region of the wicked problem addressed.

Regional embeddedness is considered beneficial for various reasons. Respondents mentioned that the place-bound context facilitates contact and exchange between constituents but also with stakeholders. All cases in the sample demonstrate a profound connection with their environment and seek ways to become embedded as a key player in systemic change. All communities in the sample have been deliberately initiated to address issues in the region in which they operate. Although wicked problems are not place-bound, they are addressed from a local and supra-local perspective by the cases. This is associated by respondents with the advantage of personal involvement in contributing to the environment. Depending on the scope of collective actions, strategic decisions are influenced by cultural aspects related to the region in which a community operates. Respondents mention various regional and local cultural characteristics and societal values. They express an urgent need to enhance (social) awareness in the region of the problems addressed by the community. Consequently, community strategies may encompass distinct collective actions to address a wider audience in the region. Summarizing, we propose four biophysical conditions that are considered influential to Strategic Commoning: stakeholders, resource dependency, legal and institutional context and place-boundedness.

#### **7.3.4. Rules in use**

Respondents consider transparency in decision-making procedures important. They are familiar with decision-making procedures and regard rules in use to be inherent to community structure, but in general, they do not associate them with strategic choice. All communities use rules in use for decision making, including strategic decision making. Distinct rules in use are developed, applied, and documented for decisions involving the whole community and its substantive goal(s). Rules in use have mostly been explored by document analysis. Documents like statutes, agendas, and notes, but also descriptions of decision making by respondents, demonstrate that procedures and responsibilities regarding various aspects of strategic decision making are established in formalized protocols. However, respondents in the focus group interviews do not give rules in use much consideration when referring to strategic decision making. Rules in use are associated with operational decisions and organizational development, and to a lesser extent with the distinct strategizing properties of a community. Documented and unwritten rules in use for strategic decision making are used by all communities in the sample. Structuring and establishing strategic decisions is partly due to legal and formal obligations associated with distinct organizational constructs. In

general, rules in use are consciously applied for decisions that are strategic, but the degree of formalization differs. Communities with a formalized membership structure (e.g., cooperative or union) have statutory obligations to execute formalized decision making procedures. Cases where only the governing board is involved in strategic decision making (e.g., a temporary flash cooperative or a partnership) tend to discuss strategic decisions in an informal setting. Respondents from three cases mention that they generally confer without a structured agenda or notes while referring to mutual trust and shared value perspectives due to knowing and understanding each other well.

Analysis of documented procedures regarding strategic decisions (e.g., agendas, notes of meetings, mailings to constituents) establishes that administered rules in use correspond with documented protocols. All cases administer, to some extent, documented procedures for collaborative decision making on collective actions or are working on this. These procedures are also applied to strategic decision making. Information regarding decision making procedures is generally made available by the governing board to all constituents. Different levels of formalization of various rules in use become apparent in the cases; however, the amount of formalization does not appear to affect the scope and structure of rules in use, nor does it affect implementation of decisions. Analysis confirms that rules in use direct and affect various stages in community-based strategic decision making. In general, rules in use are adapted to the community structure at hand and are consciously adhered. Rules and regulations for decision making are formalized through statutes. Respondents demonstrate familiarity with rules in use. Although rules in use are detectable by document research, they do not get mentioned a lot in the focus group interviews. Respondents touch upon various rules and procedures for constituents' involvement in organizational aspects but seldom relate to rules in use as critical factors influencing strategic decision making. Position rules were linked to Strategic Commoning in six focus group interviews; aggregation rules were mentioned in five of these six focus groups interviews. The cases referring to position and aggregation rules were, during the time of the focus group interview, to a greater or lesser extent involved in executing, adjusting, or changing decision making procedures, which is a possible explanation for them referring to these rules in use. Other rules mentioned incidentally by respondents are boundary rules, pay-off rules, information rules, and scope rules referring to various roles and responsibilities within a board. From the general observation that communities' governing bodies consciously contemplate decision making procedures to ensure and guard community involvement, we conclude that analyzing rules in use serves to detect decision making procedures, which in turn facilitates detecting strategic decision making. During the research period, six cases changed their community structure with rules in use changing accordingly. In contrast to attributes of the community and biophysical conditions, rules in use thus have mainly been established by document analysis. Considering our analysis of external variables affecting

Strategic Commoning, we bring forward that rules in use provide constructs and procedures to establish strategic choice induced by biophysical conditions. Biophysical conditions trigger the emergence of a community in the first place as civilians, organizations, and institutions engage in collaborations that address the region that they operate in. Thus, biophysical conditions induce communities that address those very biophysical conditions. They form the place-based context a community is embedded in.

Synthesizing case-based results, Table 7.3. below summarizes three attributes of the community and four biophysical conditions that were found to affect Strategic Commoning during this research and that are considered generalizable to the sample.

**Table 7.3.**  
*Attributes of the community and biophysical Conditions*

<b>Indicator from focus group interview</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>External variable</b>
Constituents' vision on sustainable development Constituent's concordance with mission Constituents' opinion on organizing and establishing value alignment	Value alignment (12*)	Attributes of the community
Various societal realms Various opinions Discussing purpose, goals, means	Heterogeneity (12*)	Attributes of the community
Constituents' capacities Constituents' knowledge Constituents' experience Constituents' networks	Organizational capacity (12*)	Attributes of the community
Alignment with (existing and potential) stakeholders Collaboration with (existing and potential) stakeholders Reaching out to potential constituents and stakeholders Positioning similar initiatives	Stakeholders (12*)	Biophysical conditions
Funding of collective actions Facilitating collective actions Support by third parties	Resource dependency (10*)	Biophysical conditions
Legal structures Institutional structures Political environment	Legal & institutional context (8*)	Biophysical conditions
Physical environment Demographic characteristics Cultural environment	Place-boundedness (6*)	Biophysical conditions

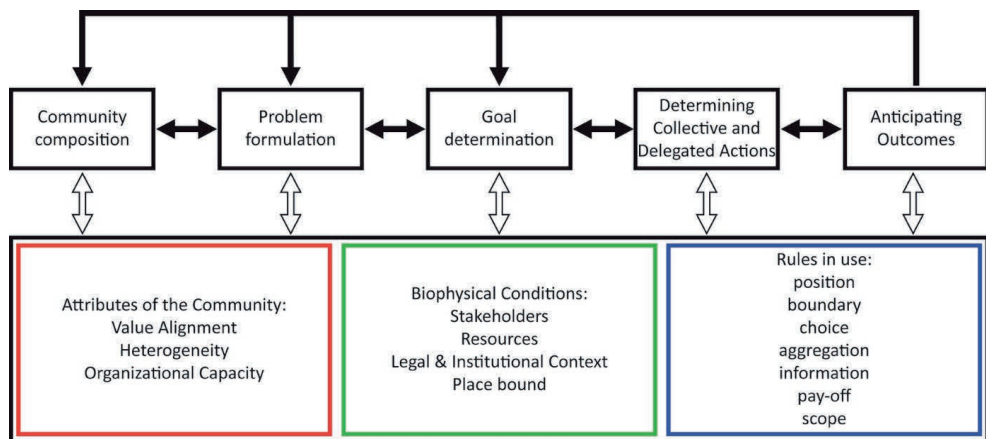
\* discussed in (x) focus group interviews



### 7.3.5. Synthesis of stages and variables

Analysis of strategic action situations in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities (see Section 7.2.) demonstrates that the successive stages of the conceptual process model presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.3.) become more entangled in an adaptive and recursive decision-making process, affected by but also affecting distinct external variables (Ostrom, 2011b) or contextual factors (Clarke & Fuller, 2011). Contrary to the conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning presented in Chapter 3, our research could not confirm that attributes of the community and biophysical conditions only affect distinct stages of Strategic Commoning. In contrast, both groups of variables constantly affect, and are affected by, multiple stages in strategic decision making. We bring forward that this probably results from the dynamics of crafting structural collaborations. Figure 7.1. visualizes this dynamic interplay of stages and external variables. Findings from the comparative case study have been merged with the conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 3.3), resulting in the case-based process model of Strategic Commoning presented here (Figure 7.1).

**Figure 7.1.**  
*Case-based process model of Strategic Commoning*



In the here-proposed process model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 7.1.) the successive stages of the conceptual process model presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.3.) become more entangled in an adaptive and recursive decision-making process, affected by but also affecting distinct external variables (Ostrom, 2011b) or contextual factors (Clarke & Fuller, 2011). The case-based process model (Figure 7.1.) visualizes Strategic Commoning as the outcome of five interacting stages, induced and affected by three categories of external variables. Configurations of external variables enhance or restrict strategic decisions regarding collective actions. Following Ostrom (2011b), Figure 7.1.

diversifies the amalgamation of external variables affecting Strategic Commoning in three overarching sets of variables: attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in Use.

Contrary to the conceptual process model of Strategic Commoning presented in Chapter, this research could not confirm that the here-presented attributes of the community and biophysical conditions only affect distinct stages of Strategic Commoning. In contrast, we present external variables that are considered to constantly affect, and become affected by, multiple stages in strategic decision-making. Most communities in the sample established considerable changes that directly resulted from the strategic action situations that were analyzed. Thus, new strategies are currently executed; however, given the long-term perspective, it is too early to assess whether these new strategies are supportive to creating lasting, intended, structural and multiple-value-creating impact.

#### **7.4. Synthesizing strategy types**

Synthesizing results from case-based analysis (see Chapter 6), six of the eight types of strategy described by Mintzberg and Waters (1985) could be attributed to the cases. Case-based research further confirms findings from theory (see Chapter 2), that community-based strategy development is partly deliberate and partly emergent. Respondents consciously consider internal value alignment during processes of strategic decision making. Pioneering new manners for addressing multiple value creation, community development may become strategic. We deem Strategic Commoning deliberately emergent: a general conception of shared goals and the collective actions to address them is gradually crafted into a collaborative strategy guiding collective actions.

In essence, every community in the sample was conceived from a deliberate intention to address a wicked problem by collaboration. From a strategic management perspective, *how* a community addresses a wicked problem should be guided by its strategy. However, various external variables (see Section 7.3.) are influential to the degree to which the wicked problem is articulated and agreed upon. Our analysis demonstrates that different ways to collaboratively address wicked problems correspond with the configuration of different strategy types used by a community and contribute two strategy types that manifest in community-based strategizing.

Based on analysis of strategic action situations (Chapter 6) we attribute the processual strategy type to eleven out of 12 cases. The entrepreneuring type has been recognized in six cases, the umbrella type in five cases, and the unconnected type in three cases. One case demonstrates and advocates the consensus strategy type. Although it became clear during the research that all communities in the sample aim for processual, value-driven, and community-based change, not all cases succeed in

developing and administering effective and supportive strategies. Additional strategic directions have been found in most of the cases; they were synthesized into two new strategy types associated with community-based strategies introduced here: the *multiple-value-driven type* and the *community-oriented type*.

Respondents indicate that a processual approach of long-term systemic change and value alignment are at the core of both organizational and strategic deliberations. A shared perspective on various aspects of the intended value creation is deemed essential for developing collective actions and the organizational construct that a community adopts (see also Section 6.3.). This is reflected in the organizational constructs in the sample, e.g., cooperatives reflect a shared value perspective on collective ownership of resources and revenues. In addition, various cases in the sample aim to change the value perspectives on, e.g., governance or production in the area in which they operate. This way, value alignment by various parties operating in the same (geographical) area becomes a strategic route to multiple value creation. Cross-case analysis thus suggests that acknowledging the long-term processual nature of intended actions and aligning value perspectives are quintessential strategic drivers for developing collective actions. From a strategic perspective, developing and advocating a value-driven approach for sustainable change becomes strategic itself. Albeit in different ways and with different levels of success, all communities in the sample demonstrate a strong focus on value alignment. For this, we introduce the *value oriented strategy type* which is attributed to all cases.

Next to value-oriented strategy development, respondents indicate that collaboration is necessary to address wicked problems. The communities in the sample make complicated, global issues addressable by putting them in a local or supra-local context in demand of collaborative solutions by various place-bound stakeholders. They invest time, knowledge, network, and resources in crafting collaborative constructs they deem necessary to address distinct wicked problems. From this perspective, community development becomes a strategic approach for addressing wicked problems. Respondents demonstrate awareness of the important role of the community for developing actions; however, not all communities in the sample have succeeded in developing a viable and durable community construct. Developing a novel, collaborative, and value-driven organizational construct in practice while addressing multiple issues simultaneously has proven difficult. According to respondents from the two communities that ceased to exist, tasks, responsibilities, priorities, but also a general focus became blurred, which in turn led to decline or absence of institutional support and funding. Their aim to become an established community was not supported by a clear community-oriented strategy. Bommelerwaar, De Fruitmotor, Energiecoöperatie WPN, FoodCouncil MRA, GCR, GoClean, and Voedselbos Ketelbroek deliberately changed or expanded their organizational construct, approach, or general focus to operate more

effectively. They developed or adapted a strategy in order to address the intended community more effectively, here interpreted as a customized *community-oriented strategy type*. We attribute the community-oriented strategy type to eight cases.

Based on our analysis of strategic action situations in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities we thus introduce two additions to the established strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985): *multiple-value-driven* and *community-oriented*. Both types are to some extent deliberate since constituents consciously contemplate their value-driven and community-developing actions. They are emergent as well since the development of a value-driven and community-based strategic approach is contemplated in practice. We position our additions to the existing types of strategies below the rather deliberate ideological style. The proposed types are related to the existing types of strategy in Table 7.4. below.

**Table 7.4.**  
*Updated strategy types*

Strategy type	Short description	Cases
<b>Planned</b>  Most deliberate	Based on formalized planning cycles. Intended and most deliberate	2
<b>Entrepreneurial</b>	Generating revenues by producing and/or trading goods / services	6
<b>Ideological</b>	Central, controlled vision	-
<b>Multiple value driven</b>	Collective actions embedded in multiple value creation-oriented vision	12
<b>Community-oriented</b>	Community development rooted in a shared belief in collaboration	8
<b>Process</b>	Developing, advocating, and contributing to processes of change	11
<b>Umbrella</b>	Central vision overarches various independent actions by multiple (groups of) constituents	5
<b>Unconnected</b>	Unconnected projects by (groups of) semi-independent constituents	2
<b>Consensus</b>	Mutual adjustment of various goals and plans	1
<b>Imposed</b>  Most emergent	Dictated by changing environment. Unintended and most emergent	-

Table 7.4. presents an overview of types of strategies (Mintzberg and Waters, 1987) with two further additions. Next to this, Table 7.4. indicates to how many cases the allocated strategy types have been

attributed. Table 7.4. demonstrates that process, value-driven and community-oriented strategy types are dominant in the collaborative strategy mix. From attributing multiple strategic styles to each case it follows that Strategic Commoning is an interplay of multiple types of strategies. Considering the heterogeneous and emerging nature of the Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample, it is no surprise that various strategy types co-exist and evolve. A periodical dominance of distinct strategy types is, in general, a deliberate choice. This is illustrated by the concept of the flash cooperative (see also Section 6.2.), where communities deliberately and periodically prioritize investing in a community structure that is supportive of their mission and intended organizational development. The communities adopting the flash cooperative construction acknowledge that various strategic directions must be addressed and demonstrate that a conscious choice of strategy styles contributes to the community and its actions. Analysis also indicates that unclarity on the various strategy types may hinder both community development and the development of collective actions, as was eventually the case in the two cases that ceased to exist. Both cases claimed a processual strategy style intended to evolve into an umbrella organization for facilitating loosely coupled collective actions. However, the process was hindered by prioritization of independent projects. The various strategies deployed by these independent projects were unconnected, leading to enduring debate on the purpose of the community. This indicates that the unconnected strategy type does not seem favorable for community-based collective actions requiring long-term involvement.

In general, three of four strategy styles are used, addressing various aspects of a community's strategy. In this mix, distinct strategy types may temporarily or permanently become prioritized. Priorities and matching strategies may change as a community evolves. Constituents contemplate and adapt their collaborative approaches to become value-driven game-changers. As organizational, operational, and strategic objectives become addressed simultaneously, multiple strategy types become equally important. This dynamic interplay of various strategy types – here called the *collaborative strategy mix* – is pivotal for Strategic Commoning.

Table 7.5 below summarizes strategy types that have been attributed towards the end of the case-based research to each case based on analysis of a distinct strategic action situation (see also Chapter 6). A short description of each strategy type was provided above in Table 7.4. Table 7.5. demonstrates that the value alignment type is attributed to all cases that are still active. The communities in the sample contribute to processes of change by developing, advocating, and executing collective actions for structural, sustainable changes.

Table 7.5.

*Types of strategies in Entrepreneurial Communities by 2021.12*

Case > -----	Bomm 2021	DFrui 2021	DirkIII 2018	EWPN 2021	FCMRA 2021	GCR 2021	Gloei 2019	GoCI 2021	NKG 2021	NoDu 2021	PakAn 2021	VoKe 2021
<b>Type v</b>												
<b>Planned</b>		X		X								
<b>Entrepr.</b>	X	X		X		X		X				X
<b>Ideological</b>												
<b>Community</b>	X	X		X		X		X	X		X	X
<b>Value</b>	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
<b>Process</b>	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
<b>Umbrella</b>					X					X	X	
<b>Unconnected</b>					X							
<b>Consensus</b>									X			
<b>Imposed</b>												

As a consequence, their collective actions should contribute to a processual strategy. Results indicate that the absence of a collaborative processual strategy seems counterproductive for community development. The quartermasters of Dirk de Derde had concurrence on the necessity and the parties needed to accelerate processes of change. However, they did not develop or execute a collective strategy to enhance processes of collaboration between these parties. Gloei was initiated as a movement, a process, but eventually became entangled in unconnected projects. For various reasons, these two cases were not able to connect the collective actions executed by constituents to the collaborative process.

Respondents from all cases emphasize that a shared perspective on multiple value creation determines their collective actions. They invest time and means to contemplate organizational constructs in support of multiple-value-creating actions by and for heterogeneous communities.

Six cases deploy a collaborative strategy mix of entrepreneuring, community, value, and process strategy types: Bommelerwaar, De Fruitmotor, Energiecoöperatie WPN, GCR, GoClean, and Voedselbos Ketelbroek. In addition, both strategic and organizational outcomes of De Fruitmotor and Energiecoöperatie WPN align with the planned strategy type. These six cases all have fairly prosperous business models (Jonker & Faber, 2021) involving revenue-generating actions. By observing these cases over a longer period of time (2015–2020), it became clear that the entrepreneurial style was prioritized in order to generate revenues that enable value-creating actions. Thus, revenues are considered a means for realizing sustainable values and not a goal. Respondents motivate their choice for integrating an entrepreneuring strategy type in their

collaborative strategy mix by relating to the importance of becoming financially independent. Financial independence is associated by respondents with operating independently from existing governmental and financial institutions.

FoodCouncil MRA, Dirk de Derde, and Gloei all initially used a mix of umbrella, unconnected, and multiple-value-oriented strategy types. After a prosperous start involving process strategies and contemplating community strategies, the collaborative strategy mix proved unsuccessful for Dirk de Derde and Gloei. Having experienced the shortcomings of not establishing a durable community structure, i.e., developing a prosperous community strategy, boards of De Fruitmotor and GCR consciously invested in community-oriented strategies. Acknowledging that the aim for community development hindered its aspired processual and connective aims, Foodcouncil MRA reorganized into an NGO, now entering a phase in which the organization generates plan-centric outcomes. Analysis demonstrates that different strategy types inadvertently or deliberately evolve, become prioritized, and sometimes change in the collaborative strategy mix. Long term, substantive goals linked to generic strategies direct, in general, strategic decisions. Decisions involving strategic change may be consequential to contextual factors but may also be deliberately induced by a community. Multiple cases underwent deliberate strategic and organizational changes during the longitudinal case-based research. Successful changes suggest that the collaborative strategy mix serves to guide and direct both strategic output and community building. Strategic Commoning benefits from structuring and governing organizational constructs that align various stakes from multiple societal realms into a viable strategy mix. Analysis thus demonstrates that the interplay of strategy types is influential to Strategic Commoning. Rooted in strategic management literature, the concept of strategy types has been used to assess how various kinds of strategies are at play in Strategic Commoning. Analyzing strategy types resulted in recognizing various collaborative strategy mixes, some of which are deployed by multiple communities, indicating that distinct strategy styles are inherent to community-based organizing.

### **7.5. Strategic modes of association**

In Chapter 2 we discuss the strategic modes of association (Jarzabkowski and Fenton, 2006) to indicate the state of strategy development in a heterogeneous and thus pluralist context. Case-based analysis (Chapter 6) demonstrates that the strategic modes of association demonstrate a close fit and indicate the state of strategy development in the Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample. Cross-case analysis of strategy development in 12 cases demonstrates that their strategy development is a rather emergent, iterative process whereby the focus is, in general, not on strategy development as such, but on organizing collective actions and organizing interactions between

constituents. Respondents in the focus group interviews acknowledge that their communities are constantly and consciously learning while contemplating and executing collective actions. This corresponds with the notion of strategy development as a social practice by Strategy as Practice (SAP) scholars (see Section 2.4.); the communities in the sample are developing their strategies in practice. Analysis reveals how the communities in the sample deal with pluralistic tensions regarding their strategy development in practice (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006), and how this influences the state of their strategic endeavors and, consequentially, the state the community is in.

Nine cases in the research demonstrate an *interdependent* mode of association. Four cases show an *imbalanced* mode of association. In two cases, an imbalanced mode has turned out to be *destructive*, causing the communities' demise.

Five cases demonstrate an interdependent mode of association from the start of the research. Four additional cases went from an imbalanced mode of association to an interdependent mode of association. This involved adaptations in their collaborative strategy mix, indicating that strategic alignment is an important factor for establishing continuity in collective actions.

A strong indicator for an interdependent mode of association is a demonstrable internal alignment of values and goals. This is observable in, e.g., year plans and agendas and notes for general assemblies but also in the extent to which constituents are involved in decision making. In the focus group interviews, this is indicated by concordance between constituents on how the community contributes to sustainable development, and concordance on intended and executed collective actions. In general, communities deliberately address this concordance by organizing discussions on the purpose and approach of the community and involving community members in deliberating strategies, resulting from alignment on substantive goals.

From the perspective of collaborative strategy development, an interdependent mode of association results in differentiated processes addressing and integrating various strategy types into collaborative strategies that accommodate collective actions. Respondents in the focus group interviews acknowledge that their communities need to stay reflective on balancing goals, interests, and means, considering the dynamic environment in which the cases operate and their heterogeneity. While constituents may largely agree on the mission and main goals, their views on achieving these can fundamentally differ, which may become a source for debate, confusion, or conflict. Seven cases in the sample have been associated with an imbalanced mode at the start of the longitudinal research. Three main causes for this have been found during analysis:

- 1) Inability to match strategic intentions with operational demands, resulting in strategies that do not fit the (intended) organizational form and goals. This may occur if, for instance, strategies are (partly) affected by third parties such as funding organizations, resulting in integrating strategy types that are not supportive to substantive community goals.



2) Inability to realize the full organizational capacity necessary to address strategic goals, e.g., the lack of organizational capacity to assess intended impact, a lack of involved constituents, or a lack of funding or revenues.

3) Tensions caused by misfit of strategy types. Unintended and sometimes opposing strategy types may interfere or become dominant. The democratic aim to “let a thousand flowers bloom” may result in unconnected collective actions blurring the initial scope and purpose of a community. Comparative case study thus confirms the theory (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) that pluralistic tensions arise from conflicting strategic goals being addressed simultaneously. According to Jarzabkowski and Fenton (2006) this indicates that pluralistic organizations must balance multiple goals and actions simultaneously. If not, goals may be or become incompatible or even contradictory, causing tensions and conflict as multiple demands for their goals and interests be addressed. From the seven cases demonstrating an imbalanced mode at the start of the research, four cases were observed to change their imbalanced mode of association into an interdependent mode of association. Acknowledging pluralistic tensions, these cases consciously entered processes of strategic and organizational reflection and contemplated a new approach to addressing their collaborative goals and putting it into practice in concordance with the entire community. This is reflected in adaptations in their collaborative strategy mix. For these cases, an imbalance has sparked a process of reflection leading to organizational and strategic adjustments, resulting in an interdependent mode. One community is still engaged in this process. Board members acknowledge that keeping all community members involved in long and inevitably slow processes of societal change proves difficult.

For two cases, the imbalanced mode of association became destructive. In both cases, the initial aim was to facilitate systems change through a processual approach whereby the community was intended as an umbrella for various collective actions. However, unclarity on purpose and collective goals, here interpreted as a misfit between strategy mix and strategic goals, resulted in unconnected strategies. Conflicting and opposing goals resulted in frictions and eventually the termination of the two communities.

Of the nine cases associated with the interdependent mode of association, six demonstrate a collaborative strategy mix (Table 7.5.) that combines the entrepreneuring, the multiple-value-driven, the community-oriented, and the process type. Four of these cases are cooperatives engaging in revenue-generating collective actions, two are run as private companies. Thus, it is no surprise that these six cases include the entrepreneuring strategy type in their collaborative strategy mix. Another three cases demonstrate an interdependent mode, demonstrating different configurations of strategy types in their collaborative strategy mix. Food Council MRA changed its informal structure

to a process-oriented NGO, aiming to become an umbrella for initiatives addressing systems change in the Amsterdam food landscape. This is reflected in a collaborative strategy mix that combines the value-driven, process, and umbrella strategy types.

The collaborative strategy mix of Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen encapsulates the value-driven, community, process, and consensus strategy types. The network seeks to address sustainability from the perspective of inclusiveness. A steering committee actively discusses an integral perspective on sustainability, making it the only case where the consensus type is an integral part of strategy development. The collaborative strategy mix of Pak An is a combination of value-driven, community, and process strategy types. This collaborative strategy mix has also been allocated in Noorden Duurzaam. Board members of Noorden Duurzaam indicate that creating an involved community is still challenging, whereas Pak An has succeeded in creating a supportive and active community. The two communities that have ceased to exist used a collaborative strategy mix where the unconnected strategy type became dominant, indicating that unconnected strategies are not favorable in a community-based setting. We conclude that the strategic mode of association is an indicator for the state of strategy development in a community and the prosperity of its collaborative strategy mix.

## **7.6. Reconsidering the archetypes of Entrepreneurial Communities**

In this section, we revisit the conceptual, strategic oriented typology presented in Chapter 4. The strategic-oriented typology (Figure 4.4.) of Entrepreneurial Communities was conceptualized to enable the selection of a diverse sample of cases representing the hypothesized strategic breadth of place-based, heterogeneous, community-based forms of organizing in the Netherlands. Our conceptual typology captures various forms of community-based organizing based on their strategic orientation and approach. The conceptual typology served our purpose to allocate and select cases based on their strategizing features. Section 7.4. confirms that Strategic Commoning is an interplay of various strategy types. This section assesses what strategy types were found dominant within the conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities.

Most communities in the sample encountered pluralistic tensions and organizational change at some stage. Some were able to handle these tensions without changing their orientation or approach, while others addressed imbalance by contemplating a different orientation or approach. Regarding the conceptual strategic-oriented typology presented in Chapter 4, four communities have become associated with different strategic archetypes over time due to changing perspectives on approach or orientation. Two communities ceased to exist, indicating that they were not able to align their approach and orientation, here associated with a destructive mode of association. Integrating these

changes in our conceptual typology demonstrates that the single issue endeavor archetype became preferred by most communities in the sample, as is demonstrated below in Table 7.6.

**Table 7.6.**

*Strategy types over time related to conceptual strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities*

Archetype	Single issue endeavor		Advocating coaction		Multiple issue endeavor		Colligating coaction	
<b>Approach</b>	Single issue		Single issue		Multiple issue		Multiple issue	
<b>Orientation</b>	Project execution		Process facilitation		Project execution		Process facilitation	
<b>Strategy types</b>	Entrepreneurial		Community		Value Driven		Value Driven	
	Community		Value Driven		Umbrella		Process	
	Value Driven		Process		Unconnected		Unconnected	
	Process							
<b>Cases</b>	<b>Start of research</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Start of case-based research</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Start of case-based research</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Start of case-based research</b>	<b>2021</b>
	DFruI 2016	Bomm	FMRA 2017	FMRA	Bomm 2016	-	DirkIII 2016	-
	EWPN	DFruit	GoCl 2018	NKG	GCR 2016		Gloei 2016	
	2016	EWPN	NKG 2018	NoDu	PakAn 2018		NoDu 2016	
	VoKe 2017	GCR		PakAn				
		GoCl						
		VoKe						

Table 7.6. visualizes the dominant strategy types that were attributed to the communities within the archetypes and compares how cases were classified at the start of the case-based analysis to how they were classified towards the end of the research.

Towards 2021, the 10 remaining communities in the sample all executed collective actions related to distinct aspects of a single wicked problem. By the end of the research period (2021) six out of 10 active cases were classified as *single issue endeavor* communities. Most communities of this type use a collaborative strategy mix that combines entrepreneurial, community, value, and process strategy types. The entrepreneurial strategy type indicates that they produce and sell goods or services to obtain revenues. In general, revenues are invested in community development and collective actions. In producing cooperative organizational constructs (e.g., energy or food), revenues are shared between constituents. The four communities that were classified in 2021 as the *advocating coaction archetype* are not primarily associated with the entrepreneuring strategy type since their organizational structure does not encompass the production and sale of goods or services to obtain revenues. However, as part of their strategies to become an established factor in the region, all communities in the sample engage in fundraising or sponsorship actions, ranging from free use of office facilities to acquiring European funding.

Three of the cases associated with the advocating coaction archetype use a collaborative strategy mix that combines the value-driven, community, and process archetype. The fourth chose to become an NGO with an operational team and a research center. This marks the strategic choice to no longer

focus on creating a cooperative, which was the initial plan. Food Council MRA decided upon a different organizational construct for facilitating a process to build a community of independent stakeholders collaborating in projects. In doing so, the initiators reassessed both strategy and organizational construct to address initial substantive goals and maximize impact.

Five cases have changed their position in the typology, and two cases were terminated. Virtually all respondents in the focus groups indicate that they deem the colligating coaction archetype to be their eventual purpose from a long-term and integral perspective on sustainable development. However, this archetype appears difficult to govern in practice. Two communities within this archetype ceased to exist while a third shifted from this archetype. In addition, all three cases that initially were related to the multiple issue endeavor archetype also shifted to a single issue archetype. Respondents mention the strategic benefits of a topical focus as the main motivation for this shift. Changes in strategic orientation and approach thus indicate that it is difficult for a heterogeneous community to address multiple wicked problems in practice.

Comparative case research demonstrates that communities deliberately reconsider their orientation and approach, seeking internal and external linkages through focus for practical reasons like the manageability of collective actions or aiming to reach out to a wider audience. By the end of the research period, the 10 remaining cases were all deliberately addressing a distinct wicked problem: energy (Bommelerwaard, Energiecoöperatie WPN, Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland), food (Food Council MRA), agriculture (De Fruitmotor, Voedselbos Ketelbroek), litter (GoClean), democracy (Noorden Duurzaam), diversity (Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen), and quality of life (Pak An). This strongly suggests that concrete and revenue-generating collective actions have become favored within the sample. It goes without saying that a single wicked problem provides a plethora of issues and manners to address those issues. Nevertheless, results show that through the years, communities prefer diversification within one wicked problem instead of addressing various wicked problems. This indicates that from the perspective of a heterogeneous community, addressing a single wicked problem is considered a more successful strategy than addressing multiple wicked problems.

## 7.7. Conclusions and discussion

Analyzing community-based decision making from a strategic perspective is a first contribution to exploring the strategic workings of contemporary, heterogeneous community-based forms of organizing addressing wicked problems. Results indicate that community-based strategy development

is a dynamic interplay of five structural stages influenced by three categories of general and case-specific variables. This interplay results in a collaborative strategy mix representing various strategic perspectives called strategy types, used in community-based strategic decision-making.

The extent to which strategy types interact within the collaborative strategy mix, and the degree to which collective actions align with the collaborative strategy mix, result in – and are indicated by – the strategic mode of association.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation synthesize strategic management theory and collective action theory in the conceptualization of a process model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 3.3.).

Comparative case research confirms that allocating and analyzing patterns in decision making (Mintzberg, 1987) serves to examine stages (Clarke & Fuller, 2011) in collaborative strategic decision-making. Strategy As Practice (SAP) contributes a practice-based perspective on strategy development in pluralist organizations as an adaptive and recursive interplay of practice, praxis, and practitioners. However, SAP and other strategic management theory sourced for this dissertation (see Chapters 2 and 3) in general does not address the multiple-value-oriented organizational constructs that are the subject of this dissertation. It seems that for a long time, community-based initiatives involving civilians were not considered subject to strategic management research, apparently because from an economic perspective they do not generate considerable financial profits. As a result, many place-bound communities are classified based on their organizational construct and revenue-generating properties, rather than on their collaborative and multiple-value-creating properties. In recent years, following the debate on transitioning to sustainable societies, perspectives on value creation are shifting towards organizational constructs that integrate multiple values, among which are community-based or social business models (see e.g., Jonker & Faber, 2021). The results presented in this chapter contribute to our understanding of such collaborative organizational constructs. Cross-case analysis confirms that evolving community-based organizational constructs do engage in strategy development. To a large extent, their strategic behavior parallels the strategic behavior of collaborating for-profit organizations that are generally the focus of attention of strategic management theory. Strategic management theory thus contributes considerably to our understanding of strategic behavior in emerging community-based forms of organizing. However, strategic management theory does not capture the dynamic interaction between and across the stages in Strategic Commoning and the external variables affecting them. For understanding these dynamics, collective action theory contributes the notion of external variables that affect decision making regarding collective actions. Rooted in strategic management theory and collaborative action theory, this research contributes a case-based perspective of Strategic Commoning that captures the protagonists and dynamics involved and the factors that affect them.

Strategic contemplations and discussions captured in cross-case analysis indicate that the nature and structure of community-based strategizing encompass various strategic viewpoints. To a large extent, these viewpoints correspond to strategy types known from strategic management theory (Mintzberg et al., 2009). The notion of strategy types enables the recognition of various strategic-oriented contemplations and sentiments present in a community that affect collaborative decision making. The results of this research disseminate various strategic directions or strategy types (Mintzberg et al., 2009) into the collaborative strategy mix, proposing two additional strategy types: community-oriented and multiple value-driven. Analyzing the collaborative strategy mix of a community accommodates assessing the degree to which configurations of strategy types determine, and align with, articulated collective strategic objectives, actions, and results. The extent of alignment is reflected in the strategic mode of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006), here considered an indicator for occurrence or absence of synergy in Strategic Commoning. The results demonstrate that absence of strategic alignment is counterproductive to the stability and continuity of a community. We conclude that collaborative strategy development is a key element of durable community-based collective action.

In addition, the focus group interviews that served as a major source for analysis of strategy styles and strategic modes of association address an isolated event in time: a critical strategic action situation selected by the main researcher. The selected strategic action situations are major events in the relatively short lifespan of the cases. Constantly learning by doing, communities have reconsidered their strategies. Documented rules in use (e.g., publication of new statutes but also year plans and evaluations) and media and social media (e.g., Facebook posts) allowed for keeping up with those changes towards the end of the research period and provided additional data for establishing whether and how strategic decisions and strategic changes discussed during focus group meetings were implemented. Some cases were involved in various strategic decision making processes, one of which was selected for the focus group interviews. Although the methodological foundations ensure considerate care in capturing the principal external variables affecting major strategic decisions, it is conceivable that a different selection of critical strategic action situations may contribute additional variables and refine or even contribute additional strategy styles. Researchers addressing contemporary and future strategy development in these or other cases thus are bound to establish additional results regarding aspects of community-based organizing that have not been addressed in this dissertation. We put forward that Ostrom's (2011a, 2011b) notion of biophysical conditions, attributes of the community and rules in use may be applied in future research for fathoming variables that contribute to a deeper understanding of the unfolding strategizing processes in a collaborative setting. Regarding biophysical conditions, we suggest

analytical refinement in static conditions (e.g., local or regional borders, geographical features, history) and variant conditions (e.g., availability of funding, governmental preferences, public opinion on sustainability). Such a refinement was not anticipated in advance and current data do not suffice for further analysis. We propose that distinguishing static and variant biophysical conditions enables the distinguishing of conditions that characterize the fixed place-based elements a community is grounded in, and conditions that may change over time. Variant conditions may induce or result from Strategic Commoning, which parallels Ostrom's (2011b) observation that external variables both induce and affect collective actions.

Future research directions may, for instance, include a larger sample to refine general variables or contribute to the notion of the collaborative strategy mix. Expanding research to an international context may shed light on the embeddedness of collaborative strategies in various societies.

Results identify community development and value alignment as structural variables affecting Strategic Commoning. In addition, the community-oriented and the multiple-value-driven strategy type are here proposed as distinct strategic directions, contributing a collaborative perspective to the notion of strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). This indicates that in Strategic Commoning, community development and multiple value creation are structural elements but also strategic types. Results from our cross-case analysis establish that value alignment and collaboration are imperative to prosperous sustainability-oriented strategies.

Summarizing, the results of our case-based exploration of Strategic Commoning contribute to answering the research questions posed in this dissertation. Strategic Commoning is here conceptualized as a dynamic, recursive, and adaptive process of five interacting stages induced by, affected by, and affecting external variables. The nature of Strategic Commoning is captured in the collaborative strategy mix. The scope of Strategic Commoning is indicated by the strategic mode of association. Synthesizing theoretical findings from Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and results from case-based research presented in Chapters 6 and 7, Chapter 8 hereafter presents the final conclusions of this research.





# CHAPTER

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# 8



## CHAPTER 8. COLLABORATIVE STRATEGY MATTERS: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

### Abstract

This concluding Chapter discusses and reflects on the research project, results, and conclusions regarding Strategic Commoning. Findings are grounded in strategic management theory and collective action theory and based on the analysis of the strategic decision making of the 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands. Findings indicate that community-based strategy development is a continuous and dynamic process of five interacting stages influenced by general and case-specific external variables. The communities in the sample contemplate collective actions and shape novel collaborative organizational and decision making formats in practice, grounded in an integral and place-bound perspective on wicked problems. In doing so, they contribute to the praxis of collaborative and multiple-value-driven strategy development while creating multiple, collective, and shared values.

The research results, summarized in the case-based process model for Strategic Commoning (Figure 7.1.), contribute a strategic, heterogeneous perspective to collective action theory and a community-based and multiple-value-oriented perspective to strategic management theory. In addition to integrating and reflecting on results, this chapter reflects on the research process and discusses the limitations and benefits of the chosen comparative case study method. In addition, contributions to practice and some directions for future research are proposed.

### 8.1. Summarizing the quest for understanding community-based strategic development

This research project was motivated by the aim to explore the emergence of community-based forms of organizing addressing sustainable development in a place-based context. We seek to understand how constituents from various societal backgrounds succeed in developing collaborative strategies that encompass multiple-value-creating collective actions. To do so, Strategic Commoning was conceptualized in Chapters 2 and 3: community-based strategy development for multiple-value-creating collective actions. The exploration of Strategic Commoning was sparked by the aim to learn how constituents from various walks of life align their personal, professional, individual, and common objectives into strategic decisions that guide multiple-value-creating collective actions. Strategic management theory addresses how strategies are contemplated and become realized, and collective action theory addresses governance of collective actions. However, no existing strategic

management theory or collective action theory addresses the structure and nature of collaborative strategy development in heterogeneous communities engaging in multiple-value-driven collective actions. To address this gap, a longitudinal case-based research project was executed in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in The Netherlands. The main research question addressed in this research is:

What is the nature of Strategic Commoning: community-based strategy formation for multiple-value-creating collective actions?

Two sub-questions address this main research question:

Sub-question 1: What is the structure of Strategic Commoning?

Sub-question 2: What variables determine the nature of Strategic Commoning?

First, both sub-questions were addressed by integrating perspectives from strategy theory and collective action theory. Next, we analyzed Strategic Commoning in practice. From 2015 to 2021, written and oral data regarding strategy development were collected and analyzed from 12 Dutch Entrepreneurial Communities: place-based, heterogeneous, community-based forms of organizing addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development.

To answer sub-question 1, qualitative analysis served to identify structural elements that determine the structure of strategic decision making. In addition, multiple external variables were found that affect strategic decision making. Structural stages in strategic decision making and external variables are intertwined in a dynamic, recursive, and adaptive process that shapes and structures community-based strategic decisions. Cross-case comparison of such processes resulted in the case-based model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 7.1.). We found that external variables affect both the structure and nature of Strategic Commoning. The sample indicates that in learning by doing, communities refine governance structures and procedures for strategic decision making.

For addressing sub-question 2, strategy types were synthesized through cross-case analysis, resulting in the conceptualization of the collaborative strategy mix. The collaborative strategy mix captures the configuration of strategic directions that determine the nature of a communities' strategy (e.g., entrepreneurial or process-oriented). A collaborative strategy mix containing process, community-oriented and multiple-value-driven strategies is favored by most cases, while there is an increase in cases adding entrepreneurial strategies to their collaborative strategy mix. In general, Entrepreneurial Communities are compelled to execute practical, hands-on, multiple-value-driven collective actions that contribute to sustainable development.

We find that the strategic mode of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) is a result of and consequentially an observable indicator for the degree to which strategy types in the collaborative strategy mix align into prosperous strategies.

Chapter 2 addresses perspectives on community-based strategy development from established strategic management theory and established collective action theory. This results in the conceptualization of the strategic action situation (see Section 2.5.2.) shaped and governed in practice by a heterogeneous community. Chapter 3 addresses contemporary academic journal publications addressing aspects of community-based strategy development. Integrating findings from contemporary journal publications and findings from theory, Strategic Commoning is conceptualized as a recursive and adaptive process shaped in practice. Strategic Commoning is captured in a conceptual process model (Figure 3.3.) consisting of interrelated stages of strategic decision making influenced by contextual factors. Drawing on Ostrom's (2011a, 2011b) Institutional Analysis and Development framework (IAD), contextual factors are subdivided into three categories: attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use.

Chapter 4 introduces Entrepreneurial Communities as distinct heterogeneous Institutes of Collective Action (Ostrom, 2011b) that become entrepreneurs in place-based sustainable development. Five universal properties of Entrepreneurial Communities are proposed: 1) place-based; 2) sustainable development-oriented; 3) heterogeneous; 4) multiple-value focused; 5) organizational pioneering. In addition, and for the benefit of this study, a two-dimensional strategic-oriented typology of these community-based organizational constructs was conceptualized. This typology enabled the selection of a diverse sample for a longitudinal comparative case study. Chapter 5 discusses the methodological foundations of the qualitative, case-based research and introduces the 12 cases that were studied to capture strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities in practice.

Chapter 6 addresses the results of within-case analysis in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands, deconstructing strategic action situations into stages affected by external variables. In addition, strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) and strategic modes of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) are deduced and attributed to the cases. This is followed in Chapter 7 by cross-case analysis resulting in a case-based model that captures the structure of Strategic Commoning. The cases' strategy types are presented, introducing two new strategy types: community-oriented and multiple-value-driven. Configurations of known and new strategy types result in a collaborative strategy mix that captures the various strategic directions represented in collaborative strategic decision-making. For each case, the initial and recent (2021) collaborative strategy mix is related to its initial and recent (2021) strategic mode of association, finding that the strategic mode of association is a result of but also an indicator for the state of strategy development in a community: interdependent, imbalanced, or destructive. Results establish that, over time, communities engage in strategic debate to deliberately alter strategic imbalance. Ultimately, Chapter 7 updates the conceptual strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities presented in

Chapter 4, demonstrating that, over time, the communities in the sample prefer addressing a single wicked problem instead of addressing various wicked problems simultaneously.

This concluding chapter discusses the results of the research project and reflects on the research process. To answer and discuss the main research question, Section 8.2. revisits the research questions that have been addressed in Chapters 2, 3, 6, and 7. Section 8.3. discusses contributions from this research project to theory. Section 8.4. reflects on the methodological approach of the research, contemplating the challenges and benefits of the explorative, transdisciplinary approach. The practical contributions of this research project are discussed in Section 8.5., followed by reflecting on contributions to applied sciences and education in Section 8.6. Section 8.7. discusses recommendations for future research addressing community-based strategizing and organizing. In Section 8.8., the author reflects briefly on the research project.

## **8.2. Strategic Commoning: a case-based framework**

### ***8.2.1. Strategic Commoning in theory***

Our exploration of community-based strategizing for sustainability started by conceptualizing Strategic Commoning. The research commenced from the premise that communities addressing wicked problems related to sustainability face the challenge of simultaneously strategizing sustainable value creation and pioneering collaborations for multiple-value-creating collective actions. This challenge is addressed in the interdisciplinary approach of this research, combining insights from strategic management theory and insights from collective action theory. Chapter 2 recapitulates the initial quest for theoretical knowledge on community-based strategy development in pluralist contexts. We find some direction in the learning school of strategy (Mintzberg et al., 2009) and in SAP theory addressing pluralist contexts (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006). In addition, collective action theory and more particularly the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework (Ostrom, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) offer clues for conceptualizing strategic action situations where a community deliberates collaborative decisions regarding collective actions. Strategic management theory indicates that constituents in community-based forms of organizing engage in emerging and incremental collaborative processes of strategy development that are detectable as patterns in decision making. Collective action theory contributes the perspective of distinct sets of external variables that affect strategic decisions. In addition, a systematic literature review was conducted (Chapter 3), analyzing recent (2005–2020) academic journal articles addressing (aspects of)

community-based strategy development. Integrating findings from established theory and contemporary academic publications, we conceptualized the structure of multiple-value-oriented community-based strategizing. We conceptualize Strategic Commoning as a practice-based recursive and adaptive process of six interconnected stages. Distinct stages are influenced by three sets of external variables synthesized in attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use.

### ***8.2.2. Entrepreneurial Communities***

Chapter 4 conceptualizes Entrepreneurial Communities as distinct forms of heterogeneous and community-based organizing grounded in a place-based and multiple-value-driven approach of sustainability-related wicked problems. Entrepreneurial Communities have in common that they unite civilians and other societal actors into multiple-value-creating collective actions from their joint belief that collaboration is key for sustainable development. From the perspective of this study, they become entrepreneurs in sustainability, crafting strategies for enduring multiple value creation. They develop various, often experimental, organizational constructs to facilitate and regulate their strategic and operational decisions and collective actions addressing the area in which they operate. In doing so, they become innovators in community-based organizing: creating multiple, collective, and shared values while addressing common objectives from a place-bound perspective. Chapter 4 appoints five general properties for Entrepreneurial Communities: (i) place-based; (ii) sustainable development-oriented; (iii) heterogeneous; (iv) multiple-value focused; (v) organizational pioneering. In addition, Chapter 4 introduces a conceptual typology of Entrepreneurial Communities grounded in strategy theory. The five proposed properties and the strategic-oriented conceptual typology were applied to select a small but strategically diverse sample of 12 Dutch Entrepreneurial Communities for longitudinal case-based research addressing their strategy development.

### ***8.2.3. Strategic Commoning in practice***

Case-based research confirms suggestions from theory that Entrepreneurial Communities engage in processes of community-based strategy development. Entrepreneurial Communities have structured and documented decision-making procedures regarding community-based plans and actions. During the longitudinal research, cases demonstrated a learning and adaptive attitude by contemplating and adapting their strategies, decision making structures, and collective actions to operate more effectively. Their collaborative nature is reflected in the openness to share their experiences and learn from others.

Addressing wicked problems related to sustainability from a collaborative perspective is a long-term endeavor in demand of a strategy to guide and direct collective actions. Analysis of strategy development in 12 Dutch Entrepreneurial Communities establishes that patterns in decision-making (Mintzberg et al., 2009) manifest as stages in collaborative strategy development suggested by theory (Clarke & Fuller, 2011).

In the early days of an emerging community, strategic decision-making processes tend to be amorphous or ad hoc as there is no immediate consensus on collaborative objectives, goals, and plans. In this setting, strategies become manifest through mutual learning processes (see also Mintzberg, 2015b; Jarzabkowski et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample acknowledge this mutual learning and even consider it as compulsory to developing a community-based approach to wicked problems. They are willing to learn and adapt and open to organizational and strategic changes deemed necessary for optimizing impact. To accommodate collaborative decisions and actions, community structures and decision-making procedures are, in general, consciously contemplated. This includes contemplating operational and decision-making structures that support collaborative strategy development. In most cases, strategy is seldom addressed deliberately in an articulated strategic plan, but generally perceived as an iterative route towards common goals. Even so, as a community evolves, objectives, goals, and plans become articulated and processes to direct and guide strategic decision making become established and formalized. Aligning objectives and goals from different constituents and stakeholders gets considerable attention within Entrepreneurial Communities. Cases constantly reflect on both collective actions and community development. Analysis demonstrates that as Entrepreneurial Communities evolve and grow, the matching of multiple issues and visions inevitably becomes time-consuming and complex. Failing to align collective objectives and collective actions can result in frictions and even conflict. The communities in the sample anticipate this by implementing changes in organizational structures, strategic goals, or collective actions. Such changes are consciously contemplated from the collaborative drive to create sustainable impact.

Cross-case analysis of stages in strategic decision making resulted in allocating five interrelated stages that shape community-based strategic decision making: community composition, problem definition, determining goal(s), appointing actions, and assessing outcomes (see also Section 7.2.). To a large extent, these stages correspond with the conceptual process model presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.3.) However, rather than a sequential process, Strategic Commoning is a continuous and dynamic interplay of stages. Although dynamic, recursive, and adaptive, the stages in community-based strategy formation are recognizable and guided by procedures for decision making captured in rules in use.

Structural factors found to affect community-based strategic decision making were synthesized into attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use (Ostrom, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) that affect various if not all stages in community-based strategic decision making.

Adapting the process model for Strategic Commoning proposed in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.3.) by merging results from qualitative analysis, we present a case-based model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 7.1.) representing five interrelated stages that determine any community-based strategic decision. The stages, and consequentially the strategic decision at hand are constantly influenced by three interacting sets of external variables: attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use.

Cross-case analysis of strategic decision-making contributes seven external variables that are here considered generic, since they are influential to the majority of cases. Next to this, it has become clear that external variables can also be case-specific; however, since this study aspires to contribute to a general theory, case-specific variables were not included in cross-case analysis. Generic attributes of the community found by this study are: value alignment, heterogeneity, and organizational capacity. Generic biophysical conditions found by this study are: stakeholders, resources, legal and institutional context, and place-boundedness. In addition, results demonstrate that all cases in the sample use written and unwritten rules in use to regulate decision-making procedures.

Four generic external variables were found to be influential in all 12 cases (Table 7.3.): Value Alignment, Heterogeneity, Organizational Capacity, and Stakeholders. This indicates that these are common, or even fixed variables affecting community-based strategic decision making. They are briefly recaptured here. The aim for multiple, collective, and shared value creation requires Value Alignment. Cases in the sample not only acknowledge this but enhance internal debate for contemplating and aligning collective values. When deemed necessary, they engage in organizational change processes, adapting their decision-making structures to ensure that decision making is community based and multiple value oriented. Heterogeneity is not only an observable feature of Entrepreneurial Communities; it affects strategic decision making in various ways. Qualitative analysis confirms the theory (see e.g., Section 1.2.1.) that constituents from different societal realms bring various perspectives on value-creating, place-based collaboration. On the one hand, this may hinder alignment. However, results show that, when acknowledged, the diversity of a community may contribute to developing inclusive collective actions that involve and affect various societal groups. Depending on the constellation of constituents, various interests may intercede since various sentiments regarding sustainability and various skills, knowledge, network, and resources are present. The Organizational Capacity of a community is not only highly dependent on the ability of



constituents to craft collaborative strategic decisions but also on its ability to organize the collective actions following those decisions. As communities evolve and expand, they must be able to cope with the increasing complexity of governing and organizing collective decisions and actions.

Structuring and governing the community and its actions requires specialist knowledge and involves alignment on procedures that guide and legitimize strategic decisions and the subsequent collective actions. Organizational Capacity thus is an influential attribute of the community. It determines the range of collective actions a community engages in and thus is influential to strategic decisions.

For developing prosperous and influential collective actions, collaboration with various Stakeholders is inevitable. Respondents in the focus group interviews are affirmative that collaboration with third parties is an integral part of their collective actions. They are aware that collaborations with outside stakeholders are necessary for their community to develop prosperous collective actions. Some collaborations are perceived to be inevitable, e.g., collaborating with governmental institutions to acquire funding or authorization of experiments. Three communities in the sample demonstrate a symbiotic partnership with founding and funding organizations, benefitting from mutual strategic advantage in creating sustainable impact in the region they operate in. Thus, constituents not only collaborate within the community but they also engage in collaborations with other organizations. This confirms perspectives from SAP that strategies are contemplated in practice by a variety of actors, not all of which are explicitly related to strategic roles or responsibilities (see, e.g., Jarzabkowski et al., 2021).

Collective action theory, particularly the IAD, (see e.g., Ostrom, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) contributes the notion that rules in use are important for structuring and guiding collective actions. This is confirmed for all cases by document analysis. Analysis of documents and procedures regarding organizational structure and decision making demonstrates that the Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample apply structured procedures reflecting Ostrom's (2010b, 2011a, 2011b) rules in use. Boards, in general, take great care to apply rules in use for structuring community-based decision-making processes that involve all constituents of a community. Cases with a decision-making structure that only involves a few constituents (e.g., board of directors) prefer informal decision-making structures, referring to mutual trust while demonstrating mutual agreement on substantive goals and strategies. Case-based research thus demonstrates that rules in use guide strategic decision making and are inherent to community-based organizing. Although not always documented, it has become clear that rules in use structure Strategic Commoning and are reflected in strategic decision making. Following Ostrom (2009) we summarize the results of our case-based research in a general framework that can be applied for identifying universal elements.

**Figure 8.1.**  
*Framework for Strategic Commoning*

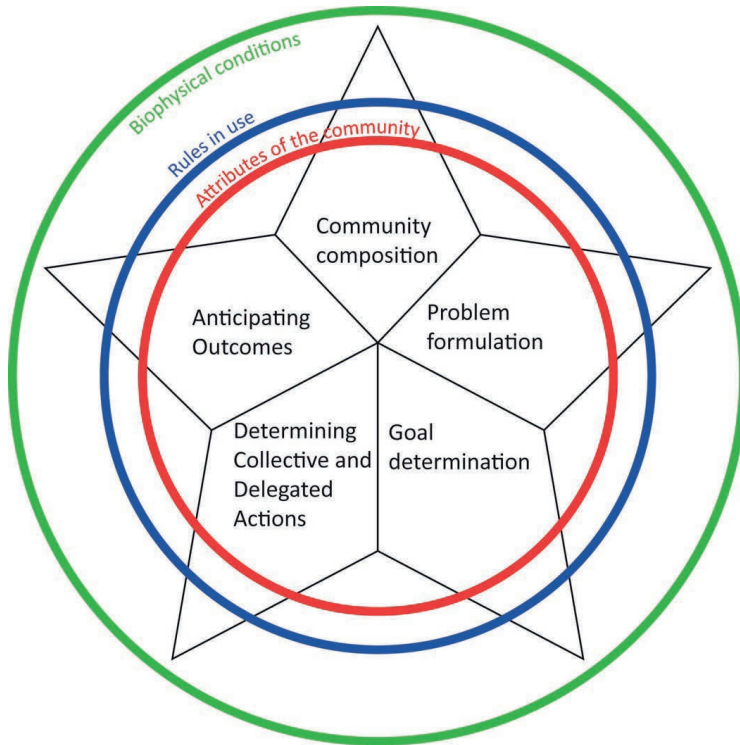


Figure 8.1. depicts the nature of Strategic Commoning as a dynamic process of five interacting and interrelated components in strategic decision making: community composition, problem formulation, goal determination, determining collective and delegated actions, and anticipating outcomes. The five components are interdependent and subject to change while each component affects, or is affected by, other components. For instance, a strategic decision may result in a change in constituents while the changing constellation of constituents may resolve to changes in the chosen collective actions and strategies. At any time, multiple strategic contemplations are in demand of a strategic decision in a community. Patterns in these decisions correspond with the five components in the framework, enabling the detection and recognition of decisions that are strategic. The framework also demonstrates that strategic decisions are influenced by three overarching sets of general and case-specific variables known from the IAD: attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use. In the framework for Strategic Commoning, the three overarching sets

of external variables address the amalgamation of practice, praxis, and practitioners in pluralistic contexts envisioned in Figure 2.1. The practice of strategy development is guided by rules in use that are gradually developed and adapted. Being place-bound, communities are embedded in, and react to, biophysical conditions while attempting to address the praxis of long-term sustainable development through multiple-value-creating collective actions in demand of strategic decisions. The constellation of constituents brings various general and case-specific attributes of the community affecting the practitioners involved in strategic decision making. The here-presented case-based framework for Strategic Commoning thus merges findings from SAP and collective action theory.

#### **8.2.4. The collaborative strategy mix**

Cross-case analysis of strategic decision making (Chapter 7) demonstrates that collaborative strategic decisions by a heterogeneous community result from contemplating various strategic directions that correspond to strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) known from strategic management literature (see also Section 2.3.2.). The Entrepreneurial Communities in this research all adopted at least three strategy types, confirming suggestions from theory (see Section 2.3.) that community-based strategy development involves the matching of multiple strategies.

Six of the eight strategy types known from strategic management literature (Table 2.2.) were recognized in the cases during this research (see also Section 7.4.). Process strategies are most common. Eleven communities in the sample endorsed collective actions addressing processes of change reflected in process strategies. In addition, entrepreneurial strategies are employed by six communities involved in revenue-generating collective actions evolving around a single wicked problem. Entrepreneurial strategies guide communities in generating revenues, e.g., by producing and selling means and goods. To a lesser extent, umbrella, unconnected, planned, and ideological strategies have been recognized. Two new strategy types have been identified during the research: community oriented and multiple value driven.

Community-oriented strategies originate in the aim for societal change through collaborative, multiple, and shared value creation. Community development serves both as a means and a goal and exemplifies a transformational approach to value creation. Strategic decisions are also guided by the aim to strengthen the community and to advocate the community-based approach as an alternative for established forms of organizing that fail to effectively establish sustainable changes. Thus, developing a community-based approach becomes strategic.

Multiple-value-driven strategies originate in long-term visions and the urge to establish transformational changes. Creating multiple, collective, and shared values is at the heart of each community in the sample. It is inherent to the structure of Strategic Commoning, but it also

determines the multiple-value-oriented nature of strategic decisions. Strategic decisions are primarily guided by considerations on whether and how (collective) actions contribute to a substantive collective goal.

In the sample, community-oriented strategies are generally found combined with multiple-value-driven strategies. Mission statements, substantive goals, oral data from the focus groups, and structured decision-making procedures shaped by rules in use confirm that constituents are united in developing value-driven and collaborative approaches for accelerating sustainable impact.

Depending on the chosen organizational form, community-oriented and value-driven strategies are combined with entrepreneurial or process strategies.

All cases in the sample use a configuration of strategy types, here called the collaborative strategy mix. The majority (eight) of the communities in the sample include community-oriented, multiple-value-driven, and process strategies in their collaborative strategy mix, six of which also employ entrepreneurial strategies for generating revenues. We conclude that communities that evolve around a well-articulated single issue generally demonstrate the ability to implement straightforward processes that direct strategic decisions at an early stage. Theory states that emerging organizations develop and adapt their strategies over time (see also Weiser et al., 2020); this is confirmed by the Entrepreneurial Communities in this research project. Various communities in the sample encountered intended or unintended changes in their collaborative strategy mix during the research period.

#### ***8.2.5. Modes of Strategic Commoning***

Analysis of strategic decision making (Chapters 6 and 7) confirms findings from theory (Chapters 2 and 3) that strategy development in Entrepreneurial Communities reflects a mixture of personal and professional commitment as well as formal and informal engagement. Levels of involvement may differ among constituents depending on the adopted organizational construct. The structure and scope of strategic actions are implicitly and explicitly influenced by the organizational form and vice versa. Over time, strategic decision making became well-structured in the Entrepreneurial Communities in the sample. Although the extent to which their procedures are documented differs, all respondents in the focus group interviews are familiar with decision-making procedures and regulations regarding collaborative decisions about the community and about collective actions. In addition, document research demonstrates that boards take great care to follow structured procedures and regularly inform and consult constituents on strategic decisions. During these procedures, various strategic directions become articulated. Discussing various opinions on strategic choice thus becomes an inevitable part of collaborative decisions and communities must seek

internal strategic alignment. Analysis confirms that communities engaging in Strategic Commoning encounter three different modes of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) regarding their strategic alignment.

Interdependent modes of association are found in Entrepreneurial Communities whose governing bodies share a clear view on goals, impact, and core activities that guide all strategic and operational decisions. The governing board aligns collaborative strategic decision making by following the main goals and mission. Community members are informed about and included in strategic decision making. Mutual investments, means, and benefits are managed and disseminated following clear procedures. There is consensus on the collaborative strategy mix which guides strategic development.

Three situations have been appointed that cause or bring a risk of imbalanced modes of association:

- 1) Inability to match strategic intentions with organizational and operational demands.
- 2) Insufficient organizational capacity to address strategic goals.
- 3) Conflicting or opposing strategy types.

If recognized in time, a community that encounters or risks an imbalanced mode of association may engage in a process of reflection and attempt to establish an interdependent mode of association. We conclude that the mode of association is both a result of and an observable indicator for the degree of strategic alignment within a community at any given time. Bearing in mind that constituents' motives to join a community differ, clarity to all community members on collaborative strategic goals and alignment on the intended collective actions is crucial in order to ascertain a collaborative mood and an interdependent mode of association. This calls for structuring and enabling transparency in decision-making processes and evaluation procedures. If a community fails to align collaborative decisions and actions, an imbalanced mode of association may turn into a destructive mode of association which may cause conflict and even result in termination of the community.

The research demonstrates that Strategic Commoning is an emerging and inductive interplay of strategic development and community-building in a place-based and pluriform setting where personal and professional involvement meet. As communities shape themselves in practice, they engage in strategic decisions regarding their collective actions. The structure of Strategic Commoning is determined by five interrelating and interacting stages. In contrast to the deliberate and often top-down strategy formation processes in established organizations, Strategic Commoning evolves implicitly and is intertwined with organizational development in emerging communities. Collaborative strategies are ultimately dependent on aligning multiple strategy types in a collaborative strategy mix that encompasses multiple-value-creating collective actions. Given the

complexity of the matters they address and their heterogeneous nature, it may take several years before communities adopt a fitting and prosperous organizational form with a matching collaborative strategy that all constituents acknowledge. Prosperous collaborative strategies are acknowledged and supported by all community members, guide mutual commitment, and direct collective actions. If different strategy types collide, there is a risk of conflict, disconnection, or even discontinuation of the community. This indicates that collaborative strategy development is a key feature of community-based collective action.

### **8.3 Contributions to theory**

#### ***8.3.1. Contributions to Collective Action Theory***

The research appoints Entrepreneurial Communities as distinct Institutes of Collective Action (ICA) (Ostrom, 2011b). The distinction lies in the fact that while ICAs have predominantly been studied as homogeneous groups of constituents (e.g., workers, employees, ethnic groups), Entrepreneurial Communities are formed by heterogeneous constellations of constituents from various societal realms. By establishing that Entrepreneurial Communities are value-creating, strategizing forms of organizing this research brings a strategic lens to collective action theory. To a large extent, the theoretical foundations for conceptualizing Strategic Commoning (Chapters 2 and 3) are confirmed by this explorative study. Based on our research, we propose a model of five interconnected and interacting stages determining the structure of any community-based strategic decision. During strategic decision making, constituents are in a continuous, recursive, and adaptive process of contemplating these components. Their contemplations are influenced by external variables of a general and case-specific nature.

Constituents have different backgrounds and may have different motives to engage in collective action. What unites them is that they all perceive wicked problems related to sustainable development as commons (see also Section 2.5.1.) and consequently engage in organizing collective actions to ascertain access to and governance of those commons. Their efforts to align collective goals and actions in strategic decisions have captured the case-based process model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 7.1.). The process model for Strategic Commoning enables the recognition of structural elements in community-based strategic decision making. Simultaneously, it helps understand how collaborative strategies and strategic decisions are affected by distinct variables, some of which are generic and some of which are case-specific. Since the aim of this research was to

build a generic theory of Strategic Commoning, the results focus on generic variables and have not addressed variables that were appointed to three or fewer cases. In discussing the concept of the strategic action situation, and in appointing distinct external variables that are influential to community-based strategic decision making, this research contributes a heterogeneous and a strategic perspective to collective action theory.

### ***8.3.2. Theory building on community-based strategy development***

This study confirms that various community-based forms of organizing that hitherto have not been addressed in strategic management literature are value-creating and strategizing organizations. Community-based initiatives are considered essential to the Dutch efforts related to the Paris Agreement (e.g., <https://www.klimaataakkoord.nl/participatie>). The call for collaborations to address climate change is imminent (e.g., IPCC, 2022; United Nations, 2015). As community-based forms of organizing are gaining momentum, it is essential to understand how they craft their goals into successful collective actions for the benefit of the whole community while creating sustainable impact in the area in which the community operates. Up until now, community-based collective actions have not been addressed from a strategic management perspective. Even more vitally, the organizational constructs at hand appear to be generalized as “mere” citizen-driven initiatives that are regarded as different organizational entities when compared to profit-driven and public organizations. In general, strategic management theory addresses the dominant paradigm that strategies must contribute to efficient ways for creating distinct and often single values that are generally measured in financial results. However, there are no straightforward and commonly accepted ways to measure all aspects of sustainable value creation that Entrepreneurial Communities aspire. While Entrepreneurial Communities develop strategies to guide multiple-value-creating actions, strategic management theory tends to overlook the valuable lessons that can be learned from formal and informal community-based efforts to strategize and organize multiple value creation.

Organizational theory mainly addresses civilians engaging in collective actions and the multi-party settings in which they operate from a governance perspective, indicating collaborations between public institutions and civilians to address issues that affect the public domain. Such collaborations emerge to address societal needs and issues in the public domain that are not, or no longer, addressed by governments and existing markets. However, collaborating civilians do not solely address topics related to local or regional social innovation policies.

We conclude that in the contemporary debate on collaborative organizing for sustainable development, community-based organizing is seldom addressed through a strategic lens. In both

strategic management literature and organizational development literature, strategic perspectives are generally limited to deliberations on the strategic advantages of joining or supporting collaborations. There is limited attention for the strategic perspectives of heterogeneous collaborations for sustainable development. This dissertation contributes to understanding the importance of community-based strategies that guide multiple-value-creating collective actions and makes the case for communities that are entrepreneuring in sustainability.

An interesting notion here is that the five stages of Strategic Commoning correspond to a fair extent with Harrison's (1996) five criteria for strategic decision making (see also Section 2.2.1.):

- 1) Problem definition corresponds with defining a relationship between the community at hand and its environment
- 2) Community composition relates to concerning the community
- 3) Determining goals relates to encompassing the communities' major functions
- 4) Assessing actions relates to directing administrative and operational activities
- 5) Assessing outcomes parallels the focus on long-term accomplishments.

From this, we conclude that the scope of Strategic Commoning parallels the scope of strategic decisions in general but brings the additional challenge of a heterogeneous community involved in collaborative strategic decisions addressing complex issues via multiple-value-creating actions. Within the domains of plural (Mintzberg, 2015), and pluralistic (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) organizations, this research contributes a community-based perspective on place-based collaborative strategy development. The concept of the collaborative strategy mix presented in Chapter 7 indicates that combining and aligning multiple strategies is inherent to community-based organizing in a heterogeneous setting.

We consider general conclusions from our research applicable to other place-bound and community-based forms of organizing. The research contributes to knowledge building on community-based organizing for sustainability (Jonker and Faber, 2021) by presenting structural elements and generic variables that determine community-based strategic decision making. Also, the results demonstrate the impact of community-based strategy development for developing compliant collective actions.

### **8.3.3. Contribution to Strategy as Practice**

In emerging community-based forms of organizing, strategy development and community-building are taking shape in a continuous interplay, indicating that community-based strategies are shaped in practice. The heterogeneous nature of community-based strategizing brings the additional challenge of shaping strategies in pluralistic contexts (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) where multiple visions and



interests meet and manifest in multiple and often implicit perceptions of strategic development. By investigating such processes in heterogeneous and place-bound collaborations, this research adds a community-based perspective to strategy as practice (SAP) and demonstrates the added value of practice-based strategy research (Jarzabkowski et al., 2021; Weiser et al., 2020) for understanding community-based strategy development. SAP authors bring forward that researching strategies in practice benefits from multiple perspectives by broadening the scope (see e.g., Seidl & Whittington, 2014). According to Jarzabkowski et al. (2021), SAP demands new perspectives regarding the development of value-creating strategies (see also e.g., Weiser et al., 2020). This research adds new perspectives by unraveling generic external variables that direct and affect community-based strategic decision making. In addition, various strategy types must be aligned before becoming collective and supported by all community constituents. When unambiguously formulated as a result of collaborative strategy development, such strategies guide collective actions that reflect and support the communities' substantive goals. This corresponds with the interdependent strategic mode of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006). If different strategic objectives, views, and approaches collide, the strategic mode of association becomes imbalanced, posing the risk of conflict and resulting in a destructive strategic mode of association. Addressing an imbalanced or destructive mode of association requires, among other things, reassessing strategic directions and collective actions in an adaptive and recursive manner.

Various cases went through radical strategic changes during the longitudinal research. From a strategic perspective, such changes were instigated to address or prevent strategic imbalance or conflict within the Entrepreneurial Community at hand. This confirms that identifying strategic modes of association is an elucidating step in noticing and allocating possible sources for conflict but also for suggesting adaptations in strategy development. We conclude that the strategic mode of association is both a result of and an indicator of the state of strategy development at any given time.

#### **8.4. Contributions to practice**

Our aim to unravel the nature of community-based strategy development was sparked by the notion that the amalgamation of contemporary place-based and community-based organizations is overlooked in strategic management theory. This study demonstrates that Entrepreneurial Communities contribute novel ways of heterogeneous community-based value creation. From the perspective of this study, community-based strategy development must be included in the debate on organizing solutions for wicked problems related to sustainable development. A first practical contribution is the acknowledgment of Entrepreneurial Communities as distinct heterogeneous,

place-based organizational constructs that strategize collaborative objectives into value-creating collective actions. Even stronger, this research positions these community-based forms of organizing as frontrunners in collaborations for addressing wicked problems related to sustainable development.

During the research, it became clear that strategy development is seldom explicitly acknowledged and addressed from the start in emerging community-based forms of organizing. The research results demonstrate the importance of allocating, construing, and governing conditions that determine the structure, scope, nature, and fit of collaborative strategic decision making. The process model of Strategic Commoning (Figure 7.1.) contributes to understanding what structural and variable elements are at the core of collaborative strategic decisions. In addition, the findings of this research strongly suggest that recognizing and aligning strategy types in the collaborative strategy mix is an essential factor in developing prosperous collective actions.

Various strategy tools have been developed for positioning or altering strategies (see, e.g., <https://businessmodellab.nl>). However, many tools for strategic and organizational development were developed from a traditional, top-down view of strategy formulation and they are not or are only partly suited for the distinct setting of developing community-based organizing while targeting collaborative, multiple, and shared value creation. The conclusions from this research provide input for developing tools to assess, e.g., the collaborative strategy mix and whether this is in accordance with the collaborative objectives and interests of the community at hand.

In the sample, distinct collaborative strategy mixes correspond with distinct strategic modes of association. Strategic modes of association are here regarded as indicators for the state of Strategic Commoning. This state is influenced by, among other things, the collaborative strategy mix. The state may be altered, deliberately or as a consequence of changing circumstances. Analyzing the strategic mode of association is a promising manner to assess whether communities' strategies match their goals, and whether their collective actions match their strategies.

## **8.5. Reflections on methodology: contributions and limitations**

### ***8.5.1. Research design***

Community-based organizing to address wicked problems is gaining momentum. The purposive selection of Entrepreneurial Communities in this research project represents a variety of place-based, community-based forms of organizing. Their strategizing efforts, experiments, and

experiences are valuable to theory-building on processes that shape value-creating collaborations for sustainability.

Knowledge about the diversity of emerging organizational constructs addressing sustainable development is dispersed and, up until now, their strategic workings have hardly been addressed. Since the research aim was to capture the nature of strategic development in a novel organizational construct, the choice for an explorative and interdisciplinary research approach was inevitable from the start. This is demonstrated in the theoretical foundations of the research where strategic management theory and collective action theory meet. Soon it became clear that professional literature on collective action is an essential body of knowledge to explore community-based forms of organizing. Relevant findings on contemporary community-based organizations are captured in professional action research aimed at practitioners. New organizational developments in community-based organizing are generally described and discussed in a practice-based setting. This inevitably calls for knowledge building by sourcing professional literature and collaborating with experts from practice. Unfortunately, this practice-based literature could not be integrated in our academic literature review, but various practice-based professional publications have been sourced to grasp variety and diversity in place-bound collaborative constructs. From the start of the research, the principal researcher was a member of the Participatie Tafel Regionale Netwerken (Participatory Table Consultation Regional Networks) of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO). Participating in meetings, debates, research, and policy discussions with various community-based organizations but also policymakers and consultants for collaborative organizing proved a valuable practice-based addition to understanding the development and complexity of community-based organizing and introduced the principal researcher to potential cases.

The qualitative research design took an interdisciplinary perspective grounded in two academic disciplines (strategic management and collective action theory). Although inter- and even cross-disciplinary research is advocated for by research institutions, in practice, research institutions appear unfamiliar with such an interdisciplinary approach. During the research period, contributions to conference procedures were welcomed, but in practice, it proved difficult to publish interdisciplinary work. Journals in the field of strategic management, and management journals in general, judged contributions on community-based strategy development too far off-topic from the established forms of organizing they generally address, while emerging academic journals that encourage interdisciplinary research were deemed insufficiently ranked according to publication guidelines for PhD candidates. From the perspective of the main researcher, studying new phenomena in practice is imperative for learning about collaborative, multiple-value-creating

contributions to sustainable development. This research project demonstrates the added value of integrating scientific disciplines, as well as the added value of studying new phenomena in practice.

### **8.5.2. Reflecting on the research approach**

A comparative case study was chosen to understand the strategizing efforts of emerging Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands. The strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities (Chapter 4) developed early in the research proved fruitful in ensuring maximum variation in the sample of 12 cases. As expected, and anticipated, the aim for a maximum variation of cases and the emerging nature of the cases provoked differences in available data since not all cases were equally well documented. The different organizational constructs that are adopted entail different degrees of formality and differences in recorded procedures. In contrast to established organizations, not all cases could provide a documented overview explaining strategic and organizational development from the start. Some cases have established well-documented, procedures while others could barely provide any documents at all. Thus, available data, and consequently data collection, differed for each case. An interesting observation is that the presence or absence of such documents appears of no influence to the actual workings of decision making structures in the early days of a community. In all communities in the sample, there is clarity and concordance on rules in use for decision making. Even stronger, clarity and transparency on decision-making procedures are deemed essential by respondents from the cases. Since the degree of documented strategic decision-making procedures differed, datasets differed for each case, as did the effort and time involved in establishing data. For some cases, multiple interviews were conducted with initiators, members of the governing body, or professionals involved in management of the community; while for other cases one orientating interview sufficed to construct a historic overview and select a critical strategic action situation for in-depth analysis. Social media proved a valuable source for updating data. Cases use social media channels to communicate with community members and the public about goals, visions, purpose, and collective actions. Data triangulation was established for primary data by multiple respondents per case and for secondary data by the available internal and public documents about strategy development, community-building, and collective actions. Observing various organizational and strategic changes over time, the chosen longitudinal and qualitative approach for this explorative study proved fruitful for unraveling strategy development and allocating critical strategic action situations in the cases. The professional experience of the principal researcher as a former consultant and trainer in community-based organizing, and her involvement in various community-based organizational constructs over the years, increased her understanding of the strategic, organizational, and

operational challenges that the cases confront. It also ensured the lenience that proved necessary to adapt data collection to the various organizational changes that cases encountered during the research period. A flexible topic list served as a guide for individual and focus group interviews. Methodological memos served to track the methodological evolution of the research project. Only slight adaptations were deemed necessary to the research design presented in Chapter 5. Virtually all respondents in the research were welcoming and open to sharing their knowledge, experiences, and thoughts. The principal researcher was welcomed to meetings, events, and even policy discussions, as were masters students from Nijmegen School of Management who assisted in data collection and analysis. Some cases even welcomed the principal researcher as a formal community member to facilitate access to internal documents only available to community members. From a methodological perspective, partial emergence in cases for data saturation brings a risk of “participant bias”. In order to maintain an objective and independent research position, the main researcher explicitly chose to behave as an observer and not partake in any internal discussions for the duration of the research. The longitudinal nature of the field research allowed for the involvement of multiple masters students over the years in both data collection and data analysis. Their independent assessments and analyses of written and oral data ensured inter-rater reliability.

### ***8.5.3. Reflection on research quality***

Analyzing qualitative data is a critical and precise process. In this research project, collected secondary data differs for each case. As this is explorative and qualitative research, there is a risk that data collection has been biased by the choices of the researcher, especially since the principal researcher has professionally worked with community-based organizations in the past, and has sourced three cases via her personal or professional network. Observing the emergence of community-based organizations in practice has triggered the aim to clarify strategic factors that determine the prosperity of multiple-value-creating collective actions in heterogeneous organizations in the first place.

Three measures were taken to ensure objectivity and validity in selecting and addressing cases and to guarantee objective and valid data analysis. First, although the principal researcher is familiar with the concept of community-based organizing, at the start of the research she was not familiar with the main theoretical footholds for the research: strategic management theory and collective action theory. As a consequence, she observed and explored the concept of Strategic Commoning through a novel analytic lens, construing a conceptual framework based on theoretical concepts that were new to her. Second, to ensure a purposive and objective selection of cases, a conceptual strategic-oriented typology was developed to ensure a theoretically grounded selection of cases. Third, for

researcher reliability, eight masters students of Nijmegen School of Management (Radboud University) were involved in collecting and analyzing data during the five-year research period. This ensured triangulation in data collection and minimized the risk that the principal researcher somehow missed or misinterpreted important data.

Next to the risk of researcher bias, the professional background of the principal researcher also brings advantages. Being familiar with the complexity of aligning multiple perspectives and goals in a place-based context, she is familiar with the dynamics of community-based organizing and anticipated a multitude of strategic approaches and organizational constructs. She is also familiar with internal differences that hinder prosperous collaborations, and with sometimes precarious relations with supporting or funding organizations. Also, she anticipated that communities may only partly be institutionalized and may not have all their procedures up to date and well documented. Hence the choice of a qualitative, explorative, and longitudinal research approach allowing for exploration of the “unity in diversity” of Strategic Commoning.

The emerging and thus dynamic state of the cases induced some risks for establishing data saturation. The main unit of analysis in this research was focus group interviews with governing bodies of Entrepreneurial Communities. The majority of the cases went through organizational change processes and, in some cases, even conflict during the five-year research period. Organizational change is to be expected while emerging forms of organizing develop and grow. As a result, it was not always possible to unite all decision-makers involved in a selected strategic action situation for an ultimate focus group interview. The possible lacunae in data induced by incomplete focus groups were addressed by triangulation via additional interviews and internal documents. It is inevitable to mention the Covid-19 pandemic that swept through the world during the final years of this research project. The penultimate focus group interview was conducted on the last day before the Netherlands went into a first lockdown. The last focus group interview was cancelled and replaced by an in-depth interview with one prominent constituent. The seminar that was planned in the spring of 2020 to present and discuss initial results with respondents had to be organized online while some respondents were hindered by meagre internet connections, inevitably missing out on interaction and exchange between the cases. Since most observations of decision making in the cases (e.g., board meetings or general assemblies) were cancelled during the spring of 2020, observations of meetings had to be left out of analysis. Simultaneously, most cases took the time during lockdown to upgrade their websites and social media. For keeping track of intended and unintended strategic alterations, social media and websites of cases were consulted until December 2021.

## 8.6. Directions for future research

This research is an initial effort to address community-based organizing from a strategic-oriented perspective. Addressing wicked problems, an articulated longitudinal perspective is integral to Strategic Commoning. Results show that within their relatively short period of existence, most cases went through strategic changes. Although place-based and community-based collective actions for sustainability still appear to be gaining momentum, we do not know yet how the cases will evolve. During the focus group interviews all respondents from the cases were asked to share their vision on the five-year future of their community. In general, their answers demonstrated a realistic and strategic view on establishing the communities' position and establishing internal interdependence, with the ultimate aim to practically contribute to sustainable systemic change. The expected progress of established Entrepreneurial Communities but also the ongoing emergence and development of community-based organizational constructs provide input for further explorations of Strategic Commoning, for which we outline four possible directions here.

1) Multiple-value-creating properties of community-based organizational constructs.

Results demonstrate that strategy development is essential from the very start of collaborative organizational development. Successful cases in the research suggest that heterogeneity enables the integration of multiple strategic perspectives for multi-faceted wicked problems. Thus, heterogeneity is a strategic asset when striving for sustainable development. A general premise is that sustainable development is a collective effort that benefits from within-sector and cross-sector collaborations (see also Section 1.2.1.). However, such cross-sector collaborations are mainly discussed from a governance or a business perspective, and strategic management literature addresses them mainly from the perspective of profit-driven or administrative organizations. This research demonstrates that the abundance of community-based forms of organizing that is still on the rise provides input for knowledge building on strategizing different forms of value creation in heterogeneous collaborative organizational constructs. In essence, Entrepreneurial Communities are "entrepreneurial" in sustainable development. This is reflected in strategies that accommodate multiple-value-creating collective actions. The concept of Strategic Commoning thus calls for further explorations from, among other disciplines, business economics and strategic management perspectives to better understand strategies that support multiple, collective, and shared value creation.

2) Broadening research addressing strategy development in heterogeneous and collaborative contexts.

This study states that Strategic Commoning is strongly interrelated with community-building. While the main focus of this study is on strategy development, an obvious next step is to examine

community-building aspects and the context in which a community emerges in an equally lucid manner. A reasonable approach for this is the IAD for further exploring influential variables. Another possible theoretical perspective is offered by addressing communities as drivers for systemic change. This study approaches Entrepreneurial Communities as value-creating forms of organizing embedded in a distinct area. It is conceivable that they might be studied as a factor of importance for systemic change in that area. Another interesting perspective is from a more sociological viewpoint, understanding what drives individuals to engage in collaborations for a sustainable future. Since the concept of collective action for sustainability is still gaining momentum, perspectives from other disciplines regarding factors influential to community-based strategizing and organizing contribute to our understanding of what makes communities tick.

### 3) Upscaling research addressing Strategic Commoning.

This study demonstrates that community-based organizing can be differentiated based on strategizing properties. However, the findings are based on only 12 different cases in the Netherlands. It is important to bear in mind that results, therefore, need to be interpreted with caution. During the five-year research period, there was a steady increase in community-based organizational constructs in the Netherlands and all over Europe and beyond (see also Section 1.2.1.). As collaborative organizing is still on the rise, it is reasonable to assume that different organizational constructs will emerge in different contexts, but also that similarities may occur between communities that address similar topics or operate under similar organizational constructs. This research project provides the theoretical and methodological foundations for upscaling research to larger samples for accessing additional results.

The framework for Strategic Commoning allows for conceptualizing strategic decision making in various community-based forms of organizing. As outlined in Chapter 1, there is a demand for local, regional, national, and international collaborative solutions addressing sustainable development. Developing multi-party collaborative organizational constructs proves laborious in a local or regional Dutch context but is downright tricky in an international setting. Organizational constructs are bounded by national laws and regulations when they become formalized. Currently, we do not know to what extent different national contexts are influential to community-based strategizing and organizing. An international comparative research program will contribute to understanding how national contexts influence multiple-value-creating collective actions.

### 4) Impact assessment and accountability of community-based organizing.

Ultimately, Strategic Commoning is all about establishing sustainable impact by creating multiple, collective, and shared values. The Entrepreneurial Communities in the research are emerging and



evolving organizations that address wicked problems while striving for long-term sustainable impact. This implies that their collective actions should contribute to long-term effects. This involves contemplating long-term strategic goals. Virtually all cases choose to operationalize impact by engaging in value-creating collective actions that address short- or mid-term project goals from the premise that concrete, physical outputs pave the way for intended long-term, value-creating impact. Over time, various communities in the sample have started addressing impact assessment. They seek and experiment with ways to concretize their impact in a comprehensive manner. They develop various methods and experiment with various tools to assess and measure progress, often collaborating with research institutions. In doing so, they assess and contribute various indicators for measuring progress and assessing impact. This suggests that community-based organizing is a practice-based knowledge source for various methods for assessing the impact of multiple, collective, and shared value creation and provides input for research addressing community-based sustainable impact.

#### 5) Strengthening professionalism in collaboration.

This study demonstrates that heterogeneous collaborations are frontrunners in entrepreneuring for sustainability. However, it also demonstrates the vulnerability of such collaborations. In most Entrepreneurial Communities the organizational constructs are dependent on the availability of skilled volunteers to address strategy development and community building. On the one hand, this sparks debate and innovative organizational solutions, while on the other hand, it poses a risk for continuity when important organizational skills are not available through volunteers. Solutions are sometimes sought in facilitation of HRM support through partners such as municipalities or enterprises; however, this also brings some risks of third parties intervening in strategic choice or restricting debate and innovation. We feel that independent, professional support might enhance “professionalism” in heterogeneous collaborative constructs. Up until now, the parties that offer support determine what kind of support is needed for organizational development of voluntary collaborations. Further independent research is needed to determine what skills, knowledge, and other means are essential to make Entrepreneurial Communities prosperous organizations crafting effective collective actions, and how Entrepreneurial Communities can incorporate all necessary skills for their collaborative endeavors.

### **8.7. Implications for applied science and education**

There is a growing demand for professionals with a profound understanding of the organizational challenges of sustainable development. A concrete example is the implementation of the Regional

Energy Strategies (RES) in the Netherlands, inducing municipalities and other institutional actors to involve civilians and various other stakeholders in developing place-based sustainable energy solutions. Professional knowledge on heterogeneous collaborative organizational constructs and professional knowledge on organizing multiple, collective, and shared value creation is pivotal to guiding such collaborations and involving communities in transitioning to a sustainable society. Universities of Applied Sciences educate those professionals and engage in transdisciplinary, practice-based research via lectorates but also via, e.g., internships, field labs, and communities of practice. This interaction contributes to mutual knowledge building and is one of the major advantages of practice-based qualitative research (see, e.g., Konstantatos et al., 2013). Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences are firmly grounded in the regions where they reside, and their researchers and students are involved in place-based developments in these regions. Multiple disciplines within applied sciences address aspects of sustainable development via practice-based research and education with a strong focus on practical experience. However, disciplines that teach about organizing value creation, e.g., business economics and financial management, are in general hesitant in addressing forms of organizing that are not predominantly associated with businesses or governmental administration. This research makes a case for structural appreciation of “non-conventional” and community-based forms of organizing in teaching business and economics, and for developing teaching and research programs that address multiple value creation in an interdisciplinary context.

### **8.8. Concluding remarks**

The subject for this study was conceived over a long period of time. After finishing university I stayed involved in collaborative organizing and sustainable development, both professionally and in my personal life. I consider myself truly lucky that all my working life has been and is centered around organizing sustainable development, allowing me to meet and work with so many inspiring people and organizations driven by the aim to make the world a better and more sustainable place, such as the cases in this project. Over the years, topics that were important to me – sustainability, equality, and inclusion – gained increasing attention from and began to be advocated for by governmental institutions and even by the companies I demonstrated against as an activist student. However, with a few exceptions, their solutions remain restricted by the dominant paradigm of economic growth by financial value creation, hindering much-needed radical changes for which the integration of multiple, shared, and collective values is pivotal. Simultaneously, sustainability-oriented startups and civilian initiatives emerged, aiming to operate from a different and integrated value paradigm. They

are entrepreneurs in sustainability, putting multiple-value-creating actions at the heart of their organization. They dare to pilot experimental organizational forms and they are learning by doing. Observing their abundance and their sustainable outputs sparked curiosity into what strategies they use and whether understanding their strategic choices might serve to enhance other collaborations aiming for sustainability. However, it soon became clear that place-based collaborative organizational constructs were largely overlooked in academic literature addressing multiple-value-creating organizational constructs. As a first step for understanding collaborative strategies for sustainability, this dissertation introduces and develops the concept of Strategic Commoning: place-based collaborative strategy development addressing wicked problems related to sustainability. In addition, the concept of Entrepreneurial Communities is introduced as a generic name for the abundance of place-based collaborative constructs engaging in collective actions for sustainability. Since the start of this research, the call for an integral approach to sustainable development has become even more urgent, as is the call to think global while acting local. This study makes the case for consciously crafting effective collaborative strategies to do so.

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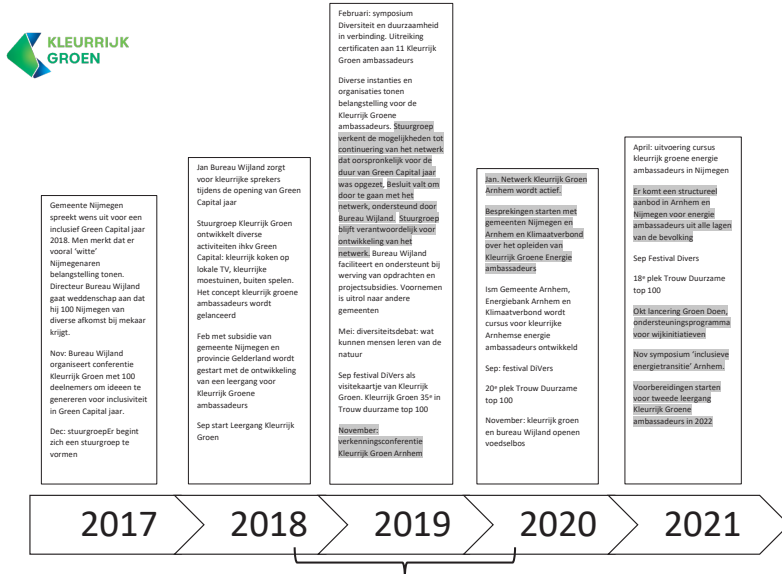
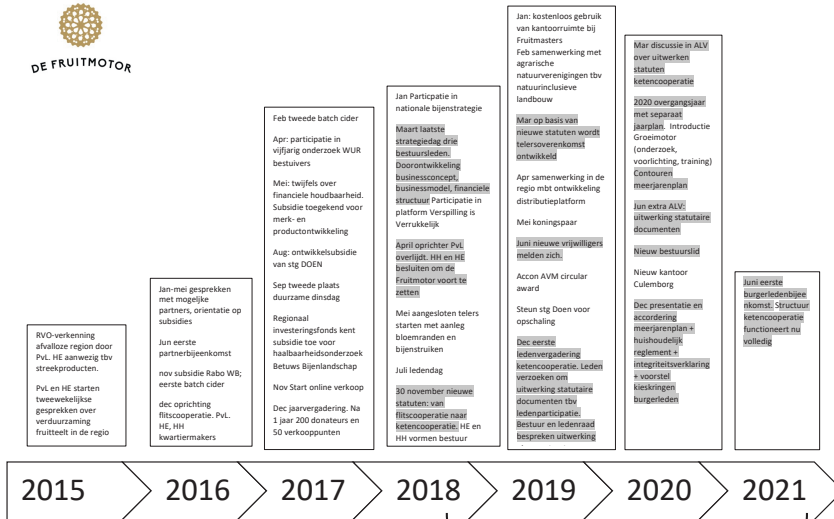
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## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Two examples of constructed timelines



## Appendix 2. Generic topic list focus group interviews in Dutch

Topic 1: contemporary strategy	Documents (Check)	Interview (name respondent & date)	focus
1a. Wat is de huidige koers van de organisatie?			
1b. Hoe is de huidige koers ontstaan?			
1c. Wat is jullie aandeel daarin geweest?			
1d. Welke rol speelde de achterban van het netwerk daarin?			
1e. Welke rol speelden externe partijen daarin?			
1f and further: customized to selected SAS			

Topic 2: Topic 2: familiarity with vision, mission, general goals	Documents	Interview	focus
2a. Wat is de visie van de organisatie?			
2b. Is deze vastgelegd? (Waar & hoe)			
2c. Door wie			
2d. Voor wie?			
2e. Wat is het doel / zijn de doelen van de organisatie?			
2f. Is/zijn deze vastgelegd? (waar en hoe)			
2g. Hoe verhouden visie en doelen zich tot de huidige koers?			
2h. Wat is jullie persoonlijke aandeel daarin geweest?			
2i. Waren daar anderen bij betrokken? Wie? Wat was hun rol?			
2j. Is de visie vastgelegd? (Zo nee, waarom niet?) Op welke manier? Wie kan bij die informatie?			
2k. Zijn de doelen vastgelegd? (Zo nee, waarom niet?) Op welke manier? Wie kan bij die informatie?			
2l. In hoe verre bepalen visie, missie, doelen de activiteiten? Hoe uit zich dat?			
2m. Zijn er, met betrekking tot de visie, afspraken over evalueren en bijstellen visie? Zo ja, hoe? Indien nee, waarom niet?			
2n. Zijn er acties of projecten die niet gerelateerd zijn aan de visie Indien ja: Welke? Waarom vinden deze activiteiten plaats?			
2o. Toetsen jullie de mate waarin plannen / activiteiten aansluiten bij visie, missie en/of centrale doelen? (indien niet, waarom niet) Hoe? Wie is daarvoor verantwoordelijk?			
2p. Verwachten jullie grote veranderingen in visie tussen nu en drie jaar? Waarom wel/niet			



Topic 3: organizing and executing collective actions	Documents	Interview	focus
3a. Wat voor activiteiten voeren jullie uit			
3b. Hoe komen activiteiten tot stand?			
3c. Wie bepalen de keuze voor activiteiten?			
3d. Wie voeren de activiteiten uit?			
3d. Welke externe stakeholders zijn belangrijk voor de uitvoering van activiteiten?			
3e. Rapporteren jullie over resultaten van activiteiten? (check) Aan wie, waarover, waarom?			
3f. (hoe) doen jullie aan resultaatmeting? Wat doen jullie met de resultaatmeting?			
3g. and further: customized to selected SAS			

Topic 4: strategy development	Documents	Interview	focus
4a. Hoe vindt besluitvorming over de koers van de organisatie plaats? (if procedures are documented: check. If no documents are available, respondents describe procedure & draw timeline)			
4b. Welke externe stakeholders zijn belangrijk voor het ontwikkelen van plannen?			
4c. Is er sprake van een organisatiestrategie? Kunnen jullie de strategie van de organisatie benoemen?			
4e. and further: customized to selected SAS			

Topic 5: selected strategic action situation	Documents	Interview	focus
5a. Hoe heeft besluitvorming over deze koersverandering plaats gevonden or: hoe ziet de besluitvorming rond deze situatie er uit?			
5b. Wat is de aanleiding voor de verandering?			
5c. Wat is er veranderd? (aan het veranderen)			
5d. Wie zijn daarbij betrokken? (doorvragen: leden, stakeholders, derden)			
5e. Wie hebben/hadden doorslaggevende stem daarin?			
5f. Wie is verantwoordelijk voor het doorvoeren van de verandering uit?			
5g. Is / wordt de verandering gemonitord? Hoe? Door wie?			
5h. and further: customized to selected SAS			

Conclusive question to be answered individually by all respondents

6. Waar staat (case) over vijf jaar?

If applicable check and ask for additional documents

## Appendix 3. Main written sources per case

	Document / media	Published	Information retrieved
<b>Bommelerwaar</b>	Statutes	2016	Goals, purpose, incorporating multiple value creation, rules in use
	Bommelerwaarstroom: een echt lokaal energieconcept (Van Bekkum, 2018)	2018	Vision on systemic approach of sustainable energy
	Rapportage RVO ParticipatieTafel Energie: "Gebiedsgerichte Systeemtransitie via de Regionale Energie Strategie" (De coöperatieve samenleving, 2019)	2019	Regional energy production
	Kwartiermaken in de Rijnlands-Coöperatieve gebiedseconomie (Van Bekkum, 2019)	2019	Vision on place-bound approach of systemic change
	Project plan: Participatieplan Windpark Lage Rooijen	2020	Community involvement in wind turbine park, strategy
	Participatie overeenkomst Windpark de Lage Rooijen	2020	Formalization of community involvement in wind turbine park
	Website windpark Lage Rooijen	2021	Progress of community wind turbine park
	Website Bommelerwaar	2016–2021	Progress of community projects and plans, strategy
	Newsletter Bommelerwaar	2019–2021	Communication within the community, informing constituents
	Facebookpage Bommelerwaar	2019–2021	Communication about the community and its goals
<b>De Fruitmotor</b>	Statutes	2014 2020	Goals, purpose 2020: incorporating multiple value creation, rules in use
	Annual reports 2018, 2019, 2020	2018 2019 2020	Progress of the community. Output of collective actions, strategy
	General assembly: agenda, documents, notes	19.12.03 20.03.10 20.12.08 21.05.18 21.12.07	Strategy development and progress of chain cooperative, strategic discussions, strategy development, rules in use
	Year plan 2020	2020	Strategy
	Plan 2021 – 2025	2020	Strategy
	De regionale voedsel transitie (Engels & Van der Schans, 2020)	2020	Integral vision on transition in the region & role of De Fruitmotor
	Website De Fruitmotor	2016–2021	Progress of the community
	Mailings De Fruitmotor	2016–2021	Member communication
	Facebook Page De Fruitmotor	2017–2021	Communication about the community and its goals

<b>Dirk de Derde</b>	Dirk III voor meer dan energie	2013	Results from first roundtable conference
	Oprichtingsakte Burgerwindcoöperatie Geldermalsen-Neerijnen B.A.	2014	Project inspired by DirkIII
	Website Dirk de Derde	2014–2017	Progress of community, vision on multiple value creation, vision on region as a system, projects
	Twitter Dirk de Derde	2014–2017	Progress of collective actions
<b>Energiecoöperatie WPN</b>	Statutes	2013 2019	Goals, purpose 2019 decoupling of community and energy production, rules in use
	House Rules	2018	Rules and regulations for community members
	General assembly: agenda, documents, notes	2017 2018 2019 2020	Strategy development and progress of chain cooperative, decision making, rules in use
	Website EWPN	2016–2021	Organizational and strategic development, documents
	Mailings	2016–2021	Communication with community members
<b>Food Council MRA</b>	A Hybrid Food Policy Board for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area (van der Valk, 2019)	2019	Vision on purpose and role of Food Council
	Een voedselraad voor de metropoolregio Amsterdam: Food Council MRA	2018	Purpose and role of Food Council in bringing together various stakeholders, strategy
	Website Food Council MRA	2018–2021	Mission, vision, projects
<b>GCR</b>	Statutes	2014	Purpose and principles of the cooperation, rules in use
	Notitie uitgangspunten Regionale Energie Strategie Rivierenland	2019	Strategic role of civilian initiatives, represented by GCR, in RES
	GCR voorbeeldproject: Betuwewind: meervoudige waardecreatie door samenwerking en vertrouwen	2018	Vision on collective actions addressing sustainable energy
	Overzicht duurzame burgerinitiatieven binnen het collectief netwerk van de Gebiedscoöperatie Rivierenland	2019	Collaborating parties
	Website GCR	2017	Initial manner of working
	Ondernemende burgers in rivierenland: de winst van een breder speelveld	2020	Process of RES, role of GCR
	Regionale Energiestrategie 1.0. Fruitdelta Rivierenland	2021	RES strategy
<b>Gloei</b>	Jaarstukken Peel en Maas 2016	2016 2017 2018	Positioning Gloei within the municipality
	Gloei Tijdlijn	2015	Development of Gloei
	Ambitiestatement	2013	Goals

	Samen met GLOEI naar een nieuwe tijd	2014	Vision, goals, collective actions
	Gloei Leaflet	2015	Purpose and goals
	Gloei 2015 & de werkgemeenschappen in het kort	2015	Purpose, goals, and actions, rules in use
	Procesplan revolverend fonds (Gemeente Peel en Maas, 2016)	2016	Vision on funding of collective actions
	Waardenoriëntatie en kaderstelling. Thema's ruimte en economie (Peel en Maas)	2017	Municipal vision on social innovation
	Ambachtsdossier Actieonderzoek Netwerk ontwikkeling (Krause, 2019, internal report)	2019	Overview of various internal reorganizations
	Besluitenlijst van de Besluitvormende Raadsvergadering van de gemeente Peel en Maas van dinsdag 13 maart 2018	2018	Discussion in town council on Gloei
	Duurzaamheidscoöperatie Gloei maakt nieuwe start	2018	News item in local newspaper
	Energiecoöperatie Gloei wordt opgeheven	2019	News item in local newspaper
<b>GoClean</b>	Statutes	2016	Goals, purpose, rules in use
	Jaaroverzicht 2019	2020	Overview of collective actions
	Website GoClean	2019–2021	Information on purpose, goals, collective actions, strategy
	Facebookpage GoClean	2019–2021	Information on collective actions, progress, lobby
	LinkedIn Company page GoClean	2019–2021	Information on collective actions, progress, lobby
<b>Netwerk Kleurrijk Groen</b>	Project Plan	2019	Goal, purpose and approach of the network, strategy
	Network meeting notes jan 30 2020	2020	Development of collective actions, rules in use
	Project page on website bureau Wijland	2019–2021	Purpose, approach, projects
	Facebook page NKG	2019–2021	Information on collective actions, progress
<b>Noorden Duurzaam</b>	Statutes	2013	Goals, purpose, rules in use
	House rules	2017	Manner of working, decision making
	General assembly; agenda's, documents, notes	2014–2021	Strategy development, discussions, decision making
	Annual plans	2015–2021	Strategy development
	Website	2015–2021	Foundations, structure, projects, members
	Mailings	2017–2021	Communication with members
<b>PakAn</b>	Statutes	2016	Goals, purpose
	Website PakAn	2019–2021	Vision, goals, approach, projects, actions, results, rules in use
	Facebookpage PakAn	2019–2021	Information on actions, progress, advocacy of region, reaching out to stakeholders

	LinkedIn company page	2019–2021	Information on actions, progress, advocacy of region
<b>Voedselbos Ketelbroek</b>	Statutes	2009 (food forest) 2016 (foundation)	Goals, purpose, rules in use
	Facebookpage Voedselbos Ketelborek	2016–2021	Information on state of the food forest, events, reaching out to the public, advocating agroforestry
	Het voedselbos: vier seizoenen Ketelbroek (Van Dinther, 2020)	2020	Development and progress of the food forest
	Website Stichting Voedselbosbouw Nederland	2019–2021	Goal, vision, approach, progress of food forests, role of Ketelbroek within the food forest movement
	Jaarverslag stg.Voedselbosbouw Nederland	2018 2019	Development of agroforestry, Development of foundation, role of Voedselbos Ketelbroek within agroforestry movement

#### Appendix 4. List of orientating and additional interviews

case	respondents	Date (y.m.d.)	purpose	interviewer
<b>Bomm</b>	initiator / chair	19.06.06	historical reconstruction	IK
	board member	19.05.04	perspectives on value creation	IK, MK
	board member	19.05.29	perspectives on value creation	IK
<b>DeFru</b>	initiator	19.06.04	historical reconstruction	MK
	initiator	21.05.10	perspectives on value creation	BE
<b>Dirk III</b>	initiator	June '16	historical reconstruction, foundations	YK
	board member	June '16	historical reconstruction	YK
	initiator	June '16	historical reconstruction, foundations	YK
<b>EWP</b>	initiator	19.07.23	historical reconstruction	MK
	board member	21.05.21	perspectives on value creation	BE
<b>FCMRA</b>	initiators	19.05.08	historical reconstruction	MK
	initiator	June '20	perspectives on value creation, progress of organizational construct	JW, DB
<b>GCR</b>	initiator, board member	19.09.19	historical reconstruction	MK
	initiator, board member	19.07.09	strategy development	MK
<b>Gloei</b>	initiator	18.06.05	historical reconstruction, outcomes, spin offs, changes	MK
	initiator	19.05.03	progress of reorganization	IK
	municipality	19.05.05	progress of reorganization	IK
	consultant	19.05.15	historical reconstruction	IK
	member, board ai	19.05.29	progress of reorganization	IK
	member, board ai	19.05.15	member view	IK
<b>GoCl</b>	member, board ai	19.05.14	member view	IK
	initiators	19.11.28	historical reconstruction	MK
	director	21.05.19	perspectives on value creation	BE
<b>NKG</b>	chair	19.07.25	historical reconstruction	MK
<b>NoDu</b>	chair and board member	17.06.14	historical reconstruction	MB, MK
	board member	18.05.18	progress of reorganization	MK
<b>PakAn</b>	coordinator	19.08.28	historical reconstruction	MK
	coordinator	20.06.17	strategy development	MK
<b>VoKe</b>	initiator	19.09.09	historical reconstruction	MK

## Appendix 5. Focus group interviews

Case	respondents	date	interviewer
Bomme	board member, board member	20.01.15	MK
DeFru	full board (2)	19.10.19	MK
DdD	board member, board member	17.05.06	MB
EWPN	chair, board member	20.03.13	MK
FCMRA	initiator, initiator	19.05.15	MK
GCR	initiator & chair, initiator, and board member	20.01.29	MK
Gloei	interim board (3), initiator	17.05.16	MB, MK
GoCl	initiator, board member	20.01.12	MK
NKG	initiator, chair steering committee, 3 steering committee members	19.09.06	MK
NoDu	full board (4)	19.07.12	MK, WL
PakAn	coordinator*	20.06.17	MK
VoKe	initiator / owners (2)	19.12.30	MK

\*due to Covid 19 Lockdown focus group interview was restricted to coordinator

## SUMMARY

### STRATEGIC COMMONING AMALGAMATING THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME

Candidate: Moniek Kamm

Promotor:

Prof. Dr. Jan Jonker (Radboud University)

Co-promotor:

Dr. Ir. Niels R. Faber (University of Groningen)

Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University

*Key words:* Strategic Commoning, Entrepreneurial Communities, strategy development, strategy as practice, collective action, commons, multiple value creation

This study introduces and addresses Strategic Commoning: community-based strategy development for multiple-value-creating collective actions. The research topic was inspired by the rise of various forms of collaborative and community-based organizing engaging into place-bound solutions for wicked problems related to sustainable development, here introduced as Entrepreneurial Communities. The increase in collaborative organizing for sustainability parallels the privatization of previously “public” goods such as energy or public transport, and a public movement from governing to governance. From the turn of the century, governmental bodies have gradually pulled back from organizing and funding various aspects of society while simultaneously advocating involvement of civilians in organizing collaborative solutions for much-needed social and ecological development.

Place-based collaborations for sustainability are still on the rise. The structural involvement of civilians in emerging collaborative organizational constructs results in a heterogeneous mix of personal and professional motives and approaches for contemplating common goals and collective actions. Learning by doing, their collective actions involve collaborative goal setting and plan making, as well as developing matching collaborative organizational constructs for realizing multiple-value-creating outcomes. They engage in deliberations that parallel strategy development. Strategy



development in Entrepreneurial Communities requires the matching of visions from constituents from various walks of life and from various societal realms. The collaborating constituents craft their visions and approaches into initiatives that create multiple, shared, and collective values associated with sustainable development. Considering the importance that is attributed to local and supra-local collaborations for sustainable development by, among other things, local, national, and international governments, there has been surprisingly little attention for strategy development in heterogeneous collaborations in academic literature. This study set out to fill this gap by exploring the nature and scope of Strategic Commoning. The study addresses an emerging and still-developing phenomenon: heterogeneous collaborations addressing sustainable development in a place-based context. To address this phenomenon as it unfolds, a longitudinal and explorative research approach was chosen to develop a theory grounded in the strategizing practice of contemporary heterogeneous collaborations addressing sustainable development in a place-based context.

To explore the nature and scope of collaborative strategizing for sustainability, a qualitative comparative case study grounded in strategic management literature and collective action literature was designed and conducted. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic as and presents the main goal of the research as well as research question and sub-questions. The main research question addressed in this research is:

What is the nature of Strategic Commoning: community-based strategy formation for multiple-value-creating collective actions?

Two sub-questions guide the main research question:

Sub-question 1: What is the structure of Strategic Commoning?

Sub-question 2: What variables determine the nature of Strategic Commoning?

Both sub-questions were addressed, first, by integrating perspectives from strategic development theory and collective action theory. Chapter 2 explores established strategic development literature and established collective action literature, merging findings in the conceptualization of the strategic action situation: a decision-making procedure that evolves in practice when strategic decisions are crafted by or on behalf of the community. Decisions become strategic when they 1) anticipate the communities' environment, 2) relate to the whole community, as well as 3) its aspired (key) role in addressing wicked problems, 4) direct collective actions, and 5) concretize long-time goals.

In addition to established strategic management theory and established collective action theory, Chapter 3 addresses contemporary academic journal publications addressing strategic and collaborative aspects of community-based collaborations for sustainability. Integrating established

theory and contemporary academic literature, we conceptualize Strategic Commoning as a recursive and adaptive process shaped in practice. This process is captured in a conceptual process model that envisions six interrelated stages of practice-based strategic decision-making influenced by contextual factors. Drawing on Ostrom's (2010, 2011b) Institutional Analysis and Development framework (IAD), the conceptual process model subdivides these contextual factors into three categories: attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use.

Chapter 4 conceptualizes the research subject: Entrepreneurial Communities as distinct heterogeneous Institutes of Collective Action (ICA) (Ostrom, 2011b) characterized by universal properties: 1) place-based; 2) sustainable development-oriented; 3) heterogeneous; 4) multiple-value focused; 5) organizational pioneering. To address their strategizing properties a two-dimensional strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities is proposed, enabling the selection of a small but diverse sample of these collaborative organizational constructs for case-based research. Chapter 5 presents the methodological foundations of the explorative, qualitative, and case-based research and introduces the 12 cases that were selected for fathoming Strategic Commoning in practice.

Chapter 6 presents the results of qualitative within-case analysis of selected strategic action situations in 12 Entrepreneurial Communities in the Netherlands. In addition, strategy types (Mintzberg & Waters, 1987) and modes of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) are analyzed and attributed to the cases. Chapter 7 presents the results of cross-case analysis, captured in the a case-based process model of Strategic Commoning. Results confirm suggestions from theory that Strategic Commoning is an evolving, recursive, and adaptive process influenced by attributes of the community and biophysical conditions that is structured by rules in use. In addition, results demonstrate that in practice, the stages in this process are far more amalgamated than theory suggests.

Chapter 7 discusses the strategy types practiced by the cases and introduces two additional strategy types that are related to collaborative strategy development: community-oriented and multiple-value-driven. Configurations of strategy types capture the interplay of strategic directions in collaborative strategic decision-making, here called the collaborative strategy mix. In addition, results of cross-case analysis show that the resulting mode of association is an indicator for the state of strategy development in a community: interdependent, imbalanced, or destructive. Results demonstrate that, while learning by doing in practice, communities engage in strategic debate to address strategic imbalance, slowly working their way towards internal strategic interdependence. Entrepreneurial Communities that are unable to effectively address their internal strategic imbalance risk a destructive mode of association that may result in termination. Reassessing the conceptual strategic-oriented typology of Entrepreneurial Communities presented in Chapter 4 we find that,

over time, the communities in the sample prefer addressing a single wicked problem instead of addressing various wicked problems simultaneously.

The concluding Chapter 8 discusses the results of the research project and reflects on the research process. The answer to the main research question is summarized in a case-based framework for Strategic Commoning that captures the five interacting components in strategic decision-making influenced by three sets of external variables: attributes of the community, biophysical conditions, and rules in use. In addition, Chapter 8 discusses contributions to theory, practice, and applied sciences, and proposes five recommendations for future research.

Integrating strategic management theory and collective action theory, this study contributes the concept of Strategic Commoning: collaborative strategy development for collective actions that address wicked problems related to sustainable development.

The concept of Entrepreneurial Communities contributes a multiple-value-creating perspective to a broad accumulation of place-based collective actions for sustainable development. This has enabled a focus on strategy development for multiple-value-creating collaborations.

This qualitative and explorative study is a first step in addressing strategy development for multiple-value-creating collective actions in place-based collaborative constructs. The chosen research approach called for exploring an emerging phenomenon by integrating scientific disciplines and developing a longitudinal comparative case study to capture Strategic Commoning in practice. This approach enabled the collection and analysis of rich data for capturing collaborative strategic decisions in a place-based context. An obvious and inevitable limitation of this study is the small sample. During the research period, the number and scope of Entrepreneurial Communities grew and undoubtedly new forms of organizing bring additional information on Strategic Commoning. This study contributes theoretical and methodological perspectives for further research.

This study establishes that heterogeneous place-based collaborations are value creating and strategizing forms of organizing. We find that, under various organizational constructs, they are “entrepreneurial” in multiple-value-creating collective actions for sustainability. Taking their multiple-value-creating and collaborative foundations as a common denominator, this study has brought a strategic perspective to place-based collective actions and underlines the importance of unambiguous collaborative strategy development for effective collective actions.

## SAMENVATTING

### STRATEGIC COMMONING AMALGAMATING THE RIGHT PEOPLE AT THE RIGHT PLACE AND TIME

Kandidaat: Moniek Kamm

Promotor:

Prof. Dr. Jan Jonker (Radboud University)

Co-promotor:

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*Key words:* Strategic Commoning, Entrepreneurial Communities, strategy development, strategy as practice, collective action, commons, multiple value creation

Deze studie introduceert en adresseert Strategic Commoning: strategieontwikkeling in organisaties waarbinnen samenwerking centraal staat en die die zich inzetten voor gezamenlijke acties die leiden tot meervoudige waardecreatie. Het onderwerp van dit onderzoek is geïnspireerd door de opkomst van uiteenlopende vormen van collaboratief en collectief organiseren die zich richten op plaatsgebonden oplossingen voor de complexe problemen (wicked problems) gerelateerd aan duurzame ontwikkeling (sustainable development). Ze worden hier geïntroduceerd als Entrepreneurial Communities (ondernemende gemeenschappen).

De toename in het gezamenlijk en plaatsgebonden organiseren van duurzaamheid gaat gelijk op met de privatisering van voorheen “publieke” goederen en diensten zoals energie of openbaar vervoer. Daarnaast is er een beweging gaande van “bestuurscultuur” naar “participatiesamenleving”. Sinds het begin van deze eeuw begonnen overheidsinstanties zich langzaam terug te trekken uit het organiseren en financieren van voorheen publieke aspecten van de samenleving. Gelijktijdig moedigen overheden burgers aan om in samenwerking met anderen collectieve oplossingen te organiseren voor broodnodige sociale en ecologische ontwikkelingen. Deze plaatsgebonden samenwerkingen gericht op duurzame ontwikkeling groeien nog steeds in aantal. De structurele betrokkenheid van burgers in opkomende samenwerkingsvormen leidt tot een mix van verschillende

persoonlijke en professionele motieven en manieren van werken die samen komen tijdens het bepalen van gezamenlijke acties.

In de praktijk blijkt dat activiteiten zoals doelen stellen en plannen ontwikkelen onderdeel zijn van deze collectieve acties, net als de ontwikkeling van collectieve organisatievormen die passen bij het realiseren van meervoudige waarden. Deelnemers aan collectieve acties maken afwegingen die overeenkomen met strategieontwikkeling. Strategieontwikkeling in Entrepreneurial Communities vereist overeenstemming van visies van deelnemers met uiteenlopende achtergronden en afkomstig van verschillende maatschappelijke geledingen. Deze samenwerkende deelnemers ontwikkelen hun visie en werkwijze(n) tot gezamenlijke initiatieven gericht op meervoudige, gedeelde en collectieve waarden die we associëren met duurzame ontwikkeling.

Gezien het belang dat door o.a. lokale, nationale en internationale overheden wordt toegedicht aan lokale en bovenlokale samenwerkingen voor duurzame ontwikkeling, is er binnen de academische literatuur verrassend weinig aandacht voor strategieontwikkeling in pluriforme samenwerkingsverbanden. Deze studie wil daar verandering in brengen door de aard en reikwijdte van Strategic Commoning te onderzoeken. Het onderzoek adresseert een opkomend fenomeen dat nog steeds in ontwikkeling is: pluriforme samenwerkingen gericht op duurzame ontwikkeling in een plaatsgebonden context. Om dit fenomeen te kunnen bestuderen terwijl het zich ontwikkelt is gekozen voor een longitudinale en kwalitatieve onderzoeksopzet. Doel hiervan was om een theorie te ontwikkelen op basis van de praktijk van strategieontwikkeling in huidige pluriforme samenwerkingen die duurzame ontwikkeling adresseren in een plaatsgebonden context. Om de aard en reikwijdte van collectieve strategievorming te onderzoeken is een kwalitatief vergelijkend casusonderzoek (comparative case study) opgezet en uitgevoerd, gebaseerd op strategic management literatuur en collective action literatuur.

Hoofdstuk 1 introduceert het onderzoeksonderwerp en het centrale doel van het onderzoek, evenals de onderzoeksvraag en sub vragen. De centrale onderzoeksvraag van dit onderzoek is:

Wat is de aard van Strategic Commoning: gemeenschappelijke strategieontwikkeling voor meervoudige waarde creërende collectieve acties?

Twee deelvragen ondersteunen de centrale onderzoeksvraag:

Deelvraag 1: Wat is de structuur van Strategic Commoning?

Deelvraag 2: Welke variabelen bepalen de aard van Strategic Commoning?

Beide deelvragen zijn eerst geadresseerd door het integreren van strategic management theorie en collective action theorie. Hoofdstuk 2 onderzoekt de gangbare strategic management literatuur en

de gangbare collective action literatuur. De resultaten worden geïntegreerd in het concept van de strategic action situation: een besluitvormingsproces dat zich in de praktijk ontvouwt rondom strategische besluiten ten behoeve van de gehele community. De geraadpleegde theorie toont aan dat besluiten strategisch zijn als ze: 1) Anticiperen op de omgeving van de community, 2) de hele community betreffen, maar ook 3) de gewenste (sleutel) rol in het aanpakken van complexe problemen, 4) richtinggevend zijn voor collectieve acties en 5) lange termijn doelen concretiseren. In aanvulling op de gevestigde strategic management en collective action theorie behandelt hoofdstuk 3 recente peer-reviewed academische tijdschrift publicaties over strategische en samenwerkingsaspecten van gemeenschappelijke organisatievormen gericht op duurzame ontwikkeling. Door inzichten uit gevestigde theorie en actuele publicaties te combineren komen we tot het concept van Strategic Commoning als een wederkerig en adaptief proces dat zich in de praktijk ontwikkelt.

Dit proces is samengevat in een conceptueel procesmodel. Het conceptueel procesmodel visualiseert zes onderling verbonden fases in van strategische besluitvorming in de praktijk, beïnvloedt door diverse factoren die samenhangen met de context waarbinnen een initiatief zich ontwikkelt.

Geïnspireerd door Ostrom's (2010, 2011b) Institutional Analysis and Development framework (IAD) maakt het conceptuele procesmodel een onderverdeling in drie categorieën van factoren: eigenschappen van de community, omgevingsfactoren, en toegepaste regels.

Hoofdstuk 4 conceptualiseert het onderwerp van onderzoek: Entrepreneurial Communities (ondernemende gemeenschappen) als specifieke, pluriforme Institutes of Collective Action (ICA) (Ostrom, 2011b). Zij worden gekenmerkt door algemene eigenschappen: 1) plaatsgebonden; 2) gericht op duurzame ontwikkeling; 3) heterogeen; 4) focus op meervoudige waardecreatie; 5) experimentele organisatievormen. Om hun strategische kenmerken te adresseren is er een tweedimensionale, strategisch georiënteerde typologie van deze ondernemende gemeenschappen ontwikkeld. Deze typologie dient om een kleine maar diverse groep van deze organisatievormen te selecteren voor onderzoek naar de praktijk van strategieontwikkeling.

Hoofdstuk 5 presenteert de methodologische uitgangspunten voor een exploratief, kwalitatief en case-based onderzoek en introduceert de 12 casussen die met behulp van de typologie zijn geselecteerd.

Hoofdstuk 6 presenteert de resultaten van kwalitatieve analyse per casus. Hiervoor werden geselecteerde Strategic Action Situations van 12 Entrepreneurial Communities geanalyseerd. In aanvulling hierop worden strategie typen (Mintzberg & Waters, 1987) en modes of association (Jarzabkowski & Fenton, 2006) geanalyseerd en toegekend aan de individuele casussen. Hoofdstuk 7 presenteert de resultaten van een vergelijkende analyse tussen de casussen (cross-case analysis). Resultaten bevestigen eerder gevonden suggesties uit de theorie zoals samengevat in het

conceptuele procesmodel van Strategic Commoning. Strategic Commoning is een zich voortdurend ontwikkelend, recursief en adaptief proces dat wordt beïnvloed door eigenschappen van de community en omgevingsfactoren en dat wordt gestructureerd door toegepaste regels. In de praktijk blijken de fases van dit proces veel meer door elkaar te lopen dan dat bekend is uit de theorie. Hoofdstuk 7 bespreekt de strategietypen die in de praktijk worden waargenomen bij de casussen en introduceert twee aanvullende strategietypen die gerelateerd worden aan collaboratieve strategievorming: community-oriënted en multiple value-driven. Configuraties van verschillende strategietypen geven weer welke strategische richtingen gecombineerd worden. Dit noemen we de collaboratieve strategie mix. Deze mix resulteert in een mate van strategische afstemming: de mode of association. De vergelijkende analyse laat zien dat de mode of association een indicator is voor de mate van strategische afstemming, en daarmee van de staat van strategieontwikkeling, in een community: interdependent (solidair), imbalanced (uit balans) of destructive (destructief). De resultaten tonen aan dat communities in de praktijk leren om strategische discussies te voeren waarin zij de strategische disbalans bespreken. Al doende lerend ontwikkelen ze stukje bij beetje aan interne strategische afstemming. Entrepreneurial Communities die niet in staat zijn om effectief op te treden tegen interne strategische disbalans riskeren een destructieve samenwerkingsmodus die kan leiden tot het einde van de organisatie. Tot slot herijkt hoofdstuk 7 de conceptuele strategisch-georiënteerde typologie van Entrepreneurial Communities (hoofdstuk 4). Terugkijkend door de tijd zien we dat organisaties binnen de steekproef zich steeds meer zijn gaan richten op een enkel wicked problem in plaats van dat zij meerdere wicked problems tegelijk adresseren. Het afsluitende achtste hoofdstuk bespreekt de resultaten van het onderzoeksproject en reflecteert op het onderzoeksproces. Het antwoord op de hoofdvraag wordt samengevat in een op de praktijk gebaseerd raamwerk voor Strategic Commoning. Het raamwerk geeft de vijf samenhangende componenten van strategische besluitvorming weer. Deze componenten worden beïnvloed door drie sets van generieke en casus specifieke externe variabelen: eigenschappen van het collectief, omgevingsfactoren en gehanteerde regels. Ook bespreekt hoofdstuk 8 de bijdrage van dit onderzoek aan theorie, praktijk, en toegepaste wetenschap. Tot slot worden vijf voorstellen voor verder onderzoek kort besproken.

Dit onderzoek integreert strategic management theorie en collective action theorie in het concept Strategic Commoning: strategie ontwikkeling voor collectieve acties om ingewikkelde problemen aan te pakken die te maken hebben met duurzame ontwikkeling. Het concept van ondernemende gemeenschappen (Entrepreneurial Communities) voegt een waarde gedreven perspectief toe aan de bonte verzameling van plaatsgebonden collectieve acties voor duurzame ontwikkeling. Dit maakt het

mogelijk om strategieontwikkeling te bestuderen ten behoeve van samenwerking waarbij het realiseren van meervoudige, collectieve, en gedeelde waarden centraal staat.

Deze kwalitatieve en exploratieve studie is een eerste stap in het adresseren van strategieontwikkeling ten behoeve van plaatsgebonden collectieve acties die meervoudige waarde creëren. Om dit opkomende fenomeen te bestuderen is gekozen voor een longitudinaal vergelijkend onderzoek gebaseerd op verschillende disciplines dat strategievorming in de praktijk bestudeert. Deze aanpak leverde rijke datasets op over gezamenlijke strategische beslissingen in een plaatsgebonden context. Een duidelijke en niet te vermijden beperking van het onderzoek is de beperkte omvang van de steekproef. Gedurende de onderzoeksperiode is het aantal Entrepreneurial Communities, en ook hun reikwijdte, gegroeid. Ongetwijfeld ontstaan er weer nieuwe samenwerkingen en inzichten die aanvullende informatie opleveren over Strategic Commoning. Dit onderzoek biedt theoretische en methodologische aanknopingspunten voor vervolgonderzoek binnen pluriforme samenwerkingen gericht op duurzame ontwikkeling.

Het onderzoek stelt vast dat heterogene, plaatsgebonden samenwerkingsverbanden gezien kunnen worden als waarde-creërende en strategievormende organisaties. We constateren dat er verschillende organisatievormen worden gehanteerd en dat de organisaties in dit onderzoek zich gedragen als “ondernemers” in meervoudige waarde creërende collectieve acties gericht op duurzame ontwikkeling. Door hun meervoudige waarde creërende en collaboratieve uitgangspunten als gemeenschappelijke deler te nemen brengt deze studie een strategisch perspectief voor plaatsgebonden samenwerking en benadrukt daarmee het belang van eenduidige gezamenlijke strategievorming voor effectieve collectieve acties.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finalizing a PhD calls for looking back and questioning myself: how did I get here? Next to concluding a long research period, this thesis brings together many discussions and conversations that took place over many years. Throughout my working life, I have been professionally and personally involved in collaborations for a sustainable and inclusive society. Observing, supporting, and occasionally joining inspiring collaborations over the years has always made me wonder about the scale of sustainable solutions. I have experienced -and still do- how effective and prosperous multi-party collaborations can become in establishing multiple value-creating outcomes. This has sparked the question of how pluriform collaborative constructs manage to effectively "think global and act local" and, in the end, whether and how their organizational experiences are helpful to others. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to explore and study the strategic endeavors of such collaborations in the past years.

Many candidates have pointed out that it takes a community to accomplish a PhD, which has undoubtedly been the case for this longitudinal research project addressing communities. Becoming and "doing" a PhD while simultaneously becoming a teacher and thesis supervisor was a steep and sometimes stressful learning curve. I could not have managed without the support and patience of family, friends, and colleagues. You know who you are.

Learning by doing, I transformed my curiosity into what makes collaborations tick in this research project, guided by my supervisor, Jan Jonker, and co-supervisor, Niels Faber. I am forever grateful that they took on the challenge to guide and accompany me on this academic journey. Next to my research, we collaborated to develop a course and a MOOC on sustainable organizing, published books, articles, columns, and organized events. It has been an inspiration, an education, and fun. I'm pleased that our collaboration endures, and I'm looking forward to new projects, as well as conversations on coffee -and cookies-, barbecue and wine.

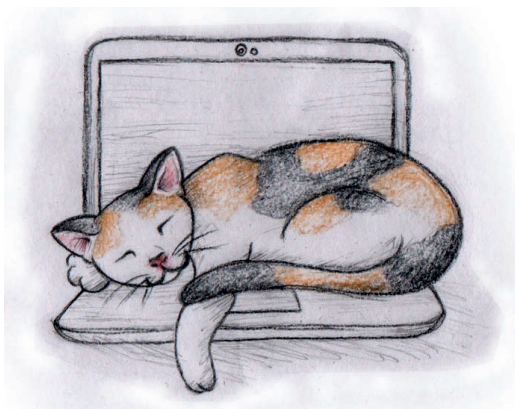
Next, I want to thank Saxion academy SFIB for signaling white smoke to me to become a teacher and a researcher at once. Until finishing this research, my colleagues at the academy and the lectorate Business Models did not see much of me. Even so, their sincere interest, feedback, patience, and camaraderie were comforting while running around and balancing between research, teaching, and family life. It feels good to finally be able to fully dedicate my energy to new research projects and education. Also, I want to thank my colleagues and fellow PhD students at the Institute of

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Communities are at the heart of this thesis. I want to thank the respondents in this research for welcoming me and sharing their experiences and thoughts. This dissertation cannot do right to their efforts, passion, and open-mindedness to share and learn together. It's uplifting to experience their dedication, creativity, and impact. Keep up the excellent work!

As always, my friends were there to remind me to sometimes close the lid of my laptop. They were there for online and live conversations and discussions, proofreading, taking walks, going to concerts and festivals, having dinners, consuming gallons of coffee and the occasional beer, enjoying holidays, playing online and offline board games, and even seeking inspiration at the carnival. It's great to finally have more time available for all of you!

In the end, it all starts with a solid basis. I was brought up by loving parents who encouraged me to think and act independently, enabling me to make my own choices. Following those choices, I met many wonderful people who became friends, tutors, and colleagues. My beloved family kept me grounded during this research project. Without their support, tolerance, and patience, I could not have managed to juggle transcripts, analyses, courses, classes, and theses. Due to Covid-19, parts of this thesis were written in lockdown at home. My laptop was commuting between analyzing, writing, online meetings, and teaching online courses while the kids were following online classes. My husband managed a household that must have appeared glued to screens and permanently short of wifi. During that time, my family kept me from ultimately emerging into work while motivating me to keep going. The buzz of busy family life with two adolescents does wonders for the academic perspective.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Growing up in Maastricht, Moniek Kamm first became aware of the complexity of crafting sustainable solutions when experiencing how the hills, forests, and fields near her home were transformed into vast limestone quarries for the cement industry, which simultaneously provided work and income to her friends' parents. As a student International Development Studies at Radboud University she became engaged in various actions and manifestations addressing the need for sustainable development. Seeking to contribute to sustainability in her own environment, she became active in various community-based initiatives such as an Emmaus community, a food cooperative, the council for refugees, and an intercultural women's cafe. The drive to contribute to sustainable changes continued throughout her working life as a policy officer and project manager for various projects addressing international sustainable development and multiple value creation. Her interest in practice-based and impact-oriented collaborations that operate from multiple value creating perspectives resulted in long-term cooperation with Stg. Our Common Future 2.0., during which she contributed to various publications, seminars, and masterclasses on organizing for sustainability and the circular economy. The drive for understanding but also accelerating sustainable changes coalesced when she made a career move to Saxion UAS, where she works as a researcher and teacher at the lectorate Business Models and the School for Finance and International Business.



Collective actions for sustainability are gaining momentum. Rooted in a place-bound context, constituents from various realms of society craft collaborative solutions for wicked problems associated with sustainable development. Their members invest multiple means and resources and share the revenues of their collective actions. Learning by doing, they craft organizational constructs to create multiple, shared, and collective values.

By aiming for long-term impact, their actions become strategic. This study explores the nature and scope of their strategic endeavors, integrating strategic management and collective action theories. This study introduces the concept of Strategic Commoning: collaborative strategy development for collective actions that address wicked problems related to sustainable development. A longitudinal comparative case study was conducted to capture Strategic Commoning in practice.

This study finds that various organizational constructs emerge for “entrepreneurial” in multiple-value-creating collective actions. Taking their place-bound, multiple-value-creating, and collaborative foundations as a common denominator, this study brings a strategic perspective to place-based collective actions. It makes a case for unambiguous collaborative strategy development for effective collective actions.

