Full papers of Day 1 - Science

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1.1 Participatory design development of a just energy system, based upon small-scale renewable energy sources under peoples-public-private governance: ongoing 'learning-by-doing' in Mariahoeve (The Hague-The Netherlands).

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GCWijk25_Mariahoeve

Context and social relevance

Mariahoeve is a mixed neighbourhood in The Hague, The Netherlands. A small part is built in the 1920s. The larger part is a post-war reconstruction district. Mariahoeve consists of social housing (40%), apartments with owners' associations (40%) and free rental market and privately owned houses (20%). In total Mariahoeve counts around 6000 households.

For the post-war reconstruction district the credo was, following Scandinavian examples, 'light, air and space'. Since 2011, Mariahoeve has been one of the ten areas of national importance designated by the National Cultural Heritage Agency. In 2023 also the The Hague Municipality formally recognised Mariahoeve as a protected city view. This status entails a recognition of the exceptional cultural-historical and urban development values of an area.

In 2018 the The Hague municipality identified Mariahoeve as a focus neighbourhood for the energy transition. Research by the municipality showed that a collective heating network is the most logical solution for Mariahoeve.

The municipality followed the national policy to facilitate large scale heating networks in a privatized market for sustainable energy provision for the future and intended to apply this also in Mariahoeve. The construction of a large-scale heating network was the most important project in the region, under responsibility of the province South-Holland. The project was highly contested in the local council of The Hague, but eventually approved given standing legal provisions. Even appeal under administrative law at the Council of State to stop the investments in the region Rotterdam – The Hague was rejected in 2023 for the same reasons.

Civil protest related to the preparation of public-private partnerships for the development of energy utilities was amongst others rooted in the fear that these investments will lead to further poverty and social segregation in and between the neighbourhoods of the already highly segregated city of The Hague. The idea is that in the current privatized market large scale investments will lead to long term profits and ultimately passive income streams for the companies. Consequently, there will be a net-outflow of money from the community over decades, especially from the less wealthy part of the community.

Customers are free to choose to connect to the heating systems or not. Those who currently have the means to invest in sustainable energy provision in their houses will privately own their energy assets and will not connect to the collective heating system. Hence, mostly those who do not have the means, the capacity, or the ambition to provide for their own new energy system will connect to

the heating system. Thus, the larger part of the future customers of the foreseen heating system will be social housing associations and for example owners' associations of apartments, if the members are not able or willing to invest in a collective, self-driven system. The same may count for individual house owners. They will consequently be customer and their payments will constitute a continuous capital outflow. For the rich, the energy transition can provide a revenue model, for the poor it can become a recipe for sustained poverty.

Over the last years many publications have been issued in The Netherlands, noticing that the current policies towards sustainability lead to more social segregation[i]. Recently more customers, who are already connected to privately owned heating system, started to complain that prices are rising beyond on forehand assured levels. The firm promise made when offering district heating was that the costs for the customers would not be more expensive than natural gas. But that promise is currently difficult to fulfil in an increasing number of places[ii]. On March 22nd, 2024, the Minister of Climate announced that he will introduce an emergency law, to force companies to keep fixed charges low. The minister announced already on October 21st, 2022, that he intends to include in the Collective Heat Supply Act that heat companies that operate collective heat infrastructure must ultimately be at least 51% publicly owned[iii].

Research question

The key question of this article is which characteristics will determine whether a new energy system will be 'just by design' and thus will lead to more social cohesion, and which conditions will enable just energy systems to evolve. How can these conditions, enablers, be created in the neighbourhood of Mariahoeve in The Hague?

The starting point is that it is possible to create an energy system that is 'just by design'. Researchers are involved in comparative studies, to identify the characteristics and conditions of the emergence of alternative energy systems, that provide more satisfactory results[iv]. Scientific institutes inform the government and basic principles are shared[v]. GCWijk25 has assigned a study to architects and an energy economist to draw the main lines of such a scenario for Mariahoeve, the so-called '3rd route'. This study, Mariahoeve shares Energy[vi], follows the characteristics and conditions that are becoming clearer through the combined results of philosophy, comparative analyses, and action research.

Hypothesis

One characteristic seems to be the collective ownership of the heating system, rather than private or public ownership of the assets. This is especially important for those who do not have the private means to invest. The 'profits' of the 'prosumers' (those who produce and consume energy at the same time) will be reinvested into the maintenance and development of the collective energy system or adjacent utilities. This requires explicit policy provisions to create space for local initiatives, facilitation, and capacity building, so that they will not be overruled by public or private investors in the region. To realize this scenario, action research, participatory development design as well as growing degree of proactive self-organisation in the community must be facilitated.

Eventually, a new local well-being economy will emerge. This approach will have the highest impact if the new energy system will be based on local renewable energy sources, local collective ownership, will provide heating, cooling, ánd electricity, ánd will be developed simultaneously with other utilities that need a full reorganisation in view of future challenges of climate change and future needs of the population, for example water management and the water supply system.

Research methodology

In this case the author of this article is the initiator of the area-cooperation GCWijk25 in Mariahoeve and lives in this area. The author has a background in development cooperation with focus on supporting local communities in areas with conflict around the extraction of oil- and gas or around mining activities, such as Nigeria and South Sudan. This experience has led to the awareness of the interaction of ownership relations, legal context, market & finance, and the power of highly organised local communities. This background determined the lens for looking at the potential social consequences of the initial policies of the Dutch government for investments in the heating systems in the neighbourhood, as well as at the potential power of the local community to resist and act.

For the idea and creation of an area-cooperation the author is indebted to De Coöperatieve Samenleving, a network of entrepreneurial civilians and social entrepreneurs that share the ambition to work collectively for a circular economy and an inclusive society, where ‘the area’ is the carrier of that economy and society. The mission of the area cooperation GCWijk25 is Solidarity in Sustainability. It envisions local self-organisation of citizens and local social entrepreneurship focused on the well-being of everyone in the neighbourhood, so that the best solutions for future challenges will be found. It aims for the cooperation between residents and civil organisations, local entrepreneurs, the local government, and private parties for the development of a strong and social neighbourhood.

GCWijk25 is learning-by-doing and has a focus on the energy transition as an entry point for integrated area development, while searching for the practical connections with other domains as well, such as water management and climate adaptation. GCWijk25 analyses the opportunities and threats to estimate the chances to realise its goals, in the first place to establish the participatory design-development process and action research for a just energy system. Its strategy is not to move if threats are omnipresent, while being prepared in view of future opportunities. GCWijk25 also joins strategic advocacy efforts in the neighbourhood, city and beyond, to create the desired opportunities.

GCWijk25 shares analyses and experiences within emerging and established networks for learning, engages with key persons and organisations within the local and city-wide community, as well as with the municipality and the University of Applied Science of The Hague. GCWijk25 engages with learning trajectories organised by universities or for example the Topsector Energy in The Netherlands, to find the pathway towards self-organisation in the neighbourhood and effective engagement with the municipality. GCWijk25 has the ambition to join one or more consortia for informed learning and doing.

Multilevel process and results

Running-up period

In 2018 Mariahoeve was identified as a green focus neighbourhood under direction of the municipality. The objective of the municipality was to stop gas supply in this neighbourhood in 2028, since the gas infrastructure should be renewed in 2028 for maintenance reasons. At that time, 2028 seemed to be a proper deadline to have the new heating system functioning, so that this heating system would replace the gas infrastructure and the full operation would be most cost-effective and create the least nuisance in the neighbourhood.

The municipality consulted residents in Mariahoeve about the energy transition. The focus was mainly on a frontrunner group. Opinions in this group were divided. There was confusion about the potential impact of the foreseen infrastructural projects on the question of social segregation. The realisation of the required policy changes for an alternative – allegedly more social – scenario seemed not very likely. And the level of self-organisation to make the alternative scenario a success seemed far out or reach. So, a pragmatic vision remained dominant among residents for years.

Separately from the frontrunners group, the municipality negotiated with other stakeholders, such as housing associations and investors. A multi-stakeholder process with the formulation of an overall and shared vision and goal for a new energy system for the neighbourhood never took off.

Meanwhile, the already existing social divisions in Mariahoeve became painfully clear during the corona lockdown in the period 2020 to 2022. Those who were already in isolated positions faced even more challenges. Social projects based on so-called informal organisations and food banks seemed the most functional structures during this period. With the enormous price increases of energy, following the Ukrainian war that started in 2022, the term energy poverty came into use.

At city level the municipality prepared the vision on the transition in the heating system[vii], which was established in December 2022. This document starts from the premisses of a private investment scheme and formulates the strategies accordingly. This policy document also applies for Mariahoeve.

Simultaneously another process evolved at the level of the city of The Hague. The Netherlands introduced a new Environment and Planning Act[viii] per January 1st 2024. The act is oriented towards regional development. Current rules do not sufficiently account for differences between and within regions, nor respond to the need for early participation in decision-making by all stakeholders. Tailor-made solutions are necessary in view of future challenges. The Environment and Planning Act (EPA) aims to enable current and future developments in its full complexity[ix].

In anticipation of the introduction of the EPA in January 2024, the municipality prepared an Ambition Document The Hague 2050[x]. This document formulates the ambitions of a just and inclusive, climate neutral, economically viable city in the future. This overall ambition requires an integrated approach, where the emergence of a new, just energy system is part of this vision. The process to facilitate the development of an ambition document for Mariahoeve 2050 has started in 2024. The integrated approach envisioned for the ambition document is not necessarily coherent with the sectoral, or integral, approach used in the energy transition[xi].

Self-organisation, collaboration, advocacy, and civil initiative

In anticipation of the introduction of the EPA a small group of residents in Mariahoeve established an area cooperation GCWijk25 in 2021. GCWijk25 positions itself as the keeper of the focus on integrated area development for a strong and inclusive community. GCWijk25 adopted the ambitions of the Ambition Document The Hague 2050, in order to be in line with future policy goals and trajectories and to accelerate their formulation and execution. In 2023 the energy cooperation De Groene Smaragd (DGS) was established by a member of GCWijk25. DGS is an emerging non-profit district energy company for and by residents in Mariahoeve.

GCWijk25 focusses on creating space for the alternative '3rd route' towards a new energy system. The 1st route being a public energy system, as The Netherlands has known for the distribution of gas that was extracted in Groningen. Every city had a municipal energy company to this end. The 2nd route being a privatised energy system. In The Netherlands the privatisation of the energy sector started in 2001. The 3rd route being a system based on cooperatives where residents are organised to produce and consume energy from local renewable energy sources [xii].

In 2022 the municipality of The Hague dedicated funding from the European Union for Community Led Local Development (CLLD)[xiii] to the energy transition in three neighbourhoods. Upon this funding, GCWijk25 assigned a study to draw a rough picture of the potential 3rd route energy scenario for Mariahoeve. The scenario ‘Mariahoeve shares energy’[xiv] creates an outline for participatory design-development of a new heating – cooling system for the neighbourhood, while using local renewable energy sources and supporting residents in self-organisation for collective ownership of the assets. Building upon this outline the electricity provision can equally be elaborated, as for example water management and climate adaptation as well.

If the municipality sets upfront the correct conditions, small and medium scale local heating-cooling and electricity systems can progressively be interconnected and a new energy system based on local renewable energy sources, collectively owned by residents can emerge organically. In step-by-step implementation, growing with demand, financial risks can be avoided, and cost be kept low. The level of local self-organisation will rise, the local economy will thrive, and the municipality can reduce its role progressively to the creation of an enabling environment and defining boundaries, hence monitoring, evaluation, learning and adjusting.

In collaboration with De Groene Smaragd other initiators gave upon the CLLD-funding the assignment to a producer of solar-heating panels for sustainable energy. This company provided the community with baseline studies for prototype houses in the neighbourhood. Another organisation is deeply rooted in the community and showed full commitment to help those in need during the Corona period. With CLLD support they helped those in need given the high energy prices. CLLD also offered an opportunity to build upon the collaboration of DNA Mariahoeve and GCWijk25 with the Open Data project of the municipality of The Hague. Meanwhile the municipality supports mainly owners’ associations to make use of the available knowledge support and subsidies for the isolation of their apartments, the so-called ‘no-regret’ measures.

Reframing

From Mariahoeve as from other districts many concerns were shared with the municipal council about the lack of real participation. Basically, the municipality of The Hague did not have space to step out of the frame of the regional energy strategy, as directed by the province. Under the private market conditions, collective heating systems need the assurance of a solid number of potential customers, to complete the business cases. From this perspective even playing with the idea of alternative scenarios did not make sense.

The tension between the different objectives under the energy transition was not unique for The Hague. While the government focusses on acceleration of the construction of the heating systems to lower the CO2 emissions, the objective of the Green Deal 'leaving nobody behind' blocks the efficiency that the market can provide on this single indicator. Municipalities are assigned to take the lead in the energy transition, but they are confronted with large scale resistance and documented feedback about the potential impact of the execution of the foreseen policies, both environmentally as well as socially and financially. They do not have the mandate to act locally and respond to the concerns, where after all 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'.

In view of this situation, The Dutch government is preparing a new law on collective heat systems, as mentioned in the introduction[xv]. Preparatory steps had already a major impact on the companies and investors as well as on municipal policies. The municipal council requested the Alderman to review the business cases of the heating systems given the preparation of the Collective Heat Supply Act. The business cases appeared not to be valid anymore, in view of insecurities of the market organisation in the future. Hence, the municipality announced on December 6th , 2023, that the issuing of concessions for the heating networks in The Hague would be postponed until further notice[xvi].

From this point on, developments followed rapidly. In December 2023 a motion to focus now on the development of local small scale energy sources was unanimously adopted. The municipal council accepted on 26th of January 2024 an ambitious proposal 'Steering the city based on Climate'. Climate Justice as an objective was explicitly added during the debate. In February 2024 a motion was adopted calling on the municipality to prepare the realisation of a public heating company, in view of a just energy transition. Another motion was adopted, in which the municipality is requested to develop a long-term vision in which the preference for local energy sources is anchored and bottom-up initiatives are as much as possible encouraged. The municipal council also assigned the development of a heating systems sources and network strategy. March 15th the municipal council limited the power of project developers in the participation process.

New opportunities in Mariahoeve for a new energy system that is 'just-by-design'

The scenario 'Mariahoeve shares energy' was presented to the Alderman of the district in November 2023. In January 2024 an execution plan for the energy transition in Mariahoeve was approved by the Municipal Council in which both GCWijk25 and De Groene Smaragd are mentioned as partners of the municipality for the energy transition in Mariahoeve.

In the mean while the municipality of The Hague has been accepted, together with 6 other Dutch cities, to be one of the 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities (100CNSC) in Europe. This program of the European Union encourages local authorities, businesses, investors as well as regional and national authorities to ensure that 100 cities act as experimentation and innovation hubs to enable all European cities to follow suit by 2050. The cities should adopt a cross-sectoral, and demand led approach, creating synergies between existing initiatives, and basing its activities on the actual needs of cities[xvii]. Under this program, cities are required to a focus neighbourhood. The Hague chose for Mariahoeve.

GCWijk25 is promoting the idea that The Hague as the International City of Peace and Justice chooses Climate Governance as its Unique Selling Point under the 100 CNSC program. If accepted, Mariahoeve becomes the neighbourhood of Peace and Justice under the 100 CNSC programme, with focus on multi-stakeholder governance for integrated area development. Moreover, in July 2022 the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right[xviii]. To realize this right a multistakeholder approach is required, which is coherent with the 100 CNSC objectives.

Answering the research question

The design study “Mariahoeve shares Energy” shows a direction how to collaborate in the neighbourhood for building a new energy system, based on local renewable energy resources and in collective local ownership, so that there will be access to energy for all, a real contribution to a thriving local economy and strengthened local control. This will contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion rather than acceleration social segregation. These characteristics have not been discussed in the article as such. They therefore still need to be validated through other studies and experience. However, from a philosophical point of view, the inner logic has been followed throughout the article, and from that perspective they seem plausible and worthy to explore further.

The social, political, and juridical conditions under which such a scenario can emerge has been discussed based on the case of Mariahoeve in The Hague. The case shows the importance of timing in the interaction between the local, city, regional, national, and even European and global level to make things happen. At local level actors should be aware and ready to act timely if there is a desire to use the momentum of the current paradigm-shift: qualified space is being created for Bottom-Up initiatives. At the national level there are signs of a political shift from an almost purely market driven approach to a combined civil – public driven approach. European policies backing the 100 CNSC program reinforce this change of perspective. Recently, the municipal council also created space for local organisation and Bottom-Up initiatives in the energy transition. A crucial factor is self-organisation of residents, so that residents and local entrepreneurs can participate in the multi-stakeholder design-development processes.

Interpretation of results and discussion

The case Mariahoeve in The Hague is by no means a 'done deal'. But there seems to be a real opportunity to start working together towards a new energy system accessible for all. The nascent civil organisations are still very fragile and mutual collaboration in its infancy but have to potential to grow under the right conditions. There is by no means a common vision and abroad public and political consensus about the way to go, nor a robust mutual trust between the stakeholders. The required administrative and institutional changes to create an enabling environment are only beginning. Yet, there are visible results that seemed only one year ago still impossible. The following questions can be discussed in-dept:

What are the characteristics of a just and sustainable energy system?

What are the enabling conditions for the development of just and sustainable energy system in Mariahoeve?

What is the potential of scaling up?

How can the emergence of a just and sustainable energy system become a pillar in integrated area development so that Mariahoeve becomes a resilient neighbourhood?

How can we develop a common vision and theory of change in Mariahoeve?

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[ii] https://nos.nl/artikel/2513773-belofte-goedkopere-stadswarmte-wordt-niet-waargemaakt-minister-komt-met-spoedwet

[iii] https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2022/10/21/wet-collectieve-warmtevoorziening-besluit-infrastructuur-in-publieke-handen

[iv] https://www.managementproducties.com/warmte-in-nederland-duurder-waarom/.

[v] https://www.regionale-energiestrategie.nl/energiesysteem/dewereldvanb/2041482.aspx

[vi] GCWijk25 offers the study to the alderman of the district. https://gcwijk25.nl/energie-voor-iedereen.

[vii] Transition Visie Warmte Den Haag, established in December 2022

[viii] https://www.government.nl/topics/environment-and-planning-act, date reading: March 24th, 2024.

[ix] Explanatory Memorandumfort he Environmenat and Planning Act, Parliament of the Netherlands. (Memorie van Toelichting bij de Omgevingswet, dossier 33 962, bladzijde 5, Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal.)

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[xv] Wet Collective Warmte, https://wetgevingskalender.overheid.nl/Regeling/WGK010356

[xvi] https://www.omroepwest.nl/nieuws/4784262/duizenden-huizen-voorlopig-niet-duurzaam-verwarmd-aanleg-warmtenetten-vertraagd, date reading: March 24th, 2024.

[xvii] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en, date reading: March 24th 2024.

[xviii] https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-environment, date reading: March 24th, 2024.

1.2 Barriers and enablers for implanting a Circular economy strategy in a large retailer. The case of Mercadona in Spain and Portugal

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Introduction

Most published literature focuses on the feasibility of implementing CE, the barriers, and whether it positively impacts the Economy. The need for public support has been outlined. The academic literature does not have a clear opinion on whether CE contributes to firm growth and performance. Adopting CE business models will depend on changing consumer habits, routines, and subjective and moral norms as public regulations, while the firm's cooperation is a facilitator. Additionally, CE innovations are positively linked to turnover and employment growth (Ramos & Albors-Garrigos, 2022).

Nevertheless, is the weight of plastic packaging in Europe relevant? Europe produces 15 % of the world's plastic, with 85 % of its origin still in fossil fuels. The circular plastics economy represented 12,4 % of European plastics production.

Food packaging is Europe's leading consumer of plastics, accounting for around 40% of the plastic demand. Post-consumer recycled plastics content in packaging reached 9,5 % in 2022). Approximately 15.4 million tonnes of plastic packaging waste were generated, and around 40% were recycled. Food packaging amounts to 50 % of these figures (Europe Plastics, 2022)

The article will be based on a literature analysis using the software Atlas Ti 9.0 and a discussion of the case study.

The context. Packaging in the food industry

Europe produces 58 million tons of plastic annually, of which 40 % are utilised in packaging. The European Union (EU) has been actively working on initiatives to reduce single-use plastics and promote a circular economy in this sector. As a reaction, the European food packaging industry is undergoing significant changes to address concerns related to plastic usage (Calleja. 2019).

As part of a broader effort to address plastic pollution and promote sustainability, the EU has adopted a strategy to make all plastic packaging on the EU market recyclable or reusable by 2030 (Watkins et al., 2018; Calleja, 2019).

The EU's Circular Economy Action Plan includes measures to reduce the use of virgin plastic, promote recycling, and encourage a more sustainable use.

Member states within the EU have been working on implementing regulations to manage and reduce plastic packaging waste. This includes measures to improve recycling infrastructure and collection systems.

What is the position of the European industry? Many leading European retailers have adopted sustainable practices, such as using recycled materials, exploring alternative packaging options, and improving the recyclability of their products. Innovation in Packaging Materials: Research and development efforts are ongoing to find alternatives to traditional plastics for food packaging.

Regarding consumers, a growing awareness regarding environmental issues has somehow increased the demand for sustainable packaging.

Literature Analysis

Our methodology for conducting the review was based on Atlas. Ti (version 9.0). It uses the software to assist the organisation, coding and examining relevant literature, organising, analysing, and synthesising the relevant findings (Smit & Scherman, 2021).

For academic literature, our research has covered ten recent years, 2014-2024, as the most relevant articles were published. We concluded with 35 journal articles and some conference papers. The material selected was well cited except those recently published.

Environmental and business journals concentrate on this subject;Their citation impact is still low due to their recent publication. Most of the literature is conceptual or review articles, with a few qualitative and quantitative research studies.

Following the results of Atlas Ti 9.0, we classified the articles matching their main content into five categories or code families: Circular Economy, Business models, Barriers, Facilitators or Enablers of plastic circularity, and Consumer Behaviour. Figure 1 shows the map indicating the categories and codes drawn by Atlas Ti 9.0, and Table 1 shows the frequency of codes and code families.

Circular Economy in food packaging

How can we relate CE to food packing? Ada et al. (2023) have published a literature analysis on CE packaging .The study reveals that CE centres on: Reduce, Recycle, Reuse and Repurposing.The CE evaluates prospects for closed loops, open loops, and waste outcomes. As a result, it is playing an increasingly important role in supply chains for circular flows, including material recovery and reuse (Calleja, 2019).

Regarding the agents, Uusikartano (2020) identified six public actors' roles in CE in the food plastics ecosystem. Operators, Organisers, Financing, Supporters, Policy Makers and Regulators.

Business models

However, what implications does CE pose on firms? Firms must change their Business model to accomplish a CE program with their packaging. Perey et al. (2018) postulate the need to change their business models to address sustainability issues and reconceptualise waste's role in their value chain. A remarkable approach is provided by Aarikka-Stenroos et al. (2021), describing and systematising the CE ecosystem in a parallel way as other authors define the innovation ecosystem.

Leder et al. (2020), Staaf & Sundström (2021), and Novakovic et al. (2023) relate innovative circular business models to waste valorisation, involving a collaborative network among the organisation,

the customer, and the supplier. Alsothe openness of the CE business model (Uusikartano et al., 2020).

Borrello et al. (2020) surveyed 1270 individuals in Italy on their willingness to participate in a circular business model in the retail sector. They found that those willing to participate already had some experience in recycling and a previous long relationship with the retailer. They were attracted by innovative actions on food waste avoidance and engaging in a pilot project.

Centobelli et al. (2020) developed a complete literature study on how firms can proceed towards a CE business model. Firms must develop managerial practices specific to each dimension of the business model: value creation, value transfer, and value capture. Furthermore, they must move from a linear production model towards a circular one.

Innovation plays a crucial role here. Plastics Europe (2024), a European association, promotes innovation in the plastics value chain to develop new business models for reuse, produce more recycled plastics, and develop new less dependent on fossil-based.

Barriers to CE in Plastic Packaging in the Food Industry

There are several publications dealing indistinctly with barriers and enablers for the CE. With a rational objective, we try to separate both. Nystrom et al. (2019) emphasised the current lack of knowledge on the barriers to a CE in food packaging. Notably, knowledge about waste management is deficient, and its economic aspects motivate store managers since minimal feedback on waste sorting reaches the stores today. There is a conflict between Economy and sustainability, the prioritisation of waste management at a higher organisational level, and the technical complexity of reusing plastic materials.

Thus, is the role of technology important? Novakovic et al. (2023) outline that the recycling rate of plastic packaging waste has decayed over the past years, implying that new approaches are required. According to these authors, technical bottlenecks limit the efficient recovery of plastic packaging waste.

Roy et al. (2022) outlined three common barriers to consumer behaviour: confusion and uncertainty about which plastic materials can be recycled, the perception that plastic recycling is not a personal priority in daily life, and the belief that local government and manufacturers have a responsibility to make plastic recycling easier. The same authors (Roy et al., 2023) posit a need for motivation and collaboration among the stakeholders .

Following and from the consumer's point of view, De Temmerman et al. (2023) conclude that consumers have multiple facilitators and barriers to package-free shopping.

Wihin the UK, Woodward (2021) highlights the problems of the existing line in managing waste from SMEs in England and the need for new approaches from this collective to a public CE policy. Also, Allison et al. (2022) concluded that automatic motivation and psychological capability predict household recycling.

Facilitators and enablers of CE in Plastic packaging in the food industry

After a systematic and holistic literature review, Seles et al. (2019) identified thirteen enablers grouped into three dimensions:

(a) management and people (i.e., Business strategy and competitiveness, Procedures indicators, Green human resources)

(b) structure, product, and process (i.e., design and innovation, manufacturing, maintenance, services, digitalisation),

(c) relationship with stakeholders (i.e., sustainable purchasing cooperation, public policies).

Harala (2021) emphasised the third enabler group, as pointed out by the former author, which is a cooperative and collaborative effort with a strong alignment of technology economy and cognitive dimensions. In the UK, Gong et al. (2020) discussed various initiatives within the industry, including removing unrecyclable plastics, packaging innovation, in-store retailer schemes, and label modifications.

The role of regulations, including by Seles et al. (2019) in the third group as a facilitator, has been indicated by some authors as barriers producing individual and collective cognitive dissonance (Koves et al. 2024; Menton, 2020; Meuleman, 2012).

A recent literature study on Drivers of Circular food packaging (Ada et al., 2023) identified some enablers linked with technology, such as active and intelligent packaging, optimising the food supply chain, and improving food storage, the functionality of food packing and its design.

In conclusion, the complementarity of barriers and enablers for a CE strategy must be underscored.

Consumer behaviour influence

The role of consumers has been discussed extensively in the marketing literature (Trudel, 2019). The psychological drivers of sustainable consumer behaviour could be related to cognitive barriers, the self, social influence, and product characteristics. Furthermore, people can look at other's behaviour as a guide to their own. Those behaviours could have a low or high impact on the environment, the latter with a higher trade-off in sustainability.

Gregory-Smith et al. (2013) showed evidence that positive or negative emotions are vital drivers of consumers' ecological dissonant behavior. Allison et al. (2022) pursued this argument and argued that emotions, habits, and psychological capability predict recycling.

As an early example, Iyer and Kashyap (2007) identified two enabler tools, incentives and information, to promote consumer recycling attitudes and behaviors. The same authors concluded, in a quantitative study, that women are more “environmentally friendly.”

Sijstema et al. (2020) found that perceptions, attitudes, motives and barriers vary among different consumers and are linked to the functionalities of the products, the food packaging and distribution system, the economic aspects and emotions such as concern about risks. Following this proposal, Fischbach and Yauney (2023) observe the association among green consumer values, ecological reward programs, and behavioral decisions.

However, Acuti et al. (2022) highlight the complexity surrounding sustainability in products and services on consumer perceptions, since though it can benefit environmental preservation, it may clash with consumer well-being and societal norms. Thus, understanding the values compromised and reinforced by sustainability is crucial for companies to develop strategies that align with consumer happiness and well-being. Nonetheless, societal perceptions can lead to negative judgments of sustainable behavior, hindering adoption.

Is it possible predicting sustainable intentions? Hameed et al. (2022) concluded that consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control could predict recycling intentions. Moreover, informational and normative social influences (NSI) were also found to affect recycling intentions significantly. Similarly, these authors theorise that intent accurately predicts plastic waste recycling behaviour. Some authors (Roy et al., 2022) have already posited that environmental concern exists among consumers. Still, ambivalence toward recycling reflects a gap between intentions to recycle and actual recycling behavior.

Many authors have asserted on the need to achieve changes in consumer behaviour and the feasibility of launching CE models in the sector (Kemper et al. (2024).

In Japan, Ohtomo & Ohnuma (2014) evaluated a dual motivation model: voice prompting and cashier recommendation decreased the usage of plastic bags.

The role of Stakeholders in the CE value chain

Within the previously discussed body of knowledge, stakeholders in the CE ecosystem were drawn. Most published literature on CE implementation in food packaging outlines the significant role of stakeholders in the value chain. Aarikka-Stenroos et al. (2021) consider the CE ecosystems and the stakeholders' fundamental status for its efficiency. Leder et al. (2020) proposed collaborative actions between stakeholders to create value within the specific CE business model as a facilitator for collaboration in Plastic Waste Valorisation models. This relationship could be a dual coopetition collaboration (Harala, 2021, Roy et al., 2023).

Other authors emphasise the involvement of stakeholders and their instruction in CE (Gong et al., 2919). Likewise, most authors mention the role of stakeholders in the packaging CE ecosystem (i.e., Staaf et al., 2021; Calleja, 2019; Watkins et al., 2017; Fischbach & Yauney, 2023; Seles et al., 2021; Perey et al., 2018, Plastics Europe, 2024).

Research Methodology

We based our research on a case study of a leading supermarket firm in Spain and Portugal. This is an acceptable methodology in social sciences (Yin, 2014). It allows the exploration of intricate phenomena within natural settings, providing a holistic understanding of the subject (Burkholder et al., 2019; Flyvbjerg, 2006). Case studies also play a vital role in theory testing, allowing researchers to generate new theoretical insights or validate existing theories (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). We carried some structured interviews with supervisory staff and utilised also secondary information provided by internet.

The company. Mercadona

This supermarket, a leader in Spain and Portugal, with a staff of 100.000 and 25,9% market penetration, started in 1990 with their internal packaging recycling. It was followed by reusable packaging in 1995 and 2011, followed by reusable cashier packaging (Martínez, 2015).

The model on which the company's decisions are based is the Total Quality Management (TQM) launched in the 1990s, which seeks to satisfy the five components of the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) program equally and with the same intensity (Mercadona, 2024):

- The "Boss": For Mercadona, the customer (the boss) is the center.
- The worker: human resources model based on stability, training, internal promotion, and other values.
- The Supplier: Mercadona works together with its suppliers.
- Society: It must satisfy society and contribute to its development and progress.
- Capital: Profit comes after satisfying the rest of the company's components. The business model is a sustainable project that generates shared prosperity with the five elements.

The company has implemented a successful co-innovation program with customers' and suppliers' participation (Albors-Garrigos, 2020).

Mercadona C.E. strategy

In 2020, Mercadona launched its 6.25 Strategy, a reorganisation of the game's rules for using plastics and recycling. With this strategy, it pursues a triple objective 2025: to reduce plastic by 25%, make all plastic packaging recyclable, and recycle all its plastic waste (Ecodes, 2024).

Six specific actions are being carried out: eliminating single-use plastic bags, eliminating single-use plastic disposables, reducing plastic in packaging, making packaging recyclable, recycling plastic waste generated by the activity, and training workers and informing customers how to separate for recycling-this strategy with a 2025 horizon Mercadona (2022).

After a pilot experience in a shop in Valencia, these actions were implemented in 24 cities with 6.25 shops and extended to the entire network. The 6.25 shop makes each of these six actions visible to the customer and our staff, who recall that things have been done for some time, but "what we have done now is to organise all the movements and give them coherence and planning", said A.

The CSR manager declared in an interview: "Strategy 6.25, which began in 2020, responds, on the one hand, to a social and environmental problem and, on the other, to the nature of the company's business model."....."Strategy 6.25 aims to reduce the plastic we generate by 25%, make all our packaging recyclable, and recycle all our plastic waste".... This will entail "an investment of more than €140 million in 4 years"...." We are finding inaccuracies or contradictions in the national and local regulations that make it difficult to implement the necessary improvements of CE"..." It is essential to continue learning and dialoguing with all relevant actors" (Corresponsables, 2021).

Mercadona 6.25 Strategy hindsight

"The strategies are: Eliminate what does not add value, reduce the amount of plastic whenever possible, replace it with other materials when possible, or incorporate recycled material, which is another way to reduce the amount of plastic. Alternatively, go directly to reuse, which is the purpose of the mesh bag or the green boxes where the fruit is displayed, a closed circuit of

reusable folding boxes from the producer to the warehouse and then to the point of sale and vice versa", explains A. "This saves 180,000 tons of single-use material per year".

Soap, dishwashing, or detergent bottles made with 25% recycled material; Disposable items such as plates, glasses, or cutlery have been changed to materials of cellulose origin or are made with reusable material (washable up to 100 degrees); coffee capsules replace the plastic packaging with cardboard; The cleaning utensils are made from the waste of thermal blankets from agriculture ("which had been done since 2011 and took three years of research and a budget of 11 million," says A). These are just some examples of what is being done with Strategy 6.25.

In addition, "the workers of the 6.25 stores have been trained in the strategy" B emphasises.

Since 2021, Mercadona has no longer had single-use plastic bags following EU regulations. There will be sustainable bags for shopping at the checkout line in all stores and in the ready-to-eat section. "The new compostable bag is of plant origin (potato) and is placed in the organic container, the brown one," highlights B, head of the physical media dimension in stores. "Also, all bags incorporate an indicative pictogram that will help bosses [customers] deposit them in the corresponding containers for subsequent recycling or composting," she points out.

B explains that "with the change from support to roll, we have managed to reduce the waste of plastic material: the part of the excess material from the package of bags is no longer wasted and, in addition, the roll makes it easier to prevent bags from breaking or detaching and therefore "We have to throw them away without having used them."

"We have gone from a virgin plastic bottle to a 100% recycled plastic bottle for juice, which means stopping using 670 tons of new plastic. giving a second life to waste and producing without natural resources," highlights B.

Focus Group experience

The company conducted a focus group with twenty-six customer buyers on the CE program (Pagá, 2023). The main conclusions were:

An attitude towards recycling is more likely if you live in Spain or Europe than in foreign countries with no culture towards recycling.

A minority of vegan participants or those with health are more likely to be informed about recycling issues.

Most participants do not look at labels. They only check the price and sometimes the ingredients. Those with a green/vegan attitude or health problems look at the ingredient labels. Once again, it is crucial to come from a culture of sustainability to look at the content of the product on the label.

Most buyers do not perceive the advertising carried out by supermarkets on sustainability issues. They argue that the communication of the CE strategy is not clear. It was outlined that loudspeaker announcements were more effective.

Participants value and identify three features related to recycling and sustainability practices in supermarkets: 1) battery deposits, 2) the vegan products section, and 3) the staff is educated in sustainability issues and customer orientation.

The participants accepted that consumers are, and should be, an integral and active part of recycling, but they stressed the need for coordinated actions between Governments, Companies, and Citizens.

Some participants were motivated to be more active in supermarket sustainability campaigns and showed particular interest in having staff help with purchasing.

Some typical phrases: "Recycling is a waste of time," "I do not have space in my apartment to do it," "At the end, I place everything in the same container," "Eating healthy is expensive," "I do not know what the CE arrows mean. I guess recycling ", "I imagine that these arrows mean that it is to be thrown into the container."

We have reviewed the company's Facebook and Twitter messages. Little content on the CE program is found on Facebook from consumers except the information disseminated by Mercadona on their CE project. On Twitter, consumers either lack information on the CE project or write hilarious comments that discard its message. Summarising, what the operators of the CE program conclude on the barriers to the implementation are:

1. Structural barriers refer to those caused by an ineffective distribution in the roles related to the circular Economy in the company and the lack of communication between them.
2. Operational barriers: low predictability in the quantity and quality of products to remanufacture, often leading to inefficiencies in the remanufacturing system.
3. Communication barriers. Clear messages and a clearer explanation of the CE concepts and actions are required.
4. Financial barriers: There is uncertainty about circular concepts' financial benefits and potential profitability. Adopting circular models entails greater operational risk for value chain members.
5. Attitudinal barriers: the actors' perception of sustainability and risk aversion. Low customer acceptance is a barrier caused by purchasing habits or consumer perception.
6. Technological barriers: product design and production processes. Due to their characteristics, some products are better suited for circular business models than others.
7. Institutional barriers: (lack of) supportive or (existence of) conflictive regulations and social awareness.

Discussion

The case study shows that Mercadona's thirty years of TQM and CSR experience and robust human resource management policies were crucial and have primarily facilitated the CE strategy. It does so with the cooperation of three stakeholders: suppliers, employees, and customers.

CE is based on reduction, reuse, recycling, and substitution, which technology and design support. It has involved extensive training and information for all stakeholders. Moreover, the company has provided resources, information, and initial pilot programs. However, the case also shows the barrier that consumer behaviour is and can only be undertaken with relevant information, especially training and motivation. Many individuals ignore the CE literature. National culture on sustainability and personal eating habits also play a vital role.

The supplier's case shows the relevance of stakeholders' cooperation alongside the complete value supply chain and the facilitating role of technology.

Theoretical and Practical implications

The case study provides a contribution to the published knowledge. The case shows evidence of how supply chains reorganise for circular flows, including plastic material recovery and reuse, confirming academic predictions (Calleja, 2019).

Mercadonma follows an organiser and financier role, while the suppliers follow the supporters' role according to the Uusikartano (2020) model with a dirigiste and facilitative style.

The case depicts how leading supermarkets changed their business model to fit a CE program with their packaging confirming academy (Perey et al., 2018; Calleja, 2019). Mercadona organises its own CE ecosystem within its supply chain. As pointed out by literature, an open system for suppliers and customers (Leder et al., 2020; Staaf & Sundström, 2021; Novakovic et al., 2023; Uusikartano et al., 2020). Suppliers also innovate by pursuing new materials(Plastics Europe, 2024).

The research illuminates barriers and enablers and their complementarity. It underscores the relevance of technology (Novakovic et al., 2023). Moreover, it ratifies the enabling influence of management and people, business strategy, infrastructure, product, process, design, and innovation identified by various authors (e.g., Seles et al., 2019; Roy et al., 2023; Harala, 2021; Gong et al., 2020).

Consumers are a crucial barrier and, conversely, an enabler, especially its dissonant behaviour, a barrier confirming Gregory-Smith et al. (2013). As Mercadona staff indicates, incentives and information promote consumer recycling attitudes and behaviours as Lyer & Kashyap (2007) signified.

However, consumers are not a single and independent factor. Their perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and motivations are linked to the products' functionalities, packaging, and economic aspects, thus confirming the literature (Sijstema et al. (2020; Fischbach & Yauney, 2023). Furthermore, normative elements are another factor in this equation, influencing recycling actions, as Hameed et al.(2022) stated. Regulations are confirmed as being controversial issues, as academic literature pointed out.

The theoretical implications are a practical guide for management and policymakers. Those could be summarised as follows:

A retailer CE program requires resources, staff involvement, cooperation with the value chain stakeholders, and a clear, established strategy that is a well-organised ecosystem.

The CE ecosystem must have defined financial benefits and costs with a time horizon.

Technology plays a vital role. Product design, packaging, and production processes should be studied with a CE objective.

Consumer attitudes and perceptions of sustainability and risk aversion should be considered to avoid consumer dissonance.

Institutional barriers are a factor that requires adequate supportive regulations perceived as sustainable and supported by the public and social awareness.

1.3 Balancing institutional and participatory space in the management of water imbalance - A dual institutional and participatory design perspective

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Introduction

Throughout Europe, sustainable livability is threatened by an imbalance in water supply and water demand. This imbalance puts pressure on contemporary water management. Due to climate change, precipitation falls in shorter and more intense cluster showers, causing nuisance, requiring water management that quickly removes excess water. Simultaneously, more intense water use results in falling groundwater levels with corresponding ecological consequences and water shortages for households, industry and agriculture, especially in the summer months (KNMI,2023). Moreover, water quality is declining, exceeding minimum levels (WFD,2000) and exacerbating water scarcity (Van Vliet,2023).

To make areas climate resilient, a better balancing of water supply and water demand is needed. Traditionally in the Netherlands, the government drafts policies and plans to this end, and involves stakeholders through participation (Leendertse et al.,2016). For water management, this encompasses technical interventions –such as collection, transportation, purification and infiltration of water– and a social transition towards more conscious water use among users. The transition implies that governments should engage, facilitate and combine various societal initiatives in tackling water challenges (Loorbach,2022; cf.Leendertse & Arts,2022).

Such an approach must be sensitive to, on-the-one-hand, the empowering of locally interacting initiatives, and, on-the-other-hand, the recognition of pre-existing problem and solution frames and visions of established actors that traditionally facilitate engagement; in other words, an approach that balances institutional and PD (Kempenaar et al.,2024; Huybrechts et al.,2017). Existing institutions provide institutional space to tackle challenges, and institutional analyses can identify where enduring systems of established and embedded rules and norms enable or necessitate change (Hodgson,2006; North,1991). Participatory approaches can encourage collaborative decision-making and active engagement of local communities, incorporating local knowledge and context (Hajer,2017).

However, little is known about the complementarity, conflicts, and trade-offs between these approaches. The co-constitutive dynamic of ‘the institutional’ and ‘the participatory’ require continuous balancing. Initiatives may fail if they are insufficiently embedded in the institutional

space or, conversely, institutions can limit the participatory power of initiatives. Balancing requires acknowledging the different theoretical and practical perspectives of both approaches.

This study explores the tensions and complementarities of both design approaches so as to inform the balancing of water imbalances through balancing institutional and participatory approaches. The research question is: What tensions and complementarities of institutional and PD require balancing upon addressing water imbalances and how can this be achieved?

Institutional design approach

Institutions are understood as durable systems of established and embedded humanly-devised rules and norms that structure social interactions by informing actors to do X in circumstances Y (Ostrom, 2005,2015; Hodgson,2006; North,1991). Institutions are 'rules-of-the-game' for decision-making processes. Institutions generally resist change to provide a sense of stability and predictability. Simultaneously, institutions provide an institutional space, a "degree of discretionary freedom of (community) initiatives to decide autonomously about the design of a project (in terms of procedures and planning) and its contents (in terms of its goals and means)" (Oteman,2014,p.4). Space may be created by changing the rules (e.g. by institutional design). The institutional space provides space for participatory initiatives.

Institutional analysis can identify rules-of-the-game i.e. the framework that structures and directs decision-making processes and the behavior of involved actors, i.e. play-of-the-game (Ostrom 2005,2015; Polski&Ostrom,2017). This interaction between rules-of-the-game and play-of-the-game provides a dilemma between providing predictability and adaptability: an existing institutional space embeds and perpetuates distributions and interests of particular actors, whereas other actors compete for their preferred institutional spaces that benefits different interests and outcomes (Leendertse&Arts,2022).

Participatory Design approach

The participatory design (PD) approach is a community-based methodology that emphasizes the importance of user involvement. It democratizes design processes by empowering users and prioritizing collaboration, iteration and feedback. PD fosters inclusivity by integrating diverse perspectives into a design for a.o. contemporary societal, environmental and urban challenges, and by leveraging the collective intelligence and creativity of all stakeholders involved (Sanders&Stappers,2008, cf.Kensing& Blomberg,2013). PD aims to create physical or virtual environments where individuals or groups actively engage in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving activities. These participatory spaces prioritize inclusivity, openness, and democratic principles, enabling diverse stakeholders to contribute their perspectives, voice their concerns, and co-create solutions to common challenges (Björgvinsson et al.,2012). The primary objective of PD is to facilitate meaningful dialogue, enhance mutual understanding, and empower participants to collectively address pertinent issues.

PD frequently employs various techniques such as workshops, co-design sessions, and focus groups to engage stakeholders and solicit their feedback temporarily or permanently (Schuler& Namioka,1993). Hence, overlap with participatory action research (PAR) can occur: both emphasize participation and collaboration, but PD primarily focuses on design and development

activities, whereas PAR is geared towards research and action aimed at addressing social or community issues (Reason& Bradbury,2001). PD is referred where overlap with PAR is present.

PD methods, tools, and techniques

Various methods, tools, and techniques can be used for the exploration of existing initiatives and collectives in participatory approaches, including stakeholder mapping, digital methods, visual ethnography (Golchehr& Bueno de Mesquita,2017; Ciappini,2017; Pink et al.,2022; Bueno de Mesquita,2022), design probes (Mattelmäki,2005), (contextually designed) facilitation tools (Sanders& Stappers,2012; Aguirre et al.,2017; Rygh et al.,2015), and futuring techniques. These can be applied to uncover the driving forces behind initiatives and recognize, amongst others, potential barriers, fears, and aspirations. By applying such methods, governmental organizations can gain valuable insights into the real-world implications of their policies and gain insights in the aspirations of citizens.

Balancing institutional and participatory design

Balancing process

Traditionally, in water management, rules-of-the-game prescribe a design process where an initiator (e.g. governments) designs an intervention and submits it to stakeholders for response. The design may be adjusted accordingly. Implicitly, the stakeholders are determined by the intervention's design(er). The initiator also determines how stakeholders are involved, ranging from consulting to co-designing (cf.Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation,1969). The advantage of this approach is that initiators can manage interventions because they frame problems and therefore invite particular stakeholders. A disadvantage is that stakeholders are only involved from the (pre)designed interventions' perspective, potentially limiting input from local initiatives and their knowledge.

Bringing the methods, tools, and techniques of PD into this process allows for engaging potential initiatives that may contribute to an overarching thematic vision (for example the necessity to create a water balance), covering a 'commons' or perceived shared challenge (Ostrom,2015). A potential threat, however, is that initiatives can run into institutional barriers.

The balancing of institutional and PD approaches may then be understood as enabling or empowering locally situated voices, interests, and knowledge to be effectuated in decision-making in relation to the formal and prescribed institutional structures and processes (or identifying the barriers that inhibit integrating the participatory in the institutional). This requires space: a participatory approach requires (perceived) space in institutions, or the possibility to create space. Institutional space refers to the established frameworks, policies, and decision-making structures within governmental, organizational, or administrative bodies and local communities responsible for water management. Because governmental, organizational, and administrative bodies have predefined roles, responsibilities, and regulations for governing water-related activities, resource allocation, and infrastructure development, the institutional space for community initiatives will always be limited.

Balancing considerations

Boundary spanning and the design process are two pivotal considerations in balancing participatory and institutional approaches. Firstly, boundary spanners are individuals who are especially sensitive to and skilled in bridging interests, professions, and organizations through various activities and roles (Van den Brink et al.,2019). Initiators of interventions can particularly look for boundary spanners, who act in the community as nodes of social networks, who are accepted by the community as such, and who are aware of various initiatives within the community. Boundary spanners may increase possible support, broader connection, community formation, and local knowledge incorporation (Cash et al.,2003). Further, the cross-sectoral nature of boundary spanning between 'the institutional' and 'the participatory' may elucidate particular institutional barriers to enable governance of a common.

The second balancing consideration concerns the design process. Instead of a detailed intervention design, initiators should formulate a clear problem description or objective (a commons), an (institutional) framework and communicate clear process rules. The openness without (pre)defined design allows the bundling of (local) initiatives over time (an evolutionary design). Design thus becomes a process of, on-the-one-hand, providing direction and framing of established rules-in-use (institutional approach) and, on-the-other-hand, exploring, bundling and developing initiatives that embed local knowledge and interests (participatory approach). Instead of linear, this proces is iterative, continuous and evolutionary in experimenting and adjusting. This evolutionary processes, mutually fitted to a particular transition direction, can counter institutional inertia (see Lowndes&Roberts,2013).

Dilemmas in balancing

Balancing institutional and participatory design approaches involves recognizing the strengths and limitations of each approach and finding synergies to enhance water management outcomes. Table 1 delineates characteristics for both approaches. We selected these characteristics based on a literature scan into dilemmas in combining institutional and participatory approaches in different disciplines (a.o. De Marchi et al.,2000; Hage et al.,2006; Barnaud & van Paasen,2013; Klok & Denters,2018; Lopez et al.,2023). While additional characteristics may be mentioned, these were chosen to highlight potential tensions and complementarities between the here studied approaches. While Table1 lists characteristics per one-by-one, they intersect and influence one another.

Table 1

The sections below elaborate per orientation on the inherent differences between the approaches, on the subsequent dilemma's for decision-makers, and on potential directions for balancing the approaches.

Logic: reframing

Where institutional approaches follow a logic of identifying rule-guiding patterns (from generic to specific, and from specific to generic), PD adheres to a logic of identifying 'what could be'. These differences in logical orientation present a dilemma for decision-makers with regard to frames in which problems and solutions are generated: institutional approaches may 'frame' the intricacies of wicked problems and institutionally appropriate ways of understanding and dealing with them,

yet produce no satisfactory solutions and conversely, PD may 'frame' newly and creatively explored solutions, yet this abductive logic defies being embedded in institutional behavioral patterns. Balancing entails reframing back-and-forth between the abductive logic to the inductive and deductive logic, aiding decision-makers to break conventional ways of thinking and doing, while also embedding actions in established rule-guiding patterns.

Methodology: flexing structured frameworks

PD involves actively engaging stakeholders to address specific challenges and developing interventions tailored to identified needs. It encourages flexibility and adaptability, allowing for spontaneous actions in response to emerging insights and opportunities. Alternatively, institutional design focuses on overarching structures and systems to tackle broader issues, employing analysis and planning to formulate transferable frameworks. While measuring the effectiveness of PD interventions can be challenging due to their context-specific nature, institutional design may struggle with engagement and scaling across diverse contexts due to local (cultural) variations.

Balancing necessitates a structured methodological approach. This involves enhancing the tangibility of institutional design methodologies and incorporating flexibility to accommodate experimentation and adaptation based on the specific requirements of local communities.

Political: representing democracy in decision-making

PD is explicitly political. It empowers individuals who traditionally may have been disengaged or marginalized from decision-making processes. PD fosters a more inclusive and democratic approach to problem-solving that can establish a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among citizens for the development of their communities (Bueno de Mesquita,2022). Contrasting, institutional approaches take a 'situation as is' and assess mechanisms that perpetuate distributions of existing interests. These differences in political representation present a dilemma for decision-makers in orchestrating decision-making interactions: openness and democratic principles can be at odds with institutionally grounded ways of orchestrating interactions. To employ the transformative potential of local actors on the larger political-systemic context without biasing specific actors, local initiatives may be tapped into by leveraging digital methods (Golchehr& Bueno de Mesquita,2018) and using PD tools. This contrasts with imposing projects based on predetermined notions of what a community "needs". Balancing requires the continuous readjustment of democratic representation and sustained citizen participation (community-driven approach) and institutions (systems-driven approach).

Power: directing community engagement

Institutional approaches typically identify established power dynamics, perpetuating role-confirmation within existing structures. In contrast, PD seeks to subvert traditional roles and promote a different power distribution among stakeholders, exemplified by practices like citizen science. By involving citizens in activities traditionally controlled by top-down approaches (e.g. monitoring air quality), PD endeavors to reshape power dynamics. While these initiatives promote public engagement and scientific literacy, they may overlook the involvement of institutionalized stakeholders (e.g. governments). Without institutional support, citizen science projects may struggle to establish credibility, access specialized expertise, or influence policy decisions based on their findings. This example highlights the balancing dilemma. Outcomes from PD efforts may

not align with demands or constraints of institutional systems, leading to limited acceptance or feasibility. Balancing institutional approaches and PD requires decision-makers to actively facilitate community engagement and bridge the gap between grassroots initiatives and institutional structures. This entails fostering collaboration between citizens and institutions to ensure that participatory efforts can effectively be integrated into broader decision-making processes.

Process: embracing complexity

PD frequently embraces a deliberately messy and unstructured process: more complexity may foster the emergence of new connections. In contrast, institutional approaches tend to adhere to well-defined structures, progressing decision-making process trajectories rather linearly. The approaches understand successful process progression differently. While institutional approaches often rely on formal metrics or indicators, participatory approaches may prioritize informal outcomes and process-oriented goals. Moreover, institutional frameworks may limit additional resources required for participatory approaches (e.g. time and funding). The dilemma entails finding a common ground for

successful process progression and sufficient resources. Balancing entails embracing complexity, i.e. incorporating flexibility into structured processes, allowing room for dynamic and unstructured exploration to accommodate the iterative nature of participatory approaches, accounting for potential resource limitations within institutional frameworks.

Rules: structuring creativity and creative structuring

Institutional approaches focus on how rules affect agency, i.e. what can, must, or must not occur. Colloquially, institutional approaches structure 'the box' within which agency occurs. By contrast, PD intends to break free from commonly occurring ways of thinking, acting, and engaging with issues and actors. Colloquially, PD employs methods and techniques to be able to think outside 'the box' (cf. rules). The dilemma to rules is that the outcomes of PD are not credible to or accepted in restrictive institutional systems, regardless of their potential (cf.Cash et al.,2003). Balancing requires decision-makers to move back-and-forth between structuring creativity and creative structuring: between respectively creating institutional soft spaces where creativity may flourish, and new possible structures to embed either the outcomes of those soft spaces or the spaces themselves (cf.Spijkerboer,2022).

Adaptability: using and enhancing adaptive capacity

Institutional approaches often exhibit resistance to change, particularly when such change threatens entrenched norms, procedures, or power dynamics. Conversely, PD embodies a change-oriented ethos, prioritizing actions aimed at altering the status quo. The inherent balancing dilemma entails integrating inertia and change, to which using and enhancing adaptive capacity may aid balancing. Adaptive capacity can build on exploring potential futures (PBL,2023). By backcasting futures scenarios to current decision-making conundrums, more experimental (PD) methods can be connected to institutionalized practices, building adaptive capacity for embracing both a change-oriented ethos and embedding entrenched norms.

Legitimacy for actions: changing rules through action

Another tension between institutional approaches and PD is the source of legitimacy. Broadly, legitimacy may be understood as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995,p.574). PD builds on a legitimacy that follows from actions that seek to change a specific circumstance particularly for a marginalized group, a hybrid of pragmatic and moral legitimacy. Institutional approaches build on a legitimacy that follows from taken-for-granted rules that seek to provide comprehensibility based on a lasting understanding of a shared sociological, historical, rational etc. institutional paradigm (cf. Salet,2018). The dilemma between the approaches comprises a conflict of sources of legitimacy: the pragmatic or moral action may be at odds with the taken-for-granted lasting comprehensible stability that rules provide. The balancing of institutional approaches and PD then requires decision-makers to both 'just do it' while also credibly and salienty inform actions in the larger legitimate structure (Cash et al.,2003).

Discussion

This paper focuses on how the combination of institutional and participatory approaches can inform the balancing of water imbalances. The research question is: What tensions and complementarities of institutional and participatory design approaches require balancing upon addressing water imbalances and how can this be achieved?

We argue that the integration of institutional and PD approaches holds significant promise for addressing the water imbalance and other transition challenges. Successful initiatives and active involvement of local communities can enable engagement with local commons to transition towards more sustainable practices across various sectors. However, successful integration needs the continued refinement and adaptation of the approaches to meet their different strengths and weaknesses, and to suit diverse contexts and challenges. This entails a continuous process of experimentation, evaluation, and adjustment, impressionistically illustrated in Figure 1.

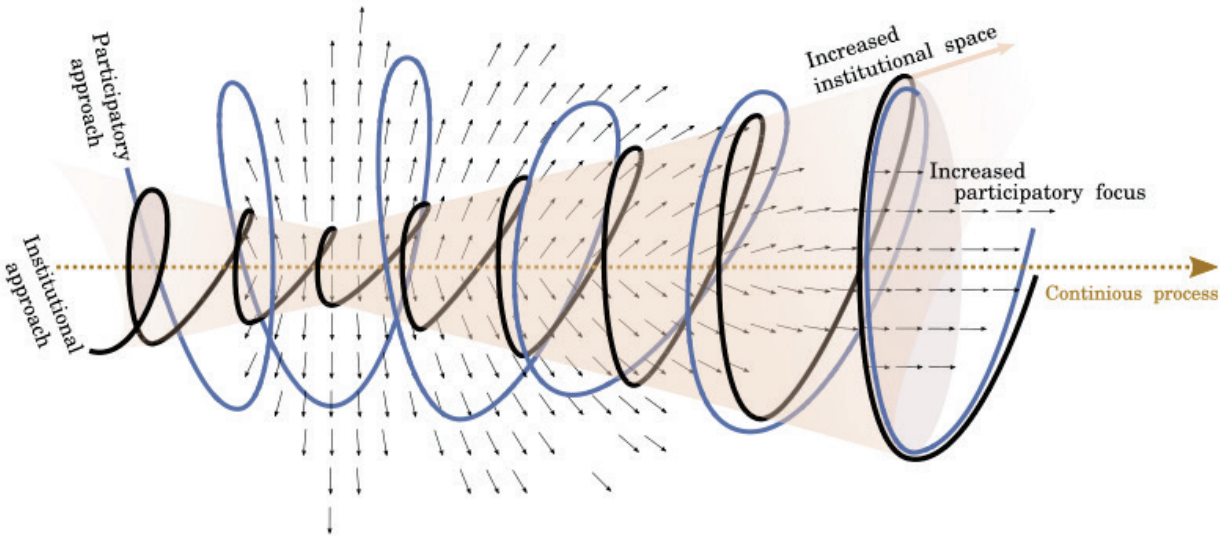

Figure 1

To facilitate a transition that effectively leverages initiatives, the institutional approach (black spiral) can employ PD methods. Conversely, the participatory approach (blue spiral) requires institutional insights to influence policy effectively. The interaction of both approaches can expand institutional space and guide participatory focus. Both approaches gradually converge (having their gap diminish over time), enabling the participatory approach to gain focus (alignment of arrow directions over time), and creating more institutional space for participatory action. This continuous process is continuous, where the ongoing evolution to integration is symbolized by the spiral and oscillating between expansion and contraction.

We have the final concluding remarks regarding a dual institutional and participatory design perspective:

The weakness of one approach is often the strength of the other approach: while contrasting, the approaches can also complement each other;

Seizing the benefits of both approaches is not self-evident, and requires continuous coordination in a process of balancing;

Evolutionary design is central to balancing, where existing and new area-oriented initiatives are bundled in a deliberate, water-balancing direction;

More comprehensive and resilient solutions for water imbalances can be developed by leveraging area-oriented initiatives, because they can foster (consensus-building for) the interconnections of local water issues and broader regional issues.

Boundary spanners can aid balancing: they cross the boundaries of social groups to enable knowledge exchange and share values among various actors at important nodes in the social networks;

The design process requires the initiator to provide direction, stimulate, facilitate, combine and manage expectations;

Institutional perspectives remain crucial for navigating complex governance structures and leveraging institutional spaces for effective participatory action, because institutional analyses identify the institutional space and its inertia (rules-of-the-game);

Once institutional space is found or created (rules-of-the-game), the PD approach can utilize this institutional space (play-of-the-game) and combat institutional inertia (rules-of-the-game);

Participatory action can aid institutional change. Thus, the institutional space evolves through (legitimate) action in a continuous process of participatory engagement, bundling and stimulating of local and regional initiatives and adjusting institutional boundaries (institutional adaptation).

Collaborative endeavors that balance institutional and participatory approaches hold the potential to unlock innovative solutions, forge new alliances, and establish more resilient systems not only for water management but also for addressing a wide array of transition challenges. It can lead to more inclusive, effective, and sustainable decision-making processes. However, it requires building bridges between top-down and bottom-up approaches, fostering collaboration, and valuing diverse perspectives.

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2.1 Competing for the common good. Are top performing companies using new leverages? A case analisys of Spanish companies.

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Abstract

Competing is a good way to make companies perform better. It also drives the search for more efficiency and the quest for new ways of doing things or even finding new products or services, in other words, innovating. This paradigm has been widely analyzed by the literature from many different points of view. One of the most popular theories, which is current to every business plan from startups to research thesis, is "the five competitive forces" introduced by Michael Porter in late 1970s (Porter, 1997). Recently, the validity of the model has been challenged due to the impact of the processes of globalization, digitalisation and new market demands specially after climate change and social inequality acceleration. The paradigm of a race to get the largest part of the market, to continuous growth has to be questioned.

This paper contributes to this critical view of the concept of competitiveness, identifying new competitive models and paying special attention to one from the perspective of the common good.

We infer that there are at least two competitive models that provide new leverages for competition at play. These leverages act as resources for creating value for the company and the whole societyñ.

We stand that the concept of competitiveness has evolved in two directions. On one hand, the economical crisis in 2008, the globalization and the pandemic crisis has provided a scenario for few technological giants to compete for the world market of a new platform model, taking profit of the emergent digital technologies.

On the other hand, coexisting with traditional business and competition models, socio-economic awareness on climate change, social rising inequality and the experience of collateral negative externalities of the tech giants (as for example gig jobs or the end of traditional markets) has provided some miraculous top performing companies able to be profitable, as well as very environmentally and socially sustainable. They are succeeding in a different way, taking also into account their interaction with public administration, society and the environment.

We focus on the new space left for a more sustainable future, where top performing companies are getting aware of the scarcity of resources and understand that negative externalities will come back as a boomerang if they don't perform in a sustainable way. Something similar happens to new social demands that have to be attended to stop the increase of inequality effects on their business. The common good oriented competition model is suggested from illustrative examples of good practices.

Keywords

Competitive factors, competition, common good, stakeholders, top performing companies, common good, economy for the common good

Theoretical context. Competitive models

1.1 Traditional profit oriented model

There was a time when companies couldn't cover all the demand. During that period of time companies used to establish product price as an addition to manufacturing costs with a reasonable margin. But when industrialization arised demand became lower than offering, and the market rules changed forever (Appleby, 2011). Other aspects like efficiency and productivity gained protagonism and companies had to start competing for reaching customers. The paradigm changed from customers buying products to producers selling them. It enhanced disciplines as marketing and businesses had to define their competitive strategy for the first time. This has been the dominant competitive model of capitalism (Piketty, 2020).

In the 70s the named "fathers" of management structured a better knowledge about how some companies performed better than others in terms of market share, incomes or profit. This study brought competitive strategies like Porter and Mintzberg among others (Porter, 1997) (Mintzberg et al., 2020) (Drucker, 1992).

The original framework can bee seen in the image 1: "The five competitive forces" introduced by Porter.

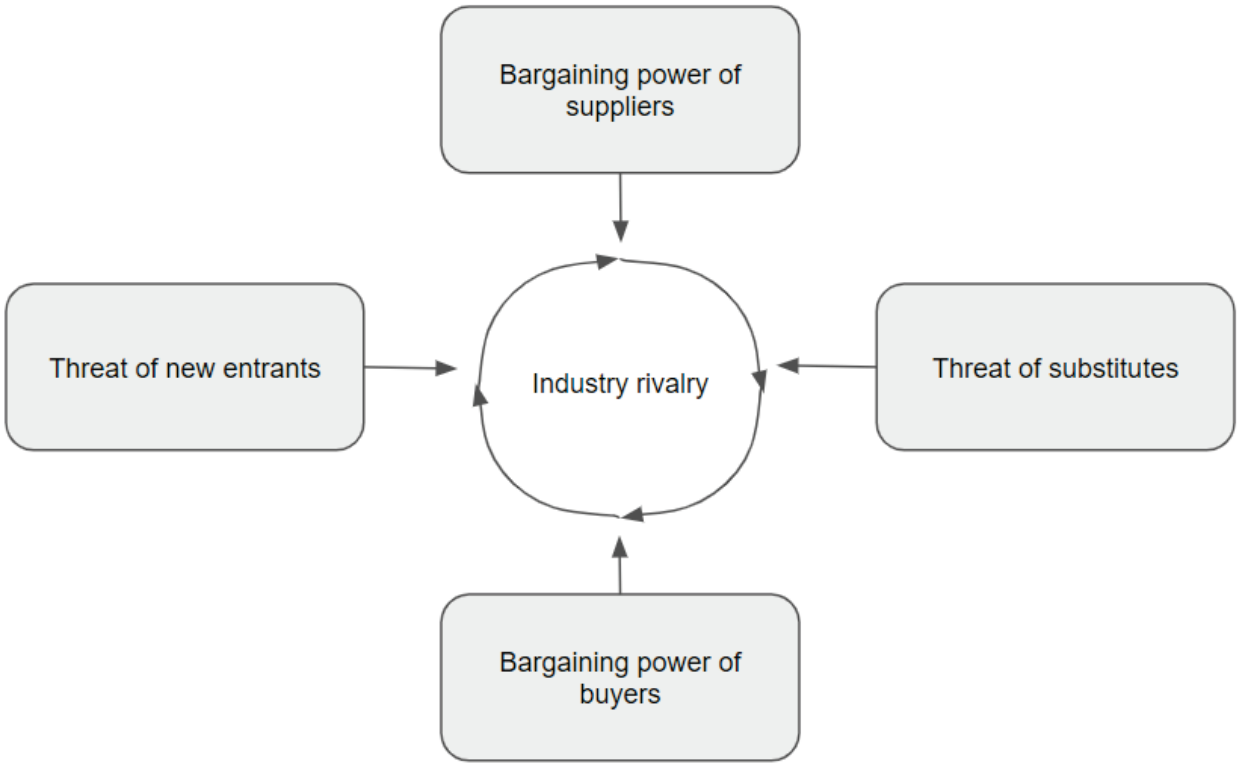

Image1. The five competitive forces.Source: (Porter, 1997)

In the beginning there was a general acceptance of three main competitive strategies: cost, differentiation and niche (see image of strategic advantage). This could be also represented in two axes: scope and competitive advantage.

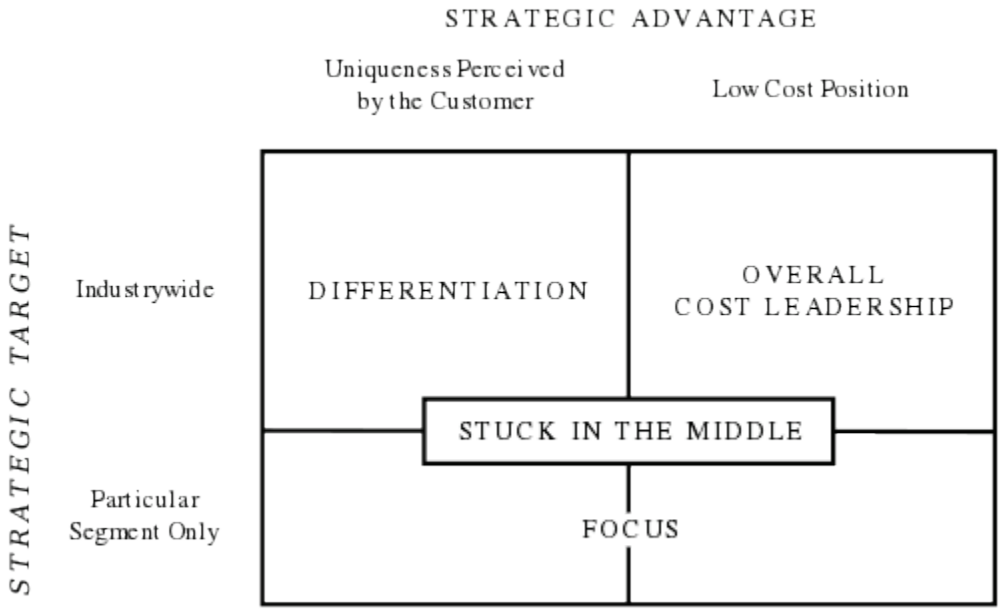

Image 2. Main competitive strategy.Source: (Porter, 1997)

It can be said that nowadays companies use a mix of different competitive strategies to survive in very saturated and crowded markets. A huge effort is needed in all aspects to get customers and keep their loyalty when the speed of innovation And the myth of a sustainable competitive advantage remains as this.

More recently another paradigms arised. We mention one specially relevant: the value innovation strategy, that combines cost optimization while increasing value named “Blue ocean strategy” (Kim & Mauborgne, 2014). But it calls our attention that this competitive strategy can’t be kept very long. Most known references of this strategy didn’t survive too much (Kabukin, 2014).

1.2 Good aspects of competition

Healthy market competition has positive effects as it promotes continuous improvement and innovation as ways to improve economic performance.Economic theory demonstrates that when firms have to compete for customers, it leads to lower prices, higher quality goods and services,

greater variety, and more innovation. This allows companies to better manufacture their products and deliver their services, and customers can choose the best option fitting their needs and expectations.

This model drives a company to be continuously watching the market for changes on the demand so it can adapt to it. And also to changes in the competition companies and their offering, to "copy" their successful evolutions to keep itself on the market.

Competition acts also as an engine for innovation, as a source of new punctual competitive advantages (Schumpeter, 1942).

1.3 Large scale oligopolies. Platforms, marketplaces and other models

Giant tech corporations have brought a new business model called "platform" very relevant in the case of marketplaces (Täuscher & Laudien, 2018) like Amazon, eBay, JD.com, Aliexpress and others. Other previous studies from other researchers like (McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017) explain their origins and variations. We can say a marketplace is:

"An online marketplace is an eCommerce platform that enables third party sellers to sell new or used products on its platform (= marketplace)… However, marketplaces that enable both private and commercial sellers (such as eBay, MercadoLibre, and Tokopedia) to offer and trade products are considered because the majority of these products stem from commercial sellers." (Statista, 2021).

But there are other many forms of this emergent business model as pointed out by authors (Parker et al., 2016) like Uber, Airbnb which are popularly known as sharing services. Other ones compiled in the studies are related to social networks like Instagram, Facebook among others (Zhao et al., 2020).

In their work, "The rise of the platform business model and the transformation of twenty-first-century capitalism", Rahman and Thelen (Rahman & Thelen, 2019) make a good analysis of the new way of capturing value from customers and it is easy to derive how it alteres completely the bargaining power of customers and consumers: "today's platform firms represent a new way to create and capture value. They do so, above all, through their capacity to extract and harness immense amounts of data in ways that allow them to operate as critical intermediaries and market makers. Thus, for example, service platforms such as Uber or Upwork provide a link between requesters and providers of services; goods platforms like Amazon connect buyers and sellers of all kinds; and information platforms such as Google and Facebook connect end users to sources of information and media through search, news feeds, and the like.

Some of these platforms now exercise a level of market dominance that inspires comparison to classic monopolies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries"

The relevance acquired by the generated business by corporations using this business model has even displaced energy and finance industries in the market in volume (see image 3: "Platform market cap"). From a set of exhaustive studies, several authors show how these hegemonic empires are distributed around the world (Parker & Van Alstyne, 2005) and exploit the emerging technologies as resources for creating an extensive and overwhelming market power.

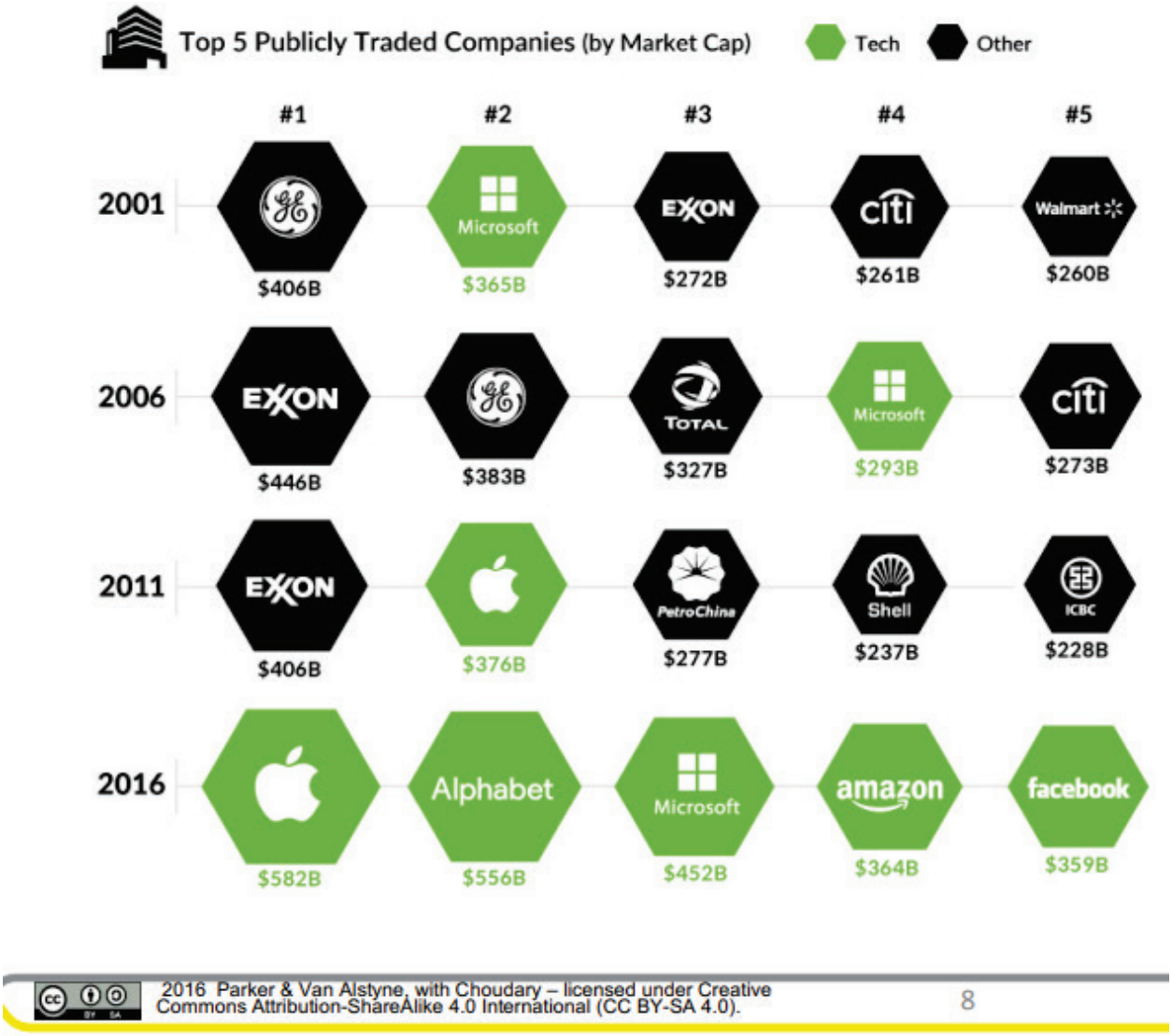

Image 3. "Platform market cap". Source Parker, 2016 based on information from Visualcapitalist.com

In this kind of winner takes all situation, a single firm tends to capture a large share of the market, often through technological advances. This process is common when the market has network externalities such that a firm's technology is more valuable when there are more users of the technology. Social media platforms or search engines are examples of such markets.

The oligopolies of largest platform business models are well described in the literature (Srnicek, 2017) and coined with several names as recently *Technofeudalism* (Varoufakis, 2024) where our preferences are no longer our own but manufactured by machine networks and few winners take it all, additionally to the rights management and profit appropriation (Geddes, 2019). This is specially amplified by globalization and we can see it very descriptively at the image 4: "Largest world

platforms by region" (Van Alstyne, 2015), that has experienced a clear rebalance towards China after the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia- Ukraine war. The distribution around the world has been exhaustively studied by....

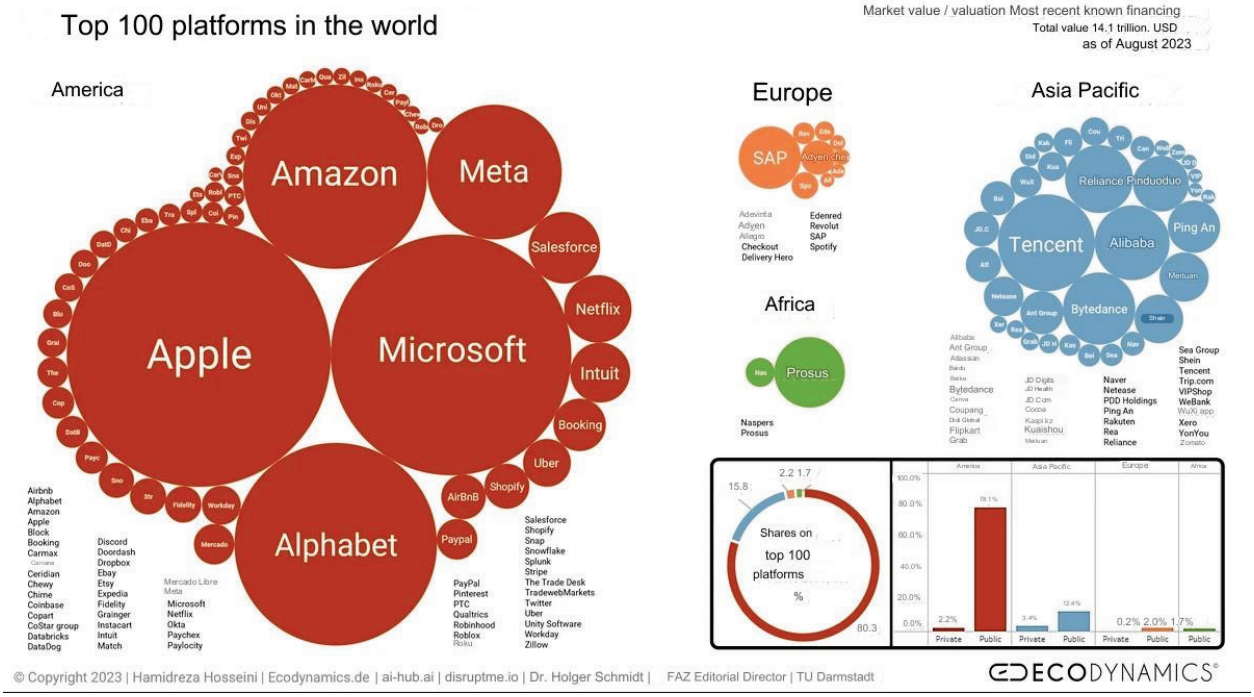

Image 4. "Top 100 platforms in the world". Source: adapted from platformeconomy.com

Research methodology

The paper reviews the evolution of competition in its traditional form and analyzes the competitive frameworks by performing a literature review and summarizing the most relevant aspects related to competition. The exhaustive work reviewed publications to synthetize the relevant contributions on the focus topic. Then it was complemented with case studies.

On one hand, we conducted a multiple case study (Yin, 2009) (Stake, 2013) that explores the evolution of big tech internet business models between 2010 and 2023. This allowed us to identify the main characteristics of the big tech market competition model.

On the other hand, we reviewed multiple cases of common good oriented companies, which have published their CG Balance. For that a list of 689 audited companies (International Federation for the Economy for the Common Good eV, 2024) was reviewed. The balances with grades were studied to find competition for the common good patterns.

To better find and contrast a model, we interviewed the managing director of a form audited with its CG Balances published since 2016. Majoral Jewelry is a CG company originally from Balear Islands and now established in Barcelona. Its audited sustainability statements (CGB) were studied

in detail and an interview was conducted to contrast the identified characteristics of its competitive leverages, in order to suggest a competitive framework.

Field work and case studies

3.1 The "coercitive" forces of the platform competition framework

Large platform businesses normally start activity in an industry and when scale to planetary dimensions, extend activity to other ones. Amazon was initially an online book store that after very important money investments derived to one of the largest marketplaces in the world among other services like datacloud, marketing agency among other activities. Apple, the famous computer company founded by the iconic entrepreneur, Steve Jobs, became an outstanding platform business when it launched its Apple Store by the hand of its game changer device, the iPhone. More recently, Tesla started as a car manufacturer, but it is a lot of more than that as the pandemic evidenced. While the rest of key actors in the automotive industry had to stop manufacturing due to chip scarcity, they went on. Additionally, their cars, also popularly called "computers with wheels", are a very profitable business on the cloud. But everything points to Tencent as the largest platform empire (Jia et al., 2018) as nowadays it integrates AI to a business model that integrates social network functionality (WeChat) with financial services, video games, e-commerce, music… and it goes on.

The special nuance with these giants is on the world economic hegemony, potential risks for privacy of users and manipulation now regulated for AI in Europe (EU AI Act), and in last term China and US security concerns alleged by both governments. This last issue drove the US Government to temporarily ban the TikTok social network.

The competitive forces only make sense among the brunch of competitors globally, being the astronomical investments one of the most clear entrance barriers. According to some authors, the main funds were collected thanks to the money printed during the crisis of 2008 and the pandemic that big private equity funds invested to create such unique cloud titans (Varoufakis, 2024).

Other authors (Zhao et al., 2020) found evidence relating the consolidation of market in few players while it grows significantly (see image 5: "Development of the Chinese OGB (Online Group Buying) market between 2010 and 2013"); while others discovered evolutions even towards a more collaborative model among some of the acting players in the competitive framework (Cozzolino et al., 2021).

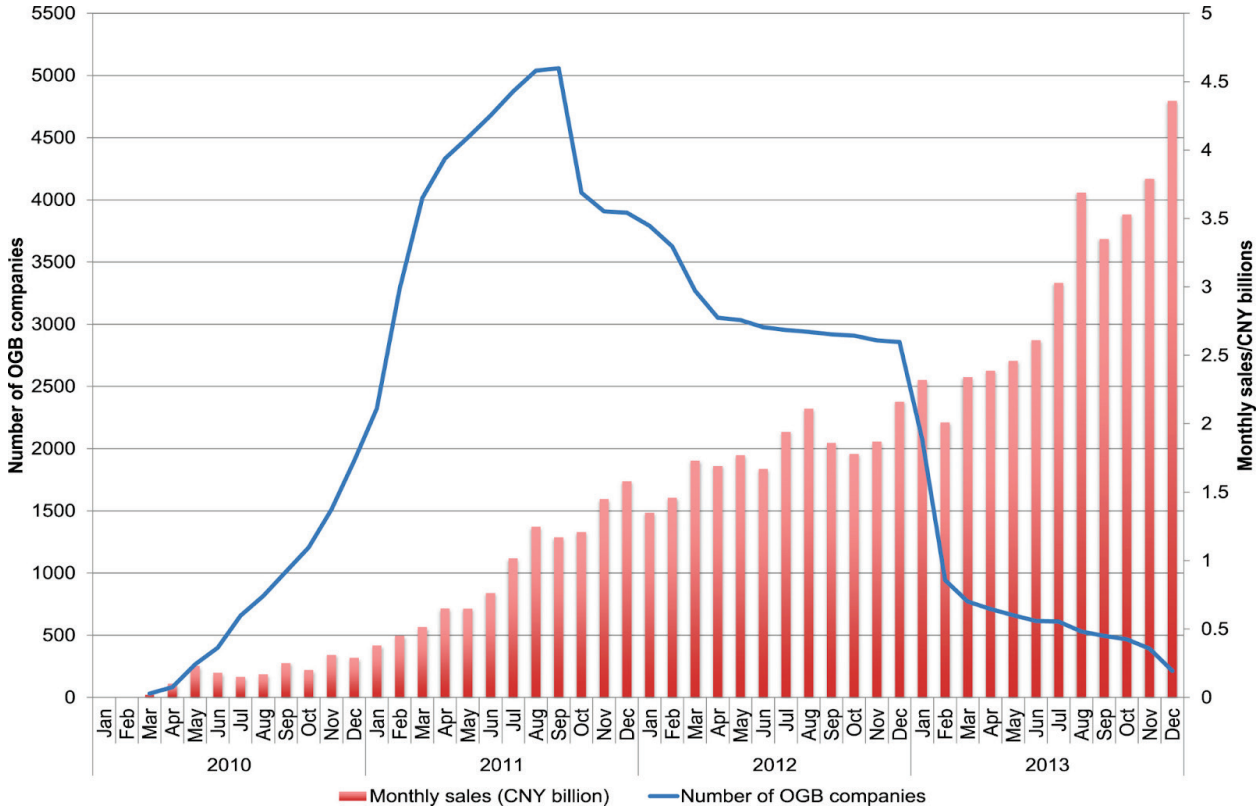

Image 5. "Development of the Chinese OGB (Online Group Buying) market between 2010 and 2013". Source: The evolution of platform business models (Zhao et al., 2020)

All that comes with a bundle of marketing products offered by the platforma, that any firm or individual, willing to sell through or use them has to pay to get consumers. Google was a pioneer with its search engine positioning auctions i.e. But it has been sophisticated a lot and got more and more complex and dominant by few players (Hermes et al., 2020).

Regarding the bargaining power of customers and users, several studies remark how it has been dismissed. Customers, for instance in a marketplace, willing to sell products, have a very small spot for negotiation. Product price at those portals have to be the minimum available on the whole internet, i.e. In the case of a platform for publishing an App, the situation is very similar, with very constraining conditions.

But the situation for consumers is even worse as presented in the theoretical context section. The bargaining power of users is almost zero and they have to accept all conditions put by the big tech companies if they want to access their platforms, operating systems and marketplaces. As several authors point out, users have to produce value for free to the platform (Varoufakis, 2024). This happened under the placit of governments that rarely rule on the trust and transparency as they should (Rahman & Thelen, 2019).

This has been taken to such an extreme that users are manipulated and exploded as a product. Several cases revealed how platforms abused their bargaining power. It was evident when famous cases shocked society such as the Cambridge Analytica scandal (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018), or the Frances Haugen complaint on Facebook (Milmo, 2021).

From the previous facts, the competitive model of Porter gets a significant distortion giving more relevance to the rivalry among a small number of giant tech corporations operating on the internet at a global scale in each industry (image 6). Thus, as pointed out before, barriers for new entrants are almost insurmountable.

According to several studies, the threat of substitutes is removed by the capacity to acquire any interesting new technology that appears in the market (Andersson & Xiao, 2016), which has also bad effects on innovation (Fons-Rosen et al., 2021).

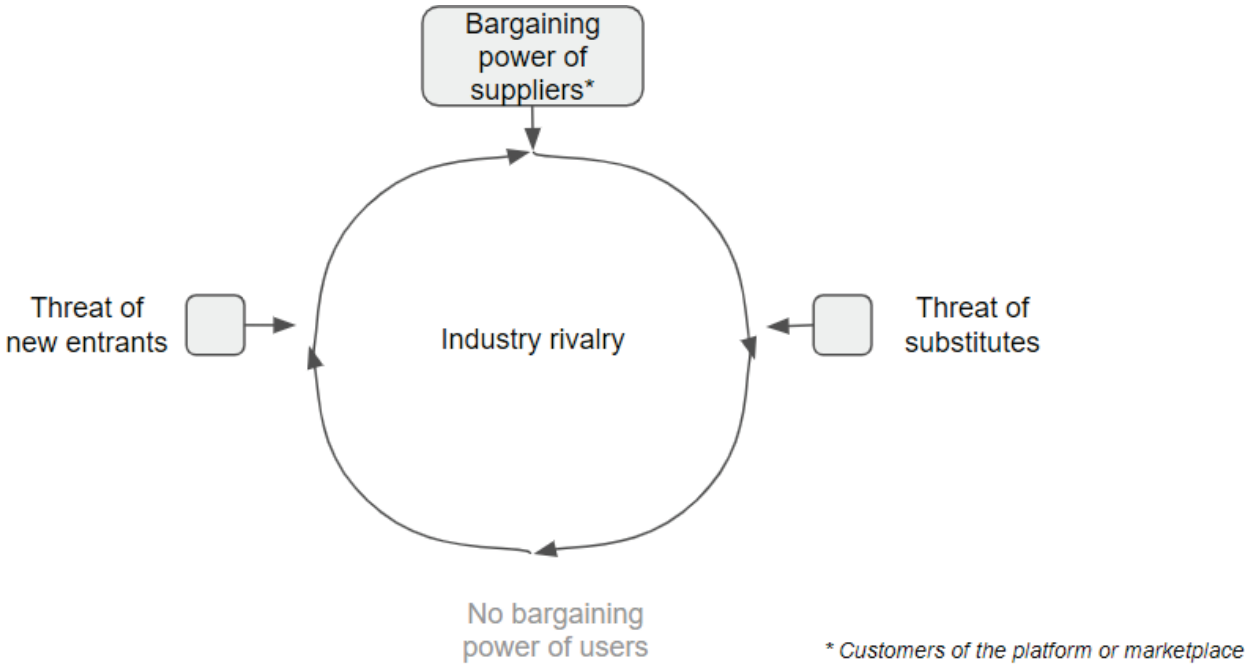

Image 6. Competitive model for a big tech market. Source: own elaboration

3.2 Case study: Majoral Jewelry. The common good oriented model

Climate change and social awareness on sustainability (social and environmental) bring new regulatory frameworks as the recently approved and in deployment, EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (Christensen et al., 2021). Some parts of society are aware about the critical point on climate change, because we all suffer the consequences that are especially hard in some parts such as India.

On the other hand, other economic degradations like gig jobs and unemployment are impacting society to push at a limit of breakthrough. Inequality has reached higher creating such paradoxes like watching rich lobbies asking for more taxes on them at international summits (Neate, 2024).

Coexisting with traditional competitive models introduced in the first section of this paper, there is another model. There are companies promoting and betting for other values while also accomplishing profitability. Those are values like social responsibility with their workers, the close

social environment and of course customers; environmental sustainability and transparency. These types of companies achieve triple impact: economic profit, environmental and social positive impact (Elkington & Rowlands, 1999).

There is a type of those companies that are measuring their alignment with sustainability and thus their positive impact, using the Common Good Balance (Wiefek & Heinitz, 2021). It is a report that analyzes and measures till 250 indicators. For doing so, the company uses the Common Good Matrix (see image 7: "The Common Good Matrix. Source: IF ECG 2024"). It matches 4 categories of human values: human dignity; solidarity and social justice; environmental sustainability; participation and transparency; with all stakeholders. Because the organization is not conceived as an entity providing value to customers and profit to shareholders anymore. According to the more current vision all stakeholders are taken into account (Friedman & Miles, 2006). They are grouped as: providers; shareholders and financial partners; customers; employees and; social environment.

Image 7. The Common Good Matrix. Source: IF ECG 2024

COMMON GOOD MATRIX 5.0

VALUE / STAKEHOLDER	HUMAN DIGNITY	SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	TRANSPARENCY AND CO-DETERMINATION
A: SUPPLIERS	**A1** Human dignity in the supply chain	**A2** Solidarity and social justice in the supply chain	**A3** Environmental sustainability in the supply chain	**A4** Transparency and co-determination in the supply chain
B: OWNERS, EQUITY- AND FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS	**B1** Ethical position in relation to financial resources	**B2** Social position in relation to financial resources	**B3** Use of funds in relation to social and environmental impacts	**B4** Ownership and co-determination
C: EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING CO-WORKING EMPLOYERS	**C1** Human dignity in the workplace and working environment	**C2** Self-determined working arrangements	**C3** Environmentally-friendly behaviour of staff	**C4** Co-determination and transparency within the organisation
D: CUSTOMERS AND OTHER COMPANIES	**D1** Ethical customer relations	**D2** Cooperation and solidarity with other companies	**D3** Impact on the environment of the use and disposal of products and services	**D4** Customer participation and product transparency
E: SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	**E1** Purpose of products and services and their effects on society	**E2** Contribution to the community	**E3** Reduction of environmental impact	**E4** Social co-determination and transparency

In the world there are thousands of companies using this tool to get their report on sustainability. And there is a public record with the audit of 689 companies (International Federation for the Economy for the Common Good eV, 2024) containing the information of the CG balances, with the total grades obtained by each company.

A study of the presented balances looking for competitive leverages allowed the researchers to find out several of them, while understanding the value exchange with each stakeholder group. The

summary is presented in table 1: “Value exchange and competitive leverages of CG oriented companies”. The table presents also de direction of the exchanged value:

“In” means that is value captured by the company

“Out” means value delivered to an stakeholder from the company

Stakeholder	Value Exchange	Direction	Competition leverage
Competition	Learning and improvement	In	Better ideas and innovations
	Open Innovation	In	Lobby and industry consolidation
			Competitive improvement (thanks to better information)
Customers	Solution to a necessity	Out	Privacy protection
			Cost
			Quality
Employees	Employment	Out	Attractive work conditions
	Wage	Out	Productivity improvement
	Work productivity	In	Better talent loyalty
			Better ideas and innovations
Environment	Environment protection	Out	Genuine positive impact
	Natural resources	In	Good reputation
	Brand positioning	In	
Public Administration	Regulations compliment	Out	Public projects preference
	Lobby for interests	In	
Shareholders	Profit	In	Satisfaction for purpose
			Interest in sustainable impact
Society	Indirect wealth creation (taxes)	Out	Positive positioning in the community
	Local development projects	Out	Long term location
	Resources (ie. land)	In	
	Better conditions (tax reductions)	In	
Suppliers	Better cost conditions	In	Incentives for improvement
	Support for improvement	Out	Loyalty
			Win- win relationship
New entrants			Attention to new opportunities
			Attention to customers' likes changes
Substitutes			Attention to new substitutive products

Table 1. Value exchange and competitive leverages of CG oriented companies. Source: own elaboration

The authors developed a process of identification of competitive leverages and grouping them according to their similarities and cataloging them into stakeholders. It allowed the research team to prepare an interview to validate it with the case study company whose CG balance was analyzed deeper.

An interview with the new Managing Director of Majoral contrasted the relevant information about the way the company succeeds in the three impact models: economic, social and

environmental (Domenech, 2024). Confirmed the different leverages and drove to a suggested competitive framework which includes the new identified forces:

“Collaborators” at the core: the Industry rivalry

“Ecological environment”, at the moment perceived as a volunteer, but starting to be mandatory by new appearing regulations

“Society and local actors”, which can be determinant to get approval for locating company’s installations, among other aspects. As it happens with previous force, it is also object of new regulations

“Public administration”. Not only because of its regulatory role, but also because of the public contracts, loans and other private and public collaborative initiatives

“Employees”. A leverage that could be also considered in the past, but which is getting more relevance nowadays because of the fight for talent, for example.

Image 8 is a suggested model that integrates all the findings of the performed research.

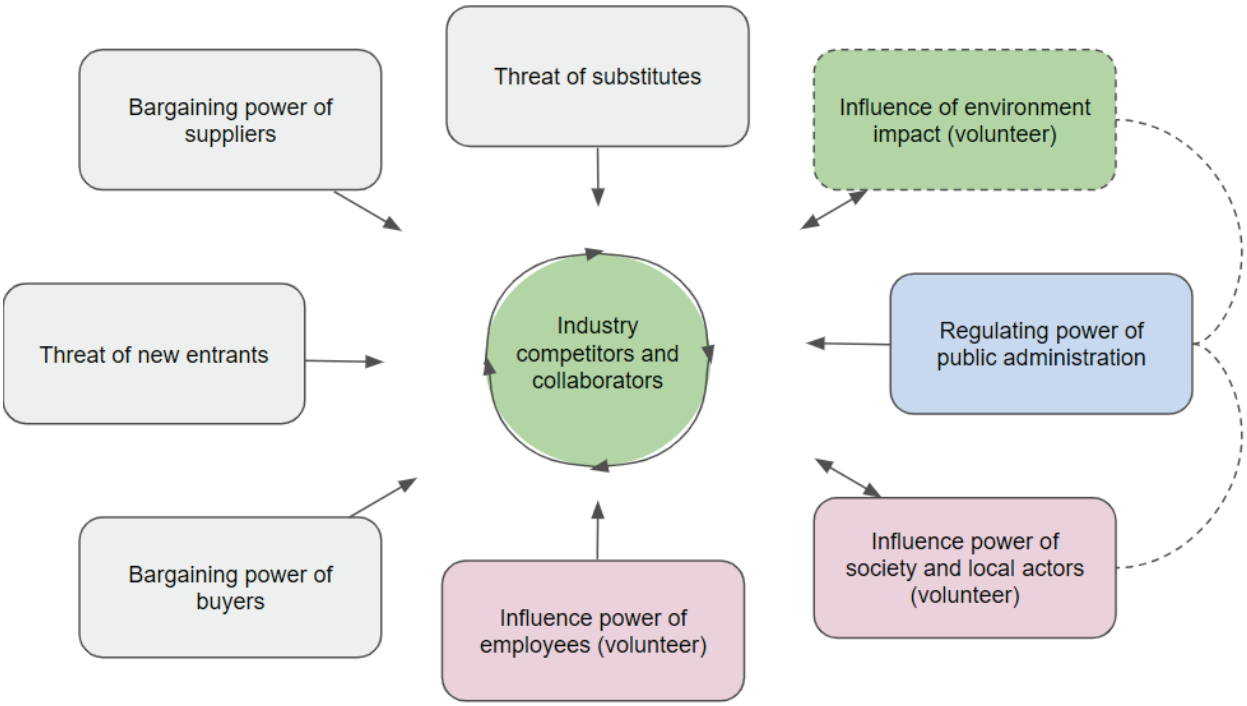

Image 8. Competitive model for a sustainability oriented market. Source: own elaboration

Conclusions. Theoretical and practical implications

Our analysis determines that, in the case of the large scale tech oligopolies, the five forces model has atrophied in such a way that can barely be considered a competitive tractor.

The great contribution of the paper is on the competitive model suggested for common good oriented companies.

The theoretical implications are a lot, as the market of big techs can't be considered "free" or "competitive" markets anymore.

The practical implications for big tech are more on the side of policy makers, who should lead an antitrust crusade against those giant corporations in the oligopoly. Not only the EU, but all governments and international economic institutions.

Regarding the common good oriented companies which coexist with traditional ones, the suggested model provides a better way to analyze the way these triple sustainable companies compete.

In the practical dimension, it can be a good model for any business to rethink its competitive strategy and start reorienting it towards a more sustainable one.

2.2 The Doce River Basin's way to the common good: mapping a sustainable path through springs restoration.

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, humanity faces a multitude of crises. There is extensive scientific literature on the complex problems resulting from entropic activities on the planet's surface, providing various perspectives for analysis. This research builds on the concept of environmental crisis, its urgent and necessary overcoming, and the understanding of the extractive economic model as the main reason for the environmental crisis.

The environmental crisis arises from the constant denial of the natural bases that sustain the economic process, a process that depends on ecological sustainability to last over time (Leff, 2022). Thus, overcoming the environmental crisis would be possible if economic processes were structured in a sustainable and environmentally integrated way. Therefore, questions about how to achieve this integration in practice become pertinent. What concrete measures can governments, companies and organized civil society take to move in this direction?

We sought to analyze this question, building on the recent work of Mariana Mazzucato (2024) on the Common Good. The Doce River Basin (DRB) was chosen because the environmental and social frictions that exist in the DRB allow us to visualize an expressive and intensified representation of the global crisis at a local level. The DRB represents the extractive economic model that spread throughout the world after the colonization of Latin America (Dussel, 1993).

Located in Brazil's Southeastern Region, the DRB stands out nationally for its environmental degradation and poor social indicators. In this Basin, organized civil society initiatives have emerged to tackle environmental issues. This research focused on the most ambitious and noteworthy of these (Espindola et al, 2022).

We analyzed the case of an ecosystem restoration initiative in the DRB, the Olhos D'Água Program (ODP), developed by the NGO Instituto Terra (IT). In a previous article (Thiago, 2023) we conducted a bibliographical review on the IT, where we noticed a gap of scientific productions about the post-ODP period. We validated this gap by interviewing the ODP management and, seeking to help fill this gap, the goal of this paper is to understand if, and to what extent the ODP affects socio-economic development in its area.

This work is divided into four sections, in addition to this introduction and final considerations. 2 presents a concise historical analysis of the regional formation of the DRB. 3 presents the IT and the ODP. 4 discusses the methodology and results. 5 builds a mission map that, with the adoption of the ODP at the micro-watershed level, together with other public policies, would have the potential to catalyze territorial development in the DRB.

2. The Doce River Basin

In 2023, the Minas Gerais State (MG) was responsible for 42% of Brazil's turnover in the mineral sector, generating 103.6 billion reais, according to the Brazilian Mining Institute data. Brito et al.

(1997) recall that at the beginning of the 18th century, gold extraction in the central area of MG guided the occupation of this territory. During this period, the dense forests on the banks of the Doce River were inaccessible to colonizers, inhabited only by native peoples, and served as a kind of protection for the mining area against gold smuggling. It was only in the mid-18th century that the Doce River region began to receive more attention as an alternative to the decline of gold mining.

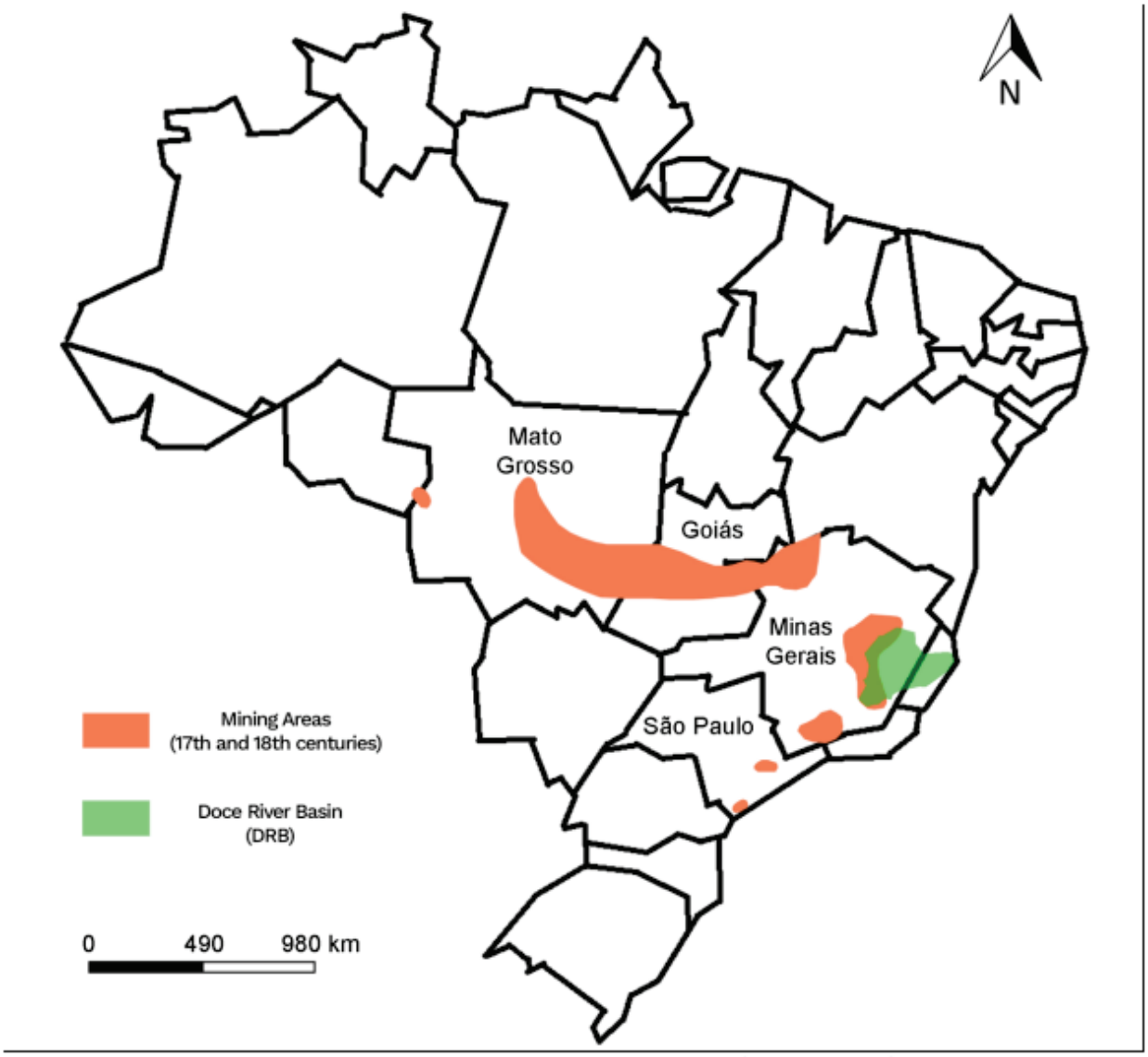

Figure 1: Mining areas and the DRB. Source: Archaeology Laboratory of the School of Philosophy and Human Sciences of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. Edited by the authors.

It was only with the arrival of foreign capital linked to steel industries, that the occupation of the DRB gained momentum. MG's mining elite saw the DRB as strategic for industrial progress through the steel industry, as it offered the perfect combination of forests, iron ore and rivers. Intense political disputes between the mining elites and external forces took place over the following decades, until in 1942 the Brazilian government set up Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD) to

establish a state monopoly on the extraction and transportation of iron ore from Itabira to the port of Tubarão in Vitória, capital of Espírito Santo State (ES).

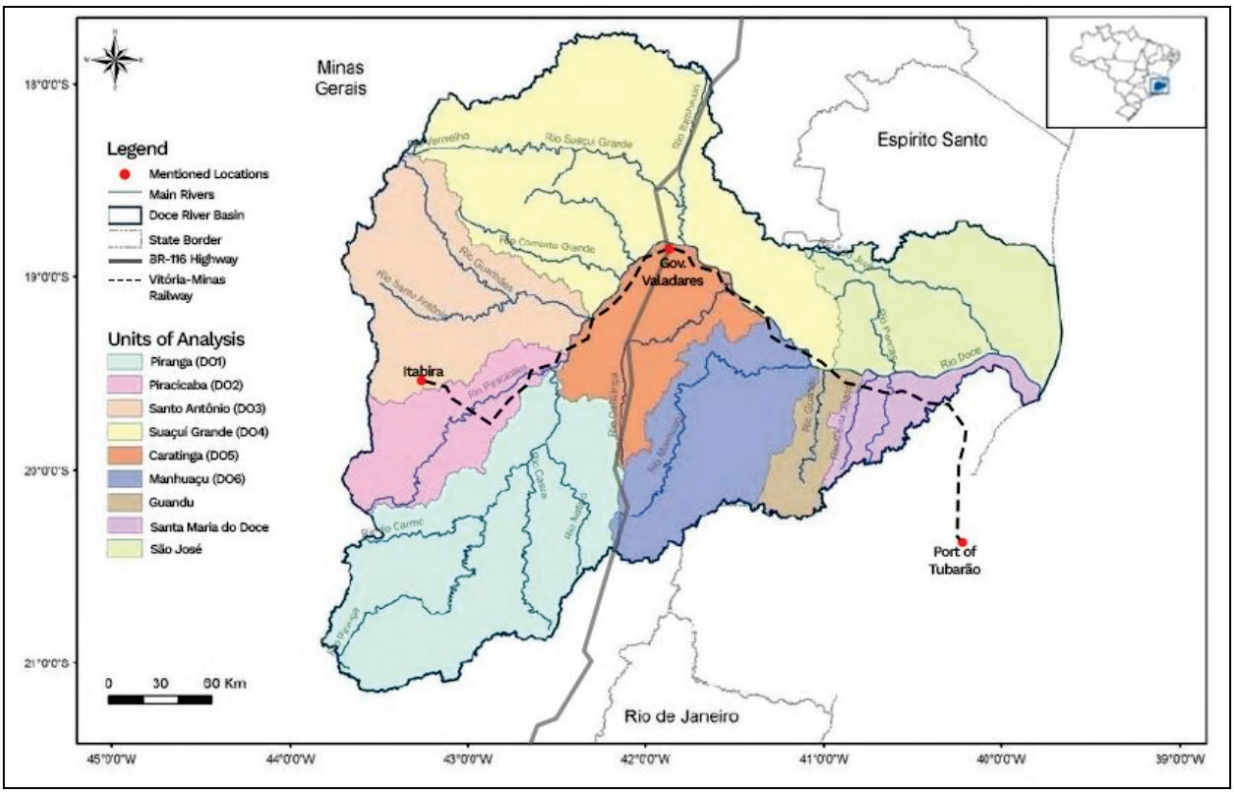

Figure 2: Location of the DRB Units of Analysis. Source, IGAM (2010), edited by the authors.

In the middle of the 20th century, the World War made the US promote the mineral extraction industry to meet its demands for iron ore and mica. During this period, there was a convergence of international, national and state interests that drove major projects and entrenched large-scale mining in the territory. This became the only possible path to development.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the city of Governador Valadares (GV) flourished with a large-scale timber and livestock industry, becoming a regional hub. GV was located at the junction between the Vitória-Minas railroad line, which connected MG to ES, and the BR-116 highway, which connected the States of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. The abundance of natural resources and the available labor force led the choice for short-term economic growth, which swallowed up the Atlantic Forest. Unbridled extractivism between 1950 and 1960 gave the DRB region higher population growth rates than the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, MG's capital.

From the 1970s onwards, this dynamic was reversed and the DRB's economic and demographic indicators fell rapidly. Espindola (2015) points out that this structural crisis in the DRB is not related to the national or State situation, since the 1970s was the peak of national economic growth. What happened was a depletion of the region's natural resources, which were quickly consumed on the previous decades.

In the 21st century, still immersed in the large-scale mining complex, the DRB became an exponent of the most tragic effects of extractivism when it was devastated by the two biggest dam collapses in national history. In 05/11/2015, the Fundão dam, in the municipality of Mariana/MG, broke, releasing 33 million cubic meters of mining tailings over the village of Bento Rodrigues and spreading a trail of destruction throughout the Basin, until it flowed into the Atlantic Ocean. Three years later, on 25/01/2019, another dam broke in Brumadinho/MG, with its 12 million cubic meters of tailings claiming 270 human lives.

Throughout this history of degradation, among all the units of analysis of the DRB, the Manhuaçu Sub-Basin (DO6) suffered the most from the direct effects of the environmental crisis. DO6 is characterized by severe droughts and rain deficit, concentrating almost 33% of the frequency of rainfall anomaly events and intense rain deficit (Louzada et al, 2018; Barbosa et al, 2020).

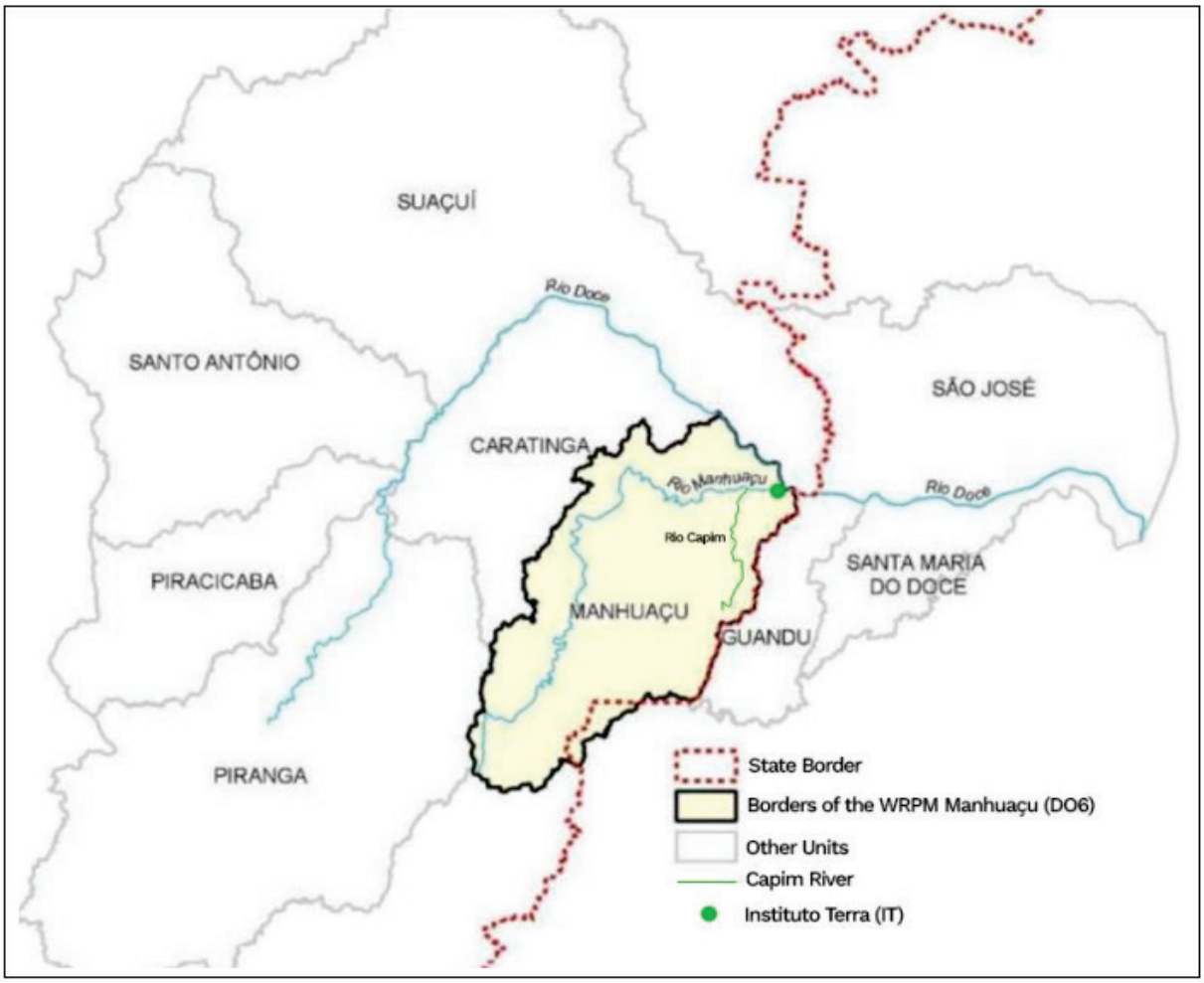

Figure 3: Delimitation of the Water Resources Planning and Management Unit (WRPM) Manhuaçu, which corresponds to the Manhuaçu River Sub-Basin. Capim River and Instituto Terra (IT) highlighted. Source, ECOPLAN-LUME, IGAM (2010). Edited by the authors.

The city of Aimorés is the hub city of the DO6, and stands out for the intensive degradation that reduced its vegetation cover to 0.3% during the early years of the 20th century (Brianezi, 2015).

Against this backdrop, the Instituto Terra (IT), founded in 1998, distinguishes itself among the conservation initiatives in the DRB (Espindola et al, 2022).

3. Instituto Terra and the Olhos D'Água Program

Based in the Fazenda Bulcão Private Natural Heritage Reserve (RPPN-FB), in Aimorés, IT is a non-profit civil organization that works for the environmental restoration and sustainable rural development of the DRB. The before and after photographs of the RPPN-FB are twelve years apart, the first with the degraded land in 2001 and the other with the forest standing in 2013. The impact of the reforestation has attracted media and academic attention (Thiago, 2023), but the work carried out by IT is not restricted to the RPPN-FB.

Figure 4: RPPN-FB 2001/2013. Source: https://institutoterra.org/o-instituto/.

The IT's mission (2023) is "to stimulate sustainable development through the recovery and conservation of forests, environmental education and the correct use of natural resources", and its field of action encompasses the 229 municipalities (203 in MG and 26 in ES) of the DRB, with an area of 82,646 km^2, developing activities such as ecosystem restoration, production of Atlantic Forest seedlings, environmental extension, environmental education and applied scientific research.

IT's exceptionality is due to the volume of funds it manages to raise through its partners, which range from Aimorés citizens to national and foreign companies. This is largely due to the media IT gets from the world-renowned photographer Sebastião Salgado, one of its founders, and the support of well-known media personalities, such as singer Gilberto Gil.

IT's Olhos D'Água Program (ODP), their most prominent initiative beyond the RPPN-FB, began with the aim of recovering and protecting the entire DRB and has become one of the best practices for recovering and conserving water resources on the planet, according to the United Nations interagency responsible for coordinating efforts and challenges related to water and sanitation (UN/Water, 2011).

Currently, the ODP has restored over 2,000 springs in the DRB, working in an integrated manner with farmers in the region. However, its goal is to restore over 300,000 springs in tributaries of the Doce River. From a pilot project started in 2010, the ODP has evolved into a detailed 30-year action plan, with actions to recover springs areas and install septic tanks on rural properties (Reis, 2016).

The methodology for carrying out the actions in the field was planned as follows: 1) mobilization of producers and evaluation of the springs in the field; 2) preparation of the project and delivery of equipment; 3) isolation of the spring and installation of the septic tank; 4) Rural Environmental Registry - CAR; 5) monitoring.

Beyond the simple mechanical activities of fencing and planting, IT sees the ODP as a catalyst for changes in the mentality of farmers, a lasting process of engagement and environmental education that includes the producer and his family, so that participants embrace the cause of restoring the DRB. From 2024, the ODP will implement agroforestry systems to offer income-generating options that are environmental friendly; it will change septic tanks to mini sewage treatment plants, which are easier to install and maintain; and it will install barraginhas (small water reservoirs).

Figure 5: Implementation of barraginha. Retains rainwater and facilitates water infiltration into the soil, helps prevent siltation and control erosion. Source: https://refloresta.institutoterra.org/terradoce.

IT carries out the activities of the ODP through various smaller projects which, when added together, achieve the main objective. Because of its headquarters in Aimorés, IT's activities have been concentrated in the DO6.

Figure 6: Side road in the Capim River Micro-watershed. You can see the hilly terrain on the horizon. Photo by the authors.

The Micro-watersheds of the DO6 have elevations of over 1,350m. The Capim River Micro-watershed stands out because it has one of the lowest annual precipitation rates in the DO6, is the second largest River in the DO6, and has plenty of experience with IT and ODP activities in its 692km^2 area that crosses the municipality of Aimorés. Between 2010 and 2018, ODP worked with 636 farmers in Aimorés.

4. Methodology and results

We conducted 20 face-to-face interviews in the Capim River Micro-watershed to capture a greater level of detail about the people and the place. The aim was to understand their perceptions of the ODP's impacts on their properties, based on the experience of each interviewee after the ODP. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed.

The transcripts were organized into a table, using Microsoft Excel, where we highlighted the main parts of each answer and identified five main issues that emerged from the interviews (Creswell, 2007): 1) "the amount of water increased a lot", 2) "they gave the fence and never came back", 3) "I can't tell the difference yet", 4) "they should give more support", 5) if there's no rain, it won't work".

To preserve the confidentiality of the participants, their names have been omitted and they are identified by numbers from 01 to 20. All the properties reported are considered small, except for the 20th, which was a large property. The properties in this research have two springs on average, ranging from one to four.

Seventeen interviews showed the ODP having a positive impact on the rural properties that have joined the Program. Interviewee 05 said that: "*the amount of water in all 3 [springs] has increased a lot. During the dry season, the water didn't flow, now it flows all year round. During droughts, it slows down a lot, but it never stops flowing. Before, when it wasn't fenced in, there was hardly any water for the cattle to drink. In the first year of being fenced in, the barraginha filled up, and in the second year, it was overflowing with*

water. It practically doubled its capacity to hold the cattle". The volume of water has grown so much on interviewee 05's property that the same area that used to support 10 heads of cattle in a drought now holds 50.

About the second issue, interviewee 11's sentence is the most representative: "*Instituto Terra gave away the fence and it never came back. If I get something from the government [referring to the equipment that IT gives to producers to fence] and it's good for me, I'm not going to take care of it?*". The interviews show that IT's work is so consolidated in the region that participating farmers even confuse it with a State Public Policy.

Among those who didn't notice the difference in ODP, two interviewees (11 and 14) didn't and still don't use water from the springs. They were therefore unable to say whether there had been any increase in water availability. Another (04) had the fencing done in 2018 and, possibly, the time needed for full recovery, which usually takes more than four years to be noticed, has not yet passed.

Interviewee 04's speech is representative of the issue demanding more financial and technical support for farmers: "*They should give more support to the producer to maintain the fence and everything. (...) It's good that you publicize what's going on, how it happened, that the project was efficient, and maybe more improvements will appear*".

Among the speeches emphasizing the rain deficit, interviewee 10's stands out: "*After it was fenced in, there was no shortage. But rain is important, if there's no rain there's no tree to solve it. A couple of years ago there was a lack of rain and it reduced it well*".

In general, the accounts of the historical context of the Atlantic Forest biome in the Capim River Micro-watershed were consistent with scientific literature (Egler, 1951; Strauch, 1955; Dean, 1996; Espindola, 2015) and presented deforestation and burning as commonplace until the end of the 20th century.

A profit-oriented view is still present among some participants, such as interviewee 15: "*I want to plant (...) trees that have a future. (...) I don't need a tree that's worth nothing. (...) for example, in twenty years, if I can saw it down and make furniture, that's good enough*". This profit-oriented thought, combined with the possibility of increasing cattle production can create a "Jevons Paradox" situation, with an increase in the efficiency of water use generating an increase in water consumption and extensive livestock activity, rather than a decrease.

Figure 7: On the left, a farmer admiring his restored spring. On the right, a glass of water straight from the spring.

5. Mapping the Doce River Basin's restoration

The bibliographic data (Thiago, 2023) reinforces the primary data we collected from the interviews and technical visits, indicating that the ODP has positive socio-economic impacts on rural properties at the Micro-watershed level. Although, IT's financial issues limits the scale of the Program. IT recently obtained funding from the German investment bank KfW to restore 4,000 springs and, if the results are positive, a further 50,000. That's almost 20% of the total 300,000. This medium-term outlook is completely disruptive for the DRB.

To increase the scale of the Program, an alternative to the financial limits thought by the ODP management was for it to be adopted as a Public Policy (PP) at the local level. However, dialogue with the DRB municipalities never produced results in this regard due to the reduced budget capacity. In this scenario, the final goal of this research was to design ways to transform the ODP into a PP for regional sustainable development.

We adopt a mission-oriented strategy, according to Mazzucato (2021). Mission-oriented PPs deal with government intervention as a catalyst for creating and structuring markets through dynamic partnerships and investments by public and private actors to solve major challenges.

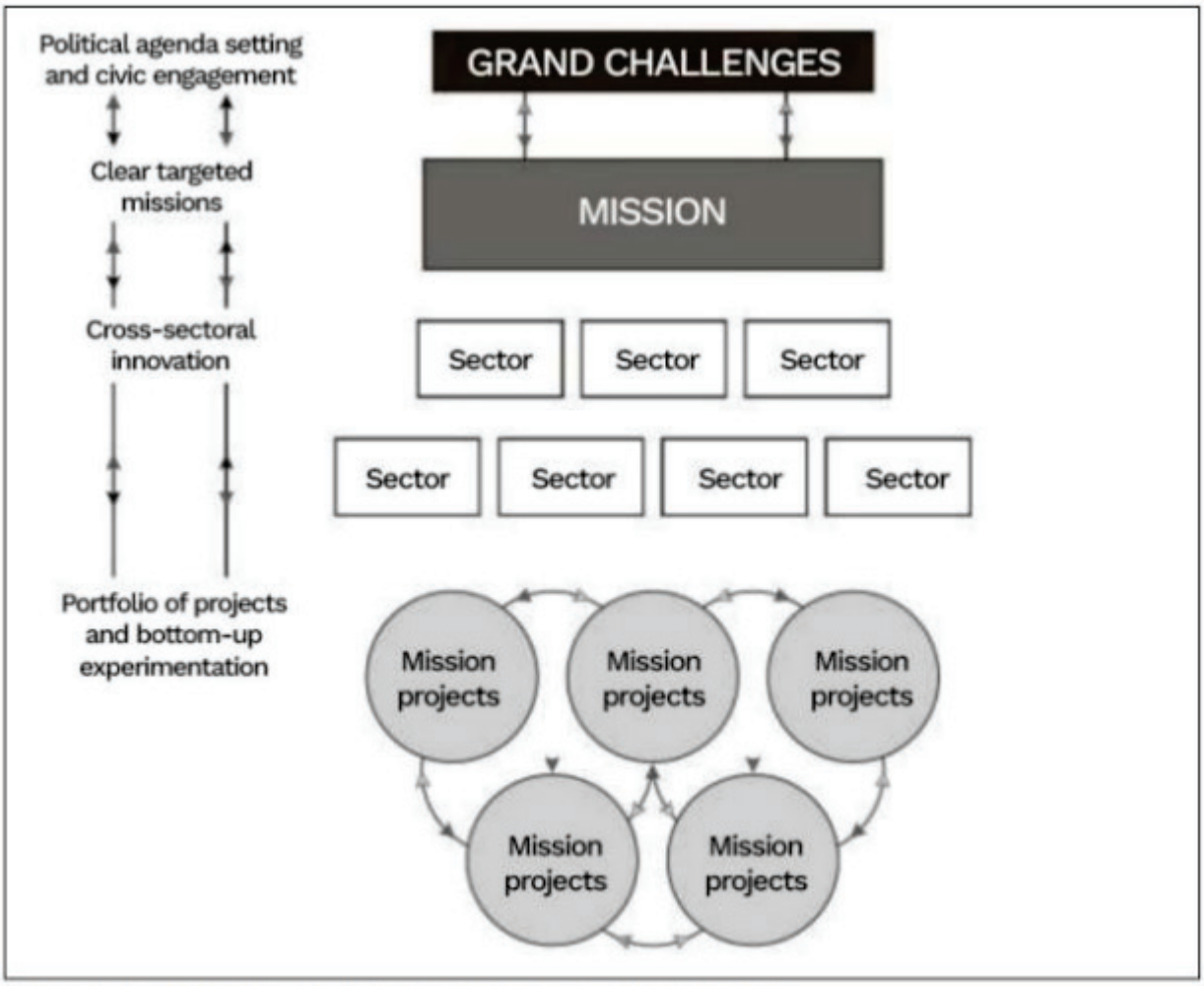

Figure 8: How to develop a Mission Map. Source, Mazzucato, 2021.

According to this methodology, the great challenge of DRB's ecosystem restoration must be on the political agenda and drive civic engagement towards specific missions. The ODP in its original version of restoring all the springs in the DRB appears as a concrete, feasible mission and, as demonstrated in this work, with the potential to promote the development of the entire region, if adopted as public policy at the regional level.

Mazzucato (2024) argues that a PP aimed at the Common Good should encompass five principles: Purpose and directionality, Co-creation and participation, Collective learning and knowledge-sharing, Access for all and reward-sharing, Transparency and accountability.

The IT's large-scale restorative mission is complex and requires integrated solutions for the territory of the DRB. The political reality dictates that the DRB must be dealt at the municipal level. This research has listed four existing PPs (three from DRB and one from the ECG in Amsterdam) which, if combined at the municipal level in the DRB, have the potential to enhance the effects of the ODP and the other PPs in a virtuous cycle of sustainable development.

5.1 Sustainable Farming - Healthy School

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) stipulates that 30% of the National Education Development Fund (FNDE) must be used to buy family farming products, but many municipalities are unable to reach this minimum percentage due to logistical and production issues. The town of Conselheiro Pena was a success case in the DRB, awarded by the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service (Sebrae) in 2022 with the project "Sustainable Farming - Healthy School" (Freitas, 2022).

The public administration helped regularizing farmers' associations to take part in the government's food procurement programs. They also get technical assistance with land preparation, and documentation to compete in public bids (Bonifácio, 2022). This case shows zero increase in expenditure, just redirecting public spending towards the municipality itself.

5.2 Agile Public Procurement

Another case is the "Developing Itabira - Agile Public Procurement" project (Lança, 2017), which increased the share of public procurement in the local market from 15% to 61% in the space of a year, with no increase in expenditure, just technical guidance for the local business. The Itabira government built a Plan so that the local businesses could organize to take part in next year's bids and included it in the Multi-Year Plan (PAA) so that it would become a permanent process.

One year into the program, the trade and services sector has become Itabira’s largest employer, overtaking the mining industry on which Itabira has historically depended. However, care must be taken to ensure that this boost to the economy does not encourage businesses that are predatory to the environment.

5.3 Building Better Business

The public administration can guide local businesses towards environmental awareness and the principles of ECG, like the city of Amsterdam is doing, helping businesses accelerate their social and environmental impacts and get certified for their performance. Businesses are encouraged to go beyond just minimizing impacts, but to reorganize themselves as creators of significant positive impact, becoming agents of change at the local level (Dyllick and Muff, 2016).

5.4 ODP at the Micro-watershed level

IT recently presented the Program "Instituto Terra's Friendly Company" in which the companies make financial contributions and receive a "Friendly Company" label while IT takes responsibility for the reforestation activities. This fundraising model can be adapted for specific Micro-watershed projects, in which the Friendly Company contributes to restoring a specific watershed.

The integration of these public policies is complex, but can be achieved through the financial incentives necessary for the initial engagement of local producers and businesses in a mission to restore a Micro-watershed that is important to the municipality (historical, cultural, for supply) in the following construction, according to a mission map for the Common Good of the DRB:

Setting the political agenda and civic engagement towards the grand challenge of	Restoration of the X River Micro Watershed
A mission with a clear objective	Recovering Y springs in the River X
Innovation across sectors	Organized Civil Society (IT and farmers' associations), Public Authorities and the private sector (business and organizations).
Portfolio of Projects and bottom-up experimentation	1) Sustainable Farming - Healthy School; 2) Agile public procurement; 3) Building Better Business; 4) ODP at the Micro-watershed level;

Figure 9: Mission Map to restore the DRB

A partnership between the municipality and IT to restore Y springs in the Rio X watershed. Producers in this watershed who will be involved in the ODP should be helped and encouraged to produce food for public purchases with PNAE funds, as in case 5.1. The adoption of an agile public procurement project, such as 5.2, integrated with technical assistance for companies to adopt a systemic vision of sustainability through the ECG, such as 5.3, should expand public procurement at a local level and create jobs while spreading the principles and values of the Common Good throughout the local community.

Businesses looking for greater socio-environmental impact can join the Instituto Terra's Friendly Company Program and allocate funds for the recovery of the Rio X watershed, closing a virtuous cycle of environmental restoration, boosting the local economy, generating jobs and strengthening the sense of belonging, as the whole community will be involved in a mission to restore its territory with positive impacts for the whole range of actors involved. Within these parameters, we believe that the ODP can become a catalyst for integrated territorial development, transformed into a PP built as a local mission.

Conclusions

Faced with the climate crisis that is pushing humanity towards an alternative to extractive development, this paper helps to fill a gap in scientific production about a Brazilian territory regeneration program, the ODP. Following the research's main goal, the interviews validated its positive impacts at the Micro-watershed level. To tackle an issue that emerged during the research, with the ODP scale, we built a mission map that can serve as a guide for alternative local models of sustainable development at the municipal level in the DRB. The map shows concrete steps that can be taken by Brazilian businesses, municipalities, and civil society together, all following the environmental agenda at the Federal and State levels. At the end, this work presents an alternative PP idea for times of crisis. Centuries ago, MG State united Brazil through its drive for gold. In this decade, the agendas and conditions are in place for MG to once again integrate the country, but now with a drive for the Common Good.

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3.1 Ecological, social and democratic value creation by member-owned and steward-owned enterprises

Jonneke de Koning, Marlon Burgerhof, Jos Bijman and Kaj Morel

1. Introduction

The transition towards an economy that meets human needs within planetary boundaries requires future-proof entrepreneurship (Raworth, 2017). The current focus on economic growth causes unsustainable pressure on planetary resources (Steffen et al., 2015). A key driver for economic growth is enterprise behavior focused on maximizing shareholder value (Nesterova, 2020; Hinton, 2020). This shareholder purpose is facilitated by ownership structures that assign both financial and control rights to individuals and organizations who have invested capital in the enterprise (Hinton, 2021). However, there are ownership structures that apply a different allocation of financial and control rights to owners and other stakeholders. We hypothesize that such alternative ownership structures are better able to create ecological, social and democratic (ESD) value.

This research will enhance understanding of the relationship between ownership structure and activities of enterprises (Hinton, 2021). Ownership structure is known to impact governance, strategy, and financial performance in investor-owned enterprises (IOEs) through owner involvement and influence on decision-making (Connelly et al., 2010). Studies have examined certain ESD values in relation to ownership structure. For instance, the Member-Owned-Enterprise (MOE) improves capabilities of members and builds social capital among members, community, and stakeholders (Novkovic et al., 2022). The Steward-Owned Enterprise (SOE) pays its employees higher wages and realizes longer-term employment than non-SOE (Børsting & Thomsen, 2017). Less is known, regarding ecological value creation and ownership structure (Bijman & Höhler, 2023; Sanders, 2023). Results are fragmented and incomplete to provide a clear understanding of the relationship between ownership and ESD value creation for different stakeholders. ***This study aims to explore how Dutch MOE and SOE, create ESD for stakeholders.***

We have collected data from MOE and SOE in the Netherlands in a multiple case-study design via in-depth interviews and reviewing enterprise reports as main data collection methods. The results of this descriptive paper contribute to the understanding of ESD value creation by enterprises with ownership structures that have the potential to safeguard a societal purpose. In addition, we present best-practices on how to put ESD value creation in practice. The paper will continue with a compact theoretical framework, an overview of the methodology, a description of the intermediate results (the results of three case-studies will be presented in this paper, the results of all six will be presented at the conference), followed by the discussion and conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework consists of the concepts purpose, ownership structure and ESD organizational value creation.

Purpose is defined as the articulation of why the organization exists (Hurst, 2016; Morel et al., 2010). Purpose can be either aimed towards achieving returns for investors or towards achieving societal benefit (Hinton, 2020). Rather than mutually exclusive categories this distinction represents different extremes on a continuum of value creation (Hinton, 2021). A societal purpose

is traditionally associated with charitable organizations (Hansmann, 1996), but more and more enterprises are now presenting societal benefit as their main reason for existence (Hinton, 2021). A transition towards an economy that meets human needs within planetary boundaries requires enterprises **to pursue ESD value creation** (Froese et al., 2023**)**. However, a societal purpose is inherently vulnerable in a traditional ownership structure, as it can easily be sacrificed for more shareholder value (Ebrahim et al., 2014). To prevent mission drift, entrepreneurs that adopt a societal purpose are exploring alternative ownership structures that support their purpose (Ebrahim et al., 2014). MOE and SOE are ownership structures with the potential to safeguard the societal purpose, as these ownership structures can decouple different ownership rights (Chaddad & Cook, 2004; Sanders, 2023).

Research on the diversity in and effect of **ownership structure** has mainly focused on corporate governance (Connelly et al., 2010). Ownership structure is defined as the specific combination of assignment of financial rights and control rights (Hansmann, 1996). Ownership structures differ in the allocation of these rights (Table 1). These differences have the potential to encourage, allow or restrain specific enterprise behavior towards advancing a societal purpose (Ebrahim et al., 2014). The IOE and the MOE are often compared in studies on the allocation of ownership rights (e.g., Chaddad & Cook, 2004). SOE is an ownership structure that was named as such only recently but has a longer history of foundation-owned enterprises (Sanders, 2023). Foundation-owned enterprises are defined as, the largest owner being a foundation, it classifies as SOE when the foundation has the majority of the voting rights (Purpose, 2023; Thomsen et al., 2018).

Table 1. Characteristics of ownership structures

	Ownership Structure			
Rights	**Single Proprietorship**	**Investor Oriented Enterprise (IOE)**	**Member-Owned Enterprise (MOE)**	**Steward-Owned Enterprise (SOE)**
Bundle of rights				
Separation of financial and control rights	No	No	Partly	Yes
Financial rights				
Assignment	Proprietor	Investors	Members	Enterprise itself
Transferability	Yes	Yes	No	No
Redeemability	No	No	Yes (under conditions)	No
Control rights				
Assignment	Proprietor	Investors	Members	Stewards
Decision making rules	Proprietor only	Votes proportional to shares	One-member-one-vote	Board collectively

Source: based on Chaddad & Cook, 2004; Sanders, 2023

MOE and SOE hold the potential to safeguard a societal purpose as these ownership structures can decouple ownership rights from financial investments (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Chaddad & Cook, 2004; Sanders, 2023). However it is unclear what kind and direction of relationships to expect between the three concepts of purpose, ownership structure and ESD value creation, see figure 1, which is why this research aims to explore ESD value creation by MOE and SOE.

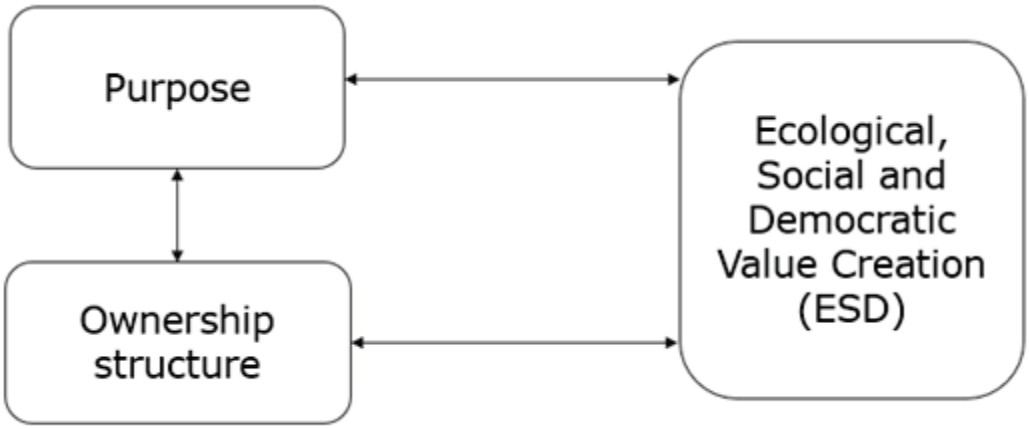

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

A multiple case-study design was employed aimed at a better understanding of ESD value creation by SOE and MOE. Case-studies were selected following replication logic (Yin, 2018). The main selection criteria, were ownership-structure (MOE, SOE or both) and pursuing a societal purpose. In addition, maximum variation on branch and size was applied to ensure data collection from the widest range possible as this allows for finding patterns that transcend both industry and size (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The selected enterprises were contacted through the Dutch Cooperative Councile (NCR) and We Are Stewards (WAS). A total six enterprises were selected: two MOE (Herenboeren and De Huisartsenconnectie), three SOE (Berenschot, Bord & Stift, and The Shore) and one that is both (Odin). Concerning variation in branches, in total five different ones were covered. Regarding size, it covers micro-enterprises (2), medium-sized enterprises (2) and large enterprises (2). In this preliminary version of the paper, the results of the first three case studies will be presented: Bord & Stift, Berenschot, and De Huisartsenconnectie. All six will be presented at the conference.

Data has been collected by means of structured in-depth interviews with representatives of each of the stakeholder groups in the enterprise, complemented with company reports. Interview questions were based on the Common Good Matrix (CGM), see Appendix II. The CGM measures the extent to which business activities employed by enterprises create ESD values for five stakeholder groups; suppliers, owners including equity and financial service providers (called owners in the rest of the paper), employees, customers including business partners and society (Felber et al., 2019). The CGM values aim to represent the universal and basic principles of human rights: human dignity, solidarity and social justice; ecological sustainability; and democratic participation and transparency (Felber et al., 2019). There is a direct overlap with ESD values. Ecological value is classified similarly, social value represents both human dignity as well as solidarity and social justice and democratic value involves participation and transparency. Hereby the CGM allows for assessing stakeholder value for each group but also its contribution to the common good by looking at the overall contribution to each of the values (Felber et al., 2019).

Data triangulation was applied in analyzing the enterprise reports. Researcher triangulation was also applied as interviews were conducted and coded by two researchers who checked each other's work. For the first three case studies in total 14 interviews were held, with 16 representatives of the enterprises, see table 2. The interviews were conducted at the enterprise site. Thematically the interview guidelines covered the CGM values. The interview questions were checked for construct validity by two ECG consultants in the Netherlands. In the content analysis of the transcripts and additional company data, practices were evaluated with regard to CGM standards, compared and counted. A value creation practice is labeled as best-practice when it is in line with the ECG Compact Balance Sheet 5.0 workbook (ECG, 2017).

Table 2. Number of interviews per enterprise and stakeholder (number of persons per interview in brackets)

Enterprise	**Total # of interviews (interviewees)**	**Suppliers**	**Owners**	**Employees**	**Customers**	**Society**
Berenschot	5 (7)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)	1 (2)	1 (1)
Bord & Stift	6 (6)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)
Huisartsen-connectie	3 (3) Supplier and owners combined; employees and society combined	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)

4. Results

The results present whether and how ESD value is created by SOE and MOE. In this paper the focus is on best-practices that were shared during the interviews. The findings are categorized per value: environmental, social and democratic aspects. The visualization of the main results is presented at the end of this section.

4.1 Ecological Value

Environmental sustainability relates to meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and to choose their own way of life (ECG, 2017). Two best-practices were found for this value, both relating to the stakeholder owners. According to ECG, best-practices for this stakeholder are seen as engaging in investment for socio-environmental impact (ECG, 2017). Both practices were found at Bord & Stift (B&S) and these are (1) profit donation to a good cause and (2) considering social and environmental effects when investing excess funds.

In the articles of association of the foundation of B&S it is noted that that **a part of the profit needs to go to good causes**. "*Team Money first decides which part of the profit needs to go to the financial reserves, but there is always a percentage that is donated to a good*

cause. Team Horizon then chooses the good cause." This team conducts research before choosing an organization and derives energy from engaging in the process. Last year it was 10% of profit.

For more information on the other practices discussed in the results please see appendix 3.

4.2 Social Value

Social aspects relate to the values human dignity and solidarity and justice. Human dignity means that every human being is valuable, unique and worthy of protection, whereas solidarity and justice are about achieving a more equal balance between the strong and the weak (ECG, 2017). Fifteen best-practices were found in this category, for all stakeholders, except suppliers and in all three cases.

For the stakeholder **owners,** six best-practices were found. According to ECG (2017) a best-practice is when an enterprise can finance its operations mainly from its financial reserves and from equity capital provided by parties with shared values or when surplus funds are first allocated to the continuity of the enterprise (ECG, 2017). The practices found were (1) control of voting rights, (2) investing profit in building financial reserves, (3) value exchange with financial partners, (4) destination of profit, (5) profit sharing with employees and (6) prioritization of enterprise continuity above individual payouts. For more information see appendix 3.

For the stakeholder **employees** four best-practices were found, this can be described as when an enterprise is manifested in an employee-focused organizational culture. People are considered to be the focus, and not a product of production. Individual structuring of employment contracts alongside extensive self-determination on the part of the employees is the stated objective (ECG, 2017). Best practices found were (1) employee focused culture (2) job crafting (3) employee wellbeing and (4) self-determined working arrangements.

For the stakeholder **customers and other companies** four best-practices were found, described as when enterprises respect customers as human beings with needs and desires, rather than just potential sources of revenue and when respectful cooperation with other enterprises takes place and they strive to improve industry standards (ECG, 2017). The examples found were (1) providing access to product/services, (2) customers with shared values, (3) cooperation with other enterprises and (4) improving standards on self-governance in organizations.

For the stakeholder **social environment** one best-practice is found at all enterprises of the case study, which can be described as the ultimate purpose of an enterprise is to produce or offer only those products and services that actively contribute to the common good and that they have been produced in a socially responsible manner that is also as environmentally sustainable as possible (ECG, 2017). What was found here is (1) purpose to contribute to the common good.

4.3 Democratic Value

Democracy relates to the values transparency and determination. Transparency can be described as the disclosure of all information relevant to the common good. Co-determination involves the participation of each stakeholder in decision-making, especially if the outcomes affect them directly (ECG, 2017). Best-practices are found in all three cases and for the stakeholders owners,

employees and social environment. For more information on the practices discussed in the results please see appendix 3.

For the stakeholder **owners** value creation is regarded as best-practice when enterprise engage in joint-decision making and responsibility with stakeholders, possibly supported by a suitable ownership structure (ECG, 2017). Four examples were found for this stakeholder, namely (1) choice of matching ownership structure, (2) self-governing organization, (3) worker-council plus and (4) civic-council.

For the stakeholder **employees** an enterprise is considered to be a best-practice when the organization is a place for active participation and involvement for all employees, thereby assuming shared responsibility, and contributing to the good of the company (ECG, 2017). Two examples were found (1) transparency in internal documents (2) distributed decision-making.

For the stakeholder **social environment** an enterprise is considered to be a best-practice when the organisation makes participation possible with regards to the legitimate interests of stakeholders and also to protect the general public from decisions that are based on a lack of information and facts or a lack of involvement of those affected by these decisions (ECG, 2017). Two examples were found here: (1) contributing to knowledge (2) civic council.

Table 3. Best-practices of ESD value creation found in the three cases

	SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	DEMOCRATIC
A: SUPPLIERS			
B: OWNERS	1. control of voting rights (3) 2. investing profit in building financial reserves (3) 3. value exchange with financial partners (1) 4. destination of profit (2) 5. profit sharing with employees (2) 6. prioritization of enterprise continuity above individual payouts (3)	1. profit donation to a good cause (1) 2. considering social and environmental effects when investing excess funds (1)	1. choice of ownership structure (3) 2. self-governing organization (1) 3. worker-council plus (1) 4. civic-council (1)
C: EMPLOYEES	7. employee focused culture (3) 8. job crafting (2) 9. self-determined working arrangements (1) 10. employee wellbeing (3)		5. transparancy in internal documents (1) 6. distributed decision-making (1)
D: CUSTOMERS	11. providing access to product/services (2) 12. customers with shared values (1) 13. cooperation with other enterprises (2) 14. improving standards on self-governing organizations (1)		
E: SOCIETY	15. purpose to contribute to the common good (3)		7. contribution to knowledge (2) 8. civic-council (1)

For the first three case-studies best-practices were found on social, environmental and democratic aspects although the amount of practices differs significantly per value. Most practices were found for social value and least for environmental value. For social value 15 unique practices were found, for environmental value 2 and for democratic value 8. In addition, not all practices are exercised by all enterprises, see table 3.

5. Discussion

The conceptual framework visualizes the hypothesis that alternative ownership structures and societal purpose are related to ESD value creation. In the intermediate results of this multiple case-study research the results show that ESD values are indeed created by SOE and MOE, although in varying degree.

The most striking variation on value show relatively more practices on social value and few on environmental value. The few practices on environmental value could be explained by the fact that all three cases sell services instead of products and therefore physical aspects are a relatively small part of operations. In addition, the purpose of these organizations is more related to social value than to ecological value. As described by Sanders (2023), SOE are open to all kinds of lawful purposes, but do not necessarily advance social or environmental value. For MOE this is line with previous research that underlines the positive impact to social values, but does not yet shed light on how ecological value creation can take place (Novkovic et al., 2022).

In the case with highest number of best-practices on ESD value-creation strong consistency is visible in the ownership-structure, purpose and ESD values, which is exemplified by the way in which the organization is structured: horizontally. This aligns with literature stating that a certain level of participation and conviviality is required in creating social and ecological value (Pansera & Fressoli, 2021).

Regarding the stakeholders most best practices on ESD value creation were found for owners. An important point to note here is that owners, in case of MOE and SOE, is about benefiting the organization, and not persons who own the organization. Value creation takes shape in the degree of independence of the organization and the concern for continuity of the organization. There is a focus on the long-term, in line with previous research. (Thomsen et al., 2018).

Value creation with regard to employees is also clearly visible. Particularly in the culture, job-crafting and attention for wellbeing. One point that contrasts literature on SOE is that employees indicate that they are not paid higher wages than non-SOE in the same industry (Børsting & Thomsen, 2017).

Value creation for suppliers was not found in this case-study. This could be partly explained by the fact that all three cases sell services instead of products and therefore procurement is a relatively small part of their operations.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore if and how Dutch MOE and SOE create ESD for stakeholders. Alternative ownership structure, societal purpose, and ESD value creation were found together in all three case-studies, however, more research is required to determine the type and direction of the relationship between them. In particular, the contribution to social and democratic values by MOE and SOE with a societal purpose has been found in the cases. Best practices on how organizations create these values have been collected, so that other organizations that aim to improve on ESD value creation can gain insights from this research. Of course, the best practices cannot be copied 1-on-1. They must be made best-fit, suitable for the organization, its purpose, strategy and design.

An important limitation of this research is that findings are based on in-depth interviews and desk-research and are not full audits. Therefore it is not possible to determine the performance level on ESD values. Instead what is possible is to show how ESD value is created. Another limitation concerns the choice for the CGM method as the basis for mapping ESD value creation. There is no consensus yet on how to measure ESD values and the area of corporate sustainability performance measurement is still underdeveloped (Maas & Reniers, 2014). More research needs to be done to establish how ESD can best be measured. This research also did not compare MOE and SOE to other ownership structures, so no conclusions can be drawn on the ability of SOE and MOE to better safeguard as societal purpose. Lastly, the case-studies have been limited to the Netherlands and further research is needed to shed light on different parts in the world.

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3.2 Exploring support for collaborative business modelling and governance design for collective action

Abstract #22

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Introduction

The sustainability transitions in our society requires deliberate collective action from multiple organisations. This implies a need to develop and implement new business models and re-design value networks. Collaborative sustainable business modelling (CSBM) is often proposed to fill this gap. CSBM is presented as a participatory process in which business models within the value network are adapted, leading to intertwined, aligned business models and long-term contracts for doing business within the value network (Rohrbeck et al. 2013).

Despite collaboration being at the core of CSBM, the aspects of governance and organization of the collaborative value creation and capture is barely addressed in literature. And exception is the work of De Man & Luvison (2019), which links governance of alliances to three high-level archetypes of collaborative business models. In line with the authors we contend that operationalization of the business model, its governance and organization is necessary to effectuate the design.

CSBM can be seen as Collective Business Action (CBA), as it refers to a specific, business model related, action taken by business organizations together. CBA can be operationalized as (multi-stakeholder) meta-organizations (MSMO) (Berkowitz 2017, Vidal & Van Buren III 2020). MSMOs are organized collectives of organizations. Because its members are organizations, they differ intrinsically form other forms of collective action, e.g., citizen collectives (Berkowitz et al. 2020). Furthermore, a cooperative can also be seen as a specific form of MO, if its members are business organizations (e.g., producer cooperatives). Cooperatives and meta-organizations are generally seen as ways to organize for collective action and address complex societal problems, such as environmental and social sustainability. In our focus on CSBM, we focus on collectives in which the members are business organizations, and the collective itself creates value in form of a service or product; as an actor in a business value network. The collective for a CSBM thus operates beyond advocacy or sharing knowledge.

Literature on MO and cooperatives provides cues to take into account when setting up and governing a collective (Rohrbeck et al. 2013, Lund N.D.,Berkowitz et al. 2020, Sanionssian et al. 2022). These approaches focus on the interplay of overarching objectives and members, but largely take the respective model as a given starting point, rather than the result of a supported strategic orientation. Although cooperatives are typically also positioned as enterprises, it is remarkable that the design of a cooperative business model has received little attention in literature, although Mazzarol et al. (2014) create an overview for cooperative business model research. They indicate that a cooperative's business model has a value proposition for its customers and also a value proposition for its members.

So, on the one hand the literature on collaborative business modelling lacks support for organization and governance, whereas on the other hand literature on MSMO and cooperatives is barely linked to collaborative business model innovation literature. Linking these streams provides an opportunity to reinforce approaches to CSBM and thereby increasing the viability, economic sustainability, and consequently the impact of emerging CSBMs.

Support for CSBM is still emerging. Derks et al. (2023), propose a participative design approach that revolves around the business model radar (Turetken et al. 2019). Such design approaches are compatible with the 'lean' way of thinking (Ries 2011). The lean approach holds that an entrepreneur should systematically design experiments to validate assumptions underpinning the business model, and informs redesigns of the business model. This is in contrast with the approaches for developing MOs and cooperatives, that are rooted in more conventional strategic planning approaches (e.g., Lund N.D.).

The research question we aim to address in our research is: "How can a design approach for CSBM be extended to include organization and governance aspects from collective business action, meta-organization and cooperative literature?". The purpose of this paper is twofold. The first is to present key aspects that should be considered when developing a business model for a business collective action. The second is to explore this canvas in context of a real-life case. For this, we take the following approach. First, we construct a preliminary framework to identify the key aspects for a business model for business collective action, based on literature on (multi-stakeholder) cooperatives, (multi-stakeholder) meta-organizations and collaborative business models. Next, we develop a prototype canvas and illustrate based on an interview with a cooperative business for impact entrepreneurs called Noorderwind. This explorative research may serve as an adequate starting point for full-fledged design research in which business modelling support for CBA is developed and evaluated.

In section 3 we briefly discuss the background for collaborative business modelling, business collective action, meta-organizations and multi-stakeholder cooperatives. In section 4 we explain our research approach. In section 5 we present our prototype business model canvas for collective action and illustrate for the Noorderwind case. We conclude this paper in section 6 by discussing our contributions and indicating avenues for further research.

Background and related work

Collaborative Business Modelling

A business model generally outlines value creation and capture, while business modelling refers to developing it. Traditionally, focus lies on individual organizations, however, interactions in the value network create value for end-users. Strategies and business model innovations drive organizational change, while sustainable business modelling (SBM) and collaborative SBM (CSBM) drive sustainability in value networks, fostering innovation. Unlike conventional models focused solely on financial value, SBM and CSBM emphasize multiple values and involve all relevant actors in strengthening the network. Various CSBM approaches exist, each emphasizing a learning process to build mutually beneficial value propositions and prevent conflicting incentives. De Man and Luvison make a useful distinction between three different types of CBMs (Sharing (combining

similar capabilities), Specialization (combining complementary capabilities) and Allocation (coordinating overlapping and complementary capabilities for risk reduction)) which also seem applicable to CSBMs. While literature originally had a strong focus on choosing a fitting business model (De Man & Luvison 2019), more attention is necessary for operationalization. Framing CBM as an alliance, which can quickly lead to high complexity as external changes can affect the partners differently and "requir[e] continuous collaboration of the collaborative business model (Arino & de la Torre 1998)" (De Man & Luvison 2019). As Derks et al. (2022) argue, the process of CSBMing itself, i.e., the design, experiment, learn and adopt approach, can help to better understand and deal with issues due to these complex interdependent processes.

In dealing with these complex operationalization challenges, De Man & Luvison (2019) give quite some pointers on governing the collective and how to shape (and re-shape) it in the wake of new external challenges. Note that they position these choices as being outside of the business model perspective. Both Governance and Organization are excluded from this perspective, because of their operational or nonstrategic nature. We argue in favour of positioning these considerations as part of the business model perspective with regards to CBM, as the governance and organization are strongly affecting the individual members' value creation and capture logic, or private benefits.

Collective Business Action (CBA) simply refers to action taken by business organizations together. This may focus on sustainability, e.g., objectives that businesses cannot achieve on their own, or that are similar to all (Vidal & Van Buren III 2020). CBA highlights the importance of inter-relationships between businesses in achieving long-term benefits for all parties (Hamann et al. 2008), e.g., efficiency, efficacy, reputations, effective management of sustainability issues, threat to one is threat to all, and pooling of resources (Vidal & Van Buren III 2020). A CBA can be positioned between state and individual business, often focusing on sector or region (Hamann et al. 2008). CBA is not only based on economic analysis, but also on political analysis (Schmitz & Nadvi 1999), as benefits are unlikely to be felt in the short term. CBA organisation and structure may however vary (Vidal & Van Buren III 2020). Bell (2008) indicates that preconditions for BCA to work are challenging, whereas Hamann et al. (2008) indicate that there is uncertainty regarding evidence. Vidal & Van Buren III (2020) However indicate that firms 'believe that BCA matters'. CBAs like trade associations, business membership associations, standard setting initiatives and multi-stakeholder initiatives can be defined as a meta-organization (Berkowitz 2017). In this paper we thus focus on CBA in which businesses are members.

Meta-organizations (MO) are organized collectives, or decided social orders, of voluntarily associated member organizations (Berkowitz et al. 2020). On behalf of its members, a meta-organization MO can facilitate interactions, coordinate joint action, develop identity and status, and handle common tasks. Member organizations can be states, firms or association. In this paper we focus on business organizations. In contrast to cooperative principles democratic voting may not be acceptable, due to large differences between organizations.

Definitions of *cooperatives* generally build on two aspects, an autonomous association of e.g., workers, producers or customers, organizations (or a mix), to meet common economic and social needs and a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Its duality or hybridity is characterised by its capability move between social and economic purposes (Levi and Davis 2008, Mazzarol et al. 2011, Mazzarol et al. 2012, Mazzarol et al. 2014). Despite not being mainstreamed,

cooperatives have a sound basis in economic practice (Lund N.D.). Often cooperatives are a response to unmet needs, e.g., lack of supply or quality, or market failures (Lund N.D.). Consumers, producers, workers and community members have differences in short term needs, long term objectives, non-financial, equity contributions and stakes in outcome, and by focusing on and governing long-term relationships, cooperatives deliberately deal with this inherent conflict of interest (Lund N.D.). Chaddad and Cook (2004) observe that cooperatives may vary (among others) in openness, conversion and redeeming of ownership, sources of equity and proportionality of power. Mazzarol et al. (2011, 2014) propose an approach to classify business model research for cooperative enterprises. It examines the co-op from three perspectives, that of the member, that of the co-op as a business entity, and the wider systems level (macro-environment).

Research approach

Our overall research approach consists of the exploratory development of a framework that serves as the basis for a business model canvas for collective action, the development of a prototype for such a canvas, and to illustrate it with a relevant collective action. The framework reflects an amalgamation of elements of collaborative business modelling, governance, collective action and cooperatives.

The purpose of the first activity, *framework and canvas development*, is to identify aspects that should be considered in the development of a business model for a collective action, and to align and cluster them into a framework. For this task, we adapted the Constant Comparative Method (CCM) (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The CCM includes an iterative process of i) Identifying and comparing expressions (e.g., in pieces of text) that are linked to emerging categories, ii) Integrating categories and their properties, followed by iii) Delimiting and writing theory. In our adaptation, we scanned the articles of the previous section for relevant aspects. These can often be found in lists, tables, frameworks and section headers. Our adaptation focuses on aspects (or concepts) rather than 'expressions'. In this (iterative) process, newly identified aspects can be appended into a category, by constantly comparing incidents with categories and categories with categories. Categories can be integrated into overarching categories. The process ended after processing of the articles. This procedure differs from conventional coding methods, as upon considering a new expression, existing categories can be broken down again. Expressions and categories are thus continuously reconsidered. The resulting framework is reflected in the Appendix. Next, the framework is represented in a prototype for a business model canvas for collective action. The result is also in the Appendix. We chose to reflect the external value proposition and the member value proposition as the core of the model, whereas an overarching foundation and principles as a top-level consideration, and organisation and processes as underpinning considerations.

Our *case study Noorderwind* aims to illustrate the concepts of the framework. By means of a semi-structured interview along the concepts of the framework, we aim to illustrate the usability of the canvas as a tool to design and understand the business model of collective action. This is done by a contextualized investigation in which it is highlighting key aspects and considerations of a business model for collective action, and showing to what extent these elements are interdependent. We found a relevant case in the Noorderwind cooperative.

Noorderwind.co in Rotterdam is a case study focusing on a cooperative of impact entrepreneurs that guides other impact start-ups from ideation to impactful outcomes. They provide process

facilitation, validation, project development and active engagement to support impact-driven entrepreneurs in navigating challenges towards the New Economy. The cooperative validates sustainable ideas, collaborates with partners to set clear directions, and helps break circular barriers to amplify impact. Notable projects include using urine for agricultural purposes, creating a business case for CO2 sequestration, and repurposing waste materials for sustainable solutions. Noorderwind is an active and visible member of the Rotterdam impact start-up ecosystem. In its years of existence, the legal entity has changed from collaboration agreement, foundation, limited business and partnership to cooperative. All along its principles and governance have evolved, but essentially remained stable.

We populated the canvas based on an interview with one of the board members and founders of Noorderwind. This interview took place online and took around one hour. Both interviewers took notes. The responses were later reviewed by one other member of the cooperative.

Results

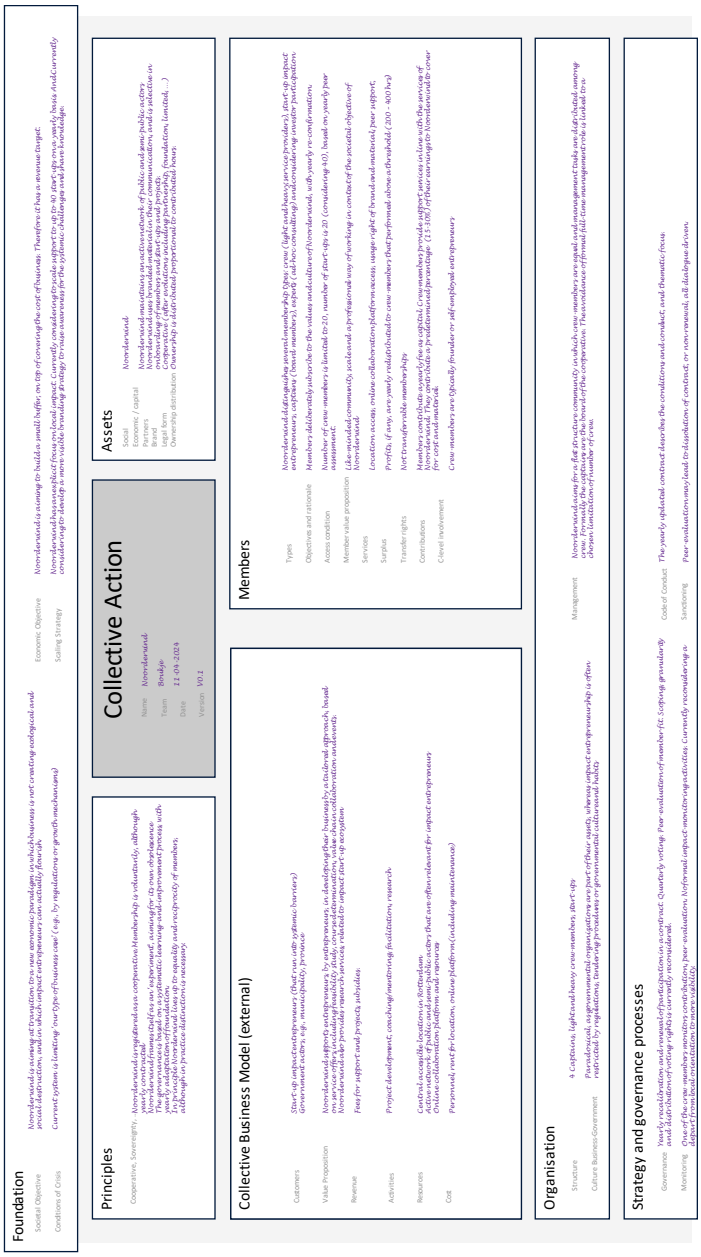

Figure 1: Collective Action Business Model Canvas with illustration of Noorderwind.co

Foundation	
Societal Objective	Noorderwind is aiming at transition to a new economic paradigm in which business is not creating ecological and social destruction, and in which impact entrepreneurs can actually flourish.
Economic Objective	Noorderwind is aiming to build a small buffer, on top of covering the cost of business. Therefore it has a revenue target.
Conditions of Crisis	Current system is limiting 'our type of business case' (e.g., by regulations or growth mechanisms)
Scaling Strategy	Noorderwind has an explicit focus on local impact. Currently considering to scale support to up to 40 start-ups on a yearly basis. And Currently considering to develop a more visible branding strategy to raise awareness for the systemic challenges and share knowledge.
Principles	
Cooperative, Sovereignty, …	Noorderwind is registered as a cooperative. Membership is voluntarily, although yearly contracted Noorderwind frames itself as an 'experiment', aiming for its own obsolescence The governance is based on a systematic learning-and-improvement process, with yearly adaptation of foundation. In principle Noorderwind lives up to equality and reciprocity of members, although in practice distinction is necessary.
Assets	
Economic / capital	Noorderwind
Partners	Noorderwind maintains an active network of public and semi-public actors
Brand	Noorderwind uses branded material in their communication, and is selective in onboarding of members and start-ups and projects.
Legal form	Cooperative (after evolutions including partnership, foundation, limited, …)
Ownership distribution	Ownership is distributed proportional to contributed hours.
Collective Business Model (external)	
Customers	Start-up impact entrepreneurs (that run into systemic barriers)
Value Proposition	Government actors, e.g., municipality, province
Revenue	Noorderwind supports entrepreneurs, by entrepreneurs, in developing their business by a tailored approach, based on service offers, including feasibility study, course determination, value chain collaboration and events.
Activities	Noorderwind also provides research services, related to impact start-up ecosystem
Resources	Fees for support and projects, subsidies.
Cost	Project development, coaching/mentoring, facilitation, research
Members	
Types	Noorderwind distinguishes several membership types: crew (light and heavy; service providers), start-up impact entrepreneurs, captains (board members), experts (ad-hoc consulting) and considering investor participation
Objectives and rationale	Members deliberately subscribe to the values and culture of Noorderwind, with yearly re-confirmation.
Access condition	Number of crew-members is limited to 20, number of start-ups is 20 (considering 40), based on yearly peer assessment.
Member value proposition	Like-minded community, scale and a professional way of working in context of the societal objective of Noorderwind
Services	Location access, online collaboration platform access, usage right of brand and material, peer support,
Surplus	Profits, if any, are yearly redistributed to crew-members that performed above a threshold (200 – 400 hrs)
Transfer rights	Not transferrable memberships
Contributions	Members contribute a yearly fee as capital. Crew-members provide support services in line with the services of Noorderwind. They contribute a predetermined percentage (15-30%) of their earnings to Noorderwind to cover for cost and material.
C-level involvement	Crew-members are typically founder or self-employed entrepreneurs
Organisation	
Structure	4 Captains, light and heavy crew-members, start-ups
Management	Noorderwind aims for a flat structure community in which crew-members are equal and management tasks are distributed among crew. Formally the captains are the board of the cooperative. The avoidance of formal full-time management role is linked to a chosen limitation of number of crew.
Culture Business-Government	Paradoxical, as governmental organizations are part of their assets, whereas impact entrepreneurship is often restricted by regulations, tendering procedures or governmental culture and habits
Strategy and governance processes	
Governance	Yearly recalibration and renewal of participation in a contract. Quarterly voting. Peer-evaluation of member-fit. Scoping, granularity and distribution of voting rights is currently reconsidered.
Code of Conduct	The yearly updated contract describes the conditions and conduct, and thematic focus.
Monitoring	One of the crew-members monitors contribution, peer-evaluation. No formal impact-monitoring activities. Currently reconsidering a depart from local orientation to more visibility.
Sanctioning	Peer-evaluation may lead to dissolution of contract, or non-renewal, all dialogue driven.

Table 1: Business Model framework for Business Collective Action with illustration of Noorderwind

The interview of an hour proved to be sufficient to discuss all aspects and where needed explain the answers. Oftentimes the answers were illustrated by relevant examples. One of the key insights based on this exercise were that the Noorderwind collective has a systematic approach to learning. It was indicated that the lean start-up approach that they use to support start-ups was also applied to their own organisation. Furthermore, yearly the focal themes and the governance of the collective is re-evaluated. The members participate in this process, and they can either commit or discontinue their membership. This allows the collective to implement learnings from the past and it also seems to create flexibility and renewed commitment. During the interview several considerations in the design of the collective action were highlighted. For example, the number of start-ups to be supported is currently 20, but the collective is considering whether that should be scaled to 40. This would however decrease the attention of crew members to individual start-ups, and perhaps also the collective's capability to solve the start-ups' problems. Also, the cooperative is reconsidering its principle to not spend resources on increasing its visibility, whereas recently members of the cooperative it would be necessary to highlight the systemic challenges of the impact start-ups. Another example is the consideration of creating a specific membership for investors. Examples of the interrelatedness of aspects of the canvas are for example related to the principle of equality among members versus the recent discussions to distinguish voting rights between heavy and light crew members (governance). Another example of interrelatedness is that the cooperative strives to avoid a dedicated management employee. This limits the number of crewmembers, and thus also the scale of the collective. The interviewee indicated at the end of the interview that she felt no key aspects were omitted.

Conclusion

In this paper we demonstrated an exploratory prototype of a business model canvas for collective action, using the Noorderwind case. A business model for a collective action differs from a conventional business model as the collective has an 'external' value proposition facing non-members, and simultaneously an 'internal' value proposition towards its members. Members can play a role in the value creation process of the external value proposition, as illustrated by the Noorderwind case. These value propositions are interrelated as the external value proposition affects the benefits for the members, and thus their incentive to participate. Furthermore, the collective requires governance. The governance specifies to a large extent how the collective is organized and what conditions members should meet. On the one hand the governance affects the proposition towards members, and simultaneously, as in the Noorderwind case, it is co-created by the members. The governance also specifies how the collective deals with the resources necessary for the external value proposition. Consequently, this interrelatedness of value propositions and governance can be considered a specific form of multi-sidedness (Hagiu & Wright 2015), and warrants in our view a specific coherent approach to business modelling.

Our exploratory prototype reflects key aspects related to business models for collective action found in literature. The demonstration of the prototype suggests this canvas puts forward key

aspects in the design of collective action in coherence. Furthermore, this research contributes to the field of collaborative business modelling by extending theory to include collective action and governance. Conversely it links collaborative business modelling to the field of collective action and cooperatives.

Practice can benefit from this approach when developing or assessing a new collective action. The approach allows practitioners to quickly sketch the key topics necessary to strategize a collective action. Practical application can, as practice in the lean start-up approach (Ries 2011), with systematically testing critical assumptions and improving the business model design.

However, despite these promising results, it should be noted that implications of this research should be taken with caution, given its exploratory nature. The research can be improved in the following ways. Firstly, the basis for the framework can be improved using a more rigorous systemic approach. Secondly, the development of the canvas can benefit from further development, demonstration and evaluation in multiple design cycles following the guidelines for design science research (Peffers et al. 2007). A careful selection of cases and industries in which to apply, and with whom should be part of such methodology. Thirdly, the design of the representation of the tool can be optimized following guidelines for adaptation of business model canvases (Lauff et al. 2019).

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Appendix

Sources for framework

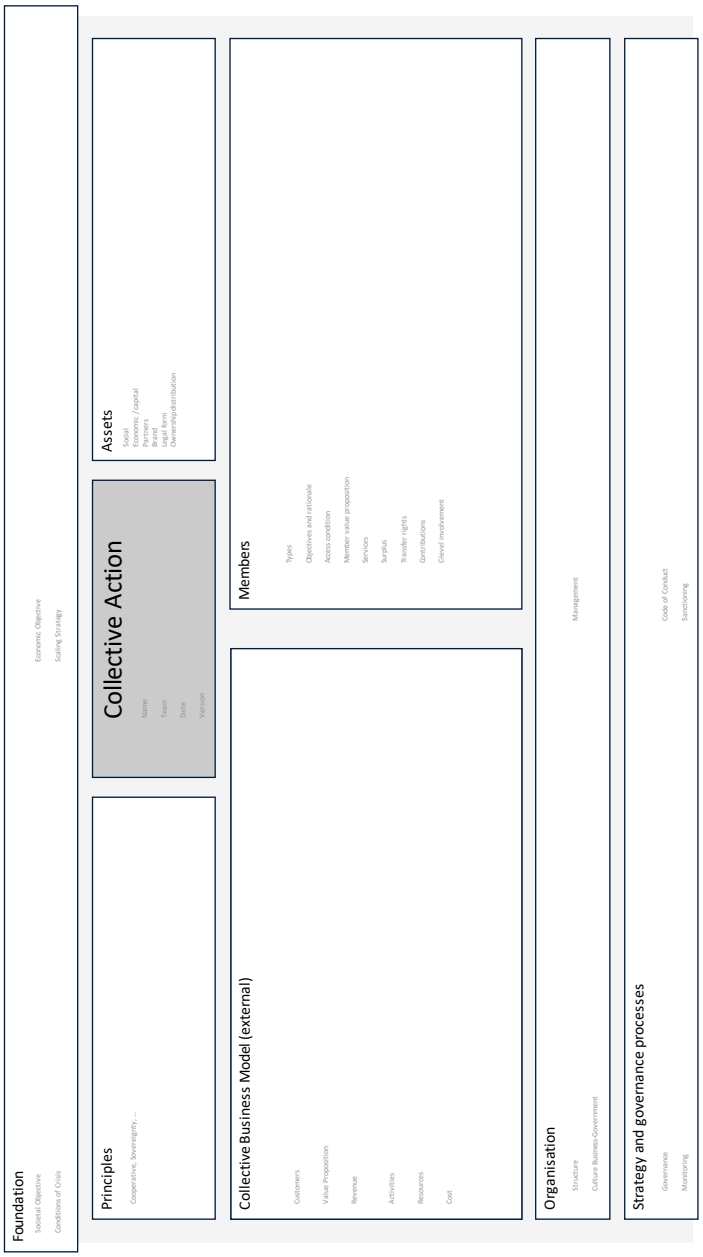
Value creation, Economies of Scale, Skill, Risk, Capabilities, Relationships (H, V, Diagonal), Value creation potential, Value Capture Mechanisms, Value delivery, Interdependence (information processing) , Level of integration; Managing incentives, Relationship building, Accountability and decision making, C-level role, Reporting	L
System (Economic, Social); Enterprise (Member Value proposition; Purpose, Profit-formula, Process, Resources, Share Structure, Governance); Member (investor, patron, owner, community)	K
user membership classes (consumers, clients, families of clients, institutional purchasers, producers, groups of producers, intermediaries (processors, distributors, etc.)); Worker membership classes; Supporter member classes (community, investor). Governance rights, surplus, transfer rights,	O
membership, rules, hierarchy, monitoring and sanctions Purposes: governance of comanagement activities (2) advocacy activities, boundary and category work, and (4) service provision	A
definition, purpose, participants, partial issue management, nature of responses to issues (B2B CRC, trade associations, MSIs)	E
international trade linkages, 2) institutional framework (sanctions and trust), 3) role of public sector support, 4) internal governance, accountability and management structures and processes established in the cluster	J
relatively small number of players, conditions of crisis, leadership involvement, commitment, perceived crisis or threat or opportunity, discursive process 3) political actors or entrepreneurs who are able and prepared to absorb the costs of mobilizing business for collective action. Culture of business-government relation (ingrained belief in the autonomy of the firm, distrust of government)	I
Co-created value in use, actor, activity / resource, value proposition, cost / benefit	P

Framework

Collective Action	
Name	
Team	
Date	
Version	
Foundation	
Societal Objective	
Economic Objective	
Conditions of Crisis	
Scaling Strategy	
Principles	
Cooperative, Sovereignty, …	
Assets	
Economic / capital	
Partners	
Brand	
Legal form	
Ownership distribution	
Collective Business Model (external)	
Customers	
Value Proposition	
Revenue	
Activities	
Resources	
Cost	
Members	
Types	
Objectives and rationale	
Access condition	
Member value proposition	
Services	
Surplus	
Transfer rights	
Contributions	
C-level involvement	
Organisation	
Structure	
Management	
Culture Business-Government	
Strategy and governance processes	
Governance	

Code of Conduct	
Monitoring	
Sanctioning	

Canvas



4.1 A mindset to foster a culture of economic well-being

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Introduction

The transition towards an economy of well-being[1] is complex, systemic, dynamic, and uncertain. Individuals and organizations struggle to connect with and embrace their changing contexts[2]. In the face of uncertainty, humans cling to the known and fear the unknown[3]. To support individuals and organizations with these challenges, this paper presents a model and framework for a culture of economic well-being based on individual and collective intrinsic values. The model is called the "Mandala of Agency" (MoA) and places the individual at the core of systemic change with values as the leverage points. The MoA is based on theoretical exploration with parts validated by empirical research. In this paper, I will elaborate on the MoA in organizational settings. There are 2 main components, namely:

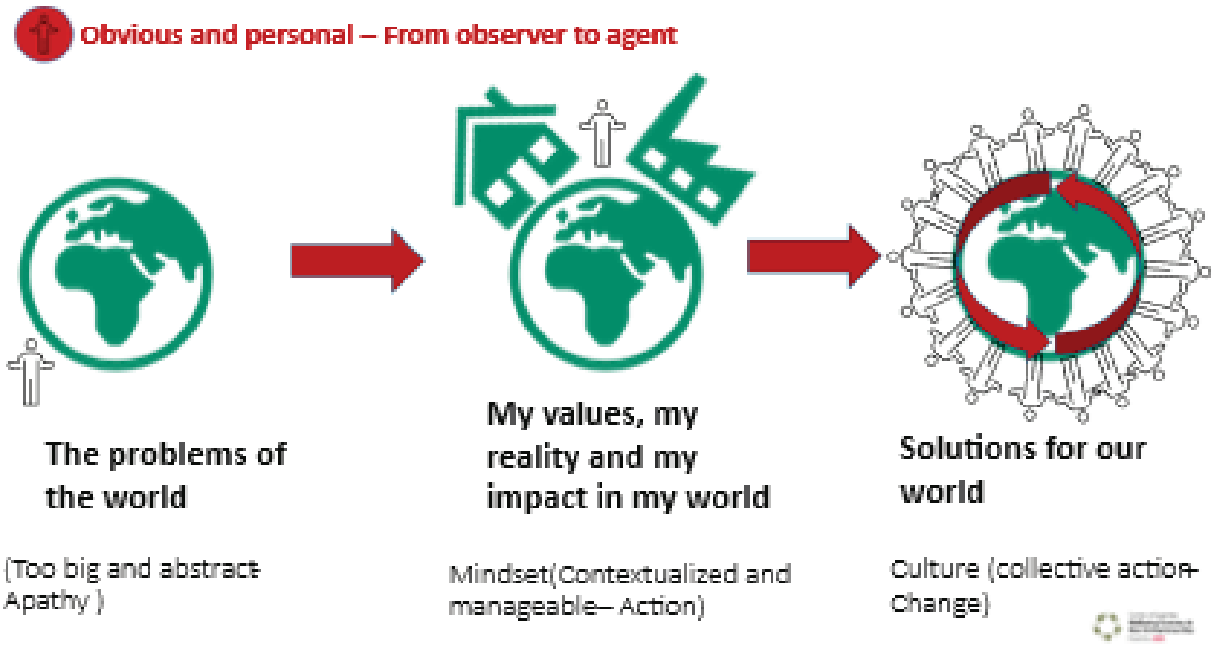
The mindset – **Agents -** uncover the dynamic and multi-identity self and connect with the challenges of the situation to create the individual context. Individuals exercise, regain, and re-exercise individual agency, freedom, and responsibility to agentively identify the values, mental models, and context to construct the personal vision of individual valuable lives.

The culture – Collective agency - merges individual valuable lives with the valuable lives of other stakeholders in the organization. It is based on appreciating and respecting the multi-identity, and dynamic self of others, and building ties with stakeholders based on trust, collaboration, and shared values. Integrating both individual and shared values, in a bottom-up and inclusive manner into the strategic framework and contextual realities of the organization. This can translate into new business models to embed multidimensional value. **Collective action - The joint actions** translate individual and shared values into the manageable and measurable actions needed to create valuable lives. Thus allowing us to face uncertainty, dismantle paradigms, and create new realities that are conducive for an economy of well-being to emerge.

Background

At the core of economic well-being lies the ability of individuals to live the lives that we have a reason to value[4]. Empirical evidence[5] demonstrates that who we are and what we value is not top of mind, limiting our own ability to lead valuable lives. Many of the choices we make arise from narratives and values constructed for us by external influences[6]. The knowledge of the individual self enables us to act in autonomous and self-directed ways[7].

In our era of uncertainty, individuals and organizations struggle to connect with and embrace their changing contexts. Organizations are instrumental in generating multiple types of value and redefining growth. Organizational change does not come easy and it is hard to gain the endorsement of all stakeholders.



The Cartesian division[8] between mind and matter generated a separation of the self, where values were separated from scientific facts[9]. The subjectivity of the self was for a very long time regarded as non-scientific and thus excluded from scientific exploration. This view of the world also separated the individuals from one another, people and planet.

The current narratives of the social and economic challenges and the big transitions of our era are not conducive to change. Concepts like sustainability and regeneration can mean different things, for different people in different situations, creating different contexts and making it difficult for the individual to connect with the external narratives. This feeling isolates individuals and generates apathy towards potential action, placing individuals as a passive observer of a reality they feel they cannot influence.

The Mandala of Agency

The MoA has been purposely designed to be applicable in different contexts and to resonate with a wide variety of audiences. It does not strive for simplicity, rather it aims at presenting in a holistic, structured, and actionable manner, a route to identify and live valuable lives[10]. The MoA strives to activate and cultivate the intrinsic motivations of individuals with the exercise of their agency, freedom, and responsibility. The Mandala is an interdisciplinary model and framework where several methods, theories, and concepts interact and blend[11]. It is to be implemented in a context where basic needs have been fulfilled and in liberal democracies with a well-established institutional framework.

The visualization of the complete model took the form of a Mandala. In some cultures[12], mandalas represent a map, a journey of consciousness toward transformation and self-discovery. In other cultures, mandala-shaped images represent a

journey of progression[13]. The inside-out nature of the mandala represents a process of growth and expansion of the self, the self in its context, and the self with others (people and planet). The MoA is a non-static, dynamic, and progressive journey for the continuous becoming of the self, the others, and the context.

The totality of the journey consists of 6 expanding steps.

Mindset, individual agency (Inner-circle)

Who I am – Defining the self

What I value – Identifying valuable life and vision for self

What I do where I am – Linking individual valuable lives to organizational context

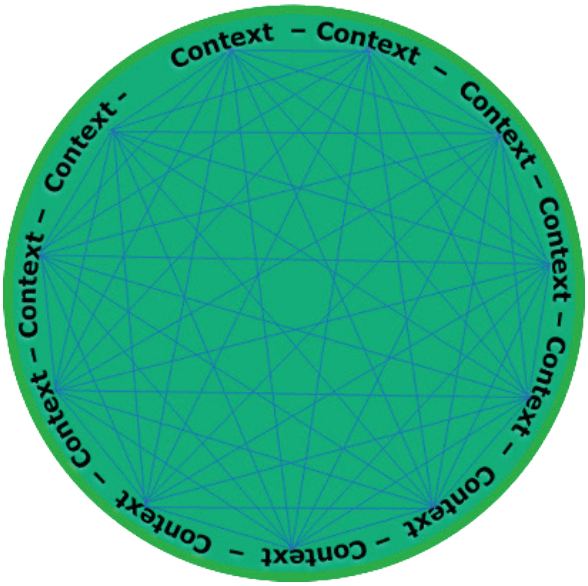
Culture – Collective Agency (outer-circle)

Who are we and what we value – Weaving visions together

Where we want to be - Embedding collective vision in organization

How we get there – Collective Actions

Context



Context is the set of interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs[14]. Originally from the Latin "*contexere*" which means to weave or join together[15].

For the mandala, **context is "the framework that captures and embeds the interconnected circumstances and patterns that give a certain situation(s), in a specific moment, a specific meaning".**

In the journey of the mandala, context expands with the individuals. It evolves from situation(s) to personal context, to collective context, to collective context for action. Therefore, the point of departure is setting the scene of the situation and guiding individuals to contextualize it based on their understanding. Examples of situations can be; nature-inclusive sustainability, regeneration, energy transition, and so forth.

Top of Form

The Mindset - Agent

A mindset is the set of underlying values and beliefs about the self, which shapes the approach to challenges, resilience, and willingness to learn and grow[16]. For the mandala, **mindset is "the dynamic outlook that we have, to use our cognition and consciousness to see, react and create the world around us".**

The key elements of the mindset are; values, identities, mental models, and context which are identified with freedom, agency, and responsibility to articulate and pursue their valuable lives[17].

The mandala does not pursue individualism, rather, seeks to support the individual to connect with the true-self to better connect with the other and together face the

systemic issues of our era in transitions. The MoA sees the individual as a relational agent who cannot exist In isolation but who knows to think independently.

1 - Who I am - Me

Who we are is a difficult question to answer, which makes it easy for many of us to rely on what the media or institutions tell us that we need to be and to have to live fulfilled lives. Empirical research[18] shows that who we are and what we intrinsically value are not top of mind. Just like our contexts, we are in a continuous state of becoming[19].

By asking these questions and identifying our intrinsic answer, we ignite our becoming as agentive and responsible citizens aiming at being truly free. We open-out control of our choices and learn to respect the choices of others, willingly acting together[20].

Values

At the core of an economy of well-being are the capabilities that individuals have to live valuable lives[21]. To understand what that means, we need to know what we intrinsically value; this knowledge will only emerge with the identification of our values.

Values guide our actions, challenge our assumptions, and enable new ways of thinking to emerge that promote well-being. In the MoA, **values are: "A set of personal choices identified with freedom, agency, responsibility, and consciousness to be applied in a given time/context to enhance individual well-being and make lives valuable"[22].** They are the leverage points for systemic change[23].

Values are not categorized or predetermined by a fixed moral or ethical construct. They are dynamic, multifaceted, and always evolving, like the individual.

It is the knowledge of our values and their dynamism that enables us to define ourselves, see our evolution, articulate our multiple identities, make decisions, adapt, and grow. The MoA gives attention to 3 distinctive identities; individual, professional, and world-citizen.

Identity

For the MoA, **identity is: "the choice we have to define ourselves in a given role, moment in time and context. It is through the understanding of the interplay of our identities that we can integrate and prioritize what constitutes the self."**

The construction of our identities determines how we think about ourselves and about the other[24]. This understanding determines what actions we are motivated to take. The better we internalize our identities, the more autonomous we become in guiding our lives, and, the more connected we become to others[25].

When we exercise our agency we can create genuine identities. When we allow our identities to be built based on the values developed by others for us, we outsource our ability to be ourselves, we commoditize our identities and ourselves[26]and our relationships with others.

2 - What I value – My vision

Mental Models

Mental models provide the cognitive tools and frameworks needed to navigate uncertain and complex systems. They enhance our ability to understand, analyze, and act[27] to promote positive outcomes and address systemic challenges[28]. Mental models enable us to choose to think differently so that we can feel differently[29] and, act differently.

The engagement of the mind does not mean rationalizing in the form of mathematizing or analysis. The mind is a process[30]. For the mandala, **mental models are: "the engagement of consciousness and cognition to become cognizant of how we construct our thoughts and become intentional in the way in which we construct our narratives and thus our realities.**

The 12 Mental Models in the MoA present the necessary ways of thinking to face the systemic complexity to achieve a culture of economic well-being[31]. They are meant to be in continuous interaction with each other.

Building a personal narrative - understand and align values, thoughts, and behaviour. Independent-thinking

Zoom in – Convergence to filter existing information to pay attention to the details. Critical and analytical-thinking

Zoom out – Divergence to gather new information to explore the unknown, and build the big picture. Creative, inquisitive, and lateral-thinking

Systems thinking – Interconnectedness, patterns and dynamism of components while seeing the whole.

Self-reflection -Transformation of acquired knowledge into personal growth acknowledging the feelings we feel.[32]

Sense-making – Data-collection process to assess the plausibility of something[33].

Both/and thinking - Reconciliation and integration of apparent dichotomous/paradoxical notions, moving us away from either/or thinking[34].

Empathy and compassion - Understanding experiences of others, fostering collaboration[35] , and sharing our humanity"[36]

Long-term thinking - Thinking about the future for ourselves and for those around us.

Resilience – Flexibility to deal with uncertainty and complexity and to embrace chaos.

Interbeing - Embracing the interconnectedness with everything around us.

Frugal thinking – maximizing resources and minimizing waste, focusing on the key features that matter, letting go of the rest.

Mental models, together with values, enable the articulation of the individual's vision of a valuable life. Empirical research[37] shows that upon identification of values, mental models, and acknowledgment of our multiple identities, individuals intrinsically widen their definition of sustainability to include their interactions with others, accountability of their behaviour, and awareness of their actions.

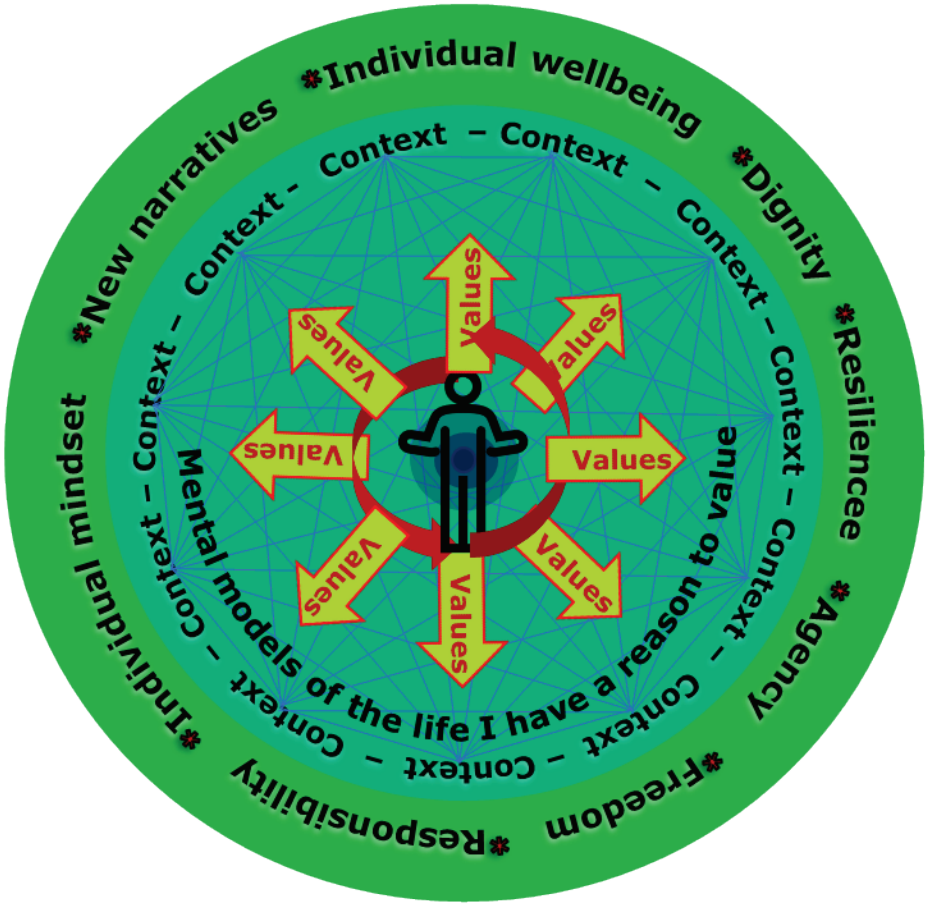
3 - What I do where I am – My vision in my context, the organization

Organizations, like individuals, are amid interconnected transitions, and in this process, are becoming more conscious of their environmental and social impacts and are starting to explore new business models to adapt to their new realities.

Based on the understanding of the self, its values, and mental models, the organizational situation is contextualized by the individual. On this basis, the individual understands the impact that the pursuit of their vision of a valuable life can create. Thus, increasing their level of competency[38] in relationship with their environment and drive intrinsic motivations to act for change[39].

Empirical research[40] demonstrates that upon the understanding of the organization context, and the linkage to the valuable lives of the individuals, shared values emerge naturally; Connection, Cooperation, Meaningful work/Making a difference. Further, individuals move from individual actions to collective and proactive interactions[41].

To wrap up the mindset journey: agency, freedom, and responsibility are the means and the ends that help us understand values, mental models and, valuable lives, create new narratives to live dignified lives, become more resilient and, agentively create our own well-being.



The Culture – Collective Agent

Culture is a dynamic and evolving concept. Many different definitions of culture exist. Yuval Noah Harari defines it as *"…collection of artificial instances that enables millions of strangers to collaborate and cooperate"*[42]. Culture indeed brings us close to others, driving our collaboration. Living by the narratives created by others for us, we collaborate based on artificial instances. Exercising our agency, freedom, and responsibility, we connect and collaborate based on genuine and intrinsic instances.

For the mandala, **culture is: "the dynamic interplay between individual and collective intrinsic values and their many different forms and manifestations in a particular context that creates shared perspectives and collective agency".**

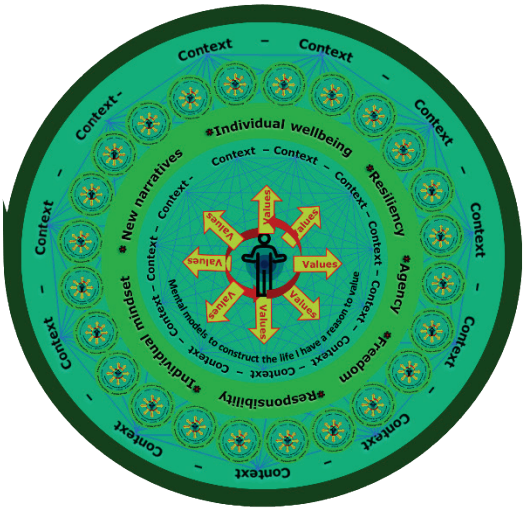
4 - Who are we and what we value – Our vision

The ensemble of agentive individuals creates dynamic and synergistic relationships that foster collaboration and shared responsibility. Individual visions are woven into a

collective vision in a bottom-up/inclusive manner. Stakeholders engage with empathy and respect and generate mutual understanding of their respective valuable lives.

It is from a place of expanded connection with the self that the individual can create genuine connections with others[43][44] and together create the cultures that will foster their collective valuable lives. Relatedness creates belonging to one another, which promotes intrinsic motivations to act and overall well-being[45] . It is through our ability to relate that cultures are created and transmitted[46].

The vision is a driver of strategy. In the process of creating a vision, stakeholders embed their mindsets in the organization. It is not only what the vision is, it is also what the vision does[47]; build individual and organizational resilience to embrace shared futures[48] and construct collective valuable lives. In this process, the organization becomes a collective agent.



5 - Where we want to be – Our vision in the organization

As stakeholders shape their mindsets, organizations need to shape their cultures and strategies. Often, strategies are created at the top and presented top-down for implementation, which is not conducive to activating people's intrinsic motivations to support the organization and create the change needed to face the transitions of our era. The MoA presents a bottom-up approach to organizational cultural change. Where the strategic objectives of the organization are developed based on the shared values and vision of its stakeholders in the organizational context.

Based on weaving individual contexts, a common context emerges. Here a gap analysis can be conducted to see existing realities and identify missing steps to get where the team defined they want to be. This can be done across projects or teams within the organization.

The alignment of shared values and shared vision not only strengthens organizational cohesion and resilience, but also nurtures cultures of collaboration, solidarity, and inclusive growth. This, in turn, fosters well-being for all stakeholders and for the organization.

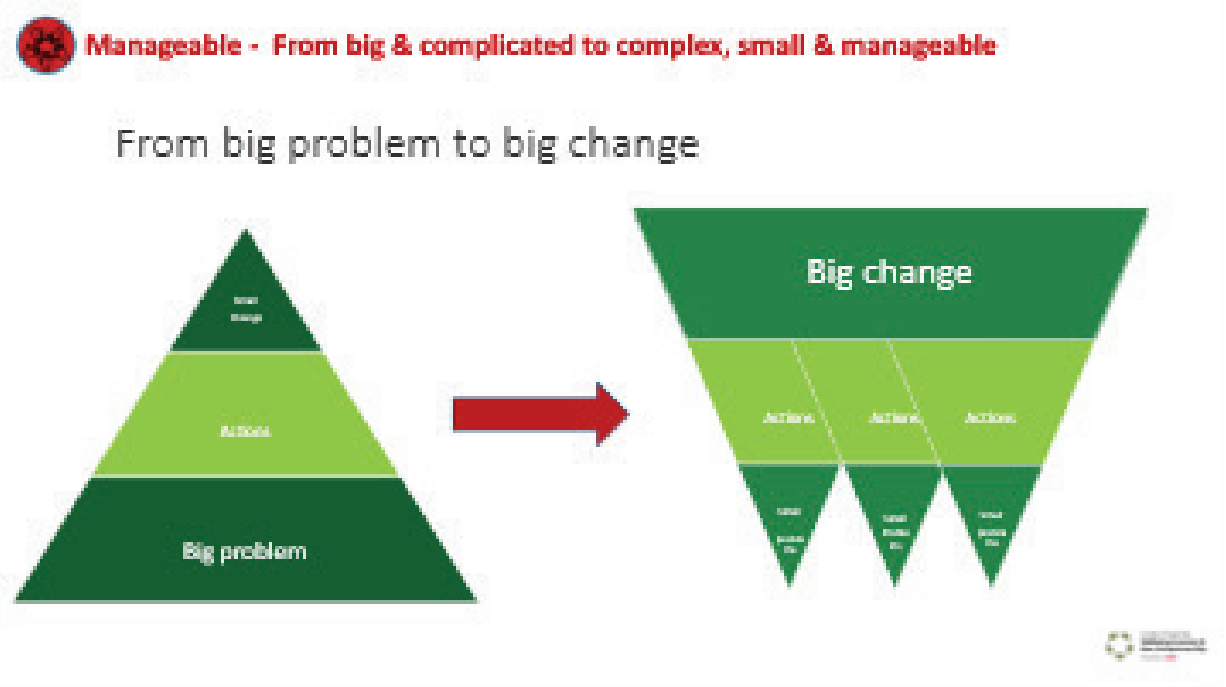
Empirical research[49] shows that when aiming at creating value based on the intrinsic values that we hold and being true to the self-identified valuable lives, individuals strive to create value beyond financial value and expand into social, environmental, cultural, and experiential value. On this basis, new business models can emerge for the organization, where multidimensional indicators can reflect the multi-dimensional value the organization strives to create.

6 – How we get there – Collective Action

Understanding is not changing[50], therefore, the last part of the mandala identifies the collective actions that need to be taken to realize the jointly created organizational vision.

Individuals become agents of their own well-being in a process that brings them close to one-another. In the same way, organizations can become collective agents, who can produce multidimensional value for their prosperity and that of those collective agents around them.

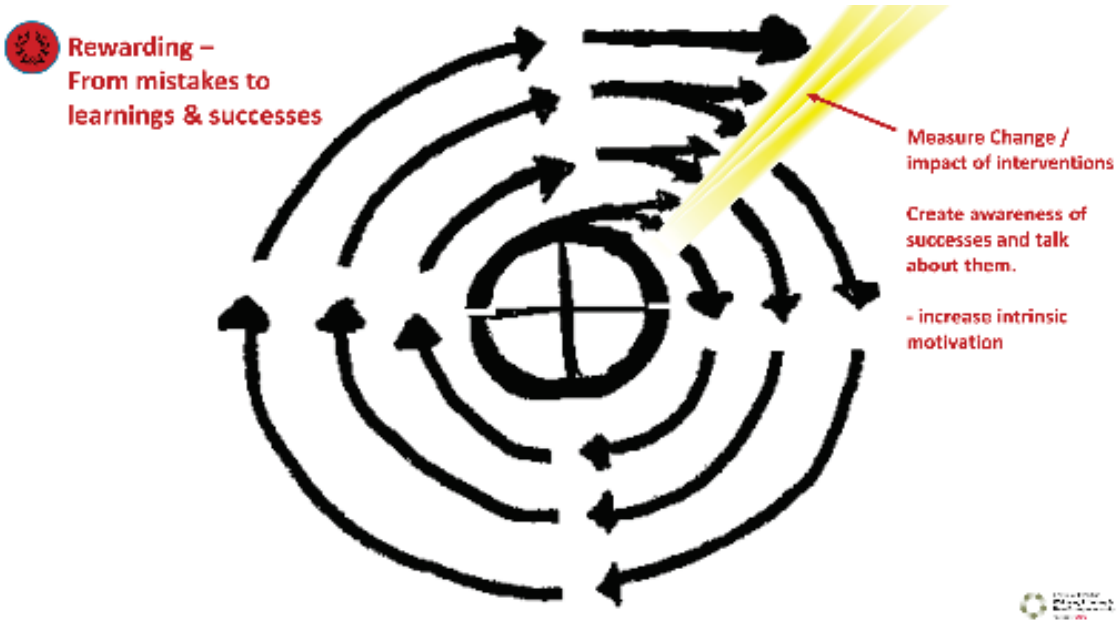
The interplay between individual mindset and collective culture gives rise to actions that are driven by intrinsic motivations, rooted in personal and shared values and visions. These actions reflect a commitment to personal development, collaboration, and contribution to collective well-being. Within the organizations, individuals engage meaningfully in the realization of shared visions and strategies.



Organizations can go beyond financial value-driven models, with the active collaboration of its engaged stakeholders and create multidimensional value to achieve an economy of well-being. Actions are also to be measured with multidimensional indicators to reflect the multidimensionality of the value they will strive to create.

As actions are identified, it is important to keep them manageable and structure them on a measurable manner.

By understanding the multidimensional value the organization strives to create, problems can be broken down into smaller problems and dimensions and contextualized. Then it can be observed that big change emerges from acting together in the pursuit of the big picture. This approach is conducive to behavioural change[51] and promotes systemic collaboration.



Measuring actions through multidimensional indicators enables the organization to see and highlight successes across the multidimensional value created. Success-narratives increase the intrinsic motivation to continue to act[52] and further build the collective agency of the organization. Change starts small, over iterations becomes big.

Conclusion

The journey towards an economy of well-being is complex and multifaceted, demanding a shift from traditional paradigms to embrace dynamic and context-sensitive approaches. The (MoA) provides a holistic, flexible and transformative framework that places individuals at the core of systemic change, emphasizing the importance of individual mindsets and collective cultures to foster economic well-being.

Mindsets to build individual agency, creating awareness of the self, and enabling individuals to identify and align with their intrinsic values, mental models, and contexts. Cultures to build a collective agency that merges individual aspirations into a collective vision, fostering trust, collaboration, and shared values within organizations. Collective actions to evolve beyond traditional models, exploring new business paradigms that prioritize multidimensional value creation.

Currently, the MoA and its implementation tools are being further tested in organizational settings. The mandala is to further grow and develop. So far, based on the theoretical exploration and empirical research obtained, the MoA can already offer new insights and outcomes to facilitate the emergence of a well-being-centric culture where; we embrace dynamism through the knowledge of our dynamic self, we create new realities that reflect what we intrinsically value, we democratized the economy through the exercise of our agency and responsibility, societies are just as they cater for what

individuals value most, organizations become resilient as they are composed of resilient individuals who can deal with complexity and connect with one another, multidimensional value can structurally be created and we exercise our individual and collective agency systemically.

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[1] Well-being in this paper refers to the capabilities that people have to live valuable/fulfilled lives, being ends and not mere means of economic production. (Sen, 1999)

[2] (Furr, 2022; Katsos, J.E, and Miklian, J., 2021; UNDP, 2022)

[3] (Walker, Salt, & Reid, 2006)

[4] (Sen, 1999)

[5] (Lomeli Aguirre - Elena, ongoing)

[6] (Adam Curtis, 2002)

[7] (Leary, 2014)

[8] Form Rene Descartes's mechanistic world of the world

[9] (Capra, F., Luisi, P.L., 2014)

[10] Valuable lives as defined by Amartya Sen in Development as freedom. Where individuals are not seen only as means of economic production but as ends on their own, with the capabilities to live fulfilled lives.

[11] Psychology, Organizational Psychology, Philosophy/Political Philosophy, Systems theory, Philosophy, Neurobiology, Cognitive Sciences, Culture, Organizational Development, Economics, Well-being economics, and Spirituality

[12] Buddhist, Hindu. For Taoism and the Navajo, they serve the same purpose but are not called Mandalas.

[13] Mayans and Aztecs

[14] Webster online dictionary. Accessed 10/03/2024

[15] idem

[16] (Dweck, 2017)

[17] Sen's capabilities approach did not specifically mention mindsets.

[18] (Lomeli Aguirre - Elena, ongoing)

[19] (Fromm, 2022)

[20] (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2000)

[21] (Sen, 1999)

[22] (Lomeli Aguirre, 2024)

[23] (Meadows, 2008)

[24] (Oyserman, D., Elmore, K., Smith, G., 2012)

[25] (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2012)

[26] (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2012)

[27] Also emerges in Volition as the power/ability of an individual to make conscious choices/decisions and to act upon them. It encompasses the capacity for intentional/purposeful action, driven by one's will/desire.

[28] (Senge, 2006)

[29] (Damasio, 2021)

[30] (Capra, F., Luisi, P.L., 2014)

[31] Interesting overlap with IDGs and the future of jobs by the WEF 2023.

[32] (Goleman, 2020)

[33] (Mantis, 2022)

[34] (Smith, W.K., Lewis, M.W., 2022)

[35] (Radzvilavicius, A. Stewart, A. Plotkin, J., 2019)

[36] (Brown, 2021)

[37] (Lomeli Aguirre, 2023)

[38] the need to feel effective and capable. (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2000)

[39] (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2000)

[40] (Lomeli Aguirre, 2023)

[41] idem

[42] (Harari, 2015)

[43] (Fromm, 2022)

[44] (Bieri, 2012)

[45] (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2000)

[46] (Ryan, R.M., Deci, E.L., 2012)

[47] idem

[48] (Senge, 2006)

[49] (Lomeli Aguirre, 2024)

[50] (Bieri, 2012)

[51] (Grant, 2021)

[52] (Cooperrider, D.L., Whitney, D., 2005; Pink, 2018)

4.2 Shaping a circular economy with urban mining? A discussion on chances and conflicts

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Introduction

In the light of acute social challenges such as the existential threat posed by climate change, various social and environmental movements are actively calling for a change in the current economic system. Alternative economies (e.g. degrowth, doughnut economics, or shareconomy) are appealing as an expression of social dissatisfaction. The Economy for the Common Good (ECG) movement can also be seen as one of these alternative approaches. The central element proposed is the measurement of the common good orientation of private companies and public institutions by means of a common good matrix, as well as the publication of the results in a common good balance sheet and the linking to state support and sanction systems (Felber, 2019). The ECG aims to address the failures of the economic system by meeting "the needs of living and future human generations, in accordance with democratic values and the ecological limits of the planet"(Felber et al., 2021, p. 7).

Indeed, the global material footprint is already exceeding ecological limits (OECD, 2019). Another popular concept that aims to directly achieve the goal of reducing resource consumption is the circular economy (CE). The overall aim of the CE is to shape a sustainable and social economy, with its central focus on turning the linear system of value creation into a circular concept that aims to ensure that resources and products retain their value for as long as possible (Lehmacher & Bödecker, 2023). Whereas in the current linear value creation processes, natural resources are extracted from the environment and deposited in the produced goods at the end of their use, concepts of a circular economy normatively demand that all natural resources in the produced goods are available even after the end of their use and can be recovered as far as possible (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

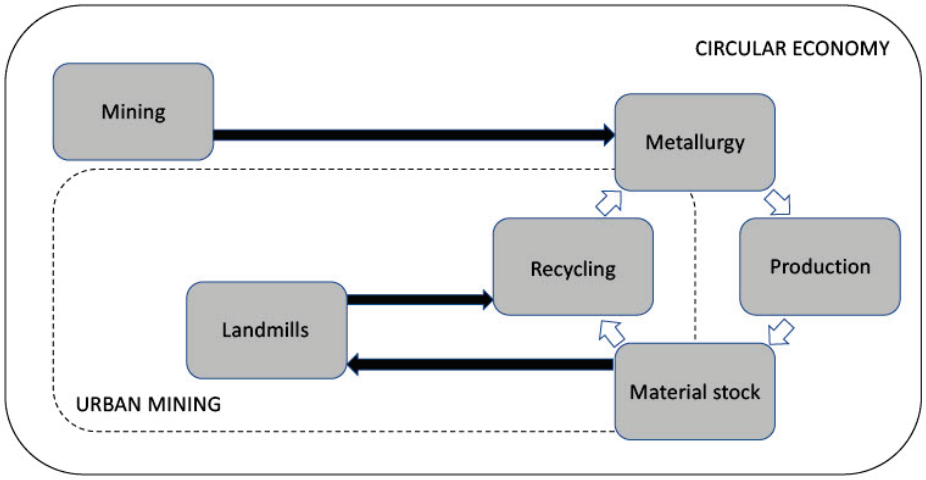
Clearly, both CE and ECG agree that the sustainable use of natural resources is crucial to achieving a change in economic behaviour (Sanchis et al., 2019). In the end, the ECG is a concept within a circularity discourse. A circular economy only works holistically within the framework of the ECG while seeking for a wholesale transformation of the entire socio-economic system and not just the industrial model (Calisto Friant et al., 2020). The aim of the ECG is a fully ethical market economy (Felber, 2019). A vision that could be dismissed in mainstream debates as too idealistic in terms of the likelihood of fundamental socio-cultural change. In contrast, technocentric circular concepts emphasise technological innovations that are implementable and can reshape the industrial system without changing socio-cultural structures. Technocentric approaches appear to be practical and realisable, thus making them attractive to politicians looking for solutions to reconcile ecological and economic goals (Calisto Friant et al., 2020).

The implementation of a CE requires an analysis of material flows over the entire life cycle of the goods produced, consumed and used. For this reason, the European Union has set itself specific targets (such as recycling quotas) for the transition to a circular economy (European Commission, 2014, 2015). Within a technocentric discourse, the concept of urban mining may offer potential for shaping a circular economy. The core idea of urban mining is that economic value creation should not primarily focus on the production of new goods using primary materials, but rather on stocks of goods that have already been produced in order to ensure largely closed material cycles (Meunier, 2017). The urban mine may contain a large potential of previously unused and recyclable materials. In this study, urban mining is analysed for its expected contribution to a CE taking the construction industry as an application case. This includes examining the chances as well as possible conflicts of interest with the ideal of a circular economy.

The circular concept of urban mining

A circular economy can be realised through the interplay of different circular strategies. The closing of loops can be considered a key strategy so that resources are fed back into the value creation process (Garcia Schmidt et al., 2023). The concept of urban mining can be characterised as a material flow management strategy for closing cycles. Urban mining is defined as the integrated management of the anthropogenic stock with the aim of extracting secondary raw materials (Meunier, 2017). It is a framework for action that ranges from prospecting, exploration, development and exploitation of anthropogenic stocks to the processing of the secondary raw materials extracted (Fluchs & Neligan, 2023). Anthropogenic stock refers to materials and substances accumulated in the environment as a result of human activities. These can include waste products, pollutants, and altered natural materials that have been deposited in landfills, water bodies, and on the land surface.

Figure 1: Urban Mining within the CE



Source: Own depiction based on Tercero Espinoza et al. (2020)

Figure 1 provides a schematic depiction of the urban mining concept in the context of the circular economy. Starting from the extraction of natural raw materials (mining), the material flow takes

place in a closed loop when the reuse of materials is maximised and the amount of waste is minimised:

Metallurgy: The raw materials extracted from mining are processed in metallurgy.

Production: The metallurgical processes provide materials that are then used in production to manufacture goods.

Material stock: The manufactured products are managed as stock of materials, which implies consumption and utilisation by end users or other industries.

Recycling: At the end of their useful life, the goods produced are fed into the recycling system and materials are reprocessed for renewed production.

The urban mining sphere is highlighted by a dashed line in Figure 1. The extraction of resources from the anthropogenic stock refers exclusively to the recovery of raw materials from stocks of manufactured goods and landfilled waste products. Although processes for the reuse, repair and reprocessing of manufactured goods or the recycling of production scrap are also commonly understood to be components of a circular economy, they are not at the centre of the conceptual framework of urban mining (Tercero Espinoza et al., 2020). Urban mining attempts to manage both the waste produced today and the value contained in the waste of tomorrow. To this end, it is necessary to improve qualitative and quantitative information about the bound materials and the periods in which they can be removed from the waste and reused (Cossu & Williams, 2015). The construction industry has recently taken on a pioneering role in utilising the potential of urban mining (Heisel & Hebel, 2021). The following section is intended to highlight the practical chances and conflicts arising from urban mining in the construction sector.

Urban mining in the construction sector

The construction sector is the most material-intensive economic sector. This sector accounts for 40% of all raw materials and around a quarter of all CO2 emissions worldwide (Heinrich, 2019). With its building and civil engineering structures, the construction sector is responsible for a very significant proportion of the materials tied up in the anthropogenic stock. Urban mining offers the opportunity to utilise the materials released during the demolition and dismantling of buildings as sources of secondary raw materials for future buildings. One initiative to realise the potential of urban mining in the construction sector is the so-called “urban mining index” (Hillebrandt, 2021):

The urban mining index is intended to specify whether and to what extent a building is recyclable. A recyclable building is characterised by the fact that its components can generally be repaired or refurbished after recovery. The dismantling capability of a building must therefore be taken into account as early as the planning phase. Demountability is characterised, for example, by the use of detachable fasteners, recyclable components and building materials. To calculate the urbain mining index, a building is modelled and disaggregated into its various material components. Starting from the building being assessed, components (e.g. the exterior wall), building elements (e.g. windows), component layers (e.g. window frames, insulating glass), materials (e.g. glass and plastic) and raw materials (e.g. wood, broken glass) are considered and assessed in a modular manner at lower assessment levels. The materials used in construction are systematically recorded and the recyclable and waste materials generated over the entire life cycle are assigned

to them in relation to their qualities in potential subsequent use. The index quantifies the materials used in a closed loop with their share in the mass of all materials used in the life cycle of the building.

When indexing a building, the reusability of components and materials (re-use) is regarded as the best way of subsequent use and is rated accordingly highly, as it conserves resources and minimises the generation of waste. Examples include the reuse of bricks or wooden floorboards. However, this presupposes that the subsequent utilisation can be carried out at a similar quality level. A material or component can be reused if its material composition and design can be reused in the original utilisation category in a subsequent utilisation phase. The meaning of recycling remains rather vague in this case: if the utilisation category and the quality of a material remain unchanged, recycling can also be counted as reuse. For some materials, however, reuse is not possible, only a reutilisation. Generally, reuse is associated with a loss of quality compared to the original use (downcycling). A prerequisite for the recyclability of materials is their consistency. The recycling of materials can only be profitable if they can be sorted by type, i.e. without adhering to other materials. In this context, it should be noted that the extraction of resources requires technologically complex, multi-stage and capital-intensive recycling processes. Urban mining likewise demands strong economies of scale, as the extraction costs per unit increase as the yield of recyclates decreases. In addition, there are insufficient recycling options for many materials.

The differentiation made between different types of usability and recoverability emphasises an important aspect from a CE perspective that is not reflected in the relevant terms of the current regulations. Hillebrandt (2021, S. 54) criticises the fact that the lack of differentiation actually leads to a whitewashing of the recycling concept. If statistics show that 70% of the construction waste produced in Germany is recycled, this is predominantly downcycling, because concrete, for instance, cannot be reused, but can at best be reutilised in the form of aggregate at a lower quality level. Thus, a key objective of the urban mining index is not simply to provide the construction industry with an information system for organising circularity in value creation, but also to make a contribution to the conceptualisation of a CE with clear definitions.

Conclusion

The concept of urban mining could suggest at first glance that anthropogenic stocks have so far been excluded in current linear value creation processes. In fact, urban mining as part of a CE is essentially an economic resource allocation problem. If the current economical perspective is set from the production of a good to the end of its use by the consumer, in a CE it must be extended to future reuse options. This means that various competing utilisation options are available for the (used) goods in the anthropogenic stock. The question arises as to how to decide which of these utilisation options should be chosen and which technologies should be used. This question cannot be answered simply by taking a look at the technical and engineering potential of circularity. Just as the resource holders, pre-producers and technology suppliers on the various input markets have different utilisation options when constructing a building, the problem of competing resource utilisation also arises for the used building along the links in the chain of a circular economy. As in the input markets, there is also competition for resources in the circular use of materials. Hence, from a macroeconomic perspective efficient reutilisation requires a coordination mechanism. Specifically, the problem of missing markets must be solved. Suppliers of reutilisation

options must be enabled to meet consumers as resource owners. This can be achieved via markets. Circular developments will only occur if there are appropriate options on markets that are also known to resource owners. Even legal regulations on the use of certain materials with recycling quotas do not replace a societal search for the best resource allocation.

In the construction sector, the transparency of the urban mining index forms the digital basis for market access. The urban mining index ensures that the circularity of materials is a positive characteristic of products, however, it is still not a coordination mechanism. If the circular economy is to take shape, a level playing field must be created for all options for reusing resources so that the various technological options for reusing or recycling materials can be reasonably compared. Then there will be innovations, new business models or creative ideas that turn a CE into reality.

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4.3 Sources of social unease in Northern-Netherlands and the role of social work; Implications for citizen involvement and democratic participation and the role of social workers.

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1. Introduction

The body of literature on societal discontent in the Netherlands is growing. Numerous publications highlight an increasing distrust of citizens towards the government, growing regional and class disparities in prosperity, and deepening concerns about the performance of the public sector. These publications describe a disengagement by substantial groups of people from society and the traditional centrist governmental-orientated parties, and the steady decline of political, institutional and societal trust.[1]

Various explanations can be given for the rise of societal discontent, including big societal trends like globalization, secularization, individualization and the decline of strong communities[2], the decline of social cohesion in an increasingly diverse multicultural society[3] or the declining performance of public services.[4] Problems at the more personal level such as financial insecurity and social isolation also contribute. [5] This discontent is concerning as it erodes trust in institutions, potentially jeopardizing democratic stability and community resilience.[6]

Traditionally social workers play an important role in strengthening the individual and communities, improving their socio-economic position, and their overall participation in society and having an positive impact on trust and social engagement of citizens and bridging the gap between government and citizens. This paper aims to describe the way social work can play a role in preventing or alleviating societal discontent among citizens by helping individuals and strengthening communities.

This paper delves in section 2 into the theoretical frameworks of the relationship between discontent and the roles of social work. Section 3 outlines our research methodology. Section 4 , 5 and 6 present findings of diverse forms of societal discontent and the roles of social workers. Finally in section 7 we discuss the results of our research.

2. Theoretical frameworks: societal discontent and social work

Societal discontent is about the underlying feeling of concerns about the personal situation or the current state of government and society. It means people have the feeling that things are not going in the right direction with themselves, their group or society, and that they themselves are powerless to change that.[7]

This paper will not offer a definitive conceptualization. All kind of aspects - economic, cultural, and societal - are crucial, especially when examining the experience of discontent among clients. However, discontent is best understood as a relationship between the individual and their personal

circumstances, the individual and the issues of their societal group, or the individual and the broader societal concerns.

Levels of societal discontent:[8]

Personal (micro): this involves worries about one's livelihood, income, health, and personal relationships, including family, friends, and community involvement.

Group (meso): this pertains to the relative position of societal groups, such as women, farmers, migrants, and low-income earners, within society.

Social and political (macro): encompasses feelings of dissatisfaction with broader societal developments, political discourse, government services, public amenities, and trust in politics.

Social work as community building

Social work historically plays a significant role in facilitating connections between residents and government entities. Social work and welfare organizations can be considered as bridging or intermediary entities. They serve a societal purpose and operate at the intersection of government institutions and citizens who rely on public services. Important aspects of social work are promoting social change, problem-solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing. [9]

In contemporary social work practice there is a growing recognition of the importance of social networks in promoting the well-being and resilience of individuals and communities. This shift underscores the significance of collective initiatives in addressing complex social issues, characterized by Payne (2005) as the socialist/collectivist approach to social work.[10] Prioritizing community-based solutions that leverage the strength of social networks and support systems.[11] This entails fostering partnerships with local organizations, grassroots initiatives, and informal networks to create a web of support for vulnerable populations, in addition to the more individualistic approach of strengthening and/or empowering the individual client.

The philosophy underpinning the collective social work approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within their social environment. It recognizes that social isolation can exacerbate socio-economic and health challenges, and seeks to counteract this by facilitating connections, communities and mutual support among individuals facing similar circumstances. By fostering a sense of belonging and solidarity, social work endeavors to empower individuals to actively participate in their communities and access resources for collective empowerment.

In addition, the transition towards more local and community-based approach also reflects a broader shift in governance paradigms, moving away from top-down, centralized models towards more participatory and community-driven approaches for healthcare and social welfare. To some extent, the decentralization of social policies in the recent decades also acknowledges the needs and strengths of local communities and seeks to empower them to take ownership of their local welfare systems.[12]

The community-based approach of social work aims by using the power of social connections and support initiatives, to build stronger, more resilient communities capable of supporting the diverse

needs of their members. The assumption is that social work has an important key role in preventing or reducing societal discontent. However, the connection between societal and the positive role that social work can play isn't frequently highlighted in the literature.

3. Method of research

In this research, we explored patterns of societal discontent among clients, and additionally, we investigated welfare activities of social workers. At the micro level, we investigated patterns of (personal) discontent among clients and the activities of social workers on the individual care level. At the meso level, we explored patterns of (collective) discontent among clients and the activities of social workers at the collective or network level. We examined interactions and dynamics within groups or communities engaged in welfare activities, exploring how these interactions contribute to or alleviate discontent. Lastly, at the macro level, we considered broader societal and structural factors that influence the overall effectiveness of welfare activities in addressing discontent on a larger scale.

Our research approach involved qualitative methods, using interviews and focus groups. We included 36 social workers and 28 clients. The clients included various target demographics such as elderly individuals, youth, immigrants, caregivers, and those seeking support for mental health issues or debt counseling. The professionals included social workers, youth workers, community workers, legal advisors, earthquake coaches, debt counselors, peer support specialists, and leaders of toddler groups. With this approach, we obtained a representative perspective of the target groups.

Through these methods, we aim to gain insights into the intricate relationship between welfare activities and societal discontent. By adopting an exploratory approach, we seek to uncover the underlying dynamics.

4. Aspects of societal discontent of clients

The interviews provided insight into various elements of discontent. N=36 social workers were asked what kind of concerns they saw on personal (micro), collective (meso) and societal, political (macro) level. Our analysis demonstrates that societal discontent often results from a complex interplay of socio-economic, institutional, and cultural factors that mutually influence and reinforce each other. However, several key elements can be distinguished.

Socio-economic and financial problems:

Professionals N=36 stated that they saw financial concerns among their clients. Financial issues, lack of affordable housing and energy poverty are repeatedly mentioned. The respondents related the financial problems to societal discontent, because these problems lead to stress, (intergenerational)-poverty, and feelings of inferiority and frustration among the population.

Psychological and multi-problem issues:

Psychological problems such as depression are mentioned as significant stressors for individuals and families. This can lead to a hardening of social interactions on the interpersonal level, such as relational problems and domestic violence, and a overall decrease in social cohesion and activities within communities, R11: “We see increased psychological problems and people with confused

behavior, more complex problems. It is about a combination of different types of problems, psychological disorders and financial problems, acceptance and quality of life in neighborhood and within families. People are less resilient, people bounce back less easily." (Individual social worker)

Social isolation and individualization

N=30 respondents claimed that social isolation was an important source. The respondents related the concept of social isolation to growing individuality in society and lack of facilities, R1:"no family here, no car, and living in a small village without facilities. Then there is a very high risk of social isolation" (community social worker) In addition, the respondents stated that an individualized society ensured that people who fall outside the system/society, are increasingly less able to be accommodated by the community. In their work, they see a society in which solidarity is declining and citizens end up in social isolation, R12:" Individualism plays a major role here. And solidarity has deteriorated. Where you used to help each other in the street, you no longer see it as often" (social worker, individual care)

Cultural change and diversity:

Increasing diversity in neighborhoods is cited as a source of tension, especially concerning integration issues and clashes of value systems between different groups. Respondents saw that changes in the neighborhood caused concerns among clients.

The clients mainly see the change in status quo as a source of societal discontent. This means that it is not only related to changes due to migration, but also caused by, for example, the energy transition or the pressure brought by the housing market crisis, which increases the idea that there is no longer a place in the Netherlands.

Institutional distrust:

Distrust towards the government and public institutions is often mentioned, particularly due to complex regulations, lack of tailored solutions, and poor communication. Leading to feelings of powerlessness and frustration. Types of distrust include 1) towards the national politics: with rural and peripheral regions feeling underrepresented, R1: "People do not feel understood by national politics. The gap is widening between national and local" (Community social worker), 2) towards government executive services, like municipality or child protection services, and 3) towards institutions, such as police. In the Norther-Netherlands, social workers noted themes that fueled institutional distrust, including natural gas extraction problems, farmer protests and/or withdrawing public services, R18: "farmers' protests, that was really a thing with us. We are a rural municipality. Many young people become farmers. There was a lot is dissatisfaction about that. And since COVID-19, it feels as if there has been a change, as if people have the feeling they can anything" (youth social worker)

Digitalization and accessibility of public services:

Issues with a lack of digital skills and access to services are noted, leading to certain groups being excluded of help. The interviews showed that there are many concerns among professionals about the accessibility of facilities, due to low digital literacy, distrust in government organizations and the financial benefits systems, R4: "When you have to apply for beneficial financial support, that's

so complicated, providing so much evidence. That almost makes people feel like they're a fraudster" (Community social worker) and due to a lack of social connection.

Social hardening and polarization:

Society's hardening and polarization are observed, especially in debates on issues such as climate, migration, and housing. This can lead to a lack of consensus and a decrease in solidarity. Several respondents indicated that they saw polarization in their daily work. In the area of hardening, youth social workers also see more youth gangs, mainly in North Groningen, or drug use among young people in rural areas.

5. Social work: strengthen individuals

Our analyses identified several activities of social workers that strengthen the individual clients and local communities.

Prevention loneliness/social isolation

Social work provides various that contribute to combating social isolation or loneliness. All professionals N=36 stated that establishing connections between groups, strengthening social cohesion and identifying loneliness are among the important tasks of the social workers. Mainly for the social workers who work out-reaching and can be seen in the neighborhoods, they identify the need for help. They look at how they can serve this request for help individually and collectively, R35: "The walking group is actually quite a bit of a social safety net. So that's me and those clients, they have quite little to fall back on." (Community social worker)

Clients of the young mother's group mentioned that the evolvement of social workers in their lives helped to prevent or reduce social isolation or loneliness. They stated the groups or collectives organized by the social workers provided social contacts and it also endured involvement in society, such as being eligible for volunteer work.

Practical help and access public services and facilities

Social workers provide practical assistance and support to individuals and groups, assisting with tasks like form completion, accessing financial aid, daily chores and tax filling. They provide individual and group support, providing practical care, a listening ear and guidance to appropriate sources.

Some serve as independent support staff, helping individuals navigate municipal regulations and articulate their needs, N34: "We pay attention to the entire request for help. Try to outline the context. At the municipality they usually look flatly at the regulations and whether there is a right to it. But, sometimes clients do not know how to put their story in the right words" (Independent client supporter)

Trust is deemed crucial in the social worker-client relationship, with practitioners trained to establish and maintain it. The independent and trusted position of social workers helps clients to seek the right help and supports them. N45: "in recent years, I have seen many care providers come and go, but I trust X very much. She is always honest, says what she thinks and especially is here to help me. She cannot impose or oblige me to do anything, that makes our relationship equal" (client)

Services are tailored to meet individual needs, ranging from one-on-one assistance for tasks like budgeting, to group programs such as budget courses. Some respondents also stated that the client is sometimes better served by referring them to a group. Social work is highly responsive to the client needs, with interventions shaped by the nature of request and the potential for collective support.

Activating self-reliance and active citizenship

Social workers see an important role for them in encouraging active citizenship. They intervene to prevent problems and foster self-reliance trough individual coaching, organizing collective activities and encouraging community participation. This involves both emotional and practical needs. N32: “We try to get people out of social isolation. We see what the person likes or what suits them. You see progress, which sometimes even means that people are returning to the labor market” (Village coordinator, community social worker) They see a connecting role for the individual and the community. Clients often find themselves engaging in voluntary work, such as at libraries, through connections made in group sessions. This sense of belonging fosters community engagement and keeps individuals informed about local developments, N39: “this group support me, you stay active and informed, for example about new developments in the municipality. The group supports each other and it has also provided volunteer work” (Client, mothers group)

Signaling function and prevention

Social work’s proactive approach allows for early problem detection and prevention. Most respondents N=32 indicated that signaling and prevention are key aspects, with social workers addressing individuals needs and broader societal issues. They organize interventions to prevent these problems and they bring these issues to the attention of relevant authorities. Collaboration among different social professions enhances this process, from addressing language delays in toddlers to preventing youth gang involvement and financial dept accumulation.

The following activities of the social worker are important for prevention and early detection:

- Assessment and identification of potential risk factors and vulnerabilities in communities, families, and individuals.
- Community development involving the establishment of bottom-up support groups to address social problems.
- Different types of programs, such as early intervention programs, crisis prevention planning, parenting support programs, school-based programs.
- Collaboration with professionals in primary care and across social work disciplines, education, law enforcement, police, and housing cooperatives.
- Signaling function and policy advocacy.

In this way, social workers also endure that as many problems as possible in the primary care field can be solved, and preventing patients from getting into secondary care.

6. Social work: strengthening community and society

Social workers play a pivotal role in community strengthening and amidst societal challenges. The social worker tries to strengthen the social cohesion of the neighborhood by connecting those in need of help and those providing help, stimulating initiatives and preventing people from ending up

in secondary care by focusing on collective assistance groups with primary care. During the interviews various activities have been found: starting collectives, working on community development, organizing volunteers, supporting citizen initiatives and serving the needs of the community.

Social cohesion and community building: social workers play a role in strengthening social cohesion within communities. They organize activities, facilitate meetings, and encourage collaboration among residents, R31: “I see it as a bridging function of connecting people and that you can therefore create more understanding towards each other”(Community social worker) Several initiatives where mentioned by respondents, a village counter with volunteers to help people fill in the form, a reading club, sustainability initiatives, a neighborhood home set up by the housing cooperative and social workers.

Network and collaboration: social workers act as key connecters, collaborating with various partners (primary care), such as the general practitioner, schools, police and youth care. They built networks and maintain relationships to provide effective support to the individuals and to the community. They generally see themselves as linking pin and care about the different facets of the client's lives. This facilitates integrated care and endures clients have access to diverse services, N33: “I’m kind of a road map. I talk to young people and refer them to the right organizations and people if necessary. I have contact with the police, education other care organizations. I receive information about the young, investigate what they encounter in daily life and provide the sight support or seek arrangements” (Community social worker)

Societal transitions: social workers also have an important role within societal transitions, such as the energy transition, R29: “We come in, are accessible and in principle neutral. So we don’t come to sell something, or impose something on someone. I strongly believe in the value of bottom-up instead of top-down. Therefore we have a crucial role in societal transitions” (Community social worker)

7. Conclusion and discussion

This study investigated societal discontent experienced by clients, as perceived by both clients and social workers. Analysis of interviews with N=36 social workers and N=25 clients identified several forms of discontent:

- Socio-economic and financial problems
- Psychological issues and multi-problems
- Social isolation and individualization
- Relational problems and domestic violence
- Cultural change and diversity
- Institutional distrust
- Digitalization and accessibility of public services
- Social hardening and polarization
- The study explored also the positive impact of social work, highlighting various roles social workers play in strengthening individuals and communities:
- Prevention loneliness/social isolation
- Practical help and access public services and facilities

- Activating self-reliance and active citizenship
- Signaling function and prevention

A community-based approach in social work emphasizes seeking solutions within communities, recognizing that strengthening individuals also benefits the community as a whole. This approach is crucial in addressing societal discontent by promoting social cohesion, building networks, facilitating collaboration, and fostering grassroots initiatives. Social workers play a vital role in community development, focusing on enhancing social well-being at individual and societal levels. By bringing together people and systems, they provide tailored support, contribute to positive development and self-reliance, and foster social participation. Through these efforts, individuals gain more control over their lives, ultimately mitigating social discontent. We see that many social workers look for solutions in communities, and that strengthening the community also trickles down to the individual.

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4.4 The Constitution for the Commons - A body of instruments and interventions to protect and nourish the Commons.

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Introduction

In the Constitution for the Commons (CvdC), we explore the building blocks that facilitate the emergence and growth of commons[1]. The CvdC ultimately forms the building blocks of the Commons and thus provides the hard and soft conditions and the direction of what is needed for a vibrant society. The Constitution is a broader concept than a judicial instrument to protect values. It is a body of instrumentes and interventions to protect and nourish the Commons.

Commons are not static in nature. They change over time. They undergo their own development. More often than not, interventions by the government and market forces stifle or commercialise initiatives in the Commons. This is a gradual process that repeatedly "drains" the Commons from society. It disrupts the balance between the government, the market, and the Commons.

Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that government institutions and market players remain faithful to the Commons. The Constitution serves as a kind of default.

Commons-Meent-Communities

The Dutch translation of Commons is the less familiar word "Meent" or Communities. Others use the term "Collective Power." All these words refer to the phenomenon where people collectively pursue their well-understood shared interests. These interests are things (goods or services) that belong to the public domain. They claim and represent their insights and responsibilities as autonomous parties[2].

I. WHY

The Commons are gaining ground, nevertheless

The Commons are active in numerous fields and at various scales of society. From waste collection, green management, education, healthcare, energy, taxi services, income insurance, to fiber optics. There is an undeniable trend that the Commons are becoming stronger and larger, both in numbers and organisational strength.

Commons provide vitality to society. People work together, recognise and acknowledge each other, resolve conflicts, dream, and act together. This adds value, social capital, economic benefits, increased individual and collective worth, and the ability to resist polarisation, distrust, and antidemocratic thinking and actions. Commons are not just a rational game of distinguishing A from B, analysis, logic, something that takes place in our left hemisphere. Commons also appeal to our ability to connect everything with everything else. To think, feel, and act holistically. To allow the mystical and to know that we are connected with each other and everything, something that artists can do and people in general when they let their right hemisphere speak[3]. A good balance between the right and left hemispheres is not rocket science; it's actually just common sense.

There is a strong desire for a strong Commons, as evidenced by its growth and the positive effects it has on us as individuals. What is surprising and also frustrating is that the Commons lack a proper infrastructure to flourish. The signals are often red. Commons face difficulties in many areas, including finding their place, organising themselves, securing financing, and dealing with existing regulations, among other challenges. These hinder both the organisation and the substantive performance of Commons.

The growth of Commons is, therefore, an uphill battle. This growth usually comes at the expense of domains that were previously under the control of governments or market players. The existing system for organising public power is not designed for Commons, which is why Commons do not flourish properly.

But also we, as individuals, are also responsible for this. We are often inclined to have things arranged for us. We quickly assume the role of consumers or subjects[4]. We often think from logic and convenience, and we easily give up the idea that we could (have) do(ne) it ourselves.

II. WHAT

Constitution for the Commons – the building blocks

In the Constitution for the Commons, we work towards a mature Constitution where obstacles are identified, and alternatives are developed. As concrete as possible, based on practical experience and translated into the system, so that it can be integrated effectively and rapidly into existing social and legal structures. The building blocks should be easily adoptable by both government and market actors.

Because we anticipate changes in various areas, much work must be done for these building blocks. Therefore, we propose an action research program. The research program includes various sub-projects in different disciplines that investigate the barriers and alternative solutions in specific areas. The approach can involve action research, but it can also lead to practical tools available through (international) comparative research. The establishment of mock courts and trial lawsuits may also be part of this research. Finally, a form of action research or process approach may be needed to implement the change in practice. These change management aspects of the issue are areas where specific disciplines will be invited to develop strategies[5].

Below, we outline a general overview of the topics that require research. We will refine the research questions for each topic.

Financing

Under the heading of Financing, two topics are discussed:

1.a Financing of the Commons

1.b Taxation

1.a Financing of the Commons

The financing of Commons initiatives is problematic. Banks, charities, and the government each pose their own challenges.

Banks

It is clear that the financing of Commons (for example, when structured as cooperatives) is not adequately addressed by banks. Banks find the financing of cooperatives problematic. Their risk-averse culture and structure (Basel guidelines etc.) do not align with mutual and collective risk-sharing. Additionally, the transaction costs are higher compared to the credit that Commons often require.

Charities

Financing organisations that achieve good deeds and generate some form of income are also problematic because charitable funds usually only finance for a maximum of three years. Furthermore, each philanthropic institution has its own criteria, and Commons initiatives are often integral and diverse, which means they only partially fit the financing conditions of the respective organisation.

Government subsidies

Government subsidies often come with various conditions that burden the operations of Commons. The disbursement often does not consider the expenditure schedule, making it difficult for the organisation to meet its structural costs on time.

Solution 1: Social Impact Bond?

As a solution, the Social Impact Bond has been considered. This instrument has seen limited application so far, partly because the transaction costs (defining the scope, measuring results, and accountability) are relatively high and time-consuming. It also assumes a business production capacity that Commons do not always have. It is an illusion to think that Social Impact Bonds are a remedy for the financing needs of large numbers of small community initiatives.

Solution 2: Social Bank?

The development of a social bank that improves the compartmentalisation, supply orientation, and economic valuation of Commons has failed multiple times before. The knowledge generated during the development of an "Action Platform for Social Impact Financing" can be utilised for this purpose.

Various intermediaries have been established to arrange financing for specific target groups and cases (e.g., real estate incubators - Triodos; social impact fund - ABNAMRO; social ventures fund - Willemijn Verloop). Additionally, the Maatschappelijke Alliantie is attempting to achieve a bundling of charitable funds that invest thematically together. Such initiatives are essentially just an extra hurdle that Commons must pass to secure their financing. Moreover, this funding often remains limited to one specific type: high return and high risk, low-interest, subordinated loans, guarantees, gifts, crowdfunding.

The idea is to establish fluid financing that can support various types of activities with different types of societal value and economic return.

In essence, the financing is being organIsed by the system, a world where functions are separated, and specialised products are offered, while the demand comes from the Commons. Commons

operate holistically, from which they generate added value. Commons think and act based on human relationships and societal effects, considering economic thinking and acting as a tool that serves this purpose. Money as a means, not as a result/product.

These two worlds require an intermediary that understands and serves the Commons on the one hand and as a facilitator keeps the system's world at bay as much as possible.

Commons and charities working together

Under the name "We Doen Het Samen" initiative, VSB Fonds, Oranje Fonds, KNHM, and Stichting Doen have joined forces to provide structural support to Commons (through a collaboration of the LSA, NLZvE, COOPlink, and Energie Samen associations). This collaboration may also result in a financing vehicle that addresses the aforementioned obstacles.

1.b Taxation

When residents help each other, such as neighbors do, it is not a market activity. However, the moment people exchange compensation, there is a chance that the tax authorities will tax that transaction. VAT is imposed, possibly even on nonprofit organisations. They are taxed when they are actually facilitating neighborly help. While these organisations strengthen self-organisation among people and thus society, it is strange to treat these organisations as market participants.

If Commons organisations are not focused on making a profit, why should they be subject to profit taxation? This aspect will also need to be addressed when taking Commons seriously.

At the same time, the increasing professionalisation of self-organisations (such as sports clubs) makes the tax authorities' involvement more likely. This may mean that we need to establish our own fiscal exemption for Commons.

Legal Aspects

The legal aspects consist of a series of subtopics.

2.a Legal Forms

2.b Priority Rights for Commons

2.c Privacy Regulations

2.a Legal Forms

The legal form of the Commons is crucial for its societal functioning. It must be easy to establish, and it must be recognised by others (governments, market parties, and residents) as a trusted form.

Internal democracy must be guaranteed. It must be inherently trustworthy and inclusive by design (trust by design).

Ownership of the legal form must be well regulated. Here again, the principle of the Commons prevails over private and commercial ownership.

Moving activities from the domain of the market or government into the Commons is a significant step, and certain legal regimes may not easily accommodate this (for example, in the case of Veerhuis Varik[6]). There are already some practices to detach companies from the market economy.

Among the existing legal forms, the cooperative appears to be the appropriate choice. However, profits generated by cooperatives are subject to taxation by the tax authorities. This is not the case with the foundation form. However, without adapted statutes, the foundation is not accessible for participation through memberships and lacks intrinsic democracy. Therefore, alternatives or new (sui generis) solutions must be sought.

2.b Priority Rights for the Commons

In the legal system, there is an inherent and inalienable privilege that Commons have in the realm of government and the market, although it is currently concealed. When Commons organise themselves, the government must hand over its tasks to them, with full policy freedom and the return of financial (tax) resources. Despite legal principles such as the subsidiarity principle and the principle of proximity, the government as a legislator is not equipped for this.

The government grants a Right to Challenge to residents in some laws, but it does so at its discretion. The right of residents to take back tasks is not yet universally recognised, and residents are not central but rather distant in the decision-making process. It should be the other way around. Tasks can always be claimed by collaborating residents, and when this happens, the government (and the market) should, in principle, withdraw.

A generic natural law recognition would give Commons more room to assert their inherent space.

This requires a trial process in which the right of Commons, anchored in (natural) law, is explicitly and applicably established.

The key issues currently putting Commons at a disadvantage include:

Procurement rules

Market and government

2.c Privacy Regulations, etc.

Privacy rules do not apply in the public domain when Commons undertake tasks there. The current regulatory system for organisations is intended to ensure that these organisations act correctly towards citizens, including privacy matters. However, if the organisation is intrinsically democratic (in the sense that it is owned and governed by the citizens themselves), then privacy becomes a matter for the Commons organisation itself—a body created by, for, and of citizens. In this case, they can decide how to regulate privacy themselves.

Under this block, an examination should be conducted to identify distrust and protection-oriented rules that are unnecessary or should be significantly altered in light of the new relationship between citizens and the Commons. Besides an inventory, a design could be developed on how Commons can represent the interests of these rule systems (such as privacy) in a different way.

The tension between privacy regulations and Commons highlights tensions between specific legislation and the independent position of the Commons. Commons are a sui generis form that is inherently not sensitive to general organic regulations.

Capacity Building

When residents want to take shared responsibility in the public domain or the economic domain, it requires leadership, social leadership. It is similar to a start-up, a new organisation where the leader needs to be involved in many different aspects. It is known that these initiative-driven and entrepreneurial individuals often need training in leadership.

It is about the capacity to stabilise and grow an initiative, to organise the impact, financing, and internal organisation.

In addition to these founders, it is also important to empower followers to strengthen and expand the stability of the Commons as much as possible. Strengthening this leadership should ideally take the form of a community of leaders and followers who support each other. This is also the basis of Asset Based Community Development.

To shape capacity building, it is necessary to create a stable context where, on the one hand, the power of the crowd is leveraged, and, on the other hand, structural assessment of capabilities leads to targeted training and support. This can take the form of lifelong learning and a kind of Commons University.

Governance within the Commons

Commons are essentially autonomous in everything, including their own governance. They are their own legal community, also known as a legal circle, where their own norms and values emerge and are maintained. This can be peaceful, but it can also turn out differently[7]. It may mean that in communities, participants do not fully appreciate each other, that power is exercised over others, and in that sense, they are not inclusive and accessible to all their members.

Although these processes can be corrected by the participants themselves at their core, it is desirable to incorporate some "assurances" (democratic by design, one man one vote, non-transferable to third parties, sociocracy, etc.).

In addition to finding the most appropriate assurance, it is a question of whether and how these assurances can be enforced by law (based on corporate law, the Constitution, or other legal sources) or by design (trust by design).

There is also the question of how oversight of the Commons is organised. Essentially, this is a matter for the Commons themselves. However, it may be the case that a clear legal oversight regime is established that ensures legal protection. This may be important to some when human rights are violated in the Commons. It may also be relevant when Commons export the problems they create to other Commons or other countries (think of ecological and social externalisation, uncompensated CO2 emissions, waste export to Africa, outsourcing tasks to third parties outside the Commons without full ecological and social compensation).

The guiding principle is that each Commons "eats its own plate first" (you ensure cleanliness in your own circle, no domination but participation and renewal of power within the circle), and you do not burden anyone else outside your circle (your neighbors, future generations, nature).

5. Culture of the Commons

The culture of the Commons encompasses a broader domain than culture in the narrow sense. It initially involves the paradigm that can be observed in the Commons based on the (implicit) ideology of the Commons (5.a). In line with this, it is desirable to examine what determines the value of the Commons, especially in comparison to other paradigms (5.b). In each of these paradigms, humans are the focal point. In the Commons, humans are challenged in a certain way. Understanding the nuances of this challenge can greatly assist in the introduction and design of the Commons (5.c). Finally, in connection with what motivates humans, it is desirable to delve deeper into the culture of the Commons. What is the symbolic language of the movement, and how can it be supportive in the upcoming era of Commons formation (5.d)?

5.a. Ideology

The Commons will not emerge (solely) until the preceding fields have been explored and translated into concrete adjustments and actions. We are currently in a paradigm of market-driven activities where everything is organised around transactions, actions, and reactions. The narrative of encounters, interactions, connections, and togetherness as independent qualities is not acknowledged in this paradigm.

It is important, perhaps even necessary, to gather a series of "competing" or, better, mutually reinforcing narratives and test them with different target groups in society.

5.b. Valuation

Communities create values that are not easily recognised and appreciated by governments and market entities. Value is often associated with economic terms. However, not everything that communities create can be valued in terms of money. It is also difficult to assess what communities achieve in terms of participation (involvement), social cohesion (care, love, and trust), and legitimacy (the right to self-organise).

How can we shape the appreciation of these other values and incorporate them into societal interactions?

So far, communities have been asked to prove themselves in the language of government (Is it legitimate?) or the market (What is the financial return? Is it efficient?). This requires a one-sided effort from the Commons for the benefit of government and the market. It should be a joint effort instead.

Substantive Valuation

The effects of Commons are referred to as impact. There are various forms of impact measurement based on different doctrines and assumptions. These could be standardised.

Procedural Valuation

In addition to standardising valuation, the fundamental relationship between government and the market on one hand, and the Commons on the other, should change in such a way that the government acknowledges the peculiarities of communities as real and unique (which likely contradicts its own principles of equality). This should also apply, mutatis mutandis, to the market (which contradicts its principles of efficiency and lowest price). Reaching an agreement between these three "parties" requires a major step, one that involves stepping outside of one's trusted paradigm.

Is it possible to structurally establish the principle of equality between government, market, and community, like an API embedded in various interactions between the Commons and the Market and Government? Think of King Arthur's round table, where everyone is equal.

In analogy, we see rituals and forms that bring different interests to the table, such as Bruno Latour's parliament of things. Lotte van den Berg has developed various conversation forms and rituals that show different perspectives and bring them into interaction with each other.

(Inspirational examples: Substantive Valuation - MAEX (handprint; peer review, crowd assessment); Procedural Valuation - Round Table, Parliament of Things)

5.c. Human

The human psyche has changed in the last hundred years due to prosperity and technology. The extent to which humans have to engage in conflict with their environment has decreased. The ease of buying one's way out of problems has increased. In essence, humans are losing the ability to engage in and peacefully resolve conflicts. Conflicts with people in the environment, where Commons activities were previously active and the market now offers services as a "savior." Recent developments in ICT, especially the increase in screen time on smartphones and the like, have reinforced this process.

The question is how humans can regain the capacity to take responsibility for their environment and relearn the skills of the Commons (engaging in and resolving conflicts). This requires an understanding of the human psyche and the design of the context in which humans act. In the field of change management, the question is: when does a person seek out the place of effort?

In this area, we need to explore the causes, as described by Herbert Marcuse and Ivan Illich, and the contexts, i.e., the design of the circle in which problems arise and must be solved without externalising the problems. Think of the principles of Elinor Ostrom, but possibly also of Ken Wilber (Holons) and Stafford Beer (Syntegration). There is also much to be learned from the organisation of self-governing networks like Wikipedia, Linux, and remedies in the form of deep democracy and non-violent communication. Lastly, approaches like design thinking and social design should be considered.

5.d. Culture

The establishment of the Constitution for the Commons, strengthening the Commons, is a process that aims to change various aspects of our lives. It affects the beliefs of all of us, and therefore, the rules and institutions, as well as essentially all organisations in our society, especially those of the government and often of the market. It affects the structure of our society.

Changes in these structures do not happen without a way to make the change resonate in people's hearts and dreams. Change occurs when people are touched. This cannot be achieved with the logic and reason that resides in our left hemisphere; it requires imagination and dreams. It requires artistic imagination in the form of visuals, language, song, theater, movement, and imagery. This imagination makes it possible to achieve the seemingly unattainable. When people start to believe in it, it will happen. Just as we are currently imbued with the neoliberal story that everything is a transaction, this belief can change into a different story.

This cultural foundation is needed, and it's not rocket science. It has been done before, think of the 1930s in the labor movement, and think of neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s when the "me era" dominated the media.

The cultural foundation can take various forms. This will be discussed with the performing arts collective. We consider multiple possibilities (for example):

A museum of the Commons (past, present, and future)

Concrete tools: in the form of rituals, conversation openers to promote wholeness and harmony in the group

A continuous series on TV/YouTube, podcasts, etc.

Concrete forms (images, symbols, songs, sounds that express the movement, the ideology of the Commons)

Embedded and visible. For different target groups, in their languages, in their activities.

HOW

In a program, the above-mentioned items will be further developed and provided with concrete guidelines. This will be worked on in a participatory process with stakeholders.

The organisation of this program assumes a core group of partners who take overall responsibility for its management. They will apply for research budgets and also oversee other strategic objectives such as communication, agenda-setting in various forums, and forming alliances around specific themes.

In addition, a group of organisations will join in, contributing their knowledge and participating in the execution. Doctoral candidates will be involved with both the first and second groups.

Jeroen den Uyl

April 23 2024

Literature

[1] We: That is an alliance of the initiators. We consider ourselves the finding founders of the Commons, reawakening and reshaping what lies dormant within us. The organisations and experts in specific fields and commons experts who are involved in this will be approached in the coming period.

[2] Theo Lijster; Wat we gemeen hebben

[3] Iain mcGilchrist - The Matter with Things

[4] Herbert Marcuse – The One-dimensional man

[5] We can consider Theory U, Future Search, appreciative inquiry, etc.

[6] The municipality does not want or cannot relinquish its potential right to acquire property (municipal pre-emption law). The water board had different objections to relinquishing its claims on the dike, which is also part of the area in question.

[7] https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herman_Dooyeweerd

5.1 Ecological Human Rights or: Limited individual ecological consumption budgets

Christian Felber, Economy for the Common Good

Abstract

Planetary ecosystems are deteriorating as a consequence of a fossil fuels-based economy, non-circular production and consumption cycles and a highly materialistic lifestyle of inhabitants, especially of the Global North. Environment protection policies currently set in place are not sufficient to stop or reverse trends of deterioration and initiate regeneration. Decoupling of economic growth and material and energy consumption does hardly work in absolute terms. A potential game changer for environmental policies is needed. The here proposed concept is about limited individual ecological consumption budgets. All humans would get the same right to consume natural resources, e. g. in the ecological currency of global hectares. The budget is small enough that, even consumed fully by all humans, mankind as a whole would remain within the ecological planetary boundaries.

1. Introduction

In 2023, six of the nine planetary boundaries, defined and described since 2009, have been transgressed.1 2 In just one year, in 2022, two more limits: green/blue water (number five) and novel entities (number six) shifted to the red zone. The global material footprint has quadrupled since 1970, with an indication of plateauing only since 2014. The authors conclude: “At current trends, absolute decoupling is unlikely to occur over the next few decades”.3 In February 2024, the Mauna Loa Observatory registered a new record of CO2 concentration in the Earth’s atmosphere: 424.55 ppm.4

It is obvious that existing measures to stop climate change and other processes of ecological deterioration (EU ETS, carbon taxes, CSRD, Taxonomy, …) are not sufficiently effective to halt ecological deterioration processes. The EU emission trading system has evidently failed, and carbon taxes remain at insufficiently low levels. Average CO2 prices range between 30 and 50 euros per ton. Only Sweden, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have reached 100 euros per ton or more. Still, according to the German Environmental Authority, an appropriate taxation on the base of IPCC would require 237 euros per ton.5 As early as in 2017, the Stiglitz Stern Report recommended a price of 50 to 100 euros per ton by 2030.6

At the same time, billions of people are falling short on meeting their most essential needs7. Due to lockdowns and other measures of pandemic management, the number of hungry people increased in 2022 by 122 million.8 A good life for all humans, present and future generations, is at great risk. And ill-designed measures of ecological policies might have negative consequences on the social situation – lockdowns tried to improve health, but they generated a whole series of collateral damages: more hunger, more inequality, more gender injustice. Measures to stabilize the climate should not repeat this failure.

Looking at the whole picture – progressing environmental degradation, huge social imbalances, non-fulfilment of basic needs and the risk of one-sided measures – new approaches to the socio-ecological crisis and transformation are required.

The increasing recognition of Rights of Nature and ecological human rights (EHR) is an opportunity to develop and propose new measures and instruments of environmental policy. As a starter, we consider the terrestrial biosphere, the wholeness of planet Earth's ecosystems - humanity's evolutionary and ecological home - as a phenomenon with intrinsic value. We support the Earth's status of a subject of rights under international law and the idea of the Rule of Law for Nature)9. We adopt a post-anthropocentric, life-centric worldview in which Nature can no longer be possessed by humans, but humans are part of Nature. This biocenosis implies that mankind as a whole should not cross the above mentioned ecological planetary boundaries. Humans, as part of Nature and beings with dignity, have the right to use natural resources and ecosystems. Under the premise that they let live and respect other species and living beings. In August 2022, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution (A/76/L.75) that ensures all persons the access to a "clean, healthy and sustainable environment." Already earlier, in the late 1980s, the UN Brundtland Report pointed out that living generations of humans should live in a way that they don't compromise future generation's possibilities to have an equally good life and leave to Planet to them in the same healthy conditions as they met it when they were born.

A possible implementation of these premises and ethical attitudes is the division of the "ecological cake" – meaning the yearly offer of renewable ecological resources from wood to water, from crops to sinks – among all living humans. Even if all currently 8 billion humans consumed their entire individual ecological consumption rights, mankind as a whole would remain within the referred ecological planetary boundaries. They would live in line with the "Brundtland mandate".

2. Core idea

The planet's annual endowment of resources to humankind could be shared among all persons in the form of individual consumption budgets. All humans have the permission to use one eight-billionth of what nature gives us humans each year, without degrading the planetary ecosystem or significantly robbing other species of living space. The goal is to prevent the planet from being exploited and overburdened by one species – homo sapiens – but also to protect future generations' EHRs. Currently, human beings consume the annual endowment of 1.75 planets in renewable and non-renewable resources and ecosystem services.10 And the average inhabitant of an industrial country consumes two to eight times more than they would be entitled to under a globally just and sustainable distribution.11

Consequently, the global ecological consumption budget of humanity would have to be more than a third lower than average consumption is today. Humans have no moral right to upset the ecological balance of the planet, nor can we justify leaving our children and grandchildren a planet in a worse ecological state than we found it.

Nevertheless, not everybody would have to reduce by the same amount: If somebody has to reduce or can still increase, depends all on the current level of resource consumption. Looked from that perspective, the proposed idea could be understood as an expansion of Kant's categorical imperative to the ecological dimension: Every human should choose a lifestyle that can be chosen by all human beings without limiting the opportunities of other inhabitants of the planet or those of future generations. On the basis of this equal ecological consumption budget, every person is free to shape her or his individual lifestyle (liberal approach). It is like the right to vote: each person has one vote, regardless of how wealthy, healthy or intelligent he/she may be.

Furthermore, the proposal is in alignment with today's definition of economics as the science of "how society manages its scarce resources"12, relating to ecological resources in this case: the foundation of every economic activity. "Management" would be a political rights-based management rather, but using markets and market forces to efficiently combine justice and sustainability.

It also builds on the Doughnut concept of the British economist Kate Raworth. The doughnut is composed of two rings. The inner ring is the social minimum that assures that every human gets the necessary minimum share of ecological resources in order to meet her basic needs and be able to lead a dignified life. The outer ring is the ecological boundary for mankind as a whole. This limit must not be transgressed if the ecological equilibrium is to be conserved. The space between the two rings is considered "safe space" for humanity.13

One could also understand the proposal of limited individual ecological consumption budgets in the way that it assures equal rights to access a global common14: the ecologically healthy Planet and its intact biosphere.

First considerations on implementation

A concrete implementation path could work with the introduction of individual ecological accounts, indicated e.g. in CO2 equivalents or global hectares (the unit of the ecological footprint). According to this metric, each human being has 1.6 global hectares or 16,000 global square meters available to him or her each year, without compromising the bioshpere's integrity.15

Other ecological boundaries have likewise been 'down-scaled' to annual per capita equivalents.16

The annual consumption budget could be logged as a "credit" on every person's ecological account by an International Ecological Authority and used up in the course of the year – or saved for a later (larger) consumption. The ecological account could be electronically linked to everyone's debit and credit cards, so that all non-cash purchases would be automatically included. When we make a purchase with our debit or credit card, two prices would be charged on our accounts: the financial price on the cash account, and the ecological price on the ecological account. We would thereby extend the system of financial price marking to the recording of ecological consumption. Once the ecological account is "empty", no further purchases of products with an ecological prize are possible. Exceptions for the satisfaction of basic needs – food, rent, clothes – should, of course be considered, in order to not endanger (other) human rights. But the purchase of a car, a city trip by airplane or a yate would no longer be possible until the account being refilled.

As a technical precondition, goods and services offered for sale on the (global) market would have to show not only a bar code for the financial price, but also their ecological "price" in the defined (and assigned) currency, e. g. "global hectares". This obligation could start with high-emission products and services such as cars, private jets and yates, flights, long distance transports and the like. The scope of application could be enlarged progressively.

The budget-granting authority could either be a UN authority such as the UNEP or UNDP or a common affiliate thereof. Alternatively, it could be the central bank of each country, e. g. the German Bundesbank, the Swiss Nationalbank or the Austrian OeNB. In case of introduction of a digital Central Bank's currency – e. g. the digital euro – a tendency towards Central Bank money

cash accounts will be a future trend anyway. In this case, the coupling of monetary and ecological accounts would be even easier.

Option: Two-tier-model

In the case that humankind – with all people living today having satisfied their basic needs – remained within the ecological limits of planet earth, we could leave the biological surplus reserves untouched. Alternatively, we could develop a two-step model with further advantages.

A) The part of the endowment that is necessary to cover all basic needs (the social limit of the Doughnut) becomes an unconditional, non-negotiable and inalienable human access permission.

B) The amount between the two circles, the actual doughnut, becomes tradable. Let us assume, 1.3 global hectares are needed for one person to cover all basic needs. The resulting surplus reserve, comprising 0.3 hectares per person, and only that, would become a tradable commodity.

This would have the following advantages:

– Low-income people who lacked the (financial) purchasing power to use up their whole ecological budget might sell what was left to better-off individuals, to their mutual benefit.

– Today's over-consumers would have a longer transitional period in which to adjust. Nevertheless, it would be essential to cap the possibility of acquiring additional permissions with e. g. 3 or 5 times of the average permission, in order to prevent huge differences. Shares should be transferred directly by the responsible UN authority (or, alternatively, the system of Central Banks) at fixed and strongly progressive prices. A repetition of the failure of the EU's emission certificate trading system should be avoided.

– Frugal individuals could give, or sell cheaply, additional contingents to other individuals or to common good-oriented NGOs or research institutions.

Expected effects

For high-income countries, such an environmental pact could be an effective way into a "post-growth economy," or a "steady-state economy." Meanwhile, low-income countries that currently consume even less per capita than the planet gives per person, would still be able to "catch up," though only within the limits of global sustainability. Currently, in countries such as Jamaica, Honduras or Mali, people consume on an average 1.6 global hectares.17 This does not mean that all humans globally have to adjust to their lifestyles, but reduce (or are allowed to increase) their ecological consumption to a comparable level. While the rich would have to lower their material life standard, this new benchmark does not mean at all that their life quality would sink. On the contrary: interdisciplinary research shows that a life rich in relationships, nature experience, internal wealth, and spiritual growth makes people happier than a materialistic lifestyle and an excess of things and stuff.18

If asked on the most relevant elements of life quality or "most important ingredients of the common good", people use to name almost exclusively non-monetary qualities and values such as health, happiness, flourishing relationships, social cohesion or fundamental rights. The following

picture is the result of many ad-hoc brainstormings in conference audiences from diverse countries.

G raphic 1: Sub-goals of a potential Common Good Product19 20

International ecological justice

Another potential design element is the consideration of historical responsibility (emissions, environmental destruction), but also different need levels due to different technological or other country-specific conditions. These conditions could turn into a country multiplier to enlarge or shrink its inhabitants' average individual budget. The calculation could be the following: Every generation that has overshot in the past, reduces the average consumption budget of its current inhabitants by 10 per cent. If a country has overshot for 3 generations, then the average budget would be 0.7 the global average budget. This way, the ecological debt of the Global North could be repaid. Current generations of ex-colonial powers would “pay back” to the descendants of colonies through a reduction of their average budget.

Besides that, for global implementation, companies in low-income countries would need technical assistance to be in condition to calculate the ecological price of their products. The establishment of an according national centre or international network could become a project of cooperation on climate protection under the UNFCCC or SDGs 9 and 13.

Legal approach & competent body

EHR could become part of an UN law, building on existing rights related to the environment and biological resources. As one option, resolution A/76/L.75 could be amended to UN Social Pact that includes economic, social and cultural rights: Why not add ecological rights? Alternatively, a third, separate covenant could be considered: an Ecological Covenant that adds to the Civil Covenant and the Social Covenant.

The definition, development, and implementation of ecological accounts could become a task of the United Nations Environmental Programme UNEP or Development Programme (UNDP), or a joint venture of both. No new UN body would have to be created. Another possibility is to adscribe this task to national Central Banks of member states of the according UN agreement.

3. Discussion

The proposal of limited individual ecological accounts adds a new layer to the existing array of environmental, ecological and climate protection policies. Whereas carbon taxes, the EU’s Carbon Boarder Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) put the focus of these policies on the collective level, and new measures in the framework of the EU Green Deal, such as mandatory corporate sustainability reporting or due diligence requirements for their value chains, on the level of organizations, this proposal comes from the other end of the spectrum: It attributes the final responsibility for a responsible environmental consumption on every single person.

In a first reaction, some debaters argue that this is the individualization of environmental responsibility of the society’s impact on the environment is inappropriate as it is a neoliberal-style individualization of social responsibility. I contradict: As little as paying taxes is the “individualization of social responsibility” the granting of equal, but limited ecological

consumption budgets is. It would be that in both cases if tax-paying or reducing one's personal ecological footprint were based on voluntary action. But this is neither the case. The collective solution – paying taxes and limiting one's piece of the ecological cake – is a formalized and rule-based expression of social responsibility. Not doing so and keep allowing the rich to overconsume thousands of times, would be much closer to an individualization of risk-and-responsibility approach, with a much worse distribution result.

Another discussion point is that the measure of the global hectare does not include all environmental impacts and damages. This is more than true. If one considers the ecological footprint as a "compound measure" of diverse environmental impacts, this could be further developed in a way that every component gets an individual limit, e. g. noble earths. If, one example, tantalum was displayed in the ecological price tag separately, and a consumer who has already exhausted her or his yearly budget of tantalum, wants to buy a product that contains tantalum, this purchase would no longer be possible.

A third counter-argument is that the "grey footprint", that is the footprint included in public infrastructures on which a single individual has no influence, would be overlooked with a strictly individual approach. Some argue that, in wealthy countries with comfortable public services and infrastructures, only this grey footprint requires the whole 1.6 global hectares that one inhabitant of the Planet would be allowed to consume in a just and sustainable distribution of Earth's natural gift. This is a relevant objection, and detailed research is needed to figure out the precise grey average footprint of each country. Depending on the level of that footprint, there are several potential solutions: a) full deduction of the average "public" footprint from the individual account; b) fractional deduction; c) combination of the limited individual budget approach with public policies that reduce the "public" ecological footprint.

A last relevant concern frequently expressed is that citizens will become fully transparent and that the state will dispose of all data on the citizen's consumption preferences. This argument is interesting because in the proposed ecological account would – in terms of data protection – not work differently from any existing financial bank account. Here, the state is not allowed to play big brother. Only if there is a concrete suspicion for a crime, a judge's ruling is needed before the police or the prosecutor can open a private account. With the ecological account, the causes for opening up have still to be invented as people will neither pay taxes on their global hectares nor has a case of "footprint laundry" been described so far. This doesn't mean that new crimes may be invented and committed in the future, but then the ecological account will work in the same way as a financial account and not create any new "transparent citizen".

Still, both, technical implementation faces a series of challenges, and ethical aspects, such as data protection, require a thorough discussion.

4. Conclusions

The deterioration of the Earth's biosphere and global ecosystems is progressing. Current political measures to stop global warming, the loss of biodiversity, the acidification of oceans or deforestation and desertification of land do not suffice. A game changer at a new level of effective policies is demanded. The proposed concept of limited individual ecological consumption budget is an attempt to put an end to extreme differences in individual consumption levels as well as

keeping mankind as a whole within the nine ecological planetary boundaries. Although the proposal may turn out to be highly restrictive for some over-consumers compared to their current habits, the proposal does not restrict fundamental (human) rights, by principle. On the contrary, it assures an equal share of all living humans and members of future generations of the ecological endowment of the Planet, while placing mankind amidst the web of life, rather than perpetuating its singular and outstanding position and right to overuse and destroy the foundations of life on this Planet.

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5.2 Task democracy: politics for the common good

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Abstract

This paper argues that urgent sustainability transitions, towards an economy for the common good, require an upgrade of the liberal democratic political system. It presents an upgrade design and first findings from experiments.

Transitions are needed to prevent dangerous climate change, resource depletion, biodiversity degradation, extreme inequality and large-scale injustice. Liberal democracies, however, have not responded timely and effectively. Briefly analysing the competitive nature of liberal democracy leads to the intermediate conclusion that ideological competition is a 'fair-weather system', fundamentally unable to turn the tide.

To explore options for democracies to innovate out of gridlocks, the history of political decision making during slow existential crises may provide clues. An example is found in the governance system of the Dutch water authorities, dating back to the 13th century. This system originally built on task division rather than competition, and is a proven effective and robust 'storm system'.

To explore its possible value in the present, a democratic institute is designed that may be added to a liberal democratic parliament as a 'transition chamber'. Its purpose would be to coordinate voluntary transition efforts from all of society and to create shared transition leadership for sustainability transitions.

Observations from field experiments are reported and some questions from political philosophy are discussed. More research is needed, which may be considered urgent.

1. Introduction

This paper argues that liberal democracy needs an upgrade to handle sustainable development challenges timely and effectively. It explores the fundamental inability of the liberal method of ideological competition to produce shared transition leadership. It continues with a novel institutionalist upgrade design, and some first findings from simulations and field tests.

Humanity is in uncharted territory. Half a century after the first loud warnings (Meadows et al., 1972), the limits to growth on our planet are exceeded large-scale, creating environmental, social and eventually economic crises. These crises are 'wicked problems': over-constrained systemic gridlocks with no easy way out, and even 'hard to define since there is nothing like the undisputable public good' (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Such crises may amplify each other, may be irreversible when trigger points are passed, and may become existential to civilisation and even mankind (Homer-Dixon et al., 2021).

Since 1987, the UN calls for sustainable development. The 17 SDG's, set in 2015, require massive change and huge investments, on a much larger scale than ever. Many industries and shareholders, however, remain focused on short term profits. Governments therefore need to

intervene, but act too little and too late. CO_2-emissions still rise. We're in the sixth mass extinction and we're running out of many resources.

The structurally insufficient crisis response leads to the two main questions of this paper: are liberal democracies able to handle slow-but-existential crises in the first place? And if not, is there an alternative democratic system that may do better?

Section 2 focuses on liberal democracy and its limitations. Section 3 explores the governance model of the Dutch water authorities, that helped managing a slow-but-existential crisis. Section 4 presents the design of a democratic institution for sustainability transition management, inspired by this 'storm system'. In section 5, observations from field experiments are reported and some questions from political philosophy are discussed, leading to conclusions in section 6.

2. Liberal democracy: a fair-weather system

In 2023 around 18% of countries worldwide were liberal democracies, meaning they hold elections, respect individual and minority rights and constrain their governments (Herre et al., 2024). This section focuses on the parliaments of these countries and their continental unions, on all levels from international to local. How do they handle the 'polycrisis'?

Since the 19th century, political parties in parliaments and councils proclaim visions on the common good, and strive for power to realise these visions. Meanwhile, they need to compete for votes, which makes asking for sacrifices without short term returns, like reducing meat consumption and holiday flights, an electoral risk. This dilemma results in various degrees of avoidance. Take the climate crisis. Typically, and exaggerated for contrast, populists deny the problem, socialists want to solve inequality first, nationalists point elsewhere, neo-liberalists trust science and markets to solve the problem and centre parties tune to insufficient average efforts. None, except some niche parties, explain the true magnitude of the crisis and its real life-style consequences.

As this avoidance is collective, it creates a normal, and thus a blind spot that masks the urgency of the polycrisis. It reduces sustainability to an issue like all others, to be addressed within budget once trust in politics is restored. This suggests a straight causal line from ideological competition, to normalised avoidance, to systemic inertia.

One might argue that the inertia has other causes, such as populism, 'wokeism' or neoliberalism, and that ideological competition as such is not to blame. A common analysis in this category is that neoliberal overpraise of markets and entrepreneurship results in privatising profits, socialising costs and eventually 'plundering of public goods and services' (e.g. Thomas, 2023). However, while sentiments and interests may explain the cause of problems of society, they do not explain why the political system cannot rise above this and find adequate solutions, which is its core task.

The systemic inertia seems to be overlooked even in scholarly debate about sustainable reform of the economy. Concepts like Doughnut Economics (Raworth, 2017), degrowth (e.g. Hickel, 2021), and many other green theories and models (Kronsell & Hildingsson, 2022), call politics and governments to action. However, researching why exactly previous calls did not result in sufficient transitions, is mostly beyond the scope.

Can liberal democracy improve itself? Francis Fukuyama proposes to step back from both neoliberalism and identity politics and to return to core liberal principles (Fukuyama, 2022). While this ideological reconciliation would reduce polarisation, it would still not alter the competitive nature of the system. It is hard to see how it would end the collective avoidance of drastic measures.

In sum, ideological competition is the dominant, if not single, method of liberal democracies to organise plurality. While effective in here-and-now issues, in elsewhere-and-later challenges it normalises collective avoidance of necessary measures, and results in political transition inertia. As this inertia is systemic, the competition method is fundamentally unfit for existential sustainability transitions. It is a fair-weather system, useful for liberalism but only as long as we can afford being divided.

3. A medieval storm system

In The Netherlands, 21 regional water authorities prevent floodings, keep inland water levels on target and operate sewage treatment plants. Their general boards consist of three groups: inhabitants, famers and nature reserve managers (Vollaard & Binnema, 2023). Each group has a fixed number of seats. The inhabitant representatives are chosen through elections. The other representatives are appointed by the elected boards of their respective organisations.

This hybrid model of group elections for quality seats has its roots the 13th century, and the population growth, economic growth and urbanisation of that time. Intensified land use resulted in a slow crisis of large-scale subsidence, worsened by devastating North Sea storm floods (Tielhof, 2021). Left unattended, this crisis would eventually turn existential, as accounts of land loss indicate.

A societal transition was needed, from artificial hills and unrestricted peat extraction, to regulation and water management by embankments, polders, locks and pumping stations. The investments and operational costs of these projects had to be carried by land owners, villages and emerging cities. They should either pay taxes or provide labour, for construction and maintenance.

Coordinating all this and settling the inevitable conflicts required an authority. At first, these authorities were bottom-up initiatives, representing all land owners and organising skill-based task division between societal groups. This bottom-up task division has survived wars and revolutions, and, so far, even political debates.

Even today, societal task division is a widely used complement of liberal democracy. In The Netherlands, issues requiring societal task division, such as labour market regulation, energy transition and pension reforms, are negotiated in corporatist advisory councils and in ‘societal agreements’ that involve government and ‘societal partners’ like industry, workers and NGO’s.

A major difference between these agreements and liberal democratic parliaments, is the relation between represented groups. While ideological groups in parliaments may want to do without some of their competitors, societal partners need each other badly, especially in crises. They have no interest whatsoever in a competition model that could result in dominance of one group over the other, or removal of any group.

In conclusion, the original governance model of Dutch water management authorities is based on sectoral task division rather than ideological competition. The model is hybrid, combining a top-level collegial board with democratic representation of task groups. This model has been successful in containing a slow-but-existential crisis, and can still be recognised in water authorities, advisory councils and societal agreements.

4. The task democracy model

Innovating out of democracy crises is currently being explored in multiple approaches, such as redesigning the social contract (Huntjens & Kemp, 2022) and establishing citizen councils (Reybrouck, 2016). This section adds a 'democratic institutionalist' approach (Herzog, 2023) and presents the outline of a new negotiation platform, to be implemented as for instance an additional parliamentary 'transition chamber' or a 'product council' for circular economy. The purpose of this platform is to create conditions for shared transition leadership and to initiate a flow of society wide campaigns that result in irreversible transitions. The platform design and intended applications are described, and a definition is proposed.

The platform is designed in three steps: a structure model, a process model and a development path.

The structure model in Table 1 is based on sectoral task division. It is designed to be generic for all sustainability transitions and scalable from villages and city districts to international sustainable development collaboration. It defines five societal sectors and their generic transition tasks. These tasks may be seen as distinct, indispensable and untransferable. The resulting mutual dependency elevates their need to collaborate above their interest to compete. The number of sectors is kept small, to keep the model generic and easier to implement. The government task group is a linking pin with the existing liberal democratic parliament. A consequence of this design is overlapping of task groups: scientists, public administrators, entrepreneurs and non-profit executives all are citizens as well.

Task group	Representation	Generic transition tasks
Science	Networks of academic disciplines or knowledge fields	Measure capitals and trends, explain history, predict future, identify development pathways, fundamental and applied research
Citizens	Grouped on a non-ideological dimension, e.g. area or age	Adjust lifestyle, support each other, raise children with sustainability values, vote
Government	Public administrators of government institutes	Encourage sustainability, tax or forbid unsustainability, ensure level playing fields, be launching customer

Businesses	Associations of self-employed, SME, multinationals, industry branches, business parks	Invest and innovate for sustainability impact, initiate supply chain action
Non-profits	Networks of health care, education, housing, sports, culture, NGO's, life view	Inspire people, qualify students, build and connect communities, inclusion

Table 1: Structure model

For continuity, a cyclic process model is chosen. This model is presented in Table 2. Its deliverable is a flow of society wide joint transition campaigns.

Step	**Content**
Agenda	Democratic prioritising of sustainability issues to set a joint transition agenda. This may be done by (1) asking each task group what they want on the agenda; (2) plenary deliberation; (3) sorting the issues into an agenda by voting.
Campaign	Co-creating sustainability campaigns to address top issues on the transition agenda. These campaigns consist of voluntary, mutually adjusted and synchronised contributions from five task groups. After co-creating a draft campaign plan, the task group representatives may ask their constituency for amendments and approval, on behalf of all of society, until a final plan can be kicked off.
Evaluation	Scientific measuring of ecological, social, economic capitals, and campaign impacts. This may be carried out by the science task group.

Table 2: Process model

In each step, negotiation and decision making is needed, to set an agenda, to coordinate campaign efforts, or to decide how trends are measured. This decision making may result in joint requests or even peer pressure to task groups and their institutes. A transition chamber or product council, however, is not an authority in itself and cannot overrule internal decision making of its participants.

As the platform represents all of society in a given territory, consensus decision making is unpractical, if not impossible. Following normal practice of parliamentary procedures, the platform therefore decides by majority vote. In the voting procedure, task groups have equal voting weight, which may be, given their mutual dependence and therefore their de facto veto power, the least questionable alternative. In a round table diagram (Figure 1), equality is expressed by equal positions.

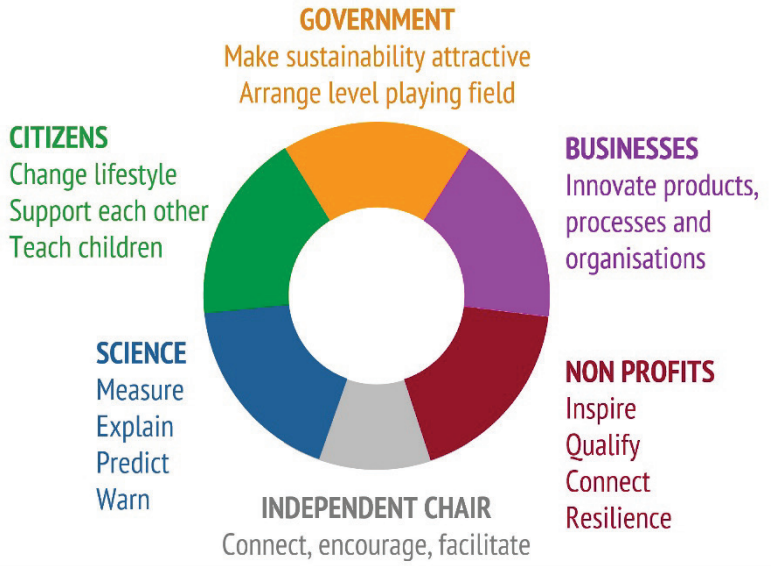

Figure 1: Round table diagram

A development path is considered essential to enable experimenting and implementation in current conditions. The path starts at the 'first mover' and ends in a consolidated new institute. Table 3 presents a summary.

Step	Deliverable
Initiative	A single initiator from one task group and a brief idea for next steps
Survey	A list of possible task group representatives
Opinion leaders	An agreement in a small group with opinion leaders, one per task group
Task groups	Meetings within each task group to collect issues and find more initiators
Simulation	Plenary test meetings, manifesto design
Institute	Establishing a formal transition chamber

Table 3: Development pathway

In recent years, the Noorden Duurzaam association developed a set of open access implementation tools for use in this pathway. The set includes an online voting system, a campaign canvas, a product council startup method (Faber et al., 2023) and more. Furthermore, a number of templates are written, such as a product council manifesto (Faber et al., 2022), and documents for district level applications like a plan for task division in district level energy transitions and a district council foundation document (in preparation). This last document outlines the councils' purpose,

structure and process, representation and membership, meeting protocol and equal voting rights for task groups, presidency, independent chair profile, open access meetings and public archive.

This design of a transition chamber is intended to be scale-independent and suitable for state, province and municipality levels. Within municipalities, the concept may also be applied in village councils and city district councils, to achieve a more task-oriented and action focused representation. International assemblies like the EU parliament and the UN General Assembly may explore similar implementations to strengthen global collaboration for sustainability transitions. For circular economy, the task democracy concept may be implemented as multi-level 'product councils'.

In summary, task democracy is a task- and action-oriented model for coordinating voluntary sectoral transition efforts. It is based on a blueprint and development path for a negotiation platform where science, citizens, public administration, businesses and non-profits are task groups with equal positions. The model intends to create conditions for shared transition leadership and a flow of society wide sustainability transition campaigns. It is designed for application in liberal democracies, on any territorial scale of public administration or circular economy supply chains, creating networks of transition centres.

5. Discussion

Any proposal to upgrade the liberal democratic governance system of states, provinces or municipalities will be controversial. This section highlights some of the many questions raised by the method of task democracy.

To start with, are there empirical observations? While the title 'task democracy' came up in 2021, sectoral task division projects at Noorden Duurzaam go back further. In a local cross-sectoral circular economy meeting, an entrepreneur said "I won't start on my own [with the suggested measures], but as a group, we would not object being forced collectively." – which set the tone and resulted in a successful covenant (Vereniging Noorden Duurzaam, 2013). In this case, the importance of level playing fields can be seen, as well as the strong motivational effect of actor group unanimity (see for instance Hauser et al., 2014) and the synergy effect of involving all actor groups. Since 2016, a series of local public transport initiatives was initiated, using a task group model. In 2019, the task group model stabilised in its current form. In a simulation of a transition chamber with a group of 20 transition professionals, participants observed peer pressure by four task groups to a relatively passive fifth group (Bootsma, 2020). In 2023, a legal entity for sustainable development of a 60 hectares farm area was established, based on task democratic articles of association. In 2024, the municipal council and an alderman of Groningen responded positively to the suggestion of a task democratic round table model for circular economy (Gemeenteraad Groningen, 2024). In a related project, five task groups designed a joint local transition campaign and reported that the process created energy and synergy (Figure 2). In general, the observations, although small in scale and numbers, confirm that the model correlates with positive results. On the other hand, politicians and public administrators often hesitate and prefer experiments with more traditional transition approaches.

Figure 2: Campaign design workshop

For political philosophers, the task democracy model raises many questions. For instance, is task democracy liberal? The model deviates from the one-man-one-vote principle, as it aims for equality and political emancipation of task groups, rather than individuals. It even allows for multiple representation (for instance, entrepreneurs and scientists are citizens as well). On the other hand, it prevents task group dominance through a 'one-task-group-one-vote' rule, regardless of potentially huge differences in constituency sizes. Furthermore, it does not establish authority over existing liberal democratic institutes. Liberalism in general may be seen as governing over diversity, rather than politics based on individualism (Fukuyama, 2022). In this sense, task democracy may be considered instrumental to liberalism, as it intends to provide liberal democracies with a new method to respond to slow-but-existential crises.

One could object that task democracy is utopian theory, since it adheres to sustainable development ideals and aims for full participation. Task democracy, however, assumes diversity, negotiation and co-creation of transitions, rather than compliance to a given transition procedure. It intends to rationalise and accelerate crisis response. It improves rather than replaces the current political system. With this openness, realism and transition approach (Valentini, 2012), it is non-ideal rather than ideal theory. In contrast, applying the competition method of liberal democracy to sustainability transitions may be considered utopian, for two reasons. First, it puts individual rights above societal interests which requires an unlimited world with unlimited resources. This causes slow-but-existential crises. Second, it causes transition inertia, making adequate response to these crises impossible.

While experimenting with a task democratic platform may be justified by urgencies and outcome expectations, one still could question its legitimacy, as citizens may be subjected to changed laws and regulations. In that case, however, the laws and regulations always stem from of decision making by a legitimate public administration. They may be negotiated in a task democratic transition chamber or product council, but this chamber or council has no authority of itself. A legitimacy objection is therefore ungrounded.

Task democracy is a new and largely untested model on how to upgrade liberal democracy for timely and effective sustainability transition handling. This paper is the third scholarly writing on topic, and the first presenting an overview. It cannot discuss all questions, but it can name some topics that are being researched or need research: representation and proportionality within task groups; the relation between task democracy and corporatism; lessons from complexity theory; implications for transition theory; implications for state law and public administration; experiment design; tool development; usage in consultancy services; facilitating a community of practice.

6. Conclusion

This paper explores the system inertia in liberal democracies, occurring while managing sustainability transitions. A root cause of this inertia is found in the competitive method of liberal democracy, which forces political parties in a race to the bottom, compromising their vision. Their collective avoidance creates a blind spot in public debate, which in turn amplifies avoidance and prevents shared transition leadership. As this problem is systemic, rather than resulting from ideologies, a systemic solution is needed.

For inspiration, the medieval governance model of the Dutch water authorities is reviewed. This model combines a top-level collegial board with democratic representation of task groups. It proved effective in a slow-but-existential crisis.

Can a modernised version of this model help to accelerate sustainable development? A design for a new democratic institution is presented: a negotiation platform, to be implemented as a transition chamber or product council. It facilitates voluntary collaboration and task division between five societal sectors, including public administration as a linking pin to current governance. The purpose of this approach is to create conditions for shared transition leadership.

The task democracy model is new and largely untested. However, simulations and small-scale implementations indicate the model is welcomed by all five task groups and creates collaborative group dynamics.

In answering some political philosophy questions it is argued that task democracy may be considered instrumental to liberalism, that task democracy is non-ideal rather than ideal theory, and that a transition chamber or product council itself has no authority and thus avoids legitimacy issues.

In sum, task democracy is in a different category than many current attempts to fix liberal democracy, like referenda and citizen councils. This category of task division based models urgently needs more research, collaboration and experiment.

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6.1 Are social and environmental companies moving towards an economy of the common good in Uruguay?

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Summary

This study investigates the elements, principles and values of the Economy for the Common Good (hereinafter ECH) model in the business environment of social and environmental impact in Uruguay called New Economies or Transformative Economies. It describes how two selected companies, aligned with EBC, express these values in practice.The methodological approach is the qualitative method, which is carried out through an exploratory and descriptive approach. The results obtained show that certain elements of the ECG are reflected in an incipient and partial way in the business field of social and/or environmental impact in Uruguay. In the two companies studied, the principles of cooperation, social justice and transparency are observed with greater preponderance. In conclusion, the orientation towards the common good and the approach carried out by the EBC model, with its tools, have not yet been fully materialized in the business environment and triple impact public policies in Uruguay.

Methodology

The qualitative approach is applied seeking to explore and describe the possible inscription of the ECG model in the Uruguayan business environment.

Objectives

Identify the different principles, values and elements of ECG that are present in the business field of social and environmental impact in Uruguay.

Describe how these principles, values and elements are manifested in companies that have a social and/or environmental purpose in the Uruguayan context.

Provide an approach to the conditions present in Uruguay that favor the change of business paradigm aligned with the EBC.

Introduction

We are all sons of a time and a land. The Uruguay of the present suffers and enjoys the classic meaning that we have given to the economy with the advent of modernity: the ¨”homo oeconomicus” or economic man. Children of immigrants and with our gaze always towards the north of the world, we have defined ourselves from reason and individual benefit, and interpreted reality from a merely material perspective. We adopt the traditional discourse of economics as a science and naturally transfer its postulates to our private, family, educational, work and community spheres.

Those, limited to the business environment, adopted the mechanisms inherent to the paradigm: utility maximization, competitive rivalry, people as resources, neglect of the environment, unequal distribution of benefits, etc.

However, this set of beliefs is changing. Just as the values that sustain it do. Proof of this are the movements, both public and private, in the field of action that calls us together, which demonstrate a more generous, feminine, benevolent, connected and careful view of life.

Where does the spark of this change blow from? We could answer the question, first of all, by addressing it from the macro and the lack of respect for natural laws and their sacred cycles. We could also argue that it is about the replication of new models of economics oriented towards social inclusion and harmony with nature. But we prefer, just for the purpose of awakening another point of view in the reader, to claim that the person who changes in the first and last instance is the individual himself.

The old business paradigm describes the human being as another part of its machinery. That is, with a utilitarian purpose. The individual purpose being subordinated to the “most convenient” purposes of the company. And this lack of meaning, so often filled with consumerism, has made us apathetic and sad.

Perhaps now, like never before in our history, we reflect and question our economic livelihood. ¿Does what we earn have to do with our own passions? ¿Do we contribute something positive to our community? In our conversations we perceive ourselves to be more aware of ourselves, more connected to each other and to nature. We do not generalize, but we also do not ignore this feeling that is born, develops and expands rapidly with the support of new technologies. We experience the paradox that at the same time that the old paradigm takes hold, the new one is born strong, consolidates and expands rapidly.

We feel that in this time of transition, the most sensible thing is to dream of creating more harmonious scenarios between us and nature. Separation only happens on a mental level to be able to understand what we believe is not part of us. So, in this context, the principles of human dignity, solidarity and social justice, environmental sustainability and transparency and democratic participation could serve as a compass for those who begin to reflect on how their decisions positively or negatively affect mind themselves and the environment. We propose that this guiding map be offered, through the balance of the common good, to those who wish to instrumentalize this change of consciousness in the organizations they lead. Underline the term offered as opposed to tax. In the old business paradigm, external intervention is inevitable for profound change. In the new body of ideas, the heart that promotes transformation is intrinsic.

Next, we will describe some organizations, legal frameworks, groups and ventures where we have identified (to a greater or lesser extent) that promote some of the values of the EBC. We recognize that there is a group behind it (and in the first instance an individual) who becomes aware of the result of their actions and for this same result, freely decides to dedicate themselves to the creation of new ways of doing economics.

Findings

Elements of the EBC present in the business field of social and/or environmental impact in Uruguay

Sustainability fairs: in 2022 the first edition of the Sustainable Uruguay Expo was launched with the participation of 43 companies. Of these companies, fifteen work in the areas of waste revaluation and recycling. Ten use natural elements to make their products. Four belong to the sustainable textile industry, making fabrics and garments based on natural dyes and fibers or reusing waste from the local textile industry. Two belongs to ecological construction. One that does not use packaging to market its products. As well as others that support micro and small producers in the sale of biodegradable products, in the creation of gardens and composters, in paper and cardboard toys with educational content and finally others that are dedicated to the conservation of native seeds or cleaning of oils and hydrocarbons from the industrial sector based on organic and biodegradable products.

A strong influence of the circular economy can be seen in many of these companies, generating a positive impact on the environment. In turn, micro, small and medium-sized companies are identified in this group.

Socialab: Organization that brings together social companies, its purpose is to support entrepreneurs to recognize solutions for social problems. In 2021, it was made up of 16 companies, most of them young, founded between 2018 and 2019. In addition to the presence of waste revaluation and recycling companies, it is also made up of companies dedicated to providing solutions for people with different abilities (Disorder Autism spectrum, low vision). Others carry out new educational approaches or focus on work in penitentiary centers. It should be noted that three Socialab companies participated in the Sustainable Uruguay Expo: Recumple (revaluation of waste), Compost Ciudadano (composting) and Sellin (support for small producers).

System B: the movement has a presence in Uruguay since 2014. By 2022 it will be made up of 15 Uruguayan companies certified by B Lab of the United States.

Companies in Uruguay that follow the model of the Economy of the Common Good and use its tools: It is worth highlighting the Entrebichitos cooperative and the Ecotech Environmental Laboratory (Limited Liability Company). The latter, a pioneer in Latin America in obtaining the Balance of the Common Good reviewed by auditors from the Spanish Federation for the Common Good. The company Triex has carried out the EBC diagnosis with the support of a consultant from the EBC of Uruguay. In turn, Ethical Banking in Uruguay shares values and principles of the Economy for the Common Good and has organized talks in conjunction with the ECG- Uruguay. Specifically in relation to the Ecotech audit, the following can be highlighted as inspiring elements:

- The orientation towards excellence in its production processes and the quality of its product.
- Relationships of trust established with suppliers.
- Collaborative relationships verified in customer service and actions for the community.
- The permanent improvement in communication to users and clients of environmental aspects.
- At a financial level, the definition of a self-financing policy and the non-distribution of dividends.
- The use of surpluses to finance investments. And not making temporary or speculative investments.

- Clarity in aspects of improvement.

ANDE Circular Opportunities Program: present since 2018, implies a government push towards a national Circular Economy strategy in which the transformation of waste product from agro-industrial activities is promoted, as a way to develop a sustainable production model aligned with the SDGs. The productive sectors that participated in the program include the wine sector, the poultry sector, tanneries and meat processing plants, among others. In the vast majority, the revaluation, recycling and/or reuse of waste from production processes is sought.

National Agroecology Plan: support for agroecological family farming is extremely relevant, since Uruguay is one of the first countries in the world in hectares dedicated to organic production, products that are increasingly in demand worldwide. In Uruguay there are more than 700 certified organic producers by 2022, a number that has been growing over the years.

Social and Solidarity Economy: Although these types of companies correspond to historical economic forms and are not the specific object of this work they are relevant in Uruguay within an approach that seeks to bring together ethics with economics. In Uruguay there are about 3,500 cooperatives and 300 companies considered to be part of the solidarity economy. Apart from worker ownership as in cooperatives, the solidarity economy considers collaboration and solidarity as a component of its identity. These types of companies also have specific protection and promotion legislation.

As observed in the previous analysis, there are companies that already have in their DNA the goal of achieving a positive social and/or environmental impact, others that seek to improve their processes to cause a lower negative impact, others that venture into better practices in their businesses.

Coditions That Promote The Paradigm Change Towards Ebc Through The Business Field In Uruguay

BIC Law: This law seeks to identify, recognize and promote companies with social and environmental impact. This purpose must appear in the statute and, in addition, be verifiable. This deserves some considerations, firstly, the law applies to the corporate types established in Law No. 16,060 and to simplified stock companies. The law establishes that the effect of actions or omissions on interested parties must be taken into account, many of which coincide with the interest groups set out in the Common Good Matrix. Likewise, companies are required to present an annual report, with public access, through which the impact actions are accredited, and which will be registered in the Internal Audit of the Nation. It should be noted that the report is presented under sworn declaration, that is, it is not audited and its registration does not imply a statement on the content or compliance with the triple impact, that is, the positive social and environmental impact, in addition to the economic profitability.

The law provides a very valuable framework to make positive impact companies visible, however, it does not provide specific tools for the exposure and measurement of their actions. In this sense, the EBC can offer a comprehensive framework for the exposure and measurement of the impact of companies, through the common good matrix and the common good balance.

Uruguay Circular Program: The Uruguayan State project called Biovalor, has as its main objective the transformation of waste generated from agro-industrial activities and small populated centers into energy and/or by-products, in order to develop a sustainable low-emissions model through the development and transfer of appropriate technologies. Although this approach is framed within the Circular Economy, the objectives of said program place productivity and profitability at the center, so sustainability appears as a secondary or complementary objective. In summary, its objectives are:

- Contribute to improving the productivity and profitability of Uruguayan companies, based on sustainable models, maximizing the value of use of inputs and reducing company costs.
- Improve competitive conditions by supporting its international insertion aligned with sustainability.
- Promote sustainable development and commitment to the SDGs.

Based on the above, the message of sustainability is provided as a means to achieve greater profitability, competitiveness, reduce costs or as a way to comply with international agreements. This still denotes a low level of commitment and awareness, regarding the primary objective of economic activity, which must be the achievement of the common good.

Public Policies for the Promotion and Development of Agroecology: Law No. 19,717 for the promotion of Production with agroecological bases is a policy that was born from the needs of agroecological family producers. As the EBC states, this is a movement ment that drives decision-making from the bottom up, that is, it starts from people's needs and then translates it into laws, or regulations in general.

National Agroecology Plan: Presents the objectives of promoting and expanding agroecological-based production systems with family farming as the main subject. This includes promoting access, distribution and consumption of agroecologically based foods, contributing to the conservation of ecosystems, the rescue, production and use of Creole and native genetic resources, as well as promoting training, research and extension processes in agroecology. .

Sustainable Public Purchases: According to information published in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of the State Purchasing Regulatory Agency, public purchases annually represent between 11% and 15% of the country's GDP, so the impact can be very relevant by promoting triple impact companies (economic, social and environmental). Decree No. 402/018 that approves the Sustainable Public Procurement policy, however, does not mention this type of company in particular. In turn, the technical standards on sustainable public procurement are aimed at establishing parameters for the purchase, for example, of air conditioning or energy efficiency. This shows that an important path is opening towards sustainable public purchases, however, it is necessary to deepen its promotion and instrumentalization.

Significant presence of social and solidarity economy companies: These companies are to a lesser or greater degree impregnated with the values of cooperation and solidarity, which is why there is an alignment with the EBC in its original purpose.

Conclusions

From this work, it emerges that certain principles and values promoted by the EBC, such as cooperation, solidarity, mutual help, human dignity, social justice, ecological sustainability or transparency, are present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the business field that seeks to generate a social and/or environmental impact in Uruguay. There are companies that since their origin are oriented towards the common good, that is, towards generating a positive impact with their economic activity. This is why the principles and values of the EBC are reflected in them. In contrast, larger companies, whose structure and values may have been under a traditional model of profit maximization, the paradigm shift pushes them to adopt environmental sustainability and social impact measures. The factors that promote the EBC approach in companies with an EBC Balance Sheet or Report are: intrinsic motivation, horizontal structure, shared leadership and internal narratives aligned to the EBC.

With reference to the conditions present in Uruguay that favor the change of business paradigm oriented towards the common good, there are public policies that are oriented towards sustainability. However, what underlies it is achieving economic development based on sustainable models and compliance with the international commitments assumed with the SDGs. Sustainability is, therefore, a secondary objective. On the other hand, there are laws that are promoted from the bottom up, that is, they are based on the needs of the population, such as the National Agroecology Plan promoted by the family agroecological sector and the BIC law promoted by System B, which present a deeper level of consciousness in terms of positively impacting social well-being and environmental care. Despite this, the present conditions do not reflect a comprehensive approach, which is what the EBC model provides. Tools such as the Common Good Matrix and Balance Sheet provide a guiding framework for companies to achieve the common good, as well as to measure the impact.

In relation to the Balance of the Common Good, generically comparing its practices assimilated in the business ecosystem, it is confirmed that of the 20 themes of the same, 3 of them have been verified: Cooperation with organizations (D2), Impact of product waste (D3) and purpose environmental/social of the value generated.

From all of the above, some questions arise:

- Does the Balance of the common good for companies as formulated adapt to the economic structure, idiosyncrasies and institutional framework of Uruguay? Is it an objective in itself or is it an approach tool?
- Is it viable, desirable or possible to bring the EBC model to companies whose internal narratives, leadership or purpose are not aligned with the EBC?

If the above is not desirable or possible, is an ethically oriented social and economic transformation viable without having a significant critical mass of them?

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6.2 Towards an Ethic of Care in (Business) Education

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1. Introduction

The 'patient is ill'. In 2009, Rockström et al. published a paper in which they identified nine boundaries, critical to maintaining the planetary biosphere. At the time they were able to assess seven of these boundaries and found that three had already been transgressed (Rockstrom, 2009). In 2023, they were able to assess all critical boundaries and found six of these to be transgressed (Planetary Boundaries, n.d.), implying that planetary conditions are worsening. In the meanwhile, we witnessed a covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the French inequality researcher Thomas Piketty revealed that on a global scale, income and wealth inequality has soared and is still increasing (Piketty, 2020). Also natural resources are getting depleted at a rapid pace. For example, the proven copper reserves are still enough to cover demand for another 40 years (Copper Demand and Long-Term Availability, n.d.) whilst the proven oil and gas reserves suffice for another 50 odd years (BP, 2021).

The 'patient's' illness should spur governments, corporate communities, universities, business schools and other educational institutes to take action to contribute to solving these crises. In this paper, I will particularly focus on how universities and business schools can contribute, for the simple reason that I have been working for business departments of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in the Netherlands for 35+ years.

In this paper, I will delve deeper into some of the causes and consequences of the some of the crises, or grand challenges, and also will formulate two alleged remedies to alleviate the patient's pain and distress: green growth and degrowth. In my view, the true remedy is the transition towards a degrowth economy. The purpose of this paper is to show what a degrowth business school curriculum could look like.

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I will (briefly) touch upon the causes and consequences of some of the above mentioned crises. In section 3, I will discuss two ways to treat the 'patient. In section 4 I will explain the ethics of care principle as the foundation for the degrowth concept. Section 5 focuses on the degrowth implications for (business) education. Finally, in section 6, I will draw some conclusions.

2. Cause of the illness and consequences

In 1972, the Limits to Growth (Meadows et al., 1972) report was published. This report showed that -when following the business as usual scenario- a complete global society collapse was to be expected in the early 21st century. Although the report was heavily criticized at the time, it made very clear that not the limits to growth are the problem, but economic growth itself. In more recent years the results we evaluated by the Australian physicist Graham Turner, who compared the report's projections with the actuality between 1970 and 2000, and he found that The Limits to Growth business-as-usual-scenario was still accurate (Turner & Alexander, 2017). In 2021 Gaya

Herrington reiterated the 1972 study and reached conclusions similar to the ones in the initial report (Herrington, 2020).

For at least some of the crises, or grand challenges mentioned above, a direct or indirect connection exists to economic growth and the prevailing economic system (e.g. Bradshaw et al., (2021); Piketty (2020); Brand et al., (2021); Khatana et al. (2021)).

Although the alarming effects of economic growth became undeniably clear in the early 1970s, the seeds for the devastating effects were already planted some 400 years earlier by philosophers like Francis Bacon and John Lock (Jonsson& Wennerlind, 2023). We therefore need to realize that we are standing on the shoulders of earlier economic theorists, and that the economic growth paradigm has already been permeating economic and business school curricula for a long time.

The consequences of economic growth are alarming indeed. Although, Meadows and his team were one of the first to warn the world about possible negative outcomes, we are now starting to feel the morbid consequences.

These alarming facts are to a large extent caused by overconsumption in global North countries (Wiedmann et al., (2020) and, an unjust and unfair economic system that incentives and accommodates economic growth. Against this backdrop it should be clear that Global North citizens and those in a position to create a fairer and more just economic system are confronted with the moral responsibility to neutralizing these consequences. As it seems, quite some people buy 'stuff' simply to fill an inner void (e.g. Jackson, 2011), which adds an existential dimension to overconsumption.

Affluence accentuates wants more than it does needs. Needs are basic necessities for survival, while wants arise out of desires people have. One of the first to distinguish between the two was Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733) (Jonsson & Wennerlind, 2023), who has become particularly famous an essay called the Fable of the Bees, which he wrote 1705. In this essay Mandeville points out that economic growth is driven by private vices. Living a "vicious life" gives way to increasing economic prosperity of some. Yet it ruins the wellbeing of many, and devastates life of our planet.

Although written more than 300 years ago, the thrust of this essay is still valid and relevant today. It is widely acknowledged that the capital market, which can be considered the very epitome of the capitalist economic system, is driven by greed (e.g. Bloomberg - Are You a Robot?, 2023). Obviously, vicious behavior has become institutionalized. However, greed is not limited to the capital market alone. It is visible throughout the economy, and what is worse: it has become institutionalized, and we don't recognize our wants as greed anymore.

3. How to treat 'the patient'?

From an economic perspective, we can identify two 'treatment extremes'. The first is a green growth and the second is degrowth treatment. Both will now be discussed.

Green growth

Green growth proponents argue that economic growth and environmental preservation are compatible (Sandberg et al., 2019). However, the belief that growth is possible without having a severe and negative environmental impact rests on the yet unproven premise that technology can

undo the environmental harm done without causing further harm either in the farther future or in the form of externalities (Ossewaarde & Ossewaarde-Lowtoo, 2020). That is, green growth proponents believe that absolute impact and resource decoupling from economic growth is possible. It also rests on the assumption underlying the environmental Kuznetz curve, that initially an increase in prosperity results in more pollution, and that beyond that point increasing prosperity results in just the opposite. Although this assumption has yet to be proven (Raworth, 2017).

We also need realize that techno-economic solutions should not and cannot be the answer to existential and moral issues. That is not to say that we should not invest in technological innovations, but we need to be aware that instrumental solutions are not the answer to normative questions.

Besides, green growth or sustainable growth is still about growth, and hence still requires additional virgin resources and fossil fuels. This causes some to believe that the circular economy is the answer to the environmental challenges we are facing, although that it is doubtful (Corvellec et al., 2021).

Degrowth

Going beyond the limits of growth brought us exactly where we are today, and to make sure to stay within these limits, we need to degrow. That is: we need to reduce resource and energy consumption and to bring back the economy into balance with the living world in a way that reduces inequality and improves human well-being (Hickel, 2020a,b). In my view, degrowth is an authentic, legitimate and accurate interpretation of sustainable development. However, some consider as a misnomer, because of the negative association people have with the term (Hickel, 2020a). I think degrowth accurately describes what is required to neutralize negative consequences mentioned earlier. A full-fledged transition towards renewable energies isn't likely to be the solution to combatting climate change, because the energy transition itself requires extensive amounts of resources and fossil fuels, which together will use up a significant share of the two-degree carbon budget (Alfredsson et al., 2018), and contributes to pollution and biodiversity loss.

4. Ethics of Care

Jason Hickel, one of the most pronounced contemporary degrowth researchers, explains that degrowth is about reorganizing or recreating the economy as we know it, and not about plummeting society into an eternal recession as many economists think (Hickel, 2020a). It In that respect he is putting forward activities we need to deploy or to abstain from, such as scaling down arms production and the production of SUVs, a fair distribution of income through progressive taxation, and the expansion of universal public goods and services. This list can be extended to include basic income, reclaiming the commons etcetera (Kallis et al., 2020).

Rethinking and recreating the current economic system is an absolute necessity, because it is by its nature extractive , exploitative and unjust. In his seminal book 'The Nutmeg's Curse', Amitav Gosh makes compellingly clear that our current system is rooted in slavery, inequality, exploitation and extraction for the sake of making profits, and we can still hear this echo today (Ghosh, 2022). Global North countries buy their resources for final goods production in Global South countries at a low price, subsequently selling these goods in Global South at a high price, and make a profit. What

is worse is that these countries remain dependent on (the benevolence) of Global North countries for the financial and economic survival, and are left with the ecological disasters of overconsumption in the Global North. Jason Hickel, in his book "Less is More" even goes a step further referring to a new form of colonization imposed upon Global South countries: the colonization of the atmosphere.

But there is more. Key to conventional economics is the so-called homo economicus, a non-existing super rational information processing being, that is driven by self-interest. Producers find themselves in a constant state of competition and profit maximization, while consumers' prime aim is to maximize utility. Care for the other (mankind as well as the ecological environment) and putting society first is valued only if it positively contributes to financial performance. Unconditional care is not an option.

A degrowth economy is the very opposite of what a market economy stands for, implying that we need to back to the drawing board to redesign the economy and economic theories. Looking at the consequences of the current economic model and the accompanying economic theories, I think it would be most appropriate to describe these as expressions of an Ethic of Carelessness.

Inspired by Virginia Held, I would like to make a plea for an Ethic of Care (EoC)as the normative frame of understanding for a degrowth economy. She states that : 'an Ethic of Care would recommend that economic activity be organized to actually do so (i.e the meeting of genuine economic needs) rather than primarily the lust of wealth of the self-interested' (Held, 2006 p.65), and 'the ethic of care must include caring for distant others (..) and caring that the rights of all are respected and their needs met' (Held, 2006 p.66).

Ethics of Care is a feminist ethic with a focus on breaking the patriarchal order that women have been submitted to for so long, and about resisting injustice done to women and girls (Gilligan, 2011). Francis Bacon, one of the founding fathers of science as we know it today, used similar language when he described the relationship between science and the natural environment. He also speaks of a patriarchal relationship: the dominion of masculine science over feminine nature. Scientific knowledge gives the scientist "the power to conquer and subdue (feminine) nature, to shake her to her foundation" (Jonsson & Wennerlind, 2023).

What is moral, or what expresses the good life in EoC can best be illustrated by the mother-nurturing-her-child metaphor. This is a very strong metaphor accentuating a caring relationship and the accompanying emotions (profmcgowan, 2015; Held, 2006). Examples of values expressing this relationship are: compassion/empathy, responsiveness, solidarity, trust, interdependency, interconnectedness, reciprocity and mutuality (Held, 2006). A caring relationship emphasizes that citizens aren't simply creatures impacting nature, but are by themselves nodes of a complex ecological system (Bohm et al., 2022). A caring relationship also goes beyond care as a (mental) disposition, because "care as a disposition often misleads people into thinking that they are caring when they only have the good motives of wanting to care, to help others, to be benevolent, and so on, however much the intention misinterprets the recipient's wishes and perceptions and however, much good intentions may fail to contribute to a caring relation" (Held, 2006, p.55).

Pope Francis poignantly proclaimed in his Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum that our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together (Francis, 2023). This entails

that from an EoC perspective we can distinguish but not separate the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development, and this need to holistically address these.

5. Ethics of Care in (business) education

To make EoC work in (business) education entails first and foremost that this concept is adopted, supported and -most importantly- lived by the board, management teams and other staff members of the educational facility. That is, EoC related values not only need to be identified, but also operationalized and internalized, preferably in a democratic process involving all stakeholders. This would make educational facilities become 'caring institutes'. In my view, business schools should be transparent about whether they support an Ethic of Carelessness, or adhere to an Ethic of Care. Students have the right to know.

Furthermore, business schools should become niches, or fertile grounds for new ideas and (radical) innovations to which experimentation and pioneering are key (Geels, 2002).

Being a caring institute has consequences for curriculum development; these should be care driven, bearing in mind the mother-nurturing-her-child metaphor. An outline of what a curriculum could look like is presented in figure 1. Business modeling is at the heart of business curriculum development and that is because every organization has a business model. So it makes sense to take the business model framework as the starting point. A business model consists of three components: (1) the value proposition component, what do we have on offer and for whom? Following Böhm et al, I would prefer using the term 'humble solution to a grand challenge' instead (Böhm et al., 2022).

(2) the value creation component -who and what is required to make the value proposition happen, and lastly,

(3) the value capture component – what do cost and revenue flows look like? Cost and revenues go beyond the traditional financial costs and revenues to also include social and environmental costs and benefits.

Interaction between the three components is also grounded in EoC values, causing the outcomes to be organically in balance with the living world whilst simultaneously improving well-being and reducing inequality, mindful of the words of pope Francis cited above.

Each semester could be built around one of the grand challenges pictured in figure 1. Value propositions are developed in transdisciplinary settings and that semester courses or themes logically follow from and are aligned with the business model components (e.g. strategizing; business modelling; creativity sessions; marketing; multiple value accounting etc).

Also longitudinal courses or themes, encompassing more than one semester, should be part of the overall curriculum. Some suggestions are mentioned in Figure 1. Two courses are key: applied care ethics and ecological economy, since an EoC has a strong focus on caring relationships, we should develop in all students the capacity for and the practice of caring about the (human and non-human) other.

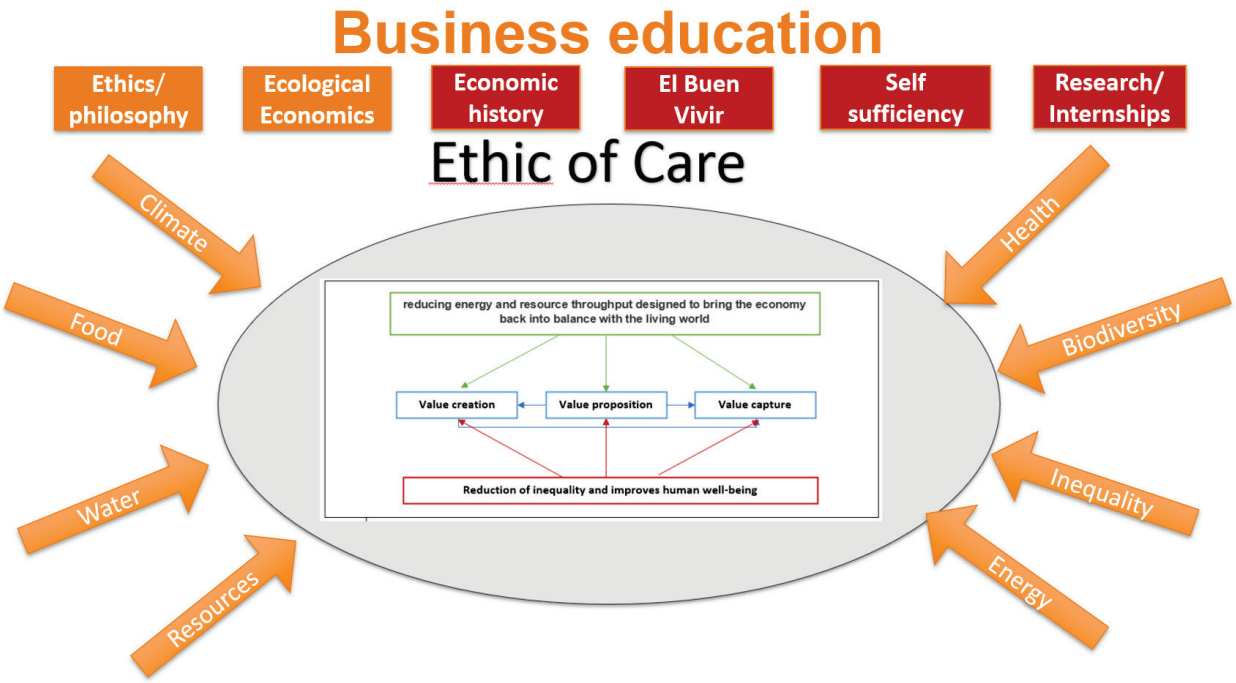

Figure 1: Ethics of Care in (Business) Education

Economic history is an important topic because where we are coming from to a large extent determines where we are going to. Students need to realize that we standing on the shoulders of our ancestors. Also educational processes require by their nature to reflect upon and question presupposed patterns, trends and systems.

Students also need to know about other systems and narratives like ‘el buen vivir’ to counter balance the dominant neo-classic and neo liberal perspectives but also to get a better understanding of what the business-society-nature relationship in different cultures looks like, and what we can learn from that. Students need to understand that they are not observants to nature, but part of it.

Bringing the economy back into harmony with the living world and fostering a caring attitude entails that students should get a better feel with nature by (e.g.) growing their own food, and repairing, refurbishing and redesigning (for example) used clothes.

Research is transdisciplinary by nature for ethical reasons, which entails that it -amongst other thongs- crosses disciplinary and institutional boundaries to include a diversity of both academic and lay actors (Belcher et al., 2015).

Internships and graduation projects take place in social enterprises to familiarize students with how an EoC works in practice.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this essay was to show what a degrowth business school curriculum could look like. Overconsumption driven economic growth is taking its toll and burdens the planet earth. Green growth, which claims that we can technologically innovate our way out of the current crises,

is a dead end street, because instrumental techno-economic solutions can't be the answer to moral and existential issues. In my view, degrowth, which states that we need to reduce energy and resource consumption to bring the economy back in harmony with the living world, whilst reducing inequality and boosting well-being, is the answer. Moving towards a degrowth economy requires a paradigm shift, implying that we need to move from economy that is rooted in an ethic of carelessness towards a degrowth economy, voicing an ethic of care. It goes without saying that this paradigm shift has major consequences for (business) education. In my view, a degrowth curriculum centers around a degrowth business model, applied (care) ethics and economic history.

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