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What Motivates Individuals or Groups to Engage in Commons Initiatives? A Scoping Review

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Badges for Good Research Practices: Diversity Statement.

Abstract

Who joins commons initiatives, and why? This paper presents a scoping review of 53 theoretical and empirical studies from 2004 to 2023, focusing on the sociodemographics of commoners and their individual and group motivations for joining. The review reveals that a wide range of people participate in commons initiatives for a variety of complex reasons. Their decision to join may be influenced by normative motives, such as biospheric values and feelings of ethical responsibility. They may be motivated by self-interest, such as positive outcome expectations, or by high self-efficacy beliefs and easy access to the initiative. In terms of group motivations for joining commons, we highlight social identity, collective efficacy beliefs, mutual support and reciprocity, collaborative decision-making, and trust. Applying a broad theoretical and geographical scope in our review enhanced our understanding of people who participate in commons initiatives in the Global North and South.

Keywords

commons, motivations, participation, motivational theories, community-based initiatives, grassroots initiatives, theory of planned behaviour, value-belief norm model, norm activation, social identity

Non-Technical Summary

Background

Commons initiatives are self-organized groups that allow people to come together and collectively manage and share resources. Such initiatives are formed around a variety of resources such as renewable energy, food, and housing. Commons are popular in both developed and developing countries, yet little is known about who joins these initiatives and why.

Why was this study done?

We reviewed 53 papers published on the issue to understand the characteristics of people who join commons initiatives and their motivations for joining. We wanted to find out what motivates people to join these initiatives, identify differences in motivations, and determine whether these differences vary between developed and developing countries. This information can guide us to better develop programmes and tools to support participation in commons initiatives.

What did the researchers do and find?

Few of the papers we studied focused on individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, or income even though differences in these factors could be explaining factors for participation in commons initiatives. Those that did, showed that urban gardening projects attracted more women than men, while energy commons drew more men than women. In terms of age, people in commons initiatives seemed to be older, in their 40s. We will need more research to confirm these individual characteristics.

Next, we focused on individual and group motivations for joining commons initiatives. We found that people joined these initiatives for a host of reasons. Some are driven by ethical values and a need to protect the environment, while others are motivated by self-interest such as having access to fresh produce from a community garden.

We also found that some are driven by group motivations such as reciprocity, social identity, collective efficacy, mutual support, and trust. Thus, people join commons initiatives when they are confident that they will meet like-minded people they can trust.

What do these findings mean?

Our study reveals that commons initiatives involve a wide range of people with different motivations. We demonstrate that these motivations are consistent with psychological theories, enhancing our understanding of collective commons management.

In practice, this knowledge can help us align programmes and interventions to foster inclusivity and collaboration within commons initiatives. Regular gatherings, storytelling, and involving participants in decision-making processes can encourage social interactions and strengthen the sense of belonging.

Future research should investigate how motivations change over time, as motivations for joining may differ from motivations for staying in the initiatives. Researchers should also

apply theories of motivation to more contexts, to explore how factors such as age, gender, income, type of resource, etc. influence motivations for joining commons initiatives.

Finally, understanding why people join commons initiatives can lead to a more sustainable use of natural resources and help to resolve environmental challenges. We can build more effective strategies for supporting and promoting commons-based initiatives throughout the world if we acknowledge the many factors that encourage individuals and groups to participate.

Highlights

- This review is the first to synthesize psychological motivational theories with individual and group motivations for joining commons initiatives (an umbrella term for community-based organizations, cooperatives, and grassroots initiatives). Its purpose is to shed light on the complex motivations behind commons engagement.
- Individual motivations for participating in commons initiatives are consistent with established psychological motivational theories. Individual motivations include normative motives rooted in biospheric values and ethical obligations, self-interest motives linked to personal gain, and self-efficacy beliefs. Some of the group motivations were also consistent with the established theories– shared identity, collective efficacy beliefs, mutual support, and reciprocity — while shared decision-making and trust were beyond the established theories.
- Sociodemographic characteristics, motivational frameworks, and regional differences in commons initiatives are crucial factors in understanding participation in such initiatives.
- This review will help to inform the design of effective programmes and tools that foster community building, collaboration, and inclusive decision-making in commons initiatives.

Discussions regarding "the commons" come from efforts to comprehend capitalism's political economy and, specifically, the "failures" of capitalist markets from the standpoint of liberal economics (Clapp & Dauvergne, 2011; Clift, 2021; McCay & Jentoft, 1998). Scholarly and political efforts to envisage alternative forms of commerce, production, consumption, and well-being have multiplied in response to increasing dissatisfaction with the capitalist, technocentric system. Consequently, the commons have arisen inside these initiatives as a workable counterbalance to the march of privatization and neoliberal individualism (Nightingale, 2019). In 1990, Elinor Ostrom in her influential book "Governing the Commons" (1990), examined how natural common pool resources have been governed historically. Since then, "commons" has been used to describe various resources, that comprise urban, digital, knowledge, digital health, cultural, etc.

As we reconsider how we utilize our natural resources, the idea of commons is becoming increasingly popular (Kennedy, 2020) in relation to the failing systems of

provision in a market economy. The discussions on commons are relevant owing to the failures and inefficiencies of the market and the state. On the one hand, market failures are reflected in the over-exploitation of natural resources as a direct consequence of an unregulated market (Bowles, 2008; National Research Council, 2002). On the other, the inefficiencies of the state may be demonstrated when, despite being privatized and/or subject to government control, natural resources under federal systems of government may still be in a disastrous situation because of the division of governance authority in federal systems (Avelino et al., 2019; Hudson & Jonathan, 2013).

Instances from across the world demonstrate a variety of commons initiatives, including the collectivization of governance and the utilization of forests, water, and various other resources for subsistence, the reclaiming of abandoned lots for urban gardens, the utilization of alternative currencies, and several others (Fisher et al., 2010; Kumar, 2002; Özkan & Büyüksaraç, 2021). Commoning offers opportunities to envision the specific arrangements of labour, exchange, manufacturing, distribution, investment, and governance that enable neighbourhoods to thrive rather than merely exist and empower their members' agency (see Sareen et al., 2023).

Discussions in commons research have largely focussed on how effective they are at distributing resources (see Dellenbaugh, 2015; Kumar, 2002; Nightingale, 2019; Özkan & Büyüksaraç, 2021) and on single-sector commons, like on energy (see Bauwens, 2016). Although there is a growing body of evidence for single sector commons, what is missing is an integration across sectors to shine a light on the underlying motivational mechanisms that influence all commons regardless of the sector. In this review, we are interested in exploring and analysing the body of research on who engages in commons initiatives, and what drives individuals to join using a psychological lens by drawing on theories from motivational psychology. We thus explore the sociodemographics of commoners, delving into various dimensions of motivations, both at the individual and group levels, for participating in and contributing to commons initiatives. Commoning is present in countries of all income levels (Haelewaters et al., 2021), albeit with different structures. Motivations may therefore vary by location. It is thus significant that the authors of this study sought a broad geographical perspective in discussing motivations for joining commons.

Our goal is to identify existing research and synthesize and bridge knowledge gaps, providing a holistic understanding of how sociodemographic factors intersect with motivations to shape participation in commons across diverse contexts. By doing so, we aspire to contribute valuable insights that can inform policy, practice, and future research on commons governance, as well as on sustainability. Specifically, we ask the following questions: What are the sociodemographic characteristics of people who join commons initiatives? What are the individual motivations for joining commons initiatives? What are the group motivations for joining commons initiatives? Are there differences between commons initiatives in the Global North and Global South?

To answer the research questions, we identified and mapped the breadth of evidence at the intersection of psychological theories and commons research, recognising a scoping review as a suitable method for uncovering research gaps in this combined domain. We start by conceptualizing commons initiatives as the study object of this paper. Next, we briefly discuss theories of motivation and the methods used in this study. This is followed by an analysis of the selected papers to achieve the objectives of the study, and a discussion of our findings. We conclude with a summary of the results and suggestions for further study.

Conceptualizing Commons Initiatives

Commons

Academics view commons as a larger political experience and a way out of a life defined by market and state (Dellenbaugh, 2015). Hardt (2010) defines the term "common" as shared resources, including natural resources and digital wealth, that enable humans to coexist. Commons share characteristics such as non-excludability and social value (Foster & Iaione, 2015; Marcinek & Hunt, 2019; Ostrom, 2008) and uphold principles such as democratic governance, transparency, and fairness (Bollier, 2014; Hess, 2008). Commons refers to shared resources, institutions, practices, and communities that benefit and maintain them (De Angelis, 2007).

In the context of this paper, we use commons interchangeably with commons initiatives to mean context-specific social structures and activities that offer value to a group of people, i.e., the commoners. Commons involve tangible (e.g., gardens, fisheries, arable lands) and intangible resources (e.g., climate), management, and negotiation that ensure the continuous use of resources. Thus, commons initiatives include community-based organizations, cooperatives, and grassroots initiatives.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are social structures that foster togetherness and help individuals achieve shared goals. They are run by community members who share common characteristics, such as belonging to the same neighbourhood or settlement. CBOs can be geographical or thematic (Barr et al., 2010), and they strengthen civic abilities, promote healthy habits, foster camaraderie, create connections for community well-being (Bloemraad & Terriquez, 2016), and empower citizens (Lennon et al., 2020). For Lennon et al. (2020), enabling citizens to actively participate in the energy system is crucial for achieving the necessary public participation to address societal crises. As discussed by Hess (2008) and Bollier (2014), internal organization and processes are relevant aspects of commons initiatives. CBOs as part of commons initiatives put the focus on the internal organization and processes of groups.

Cooperatives are formalized methods for managing commons initiatives and promoting community building (Iankova, 1998; Rodima-Taylor, 2014). They offer safeguards

against resource encroachment and focus on voluntary membership, democratic control, equal economic participation, autonomy, and community welfare (Billiet et al., 2021; Fisher & Nading, 2021; Guttmann, 2021; Sacchetti & Tortia, 2016). In this study, cooperatives reflect the conceptualization by Fisher and Nading (2021) who describe them as "new cooperativism", which encompasses various modes of commoning and cooperating. These projects begin with commoning as the premise, engaging in collective association and co-becoming in response to crises and emerging social and economic needs.

Commons initiatives often originate from grassroots activities, where citizens advocate for change at local, national, or global levels, addressing specific problems and promoting change at the grassroots level. Initiatives and local organizations (e.g., neighbourhood committees) can mutually benefit each other (Blanchet, 2015; Weber et al., 2019). For DellaValle and Czako (2022), grassroots initiatives promote collective engagement which is crucial for addressing specific challenges like energy poverty that extend beyond individual contributions. These organizations act as first responders in times of need and are crucial monitors of which solutions are better suited to the circumstances. While the term "commons" has taken on various meanings, we conceptualise community-based organizations, cooperatives, and grassroots initiatives as commons in this study.

Commoning

Commoning is the process of connecting a natural resource to the local user group (Ridley-Duff & Bull, 2021). Commons initiatives are produced by it (Noterman, 2016). Numerous academics link commons to property connections, although commoning is seen as a process that goes beyond concerns with property and money (see Bollier et al., 2015; De Lissovoy et al., 2016; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2021). Consequently, commoning develops into an imaginative force that can produce, e.g., novel urban spatialities (Asara, 2025; Exner et al., 2021).

Commoners

Commoners are the members of commons initiatives. Individuals are shaped by external structures (Bourdieu, 1998). When residents witness the degradation of resources, they are motivated to act, in ways that vary depending on factors such as the type of resource and people's beliefs and values. For example, in areas of deterioration, residents have devised collective ways to save the forests because there are no formal rights to the forests and no financial incentives to promote conservation (García-López et al., 2021). Through "bottom-up crafting of institutions", communities demonstrate how locals, or commoners, build rules to self-govern and avert disaster as opposed to just standing by and doing nothing as a "tragedy" plays out (Haller et al., 2016). Thus, in the context of this paper, commoners are active individuals who self-organize and devise rules to self-govern around a natural resource.

Motivation to Start or Join Commons Initiatives

Various psychological motivational theories offer explanations as to why individuals might join commons initiatives. Among the most familiar are Norm Activation Model (NAM), Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Social Cognitive Theory, Social Identity Approach (SIA), and Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Actions (SIMPEA).

The Norm Activation Model (NAM) contends that when individuals are aware of the effects of destructive behaviour, they develop a sense of responsibility (a personal norm) to counteract the adverse consequences (Savari et al., 2023; Schwartz, 1977; Schwartz, 1994). Applied to the context of commons, this would mean that individuals join commons when they feel morally obligated to do so, for example driven by a pro-environmental personal norm. Personal norms are activated by awareness of adverse consequences and aspiration to responsibility. For example, individuals may be aware of issues that threaten the use of the commons, such as enclosure or access restrictions, and believe that by joining a commons initiative, they can help to improve the situation. Also, individuals who feel morally obligated to protect the environment and believe that communing will lead to the desired consequences may join commons to align with their moral values.

The Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory (Stern et al., 1995) is an extension of the NAM. The VBN theory suggests that individuals' values, beliefs, and norms can lead to pro-environmental behaviours, such as preserving and protecting the environment. Strong pro-environmental values and beliefs increase people's motivations to act responsibly, as their actions align with their values and norms. In the context of commons, this means that values, beliefs, and norms can motivate individuals to engage in commons initiatives.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) emphasizes the role of subjective norms, attitudes, and perceived behavioural control in shaping behavioural intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB defines human activity, especially in terms of decision-making and goal-directed action. It contends that a person's behavioural intentions are influenced by their attitudes, subjective social norms, and perceptions of behavioural control. Thus, positive attitudes towards common outcomes, the belief in approval from close friends, and the capacity to be part of a commons can influence behaviour intentions in commons contexts.

The Social Cognitive Theory states that perceived self-efficacy both influences and is impacted by behaviour and circumstances (Bandura, 2002). A person's self-efficacy is their conviction that they can carry out a specific activity effectively (Schunk, 2012). Three factors contribute to self-efficacy: magnitude, which refers to the subjective difficulty of achieving a goal; strength, which refers to the extent to which what is desired is generalized across contexts; and how generalized the goal is. The perception, motivation, and performance of an individual are all influenced by their feeling of capacity (Bandura,

2002). People seldom try to complete a task when they anticipate failing at it. Thus, individuals might join a commons initiative because they expect it to succeed.

The Social Identity Approach (SIA) highlights the significance of group identity and identification in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviours (Brügger et al., 2020), emphasizing that people derive a sense of self and understanding of their social environment from their group affiliations. It posits that group identification, reflecting emotional and cognitive alignment with a social group, plays a crucial role in influencing collective efficacy beliefs and interpersonal behaviours. Ingroup favouritism can foster positive attitudes and actions towards group members, while outgroup animosity may lead to negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviours towards those outside the identified group. SIA suggests that people engage in commons initiatives due to the sense of belonging they anticipate, with those with a stronger need for belonging being more motivated. Group-based motivation helps to promote a feeling of shared purpose, collective efficacy beliefs, and common responsibility for the community's well-being.

Finally, an extension of the social-identity-based collective action is the Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Actions (SIMPEA) (Fritsche et al., 2018). SIMPEA is a social identity model that explains individualistic models of pro-environmental action by considering collective self-definition effects on environmental appraisals and responses. SIMPEA suggests that decisions made under the influence of social identity are no longer personal but depend on collective perceptions and dynamics. The model suggests that social identity may provide a unique route to motivated pro-environmental action.

The various theories suggest that the motivation (whether normative, self-interest, or group-related) to join a commons initiative fosters, supports, or strengthens actual participation. The presented theories all recognize that psychological elements have an impact on how people make decisions and behave (see Fooken & Schaffner, 2016), be it through intimate values and norms in NAM and VBN; self-interest related motives such as attitudes, subjective social norms, and perceived behavioural control in TPB; self-efficacy in Social Cognitive Theory; or group-based motives such as social identity and collective efficacy in SIMPEA, or affiliation to groups in SIA and SIMPEA. Taken together, these models of motivations suggest that participation in commons can theoretically originate from a range of motivations, both on the individual and group level. However, to our knowledge, there is no overview of which of these motivations are tested empirically and whether specific motivations explain engagement in commons particularly well.

Method

Our study is based on a scoping review of secondary data, i.e., published literature in academic journals and conference papers that were examined against the research questions. The study did not aim to undertake an exhaustive systematic review but

instead adopted the criteria of Munn et al. (2022), focusing on a scoping review approach. Scoping reviews help synthesize data (Munn et al., 2022) that could inform practice, and guide future research priorities. To achieve the aim of a scoping review, we followed the procedure outlined by Peters et al. (2020), the intention was to identify and map the breadth of evidence at the intersection of psychological theories and commons research, recognizing a scoping review as a suitable method for uncovering research gaps in this combined domain.

We first conducted a literature search on motivational theories and empirical works that focused on individual and group motives for joining self-organized initiatives. We then linked the theories and the empirical works, although we did not conduct a detailed analysis of how the identified theories can be applied to the empirical works.

To retrieve the relevant literature, different perspectives and contexts were purposefully gathered to widen the lens of the review. A Boolean search methodology was used to extract scholarly articles/grey literature to analyse and develop a comprehensive understanding of the sociodemographic characteristics and of individual and group motivations to join a particular commons initiative. All the key phrases were paired with Boolean operators, such as "AND," "OR", and "NOT."

The key phrases were "demographic", "socio-economic demographic", "motivation", "individual motivation", "group motivation", "commons", "urban commons", "commoning", "community-based initiative", "grassroots initiative", and "cooperatives". The study relied on clear inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 1) to ensure that the study focuses on the sociodemographic characteristics of individuals and on group motivations to join a commons initiative.

Table 1

Search Criteria

Criterion	Included	Excluded	Justification of Criteria
Setting	Global North and South	—	To provide a review that guides future studies in the Global North and South.
Language	English	All other languages	The first author is proficient in English.
Date of publication	All periods	—	To broaden the scope.
Article type	• Peer-reviewed articles. • Conference papers. • Review papers. • Book chapters. • Grey literature.	—	To broaden the scope.

Note. Table is authors' own construct (2024).

Considering the complex body of transdisciplinary papers and the vast breadth and depth of literature on theories and empirical data on motivations to join commons, we narrowed the search down to titles and abstracts to enhance search specificity (see Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020).

The papers were screened in two stages. The first stage consisted of screening the title and abstract and was intentionally inclusive, retaining articles if they mentioned: (i) motivational theories for joining commons initiatives, or (ii) socioeconomic characteristics of commoners, or if they reported (iii) their own findings as to why individuals join commons. In the second stage, we applied tighter restrictions by reading full texts, and we included papers that focused on commons initiatives that fit our definition. We did not engage in risk of bias assessment, as the aim was to map the existing data (Peters et al., 2020).

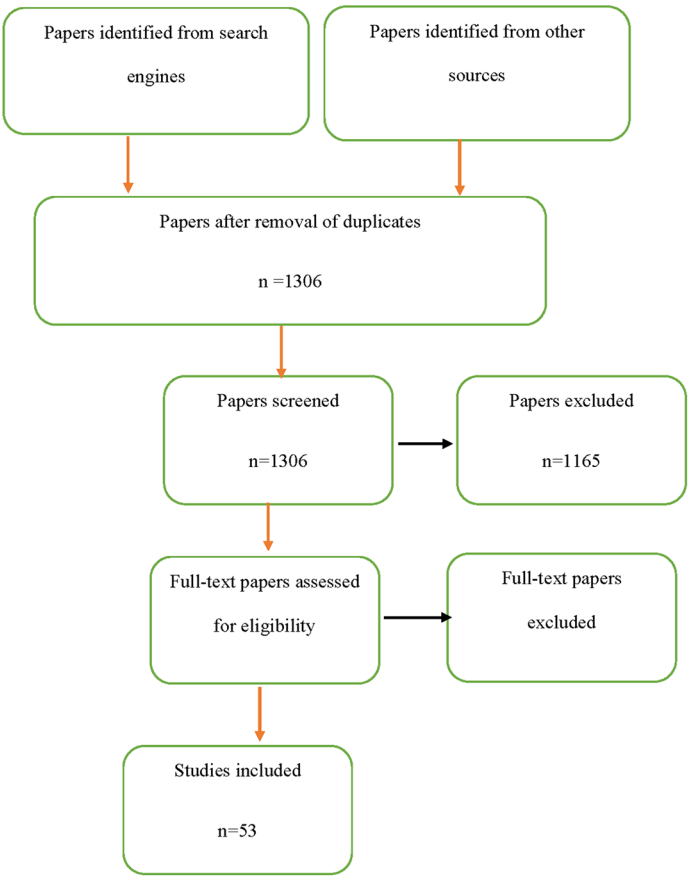
The inclusion criteria allowed the review to focus on papers published on commons without date restrictions. Including countries from the Global North and South widened the geographical and analytical scope of the study and enabled us to reveal a diversity of commoning cases. The key phrases were applied to Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar (grey literature) in June 2023. The search phrases were the same across the search engines. The scoping review focused on peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, review papers, and grey literature, based on the key phrases mentioned earlier.

A total of 1572 items fit the criteria. By removing duplicates across the search engines, we reduced the list to 1306 items. Next, 1165 items were eliminated because their abstracts or titles did not present theories or empirical data to answer our research questions. The first author manually screened all titles and abstracts without using AI tools. The first author read the 81 papers and eliminated them from the study as they had no association with the commons. The second, third and fourth authors verified this. Ultimately, 53 sources were selected for the study (see Figure 1).

Peters et al. (2015) recommend that the data extracted should align with the research questions. We, therefore, extracted data that will offer a comprehensive view of the reviewed papers and answer the research questions which included: (i) geographic location of the study, (ii) resource type around which the initiatives were organized, (iii) year of paper publication, (iv) name and type of journal, (v) methodological approaches (quantitative, qualitative, essay), (vi) theories employed in the paper, (vii) sociodemographics of commoners (gender, age, education level, household size, and income), (viii) individual motivations, and (ix) group motivations.

Figure 1

Flow Diagram of the Scoping Review Process



Note. Adapted from Peters et al. (2015).

Descriptive Overview

Country of Origin

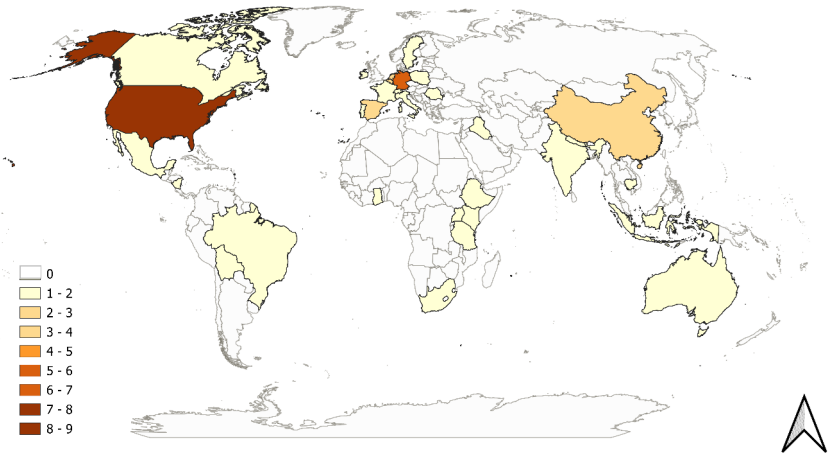
We distinguished between two dimensions with respect to the geographical provenance of the studies: (1) number of countries in which the research was situated (i.e., one country, more than one country, or none, i.e., theoretical research not situated in any country) and (2) location, i.e., Global North or Global South (see Appendix Table 1). A total of 83% of the analysed papers were set in a single country (67% of them in the

Global North and 36% in the Global South), 11% in more than one country, and 6% were not set in any country (i.e., theoretical). (see Appendices).

Figure 2 depicts significant regional disparities in coverage. Most of the papers were published in the Global North, with a predominance of papers published in the US and Germany.

Figure 2

Number of Articles From Each Country



Note. Map created with QGIS.

Type of Resources

The reviewed papers cover a thematic breadth of different types of commons. Of the 53 papers reviewed, 51 discussed the types of resources surrounding the commons. Of these 51 papers, most of the studies (n = 13) focused on food commons. Overall, the studies covered housing commons (n = 4), cultural commons (n = 5), land commons (n = 4), and energy commons (n = 3). A total of 6 papers focused on more than one type of commons initiative.

The food commons researched were in the Global North and South. In the Global North, they were in Spain (López-García & Carrascosa-García, 2023), Germany (Gauder et al., 2019; Winkler et al., 2019), Australia, (Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022), the US (Quimby et al., 2020), Portugal (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016), and France (Torres et al., 2017). In the Global South, they were in China (Dong et al., 2023), Iraq (Savari et al., 2023), and South Africa (Wesselow & Mashele, 2019).

By contrast, research on energy commons was conducted only in the Global North: in Belgium (Bauwens, 2016); across Portugal, Spain, and Belgium (Soeiro & Dias, 2020); as well as in Ireland (Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023).

Year of Publication

The reviewed papers were published between 2004 and 2023. Most were published in the past eight years with n = 11, representing 20.75% in 2023. This is followed by eight publications in 2022 (15.09%). Seven publications (13.21%) each are from 2020 and 2016.

Type of Publication

Most of the reviewed papers were published as peer reviewed journal articles (n = 50, representing 94.34%). Only three of the studies (representing 5.66%) were conference papers. The reviewed studies were published in various journals related to Psychology, Sustainability, Geography, and Environment, as well as more general journals (e.g., Scientific Reports, Marine Policy, and Judgment and Decision Making). See Appendix Table 2 for a detailed list.

Methodological Approaches

Most of the publications were quantitative studies (n = 27, or 50.9%, cf. Appendix Table 3). Out of the 27 quantitative studies, most were correlational (n = 24, 88.8%) while the remaining three were experimental.

The qualitative studies made up 28.3% (n = 15) of the reviewed papers. The third-largest group of publications (n = 6, or 11.3%) were mixed-methods studies. And 9.4% (n = 5) of the total number of publications reviewed were theoretical works or essays.

Theorization

The approach and use of theories in the reviewed papers was diverse. Theory application ranged from criticism of prior concepts (Gillespie, 2016) to adaptation and incorporating elements of prior theories (Avey et al., 2009; Cermeño et al., 2022; DeCaro et al., 2015; Pal & Singh, 2021; Vita et al., 2020). Some authors relied on single theories to underpin their studies (Allert & Reese, 2023; Bauwens, 2016; Bonow & Normark, 2018; Brügger et al., 2020; Dakurah et al., 2005; Eizenberg, 2012; Emich, 2012; Łapniewska, 2017; Li et al., 2023; Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Winkler et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2023), while others incorporated more than one theory (Hamann et al., 2021; Moser & Bader, 2023; Savari et al., 2023).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour was the most popular motivation theory among the reviewed studies. Moreover, many of the authors relied on theories that considered ownership or possession, referring to it as "solidarity" (Łapniewska, 2017), "collective psychological ownership" (Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023), "psychological ownership" (Eizenberg, 2012), "psychology of possession" (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004), and "psychological ownership" (Ambuehl et al., 2022).

Substantive Overview

Sociodemographics of Commoners

This section presents the sociodemographics of the respondents who were captured in the selected papers. Notably, in most articles, the authors did not discuss how sociodemographic properties relate to participation in commons, nor did they provide representative data of commoners, and only a minority of the papers (n = 13) reported sociodemographic information about their participants at all. In that sense, we cannot directly answer our research question on the sociodemographic characteristics of commoners, but we can highlight the diversity of commons participants in the covered papers.

Location

Some of the studies were located in cities and as such the majority of their participants were in the urban areas (Winkler et al., 2019), however Pithouse (2014) found that rural inhabitants in South Africa were more familiar with cooperatives than their urban counterparts. (see Appendix Table 4).

Gender

In the reviewed articles, women constitute a majority of members across different initiatives (Moser & Bader, 2023) as well as in specific initiatives such as the Visible Group in Poland and the Municipal Network of Urban Allotment Gardens in Portugal (Łapniewska, 2017; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). However, energy commons were dominated by men (Soeiro & Dias, 2020). All these studies were undertaken in Europe. In Portuguese urban allotment gardens (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016), women indicated higher motivation for applying to urban allotment gardens than men.

Age

The commoners are generally older: on average 40.00 years of age across Europe (Soeiro & Dias, 2020), 50.22 in Switzerland (Moser & Bader, 2023), and 47.00 in Portugal (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). In the case of Martinho da Silva et al. (2016), higher age increased willingness to apply to the urban allotment gardens.

Level of Education

The education level of the study participants was diverse, whether they were members of cooperatives, community-based organizations, or grassroots initiatives (Winkler et al., 2019). In some cases, most members were highly educated (Gauder et al., 2019; Moser & Bader, 2023), in others the majority were from a low education background (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).

Household Size and Income

Only few of the studies measured household size. For authors that enquired about household size, the average comprises 2.77 persons in Switzerland (Moser & Bader, 2023) and 2 to 4 persons in Portugal (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). The numbers are close to the 2.3 household size average provided by the European Union in 2021. The income levels of members ranged from low income (Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021; Quimby et al., 2020) to middle income (Moser & Bader, 2023; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). The overall composition of commons have been described in some studies as heterogeneous (Bauwens, 2016; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016; Winkler et al., 2019) and in others as homogenous (Gauder et al., 2019; Moser & Bader, 2023). In Table 2, we present a table of the papers that discussed gender, age, education level, household size, and income.

Table 2

Substantive Data

Variable	Pertinent/Associated Papers and Location
Location	
Urban	Winkler et al. (2019).
Rural	Pithouse (2014).
Gender	
Women Majority	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
	Portugal — (Łapniewska, 2017; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Men Majority	Soeiro and Dias (2020).
Average age	
40 years	across Europe — (Soeiro & Dias, 2020).
50.22 years	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
47 years	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Level of Education	
Highly Educated	EU Countries (Italy, Germany, Romania and Spain) — (Gauder et al., 2019).
	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
Low Education Background	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Household Size	
2.77 persons	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
2 to 4 persons	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Income	
Low Income	Uganda — (Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021).
	USA — (Quimby et al., 2020).
Middle Income	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).

Note. Table is authors' own construct (2024).

Individual Motivations for Joining Commons

A total of 30 out of the 53 articles used individual motivations to predict participation in commons initiatives. Two of these papers (Dearborn & Kark, 2010; Martinez, 2020) were theoretical. All individual motives identified in the reviewed articles can be assigned to one of the motivational theories presented in the theory section. The first category reflects the theoretical frameworks described earlier in the paper (SIA and SIMPEA), which are social identity/sense of belonging, collective efficacy, and mutual support/reciprocity. The second category is an addition to the earlier frameworks and includes collaboration, decision-making, and trust.

Values

According to the VBN theory, an individual's values, beliefs, and norms can combine to produce pro-environmental behaviours, or behaviours that contribute to the preservation and protection of the environment. The analysis showed that environmental conservation, driven by biospheric values, is a significant motivator for commons initiatives (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Cattivelli, 2023; Keane et al., 2016; Savari et al., 2023; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016; Soeiro & Dias, 2020; Torres et al., 2017; Turreira-García et al., 2018), particularly in urban garden commons (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Cattivelli, 2023; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016; Torres et al., 2017), rural commons (Keane et al., 2016; Turreira-García et al., 2018), and energy commons (Soeiro & Dias, 2020). Active members (Turreira-García et al., 2018) and women tend to be more concerned about saving the environment and thus hold higher biospheric values (Keane et al., 2016).

Personal Norms

Per the NAM ethical duty is a significant motivation for people to engage in urban conservation initiatives (Dearborn & Kark, 2010). Empirical evidence supports this claim, as seen in studies by Aalbers et al. (2013), Łapniewska (2017), and Međugorac and Schuitema (2023). Personal norms have also been found as a normative motive for joining a common (Eizenberg, 2012).

Positive Outcome Expectations

Following Social Cognitive Theory, individuals join commons initiatives because they expect them to succeed. Following TPB, individuals tend to adopt behaviours to which they hold positive attitudes, i.e., they expect positive outcomes. Conservation commons attract members due to the potential for increased natural resources and positive results (Keane et al., 2016; Martinez, 2020; Shen et al., 2023; Vita et al., 2020). Members value improvements in resources and livestock (Keane et al., 2016), with this motivation present across European countries (Vita et al., 2020) and in Africa (Keane et al., 2016).

Urban agriculture and fishing commons are driven by the opportunity to share in harvests, earning food from commoning (Cattivelli, 2023; Quimby et al., 2020). The material benefits of participating in commons are crucial in decision-making in sustainability initiatives (Moser & Bader, 2023). Health-related motivations, particularly the desire for high-quality or organic foods and the pursuit of a healthy diet, drive urban gardeners to participate in urban gardening initiatives (Cattivelli, 2023; Winkler et al., 2019).

Easy Access to Commons

Having access to commons is a part of the "perceived behavioural control" strand of the TPB. Through perceived behavioural control, an individual will assess how easy or frustrating it is to participate in commons and then decide whether or not to engage. Our review shows that individuals join commons if they are easily accessible, both in the Global North (Moser & Bader, 2023) and South (Pal & Singh, 2021). Another motivational factor is people's perceived notion of having control over their activities (Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022).

Self-Efficacy

An underlying premise of self-efficacy theory is that expectations of personal mastery and probability of success influence an individual to take part in commoning. The belief that one has the capabilities and skills to contribute to the group is a motive for joining commons (Aalbers et al., 2013; Avey et al., 2009; Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022; Li et al., 2023; Martinez, 2020). The suggestion by Martinez (2020) that personal capability motivates commoning is supported by empirical evidence (Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022; Li et al., 2023). This belief is held by urban garden commoners (Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022), managers (Aalbers et al., 2013), and volunteers (Avey et al., 2009) and has been found in North America (Avey et al., 2009), Australia (Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022), and across European countries (Aalbers et al., 2013).

Group Motivations for Joining Commons

A total of 38 studies discussed group motivations for joining commons across different countries, using a variety of methodologies and theories. The resulting group motivations could only be partially matched to the motivational theories presented in the theory chapter. The analysis revealed additional motivations that did not fit into the theoretical frameworks we had selected. We therefore divided the group motivations into two categories. The first category reflects the theoretical frameworks described earlier in the paper (SIA and SIMPEA). The second category is an addition to the earlier frameworks and includes collaboration, decision-making, and trust.

Social Identity/Sense of Belonging

Commoners are sometimes motivated by the shared identity they will have for joining commons (Allert & Reese, 2023; Avey et al., 2009; Bonow & Normark, 2018; Brügger et al., 2020; Dearborn & Kark, 2010; Dong et al., 2023; Łapniewska, 2017; Quimby et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2017), as postulated by the Social Identity Approach and SIMPEA. Shared identity is a crucial factor in urban conservation initiatives (Allert & Reese, 2023; Łapniewska, 2017; Quimby et al., 2020), as it offers psychological ownership and connects people with others (Allert & Reese, 2023; Avey et al., 2009; Brügger et al., 2020). This motivation is evident in youth strikes (Brügger et al., 2020), farmer cooperatives (Dong et al., 2023), fisherfolk (Quimby et al., 2020), urban initiatives networks (Allert & Reese, 2023; Avey et al., 2009; Cermeño et al., 2022; Łapniewska, 2017), urban agriculture (Bonow & Normark, 2018), and volunteer gardeners (Torres et al., 2017).

A shared sense of identity as a motivational factor is present in the Global North (Allert & Reese, 2023; Avey et al., 2009; Bonow & Normark, 2018; Cermeño et al., 2022; Łapniewska, 2017; Moser & Bader, 2023; Quimby et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2017) and South (Dong et al., 2023).

Collective Efficacy

Collective efficacy as postulated by SIMPEA is a motivating factor for urban gardening groups (Torres et al., 2017; Winkler et al., 2019), cooperative farmer groups (Savari et al., 2023), political groups (Brügger et al., 2020; Mambo Tampi et al., 2018), knowledge commons (Fait et al., 2023; Yuan et al., 2005), and energy commons (Soeiro & Dias, 2020). As a motivating factor, the belief in collective efficacy is present among groups in the Global North (Brügger et al., 2020; Fait et al., 2023; Müller & Köpper, 2023; O'Brien, 2016; Soeiro & Dias, 2020; Torres et al., 2017; Yuan et al., 2005) and South (Mambo Tampi et al., 2018; Savari et al., 2023).

Mutual Support and Reciprocity

The Social Identity Approach postulates that people are motivated to join commons for the mutual support and reciprocity they perceive they will get (Dong et al., 2023; Emich, 2012; Paulson & Büchs, 2022; Winkler et al., 2019). Mutual support is a popular motivation among gardeners (Cattivelli, 2023; Winkler et al., 2019), farmer groups (Dong et al., 2023), and group-based micro-credit initiatives (Pal & Singh, 2021). Reciprocity influences information-seeking and giving (Emich, 2012), determining the success of commons (Pal & Singh, 2021). This motivation is prevalent in the Global North such as Germany (Cermeño et al., 2022; Winkler et al., 2019), the US (DeCaro et al., 2015; Emich, 2012), and Sweden (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Seravalli, 2018). In the Global South, groups in Nepal (Ambuehl et al., 2022) and China (Dong et al., 2023) have been motivated by reciprocity.

Collaboration and Shared Decision-Making

Collaboration and shared decision-making involve beneficiaries actively influencing community development, ensuring sustainable access to resources (Adhikari et al., 2014). They are crucial for the sustainable management of shared resources. For instance, in rural water supply planning, communities participate in decision-making and attend meetings, making an important contribution to infrastructure projects (Peck et al., 2021).

Several studies have highlighted collaboration or shared decision-making as a motivation to take part in commons, as seen in farmers seeking to adopt green technology (Cermeño et al., 2022), urban gardeners seeking to benefit from diverse cultures (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Winkler et al., 2019), and individuals in political movements (DeCaro et al., 2015).

Trust

Trust is a crucial factor in social relationships, and it is essential for collective resource management (Van Vugt, 2009). Members of commons initiatives trust each other to exercise voluntary restraint, but when institutional changes are necessary, they want leaders and authorities who can be trusted to look after the common good (Singleton, 2000; Van Vugt, 2009).

Trust is a significant motivating factor for engaging in commons as found among refugee-led commons (Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021), energy commons (Bauwens, 2016), housing commons (Cermeño et al., 2022), and internet-organized commons (Łapniewska, 2022). Trust as a motivating factor is present is present in the Global North (Belgium, Germany), and the Global South (Uganda).

Discussion

Research on the motivations for joining commons initiatives has been gaining momentum in the last eight years, with a majority of studies from the Global North, but also a number of studies from the Global South. This review linked motivational theories to the research on commons initiatives and provided insights as to who joins which types of commons initiatives, and what motivates them to do so.

As a first step, we were interested in finding out how people who are involved in commons initiatives can be characterized. We were surprised to see that the studies reviewed placed little emphasis on identifying sociodemographic characteristics as explanatory variables for engagement in commons initiatives. Our findings allow for no profound conclusions in this regard. Based on the rare characterization of the samples examined in the studies reviewed, we conclude that location (urban vs. rural), gender, education, and income level depend on the type of commons initiative under study. For example, studies on urban gardening reported more female members (Łapniewska, 2017; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016), whereas energy commons were dominated by men

(Soeiro & Dias, 2020). In terms of age, the emerging picture is that commoners tend to be older than the average population. However, these assumptions are based on only a few studies and should be verified with more representative data in the future.

Second, we were interested in what individual motivations might explain commoners' engagement in commons initiatives. Individual motivations to engage in commons initiatives found in the reviewed papers relate to well-known psychological motivational theories. On the one hand, we identified normative motives, as proposed by Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern et al., 1995) and the Norm Activation Model (Schwartz, 1994). Commoners are thus motivated to participate in commons as a result of biospheric values (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Cattivelli, 2023; Keane et al., 2016; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016; Savari et al., 2023; Soeiro & Dias, 2020; Torres et al., 2017; Turreira-García et al., 2018), a sense of ethical obligation (Aalbers et al., 2013; Łapniewska, 2017; Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023), and personal norms (Aalbers et al., 2013; Eizenberg, 2012; Łapniewska, 2017; Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023). In addition, the reviewed studies revealed motives based on self-interest as described by Social Cognition Theory (Bandura, 2002) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Self-interest motives include positive outcome expectations, such as the opportunity to harvest produce from the garden (Keane et al., 2016; Martinez, 2020; Vita et al., 2020). The need for food is also a significant motivator, particularly for those in in urban agriculture (Cattivelli, 2023) and fishing commons (Quimby et al., 2020). Easy access to commons is another motivational factor, as individuals assess how easy or frustrating it is to participate in commons when they decide on their participation (Moser & Bader, 2023; Pal & Singh, 2021). Self-efficacy, which refers to belief in personal mastery and probability of success, also influences an individual to participate in commoning. This belief is held by urban garden commons, managers, and volunteers, with research finding personal capacity as a motivating factor (Aalbers et al., 2013; Avey et al., 2009; Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022).

Third, we examined group motivations for joining commons initiatives. Our findings confirm, on the one hand, factors as described in motivation theories such as the Social Identity Approach (Brügger et al., 2020) and the Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Actions (Fritsche et al., 2018). A shared identity was evident in youth strikes, farmer cooperatives, fisherfolk, urban initiatives networks, urban agriculture, and volunteer gardeners (Allert & Reese, 2023; Avey et al., 2009; Bonow & Normark, 2018; Brügger et al., 2020; Cermeño et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2023; Łapniewska, 2017; Quimby et al., 2020; Torres et al., 2017). Collective efficacy beliefs are motivating factors for urban gardeners' groups, cooperative farmer groups, political groups, knowledge commons, and energy commons (Brügger et al., 2020; Fait et al., 2023; Mambo Tampi et al., 2018; Savari et al., 2023; Soeiro & Dias, 2020; Torres et al., 2017; Winkler et al., 2019; Yuan et al., 2005). Our review revealed additional motivational factors that extend the known theories of motivation: Mutual support and reciprocity are key motivating factors for people to join commons initiatives (Cattivelli, 2023; Emich, 2012). Last but not least, trust is an

important motivating factor for joining commons initiatives, as it has been observed in refugee-led commons, energy commons, housing commons, and internet-organized commons (Bauwens, 2016; Cermeño et al., 2022; Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021; Łapniewska, 2022).

Fourth, we were interested in similarities and differences between the contexts of commons initiatives in the Global North and Global South. In terms of differences, commons initiatives in the Global North, such as Europe often involve urban participants, while in the Global South, like South Africa, rural residents are more familiar with cooperatives. Motivations for joining commons initiatives also varied. In the Global North, personal norms, self-efficacy, and belief in personal capability are identified as motivations (Aalbers et al., 2013; Avey et al., 2009; Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022) while in the Global South, mutual support and reciprocity are observed (Ambuehl et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2023). It is important to note that personal capability and mutual support have not been directly compared. Biospheric values related to environmental conservation are present in both regions, but to varying degrees. Motivating factors in both regions include collaboration and shared decision-making, emphasizing the importance of participatory approaches in commons management, as well as trust, highlighting the importance of trust in maintaining and governing common resources. Interestingly, no particular motivation was overly present in the reviewed papers. This shows that research on the topic is both diverse and in need of systematization.

Our findings support the relevance of the different psychological theories in understanding participation in commons. We provide empirical examples of how attitudes, beliefs, self-efficacy, values, shared identity, social norms, and trust play pivotal roles in motivating individuals and groups to engage in commons-based initiatives. This alignment between theory and empirics enhances our theoretical understanding of collective action and resource management in commons. The findings have theoretical implications. The integration of several theoretical frameworks in the future would provide a stronger theoretical foundation for understanding the complexity of individual and communal incentives in the commons setting. By referring to a range of theories, researchers can capture the complex nature of motives and account for the interplay between sociodemographic, individual, and collective factors. This broadens our theoretical understanding and creates the possibility for further research to advance and refine existing concepts on commons engagement.

Practically, understanding these motivations can have an impact on the design of programmes and tools that foster a supportive environment for commons to thrive, encourage collaboration, and include participants in decision-making processes in commons initiatives. For practitioners seeking to promote bottom-up solutions through self-organised groups, their strategies could focus on meetings (as they provide a sense of community), storytelling that emphasises identity, and inclusive decision-making to promote trust, agency, and self-efficacy. Group meetings are crucial, but the decision-making

process is equally important. If the group had to decide during a meeting, a focus on consensus-building would be better for group longevity than majority rule.

In our review, we examined 53 studies that reported sociodemographic and motivational factors characterizing people in commons initiatives. Despite the breadth of the papers considered, our study is limited by the focus on different commons and not a specific type of commons (for instance, energy commons). The broader aspect meant we did not have an in-depth discussion and analysis of commons in a single sector. Also, we did not include keywords such as "public goods", and "common pool resources". The initial search by the first author with these two phrases did not provide new papers beyond what was already gathered. Thus, excluding these search terms does not impact our results. The paper still provides a solid basis for further investigation to better understand factors such as mutual support, reciprocity, and trust.

Another limitation is our selection of databases. With a focus on Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Google Scholar (grey literature), we acknowledge we may not have covered all the potentially relevant papers that could have helped answer our research questions. For instance, we did not consider blog entries like Excelsior Online Writing Lab (OWL) which is an interesting field for a discursive analysis of motivations for joining a commons. Instead, we chose to take a more theory-driven approach. However, such an analysis might be useful in future efforts. While our selection was extensive, it does not include all viable sources, potentially excluding some relevant research.

Conclusion

The findings of our scoping review highlight the diversity of individuals participating in commons initiatives as well as the complexity of their motivations. The theoretical frameworks utilized in the reviewed papers assist in our understanding of the underlying ideas that guide collective activities in commons. Despite these contributions, the authors noticed some topics that did not feature in the articles selected for the scoping review and that should be addressed in future research.

First, the studies did not seek to find out if motivations for joining commons change over time. This would involve examining the differences in motivation at the start of an engagement or at the time of joining, compared to keeping up the participation. In this respect, topics for study could relate to the phases of involvement of commoners and how they differ among generations (e.g., first/founding and second generation of members), or to the phenomenon of pioneer burnout as mentioned by Geels (2019). Another aspect to consider when studying changing motivations over time is if it is a newly founded community or a well-established commons (e.g., an existing housing cooperative). Future studies can contribute to this area by undertaking longitudinal research.

Second, there was little focus on expanding existing theories to cover more contexts. Also, there is a dearth of literature on evaluation/expectations about processes (e.g., that democratic decision-finding could be demotivating some people). Thus, questions remain on the theorization of individual and group motivations to join commons. For instance, do phases of involvement and degrees of participation matter in the motivations to join commons and continued participation? Further studies may consider these niches.

Third, several of the reviewed studies focused on single countries and the ones that were cross-country tended to be in similar sub regions. The review found systematic differences between participants in the Global North and Global South and it is key to investigate these more systematically. Consequently, future studies must compare motivations across the Global North and South.

Fourth, future studies should move beyond single cases (e.g., a sole focus on urban gardeners) that were prevalent in the reviewed papers. It is worth exploring the possibility that individuals in similar locations may have different motivations for joining specific commons. Related to this argument is that motivations may vary depending on the type of natural resource, which requires comparisons between the motivations for joining commons with respect to various resource types.

Finally, do people who join commons have different motivations or significant differences in biospheric values compared to people who do not engage in commons initiatives? Do they have different perceptions and motivations? While these are interesting questions worth knowing the answers to, the reviewed papers were silent on such areas. Future studies may consider such questions.

Commons initiatives are often seen as promising answers to the problem of overuse of natural resources (Kennedy, 2020). By focusing on the question of who engages in commons initiatives and why they do so, we contribute with our review to a better understanding of the successful emergence and existence of commons initiatives and thus a more sustainable use of our natural resources in the future.

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- ☐ Ethnically or otherwise diverse sample(s)
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- ☐ Extensive sample description
- ☑ Discussion of generalizability
- ☑ Diverse reference list
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- ☑ Degree of privilege/marginalization considered in authorship order
- ☐ Author(s) from sampled population (avoiding 'helicopter science')

Supplementary Materials. The following table provides an overview of the accessibility of supplementary materials (if any) for this paper.

Type of supplementary material	Availability/Access
Data	
No data is available.	—
Code	
No code was provided.	—
Material	
No supplementary material is available.	—
Study/Analysis preregistration	
No preregistration.	—

Badges for Good Research Practices.

Open data: NO.

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Open materials: NO.

Preregistration: NO.

Diversity statement: YES.

Note: YES = the present article meets the criteria for awarding the badge. NO = the present article does not meet the criteria for awarding the badge *or* the criteria are not applicable.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix Table 1

Country of Origin

Focus	Global North	Global South
Single Country		
	• Canada — (Dakurah et al., 2005). • Spain — (Eizaguirre Anglada, 2022; López-García & Carrascosa-García, 2023). • Germany — (Allert & Reese, 2023; Cermeño et al., 2022; Gauder et al., 2019; Hamann et al., 2021; Winkler et al., 2019). • Switzerland — (Brügger et al., 2020; Moser & Bader, 2023). • Australia — (Goodfellow & Prahalad, 2022). • Poland (Łapniewska, 2022). • Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). • USA — (Avey et al., 2009; DeCaro et al., 2015; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Eizenberg, 2012; Emich, 2012; Noterman, 2016; O'Brien, 2016; Quimby et al., 2020; Yuan et al., 2005). • Italy — (Fait et al., 2023). • Ireland — (Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023). • Sweden — (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Seravalli, 2018). • France — (Torres et al., 2017). • Belgium — (Bauwens, 2016).	• Ghana — (Gillespie, 2016). • South Africa — (Pithouse, 2014; Wesselow & Mashele, 2019). • Tanzania — (Fisher et al., 2010). • China (Dong et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). • Iraq — (Savari et al., 2023). • Indonesia — (Mambo Tampi et al., 2018). • Nicaragua — (Zapata Campos et al., 2023). • Ethiopia — (Debele & Negussie, 2022). • Cambodia — (Turreira-García et al., 2018). • Nepal — (Ambuehl et al., 2022). • Uganda — (Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021). • Kenya — (Keane et al., 2016). • India — (Pal & Singh, 2021).

Focus	Global North	Global South
Cross Country		
	• Netherlands and Belgium — (Calzati et al., 2022). • Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France — (Müller & Köpper, 2023). • Italy, Germany, Romania and Spain — (Vita et al., 2020). • Portugal, Spain, and Belgium — (Soeiro & Dias, 2020). • Netherlands and Poland — (Aalbers et al., 2013).	• Brazil, Mexico, and Bolivia — (Ruiz-Mallén et al., 2015).

Appendix 2

Appendix Table 2

Journals of Publication

Journal	Frequency	Percentage
Sustainability	9	17
Multidisciplinary	11	21
Environment	5	9
Geography	4	8
Psychology	4	8
Conference	3	6
Economics	2	4
Urban	2	4
General	1	2
Planning	1	2
Conservation	1	2
Gender	1	2
Human judgments	1	2
Social movement	1	2
Small groups	1	2
Communication	1	2
Development	1	2
Transport	1	2
Knowledge management	1	2
Energy	1	2
Organisational behaviour	1	2
Total	**53**	**100**

Appendix 3

Appendix Table 3

Methodological Approaches

Study Design	Global North	Global South
Quantitative Studies		
	• Canada — (Dakurah et al., 2005). • Switzerland — (Brügger et al., 2020; Moser & Bader, 2023). • Germany — (Allert & Reese, 2023; Gauder et al., 2019; Hamann et al., 2021). • Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). • USA — (Avey et al., 2009; DeCaro et al., 2015; Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004; Emich, 2012; O'Brien, 2016; Quimby et al., 2020; Yuan et al., 2005). • Italy — (Fait et al., 2023). • Ireland — (Međugorac & Schuitema, 2023). • Belgium — (Bauwens, 2016). • Italy, Germany, Romania and Spain — (Vita et al., 2020). • Portugal, Spain, and Belgium — (Soeiro & Dias, 2020). • Netherlands and Poland — (Aalbers et al., 2013).	• China — (Dong et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). • Iraq — (Savari et al., 2023). • Kenya — (Keane et al., 2016). • Nepal — (Ambuehl et al., 2022).
Qualitative Studies		
	• USA — (Noterman, 2016). • Spain — (Eizaguirre Anglada, 2022; López-García & Carrascosa-García, 2023). • Germany — (Cermeño et al., 2022). • Sweden — (Bonow & Normark, 2018; Seravalli, 2018). • France — (Torres et al., 2017). • Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France (Müller & Köpper, 2023).	• Ghana — (Gillespie, 2016). • Tanzania — (Fisher et al., 2010). • South Africa — (Mambo Tampi et al., 2018). • Uganda — (Zapata Campos et al., 2023; Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021). • Brazil, Mexico, and Bolivia — (Ruiz-Mallén et al., 2015)).

Appendix 4

Appendix Table 4

Substantive Data

Variable	Pertinent/Associated Papers and Location
Location	
Urban	Winkler et al. (2019).
Rural	Pithouse (2014).
Gender	
Women Majority	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023). Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016; Łapniewska, 2017).
Men Majority	Soeiro and Dias (2020).

Variable	Pertinent/Associated Papers and Location
Age	
Average age of 40 years	Across Europe — (Soeiro & Dias, 2020),
Average age of 50.22 years	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
Average age of 47 years	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Level of Education	
Highly Educated	EU Countries (Italy, Germany, Romania and Spain) — (Gauder et al., 2019).
	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
Low Education Background	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Household Size	
2.77 persons	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
2 to 4 persons	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).
Income	
Low Income	Uganda — (Easton-Calabria & Hakiza, 2021).
	USA — (Quimby et al., 2020).
Middle Income	Switzerland — (Moser & Bader, 2023).
	Portugal — (Martinho da Silva et al., 2016).