



**Driving Urban
Transitions**



DELIVERABLE 5.1

COMMONING ACCESSIBILITY AND POLICY CONDITIONS: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

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Deliverable 5.1 COMMONING ACCESSIBILITY AND POLICY CONDITIONS: AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

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2 INTRODUCTION

The question of how to guarantee accessibility to essential facilities and services is a growing challenge in peri-urban and rural areas across Europe (Burton, 2010; de Haan et al., 2018; Farmer et al., 2015; Kreibich, 2016; Lundgren & Nilsson, 2023; Olmedo et al., 2024). Recently, scholars have identified the phenomenon of “commoning accessibility” as a particular kind of community response to these challenges (Lanza & Pucci, 2024). Commoning accessibility (CA) is defined as a “process through which a community collaboratively creates and manages the conditions necessary to provide access to needed/desired socio-spatial resources to its members under shared rules and norms” (2024, p. 17). CA practices include, for instance, community transport and shared mobility schemes or collective efforts to create and maintain place-based social, cultural and care amenities such as a shops, cafés, neighbourhood centers, or healthcare facilities. Such practices often emerge as a community-based response to a perceived lack or insufficiency in state- or market-based provision, while also expressing the will and capability of a community to autonomously define and identify what are needs to be met, and how to meet them. As such, they can provide an original, emergent response to the pressing challenge of ensuring accessibility in European peripheries.

The variety of practices that, together, constitute processes of commoning accessibility are inevitably part of complex and uneven relations and assemblages of governance, influencing their very scope and form, and enabling and constraining their development. These relationships are not confined to the domain of the state alone, but often comprise a diverse group of actors, including governments, businesses, and civil society actors. For example, volunteer-based transport schemes in rural areas may be actively promoted and supported by local governments, through the provision of funding and training, while also drawing in local businesses as sponsors and striking up partnerships with a variety of actors, ranging from bus companies and senior citizens’ advisory boards to social workers, health service providers, and local shops (Schiefelbusch, 2016, 2021, 2023). Likewise, efforts to preserve local shops in areas where the access to facilities and services is dwindling might take the form of a Community Retail Enterprise (CRE); a community-run or co-operative shop that is legally recognized as a trading business but often relies heavily on the time and labor of unpaid volunteers (Calderwood & Davies, 2012). Forms of social infrastructure such as community cafés, moreover, might similarly straddle the line between private sector and volunteer involvement, as these cafés are sometimes set up by social businesses but managed by charities (Basso, 2018, p. 116).

Commoning accessibility practices are also characterized by different levels of institutionalization, ranging from informal ride sharing or child-care arrangements to social enterprises that are commissioned by the local authorities to provide health care services (Macaulay, 2016), to rural broadband communities that receive technical, financial, legal, and organizational support through government-led platforms (Salemink & Strijker, 2018). Moreover, those involved in commoning accessibility might also entertain more antagonistic relations with institutions. Indeed, efforts to prevent the loss of accessibility, for instance, as a result of price hikes in public transport or the privatization or enclosure of public spaces and greenery, often include more contentious space- and claim making practices such as fare evasion, jumping over turnstiles, or forms of trespassing (Bradley, 2019; Mayfield, 2010; Nygård, 2018; Sotiriou &

Petropoulou, 2022). Commoning accessibility practices thus defy a straightforward relationship with policy or the state.

In their work on the institutionalization of urban commons, Calzati, Santos, and Casarola (2022, p. 2) observe that there is a tendency to consider practices of commoning in relation to “an enabling state” that is supposed to actively foster cooperation between various stakeholders through the design of conducive legal and policy frameworks. Such a perspective, however, glosses over the fact that commoners might want to find recognition and legitimization beyond institutionalization (Calzati et al., 2022, p. 12). Nor does it direct attention to the fact that the creation of such an enabling environment is in and of itself a reflection of policy priorities such as citizen participation, multi-stakeholder involvement, and the co-governance and co-management of public resources. Indeed, far from merely shaping the bureaucratic and legislative conditions for different forms of civic action, policy-making is also an exercise in agenda-setting (Barbehön et al., 2015) and, as such, inevitably “sends messages about what government is supposed to do, which citizens are deserving (and which not), and what kinds of attitudes and participatory patterns are appropriate in a democratic society” (Schneider & Ingram, 1993, p. 334).

This literature review sets out to examine and map how policy conditions and agendas shape commoning accessibility practices, thereby focusing explicitly on peri-urban, suburban and rural areas. The reasoning behind this particular geographical focus is threefold. First of all, areas beyond the urban core are typically characterized by lower densities and a higher degree of car-dependency and therefore face specific – and arguably more difficult – challenges when it comes to the accessibility of services, facilities, and goods. The land use and transport conditions in these areas thus configure specific needs to which commoning accessibility practices might offer a response. Secondly, these conditions also speak to specific policy contexts; indeed, peri-urban, suburban and rural areas are usually disproportionately affected by policy decisions – often taken in other contexts – to disinvest in public transport or to centralize or relocate public services such as healthcare. This also results in an uneven trend towards the responsabilization of citizens (Farmer et al. 2015), with people who are living in more peripheral or remote areas effectively being forced to become “active citizens” (Enlund, 2022, p. 1042). Thirdly, a focus on these geographical contexts is an acknowledgment of the persistent “urban bias” in planning research (Hibbard & Frank, 2024). Redressing this bias might not only make policies fairer and more effective, a sufficient justification in itself, but might also be conceptually enriching, contributing novel perspectives to the academic and professional debate.

Since the notion of commoning accessibility represents a fairly new concept, this literature review into policy conditions and agendas is explorative in nature. The scope and aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand, we seek to create an overview of the **diversity and range of** commoning accessibility practices that unfold in peri-urban, suburban, and rural areas. Secondly, we set out to map the **policy conditions** and **agendas** that shape these practices. Based on this initial inventory we have developed an analytical framework that sheds light on how both the process of commoning and the pursuit of accessibility are shaped by policy conditions.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Key Terms and Search Strategy

The notion of commoning accessibility that forms the basis for this literature review departs from a multi-dimensional understanding of accessibility. In line with Levine (2019), we recognize three subcomponents of accessibility and understand CA practices to intervene in one or more of the following domains: *mobility* (e.g., a community-run car- or bike-sharing scheme), *proximity* (e.g., a community-run supermarket, or café), or virtual *connectivity* (e.g. a community-run digital platform offering online services).

While the idea of commoning is closely tied to notions of community, we deliberately leave open the question of who exactly can or should be involved in these practices to leave sufficient analytical room for a hybridity and heterogeneity of actors, practices of brokerage and collaboration, and dynamics of institutionalization and cooptation. This is in line with some of the critiques that have been leveraged against the notion of the commons for invoking “an imaginary, utopian ‘community’, with connotations of egalitarian and symbiotic relationships” (Gyimóthy & Meged, 2018).

Commoning	Accessibility	Policies	Peripheries
Commoning	Accessibility	Planning	Rural
Commons	Access to	Policy	Suburb
Social movement	Mobility	Policies	Peri-urban
Self-organization	Connectivity	Politics	Periphery
Communal	Transport	Governing	Outskirts
Community-led	Infrastructure	Governance	Remote
Civic participation	Proximity		Village
Community participation	Public services		Countryside
Mutual aid	Public facilities		Peripheral
Activism	Public space		Urban fringe
Collective action	Supermarket		
Sharing	Shops		
Citizen initiatives	School		
Bottom-up	Recreation		
Citizen-led	Green space		
Mutual support	Parks		
Volunteer	Markets		
	Care		
	Libraries		

Figure 1: Operationalization of Key Search Terms

The literature review itself was conducted through a keyword-based search in Elsevier’s Scopus database, which focused on Abstracts, Titles, and Keywords. The search string consisted of a combination of four dimensions, which have been operationalized in Figure 1: commoning, accessibility, policies, and peripheries. The Boolean operators AND and OR were used to link these four dimensions to one another and to ensure a sufficient variety within each category. Because the term commoning has a very specific theoretical legacy and has not yet been frequently applied to accessibility-related practices, we have experimented with a variety of synonyms signaling bottom-up community action. Moreover, because search terms like “accessibility”, “proximity”, “mobility”, and “connectivity” would not necessarily garner results on the commoning of services such as healthcare or supermarkets, we have also included search terms such as “public facilities” or “public services”, as well as a number of important social-spatial resources and destinations. This has resulted in the search string below.

(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("commoning" OR {commons} OR "social movement" OR "self-organization" OR {communal} OR "community-led" OR "civic participation" OR "community participation" OR "mutual aid" OR "activism" OR "sharing" OR "collective action" OR "citizen initiatives" OR "bottom-up" OR "citizen-led" OR "mutual support" OR "volunteer*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("accessibility" OR "access to" OR "mobilit*" OR "connectivity*" OR "transport*" OR "infrastructure" OR "proximity" OR "public services" OR "public facilities" OR "public space" OR "supermarket" OR "shops" OR "school" OR "Recreation" OR "green space" OR "parks" OR "markets" OR "care" OR "librar*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("planning" OR "politics" OR "policy" OR "policies" OR "governance" OR "governing") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("rural" OR "suburb*" OR "peri-urban" OR "periphery" OR "remote" OR "village" OR "countryside" OR "peripheral" OR "outskirts" OR "urban fringe"))

Figure 2: Search String Literature Review

3.2 Literature Screening Process

The screening of the literature was conducted according to the steps listed below. The initial search in Scopus, which was carried out in April of 2024, garnered 5,295 results. This sample was then limited to include only academic articles, books, book chapters and review papers. Titles of 4,735 sources were screened for relevance, with the screening process being guided by the following four questions: 1) Is there evidence of practices that resemble commoning? 2) Does the article engage with the problem of spatial access to important services and resources? 3) Does it deal with rural or peri-urban contexts? 4) Is there a clear link to policy dimensions? Only abstracts written in the English language were taken into consideration.

Initially, we did not limit our search to one particular geographical area. However, because this resulted in a very broad sample, with sources reflecting a great variety of commoning practices and policy contexts, the decision was made to limit the sample to the European context. In doing so, we wanted to achieve greater analytical coherence, especially in terms of the kind of spatial-social resources that commoning accessibility practices are working towards, considering that

in many countries – particularly in the global South – it is not necessarily access to public services, but also, importantly, to land, forests, or drinking water that is at stake. Moreover, focusing on the European context also meant that we were dealing with not too different administrative contexts; shaped by broadly similar experiences with the welfare state and a shared – at least to a certain extent – framework of EU policies.

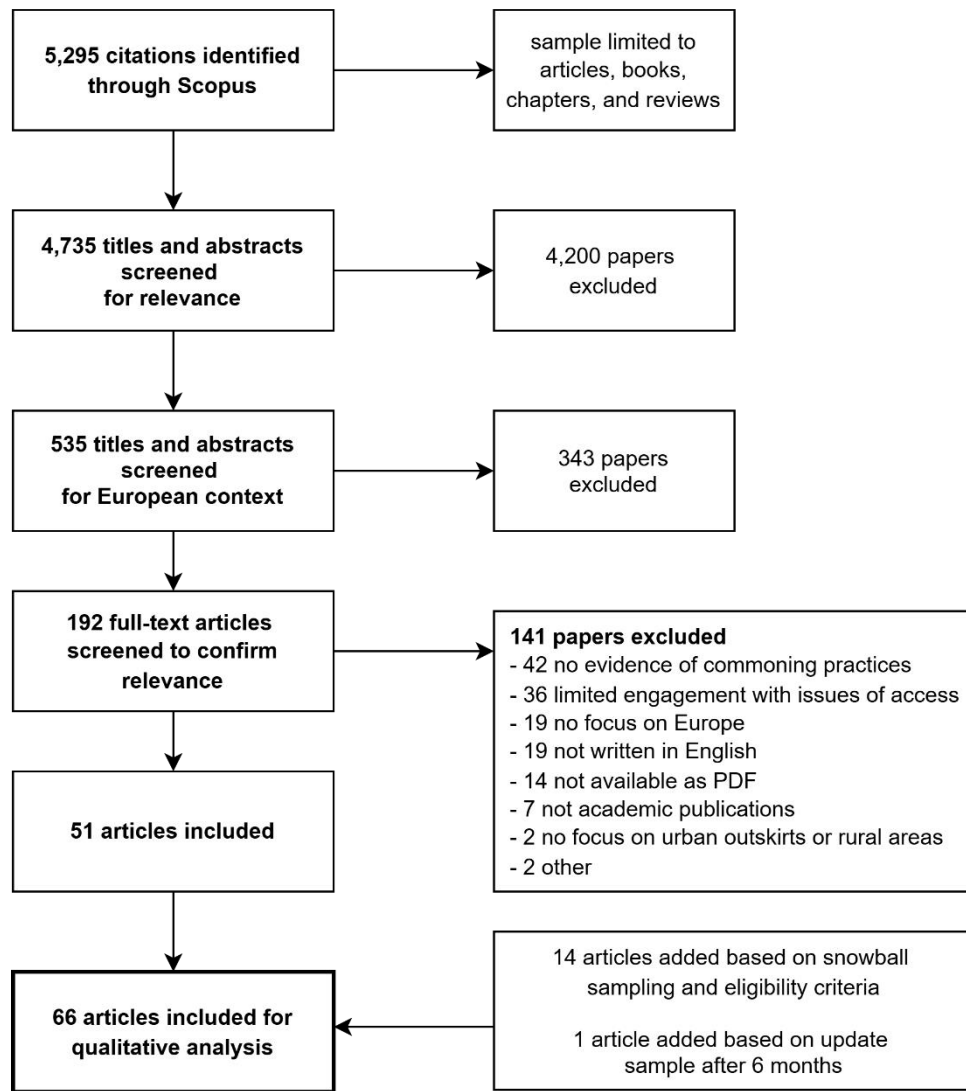


Figure 3: Overview Screening Process

After a second round of screening abstracts to filter out those sources that did not focus on the European context, full-text screening was conducted for 192 articles. In determining whether a source dealt with the problem of how to reach a certain spatial-social resource we have, again, abided by Levine’s (2019) understanding of accessibility as mobility, proximity, and virtual connectivity. This means that we have included sources on digital connectivity, but excluded those that focused – for instance – on access to water or energy. When it came to access to food, we have only included sources that centered on community-led supermarkets or the transport and distribution of food, while excluding those that dealt with food sovereignty in a fairly abstract or generic way. Lastly, in the case of articles that focused on parks, we have excluded sources that focused on the environmental value of parks or on conservation practices while including

those that dealt explicitly with the issue of accessing these park through, for instance, spatial-political claim-making practices.

This final round of screening resulted in a sample of 51 articles (Figure 3). All these sources were submitted to both backward and forward sampling, to ensure that we would not miss out on important literature. Scopus was used to systematically screen the reference lists of the selected sources (backward sampling), as well as the titles of publications citing the work in question (forward sampling). This process resulted in 14 new studies. Moreover, a second database search was conducted in October of 2024 to allow for the inclusion of more recent papers¹, resulting in one additional article. In total 66 papers were subjected to thematic analysis and have been coded in Atlas-ti. Coding was done both inductively and iteratively. A preliminary list of codes was compiled after reading the first ten articles of the sample, including codes such as “type of commoning”, “geographical context”, “policy priorities”, “funding structures”, “legal framework”, and “navigating bureaucracy”, which was then updated throughout the process.

4 POLICY DIMENSIONS OF COMMONING ACCESSIBILITY: TOWARDS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Efforts by communities to (re)claim and give shape to accessibility as a common good, inevitably resemble processes of commoning that target other resources, such as housing or energy. In presenting the findings of our literature review, we therefore distinguish between commoning as a *process* and accessibility as an *objective*. We show that policy shapes both the conditions under which people unite, mobilize and organize themselves (e.g. commoning as a process), and the way in which accessibility is articulated, translated and pursued as an objective. We recognize three dimensions of policy that are relevant to both the process and objective of commoning accessibility practices, namely: policy priorities, laws and regulations, and the administrative and institutional context.

First of all, policy priorities or agendas are typically articulated at different scales – municipal, national, European, etc. – and can either express a particular view on (desirable) community action or sectoral priorities relating to the organization and planning of transport, land use, healthcare, or other services. Laws and regulations refer to the rules that impact both the conditions under which communities organize themselves and the specific legislative landscape that shapes how people negotiate access to important spatial-social resources and destinations. Finally, the administrative and institutional context relates to the bureaucratic realities, such as tender or funding procedures, that commoners have to navigate. It also refers to the wider institutional landscape and governance structure that affects how certain administrative responsibilities are distributed and devolved, while also, indirectly, impacting the allocation of infrastructures, spatial resources, and (statutory) services. These three dimensions

¹ To update the sample a second database search was carried out in Scopus 6 months after the initial search. This was done by restricting the time frame to 2024, and removing the duplicates from the sample. Out of 261 search results (articles, books, chapters, and reviews) 106 duplicates were removed. Abstract screening was carried out for 155 articles, and full text screening for 5 articles, leading to 1 new source.

have been visualised in the analytical model depicted below (Figure 4) and will be further explained and substantiated below with the help of specific examples from the literature (see Appendix I for an overview of the full sample and corresponding policy dimensions). In presenting these findings, it is important to reiterate that this model reflects a specific geographical context, namely peri-urban and rural areas across Europe.

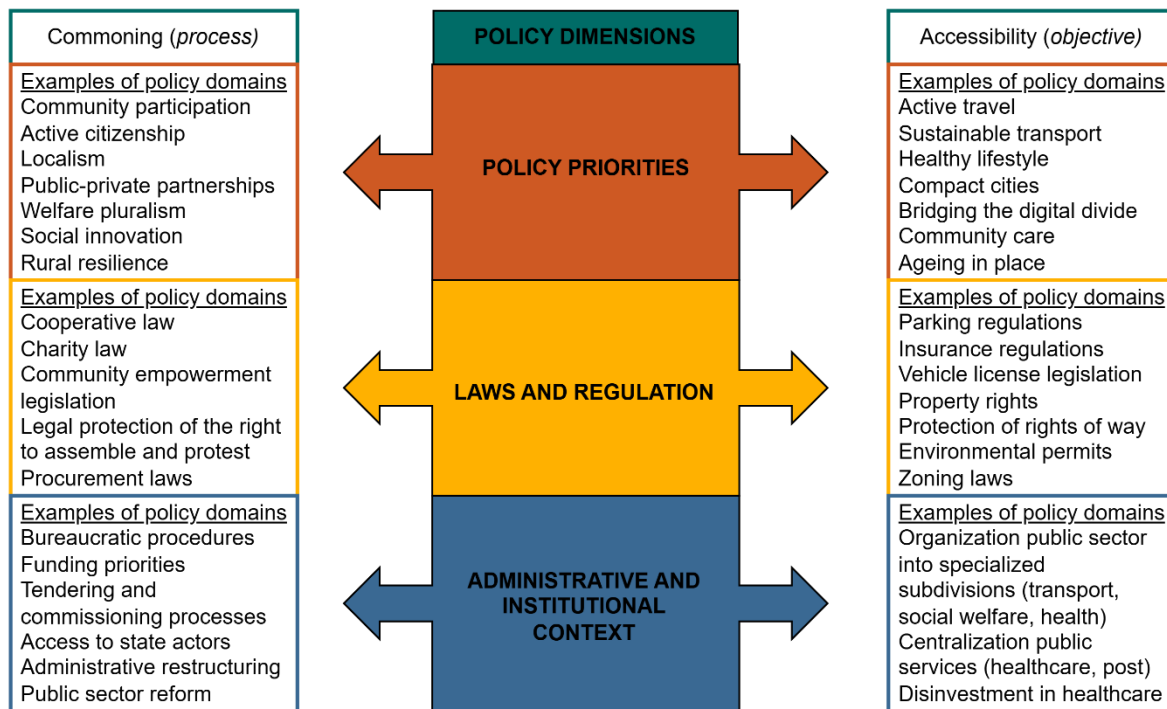


Figure 4: Analytical model: Dimensions of Commoning Accessibility

4.1 Policy Priorities and Commoning

The fact that the encouragement of active communities and citizens is increasingly becoming a policy agenda in and of itself, has turned commoning practices into an explicit object of governance. This is articulated on a global and EU level through agendas such as the Local Agenda 21 (Barton, 2013), the European Assembly of Commons (Buemi, 2020) and the LEADER program, which aims to involve local actors in rural areas in the development of their own regions (Gargano, 2021; Healey, 2015; Kasemets & Nugin, 2022; Knieć & Goszczyński, 2022; Slee, 2019). Moreover, policy discourses such as the “Big Society” in the UK (Calderwood & Davies, 2012; Sellick, 2014; Woolvin et al., 2015) or the “Participation Society” in the Netherlands (Bock, 2016; de Haan et al., 2018; Meerstra-de Haan et al., 2020; Salemink & Strijker, 2018) have also been instrumental in shaping the parameters for commoning initiatives, as they have created a pretext in which citizens and communities are increasingly expected to take over certain responsibilities from the state, including public service delivery.

As part of this move towards “welfare pluralism” (Banister & Norton, 1988) and the “co-production of services” (Buemi, 2020), community initiatives are often explicitly encouraged to take part in wider partnerships that do not only include public institutions, but also private businesses and the Third Sector (Barton, 2013; Bock, 2016; Buemi, 2020; Burton, 2010; Gargano, 2021; Sherwood & Lewis, 2000; Slee, 2019). In rural areas, in particular, this agenda has

appeared under various guises. For instance, in Germany, the role of community cooperatives or social enterprises in providing and maintaining (social) infrastructure in rural areas has been couched in policy ideas about “entrepreneurialism” and “social innovation” (Bock, 2016; Martens et al., 2020; Zerrer & Sept, 2020). The study by Lundgren and Nilsson (2023) on rural initiatives in Sweden similarly shows how efforts to, for instance, build a local retirement home or prevent the closure of local schools were tied to policy ideals of “community cooperation” and “rural resilience”.

4.2 Laws and Regulations and Commoning

When it comes to laws and regulations, commoning practices are affected in at least three important ways. First of all, as communities and citizens are increasingly made responsible for the delivery of public services and goods (Farmer et al., 2015), laws are needed to accommodate this. For instance, in the UK, legal provisions have been made to enable community asset transfers; that is, the transferal of – for instance – a disused building, local park, or old library to a community trust (Healey, 2015; Sellick, 2014; Slee, 2019; Woolvin et al., 2015). Another example is the “Community Right to Bid” (Calderwood & Davies, 2013), which is part of the *Localism Act 2011*. It grants communities in England the right to nominate land or a building as an “asset of community value” and to make a bid for it when it enters the market. Similarly, in Scotland, the *Community Empowerment Act of 2015* and the *Self-directed Support (Scotland) Act 2013* have broadened the scope for community asset transfers, forms of participatory budgeting, and the organization of community care services (Slee, 2019, p. 644). Such legal provisions, however, are not just articulated at a national level. Indeed, Buemi (2020, 556) gives the example of the city council of Turin, which has introduced so-called “pacts of collaborations”. These pacts consist of a “set of nonauthoritative administrative legal tools based on [a] participatory approach” and are meant to spark urban innovative solutions and to foster collaboration between citizens and the municipality (2020, p. 556).

A second way in which laws and regulations impact commoning projects is by determining the conditions under which initiatives can organize themselves. With many commoning projects, such as community retail enterprises or volunteer-led transport schemes, straddling the line between businesses and non-profit organizations, the organizational laws of different countries determine whether initiatives are recognized as, for instance, a “not for profit consumer cooperative” or a “community interest company” (Ajates Gonzalez, 2017; Calderwood & Davies, 2012). Procurement laws, moreover, dictate what kind of organizations are eligible to bid for public contracts or tenders (Steiner & Teasdale, 2019, p. 150). Lastly, legal frameworks also impact the tactics of commoners by configuring the extent to which forms of civil disobedience, such as trespassing, are penalized and criminalized (Mayfield, 2010).

4.3 Administrative and Institutional Context and Commoning

With many citizen initiatives and community cooperatives relying, at least partly, on public funding (de Haan et al., 2018; Martens et al., 2020), commoning practices often require navigating bureaucratic procedures, such as grant applications or tendering processes, as well as wider administrative and institutional landscapes. Forms of public service reform, which have resulted in the increased involvement of volunteers in the delivery of public services, have also brought along new funding structures. In the UK, for instance, there has been a notable shift from

grants to contracts in public funding mechanisms (Hardill & Dwyer, 2011). Indeed, the voluntary and community sector is increasingly commissioned by local governments directly to provide a particular service (Hardill and Dwyer 2011, 158). This formalization of the role of citizen initiatives in service delivery, also comes with distinct challenges. It does not only result in the transferal of financial risks to citizens (Salemink & Strijker, 2018), but also means that commoning projects have to ultimately mold their proposals, ideas, and ideals in such a way that they are “acceptable (and comprehensible) to those who control the resources to put it into action” (Burton, 2010, p. 308). Meerstra-De Haan et al. (2020, p. 268), for instance, give the example of an initiative in a village in the Netherlands that tried to transform some of their sports facilities into a multi-functional community center, but that ultimately failed because they were only eligible for regional funding if they also succeeded in articulating a clear regional vision for their initiative that also reflected the interests of surrounding villages.

Gaining access to funding is not just a matter of alignment with certain policy priorities, but also often entails navigating a patchwork of potential funds which tend to favor the generation of new initiatives over “stable long-term financial support” (Ravensbergen & Schwanen, 2024, p. 13). The fact that the technical and judicial skills that are required to navigate the complexity of bureaucratic landscapes, which are often changing as administrative boundaries are redrawn and budgets and roles are reshuffled (Kasemets & Nugin, 2022), means that commoners frequently rely on intermediaries to broker access to the government. This is not only true when it comes to accessing funding, but also when it comes to convincing the “right people” or the ability to book a room at a municipally-run community center (Tchoukaleyska, 2019, p. 137).

Such intermediaries may take the form of external consultant agencies (Salemink & Strijker, 2018), local entrepreneurs with good connections at the municipality (Lundgren & Nilsson, 2023), informal village leaders (Kondratyev & Fadeeva, 2021), or the so-called Local Action Groups (LAGs) that have been instituted by the EU to foster local partnerships (Gargano, 2021; Kniec & Goszczyński, 2022). The mainstreaming of such forms of brokerage and partnerships, which rely strongly on social capital, however, may come at a certain cost. Slee (2019, p. 645) observes that as policy support relies increasingly on competitive bidding processes “the tendency will be for places well-endowed with human and social capital to draw down an ever-increasing share of public (and charitable) support, not because their needs are greatest but because their skills are greater”. Moreover, as Tchoukaleyska (2019) has shown in the context of a Montpellier suburb such dynamics of access are not seldom racialized.

4.4 Policy Priorities and Accessibility

The fact that accessibility pertains to aspects of mobility, proximity, and connectivity (Levine, 2019) means that it draws in a very diverse set of policy agendas that might not necessarily align or resonate with one another. When it comes to the reconfiguration of mobility, policy agendas that stress the need for sustainable transport and decarbonization in the face of climate change are particularly influential. Government-led efforts to encourage bike-sharing, for instance, invoke ideals of green transport, active travel and healthy lifestyles (Bieliński et al., 2020; Kwiatkowski, 2021b; Pellicer-Chenoll et al., 2021). When it comes to fostering accessibility through proximity, priorities around land-use play an important role, as reflected in ideas about multifunctional housing projects (Krüger & Altröck, 2023) and multi-service outlets such as “the

pub is the hub” initiatives (Moseley et al., 2004), but also in the more general commitment to create compact cities (Broaddus, 2010).

The pursuit of proximity, however, is also shaped by sectoral policies –focusing for instance on healthcare. Burton (2010) for instance describes how organizers who wanted to set up a community-owned care organization in England, had to strategically align their efforts with government agendas such as “Dignity in Care” and the “Personalisation Agenda” to garner institutional support. Moreover, policy priorities such as “aging in place”, “independent living”, “community care”, and “remote care” also help to explain the need for an increasing number of community-led health initiatives (Enlund, 2020, p. 39; Hardill & Dwyer, 2011; Sherwood & Lewis, 2000). Finally, the issue of digital connectivity, is very much rooted in policy concerns relating to the “digital divide” and the need to “connect the final few” (Gerli & Whalley, 2021; Philip et al., 2017; Saleminck & Strijker, 2018; Wagg & Simeonova, 2022), while also often couched in entrepreneurial narratives on digital social innovation and “smart villages” (Zerrer & Sept, 2020).

4.5 Laws and Regulations and Accessibility

Laws and regulations also impact the pursuit of accessibility as an objective by enabling, hindering or even necessitating certain practices. For instance, parking regulations may create an incentive for car-sharing (Krüger & Altroch, 2023), but can also pose an obstacle. Indeed, Broaddus (2010, p. 116) describes how, in Germany, environmental activists were thwarted in their efforts to build a car-free ecosuburb by a national law that dictates that all residential units should have one parking spot. Other laws that affect mobility-related commoning practices, such as car sharing or volunteer-led transport, relate to vehicle license regulations (Bonsall et al., 1983), the classification of vehicles (Ravensbergen & Schwanen, 2024), insurance requirements (Sherwood & Lewis, 2000), control over fares (Banister & Norton, 1988), and the extent to which educational, religious, and welfare bodies are allowed to “run vehicles for hire or reward without public service licensing” (Nutley, 1988, p. 338).

Schiefelbusch (2016, p. 88) elaborates how community transport initiatives in Germany (so-called *Bürgerbuses*) are affected by the *Passenger Transport Act*, which stipulates that any public transport service needs to have a specific license which grants the operator an exclusive right to run scheduled public transport on particular routes. This leaves *Bürgerbuses* with four options: 1) cooperating with existing bus operators under their license, 2) finding a route or area that is not yet served, 3) choosing a different formal service such as a service only available for senior citizens, or 4) ensuring that the service does not fall under the *Passenger Transport Act* requirements by not charging fares (Schiefelbusch, 2016, pp. 88–89). Moreover, these community transport schemes also have to navigate insurance requirements, which might differ depending on the nature of the services that are being offered (Schiefelbusch, 2023, p. 10).

Other sectoral legislation that might shape how accessibility is pursued include laws that pertain to the access of medical records (in the case of community health enterprises) (Macaulay, 2016), laws that stipulate the necessity for obtaining environmental permits (Lundgren & Nilsson, 2023), or zoning plans that determine where certain facilities can be developed (Meerstra-de Haan et al., 2020, p. 265). Moreover, the accessibility of green spaces and walking routes can either be hindered by private property rights (Bradley, 2019; Gyimóthy & Meged, 2018), or facilitated by legal frameworks such as the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*, which was

the outcome of decades of social activism and advocacy in the UK (Mayfield, 2010). Finally, laws can also create the need for commoning accessibility. This is true for both the UK *Transport Act 1985* and the *1990 NHS and Community Care Act 1990*, which respectively resulted in the deregulation and privatization of bus transport and the devolvement of the delivery of health and social care services to local authorities and communities more broadly (Hardill & Dwyer, 2011; Nutley, 1988). That EU-legislation can also play a role in shaping the need for CA-practices, becomes clear from the example of rural broadband communities. Because EU-legislation only allows for limited public intervention in the realm of telecommunication, coupled with the reluctance of market players to invest in rural areas, a situation has emerged in which national governments have devolved the responsibility for guaranteeing digital connectivity to lower municipalities, public-private partnerships and, in many cases, to citizen initiatives (Gerli & Whalley, 2021; Salemink & Strijker, 2018).

4.6. Institutional and Administrative Context and Accessibility

The extent to which accessibility presents itself as an important objective for commoning practices is very much shaped by the institutional and administrative restructuring of important sectors through – for instance – processes of centralization. The centralization of public institutions, healthcare facilities, and retail- and postal services have left gaps in rural and peripheral areas when it comes to the access of important services (Barton, 2013; Calderwood & Davies, 2013; de Haan et al., 2018; Illgen & Höck, 2020; Kreibich, 2016; Steiner & Teasdale, 2019; Zerrer & Sept, 2020). This is especially true for those sectors, such as health care, which have also been at the receiving end of public spending cuts (Burton, 2010; Macaulay, 2016; Slee, 2019). Administrative realities of centralization or dwindling local budgets do not only shape the need for commoning accessibility practices but also, importantly, the conditions under which they unfold. For these practices do not merely rely on social capital but also on spatial resources, such as functioning infrastructure and the availability and accessibility of semi-public spaces.

For instance, the fact that the “scale and reach of the electric vehicle charging network is poor in many rural areas” (Sturzaker et al., 2024, p. 5) might shape conditions for car-sharing or community transport, whereas the relocation and closure of facilities due to centralization (de Haan et al., 2018, p. 313) might impact the availability of community spaces. One way in which communities deal with such realities is by bundling activities and services. Indeed, Kreibich (2016, p. 51) elaborates how community-run shops Germany often also “contain a post agency and can provide premises for other activities like assembly halls and consultancy rooms for medical services provided by a general practitioner at a fixed weekly schedule” (see also Bock, 2016). However, bureaucratic realities do not always accommodate such forms of intermingling and activity bundling. For instance, in his work on community transport, Schiefelbusch (2023, p. 9) describes how in Germany transportation and social services are usually “clearly separated with different views, institutions, rules, and funding opportunities for each side”. This siloed governance structure (Ravensbergen & Schwanen, 2024) means that such initiatives are ultimately forced to “position themselves on either the ‘transport’ or the ‘social’ side, even if their service addresses both fields” (Schiefelbusch, 2023, p. 9).

5 OVERVIEW LITERATURE SAMPLE AND POLICY DIMENSIONS

5.1 Policy Dimensions

A = Commoning and Policy Priorities

D = Accessibility and Policy Priorities

B = Commoning and Laws and Regulations

E = Accessibility and laws and regulations

C = Commoning and Administrative and Institutional Context

F = Accessibility and Administrative and Institutional Context

Author(s)	Year	Type(s) of CA practices	Country	Geographical Context	Policy Dimensions
Ajates Gonzalez	(2017)	Multistakeholder (Food) Cooperatives	Spain and UK	Urban periphery	(B) (C) (F)
Banister and Norton	(1988)	Community transport including social car schemes, dial-a-ride schemes and community buses	UK	Rural	(A) (E) (F)
Barton	(2013)	Community-based and eco-neighbourhood initiatives	UK	Suburban	(A) (C) (D)
Basso	(2018)	Community-based food initiatives; share-a-car and food delivery schemes; transforming empty urban spaces into gardens, playgrounds or barbecue areas; community cafés	UK	Urban periphery Suburban	(D) (F)
Bieliński et al.	(2020)	Municipality-led e-bike sharing system	Poland	Urban periphery Suburban	(D) (E) (F)
Bock	(2016)	DORV: realization of local shops that offer multi-functional services (postal services, banking, healthcare, laundry, repair, childcare, cultural meeting place, ICT facilities for online shopping and administrative chores); community-led broadband; care cooperatives	Netherlands and Germany	Rural	(A) (C) (F)
Bonsall, Spencer, and Tang	(1983)	Car-sharing schemes (established by West Yorkshire)	UK	Suburban	(E) (F)

Bradley	(2019)	Protest for public access and against enclosure Green Belt	UK	Suburban	(D) (E) (F)
Broadbus	(2010)	Ecosuburb focused on car-free living, initiated by environmental activists	Germany	Suburban	(C) (D) (E)
Buemi	(2020)	Transforming empty buildings into self-managed social centers	Italy	Suburban	(A) (B) (D) (C)
Burton	(2010)	Community-owned and -run care organization	UK	Rural	(A) (C) (D) (F)
Calderwood and Davies	(2012)	Community Retail Enterprise	UK	Rural	(A) (B) (F)
Calderwood and Davies	(2013)	Community Retail Enterprise	UK	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (F)
De Haan et al.	(2018)	Citizen initiatives focused on replacing public services and facilities	The Netherlands	Rural	(A) (C) (F)
Enlund	(2022)	Protests against the closure of a delivery and emergency ward; opening of a 'citizen cooperative' primary care center	Sweden	Rural	(A) (F)
Farmer et al.	(2015)	Community participation in primary healthcare delivery; volunteer first responder scheme	UK (Scotland)	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (F)
Frank, Dirks, and Walther	(2021)	(Electric) car and bike sharing in the context of multimodal mobility hubs	Germany	Rural	(D) (F)
Gargano	(2021)	Role of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in facilitating rural development and service delivery through the support of social enterprises and investment in community buildings and infrastructure	UK and Italy	Rural	(A) (C)
Gerli and Whalley	(2021)	Community-led broadband initiatives	UK	Rural	(C) (D) (E) (F)
Gyimóthy and Megeed	(2018)	Communitarian walking trail and its coproduction as a collaborative business model for fostering rural development	Denmark	Rural	(A) (E)
Hardill and Dwyer	(2011)	Community-based 'low-level' services and activities to support older people; community warden service; county-wide initiative to grow community self-help networks; befriending services; lunch club and mobile care service	UK (England)	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F)
Healey	(2015)	Civil society enterprise focused on establishing a multi-purpose community hub; retaining a wide range of public services; re-use of old buildings; revitalization of the high street; service delivery to	UK (England)	Rural	(A) (B) (C)

		older people; improving opportunities for young people			
Hodson	(2002)	Activism and advocacy for public rights of way through forms of volunteer-led mapping and surveying	UK (England and Wales)	Rural	(C) (D) (E)
Illgen and Höck	(2020)	Car sharing (simulation based study)	N/A	Rural	(E) (F)
Karsten, Lupi, and De Stigter-Speksnijder	(2013)	Neighbourhood activism around traffic safety and to create playgrounds; informal childcare arrangements; informal ride-sharing among families with children; community-led daycare facility	The Netherlands	Suburban	(C) (D) (F)
Kasemets and Nugin	(2022)	Community activism for local development; renovation of the local community center; informal ride sharing; transforming the local library into a village center	Estonia	Rural	(A) (C) (E) (F)
Knieć and Goszczyński	(2022)	Grassroots initiatives around rural development; creation of a community and activity center; playground renovation; initiation of a community-led (non-public) school after the old school closed	Poland	Rural Suburban	(A) (B) (C) (F)
Kondratyev and Fadeeva	(2021)	Civic engagement and self-organization around issues such as the construction of a playground or sports pitch, the repair of a section of road, or the reconstruction of a lighting system; targeted assistance to elderly residents and families in difficult life situations	Russia	Rural	(C) (F)
Kreibich	(2016)	Multifunctional, community-led shops containing a post agency and premises for other activities like assembly halls and consultancy rooms for medical services; carpooling; volunteer-led school buses; shared taxis operated by volunteers; mobile shops	Germany	Rural	(D) (E) (F)
Krüger and Altröck	(2023)	Shared mobility services as part of mobility hubs and multifunctional housing development	Germany	Urban periphery	(D) (E) (F)

Kurakin	(2015)	Community self-organization for service delivery (specifically heating for schools, culture clubs, retail stores, and municipal offices)	Russia	Rural	(C) (E) (F)
Kwiatkowski	(2021a)	Municipality-led e-bike sharing system	Poland	Rural Suburban	(D) (F)
Kwiatkowski	(2021b)	Municipality-led bike sharing system	Poland	Suburban	(C) (D) (F)
Leroy, Bailly and Billard	(2023)	Municipality-led car sharing scheme	France	Rural	(D)
Lowans et al.	(2023)	Car sharing; ride sharing	UK (Northern Ireland)	Rural Suburban	(D) (F)
Lundgren and Nilsson	(2023)	Citizen initiatives to retain and develop local welfare and community services; building a local retirement home; efforts to convince politicians to save local schools threatened with closure; initiatives to welcome and create social contexts for refugees after the closure of refugee accommodation; starting of a healthcare cooperative following the closure of the primary care centre.	Sweden	Rural	(A) (C) (E) (F)
Macaulay	(2016)	Social enterprises delivering health services	UK (Scotland)	Rural Islands	(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F)
Martens, Wolff, and Hanisch	(2020)	Community cooperatives; provision and maintenance of services and amenities such as village shops, community houses, cafes, and swimming pools; initiation and administration of a nursing home and common room for citizens; development of charging infrastructure for e-mobility	Germany	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (F)
Mayfield	(2010)	Activism for public rights of way and access to the countryside; protests in the form of mass trespassing; rambler groups	UK	Rural	(B) (D) (E)
Meerstra-de Haan et al.	(2020)	Citizens' initiatives; establishing a multi-functional accommodation to house different sports and cultural activities and clubs	The Netherlands	Rural	(A) (C) (E)
Mendas	(2015)	<i>Moba</i> or mutual aid between individuals or families who help each other out with the repair and maintenance of boats	Croatia	Rural Islands	(E) (F)

Mendas	(2016)	Cooperative practices and mutual aid (<i>moba</i>); younger generations and ferry staff delivering medicines and food to older people; mutual aid for the repair and maintenance of boats	Croatia	Rural Islands	(F)
Mennen	(2023)	Activism for public rights of way and access to the countryside and open-air recreation	UK (England and Wales)	Rural	(C) (D) (B)
Mitchell, Jönsson, and Pries	(2021)	People's Parks (<i>Folkets park</i>) movement; construction of parks that served as spaces of recreation and political assembly and mobilization for working-class communities	Sweden	Urban periphery Rural	(B) (D) (E) (F)
Mosely, Parket, and Wragg	(2004)	Multi-service outlets such as a school that also functions as a community center and GP surgery; a village hall that also hosts a cooperative shop; a store with a small library; a pub hosting a post-office; or a health center that is connected to a volunteer car service	UK (England)	Rural	(B) (D)
Nelson et al.	(2017)	Community transport	UK (Scotland)	Rural (but also some urban examples)	(A) (C) (D) (E)
Nutley	(1988)	'Unconventional modes' of transport including community transport, social car schemes, lift-giving, car-pooling, and car-sharing.	UK	Rural (but also some urban examples)	(A) (C) (E)
Olmedo et al.	(2024)	Community-based social enterprises; development of community infrastructures such as office spaces, café-restaurants, and community centres; organization of education/training courses; providing daycare and travel services; operating a local shop and renting out event spaces; upgrading of footpaths	Ireland and Finland	Rural	(A) (C)
Pellicer-Chenoll et al.	(2021)	Public bike sharing system (commercial)	Spain	Urban periphery	(D) (F)
Philip et al.	(2017)	Community-led broadband initiatives	UK	Rural	(D) (E) (F)
Ravensbergen and Schwanen	(2024)	Community transport	UK (England)	Rural	(B) (C) (D) (E) (F)
Rinne-Koski and Lähdesmäki	(2024)	Community-based social enterprises	Finland	Rural	(B) (C)
Salemink and Strijker	(2018)	Community-led broadband initiatives	The Netherlands	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F)

Schiefelbusch	(2016)	Community transport or paratransit (<i>Bürgerbus</i>)	Germany	Rural	(C) (B) (E)
Schiefelbusch	(2021)	Community transport or paratransit (<i>Bürgerbus</i>); informal lift-giving	Germany	Rural	(C) (D) (E)
Schiefelbusch	(2023)	Community transport or paratransit (<i>Bürgerbus</i>)	Germany	Rural Urban periphery	(B) (C) (D) (E) (F)
Sellick	(2014)	Local community taking over the ownership of their local park	UK (England)	Rural	(A) (B) (C)
Sherwood and Lewis	(2000)	'Rural Wheels': a medical transport scheme run by volunteers; protests against the closure of local healthcare facilities	UK (England)	Rural	(A) (C) (D) (E) (F)
Slee	(2019)	Self-organised, bottom-up community action; village cooperatives (shops); community land purchase	UK (Scotland)	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (D)
Sotiriou and Petropoulou	(2022)	Urban social movements to prevent the enclosure and fencing off of public parks; community-led tree planting and maintenance activities; collective kitchens; self-education workshops; trespassing	Greece	Suburban Urban periphery	(D) (E) (F)
Steiner and Teasdale	(2019)	Social enterprises	UK (Scotland)	Rural	(A) (B) (C) (D) (F)
Sturzaker, Catulli, and Kubitz	(2024)	Grassroots, community-run sustainable transport initiatives	UK (England)	Rural	(C) (D) (F)
Tchoukaleyska	(2019)	Creation and consolidation of informal social meeting places; transformation of a closed-off parking lot into an outdoor market	France	Suburban	(B) (C) (D) (E) (F)
Wagg and Simeonova	(2022)	Digital inclusion initiatives; community-led broadband initiatives	UK	Rural	(C) (D) (F)
Woolvin et al.	(2015)	Public service delivery by the voluntary and community sector (VCS); volunteer-led delivery of transport services for hospital patients	UK (England, Scotland and Wales)	Rural	(A) (B) (C)
Zerrer and Sept	(2020)	Digital social innovation projects; purchase of a shared village e-car; development of a village car-sharing program supported by a digitally managed calendar and administration system	Germany	Rural	(A) (C) (D) (F)

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