

Sufficiency as a Core Building Block of Community-Supported Business Models

Introducing an Innovative Business Model Type for Sufficiency

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Abstract *This chapter introduces a novel phenomenon that is spreading in practice into the scholarly debate on sufficiency in business: community-supported business models (CSBMs). We argue that sufficiency is a core building block of CSBMs, discuss three sufficiency-related principles and provide practical examples of CSBMs in varying business fields.*

1. Introduction

In line with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the idea of a so-called sufficiency economy is regarded as one of the most valuable strategies for meeting human needs within the planetary boundaries (Alexander 2015; Niessen/Bocken 2021). This strategy advocates moderating production and consumption to reduce environmental deterioration while guaranteeing a beneficial, healthy life for all beings (Niessen/Bocken 2021). Scholars are increasingly exploring how businesses can apply sufficiency thinking and foster sustainable production and consumption (Bocken et al. 2022; Bocken/Short 2016; Gossen/Kropfeld 2022; Jungell-Michelson/Heikkurinen 2022; Niessen/Bocken 2021). Our study aims to contribute to this discourse by directing scholarly attention to a novel phenomenon that is growing in practice: community-supported business models (CSBMs). We argue that sufficiency is a core building block of CSBMs (Bloemmen et al. 2015; Debuquet et al. 2020), meaning it is worth exploring CSBMs as new forms of business that contribute to broader sustainability transformations (Aagaard et al. 2021; Bocken et al. 2014; Geissdoerfer et al. 2018; Lüdeke-Freund/Dembek 2017; Stubbs/Cocklin 2008).

In this chapter, we first elaborate on the background and roots of CSBMs. Second, we show how these businesses contribute to the sufficiency economy by following the three sufficiency-related core principles of *direct instead of indirect relationships*, *needs orientation instead of growth orientatio*, and *solidarity-based contribution in-*

stead of fixed prices. Third, we provide practical examples of CSBMs that have implemented these principles in a variety of business fields, i.e. renewable energy, agriculture and sustainable mobility. With our study, we contribute to research on sufficiency in business by introducing CSBMs as innovative business models that provide a novel perspective on sufficiency-oriented ways of thinking and doing business, discuss limitations and deliver valuable ideas for future research.

2. Sufficiency business models

Scholars have identified three strategies for achieving the UN climate summit goal of slowing global warming and reducing anthropogenic climate-damaging emissions: efficiency, consistency and sufficiency (Brinken et al. 2022; Huber 2000; Speck et al. 2022). Efficiency usually refers to technical innovations that increase performance with less effort, such as LED lamps, cars with electric or hybrid engines or micro-memory storage chips. Consistency refers to imitating natural flows in production, for instance by producing with renewable materials or energy and closing loops. However, both efficiency and consistency strategies can still fall into the trap of causing increased resource depletion due to so-called *rebound effects* when total production is not eased (Beyeler/Jaeger-Erben 2022; Kropfeld/Reichel 2021). These strategies furthermore do not question the habits and patterns of the system itself.

Hence, the third strategy of sufficiency advocates limited consumption. To address limited natural resources, climate change and the threat of biodiversity loss, sufficiency strategies strive to save energy and resources in absolute terms (Bocken et al. 2022; Gossen/Kropfeld 2022; Niessen/Bocken 2021). Sufficiency in past decades has mainly been a matter of individual behavior and lifestyle, advocating that people solely consume what is necessary for a good life, hence promoting a minimalist lifestyle (Kropfeld 2023). Today, it is increasingly recognized as a necessary building block for sustainable societal development that not only protects natural resources but also asks the question of what is actually needed for a good life (Gossen/Kropfeld 2022; Jungell-Michelsson/Heikkurinen 2022). Sufficiency has simultaneously found its way into business research and practice (Beyeler/Jaeger-Erben 2022).

Sufficiency business models, also referred to as “business models of enough” (Kropfeld/Reichel 2021: 164) describe how businesses can propose, create and capture value for a broad range of stakeholders beyond organizational boundaries (Niessen/Bocken 2021; Schaltegger et al. 2016) while moderating production and avoiding rebound effects (Kropfeld/Reichel 2021). Similar to other sustainable business models, value proposition defines what type of value is created for which stakeholders; value creation refers to how this value is created and with which

stakeholders; while value capture explains how value is captured and dispersed (Schaltegger et al. 2016).

Concrete sufficiency strategies on the business model level range from the three well-known approaches of reducing, avoiding and reusing (Price/Joseph 2000; Bocken/Short 2016) to more granular strategies like regionalization, decluttering, slowing down and de-commercialization (Sachs 2015; Schneidewind/Palzkil-Vorbeck 2011). Bocken and Short (2016) empirically examined six sufficiency-based business model innovations: sharing/no ownership, demand reduction services, moderating sales and promotion, extending product life, direct reuse and full life cycle sufficiency. Bocken, Morales and Lehner (2020) explored sufficiency business models in the food industry, presenting a framework encompassing twelve business strategies for sufficiency. Kropfeld and Reichel (2021) synthesized insights from previous studies as they developed a generic framework for sufficiency-oriented business models that builds on a social practice theoretical perspective encompassing the following three dimensions: (1) materials (tools, machines, physical infrastructure), (2) competences (personal skills for carrying out a practice) and (3) meanings (ideas, meanings and understandings) as core social practice dimensions (Shove et al. 2015). Finally, Niessen and Bocken (2021) developed a comprehensive framework for sufficiency in business, drawing on an extensive literature review, a practice search, as well as 13 semi-structured interviews. They presented 16 business-for-sufficiency strategies within a matrix encompassing rethink, reduce and refuse; as well as less clutter, less speed, less distance and less market. The 16 strategies include green alternatives, design strategies, awareness-raising, life-extension services and many more. Consolidating these insights, we conclude that the current scholarly debate on sufficiency business models presents a broad range of valuable business strategies and frameworks that contribute to a sufficiency economy.

We argue that these strategies mainly operate in a market-based mode and generate volatile revenues. This means that the ventures sometimes create more profit than they actually need to cover the costs of running their business and for reinvestment, while sometimes revenues fall short. On the one hand, generating profits that exceed the needs of running the business and fulfilling shareholder payments tends to strongly contribute to (over)exploiting social and ecological resources (Büscher et al. 2012; Stubbs/Cocklin 2008). In our current market-based system, profits are often achieved thanks to not factoring in the externalized costs of (non-) human nature and well-being (Upward/Jones 2016; Wells/Bristow 2007). On the other hand, falling short of covering the costs of businesses leads to precarious living conditions for the entrepreneurs (Berglund 2017; Conen/Schippers 2019).

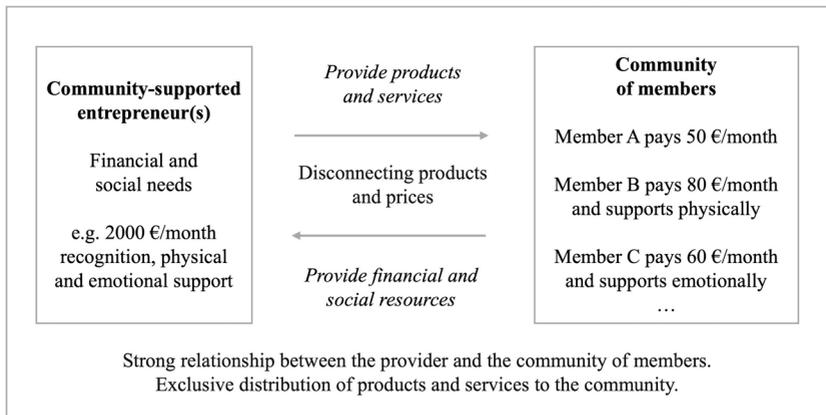
Accumulating the revenues of all of these individual businesses reminds us of “Doughnut Economics” (Raworth 2017). We suggest that exceeding financial and social needs on the business level may result in economies that overshoot the ceiling of natural and social foundations, while falling short of financial and social needs

brings about economies that fall below the social foundation of the doughnut. Hence, volatile revenues can be problematic both on the business model as well as on broader economic levels. This is where CSBMs can come into play, as they support entrepreneurs in precisely generating the revenues needed to run their business within the natural and social boundaries in an environmentally, socially and economically sufficient manner.

3. Community-supported business models

Community-supported businesses represent a “holistic approach [...] based upon trust, cooperation and ecologically responsible behaviours” (Bloemmen et al. 2015: 110). Their business models directly link producers and consumers while enabling a close relationship between both parties (Debuquet et al. 2020). Community-supported businesses are founded and run by a single person or team that provides access to products and services for (and to some extent with) a *community* of consumers. The community of consumers provides the material and immaterial resources¹ needed and, in turn, receives the product or service (often on a regular basis) (Hausdorf/Timm under review: 5; see Figure 1).

Figure 1: General overview of the relationship between providers and consumers in community-supported businesses. (Adapted from Hausdorf/Timm under review)



¹ Material resources refer, for example, to money and items that help the producer(s)/provider(s) set up and run their businesses. Immaterial resources refer, for example, to (wo)manpower at the production site, knowledge transfer, the social network and social and emotional support for the entrepreneur.

The concept of CSBMs stems from agriculture. More than eighty years ago, Japanese farmers started to build close relationships with consumers to sell their regional, healthy products directly to them (Medici et al. 2021). Meanwhile, these close relationships between producers and consumers dispersed internationally and became known as *community-supported agriculture* (CSA). Recent decades saw community-supported businesses primarily set up in response to major societal challenges such as demographic shifts and environmental degradation (Elmes 2018; O'Hara/Stagl 2001). These were of a politically inspired nature.

Recently, the concept of community-supported agriculture has been increasingly applied to other business sectors around the world (Rommel 2017; Szuster et al. 2021; Zhao/Jia 2020). For example, there are community-supported fisheries in Southeast Asia, community-supported retail stores in the United Kingdom and community-supported restaurants in the USA (Szuster et al. 2021; Zhao/Jia 2020).

It is important to distinguish *community-supported* businesses from *community-based* businesses. In *community-based* businesses, a community of people jointly starts a business that is usually fruitful for their specific region (Peredo/Chrisman 2006; Peredo/McLean 2013; Sinnicks 2020). In contrast, solo entrepreneurs or teams set up *community-supported* businesses for (and partly with) a community of people. Moreover, we can distinguish *community-supported* businesses from cooperatives. While a cooperative's members jointly own and manage their venture, members of *community-supported* businesses usually do not own the organization but receive the products and services from the producer (Bacq et al. 2020; Davila/Molina 2017). Nevertheless, cooperatives are often suitable as legal forms for CSBMs.

Community-supported businesses are attracting increasing scholarly attention as environmentally, socially and economically sustainable ventures (Bloemmen et al. 2015; Rommel 2017). They contribute to a healthy environment by providing environmentally friendly products and services (Cristiano 2021; Tang et al. 2019), enhancing entrepreneurs' working conditions (Cristiano 2021; Elmes 2018) and ensuring economic stability and resilience (Brinson et al. 2011; Cristiano 2021). Previous research has shown that, in practice, different types of CSBMs exist (Bloemmen et al. 2015; Cameron 2015; Woods et al. 2017). Transactional CSBMs use their community in a mechanical way, perceiving it as a means to achieve a specific goal. In contrast, relational CSBMs understand the community as an end in itself, create value via the strong participation of their community members and capture value with a solidarity-based proportional pricing model. Hybrid CSBMs combine elements of both transactional and relational types of CSBMs (Hausdorf/Timm under review). In the following, we refer to the *relational* type when elaborating on CSBMs. This type is known for building particularly close relationships between producers and consumers, which enables it to function more environmentally, socially and economically sustainably than transactional and hybrid CSBMs.

We argue that relational CSBMs have even more to offer than ‘just’ being particularly sustainable: They represent an ideal type of a concrete and already-existing sufficiency business model that enables ventures to operate within the safe space between the social foundation and the ecological ceiling (Bloemmen et al. 2015; Raworth 2017). In the following, we discuss how sufficiency forms the core building block of CSBMs.

4. Sufficiency as the core building block of CSBMs

We argue that sufficiency forms the core building block of CSBMs, as these ventures (1) have direct instead of indirect relationships with stakeholders, (2) are characterized by a needs instead of a growth orientation and (3) use solidarity-based contributions instead of fixed prices.

Direct instead of indirect relationships. According to Freudenreich and Schaltegger (2020), avoiding overproduction is a core building block of sustainable production in a sufficiency-oriented business. Although one way to prevent overproduction is via made-to-order production (Niessen/Bocken 2021), CSBMs provide another way to reach this goal: their direct and personal relationships between producers and consumers (Debusquet et al. 2020; Woods et al. 2017). This closeness enables both parties to negotiate production quantity, quality, as well as wages, and helps eliminate the need for the producer to sell more products during good times in order to prepare for hard times (Bloemmen et al. 2015). In contrast, it is possible for the producer to constantly offer as many products or services as needed at a fair wage while sharing the entrepreneurial risk with all parties involved (Parot 2015). Hence, direct relationships between producers and consumers contribute to sufficiency as they work to prevent overproduction. Second, direct relationships between producers and consumers lead to high levels of communication, which fosters members’ appreciation for the product or service (Debusquet et al. 2020). For example, surveys show that members highly value the fruits and vegetables they receive from a community-supported farm (Bloemmen et al. 2015; Debusquet et al. 2020; Rommel 2017), as they learn how much time and effort it takes to grow the harvest. Ultimately, this can foster sufficiency by raising awareness and reducing food waste. According to Niessen and Bocken (2021), education and communication are effective and valuable sufficiency-oriented businesses strategies for changing consumption patterns. Usually, newsletters, podcasts, blog posts and social media content are used as communication media (Niessen/Bocken 2021), whereas CSBMs concentrate on personal communication. Third, direct and trustful relationships build the foundation for a ‘sufficiency mindset’ that is indispensable for the following two principles.

Needs orientation instead of growth orientation. There is an ongoing scholarly debate about whether sufficiency-oriented businesses should generate profit and grow or not. On the one hand, some researchers argue that sufficiency strategies can unlock novel sources of profit (Bocken 2017; Boons/Lüdeke-Freund 2013), that (economic) growth has the potential to move customers away from unsustainable products and services (Niessen/Bocken 2021), and that profit is necessary for business survival (Khmara/Kronenberg 2018). On the other hand, as discussed above, generating profits that exceed the costs of running a business tends to contribute to (over)exploiting social and ecological resources (Büscher et al. 2012; Stubbs/Cocklin 2008), as they are often based on not factoring in the externalized costs of (non-)human nature and well-being (Upward/Jones 2016; Wells/Bristow 2007). CSBMs can offer a solution to this problem: Focusing on needs orientation instead of profit orientation, CSBMs aim to satisfy producers' and consumers' needs instead of maximizing profits (Bloemmen et al. 2015). The producer offers a limited number of products or services while avoiding overproduction (ibid.). At the beginning of each economic year, community-supported producers openly, faithfully and transparently communicate the material and immaterial resources needed to offer the sustainable product or service in a so-called bidding round (Loebbering 2018; Rommel 2017). Financial resources cover the costs of the endeavor (instead of generating profits) and guarantee constant revenue for the entrepreneur for a fixed timeframe, usually one year (Bloemmen et al. 2015; Brinson et al. 2011; Cristiano 2021). Community-supported entrepreneurs describe needs orientation in the context of their antagonistic attitude towards profit orientation: They strive to cover costs, enabling them to offer sustainable products or services instead of maximizing their profits (Hausdorf/Timm under review). Needs orientation enables CSBMs to meet the requirements of members and entrepreneurs, thus promoting sufficiency while counteracting economic growth. Ultimately, needs orientation is a practical means of helping entrepreneurs generate the precise revenue required to operate their business on proper environmental, social and economic terms.

Solidarity-based contributions instead of fixed prices. Entrepreneurs face a challenge when selling sustainable products and services, as they attempt to internalize as many external factors as possible to offer their products and services at prices that are fair and environmentally, socially and economically sustainable (Upward/Jones 2016; Wells/Bristow 2007). However, this often leads to expensive products and services that bear the risk of becoming exclusive and affordable only to high-income customers (D'Souza et al. 2006). This is why recent research recommends that businesses implement a broader range of sufficiency strategies, such as resale services to extend product lifetimes or no-ownership strategies like rental, leasing and sharing (Niessen/Bocken 2021). CSBMs can enrich this debate by bringing in solidarity-based contribution structures as novel mechanisms that simultaneously enable fair

and inclusive prices. Solidarity-based contribution structures are a core element of CSBMs and are put into practice through bidding rounds (Diekmann 2020; Loebbering 2018; Rommel 2019). When preparing for a bidding round, entrepreneurs determine the material and immaterial resources they need for their work (Bloemmen et al. 2015). Then, they communicate these needs among their members and commence the bidding round (Diekmann/Theuvsen 2019). According to their income, members have the opportunity to offer individual contributions that can differ substantially between them. Thus, individuals with highly divergent financial budgets are able to participate (Loebbering 2018; Rommel et al. 2022). Contributions can be understood as proportions of income for paying for a service or product, instead of a fixed price that is the same for everybody, independent of their income. For example, for the same amount and the same quality of products or services, a member with a monthly net income of €1,400 would contribute €42 per month, whereas a member with a monthly net income of €3,500 would pay €105 per month, i.e. the same three-percent portion of their respective income (see Figure 1). In other words, both members pay a price that is proportional to their income (Cristiano 2021; Tang et al. 2019; Zhen et al. 2020). This logic is very socially inclusive, as high-income groups enable low-income groups to participate when each member provides a financial contribution that is proportional to her/his budget. Products and prices are detached from each other, and the members instead provide the material and immaterial resources necessary for the business to operate (Diekmann/Theuvsen 2019; Rommel et al. 2022). Bidding rounds permit entrepreneurs to receive the financial amount needed to operate the business and cover their personal, financial and social-emotional costs/needs as they run the business – no more, no less.

5. Examples of CSBMs in practice

To provide some practical examples of CSBMs, we screened the websites of two larger networks for community-supported businesses in Germany: one of them is the MYZELIUM educational center for community-supported initiatives (MYZELIUM 2023). The other one is CSX Netzwerk, an association of people who work, research or consult in the field of community-supported businesses (CSX Netzwerk 2023). Both websites provide rich lists of CSBs of which we present three cases in the following. We selected initiatives providing comparably detailed information on their websites and that stem from a variety of sectors.

Community-supported energy provider. SoLocal Energy aims to contribute to the global bottom-up sustainability transformation by empowering local communities. To reach this goal, the business offers, among other things, professional self-help communities for installing renewable energy systems. SoLocal Energy applies all

of the three sufficiency principles presented above: the entrepreneurs directly cooperate with their community of consumers who would like to acquire a renewable energy unit. The group also takes responsibility for each other as they apply the solidarity-based proportional pricing model, rendering this approach very socially inclusive. Moreover, they act in a needs-oriented manner by calculating the financial costs of the material, scaffold and staff (SoLocal Energy 2023). It could nevertheless be criticized that SoLocal Energy, although promoting self-sufficiency, does not achieve a reduction in overall energy consumption. This is in fact true for their self-help communities that install renewable energy units, although they do regularly set up other communities such as neighborhood climate transition groups that contribute their climate protection and renewable energy experience.

Community-supported winery. Due to vast amounts of pesticides, high competition levels, questionable working conditions and sometimes even high levels of overproduction, conventional winemaking belongs in the category of less-than-sustainable businesses (Christ/Burritt 2013). Switching to organic farming only partially solves this problem, as the winemaker still takes on the entire risk of crop failure or sales problems, in these cases adjusting prices that make wine less affordable to lower-income groups (ibid.). The community-supported winemaker Jan-Philipp Bleeke walks a different path: Independent of the wine market and market price pressures, he shares costs and the harvest with his winery members (JPB Winemaking 2023). Bleeke has built up a community of members with which he maintains a close dialogue, mutual learning and an exchange of ideas. Members become co-winemakers while sharing responsibility and risk, paying a monthly contribution that they establish as part of a bidding round at the beginning of the growing season. This secures the operating costs for the winemaker for one year (including his wages). In return, the members receive the entire harvest – which is highly dependent on weather conditions and may as a result be abundant or lacking. With his community-supported winery, Bleeke contributes to the sufficiency economy in how he produces his wine in a sustainable, sufficient manner. His members guarantee they will take their agreed-upon portion of the wine – Bleeke will face neither sales problems nor overproduction as a result. Nevertheless, wine is a luxury item that consumes extensive amounts of water in its production. Hence, when seriously wanting to contribute to a sufficiency economy, consumers should question what and how much wine they actually need.

Community-supported car sharing. Conventional car sharing is usually offered in large cities (Zhou/Park 2020). For people in smaller towns or rural areas, there is often no alternative to owning a vehicle, in part because car-sharing is simply not a viable option. Moreover, there is a paradox in the incentive system of car sharing. On the one hand, a provider would welcome a shared car for economic reasons (partially

for environmental reasons as well, assuming customers replace their own vehicle). On the other hand, walking or cycling is even more preferable for environmental reasons; here, infrequent shared car use would be similarly preferable (Hausdorf/Timm under review). Hence, it becomes difficult to find a suitable incentive structure that covers the costs for the car sharing provider but at the same time does not make driving more attractive than walking or cycling. The car sharing provider Vianova.coop founded a community-supported way of enabling neighborhoods in rural areas to create a car sharing opportunity and no longer have to own their cars (Vianova.coop 2023). Six to eight users share the fixed costs of the vehicle in solidarity through bidding rounds while the variable costs are borne individually. Here, the providers try to solve the incentive problem while the community meets the business' demands in a needs-oriented manner. One of the most salient critiques of car sharing is that people who have never owned a car but instead cycle or take public transport become car sharers and start driving. This might certainly be the case in some instances at Vianova.coop, even though the provider tries to solve this problem via open, honest communication, as well as raising awareness, enabled by the direct relationships between the provider and the members (*ibid.*).

6. Discussion

To date, scholars have identified a broad range of sufficiency business strategies (Bocken/Morales/Lehner 2020; Bocken/Short 2016; Kropfeld/Reichel 2021; Niessen/Bocken 2021; Schneidewind/Palzkil-Vorbeck 2011). However, we argue that these strategies mainly follow conventional business paradigms by operating within market-based structures while generating volatile revenues. In this article, we outlined that, in the market-based paradigm, there is a tendency towards creating financial profits that exceed the costs of running the business and meeting the needs of the entrepreneur(s) and interests of their shareholders, while profit generation is often connected to social or ecological exploitation (Büscher et al. 2012; Stubbs/Cocklin 2008). In contrast, falling short of the financial goals required to cover the costs of a business endeavor may lead to precarious living conditions of the producers or environmental degradation, and external costs that as a result need to be absorbed by society at a later stage (Berglund 2017; Conen/Schippers 2019). We argue that this market-based operating mode is incompatible with a sufficiency economy, which strives for a sustainable economy within the prevailing social foundation and ecological ceiling (Raworth 2017; Stubbs/Cocklin 2008). Here, we introduce CSBMs as business models that build on sufficiency principles not yet considered in research. With direct relationships between producers and consumers and a needs-oriented, solidarity-based financing structure, CSBMs manage the balancing act of precisely

generating the revenue that is necessary to run a business while fulfilling the needs of the entrepreneur(s) and stakeholders.

CSBMs can be better understood by contrasting them to market-based corporations that establish sufficiency strategies. For example, Patagonia generates profits and reinvests these in sustainable projects that help combat the climate crisis and protect the environment. The sufficiency-oriented business VAUDE also generates profits but distributes 60 percent of the surplus to shareholders, while investing 40 percent in a sustainable corporate strategy via its reserves (VAUDE 2023). In contrast to these two examples, CSBMs generate exactly the financial and social resources needed to run their business – no more, no less. They figuratively neither fall below the social foundation, nor overshoot the ecological ceiling but instead attempt to operate within a safe space for humanity (Raworth 2017). These businesses seem perfectly equipped to contribute to a sufficiency economy – one of “Having enough for a healthy meaningful life, but without excess” (Bocken/Short 2020: 2).

However, there are some limitations to the potential of CSBMs when it comes to promoting a sufficiency economy. First, there is the issue of providers and members mutually agreeing on what products and services constitute the basic needs necessary for a good life. For example, some people might decide that a cruise holiday is an absolute necessity or that they want to eat fresh caviar from the Caspian Sea every day. Indeed, it is difficult to agree on what a sufficient standard of living exactly means, and it is certainly possible to take advantage of CSBMs to fulfil unsustainable wants rather than sufficiency-oriented needs. Nevertheless, so far, all CSBMs known to the authors offer sustainable products and services. A reason for this could be the collective nature of these businesses, enabling them to start processes of “reflective practice and collective meaning-making” (Le Ber/Branzei 2010: 190) and being well-equipped to negotiate which wants and needs are necessary while contributing to a sufficiency economy.

The second concern addresses the inclusive impact of CSBMs. With their solidarity-oriented pricing structure, these business models aim to let people from all financial backgrounds participate (Cristiano 2021; Tang et al. 2019; Zhen et al. 2020). However, some scholars question whether CSBMs are as inclusive as they intend to be (e.g. Loebbering 2018; Werling 2022) because sustainable products and services often only reach middle- and high-income groups. To date, empirical research is missing that shows whether CSBMs tend to be elitist; chances are, however, that this currently still proves to be the case. This raises the question of whether other sufficiency-oriented strategies are better suited towards inclusively taking the entire society along on the journey towards a sufficiency economy.

This thought brings us to the final limitation: The direct partnerships between producers and members, needs orientation and the solidarity-based financing structure are strategies containing vast potential for promoting a sufficiency economy. However, they should not be understood as exclusive strategies; they can

effectively unfold their potential when combined with other sufficiency-oriented strategies such as sharing, short-distance promotion or questioning consumption (Bocken/Short 2016; Kropfeld/Reichel 2021; Niessen/Bocken 2021).

7. Conclusion

This chapter contributes to the current scholarly debate on sufficiency in business by introducing CSBMs as innovative models that provide a novel perspective on sufficiency-oriented businesses. Close partnerships between producers and consumers and a needs-oriented, solidarity-based financing structure enable these ventures to precisely generate the revenue needed for running their businesses in an environmentally, socially and economically sufficient way.

We have presented three examples of CSBMs from the energy, agricultural and mobility fields, discussing the extent to which these businesses promote a sufficiency economy. The discussion has shown that CSBMs indeed contribute to sufficient production and consumption within a socially just space in which humanity can thrive (Raworth 2017) while also facing crucial challenges. Hence, while the three core principles discussed in this chapter enrich the scholarly debate on sufficiency strategies, they should not be understood as stand-alone principles. Rather, CSBMs can combine these core principles with other sufficiency-oriented business strategies identified in previous research, such as local production, sharing or dematerialization strategies (Bocken/Short 2016; Kropfeld/Reichel 2021; Niessen/Bocken 2021).

Based on our own observations in literature and practice, this chapter provides a first glimpse at how CSBMs promote a sufficiency economy. Future research could explore the intersection between CSBMs and sufficiency more empirically and in greater detail, for example, by analyzing a larger number of practical examples through in-depth interviews. Grounded theory could be a support here, constructing an explanatory theory that sheds light on how exactly CSBMs can foster sufficiency. Moreover, it would be fruitful to explore CSBMs' potential to contribute to a sufficiency economy on a broader scale, i.e. when numerous CSBMs settle in one area and cooperate. Such transformation paths could be explored in a real-life environment within a living lab, accompanied by in-depth interviews, group discussions and ethnographic research. Eifel Myzel constitutes this kind of exciting environment in which a large number of CSBMs are currently emerging (Eifel Myzel 2023).

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