The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship research frequently treats entrepreneurship ecosystems, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation as parallel or pairwise explanations, leaving limited understanding of how these domains interact, generate reinforcing (or weakening) feedback, and co-evolve over time, particularly in emerging-economy contexts where institutional coordination is uneven and entrepreneurial practice is routinely shaped by shocks and livelihood insecurity.

This thesis addresses that gap by developing the Triadic Synergy Model (TSM), an original, mechanism-based analytical lens that specifies reciprocal influence and feedback among Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (EE), Collective Entrepreneurship (CE), and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC), while conceptualizing Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE) as a cross-cutting constraining practice logic that dampens triadic coupling. Empirically, the study adopts a qualitative multiple-case design focused on Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, drawing on semi-structured interviews with SME entrepreneurs, conducted primarily in participants' mother tongue, with follow-up interviews and iterative thematic analysis and cross-case comparison to identify mechanisms, boundary conditions, and sectoral patterning.

Findings show that CE is not a generic claim of "working together" but an achieved coordination capability: synergy emerges when participation is sustained and governance is credible. Under these conditions, CE enhances EE functioning by translating ecosystem supports into usable capacity (e.g., shared infrastructures, pooled learning routines, and collective voice) and can catalyze civic endowments when collective enterprise is organized around inclusion, stakeholder participation, and community capability building. EE is experienced less as a static set of "elements" than as workable access points (e.g., regulatory and procedural infrastructure, skills, finance, market channels, and shared resource pools) that condition day-to-day continuity and shape whether collective arrangements and civic pathways can persist. CWC is evidenced as multidimensional endowment creation and, in necessity-driven settings, as a survival and resilience pathway; however, civic wealth durability depends on participation infrastructures and credible support regimes rather than enterprise goodwill alone. Across the triad, boundary conditions are systematic: low trust, role ambiguity, opportunism concerns, politicization, and survival-first constraints weaken CE and narrow civic outcomes, interrupting the reinforcing loops the TSM specifies.

By sector, tourism exhibits more consistent triadic reinforcement due to higher interdependence and more visible participation infrastructures, whereas agriculture shows stronger IE resistance, coordination fragility, and weaker feedback channels, yielding more constrained and discontinuous reinforcing pathways. By integrating Active Influence and Reactive Adaptation logics, the thesis advances a contingent, governance-sensitive explanation of when ecosystem supports translates into durable collective capability and when entrepreneurial activity produces civic wealth that consolidates over time in emerging-economy sectors.

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List of Abbreviations

AC -Ancient Cities

ADKAR - Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement (change management model)

AHEAD - Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) Project

AI - Active Influence

CC - Colombo City

CE - Collective Entrepreneurship

CEE - Collective Environmental Entrepreneurship

CIE - Collective Institutional Entrepreneurship

COVID - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (used as shorthand for COVID-19)

COVID-19 - Coronavirus Disease 2019

CRIB - Credit Information Bureau (Sri Lanka)

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

CWC - Civic Wealth Creation

DCS - Department of Census and Statistics

EC - East Coast

EE - Entrepreneurial Ecosystem(s)

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GC - Greater Colombo

GSER - Global Startup Ecosystem Report

HC - Hill Country

IE - Individualistic Entrepreneurship

IT - Information Technology

LKR - Sri Lankan Rupee(s)

LRIF - Legislative, Regulatory and Institutional Framework

MSMEs - Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

NGO - Non-Government Organization(s)

NR - Northern Region

OECD - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PhD - Doctor of Philosophy

R&D - Research and Development

RA - Reactive Adaptation

RQ1 - Research Question 1

RQ2 - Research Question 2

RQ3 - Research Question 3

RQ4 - Research Question 4

SC - South Coast

SLTDA - Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

SME - Small and Medium Enterprise(s)

TA - Thematic Analysis

TSM - Triadic Synergy Mo

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background and research context

Three hundred and forty-six kilometers from the capital city of Sri Lanka, there is a small village in Kilinochchi where the Sri Lankan Civil War ended, but life did not become easy. Years passed, yet poverty stayed. Water was not safe to drink. There were often not enough meals. Parents worried about a child's cough because medicine cost money they did not have. Many homes were only half-homes, thin walls, leaking roofs. In many houses, night came early because there was no electricity. Work was scarce. People had hands willing to labor, but no tools, no guidance, no place to begin.

One day, the whole village came to the road and stood there asking for living aid. Not as a protest, but as a plea. Faces lined the roadside, quiet, tired, and hopeful in a fragile way. When help did not come, people did what desperate people do: they borrowed. Loans came from different people and places, each one promising relief. But there was no steady income to match the repayments. Debt grew like a shadow. Some were chased by fear and shame. And some, when they saw no way out, chose the darkest escape.

A man saw this, and it broke something inside him. He was poor too. He did not have spare money. But the sight of those faces stayed with him. He lay awake for nights, hearing their silence in his mind. He tried everything he could think of. He asked people for support and was turned away with polite words. He walked into temples and other religious places, not asking for miracles, just asking for help for the innocent people. He spoke to elders, youth, mothers, anyone who would talk. The more he listened, the more he realized the village lacked spirit, it lacked a doorway.

So, he tried to build one. He started small, with the friends, villagers, using what they still carried even after everything else had been taken: their stories, their culture, their skills, their pride. A little cultural theme park, simple at first, almost nothing. A place to cook and share food, a place for crafts, a place for songs and dances, a place where visitors could see the beauty that had survived.

It did not change overnight. But slowly, support began to arrive, one person helping, then another, then another. He taught what he learned. He trained people. He shared the work and the earnings. The project became "ours," not "mine." And step by step, the village began to stand differently. Over time, the road where they once asked for aid stopped being the village's only answer. People started earning. Children went to school with less worry. Families could buy food without begging for it. Healthcare was no longer a hopeless question. The same place that had held so much sorrow began to hold something else too, movement, laughter, and the calm dignity of a life rebuilt together.

This real story is not used here as "evidence," but as a contextual scene-setter that captures a recurring development reality in Sri Lanka and similar emerging-economy settings: when formal protections and reliable support infrastructures are weak, communities often face livelihood shocks, uneven formal support, and fragile social safety nets. Entrepreneurial action becomes entangled with survival, dignity, and collective problem-solving (North, 1990; Scott, 2014). It also illustrates why entrepreneurship, in such contexts, cannot be understood narrowly as an individual pursuit of profit or innovation, but must be examined as a practice embedded in local relationships, institutional environments, and civic expectations.

Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a driver of economic growth and development through innovation, job creation, and productivity upgrading (Acs et al., 2014; Audretsch et al., 2015; Harper, 2003; Peprah & Adekoya, 2020; Szirmai et al., 2011; Yu, 1997).

This development link is emphasized across both developed and emerging economies, where entrepreneurship is increasingly positioned as a pathway to opportunity creation and livelihood improvement (Szirmai et al., 2011; Valliere & Peterson, 2009). The foundational connection between entrepreneurship and economic development is also historically grounded in Schumpeterian arguments that new venture creation and innovation are central drivers of economic development and transformation (Audretsch et al., 2019). Contemporary policy discourse similarly frames entrepreneurship as the translation of ideas into action, which reinforces its practical relevance as a development capability rather than solely as a business activity (European Commission, 2016b).

As entrepreneurship gained policy and scholarly attention in the late twentieth century, entrepreneurship and small firms were increasingly viewed as decisive factors in economic performance, contributing to intensified investment in new knowledge and innovation-driven development (Urbano et al., 2019). Entrepreneurship has also become a prominent lifestyle and career pathway in many contexts, which has further increased scholarly and policy interest in understanding how entrepreneurial practice emerges and persists (Gutterman, 2018). This broader shift has reinforced the idea that entrepreneurship should be analyzed not only at the level of individual traits or single firms, but also through wider environments that enable or constrain entrepreneurial practice (Isenberg, 2011; Mason & Brown, 2014; Spigel, 2017).

However, the "environment" is not merely a background. It is constituted by relationships, rules, support organizations, market channels, and cultural norms that shape what is feasible, what is rewarded, and what is risky for entrepreneurs. This is particularly consequential in emerging-economy settings where institutional reliability is uneven and access to resources, protection, and market power is often negotiated through networks and intermediaries rather than assured through stable systems (North, 1990; Scott, 2014; Urbano et al., 2019). In such contexts, collaboration is not incidental but enabling: entrepreneurial action is often co-produced through coordination among entrepreneurs, intermediaries, and community stakeholders who jointly mobilize resources, legitimacy, and support (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Urbano et al., 2019; Wurth et al., 2022)

Building on this premise, the thesis advances a triadic, mechanism-based explanation of entrepreneurship that links Entrepreneurship Ecosystems (EE), Collective Entrepreneurship (CE), and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC), while treating Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE) as a constraining practice logic. Its novelty lies in specifying interaction and feedback among these domains over time, explaining how ecosystem conditions shape collective practices, how collective action conditions the mobilization of ecosystem resources, and how these dynamics generate and sustain civic endowments, rather than treating EE, CE, and CWC as parallel literatures.

This emphasis has supported the rise of EE scholarship, which offers a more holistic view of entrepreneurship by focusing on interconnected actors, institutions, resources, networks, and cultural norms that jointly shape entrepreneurial activity (Cavallo et al., 2018; Isenberg, 2011; Isenberg & Onyemah, 2016; Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022). Ecosystem research has gained rapid attention from scholars and policymakers because it frames entrepreneurship as conditioned by the quality of the environment and its relational connectivity, not only by the presence of isolated inputs (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Audretsch et al., 2019; Audretsch & Link, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Ullah, 2019).Yet, even within EE thinking, a persistent challenge is explaining "how" ecosystem elements translate into entrepreneurial practice and outcomes, especially when entrepreneurs face fragmented supports, institutional distrust, politicization, or uneven access. Mechanism-oriented critiques therefore call for greater clarity on the pathways that connect ecosystem conditions to what entrepreneurs do, how they mobilize resources, and how ecosystems evolve through feedback over time (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Stam, 2015; Stam & van de Ven, 2021; Wurth et al., 2022).

At the same time, research and practice increasingly recognize that entrepreneurship is often not confined to the founder alone. Entrepreneurial activity can be distributed across employees, partners, and stakeholders through continuous incremental innovation and participation across the organization (Reich, 1987). This broader participation logic aligns with CE, which highlights the collective efforts of employees and leaders in producing continuous innovation and coordinated value creation (Yan & Yan, 2016). CE scholarship is particularly relevant for contexts where opportunity pursuit depends on coordination, such as shared infrastructures, pooled learning, collective voice, joint marketing, cooperative purchasing, or community-based service design. In these settings, the core question is not whether people "work together" occasionally, but whether collective action can be governed, stabilized, and sustained under real tensions: divergent incentives, accountability disputes, trust deficits, opportunism concerns, and uneven power (Cairns et al., 2024; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Sorenson, 2003).

Extending further beyond firm-level outcomes, CWC scholarship positions entrepreneurship as a change process that can generate durable civic benefits when community members, supporters, and entrepreneurial actors engage collectively to pool resources and build capabilities (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). CWC emphasizes the civic level of analysis as a setting where societal change initiatives occur through citizen engagement and entrepreneurial commerce, framing civic wealth as a multi-stakeholder outcome rather than a private benefit (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). CWC is especially important for interpreting entrepreneurship in places where "impact" is not only a voluntary add-on but is bound up with local survival, public service gaps, and community expectations. It also shifts attention from episodic philanthropy toward the durability of civic endowments, economic, social, communal and institutional, co-produced through participation, governance, and support regimes (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Frid & Vedula, 2019; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

These developments are especially relevant in emerging economic settings where institutional coordination and support quality are uneven, and entrepreneurs frequently depend on relational and collective arrangements to access resources and manage uncertainty. In such settings, sectoral structure also matters because industries differ in coordination needs, stakeholder arrangements, and resource dependencies. Tourism and agriculture are particularly suitable for comparison because both are central to livelihoods and local development, while differing strongly in market structures, risk profiles, and organizing requirements (Bijman & Doorneweert, 2008; Czapiewska, 2021; Jørgensen et al., 2021; Parzonko & Sieczko, 2018) Examining both sectors within one national context therefore provides a strong basis for understanding how entrepreneurial practice and outcomes vary under shared macro conditions but different sectoral logics (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Autio et al., 2018; Wurth et al., 2022).

Tourism is typically characterized by visible interdependence across value-chain actors (e.g., accommodation, transport, experiences, suppliers, guides, local communities), making coordination and reputation effects central to performance and legitimacy (Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018). Agriculture, while also networked, often involves fragmented smallholder realities, price-taking constraints, high exposure to shocks, and contested collective arrangements (Bijman & Doorneweert, 2008; Parzonko & Sieczko, 2018). Placing these sectors side by side therefore allows the study to hold the national institutional environment broadly constant while investigating how sectoral organizing logics shape (i) ecosystem mobilization, (ii) the feasibility of CE, and (iii) the creation and durability of civic endowments.

Finally, this thesis also examines individualistic orientations because prior research suggests they can constrain collaboration, weaken collective governance, and limit civic spillovers. IE is therefore treated not as a separate domain, and not as a fixed personality disposition or broad cultural trait, but as a relational and systemic constraining practice logic that becomes visible in coordination behavior (e.g., reluctance to share resources, information, or decision rights) and is often reinforced by institutional incentives and uncertainty. In this framing, IE shapes the feasibility and durability of collective engagement and the persistence of civic wealth outcomes (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Taken together, these arguments position the thesis around a single research problem: in resource-constrained and institutionally uneven contexts, it remains unclear how ecosystem supports become usable in entrepreneurial practice, how CE produces or fails to produce synergy, and how entrepreneurial activities generate civic endowments that endure over time. This problem is especially important where an individualistic practice logic may weaken collaboration, participation, and shared accountability. The formal overarching and subsidiary research questions are therefore presented in Section 1.3.

1.2 Research problem and gap

Despite rapid growth in entrepreneurship research, a persistent limitation is that many studies remain concentrated in developed contexts, while entrepreneurship in developing countries remains comparatively under-examined (Bruton et al., 2013; Dana, 2004). Developing-country contexts are also often characterized in the literature as facing weaker entrepreneurial culture and fewer enabling conditions, which can shape both the feasibility and the form of entrepreneurial practice (Ghanem, 2013). This matters because the mechanisms through which entrepreneurship emerges, scales, and generates societal outcomes are likely to differ when institutions are uneven, support systems are fragmented, and relational conditions are fragile.

Sri Lanka provides a context where these concerns are particularly visible. As a developing country, Sri Lanka faces significant socioeconomic challenges, and entrepreneurship development is shaped by constraints in policy coordination, institutional support, and the broader environment for sustaining entrepreneurial practice (Liyanage, 2020). Entrepreneurship research in Sri Lanka has also been described as relatively limited and still developing, which restricts locally grounded explanation of what enables or constrains entrepreneurial practice and outcomes (Kumara, 2012). In addition, policy and practice concerns include imperfect or weakly evidenced policies and limited coordination across public and private institutions responsible for entrepreneur support, which can create persistent dilemmas in enabling entrepreneurship development (Samarathunga et al., 2020; Silva, 2019)

This thesis addresses this gap by bringing together three research streams that are often treated separately.

First, EE scholarship provides a system-level understanding of entrepreneurship but is repeatedly critiqued for broad conceptualization and limited clarity on the mechanisms that connect ecosystem features to context-specific outcomes, including how ecosystems evolve over time (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Cavallo et al., 2018; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). Second, CE scholarship emphasizes coordinated collective action but remains divided regarding what counts as CE and is critiqued for insufficient mechanism clarity about how synergy is produced, stabilized, and disrupted under real coordination problems and governance tensions (Cairns et al., 2024; Cook & Plunkett, 2006; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). Third, CWC scholarship addresses the need to specify community-level outcomes by framing civic wealth as co-produced endowments shaped by multi-stakeholder engagement, yet it also calls for stronger explanation of durability under constraints, uneven participation, and power asymmetries (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Frid & Vedula, 2019; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019)

Although these literatures are individually valuable, the central research problem is that they are frequently mobilized in partial ways, either as separate conversations or as pairwise explanations (e.g., EE→entrepreneurship; CE→performance; entrepreneurship→impact). As a result, scholarships often understate reciprocal influence, feedback, and tension across all three domains, and consequently provide limited explanation of how entrepreneurial practice, ecosystem conditions, and civic endowments co-evolve over time (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022).

A second, closely related gap concerns mechanism clarity. Even when scholars acknowledge interdependence, the "how" is often left under-specified: How does CE convert ecosystem resources into usable capability? How do civic expectations and participation infrastructures shape legitimacy, trust, and governance conditions for collaboration? How do entrepreneurs' everyday organizing choices generate reinforcing loops, or break them, under constraints? Mechanism-based critiques across EE and collective action research repeatedly call for models that trace these pathways more explicitly, particularly outside high-income contexts (Franco & Haase, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

A further gap concerns how individualistic orientations shape the feasibility of collective practice. The literature suggests that individualism can influence entrepreneurial behavior in context-dependent ways and can reduce collective feasibility when trust-based exchange and coordinated participation are difficult to stabilize (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). This implies that explaining entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors requires attention not only to ecosystem structures and collective practices, but also to individualistic practice logics that can constrain synergy, weaken ecosystem engagement, and diminish civic outcomes.

In summary, the research problem addressed in this thesis is the limited understanding of how EE, CE, and CWC operate as an interdependent system over time, especially in emerging-economy contexts, and how individualistic orientations constrain or dampen reinforcing pathways across the system. Addressing this problem requires an integrative lens that can interpret (i) system conditions, (ii) collective practice and governance, and (iii) civic endowment creation and durability, while explicitly accounting for constraint logic and sectoral differences.

This leads to the overarching research question that guides the thesis.

1.3 Overarching research question

The thesis is guided by the following overarching research question:

How and to what extent do Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation interact over time in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, and how does Individualistic Entrepreneurship influence these interactions and their entrepreneurial and civic outcomes?

This overarching question is addressed through four subsidiary research questions:

RQ1: How do entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors experience, interpret, and mobilize EE conditions, and what systemic, structural, and relational factors enable or restrict entrepreneurial practice?

RQ2: How is CE enacted within and across enterprises in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, and what practices and governance conditions support or weaken collective synergy?

RQ3: How are civic endowments produced and sustained through entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, and what roles stakeholder participation, social capital, and support regimes play in enabling or constraining durable CWC?

RQ4: To what extent do EE, CE, and CWC interact over time across the tourism and agricultural sectors, and what mechanisms influence how they interact and whether IE constrains or dampens those interactions?

1.4 Significance and major contributions

This thesis is positioned as a mechanism-oriented theory-building study that contributes to process explanation in entrepreneurship systems by integrating EE, CE, and CWC, and by clarifying interaction, feedback, and constraints across these domains. It makes three broad contributions. First, it strengthens EE explanation by clarifying how ecosystem conditions connect to entrepreneurial practice and outcomes across two contrasting sectors, responding to critiques on mechanism clarity and uneven cross-context explanation (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). Second, it advances CE scholarship by specifying how synergy is enacted and stabilized in practice and by identifying boundary conditions and tensions that weaken collective outcomes (Cairns et al., 2024; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Tiessen, 1997; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). Third, it strengthens CWC explanation by examining how civic endowments are produced and sustained through stakeholder participation and support regimes in an emerging economy context, while clarifying constraints that weaken durability (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2020; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Across these contributions, the thesis also clarifies how IE can function as a constraining practice logic that reduces collective feasibility and dampens reinforcing pathways (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997).

Practically, this study matters because it frames entrepreneurship through the combined lenses of the EE, CE, and CWC, which keeps attention on how entrepreneurial activity is supported, how it is organized in practice, and how it may connect to wider community outcomes.

1.5 Methodological overview

This study adopts a qualitative, case study research design suited to examining practices, mechanisms, and context-sensitive processes across sectors. Data will be generated primarily through semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs operating in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, supported by systematic thematic analysis and cross-case comparison to identify patterns, boundary conditions, and sectoral differences.

This methodological choice is aligned with the purpose of the study. Because the research questions focus on experience ("how entrepreneurs interpret and mobilize"), practice ("how collectivity is enacted and governed"), and process ("how domains interact over time"), a qualitative approach is appropriate for generating mechanism-rich explanation rather than variable-based measurement (Yin & Campbell, 2018).

This study will apply manual coding within a reflexive thematic analysis approach, using iterative rounds of coding, analytic memoing, and theme refinement through repeated engagement with transcripts, alongside systematic comparison across cases and sectors and checks for deviant or negative cases (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Morse, 2015; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2009). Ethical practice followed institutional human-research ethics requirements and included informed consent, the right to withdraw, confidentiality and anonymization, secure data handling, and careful management of potentially sensitive narratives raised during interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; University of Waikato, 2024).

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Although the empirical findings are organized across CE, EE, CWC, and IE for clarity of presentation, the chapters are not intended to treat these domains as analytically isolated or unrelated. Each chapter provides an empirical entry point into the wider triadic system by showing how one focal domain influences, adapts to, or constrains the others.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) establishes the three foundational domains EE, CE, and CWC and reviews the key debates, definitional boundaries, and critiques that motivate their integration. It develops the conceptual foundations for the study

Chapter 3 (Methodology) justifies the qualitative, comparative research design and explains the data generation and analysis strategy used to address the four research questions. It details the case selection logic across tourism and agriculture, the interview strategy, ethical procedures, and the thematic analysis and cross-case comparison approach.

Chapter 4 (Context) provides the empirical setting for the study. It introduces Sri Lanka's contextual landscape.

Chapter 5 (Findings on CE) presents CE as the first empirical entry point into the triadic system. It shows how CE generates synergy within and across enterprises, how collective practices enhance EE functioning, and how collective action can catalyze CWC.

Chapter 6 (Findings on EE) presents EE as the second empirical entry point. It examines how ecosystem conditions enable or restrict entrepreneurial practice, shape CE, and reinforce or weaken the conditions through which civic outcomes become possible.

Chapter 7 (Findings on CWC) presents CWC as the third empirical entry point. It examines how civic wealth is produced as an outcome of entrepreneurial practice, while also showing how civic relationships, social capital, and support regimes feed back into CE and EE.

Chapter 8 (Findings on IE) presents IE as a cross-cutting constraining logic. It examines how self-reliance, control-oriented practices, distrust, and reluctance to collaborate can dampen CE, weaken engagement with EE, and reduce the durability of CWC.

Chapter 9 (Discussion) synthesizes these empirically grounded patterns through the TSM. It explains how CE, EE, and CWC operate as an interactive system through Active Influence and Reactive Adaptation pathways, while IE operates as a constraint on triadic coupling.

Chapter 10 (Conclusion) consolidates the thesis argument, outlines implications for theory and practice, acknowledges limitations, and proposes directions for future research.

1.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has positioned the study within its empirical and scholarly context by outlining the setting that motivates the inquiry and the research problem the thesis addresses. It has identified the key gaps that arise when entrepreneurship is examined through partial lenses and has articulated the overarching research question. The chapter has also signposted its significance and intended contributions, provided a concise overview of the methodological approach, and mapped the structure of the thesis to guide the reader through the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter discusses the major theoretical foundations relevant to this study and is organized into two segments. The first segment reviews and synthesizes the core literature related to the history and definition of entrepreneurship, including Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE). It then turns to describing the three fields of research, namely Collective Entrepreneurship (CE), Entrepreneurial Ecosystems (EE), and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC), and it identifies the key research gaps within each stream as they relate to the focus of this thesis. The second segment provides an integrative synthesis that brings these three literatures into conversation, highlights the gaps in theorizing and empirically tracing the dynamic interplay among CE, EE, and CWC, and clarifies why an explicit triadic lens is needed. This synthesis section also establishes the conceptual bridge to the subsequent chapter by summarizing the unresolved questions.

This literature review was designed as a critical, theory-building review rather than a systematic literature review. Its scope was guided by the thesis focus and research questions, which required engagement with entrepreneurship literature, including IE, and three interrelated fields: EE, CE, and CWC. The review drew mainly on peer-reviewed work from well-indexed and internationally recognized journals in management, entrepreneurship, strategy, tourism, and related fields, while policy documents, sector reports, and Sri Lanka-specific sources were used selectively for contextual grounding. Relevant literature was identified through Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, publisher databases, targeted journal searches, and citation tracing. Search terms included combinations of “entrepreneurship ecosystem,” “collective entrepreneurship,” “collaborative entrepreneurship,” “civic wealth creation,” “community entrepreneurship,” “individualistic entrepreneurship,” “tourism entrepreneurship," "agricultural entrepreneurship," "rural entrepreneurship," "emerging economies," "institutional unevenness," "formal support gaps," "institutional frictions," and "Sri Lanka." The review prioritized studies that clarified the thesis concepts, supported the Sri Lankan sectoral context, or explained relevant mechanisms, while excluding literature with no clear connection to entrepreneurship, ecosystem conditions, collective organizing, civic/community value creation, or emerging-economy contexts.

2.1 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined in multiple ways in literature, reflecting differences in disciplinary starting points and levels of analysis (Audretsch, 2012; Mazzarol & Reboud, 2020; Ogbor, 2000; Santini, 2020). This definitional plurality is well recognized, and the literature repeatedly notes inconsistency in how entrepreneurship is conceptualized and measured across studies (Mazzarol & Reboud, 2020; Ogbor, 2000; Santini, 2020). Classic contributions highlight entrepreneurship as a driver of innovation and economic change, with historical roots traced to early economic thought and later formalized through Schumpeterian arguments about new combinations and creative destruction (Chandra, 2018; Fritsch, 2017; Gutterman, 2018).

Across contemporary scholarship, several emphases recur. One stream treats entrepreneurship as **new venture creation** and new entry (Cole, 1968; Gartner, 1985). Another foregrounds **innovation**, often linked to entrepreneurial action rather than routine management (Drucker & Noel, 1986; Fritsch, 2017; Hisrich & Peters, 1989). A third stream conceptualizes entrepreneurship as an **opportunity process**, identifying, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities that can involve multiple actors and does not necessarily require the formation of a new organization (Eckhardt & Shane, 2003; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Strategy-oriented work further frames entrepreneurship as a **behavioral posture** captured in **entrepreneurial orientation**, commonly conceptualized through five dimensions:

innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, competitive aggressiveness, and autonomy (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). These dimensions help explain how firms identify, pursue, and exploit opportunities across markets, which is particularly relevant to international entrepreneurship contexts (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005).

Policy and applied literature broaden the outcome focus by defining entrepreneurship as the creation or expansion of economic activity through innovation in products, processes, or markets and noting that outcomes may extend beyond private wealth creation (European Commission, 2016a, 2016b; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017). This aligns with work that frames entrepreneurship as value creation in diverse forms and contexts, including settings where entrepreneurs convert ideas into action and learn through market and stakeholder responses (Gomes-Casseres, 2019; Lorenzo et al., 2018; Newman, 2021). It is also consistent with arguments that entrepreneurship is not synonymous with small or new firms and can occur within established organizations, including through intrapreneurship (Drucker, 2014; Klofsten et al., 2020).

For the purposes of this thesis, entrepreneurship is treated as a contextually situated process of opportunity enactment and value creation that can be pursued by individuals and/or groups and can generate economic and non-economic outcomes (European Commission, 2016b; Newman, 2021; OECD, 2017; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This framing is intentionally compatible with (i) collective forms of agency and coordination (developed as CE), (ii) the multi-level conditions that shape resource mobilization and constraints (developed through the EE literature), and (iii) the civic and community-facing outcomes that depend on participation, social capital, and stakeholder engagement (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

2.1.1 Individualistic views of entrepreneurship

This subsection clarifies how entrepreneurship has been theorized through an individualistic lens because this thesis later treats **Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE)** (Chapter 08) as a conditioning logic that can shape entrepreneurs' mobilization of ecosystem elements, the feasibility of collective action, and the durability of civic outcomes, which are central concerns across the subsidiary research questions (Jarillo & Stevenson, 1990; Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997). Early entrepreneurship scholarships commonly positioned the entrepreneur as an individual and emphasized how personal backgrounds, values, aspirations, and motivations shape entrepreneurial behavior (Dubini, 1989; Jarillo & Stevenson, 1990). Within this tradition, the entrepreneur is portrayed as exercising judgment under uncertainty by allocating scarce resources, recognizing opportunities, and organizing venture activity, including entry and financing decisions (Alvarez et al., 2014; Eckhardt & Shane, 2003). Individual-level explanations are reinforced in intention and psychological approaches that link entrepreneurship to achievement motivation, personal control, creativity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Batool et al., 2015), and to trait clusters such as need for achievement, locus of control, risk tolerance, innovativeness, and tolerance for ambiguity (Gutterman, 2018). Some work also ties entrepreneurial propensity to personal and household conditions, including family business background and biological factors, illustrating how individualistic explanations can extend to micro-level determinants (White et al., 2007).

Individualism is further reproduced through entrepreneurship education and pedagogy that foreground the individual as the key target for entrepreneurial development (European Commission, 2016a; Laukkanen, 2000). Didactic approaches often assume that education prepares individuals to start ventures after study and can downplay teams, context, and business principles, thereby privileging personal capability as the main driver of entrepreneurial outcomes (Gibb, 1993; Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006). Strategy and process definitions similarly keep the individual analytically central by conceptualizing entrepreneurship as opportunity pursuit regardless of resources currently controlled, while still allowing that individuals may operate within groups (Jarillo & Stevenson, 1990).

Individual-centered accounts do not require a purely trait-based explanation. Integrative perspectives argue that entrepreneurship should be understood through the evolving relationship among the individual, the venture or project, and the surrounding environment, rather than treating the entrepreneur's traits as sufficient causes of outcomes (Bruyat & Julien, 2001), and by emphasizing that outcomes are only partially determined by the entrepreneur's traits (Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006). Opportunity-based work further treats opportunity identification and evaluation as cognitive effort in which the individual remains salient, whether acting alone, as part of a team, or during only part of the process (Gaglio & Katz, 2001; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

2.1.2 Entrepreneurship: individualistic view to collective view

Critiques of entrepreneurship scholarship highlight how the heroic entrepreneur image can reproduce individualized and gendered assumptions about entrepreneurial roles and attributes, encouraging explanations that over-privilege personal traits and agency (Ogbor, 2000). In response, research increasingly emphasizes movement from purely individualistic accounts toward group and team-based entrepreneurship, including pathways where individuals participate in collective start-ups rather than acting alone (Etzkowitz, 2003; Wright, 2019). This shift is reinforced by arguments that contemporary ventures are deeply embedded in networks, which challenges the adequacy of the lone-hero stance as an explanatory model (Nijkamp, 2003). Related team scholarship argues that the solitary entrepreneur narrative is increasingly replaced by studies of entrepreneurial teams that share ownership, control, and strategy (Reuer et al., 2019).

Network perspectives further relocate entrepreneurship from isolated individual strategy to interaction within relationship structures (Drakopoulou Dodd & Anderson, 2007; Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009). In internationalizing contexts, opportunity development and market entry can arise through formal and informal network interactions and a firm's position within those relationships, rather than only through deliberate managerial choice (Coviello & Munro, 1995). Relational accounts similarly argue that entrepreneurship is difficult to conceptualize as a solo endeavor because entrepreneurs depend on others for specialized tasks, credibility, resource recognition, and access to resources (Drakopoulou Dodd & Anderson, 2007). Consistent with this view, entrepreneurship is framed as a collective experience whose empirical basis cannot be reduced to the visible story of one focal actor (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009), and as a multidimensional sociological phenomenon that requires attention to social structures and relationships (Ratten & Dana, 2020). Networking is also treated as a dynamic practice, with entrepreneurs actively building and adjusting ties in response to evolving resource needs (Hulsink & Elfring, 2019), and collective research highlights how diverse actors can combine complementary knowledge and capabilities to generate solutions beyond any single individual (Klein et al., 2019).

Determinants of individualistic versus collective orientations are treated as context sensitive rather than fixed. Values scholarship links entrepreneurial orientation and intention to culture, values, beliefs, and norms (Hechavarria & Reynolds, 2009), and suggests that individualist values can correlate with entrepreneurial behavior in some settings (Holland & Shepherd, 2013; Mueller & Thomas, 2001; Pinillos & Reyes, 2011). However, the relationship between individualism and entrepreneurial intention varies with environmental features and cultural fit, meaning similar personal values can have different effects across contexts (Liñán et al., 2016). In complex social challenge settings, relationship building, credibility, and commitment to shared goals are presented as practical advantages for entrepreneurial action (Santini, 2020), and collective approaches are argued to support broader learning about forces, constraints, and rules shaping value creation and societal well-being (Chandra, 2018). These collective foundations connect directly to civic and community-facing outcomes: social capital scholarship emphasizes norms and networks that enable people to act collectively (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000), and CWC theorizing treats civic endowments as dependent on stakeholder participation and support regimes rather than automatic spillovers (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Empirical work in tourism-oriented collective social entrepreneurship similarly links collective processes to community mobilization and social transformation (Jørgensen et al., 2021), while research on sustainability highlights the importance of resolving collective action challenges with external stakeholders and institutions that facilitate interaction (Dilli et al., 2018).

2.2 Collective Entrepreneurship (CE)

2.2.1 Defining CE

This section reviews CE as a shift from individual-centered understandings of entrepreneurship toward collective, relational, and multi-actor forms of entrepreneurial action. It first clarifies how CE is defined, before discussing its significance, relational tensions, and the need for further research.

Entrepreneurship literature is still evolving, and opinions of the scholars vary (Jørgensen et al., 2021; Santos & Spann, 2011; Yan & Yan, 2017) and the CE notion is most often found in the social economy and ethnic entrepreneurship literature, and it is utilized in different primary ways, and the domain of entrepreneurship research, the term collective is generally used to describe multiple actors engaged in the entrepreneurial process (Burress & Cook, 2009; Cook & Plunkett, 2006). Haase and Franco (2020) envisioned CE as individuals' capacity to collaborate, innovate, and create within organizations. Manouchehrabadi et al. (2021, p. 371) defined CE as "an association of entrepreneurs". Cook and Plunkett (2006, p. 427) defined CE as the "emergence of jointly owned patron-controlled entities seeking rents at multiple levels exhibiting group innovation attributes, opportunity-seeking behavior, and uncertainty bearing characteristics be analyzed as a separate and unique phenomenon." According to the Yan and Sorenson (2003, p. 37) CE is the "synergism that emerges from a collective, and that propels it beyond the current state by seizing opportunities without regard to resources under its control." Santos and Spann (2011, p. 444) defined CE as the "combination of using the whole employee base for sourcing ideas, collective intelligence methods for the down-selection of promising ideas and entrepreneurship techniques for commercializing these ideas in a corporate setting." In this way, the talents, intelligence, and perspectives of individual team members are combined in CE, resulting in a solid collective capacity to develop and innovate (Urbano et al., 2019). Mourdoukoutas (2011) defines CE as a network organization that enables a diverse group of individuals to share the risks and retunes related to the exploration and exploitation of new business opportunities. Narrowing the direction of CE studies to a new dimension Leyden and Link (2013) emphasized that the CE is an interplay between universities and business enterprises on the mutual benefit within a cost and profit framework aimed at sharing research and development knowledge. Houcine and Amel Dakoumi (2021) argue that CE seems to be a novel form of entrepreneurship that necessitates establishing a variety of mechanisms targeted at establishing a new management style centered on innovation and aimed at cost reductions and improving the social work atmosphere. Bijman and Doorneweert (2008) argue that the notion of CE uses when decisions on the utilization of assets are made by a team instead of an individual. Joint asset ownership creates the need for collective decision-making. Further, they argue that the CE notion is typically present in producer-owned firms. According to their view, CE implies that it is not the individual's judgment that is relevant but rather the collective assessment of a group of people. The inefficiency of the decision-making process is impacted by intragroup differences of opinion over the best use of the resources deployed collectively. Yan and Yan (2017) viewed CE as an internal notion of a firm, and collective entrepreneurial capability is the way of working as a team of organizational members toward a synergistic capability that emerges from the collectivism and drives it beyond its existing condition by seizing opportunities regardless of the resources manage by the firm. Franco and Haase (2017) define CE as the ability of a group of individuals to collectively innovate and create inside an organization.

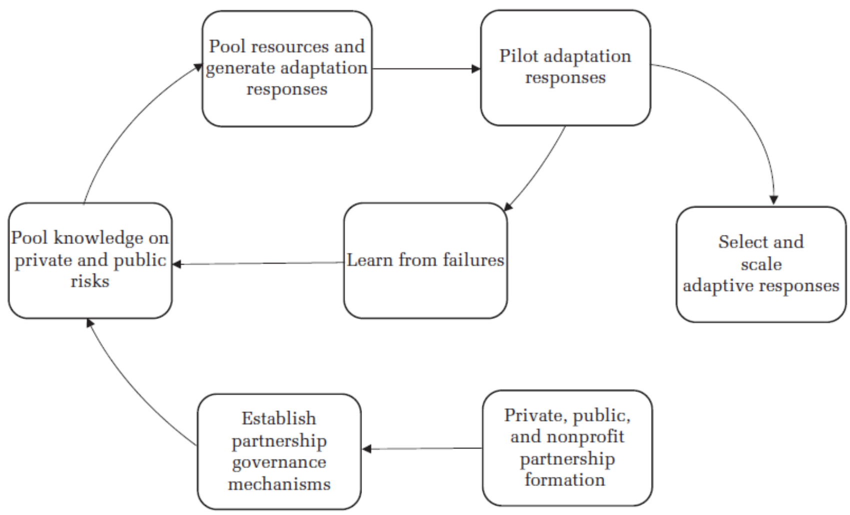
Meanwhile, some authors used the notion of 'collaborative entrepreneurship.' Miles et al. (2005) defines collaborative entrepreneurship as the collaboration of entrepreneurial firms within a community or network of businesses. Accordingly, collaborative entrepreneurship links underutilized resources with untapped market prospects to commercialize a steady stream of innovation in a community of networked enterprises. Collaboration among the separate businesses of the network focuses on value creation through constant innovation rather than value distribution. As members of the community of networked enterprises see ideas as a shared resource and collectively utilize skills, there is a great deal of trust. Child et al. (2005) argues that collaboration is frequently rooted in existing social and personal connections with friends, neighbors, relatives, and other community members. Strategic alliances, joint R&D operations, or firms that engage in tightly coordinated supply chains are typical examples of collaborative entrepreneurship.

Franco and Haase (2017) identify 'collaborative entrepreneurship' as the capacity to cooperate outside and 'collective entrepreneurship' as the ability to collaborate inside the organization. Meanwhile, Bijman and Doorneweert (2008) identify critical differences between collective and collaborative entrepreneurship. First, in collective entrepreneurship, the revenue of the partner firms is heavily reliant on the success of the jointly owned firm. In collaborative entrepreneurship, the jointly owned business is significantly more autonomous. Second, the collaborative enterprise is more dynamic than the collective enterprise. For instance, alliances are frequently transitory, and partners frequently change. Third, collaborative entrepreneurship focuses primarily on (a) learning and knowledge exchange or (b) complementary assets. Collective ventures have traditionally relied on economies of scale and scope through the pooling of tangible assets, but recently the emphasis has switched to intangible assets and the importance of collective learning. Yan and Yan (2016) also stated that the CE theory focuses on the collective efforts of the employees and leaders of an organization to achieve continuous innovations, and Ribeiro-Soriano and Urbano (2010) identified CE as a facilitator for corporate entrepreneurship. dos Santos and Spann (2011) coin the notion of 'collective corporate entrepreneurship' and define it as employing the entire team of employees for idea sourcing, collective intelligence for validating those ideas and setting up entrepreneurship tactics to monetize these ideas in a business context. In coherent collaborative entrepreneurship, the strategy seeks to motivate and equip employees to act as entrepreneurs, leverages collective intelligence to find and pick the most beneficial innovative solutions, and fosters development and commercialization.

Mottiar and Ingle (2007) define the term ‘interpreneurship’ based on the foundations of collective behavior of the entrepreneurial process undertaken by the industrial district environment where the small, interconnected firms are located close together inter-organizational network consisting of several independent individual organizations. Going closer to it, Wijen and Ansari (2007, p. 1079) defined the concept of Collective Institutional Entrepreneurship (CIE) as the “process of overcoming collective inaction and achieving sustained collaboration among numerous dispersed actors to create new institutions or transform existing ones.”

Doh et al. (2019) introduced a novel approach to managing grand environmental challenges, namely Collective Environmental Entrepreneurship (CEE), derived from two constructs: environmental entrepreneurship and cross-sectoral partnerships. Cross-sectoral partnerships are the collaborations between private, public, and/or nonprofit organizations to address shared interests where various sectors cannot reach their interests (Pearce-II & Doh, 2005). Figure 2.1 illustrates how CE partnerships grow, develop, and evolve, modeled by Doh et al. (2019, p. 456) in CEE.

Figure 2.1: Process of CEE



Note. Reprinted from Doh et al. (2019)

Yan and Sorenson (2003) raise an argument presenting cooperation, task conflict, and relationship conflict as the three behavioral factors, and participative leadership is necessary for CE formation. In addition to that, Santos and Spann (2011) identified idea generation, selection, and execution as three main challenges in CE, and the CE methodology was developed in these three phases; accordingly, the first phase (generation) takes advantage of the motivating nature of idea competitions to find and procure innovative ideas from employees or customers, in the second phase, collective intelligence approaches are integrated into the screening of generated ideas and concepts, and a large number of initial ideas could be narrowed to a realistic number of interesting ones for further progress and in-depth review based on the inputs of this phase, the third phase CE assists in the creation and commercialization of potential new product concepts and innovative ideas.

Recent work refines CE as sustained collective action that requires ongoing framing, governance, and coordination to align heterogeneous actors and manage tensions between private benefits and collective goals (Hruskova, 2024). Evidence from low-income communities further shows that collective entrepreneurship can build local capacity and legitimacy, yet it can remain fragile when coordination costs rise and when participants perceive unequal effort and reward sharing (Cairns et al., 2024). Despite these advances, CE research still rarely specifies how collective entrepreneurial practices connect to civic wealth outcomes as an explicit outcome construct, or how entrepreneurial ecosystem conditions shape when CE generates broad-based civic spillovers versus narrow, member-only benefits.

Recent scholarship provides finer-grained, empirically grounded accounts of how CE is constituted and sustained. For example, Deschamps and Slitine (2024) theorize the creation of collective enterprises for social impact through an agency lens, while Solbreux et al. (2024) show how collective narrative practices can challenge dominant entrepreneurial identities and enable collective organizing. Cairns et al. (2024) demonstrate that collective ownership arrangements, collective processes, and the production of collective goods are central to CE in low-income communities. Complementing these community-based forms, Lomuscio (2024) discusses how worker takeovers can trigger going collective dynamics where entrepreneurship is enacted through collective action and governance. Together, these studies shift CE from a loosely defined collaboration label toward a processual, governance- and identity-sensitive construct that can be analytically connected to ecosystem arrangements and civic outcomes.

2.2.2 Significance of CE

Reich (1987) argues that individual abilities are incorporated into a group in CE, which has synergy, and as members of the group work through different challenges and methods over time, they better understand one another's abilities. Further, Reich (1987) states that organizational members learn how to help one another work better, what each of them can bring to a project, and how to best use one another's experiences, and each participant is always on the search for slight adjustments that will help the overall process move more quickly and smoothly. The net outcome of a slew of minor changes implemented around the organization is that the organization progresses. Further, Yan and Sorenson (2003) declare that owners who establish a culture that promotes CE can develop a sense of entrepreneurship that can achieve a firm's expectations that have existed for generations.

Reuer et al. (2019) also emphasizes the importance of having inter-organizational collaborations from two broader perspectives. Interorganizational collaboration is a type of collaboration in which two or more independent institutions collaborate to achieve specific goals under the terms of an incomplete agreement. Through these relationships, entrepreneurial firms are able to deal with two of the most significant obstacles of entrepreneurship: operating in an uncertain environment and the face of limited resources. These collaborations can take various forms, from somewhat informal or limited-scope arrangements to equity partnerships.

Chouinard et al. (2002) argue it is essential to note that collective entrepreneurship can also refer to a community movement aimed at improving the quality of life of its members and regional development. From this viewpoint, the form and organization of the enterprise are not unrelated to the social issues impacting society. Further, it argues that enterprises should be viewed differently. Instead of presenting itself as an autonomous or independent entity, the result of the initiative of a single entrepreneur, it shows itself as the outcome of collective intent, a collective effort. Burress and Cook (2009) put forward several arguments regarding collectivism and the first of which was all entrepreneurship fundamentally collective because entrepreneurship can only be understood by looking at the more broad, collective context in which it takes place; the second argument was that entrepreneurship is frequently collective as when compared to the percentage of new startups formed through collaboration among diverse entrepreneurial actors, the percentage of new ventures developed by a single individual is minimal. The third argument was that CE is an essential subset of entrepreneurship. Houcine and Amel Dakoumi (2021) argues that the need for collectivism depends on the type of entrepreneurship; for instance, social entrepreneurship cannot be centered solely on the individual 'hero' model because there are situations where an individual cannot succeed by working alone. However, Comeche and Loras (2009) argue that if organizations wish to stay competitive in the present business setting, they need begin by encouraging collectiveness inside their organizations, based on the principle that the combined contribution of all organizational members is higher than the total of their effort arena.

According to Gomes-Casseres (2019), entrepreneurship entails remixing assets to generate new value. They obtained this fundamental concept from Joseph Schumpeter's pioneering study. They then combined Schumpeter's concepts with contemporary economic theories to better understand the relationship between entrepreneurship and collaboration. As a result, they have a model of what we refer to as a remix strategy. The Remix strategy is centered on three issues: how to produce shared value, control the collaboration, and share the value created.

Further, some literature on ‘dynamic capabilities’ mentions the recombination or reconfiguration of capabilities or assets. Furthermore, notions such as ‘open innovation’ stress how businesses can profitably transfer their ideas to third parties or incorporate ideas that occur outside their walls. As a result of this viewpoint, researchers have looked into how established companies invest in start-ups and how they can license their technology. Bian and Katila (2019) drag the discussion into a new arena with their scholarly works, Asymmetric Partnerships: Formation, Process Dynamics, and Firm Performance, which depicts the collective interplay of small and large firms. The literature demonstrates that a firm's propensity to engage in an asymmetric partnership is related to its resource requirements and its possible partner's resource endowment, the potential compatibility between the two, the position within an extensive social network, the social connection between the two, the coordination cost related to knowledge integration and collective action.

Further, it says that beyond the constraints imposed by a firm's initial resource endowment and network position, a growing line of research has begun to examine how small firms might take strategic activities to develop alliance opportunities with large firms. St-Hilaire (2020) supports the argument and emphasizes the need to foster a collective spirit among firms. This spirit is frequently lacking in relationships between SMEs and large groups. In the Western world, legislative efforts aiming at strengthening collective bargaining and enhancing employee knowledge and consultation have grown since the first global economic crisis. strengthening the legitimacy of social dialogue in the enterprise and increase the usefulness of collective representation mechanisms can be widely discussed in the future. Amit et al. (2019) explore that the fast adoption of digital platforms has facilitated the development of new types of collective engagements within and across firms.

Additionally, it has increased the role and significance of collaborations in facilitating the design and operation of innovative business models significantly. Knowing how collaborations within and between organizations affect business model innovation is crucial for managers tasked with the responsibility of inventing and executing innovative business models. Graebner et al. (2019) emphasize entrepreneurial collaboration across three major stages of the life cycle of a high-potential venture: seed, commercialization, growth, and exit. They identify and evaluate internal collaboration associated with recruiting and strategic decision-making with collective engagements of the founding members, advisors, former employees, technical consultants, family ties during the seed stage and external collaboration linked with early advisers like angel investors, accelerators, and incubators. They identify internal cooperation challenges connected with changing the composition of the founding team and external collaboration issues involved with obtaining financing from professional investors such as venture capital firms during the commercialization stage. They focus on external collaboration during the growth-and-exit stage on matters such as developing strategic partnerships with other organizations, executing mergers and acquisitions, and issuing shares to the general public.

Fridhi (2021) argues that many actors believe that collective and participatory engagements are required to overcome resource constraints and innovations and respond effectively and rapidly to societal crises. Sieczko et al. (2021) defined entrepreneurship as a predefined type of human engagement that can be carried out as an individual or collective effort. As Siivonen et al. (2020) argue, anyone can become an entrepreneur. That is all about setting the mindset. Especially in the collective efforts, participants focus on the betterment of others through their motives, knowledge, and skills. According to Parzonko and Sieczko (2018), people work together in an organized, conscious, and voluntary manner to achieve a shared goal in the collective efforts.

Further, it highlights that collective efforts can be used as informal groups or formal organizations. Collectivists establish strategic contacts, select leaders, define, and make agreements upon local interests, identify problems, and mobilize material resources and humans to resolve them. Faghih and Forouharfar (2021, p. 237) argue that “the counterpoint to the lone entrepreneur is the collective entrepreneur. These entrepreneurs discover and exploit their ideas in the context of business and relationships designed to constitute and develop a venture. Under this approach, ventures can be created within others or as part of a cluster of ventures”.

Collective identity in a social or institutional setup is vital. A strong collective identity and dedication to working together may also help alleviate some of the difficulties associated with being an entrepreneur and taking control of one's own life (Siivonen et al., 2020). Moreover, as Siivonen et al. (2020) argue, collective identities are formed based on categorizations such as being a student, being young, having a shared interest in entrepreneurship, participating collaboratively in activities and events related to entrepreneurship, and desiring to be a part of the positive hype surrounding the start-up scenario. According to Reich (1987), entrepreneurship is not exclusive to the company's founder or top executives; indeed, it is a capability and attitude that pervades the organization because competitive advantage comes from continuous, incremental innovation and improvement of a range of ideas that propagate throughout the organization as everyone has the opportunity and capacity to participate. He further points out that as global competition intensified, the mid-1980s shifted from individual ideology to group ideology, making the necessary reforms within American organizations to gain a competitive advantage. CE has grown in prominence over the last two decades, both in the academic and corporate arenas (Haase & Franco, 2020; Ratten, 2014; Ribeiro-Soriano & Urbano, 2010; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). Communities can band together to confront economic, sociocultural, and environmental stressors, resulting in the development of collective forms of organizations with specific institutional characteristics for the production of goods and services (Meyer, 2020). Czapiewska (2021) claims that collective activities are becoming increasingly vital in the modern world, and especially the collective framework is a thriving domain in the agricultural sector. Jørgensen et al. (2021) argue that a collective perspective on social entrepreneurship in the tourism sector is needed. Further, a model called ‘Collective Tourism Social Entrepreneurship’ is presented as the practice of utilizing tourism operations to collaborate with similar and varied players to solve social problems and collectiveness itself enables access to resources that might otherwise be inaccessible.

2.2.3 Conflicting interests and managing relationships

Although cross-sectoral partnerships allow sectors to pool resources to solve common problems, institutions from different contexts have differences in cultures and purposes, represent various stakeholders with conflicting expectations and interests, and hence have conflicting goals, limiting the effectiveness of collaborations (Manouchehrabadi et al., 2021; Pisani et al., 2017; Powell et al., 2018; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Shapiro et al., 2018). Conflicts are common when different segmental partnerships come together for different purposes (Doh et al., 2019), and these goal conflicts can be divided into three main categories: focus, scale, and time horizon (Selsky & Parker, 2005). Contemporary social entrepreneurship literature has also stressed the significance of the shared decision and collective identity in order to handle divergent stakeholder expectations (Smith & Woods, 2015)

Houcine and Amel Dakoumi (2021) argue that CE is still in its inception and confronts numerous challenges, such as interpersonal disputes originating from the diversity of entrepreneurs' experiences and knowledge. Because of the diversity of knowledge and experiences and unsolved conflicts for the majority of entrepreneurs, the difficulties confronted before or after the collective identification of the entrepreneurial opportunities are also harmful. Although goal conflicts can impair the effectiveness of collective partnerships, they can be minimized when collective governance systems are established when the partnership is in its early stages (Googins & Rochlin, 2000; Manouchehrabadi et al., 2021; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). According to the literature, fostering such 'collective trust' in the CE is critical to enable participants to share their experiences, be receptive to new ideas, and identify new avenues for their firms via mutual support and help (Levin & Cross, 2004). Wright (2019) argues that the debunking of the myth of entrepreneurs as heroic individuals has led to another misconception: entrepreneurial teams are either completely established at the start of a venture or grow in a unidirectional pattern, particularly when it comes to recruiting new members. Rather than that, entrepreneurial teams emerge from a combination of entry and exit. Certain positions become obsolete, and new ones emerge as the enterprise adapts to the diversity of functions within the team that will carry it forward to the next stages of development. Additionally, the disparate competencies and objectives of team members may result in conflicts that must be resolved if the enterprise is to succeed. As a result, entrepreneurial ventures see volatility in the composition of their teams. Sarasvathy and Dew (2019) claim that at the core of entrepreneurial collaboration is tension: entrepreneurs require people to expand their ventures, yet they fear losing control of the ventures they establish by bringing others on board. The tension reaches a paradoxical degree when the behavioral premise of opportunism is included. The paradox is especially pronounced in effective entrepreneurship, which focuses on stakeholder self-selection as a catalyst for cocreation.

2.2.4 Further studies required

Tiessen (1997) discusses marking a key milestone in how CE necessitates strong working relationships among participants at all phases of the process and a distinctive organizational structure where coordination and communication have replaced the command and control. Burress and Cook (2009) presented five general categories of primary motivations for CE research: theoretical advancement (the investigation of CE has been identified as a necessity in the development of entrepreneurial theories), intra-organizational efficiency (it claims that firms may be used limited resources efficiently reducing agency cost and collective decision-making costs), inter-organizational gains (it highlights the dynamic cooperation in the market and the mutual benefits of corporate hybrids), economic growth and development (this illustrates the idea that interactive, collective processes can influence innovation, commercialization, and business development), and socio-political change (this depicts the initiatives that affect regional development, public policies and changes relative to social or cultural norms).

More studies are required to identify the fundamental mechanisms that stimulate the collaborations among employees or between employees and managers and, as a result, develop entrepreneurial activities in established firms (Ribeiro-Soriano & Urbano, 2010; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). Further, Yan and Yan (2016) argued that CE studies are required in different contexts as cultural orientation as context variables affect entrepreneurship and collectivity. Moreover, Doh et al. (2019) suggested that future research should look into the factors that help cross-sectoral partners create confidence and how that can lead to meaningful collaborative, entrepreneurial behavior and further highlighted the broader question of who should be the right people included in the collaboration in order to optimize the capacity for collective entrepreneurship and how organizational learning takes place through learning networks that balance internal structural processes, exploratory and exploitative adaptation, and use communities. Meanwhile, critics contend that interpretations of institutional entrepreneurship focus too heavily on "heroic" entrepreneurs and fail to consider where and how ideas for change arise and the precise ways in which embedding influences change processes (Thornton et al., 2012).

Entrepreneurship as a collective action is being discussed in various ways, and literature on CE is limited (Yan & Yan, 2016). Entrepreneurship as a phenomenon necessitates the formation of teams to take place, but there are still debates concerning how such teams should be conceptualized, whether heterogeneous entrepreneurial groups have any common characteristics, and why this is so. The argument still exists to define collective entrepreneurship. Some researchers have defined CE as a collective effort of internal members of an organization (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Reich, 1987; Santos & Spann, 2011; Tiessen, 1997; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017) while others identify it as working even beyond the internal boundaries and making formal collaborations with outside parties (Bijman & Doorneweert, 2008; Child et al., 2005; Cook & Plunkett, 2006; Jarrar, 2022; Leyden & Link, 2013; Manouchehrabadi et al., 2021; Reuer et al., 2019; Miles et al., 2005; Yan & Sorenson, 2003) under different circumstances. Since the study focuses on the interplay of EE, CE, and CWC, both internal collection efforts and external collective practices will be considered in defining and interpreting CE.

For this thesis, CE is defined as a coordinated entrepreneurial process through which actors combine resources, decision-making, knowledge, and practices to pursue opportunities beyond the capacity of isolated individuals. This includes intra-organizational collective practices among owners, managers, and employees, and inter-organizational collective action across enterprises, associations, suppliers, community actors, support organizations, and other stakeholders. CE therefore refers to the collective organizing of entrepreneurial action, whereas CWC refers to the civic-level endowments and societal benefits that may emerge from such organizing. This view keeps the focus on collective processes while also recognizing that collective entrepreneurial outcomes are conditioned by institutions, networks, and support infrastructures in which collectives are embedded (Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Recent CE scholarship has strengthened and sharpen the understanding of how collective ventures are formed and stabilized through collective mechanisms and agency, providing some explanation of why CE takes different forms and achieves different outcomes across places and over time (Cairns et al., 2024; Deschamps & Slitine, 2024). Moreover, entrepreneurial ecosystems are conceptualized as relational configurations of interdependent cultural, social, and material attributes, actively influencing and reproducing each other, rather than existing as passive background conditions (Spigel, 2017). Entrepreneurial ecosystem scholarship argues that entrepreneurial action is shaped by interdependent system elements and by feedback dynamics, meaning that collective entrepreneurship is unlikely to be fully understood in isolation from the wider configuration of institutions, networks, intermediaries, and material supports that surround it. Ecosystem research further emphasizes feedback dynamics and causal mechanisms, implying that entrepreneurial action can shape ecosystem evolution rather than only being shaped by it (Wurth et al., 2022). Recent empirical work further shows that collective action itself can operate as a coordination mechanism within entrepreneurial ecosystems, influencing how support and resources are channeled across actors and entrepreneurial journeys (Hruskova, 2024).

However, CE research still concentrates largely on intra-collective governance and agency, with limited cumulative evidence on how collective ventures draw on and reshape ecosystem resources over time, and on when collective benefits become durable at the community level beyond members (Cairns et al., 2024; Hruskova, 2024). These limitations justify extending the review from collective processes to the surrounding entrepreneurial ecosystem, conceptualized as an interactive set of institutions, networks, and support infrastructures that co-evolve with entrepreneurial action (Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Accordingly, the next section turns to entrepreneurial ecosystem scholarship to specify the ecosystem elements and causal mechanisms that enable and constrain collective entrepreneurial action and to explain how collective initiatives may also reshape ecosystem arrangements over time (Hruskova, 2024; Wurth et al., 2022).

2.3 Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EE)

2.3.1 Conceptual foundations and definitional evolution of EE

'Ecosystem' is a word derived from a Greek word, which means a complex system that contains a variety of entities, and the concept has predominantly been employed in the context of biology (Cavallo et al., 2018). Moore (1993) coined the term "business ecosystem" initially to describe a group of interconnected actors such as various types of businesses, universities, science parks, and government agencies that collaborate in a standard setting and develop together in the same way as entities in their ecosystem does (Audretsch et al., 2019). Eventually, although there is a dynamic stream of EEs studies, scholars have yet to agree on a commonly agreed and theoretically grounded definition (Roundy et al., 2018; Stam, 2015). EEs have been broadly known as complex, dynamic, and emerging frameworks (Acs & Storey, 2004; Isenberg, 2010; Spigel, 2017). Scholars presented EE definitions in different domains (Cavallo et al., 2018). Neck et al. (2004), Li et al. (2020), and Auschra et al. (2019) creation of a new venture as the ultimate goal of the EEs, and definitions have been developed based on that. Scholars such as Mason and Brown (2014), Galindo and Mendez (2014); Gebczynska and Kwiotkowska (2019), Etzkowitz and Klofsten (2005), Yun et al. (2017) have taken the studies in a new direction, and regional development has been identified as the ultimate aim of EE.

Stam (2015) has argued that diverting EE studies' attention to productive entrepreneurship focuses on innovation and growth orientation (Cavallo et al., 2018). Researchers such as Spigel (2017), Kansheba (2020), and Nicotra et al. (2017) have subsequently researched this field. Moreover, due to the increasing popularity of the concept of EE, scholars have started to examine it in different geographical contexts and levels (Cavallo et al., 2018; Harima, 2020). According to the Global Startup Ecosystem Report- GSER 2020 (Startup Genome, 2021), some regions show high economic contributions through startups and Silicon Valley is the largest EE in the world and the other EEs in the top five on the list are New York City, London, Beijing, and Boston respectively. It can be found out what EE is by examining some of the key definitions that have been presented based on research performed in different contexts and ages.

Dubini (1989) identified a supportive environment consisting of family businesses and role models, a diversified economy, availability of healthy infrastructure facilities, a substantial investment community, healthy entrepreneurial culture, and other public incentives for the diffusion of entrepreneurship territory. According to the Feld (2012) influential startup community consists of nine attributes as leadership (a strong community of entrepreneurs who are visible, approachable, and dedicated to making the area a great place to start and develop a business), intermediaries (mentors, advisors and well organized and network accelerators and incubators), network density (well organized and integrated startup community), government (a stable government who facilities for startups in setting up healthy policies and other facilitation), talent (talented human capital in every level of the organization and universities play a crucial role in developing such human capital), support services (well established and integrated professional services like legal, accounting, real estate, insurance and consulting), engagements (events such as meet-ups, pitch days, startup weekends, boot camps, competitions for entrepreneurs to get together), companies (large companies to encourage collaboration with high-growth startups) and capital (a strong, established and supportive of venture capitalists, angels, seed investors and other forms of entities which have financing capacities).

Stam (2015, p. 1765) described EE as “the entrepreneurial ecosystem as a set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship,” and ten elements of an EE have been identified in the Model such as network, leadership, finance, talent, knowledge, supportive services/intermediaries, demand, physical infrastructure, culture, and formal institutions. Further, he stated that entrepreneurship is seen as a result of the system in the EE approach, but it is also necessary for entrepreneurs to be critical players in the development and maintenance of the EE system. Moreover, Audretsch et al. (2019) highlighted that EEs have emerged as structured efforts to create environments that promote newly established firms' success.

2.3.2 Core pillars, territoriality and theoretical gaps in EE

According to most definitions, an EE has a geographically specified boundary that involves various interconnected entities and variables such as human capital, networks, and institutions (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017). The territory-specificity is a dimension of EE instead of a function for regional and local EE development in the core of Stam (2015) study, and following him, several other scholars like Colombelli et al. (2017), Cavallo et al. (2018) have emphasized the “territory"-specific dimension of EE. However, current digital technology and globalization developments ostensibly reduce spatial dependency (Florida et al., 2017). Moreover, Acs et al. (2014, p. 479) defined EE as “A national system of entrepreneurship is the dynamic, institutionally embedded interaction between entrepreneurial attitudes, ability, and aspirations, by individuals, which drives the allocation of resources through the creation and operation of new ventures” and emphasized the applicability of physical territory boundaries. Mason and Brown (2014, p. 4) defined EE as “a set of interconnected entrepreneurial actors (both potential and existing), entrepreneurial organizations (e.g. firms, venture capitalists, business angels, banks), institutions (universities, public sector agencies, financial bodies) and entrepreneurial processes (e.g. the business birth rate, numbers of high growth firms, levels of 'blockbuster entrepreneurship', number of serial entrepreneurs, degree of sell-out mentality within firms and levels of entrepreneurial ambition) which formally and informally coalesce to connect, mediate and govern the performance within the local entrepreneurial environment".

Audretsch and Belitski (2016, p. 1031) defined EE as "institutional, organizational and other systemic factors that interact and influence identification and commercialization of entrepreneurial opportunities, geographically bounded." According to Spigel (2017), EEs are configurations of social, political, economic, and cultural elements within a region that facilitate the development and growth of new startups, encourage aspiring entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to take the risks of launching financing, and otherwise assisting high-risk enterprises. Roundy et al. (2018, p. 5) have defined EE as "An entrepreneurial ecosystem is a self-organized, adaptive, and geographically bounded community of complex agents operating at multiple aggregated levels, whose nonlinear interactions result in the patterns of activities through which new ventures form and dissolve over time." Although there is no exact formula for developing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, leaders should conform to nine principles when doing so (Isenberg, 2010). Moreover, Isenberg (2011) presented six domains of the EE, namely finance, culture, support, human capital, markets, and policy. Further, nine principles were presented stop emulating Silicon Valley and for homegrown or own EE; shape the ecosystem around local conditions, engage the private sector from the start, favor the high potentials, get a big win on the board, tackle cultural change head-on, stress the roots, do not over-engineer clusters; help them grow organically and reform legal, bureaucratic, and regulatory frameworks.

Davari and Najmabadi (2018) identified eight factors of an EE, namely R&D, financial resources, market, support services, infrastructure, culture, policies, and human capital in the study titled "Entrepreneurial Ecosystem and Performance in Iran." Nahla and Abdelgadir (2020) identified nine components of an EE: government policy, Business support services, Finance, R&D and innovation, Regulatory framework, Market, Human capital, Culture, and Infrastructure in the study titled "the role of the ecosystem for entrepreneurship development in Sudan." Lux et al. (2020) identified government policy, access to capital, access to labor/talent, professional services, physical infrastructure, university engagement, local attitudes, and access to mentors as the components of an EE.

Contingency theory has emphasized the importance of a business operating in a conducive environment that will enable it to grow and survive (St-Pierre et al., 2015).

World Economic Forum (2014, p. 9) defined EE "as a system of interrelated pillars that impact the speed and ability with which entrepreneurs can create and scale new ventures sustainably." Accordingly, the following eight pillars and their components have been configured. The role of government has been identified as c critical in developing EEs, but the government cannot do all; the private and nonprofit sectors must share some responsibility (Isenberg, 2010).

Table 2.1: Entrepreneurial ecosystem pillars and their components

	Pillar	Components
01	Accessible markets	- Domestic market: - Large companies as customers - Small/medium-sized companies as customers - Governments as customers - Foreign markets: - Large companies as customers - Small/medium-sized companies as customers - Governments as customers
02	Human capital/workforce	- Management talent - Technical talent - Entrepreneurial company experience - Outsourcing availability - Access to the immigrant workforce

03	Funding & finance	- Friends and family - Angel investors - Private equity - Venture capital - Access to debt
04	Support systems/mentors	Mentors/advisers - Professional services (such as accounting, human resources and legal) - Incubators/accelerators - Network of entrepreneurial peers
05	Government & regulatory framework	- Ease of starting a business - Tax incentives - Business-friendly legislation/policies - Access to basic infrastructure (e.g., water, electricity, gas, other sources of power) - Access to telecommunications/broadband - Access to transport (e.g., roads, rail, air)
06	Education & training	- Available workforce with pre-university education (such as high school) - Available workforce with university education - Entrepreneur-specific training
07	Major universities as catalysts	- Promoting a culture of respect for entrepreneurship - Playing a pivotal role in idea-formation for new companies - Playing a pivotal role in providing graduates with new companies
08	Cultural support	- Tolerance of risk and failure - Preference for self-employment - Success stories/role models - Research culture - Positive image of entrepreneurship - Celebration of innovation

Note. Reprinted from World Economic Forum (2014, pp. 9-13)

The Model presented by the World Economic Forum tends to be the most comprehensive, and it appears to include all of the others (St-Pierre et al., 2015). The current study will adopt the definition of the World Economic Forum (2014), and accordingly, the eight pillars are considered the indicators of the entrepreneurial ecosystem construct. Besides, according to the World Economic Forum (2014), there are significant differences in EEs from one territory to the next, and the role of entrepreneurs is decisive, and they can perform various functions in the formation of an EE.

Scholars have identified theoretical gaps in the EE in different contexts, and the understanding of entrepreneurial ecosystems has been restricted due to a lack of conceptual development (Colombelli et al., 2017). Similarly, scholars widely acknowledged that, theoretically, EE remains underdeveloped and challenging to understand the structure and the impact of EE on the entrepreneurship process (Acs & Storey, 2004; Gustafsson & Autio, 2011; Haifeng et al., 2013; Spigel, 2017). Scholars are currently debating how to evaluate the EEs and create a holistic understanding of the subject (Cavallo et al., 2018), and policymakers are struggling to define key action points and endorse the required steps to build and nurture entrepreneurship due to the large number of actors involved in the entrepreneurial process (Jung et al., 2017). Ross and Colin (2017) discussed the gaps in execution level, and lack of understanding of the concept of EE has been identified as the misapplication. Therefore, Alvedalen and Boschma (2017) stated that more studies are needed to determine how the numerous elements of EE influence entrepreneurship.

Alvedalen and Boschma (2017) argued that even though literature has provided long lists of potential factors, there is a lack of a specific analytical framework in the EE studies that specify the cause and the effect. Furthermore, it is unclear how the EE will account for such disparities between regions, and the institutional and political background of connections in EE has not been adequately discussed in the EE literature: what forms of formal and informal institutions function in EE, and at what contextual scales? There is a lack of awareness of how EE arises and progresses and the mechanisms through which it grows over time. Moreover, scholars have recently argued that digitization is diminishing spatial dependency and that entrepreneurship is becoming less of a local phenomenon due to it (Autio et al., 2018). Future research should also employ cross-country, cross-industry, and cross-societal research designs, as recent studies have primarily focused on one specific context (Audretsch et al., 2019).

Although EE research has expanded rapidly, foundational reviews argue that the concept remains under-theorized and that the causal mechanisms governing ecosystem dynamics and outcomes are still not well understood (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Wurth et al., 2022). Relatedly, the literature remains fragmented in specifying how particular ecosystem elements translate into different entrepreneurial and societal outcomes, which limits cumulative theorizing and comparability across studies (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Brown et al., 2023; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Wurth et al., 2022). In addition, evidence syntheses indicate that the empirical base has been developed primarily in advanced-economy settings, while emerging-economy ecosystems remain comparatively less examined and may operate under different institutional conditions and resource constraints (Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). Furthermore, the studies that have been carried out have focused mainly on large organizations, perhaps successful multinational companies (e.g., companies operating in Silicon Valley) (Stam & Spigel, 2016), and the need to develop homegrown EE is discussed by (Isenberg, 2011). Taking together, these limitations motivate more comparative and context-sensitive EE research that explicitly traces mechanisms and examines how ecosystem configurations shape varied entrepreneurial and broader value-creation outcomes beyond the most frequently studied contexts (Cao & Shi, 2021; Manning & Vavilov, 2023; Wurth et al., 2022).

Building on these critiques, recent scholarship increasingly emphasizes that EE research needs to explain not only venture-level performance but also how ecosystem configurations shape broader, place-based societal outcomes and value distribution (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Manning & Vavilov, 2023; Wurth et al., 2022). This emphasis aligns with ecosystem theorizing that treats ecosystems as relational configurations of interdependent cultural, social, and material attributes that structure who can participate in entrepreneurship and how benefits circulate through a community (Cairns et al., 2024; Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015).

However, recent scholarship argues that EE research still lacks shared outcome definitions and comparable measurement, which makes it difficult to explain how ecosystem configurations translate into community-level benefits and wellbeing, especially beyond advanced-economy settings (Cairns et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022)

Civic Wealth Creation (CWC) responds to this need by theorizing civic-level wealth as **social, economic, and communal endowments** and by clarifying how communities, regimes of support, and enterprises jointly engage to produce durable benefits beyond firm performance (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019), while subsequent work extends this logic by specifying **stakeholder engagement processes** through which positive social change can be enacted (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023).

Recent applications further demonstrate the relevance of this civic lens for inclusive development agendas, including place-based regeneration and community-building efforts that mobilize diverse stakeholders toward shared civic goals (Dowin Kennedy, 2021; Selena et al., 2023; Zeyen & Branzei, 2025), thereby motivating the next section's focus on CWC mechanisms and outcome dimensions as a clearer bridge from ecosystem structures to civic-level wellbeing.

2.4 Civic Wealth Creation (CWC)

As Bailey and Lumpkin (2023) argue, entrepreneurship is increasingly used as an innovative solution by businesses, communities, governments, nonprofits, and social innovators to address societal challenges such as poverty and social injustice. They conceptualize CWC as an entrepreneurial change process that engages diverse stakeholders to enact positive social change and to generate durable civic endowments beyond firm-level performance. Complementing this, a narrative synthesis of empirical research on social value creation highlights that evidence remains conceptually diverse and often under-specified in tracing mechanisms that connect entrepreneurial practices to lasting community benefits, reinforcing the value of explicit stakeholder- and mechanism-based frameworks such as CWC (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025). Beneficiary-oriented studies further show that social value is co-produced through relational practices and collective participation shaped by what beneficiaries themselves care about, underscoring the importance of community social capital as the norms and networks that enable coordinated action (Frid & Vedula, 2019; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000)

As Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) argue, when community members, supporters, and entrepreneurially minded actors collaborate to pool resources and develop new capabilities, positive societal transformation occurs, and an integrated framework is developed, which is called CWC that accounting for the social, economic, and community legacy created by local communities in order to explain and enlighten how societal impact occurs across types of stakeholders. In the context of contemporary societal transformation activities, they highlight the significance of citizen engagement and entrepreneurial commerce. In further consideration, it has been proposed "civic" level of analysis is a setting that eloquently encapsulates the range of situations in which several societal change initiatives occur, emphasizing the role of citizen engagement and entrepreneurial commerce in creating changes. The term civic encompasses a wide range of community-focused settings at the center of many social change activities. The term civic also emphasizes the importance of local engagement and a sense of social obligation beyond purely economic factors. Because of the role in developing knowledge and support of local circumstances, citizens from the communities being supported are not only beneficiaries but also vital players in problem-solving and enterprise development.

In this thesis, CWC is treated as a civic-level construct referring to community settings such as villages, towns, regions, and sectorally embedded communities, where entrepreneurial and stakeholder engagement produces durable economic, social, communal, and institutional endowments. This distinguishes CWC from CE: CE explains the collective organizing of entrepreneurial action, whereas CWC explains the civic-level value and durability that may emerge from such organizing.

Moreover, the CWC concept values “wealth” beyond money and material properties, and contrary to the narrow notions of wealth that do not grasp the range of returns that many social transformations seek to achieve, societal wealth represents a collection of intangibles, non-unique material benefits of wealth. Furthermore, the CWC framework emphasizes the intentionality required to effect positive social change or to sustain a community's civic vitality, and a new form of stakeholder theory is used to address the purposeful activities involved in determining and achieving civic-level objectives and instrumental stakeholder views are employed to examine how communities having common goals create civic wealth via the interplay of many stakeholders with distinct but common interests. Accordingly, the literature shows that involving multiple stakeholders, often from multiple areas, in societal transformation engagements is critical to the success (Mulder & Loorbach, 2018; Singh et al., 2020; Turner & Zolin, 2012), and when a group of stakeholders willingly commits to producing beneficial societal change via deliberate efforts, civic wealth is created (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

Recent work has extended the CWC framework by specifying stakeholder engagement mechanisms for enacting positive social change (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023) and by clarifying how communities can bypass monopolies through collective action to build civic wealth (Lumpkin et al., 2024). Complementary strategy evidence shows how for-profit firms pursue community inclusion under systemic inequality by negotiating legitimacy and aligning economic and social logics across stakeholders (Lashitew et al., 2024), suggesting that CWC can emerge through hybrid configurations of market and civic action. Entrepreneurship research further specifies enabling local conditions that shape how community-based enterprises configure impact creation approaches (Mitzinneck et al., 2024) and how small, local businesses can scale sustainability-oriented opportunities (Yang et al., 2025).

Despite influential conceptualizations of CWC as a multi-stakeholder change process that depends on interactions among communities, regimes of support, and enterprises, foundational work emphasizes that scholars still need stronger explanation of how these stakeholder interactions generate and sustain civic outcomes over time (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Existing process-oriented empirical research has begun to illuminate how entrepreneurial communities can intentionally form around civic wealth goals, but it also notes that research explaining the processes of formation and co-creation that shape local development conditions remains limited (Dowin Kennedy, 2021; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019) . In parallel, leading EE reviews argue that EE research remains under-theorized and that causal mechanisms governing ecosystem evolution and outcomes are still not sufficiently understood, leaving open how ecosystem conditions interact with collective organizing to produce broader civic benefits (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Wurth et al., 2022).

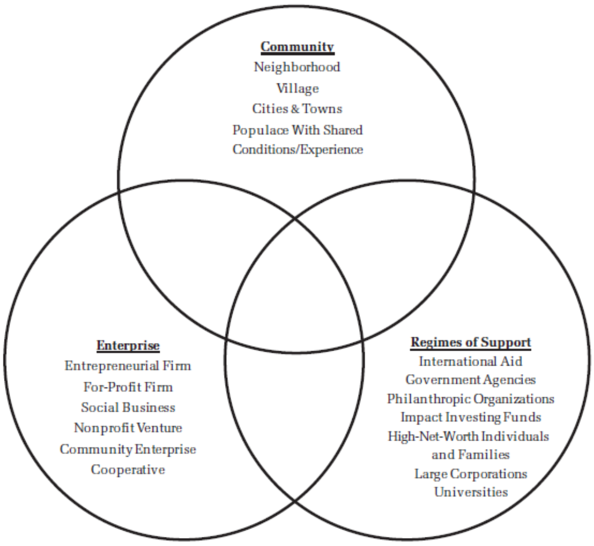
At the same time, qualitative scholarship highlights that multi-stakeholder engagement is shaped by power asymmetries, particularly when research and interventions involve vulnerable communities. Lorenzo-Afable et al. (2025) show how ethical tensions can arise between formal ethics procedures and the realities of working with vulnerable people in developing-world contexts, warning that community voice can be constrained by researcher and institutional expectations. This strengthens the argument that CWC research should be attentive to inclusion, representation, and how stakeholder engagement is enacted in practice rather than assumed in principle (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2021).

Recent contributions deepen CWC theorization in several ways. First, Lumpkin et al. (2024) show how collective action can bypass monopolistic regimes of support, sharpening attention to institutional power and governance as central to civic wealth generation. Second, Lashitew et al. (2024) develop and empirically validate a framework of community inclusion that explicates mechanisms through which purposeful for-profit firms generate civic wealth under systemic inequality, thereby responding to calls for more measurable, process-oriented evidence in CWC research. Third, research on place-based cross-sector partnerships demonstrates how facilitation and partnership architecture can enable community regeneration and legitimacy building, complementing the stakeholder engagement emphasis in CWC (Brenton & Slawinski, 2023). These developments also resonate with broader entrepreneurship research that positions communities as a critical locus of entrepreneurship and societal impact (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2022).

2.4.1 Who creates civic wealth?

According to Lumpkin and Bacq (2019), stakeholders representing three primary categories come together to create civic wealth. Figure 2.2 depicts the stakeholders in each category.

Figure 2.2: Examples of CWC stakeholders



Note. Reprinted from "Civic wealth creation: A new view of stakeholder engagement and societal impact," by G. T. Lumpkin & S. Bacq, 2019, *Academy of Management Perspectives, 33*(4), 383–404 (Figure 1). Copyright 2019 by the Academy of Management. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.2017.0060

1. Community: The community category is the civic context in which social reform initiatives are underway. This includes physical spaces related to collective culture and/or ethnicity and community members who enjoy a common bond through shared experience in similar spaces that are not geographically central.

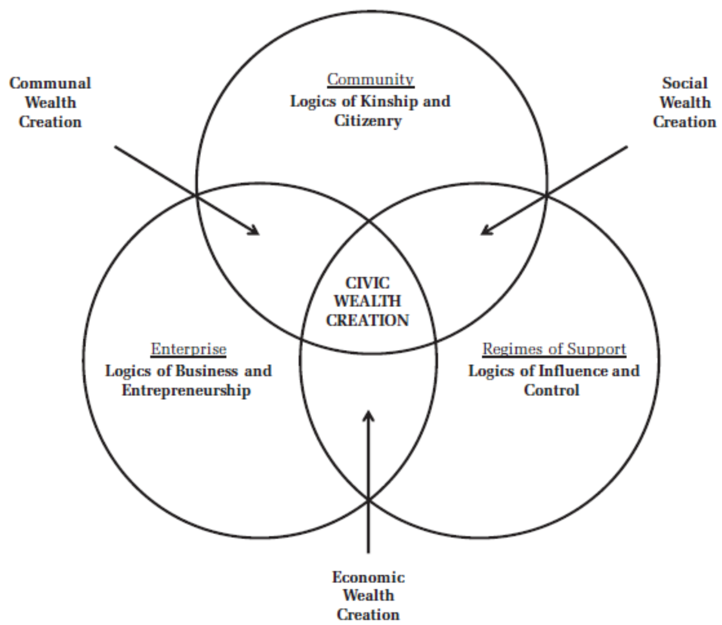
2. Regimes of Support: This category includes a wide range of stakeholders who provide critical resources and the legitimate power to act in a civic context. Supporters seem to have a significant impact on community activities, and support differs across ecosystems; primarily, it includes economic development initiatives, legislation, funding, volunteering, research, training aids, etc.

3. Enterprises: Enterprises category consists of entrepreneurial ventures and activities that create wealth over market-based commerce.

2.4.2 How is Civic Wealth created?

According to Lumpkin and Bacq (2019, p. 389), "Civic wealth is created when multiple stakeholders with different logics join forces in collective actions that improve the welfare of a segment of society." Figure 2.3 illustrates that when the logic underpinning each stakeholder category intersects, shared interests get the potential to create multiple types of wealth, social, economic, and communal wealth consistent with the three-circle model. When these three wealth converges, civic wealth is generated.

Figure 2.3: Civic Wealth Creation Framework



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1. Social wealth creation: At the convergence of community and support regimes, social wealth is created. Needs occur in difficult civic circumstances or among groups who share a common destiny that is not answered by market systems or is beyond the scope of efficient government interventions (Mintzberg, 2015). Social wealth could be generated in a variety of ways in these conditions. When people of a community, inspired by family ties and citizenry logic, request aid or assistance from Regimes of Support members, bottom-up development may progressively improve social capital and create capacity. Similarly, outsiders who recognize a community's needs may pitch in without being officially invited to contribute resources and aid in improving the community's well-being (Woolcock, 1998). As per the concepts of inside-out development, it is assumed that the benefits of engaging and investing in a community will improve society as a whole (Worthman, 2011).

2. Economic wealth creation: When enterprise and regimes of support intersect, economic wealth is created, and enterprises are motivated to achieve economic wealth through commerce by the rationale of business and entrepreneurship (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Further, it emphasizes that expanding and growing a new business that does not have accumulated resources often requires external funding, and it frequently seeks external assistance for that. Even though it may negotiate terms, a startup is more likely to accept the requests of sponsors as it benefits from the monetary influx. Moreover, funding includes not only financial support but also legal advice, professional management skills, networking, and social capital that can enhance productivity and expand the reach of a business.

3. Communal wealth creation: Communal wealth is created when the community logic interacts with the enterprises' logic (Dubb, 2016). When people of a community band together to better their situation by organizing a purposeful venture, it is called communal wealth, and creating communal wealth stems from a variety of needs and goals that a community might want to focus on (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Accordingly, the ultimate effort is creating community-based entrepreneurship, and enterprises give a focal point for community members to come together, and they help individuals of the community succeed by channeling their creative energies and economic ambitions.

4. Civic wealth creation: When the logic that underpin Community, Regimes of Support, and Enterprise merge to drive initiations that increase the prosperity of a targeted population, civic wealth is created (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Moreover, it has been highlighted that many communities lack the operational competencies and resources required to complete initiatives like startups, empowerment programs, or local rejuvenation, and the support and experiences of other stakeholders are necessary for such isolated members to thrive at least at the initial stage. Furthermore, collective engagements through the combination of many stakeholders with diverse logic distinguish CWC from typical assistance or corporate social responsibility approaches. Importantly, Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) highlighted that "CWC addresses situations where the societal change initiatives that are being tackled are more complex than a marketplace, government, or civil society solutions alone can effectively address."

2.4.3 Mechanisms of CWC

Three techniques utilized by stakeholders to stimulate the CWC have been recognized in discussions about how multiple stakeholders create civic wealth (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

i. Engaged participation: The mechanism that allows multiple parties to become dedicated to CWC is called engaged participation, and there are two aspects of participation in this framework, and the first is involving members of the community in every stage of social enterprise, from ideation and design to organizing, establishing, and maintaining businesses and the second aspect is, active involvement entails key stakeholders committing to contribute resources, legislative authority, and entrepreneurial solutions by using their talents and values (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019)

ii. Collaborative innovation: CWC is also derived from the pursuit of innovations beyond firm boundaries through sharing ideas, knowledge, skills, and opportunity (Ketchen Jr et al., 2007). Collaborative innovations that draw stakeholders together on community change engagements are often inter-organizational in a civic environment (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

iii. Resource mobilization: For effective societal transformation, utilizing and mobilizing different forms of resources is almost always necessary (Nicholls, 2010), and the resource constraints have been identified as barriers to solving societal problems (Desa & Basu, 2013). Resource mobilization may assist CWC in a variety of ways, based on the situation (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019), and most CWC activities critically require financial resources, but other forms of resources, such as human, physical, and technology, are also required (Haugh, 2007).

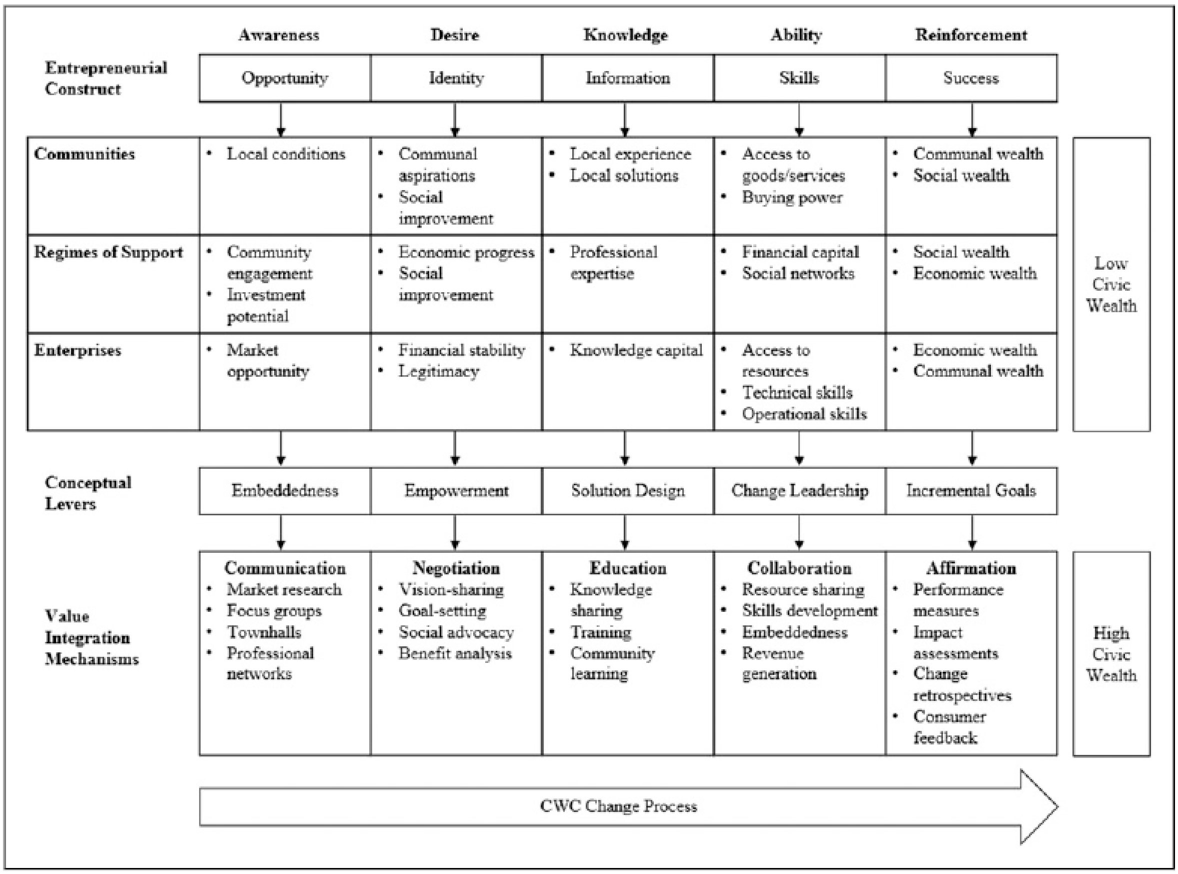
2.4.4 Civic Wealth Creation Change Engagement Framework

Bailey and Lumpkin (2023) present a conceptual framework that gives perspective on the highly complex and dynamic stakeholder relationships that result in higher CWC levels. As the framework illustrates in figure 2.4, CWC is composed of various underlying change mechanisms tied to entrepreneurial constructs and affects how stakeholders perceive and assess change opportunities. It emphasizes that CWC stakeholder communities, support regimes, and enterprises have distinct reasons for participating in the CWC process. When these goals and objectives are aligned, a higher proclivity for stakeholder involvement promotes and encourages change; however, unfulfilled stakeholder demands and preferences limit proclivity for participation and provides hurdles to change. The framework depicts how stakeholders evaluate multiple factors of change while deciding whether to engage or withdraw from change initiatives, providing a multi-dimensional perspective of the CWC change process.

More recent contributions build on this foundation by emphasizing collective action pathways for bypassing concentrated power (Lumpkin et al., 2024) and by theorizing transformational hybridity as a mechanism for mobilizing cross-sector collaboration toward societal grand challenges, with implications for the creation of civic wealth across stakeholder groups (Ciambotti et al., 2025). Relatedly, place-based partnership research clarifies the facilitation capabilities required to sustain stakeholder coalitions over time (Brenton & Slawinski, 2023), and community inclusion research provides empirically grounded micro-mechanisms through which civic wealth is generated and distributed across stakeholder groups (Lashitew et al., 2024).

ADKAR methodology of Hiatt (2006) is used to explicate these fundamental change pathways, which defines five factors of change that must be present at pretty high levels for change to take place: (1) awareness of the need for change, (2) desire to participate and support the change, (3) knowledge of how to change, (4) ability to implement new skills and behavior, and (5) reinforcement to sustain the change. The framework (Figure 2.4) assesses each stakeholder to determine the fundamental change processes within the five elements of change involvement that are necessary for change to take place. Even well-intentioned stakeholders may become reluctant or refuse to engage in CWC if these criteria are not satisfied.

Figure 2.4 Civic Wealth Creation Change Engagement Framework



Note. Reprinted from "Enacting positive social change: A civic wealth creation stakeholder engagement framework," by R. C. Bailey & G. T. Lumpkin, 2023, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* (advance online publication). doi:10.1177/10422587211049745

2.4.4.1 Awareness of the Need for Change

As Shane and Venkataraman (2000) argue, the stakeholders must realize the need for change by comprehending what the change is, why it is necessary, the risks of not changing, and the personal advantages of the change. Entrepreneurial sensitivity to existing realities and anticipation of future opportunities enables awareness. As Bailey and Lumpkin (2023) suggest, before taking action, communities must have a comprehension of the local situations. Second, regimes of support must be engaged within a community, which may extend beyond regional lines, to realize the need for change. Third, an enterprise must first assess if there is market potential before initiating a change within a community or with support regimes.

2.4.4.2 Desire to Participate and Support the Change

The existence of awareness does not ensure the intention to modify behavior among stakeholders (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). The nature of the change, organizational and/or environmental backdrop, personal situation, and intrinsic motivation are all elements that influence desire (Hiatt, 2006). Bailey and Lumpkin (2023) highlight that, though specific changes may occur without the involvement of stakeholders, such difficulties are typically resolved by stakeholders with a variety of motivations and aspirations. As a result, understanding the differences in stakeholders' motives and aspirations to support and engage in CWC is beneficial in a CWC environment.

2.4.4.3 Knowledge of How to Change

The information needed to complete a new process or execute a change is known as knowledge. Knowledge-sharing among stakeholders is critical to the CWC process, whether gaining access to proven solutions or developing new ones (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). The community must have procedural knowledge and ideas, strategies, and methods for achieving and maintaining the desired change. Even though support regimes are not the significant implementers of change, they provide professional skills and information to businesses and communities. Enterprises must have accessibility to knowledge capital to participate in CWC. If a company's knowledge is internal, it can quickly undertake a change project by reusing internal company resources. However, when internal expertise is insufficient, businesses must look outside the company for resources to help them gain more knowledge, such as training or consultancy. In a CWC setting, a single stakeholder rarely has all the knowledge to make a change. Moreover, collective knowledge enhances as mutual stakeholder participation grows.

2.4.4.4 Ability to Implement New Skills and Behaviors

CWC stakeholders must have the capabilities to accomplish the work at their desired degree of performance to enact a change (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). As a result of collective action, stakeholders may be able to rely on the capabilities of strategic partnerships; nevertheless, each stakeholder is required to contribute at a minimum level of their capacities. The ability of a community to effect change is influenced by its availability of goods and services and its purchasing power. Regimes of support give financial capital to enable funding and implementation of change efforts. To be successful, enterprises must have appropriate access to resources and technical and operational expertise. Physical, financial, human, and social capital are all forms of capital used. A change leader is frequently seen as the primary driver of CWC because of his or her ability to coordinate and mobilize varied stakeholder talents and resources. There are several possibilities for this protagonist. He or she may be a key person within the community, or he or she may come from among other CWC stakeholder domains.

2.4.4.5 Reinforcement to Sustain the Change

According to Bailey and Lumpkin (2023), reinforcements may take place continually throughout the change process, after it has been completed, or not at all in some instances. Reinforcements send good or negative signals to the stakeholder about the success or failure of the change, and they encourage or discourage engagement in the change process. If negative or neutral reinforcements increase the opportunity costs of engagement, stakeholders may choose to withdraw their support or reduce their involvement before, during, or after the implementation process is complete. In the building of communal and social wealth, communities have a vested interest. The most critical indicators of success for regimes of support are social and economic well-being. Enterprises evaluate their performance in terms of economic and communal wealth. The success of the civic wealth generation process is evaluated by several feedback systems used by stakeholders involved in the process. Due to the subjective character of social and communal values, it is not easy to quantify social impact through performance measurements.

2.5 Synthesis and research gaps: Bridging CE, EE, and CWC

In bringing CE, EE, and CWC into one framework, this thesis treats them as related but analytically distinct concepts. CE refers to the collective organizing of entrepreneurial action within and across enterprises; EE refers to the wider enabling or constraining system of actors, institutions, resources, and support mechanisms; and CWC refers to the civic-level value and endowments produced within communities, regions, and sectorally embedded local contexts.

First, despite growing calls for mechanism-based explanations in CE and EE research, empirical work rarely theorizes the triadic interplay through which collective action, ecosystem structures, and civic outcomes co-constitute one another over time (Bacq et al., 2022; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022). Most studies still privilege dual linkages, which limit understanding of how ecosystems enable CE and how CE, in turn, reshapes ecosystem pathways and broadens civic value creation (Hruskova, 2024; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Spigel, 2017).

Second, while CE research has advanced micro-level insight into collective ownership, governance, and agency, there is limited cumulative evidence on which configurations of collective processes systematically generate durable benefits that extend beyond members to the wider community (Cairns et al., 2024; Deschamps & Slitine, 2024; Hruskova, 2024). In parallel, EE syntheses highlight persistent ambiguity about causal mechanisms and the translation of ecosystem attributes into different outcomes, indicating a need for integrative accounts that link micro-processes to meso-level ecosystem structures and macro-level civic outcomes (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Wurth et al., 2022).

Third, temporal dynamics and feedback loops are frequently acknowledged but remain under-theorized in ways that specify how entrepreneurial action and ecosystem structures adapt in response to shocks, learning, and shifting stakeholder commitments (Schmidt et al., 2024; Spigel & Harrison, 2018). Relatedly, evidence that ecosystem effects can be spatially fluid and subject to spillovers or shadow effects strengthens the case for theorizing boundary and spillover conditions rather than assuming stable, place-contained ecosystem dynamics (Fischer et al., 2025; Leendertse et al., 2025; Lomuscio, 2024).

Fourth, CWC scholarship underscores that civic value creation depends on stakeholder engagement and inclusion, yet empirical research remains limited on how engagement mechanisms interact with ecosystem constraints such as power concentration, inequality, and contested resource access, particularly in emerging economies (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lashitew et al., 2024; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). As a result, societal outcomes remain variably defined and insufficiently traced through causal mechanisms, limiting comparability regarding how ecosystems and collective action contribute to community-level wellbeing (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022; Wurth et al., 2022). Moreover, Lorenzo-Afable et al. (2025) argues that empirical social value creation research and emphasize the need for stronger theorizing of the processes and mechanisms through which value is generated for beneficiaries within specific contexts, rather than relying on broad outcome claims. This supports the need for mechanism-focused accounts of how civic wealth emerges and becomes durable through stakeholder interactions.

Taken together, these gaps warrant an empirical examination of whether, how, and under what conditions CE, EE, and CWC become connected in practice, how these connections may evolve over time, and how IE may constrain or weaken potential reinforcing pathways. The literature leaves several issues insufficiently resolved: how entrepreneurs interpret and mobilize ecosystem elements under uneven resource and institutional conditions (Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022); when collective entrepreneurship generates coordinated value creation rather than coordination failure or fragmentation (Bacq et al., 2022; Wurth et al., 2022); how civic endowments are produced and sustained through stakeholder participation, social capital, and support regimes (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019); and how these domains interact over time through learning, adaptation, and changing institutional conditions, including the ways individualistic logics may dampen collective engagement and civic outcomes (Bacq et al., 2022; Schmidt et al., 2024).

The synthesis above clarifies the conceptual basis for the research questions introduced in Section 1.3. It shows that the thesis needs to examine how entrepreneurs experience and mobilize ecosystem conditions; how CE is enacted and governed; how civic endowments are produced and sustained; and whether, how, and to what extent EE, CE, and CWC interact over time under the possible constraining influence of IE. These questions guide the empirical analysis developed in Chapters 5 to 9.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Method

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to delineate the philosophy and assumptions, research paradigms, research design, data collection and data analysis, and ethical requirements in conducting the research, building upon the overarching research problem. Consequently, the content of the chapter is organized and presented in four sections.

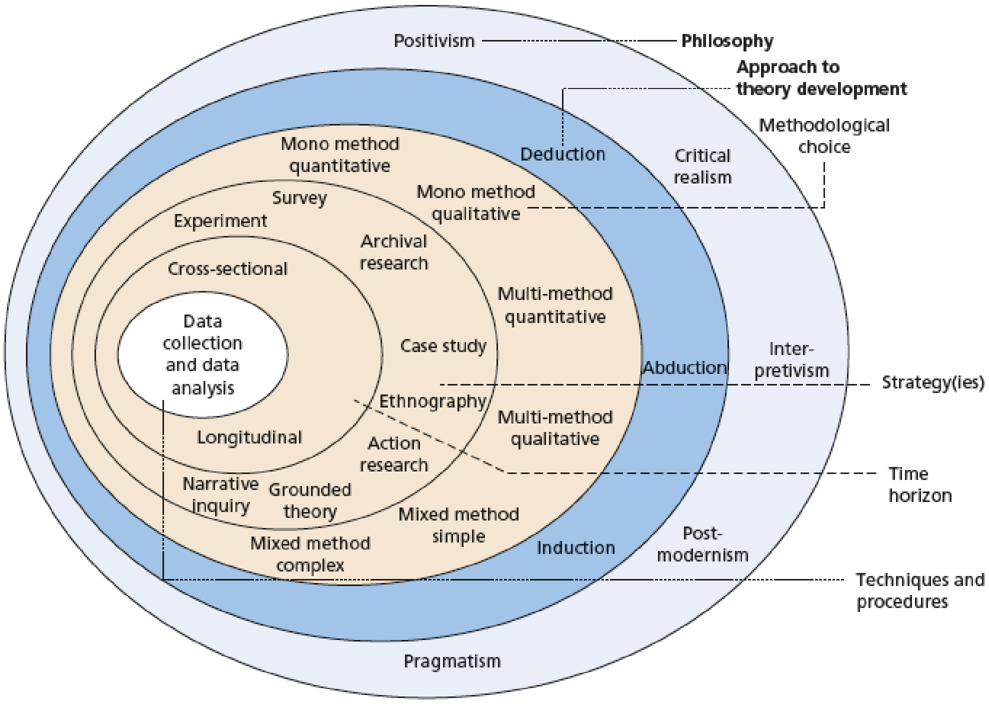
The chapter begins with the introduction, followed by the second section which outlines the core philosophical underpinnings of this research. Accordingly, research assumptions of ontology and epistemology are discussed. The third section delves into research paradigms such as Positivism, Interpretivism, and Pragmatism. Here, the Interpretive paradigm is identified as the most appropriate for this study and is, therefore, presented in detail. This section also includes a discussion on the qualitative method, covering approaches in qualitative research such as Narrative, Phenomenological research, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, and Case Studies. As the Case Study approach is identified as the most applicable for this study, it is comprehensively discussed in this section. Additionally, this section covers the data collection process, criteria for selecting cases, the use of semi-structured interviews, data analysis methods, and the specific techniques employed. The chapter wraps up with a concise summary of the key points discussed.

3.2 Core philosophical underpinnings

Research methodology is the broader framework of defining and understanding the philosophies, paradigms, and approaches which depict how research is conducted (Daniel & Harland, 2018; Morgan & Burrell, 2019). Conceptualizing this path is vital in methodically designing the study to assure valid and reliable results that meet the research objectives. According to the comprehensive model named 'research onion' presented by Saunders et al. (2009), the researcher should justify what data he/she needs and what methods that he/she uses to collect them to meet the research objectives. As per the research onion illustrated in figure 3.1, the data collection and analysis are determined by the research philosophy, approaches to the theory development, methodological choice, research strategy and time horizon mentioned in the outer layers of the model.

Accordingly, this chapter outlines philosophy and assumptions, research design, data collection and data analysis, and ethical requirements in conducting the research.

Figure 3.1: The Research Onion



Note. Reprinted from *Research methods for business students* (5th ed., p. 108, Figure 4.1), by M. Saunders, P. Lewis, & A. Thornhill, 2009, Pearson Education Limited. Copyright 2009 by Pearson Education Limited.

3.2.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy is a set of beliefs and assumptions about the creation of knowledge, and this includes epistemological, ontological, and axiological assumptions which explain human knowledge, realities come across, and the researcher's value system, which influences the research process respectively (Saunders et al., 2009). The philosophical stance guides our conception of what we do when creating knowledge about the world (Byrne, 2016). It states that methodology is the plan or design that underpins the selection and use of specific methods, and it connects the selection and execution of methods to intended research outputs. It is connected to epistemology and ontology and appears to have been interpreted as 'philosophy of research' or 'philosophy of methods.' According to Proctor (1998), when planning a research study, exploring personal beliefs (personal paradigms or personal philosophies) improves understanding of the interplay among ontological (what is the nature of reality?), epistemological (what can be known?), and methodological (how can the researcher explore what he or she believes can be known?) levels of inquiry. According to Daniel and Harland (2018), ontology and epistemology are the two types of research assumptions that distinguish research philosophies.

3.2.1.1 Ontology

The term ontology implies a set of assumptions about the nature of reality, and thus it determines how a researcher sees the world (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Daniel & Harland, 2018; Krauss, 2005; Saunders et al., 2009). "Ontology covers what we believe can exist, what we consider to be fundamental or basic" (Berryman, 2019, p. 272). Ontology is concerned with what we know, and philosophies and their corresponding methodologies construct two kinds of ontological assumptions: 'appearance' and 'what may lay behind appearances' (Williams, 2016). "Ontological assumptions are concerned with what constitutes reality; in other words, what is, and researchers need to take a position regarding their perceptions of how things are and how things work" (Scotland, 2012, p. 09). Ontology becomes a distinct aspect of reality and serves as the foundation for bringing up credible conversations about reality (Nasution, 2018). Jepsen (2009) states that the term ontology is derived from philosophy and applies to the study of 'being' or 'existence,' and ontologies are divided into two types: 'transcendent ontologies' and 'immanent ontologies.' The construction of transcendent ontologies is firmly established by scientific knowledge, which is developed over a long period and is rarely changed. The structure of the immanent ontologies is constantly changing, and the existence of a view or an object is not eternal or remains unchanged for a very long time. Primarily, ontology is also linked to the debate over whether knowledge should be considered objective or subjective (Daniel & Harland, 2018). Berryman (2019) argues that our ontology is what drives us to develop research questions. Diverse paradigms have different ontological and epistemological perspectives and different assumptions about reality and knowledge that underlie their unique research approach (Scotland, 2012). Accordingly, positivism takes a realism ontological stance, the ontological viewpoint of interpretivism is relativism, and historical realism is the ontological stance of the critical paradigm. Concerning the ontology of qualitative studies, people are viewed as 'anticipatory', 'meaning-making' agents who actively build their interpretations of circumstances and use these interpretations to making sense of their reality and behave in it (Cohen et al., 2018). It argues that individuals are deliberate, intentional, and creative in their behaviors, and meaning emerges from social events, dialogues, and agreements, and is managed by the individuals engaged through respective interpretive processes. Participants' interpretations of situations are culturally and contextually bounded, and there are multiple realities, not single truths, in interpreting a scenario.

3.2.1.2 Epistemology

"Epistemology is the branch of philosophy focused on knowledge. The word stems from the Greek: 'episteme,' or knowledge; and 'logos,' the study of epistemology, thus dealing with questions: what is knowledge? How do we know something? What does it mean to know? (Couper, 2020, p. 275)." Moser and Moser (2002) state that epistemology, in the broadest sense, is an explanation of knowledge. Epistemology is the study of the landscape of knowledge and its justification within the subject of philosophy. Epistemology is indeed a way of viewing the world and making sense of it; thus, it requires knowledge and contains a specific sense of what it means to know, in other words, 'how we know what we know' (Crotty, 1998). Epistemological assumptions are involved in the creation, acquisition, and communication of knowledge, or what it is to understand (Scotland, 2012). Epistemological assumptions concern the foundations of knowledge and how one could begin to comprehend the universe and transmit this understanding to others, and these assumptions include ideas such as what kind of knowledge may be gathered and how to distinguish between what is seen as 'true' and what is viewed as 'false'; indeed, the distinction between 'true' and 'false' implies a definite epistemological position (Morgan & Burrell, 2019). Distinct epistemologies are used by different business and management scholars in their studies, which include projects based on archival research and autobiographical accounts, narratives, and fictional literature, and this wide array of appropriate epistemologies gives the researcher a broader range of methods than in other academic disciplines (Saunders et al., 2009).

According to Cohen et al. (2018), distinct paradigms are founded on different ontologies (diverse perspectives on the fundamental nature or peculiar features of the phenomenon in question) and different epistemologies (theories concerning the nature of knowledge, its structure, and organization, and how we study knowledge and phenomena: how we know, what comprises good knowledge, our cognition of a phenomenon). Scotland (2012) argues that distinct research paradigms have their own set of ontological and epistemological assumptions, and because all presumptions are speculative, the philosophical foundations of each paradigm cannot be empirically proven or refuted.

As summarized by Cohen et al. (2018), a positivist worldview is founded on a scientific, experimental, hypothesis-testing epistemology; a post-positivist paradigm adheres to a conjectural, falsification epistemology; an interpretive paradigm is grounded in an epistemology that acknowledges multiple realities, agentic behaviors, and the significance of viewing an event through the participants' eyes. Rawnsley (1998) argues that epistemological principles are inherent in all investigative approaches. The primary question in epistemology is whether there are adequate and requisite conditions for 'justifying belief' and 'rejecting skepticism.'

About the epistemology of qualitative research to comprehend a situation, researchers must first comprehend the context as its whole, both explicitly and holistically, because situations shape behavior and viewpoints and conversely (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, it states that the researcher needs to comprehend, describe, and explain multiple and different interpretations of situations. The researcher must be able to comprehend, describe, and explain multiple and disparate interpretations of events. Understanding a phenomenon requires taking into consideration all elements instead of a small set of variables. Researchers are concerned with participants' subjective feelings, perspectives, and interpretations of a phenomenon: their 'definition of the situation,' which is usually recorded verbally instead of statistically.

3.2.2 Research paradigms

A research paradigm that coincides with particular ontological and epistemological views is another way to learn about ontology and epistemology, and when addressing a problem in this manner, a researcher might pick a paradigm that best meets the needs and then apply the appropriate ontology and epistemology (Daniel & Harland, 2018). The word ‘paradigm’ originates from Greek, but it socializes with the contributions of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), widely recognized as the founding father of ‘sociology’ (Morgan & Burrell, 2019).

Profound insight into the philosophical underpinnings of research will assist researchers in selecting and justifying a framework or paradigm (Khaldi, 2017). The paradigm determines a researcher's philosophical perspective, which has ramifications for each decision taken during the research process, particularly methodology and methods selection (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Pabel et al., 2021). Accordingly, there seems to be no rationale for following decisions in methodology, methods, literature, or research design without defining a paradigm (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Researching human behavior generally necessitates using a research paradigm to enhance the credibility and generalizability of the study, and the use of paradigms in studies depends on the preference of the researcher and the nature of the phenomena being researched (Kankam, 2019).

Since the different paradigms and alternative ontological and epistemological interpretations are available (Daniel & Harland, 2018; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Scotland, 2012), this section discusses the different paradigms presented and the appropriate paradigm for this study.

3.2.2.1 Positivism

Positivism refers to a natural scientist's philosophical position, which requires working with ‘observable social reality’ to create law-like generalizations. This stresses that the positivist concentrates strictly on ‘scientific empiricist’ methods to produce pure data and facts supposedly uninfluenced by human interpretation or prejudice (Saunders et al., 2009). A positivist researcher believes that the world is governed by constant and unchanging laws and rules of cause and effects; that there is an immensity and sophistication that can be solved by reductionism, and that impartiality, measurement, objectivity, and repeatability are essential and should be emphasized (Aliyu et al., 2014). Accordingly, the positivist paradigm is founded on what is regarded in research methodologies as the scientific research process, which is employed in nature to look into cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Irshaidat, 2022; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Scotland, 2012). "The ontological position of positivism is one of realism" and most positivists believe that the researcher's senses do not mediate reality (Scotland, 2012, p. 10). Therefore, ontologically, positivists assume that a fixed reality exists, which necessitates the creation of appropriate tools to collect supporting evidence (Irshaidat, 2022).

The epistemological stance of the positivist is of objectivism, and positivists explore the world objectively in search of absolute truth for the objective reality and the researcher and the subject of the investigation independently distinct (Scotland, 2012). Extreme positivist researchers see organizations and other social constructs as real in the same way that material objects and natural phenomena are (Saunders et al., 2009). They would focus on identifying observable and measurable facts and patterns from an epistemological standpoint. Only phenomena they could see, and measure would lead to reliable and relevant data (Crotty, 1998). Confirmatory analysis, nomothetic experiments, quantitative analysis, laboratory experiments, and deduction are the methodologies employed by positivist scientists and scholars (Aliyu et al., 2014)

Table 3.1 presents the fundamental aspects of research that fall under the positivist paradigm characterized by Gartrell and Gartrell (1996).

Table 3.1: Summary of positivism paradigm

• Concepts related to law-like statements
• Nominal definition of concepts
• Operational definition/ partial interpretation (empirical measurement of concepts)
• Derivation of a hypothesis (or hypotheses) for empirical examination
• Formal language (logic or math) to express laws
• Variables related together empirically
• Use of statistical techniques/quantitative methodology

Note. Adapted from "Positivism in sociological practice: 1967-1990," by Gartrell, C. D., & Gartrell, J. W. (1996), *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 33*(2), 143-158.

3.2.2.2 Interpretivism

When the positive ideal has been extensively critiqued and debated, scholars have pushed for a new paradigm called 'interpretive' that gives descriptions of realities instead of generalizations (Candy, 1989). Interpretivism believes that qualitative data can more effectively depict the dynamics of social reality (Neuman, 2014). Interpretivist scholars contend that universal truth or worldview does not exist (Kankam, 2019) and regard reality or truth as a social construction or fabrication of the intrinsic feeling of mind (Aliyu et al., 2014; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The ontological standpoint of interpretivism is relativism, and it holds that reality is subjective and varies from one person to the next (Scotland, 2012). Leitch et al. (2010) states that interpretivism is founded on a life-world ontology based on observational theory and values influenced by the opinion that inquiry the social setting. It is not, and cannot be, the quest for an objectively separated reality. The interpretive paradigm encompasses a broad spectrum of philosophical and sociological views that have the general feature of striving to perceive and interpret the social reality largely through the participants' eyes actively participating in a social system (Morgan & Burrell, 2019).

Moreover, the subjective meanings are diverse and multifaceted, prompting the scholar to focus on the depth of perspectives instead of limiting meanings into few notions (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Irshaidat (2022) states that interpretivism argues that collective notions, such as norms that regulate behavior embraced in a given culture, reflect that the culture and ontological beliefs of the people are shaped by their surroundings. Saunders et al. (2009) also state that people create and perceive different social realities from diverse cultures, and interpretivists critique the positivism philosophy, which believes in uncovering definitive, universal 'rules' that apply to everyone.

Interpretivism is appropriate for this study because it does not seek to test hypotheses or measure cases against a pre-determined model. Rather, it enables the researcher to understand how participants construct meanings, practices, and relationships within their own social and institutional contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gephart, 2004; Neuman, 2014). In this thesis, EE, CE, CWC, and IE were used as sensitizing concepts that helped frame the inquiry, but they were not treated as fixed variables or as an ideal type against which the cases were evaluated. The analysis remained open to what the data revealed about whether, how, and to what extent domains interacted in practice.

An interpretive scholar establishes reliability by continuous comparisons of findings, as reliability in concept relates to consistency in assessment (Irshaidat, 2022). Further, In focusing on intricacy, richness, multiple perspectives, and significance, interpretivism is inherently subjectivist (Saunders et al., 2009).

Table 3.2 depicts the widely shared assumptions of interpretive theorists presented by Candy (1989).

Table 3.2: Widely shared assumptions of interpretive theorists

• The belief that any event or action is explicable in terms of multiple interacting factors, events, and processes, and that 'causes' and 'effects' are mutually interdependent
• An acceptance of the extreme difficulty in attaining complete objectivity, especially in observing human subjects who construe, or make sense of, events based on their individual systems of meaning
• The view that the inquiry aims to develop an understanding of individual cases, rather than universal laws or generalizations
• The assumption that the world is made up of tangible and intangible multifaceted realities and that these are best studied as a unified whole, rather than being fragmented into dependent and independent variables (in other words, the context makes a difference)
• Recognition that inquiry is always value-laden and that such values inevitably influence the framing, bounding, and focusing of research problems

Note. Adapted from "Alternative paradigms in educational research," by P. C. Candy, 1989, *The Australian Educational Researcher, 16*(3), 1–11.

Interpretivists aim to develop new and comprehensive understandings about the social world and settings, and this is applied in business management research to look at the organizations from different perspectives in different groups of people (Saunders et al., 2009). Table 3.3 outlines the summary of the interpretive paradigm as discussed by Neuman (2014).

Table 3.3: Summary of the interpretive paradigm

• Interpretivist strives to understand the meaning of an event or behavior by situating it within a specific social setting
• The subjective worldview influences how he or she behaves, and the researcher strives to discover their thoughts and standpoint.
• Interpretive scholars believe that qualitative data can more effectively capture the dynamics of social reality.
• Interpretive scholars are unlikely to utilize a nomothetic method, preferring an idiographic mode of interpretations and employ inductive reasoning.

- Interpretivists do not test hypotheses or develop universally applicable theories; instead, they seek to understand the meanings, particularities, and contextual conditions of each case.

Note. Adapted from *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed., p. 109), by W. L. Neuman, 2014, Pearson Education Limited.

Finally, the focus of interpretive studies is to develop 'bottom-up' interpretive theories that are intimately 'grounded' in the lived world, rather than to validate or refute past theories (Cope, 2005, p. 167).

3.2.2.3 Pragmatism

Pragmatism as a paradigm emerges through 'acts,' 'situations,' and 'consequences' instead of 'antecedent grounds' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pragmatists argue that reality is not permanent and evolves with every move of events and the fundamental foundation of pragmatic epistemology is that knowledge is always founded on experience (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Shaw et al. (2010) states that pragmatism is a paradigm in which conceptions and actions' practical implications and effects play a critical role in determining meaning and truth. This research paradigm advocates for the concurrent employment of qualitative and quantitative research methods to provide evidence in supporting best practices. Pragmatism is interested in action and change and the interplay of knowledge and action, and it is useful as a foundation for research methodologies that intervene in the world rather than simply observing it (Goldkuhl, 2012). "Pragmatism can be used as a guide not only for top-down deductive research design but also for grounded inductive or abductive research" (Yvonne Feilzer, 2010, p. 14). Creswell (2009) argues that any ideology or reality does not bind pragmatism, and the pragmatic researcher is concerned with the 'what' and 'how' of the study inquiry. Pragmatism is the paradigm that gives the philosophical underpinning for mixed-methods research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Morgan (2014) stresses that pragmatism provides an opportunity to develop an integrated methodology for the social sciences by recognizing the value of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and the knowledge generated by such study in advancing our comprehension of society and social life. Thus, pragmatism may assist scholars in embracing the intricacy and messiness of social reality revitalizing a withering sociological imagination (Yvonne Feilzer, 2010). Pragmatism attempts to manage both objectivism and subjectivism, facts and ideals, precise and comprehensive knowledge, and a variety of contextualized experiences (Saunders et al., 2009). This is achieved by studying theories, concepts, ideas, hypotheses, and research findings and studying their practical implications where necessary. To pragmatists, reality is vital in terms of the practical consequences of ideas, and knowledge is regarded as its capacity to enable actions to be performed successfully.

As opposed to philosophy, which has a reputation for being excessively idealistic and abstract, pragmatic thinking is concerned with practical application ideas (Scott, 2016). It argues that pragmatism's argument is grounded on their effects rather than on the theories themselves. Pragmatists make an effort to stress the necessity of experimenting with multiple ways and then evaluate their success. Pragmatism recognizes phenomena and occurrences as existing independently of any observer. However, it also stresses reason and thinking as the originators of components within the external world. (Goldkuhl, 2012).

The pragmatist ontology says the material world is real and separate from us, and we may interact with and influence it in the same way that it influences and curtails our behavior (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Each individual constructs their social world as they mature and develop, impacted by their social environment and arriving at their own interpretation of people, society, and culture. As pragmatist epistemology states, knowledge is defined as anything that has the potential to cause a transformation in the physical or social behavior of an individual or the environmental factors. The pragmatist methodology stresses numerous methods for determining the impacts of items and activities, all of which should be studied to understand a physical or social issue better.

Table 3.4 outlines the philosophical basis of pragmatism.

Table 3.4: The philosophical basis of pragmatism

• Pragmatism is not bound by any single system of philosophy or reality. This is applicable for mixed methods of research, in which researchers predominantly use both quantitative and qualitative methods.
• Individual researchers have the freedom to pursue their interests. Researchers are free to select the study methodologies, strategies, and processes that best match their goals and objectives in this approach.
• Pragmatists do not perceive the world as a unified entity.
• Truth is what occurs at the moment. It is not grounded by a contradiction between reality outside of the mind and reality within the mind.
• Pragmatist researchers consider what and how to investigate based on the anticipated outcomes and where they need to take it
• Pragmatists believe in both an external reality independent of the intellect and entrenched within the intellect.

Note. Adapted from *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.), by J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, 2018, SAGE Publications.

3.3 Research design

This study examines whether, how, and to what extent EE, CE, and CWC interact over time in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, and how IE may constrain or dampen these interactions. The interpretive paradigm is appropriate because the study seeks to understand these relationships through participants lived experiences, meanings, practices, and sector-specific contexts rather than through hypothesis testing or variable measurement.

3.3.1 Interpretive paradigm

Leitch et al. (2010) argue that entrepreneurship is a multilayered, complex social phenomenon that is acted by a range of characters in many distinct contexts, and interpretive entrepreneurship studies can yield quality and deep insights through the participants' experiences, attitudes, and beliefs, adding meaningfully to the comprehension of entrepreneurial behavior. Letaifa and Goglio-Primard (2016) argue that entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon that necessitates the engagement and interaction of multiple socio-economic actors. These actors behave differently across contexts, and the actors depend on particular cultural settings that determine a specific stance. Interpretive studies that people create subjectively and perceive different social realities from diverse cultures (Saunders et al., 2009) are applicable in entrepreneurship studies.

Isenberg (2010) argues that there is no commonly agreed best entrepreneurship ecosystem, and it is entirely different from the context, and the appropriate approach or model should be developed utilizing all available expertise and continuous experiments. Nonlinear dynamics, feedback loops, and complex, multi-level interactions constitute EEs, and qualitative methodologies are ideal for researching such phenomena due to their flexibility (Roundy et al., 2018). Interpretivists articulate in their own words, enabling scholars to develop a deep understanding of individuals' subjective perceptions and interpretations (Graebner et al., 2012). The richness of qualitative insights helps scholars unpack multifaceted, temporally developing circumstances and causal mechanisms comprehensively (Graebner et al., 2012). Accordingly, interpretivism is the ideal paradigm for such a study.

Gephart (2004) states that interpretive research identifies, describes, and theorizes actual meanings individuals employ in real-life situations. It studies how specific meanings become widespread, prominent, and/or contentious in circumstances where alternative interpretations and conceptions exist and are possible. Interpretive paradigm is more applicable for a study that focuses on how intra and inter-organizational actors pool knowledge and resources and govern CE efforts to strengthen EE for creating an entrepreneurial revolution (Bockhaven et al., 2015; Doh et al., 2019; Reich, 1987). Individual abilities will be integrated into a CE group, where synergies exist, and members will get a greater grasp of one other's capacities as the group works through different difficulties and techniques over time (Reich, 1987). Each participant learns how to improve their work, what they can achieve, and how they can best exploit one another and constantly seeks to adapt slightly so that the whole process can go more swiftly and smoothly. The community members, supporters, and entrepreneurially minded actors collaborate to pool resources and develop new capabilities for the positive societal transformation through the integrated framework are concerned in CWC (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Subjectivism, which holds that the participants can build the meaning of a subject, which is generally produced through conversations or interactions with others (Scotland, 2012), is the appropriate epistemological viewpoint for the study. Packard (2017, p. 542) argues further, confirming that "social 'structures' such as institutions are not ontologically 'real' nor deterministic, but are learned patterns of behavior and relationships that individuals voluntarily rely on to guide their behavior in the face of uncertainty. Thus, we find interpretivism to be in full accord with social conformity without reifying merely epistemic processes." Since universally agreed and widely practical realities, models or structures on entrepreneurship development, EE, CE and CWC have not been discussed in the literature and, the entrepreneurship development is based on the knowledge and personal experience of the research participants (Leitch et al., 2013), it is worth using the interpretive paradigm to study how theories are conceived (Barrett & Mayson, 2008). Moreover, Renton and Richard (2020) argue that interpretivism enriches entrepreneurship studies by aligning it with entrepreneurial processes and allowing for a greater understanding of entrepreneurial intent, and case studies are a prominent method for undertaking entrepreneurship studies (Gilmore et al., 2013).

Using an interpretive approach in this study gives the ground to investigate the interplay between EE, CE, and CWC and understand the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants.

3.3.2 Research methodology and methods

Diverse paradigms are based on different ontological and epistemological standpoints, and as a result, they have different assumptions about reality and knowledge that drive their research approach. This is apparent in their research methodologies and methods (Scotland, 2012). Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) argue that there is no foundation for consequent decisions regarding methodology, methods, literature, or research design without defining a paradigm as a starting point. The methodology is the plan or design that guides the selection and application of specific procedures and connects the selection and application of methods to intended research findings (Byrne, 2016). The term ‘methods’ refers to the particular techniques and procedures used to collect and analyze data, which may be qualitative or quantitative (Crotty, 1998). Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that the ‘research methods’ refer to the processes for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data that scholars suggest for their studies, and qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are widely used by researchers when considering research methods.

3.3.3 Qualitative method

The interpretive philosophy relies heavily on qualitative methods (Cohen et al., 2018; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Barrett and Mayson (2008) state that interpretivists are concerned with gaining access to subjective reality through qualitative approaches in terms of methodology. Saunders et al. (2009) emphasize that interpretive studies are typically inductive and use small samples, in-depth investigations, and qualitative analysis methods. Krauss (2005) states that many qualitative scholars believe that the best approach to understanding what is going on is to involve themselves in it by moving into the culture or entity being investigated and witnessing what it takes to be a part of it.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that qualitative research is a method of investigating and comprehending the interpretation that individuals or groups attach to a societal or human problem. Moreover, it describes how the research process entails developing study questions and procedures, collecting data in the environment of the participant, analyzing the data inductively by progressing from specifics to broad themes, and the researcher drawing judgments about the meaning of the data. The interpretive paradigm provides insights and comprehension into behavior, explains actions from the participant's standpoint, and does not dominate the participants (Scotland, 2012). Moreover, this comprises open-ended interviews, focus groups, open-ended questionnaires, open-ended observations, think-aloud protocol, and role-playing, and typically, these methods yield qualitative data.

According to Byrne (2016), qualitative studies are primarily exploratory and used to understand underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It states that using unstructured or semi-structured methodologies, qualitative research can also reveal patterns in people's thoughts and opinions, and it can help scholars dig deeper into a problem by researching an individual or a group. Furthermore, it highlights that the sample size is generally less than in quantitative studies; some frequent qualitative methods of collecting data comprise focus groups, individual interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork. In addition to that, Gartner and Birley (2002) argue that a number of substantive problems in entrepreneurship are rarely discussed, and most critical questions in entrepreneurship can only be answered qualitatively. Qualitative research studies how social experience is constructed and given meaning and how it generates world interpretations that render the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). According to Gephart (2004); Irshaidat (2022), qualitative research is primarily descriptive and usually describes 'who said what to whom, how, when, and why' and the description and comprehension of genuine human interactions, meanings, and processes that make up real-life organizational contexts are the critical value of qualitative studies.

Notably, literature aids in substantiating the research problem in qualitative studies, but it does not restrict the participants' viewpoints (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research can yield dense, thorough descriptions of actual acts in real-world settings that retrieve and preserve the genuine interpretations that participants assign to these actions and situations (Gephart, 2004). The deployment of theory in a qualitative study is substantially more diverse (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative researchers use various terms for theories, including 'patterns', 'theoretical lens,' and 'naturalistic generalizations,' to refer to the broader interpretations they employ or construct in their studies. Therefore, qualitative research enriches the domain by contributing to scholarly debate and organizational activity in a distinctive, memorable, socially valuable, and theoretically meaningful way (Gephart, 2004).

3.3.3.1 Approaches to qualitative research

A variety of approaches to qualitative research have been constructed and discussed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Table 3.5 summarizes the approaches in qualitative research.

Table 3.5: Approaches in qualitative research

Narrative research	This is a humanities method of study in which the researcher studies the lives of individuals and then invites one or more of those individuals to present their life stories.
Phenomenological research	A philosophical and psychological study design in which the researcher discusses the lived experiences of individuals concerning a phenomenon as expressed by participants.
Grounded theory	A sociological method of study in which the researcher develops a general, abstract theory of a process, activity, or interaction drawing on the perspectives of participants
Ethnography	An anthropological and sociological method of inquiry in which the researcher explores the shared patterns of behavior, language, and activities of an undivided cultural group in a native environment over an extended period
Case studies	A research approach is prevalent in many domains, and the researcher conducts a deep analysis of a case, usually a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals.

Note. Adapted from *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.), by J. W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, 2018, SAGE Publications.

The case-study research method was selected from the qualitative research approaches to investigate the interplay of EE, CE, and CEC for entrepreneurship development.

The case study research approach is recommended for investigating a complicated and under-explored domain, which researches a current phenomenon inside its real-world setting (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Using case studies to study and discuss entrepreneurial problems has become more extensively discussed and accepted (Brown et al., 2007). Duxbury (2012) states that case study research offers an alternate method and potential to develop new theories across domains. Case study approaches in entrepreneurship provide researchers with more of what they require: multilayered richness in data, insightful cross-disciplinary theory, and practical guidance for entrepreneurs.

3.3.4 Case study approach

3.3.4.1 Overview

Dul and Hak (2008) identify case stud research as “A case study is a study in which (a) one case (single case study) or a small number of cases (comparative case study) in their real-life context are selected, and (b) scores obtained from these cases are analyzed in a qualitative manner”. The case study approach is the most often used method by scholars interested in qualitative research (Baakarada, 2014; Yazan, 2015). According to Duxbury (2012), case studies are widely used by scholars who do qualitative studies on entrepreneurship. Case study methodology can be useful in uncovering new insights about complex factors that affect the new patterns of entrepreneurial behaviors (Urbano et al., 2011). The importance of the case study approach is widely acknowledged in a wide range of domains, especially in the social sciences, and Stake (1995) contributes to developing the case study approach for scholarly inquiry (Crowe et al., 2011). “Case studies are a qualitative design in which the researcher explores a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals in depth. The case(s) are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 373). According to Crowe et al. (2011), the case study method enables in-depth, multidimensional studies of complex problems in real-world contexts. Feagin et al. (1991) identify case study research as an in-depth, comprehensive analysis of a specific social phenomenon employing qualitative research methods. The research is carried out in substantial depth using multiple data sources. Case study research offers an alternate way and opportunity to contribute to the development of new theories across domains, and it also provides an acknowledged foundation for developing theory based on real-world, instantaneous observations instead of recaps, surveys, or lab testing (Duxbury, 2012).

3.3.4.2 Importance of case studies

Duxbury (2012) states that single-case studies and longitudinal studies give academics and practitioners a wealth of information to derive their insights. The case study method is a primary method of qualitative approach that entails a comprehensive review of a social unit that may be a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group, or even the entire society (Kothari, 2004). According to Stake (1995) case is "a specific, a complex, functioning thing." Moreover, it entails comprehending meanings/contexts and processes from various standpoints to perceive both individuals and shared societal interpretations, and the aim is to develop theories. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2009, p. 47).

Cleland et al. (2021) recognize case study research as a precious approach for exploring complex issues, particularly those involving human behavior and social interactions. Daniel (2007) highlights the rigor of case study methodology varies based on the anticipated knowledge output and the specific problems at hand, a characteristic shared by all research methods. Case studies are particularly well-suited for exploratory research, such as theory generation, as well as investigating critical and unique situations. While not the primary choice for theory testing, they can be adapted for this use if they meet the criteria for falsifiability. Sena (2023) highlights, the case study research binds significant importance in social sciences for its deep probing power, ability to provide wide-ranging and profound insights into complex phenomena, contribute to theoretical development, and offer practical insinuations for policy and practice. Its emphasis on depth, context, and flexibility makes it a powerful approach for understanding the nuances of social, organizational, and individual behaviors and processes. Dul and Hak (2008) highlighted that case study research is widely used in different fields in business management as it’s a multifaced methodology to explore broad and complex topics. Further, it draws that many scholars authors advocate case study research for exploratory aims due to its effectiveness in intensely understanding phenomena within their real-life context. Halkias (2022) advocates that case study research allows for an in-depth study of views, and broad insight of a participant in a phenomenon being studied.

3.3.4.3 Types of case studies

Different types of case studies are presented by scholars based on the purpose of the inquiry (Baxter & Jack, 2015; Yin & David, 2007). Cleland et al. (2021) state that the difference is whether the researcher explores the case itself closely or the researcher deploys the case to understand complex or wider phenomena. It's about whether the findings are just about that one case, or if they help researchers to generalize. This can help build new theories or it gives better grasp of a larger issue. Dul and Hak (2008) identify two main types of case studies: single study and comparative case studies. A single case study involves analyzing data from just one instance from a specific point to meet the research objective, whereas a comparative case study necessitates gathering and exploring data from multiple instances to fulfil the research objective. Basically, comparative cases involve broader exploration and drawing comparisons. According to Stake (1995), there are three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Generally, an ‘intrinsic case study’ is undertaken to get knowledge about a distinct phenomenon, the ‘instrumental case study’ makes use of a specific case in order to get a deeper understanding of a problem or phenomenon, and the ‘collective case study’ is researching multiple cases concurrently or sequentially in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of a specific problem. Sneed et al. (2020) identify three types of commonly employed case studies: single case study, multiple case studies, and intrinsic case study. Further it discusses that the single case studies are primarily employed for exploring uncommon, exceptional, or typical instances or for the study phenomena which requires a continuous investigation. Multiple case studies which are also established as collective case studies, study and problems or a study phenomenon through multiple well-defined cases to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. Yin (2003) identifies six types of case studies: explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, single, multiple, and collective. Explanatory case studies are employed when the researcher wants to answer a question about the hypothesized causal relationships in real-life actions that are too complicated for survey or experimental procedures. Exploratory is a type of case studies that are used to study conditions in which the intervention being assessed does not have a clear, single set of results. Descriptive case studies are employed to explain an action or phenomenon and the real-life setting in which it happened, and descriptive research primarily draws on document evaluation, participant observation, and in-depth interviews to gain an understanding of the experiences, viewpoints, and ideologies of individuals in a specific set of circumstances (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In the single case study type, the researcher selects a specific type of case for the study, and multiple case studies let the researcher study variances between and within cases (Yin, 2003). Since comparisons will be made, the cases must be carefully selected so that the researcher can foresee similar findings across cases or anticipate contrasting findings based on a theory. Furthermore, multiple case studies are often considered more solid than single case studies since they provide observation and study of an event in multiple contexts (Yin, 2009). The multiple case studies also provide a replication logic wherein the cases are viewed as a bundle of independent studies.

3.3.4.4 Single vs multiple case studies

Sena (2023) notes that choosing between a single-case and a multiple-case study design is a key methodological decision and the choice should align with the study's purpose and research questions and require clear specification of the unit of analysis. A single-case design supports in-depth understanding of one case, whereas a multiple-case design enables analytic comparison across cases. Similarly, Yin and Campbell (2018) single case study is specifically suitable for some situations such as;

Critical case: To decide if a theoretical claim is to be modified or accepted as true. It supports whichever confirm or build a new theory.

Unusual or extreme case: Helpful in clinical psychology and other domains where the case deviates from the norm and offers new perspectives on processes.

Common case: Portrays real-world events to offer original perspectives on social dynamics associated with a particular theoretical area of interest.

Revelatory case: When a phenomenon that was beforehand unstudied by science becomes available, like studying a secret organization.

Longitudinal case: Exploring the same case twice to track changes over time.

Further, Yin and Campbell (2018) highlight that when a study contains more than one case, multiple case studies are applicable. Multiple-case studies enable the researcher to apply consistent exploratory procedures across cases in order to compare and contrast two or more cases addressing the same research issues, and to identify recurring patterns by examining similar conditions across several instances. On the other hand, multiple case studies are useful for comparative analyses that try to explore differences between various settings or contexts.

Daniel (2007) highlights that the case study approach employs in-depth study of single and/or multiple case studies that gives a methodical way of approaching the problem, collecting and analyzing the data, and reporting the findings. It further underlines that exploring multiple cases enhances the generalizability of the conclusions drawn. According to Stake (1995), a case study appears to be insufficient ground for generalization. Only one or a few cases will be explored in-depth. However, if multiple case studies center on the same phenomenon in distinct contexts is replicated, a specific generalization can be established (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009).

Notably, a case study is not a 'sample,' and the purpose of doing one is to develop and generalize theories, not to quantify frequencies.

It requires different actors in different contexts to be studied. The background in each of the cases differs in multiple or collective case studies, and enables the researcher to conduct studies both inside and across contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2015). Several instances in a multiple case study can be studied to discover the commonalities and dissimilarities between the two cases. When studying several cases of the same phenomenon, the researcher continues to add instances until he or she no longer learns anything new about the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Furthermore, the other important thing is that the descriptive cases are used to construct a comprehensive, comprehensive depiction of a phenomenon to convey the story to policymakers, scholars, and other communities (Odell, 2001). Dul and Hak (2008) advocate that multiple case studies typically involve a collection of case studies used to develop or apply theories, rather than an arrangement of repetitive experiments to test peculiar hypotheses. Halkias (2022) states that multiple case studies admit for a multifaced exploration across respective instances, presenting comparative insights and a broader understanding of the events across diverse contexts. Further it draws attention of replication logic of multiple case studies. Multiple case studies devote replication logic, where each case is handled as a separate conduct experiment to prove or rebut the emerging conclusions.

Since the study focuses on different cases in the sectors of tourism and agriculture and as the study makes a cross-sectional comparison on the interplay of EE, CE and CWC, the multiple case study approach is selected and used for this study.

3.3.5 Data collection

Preparation for data collection could be a complex task and if this step is not performed correctly, the whole case study inquiry may be at risk, and all of the prior efforts in developing the case study may be in vain (Yin, 2009). Yin states that the researcher should be well qualified and competent in conducting a high-standard case study because of the constant interplay between theoretical concerns being researched and the data being collected. Only a more competent researcher will reap the benefits of unforeseen opportunities instead of being bound by them while collecting data.

3.3.5.1 Data collecting sources.

The researcher needs to identify and select sites or people for the proposed study purposely and purposive selection helps the researcher to understand the research problem clearly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Purposeful sampling is commonly employed in qualitative research for identifying and selecting suitable cases related to the phenomenon of study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Collecting data for case study research is more than just mechanically recording evidence. Even though formal processes are used to collect case study research data, the exact data that becomes relevant to a case study is not always predictable (Yin, 2009). Moreover, when the data is collected for a case study, the researcher must immediately review the evidence and constantly inquire why events or facts seem the way they do. The researcher's conclusions may need an aggressive search for new evidence.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) identify four fundamental types in collection procedures of qualitative research: (a) qualitative observations, (b) qualitative interviews, (c) qualitative documents, and (d) qualitative audiovisual and digital materials. Yin (2009) identifies six sources that could be used for case study evidence: (a) documents, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, (d) direct observation, (e) participant observation, and (f) physical artifacts.

(a) Documents - Except for studies of primitive societies, documentation data is almost always relevant to the case studies (Yin, 2009). Primarily, letters, memoranda, e-mail correspondence, and other personal documents, including diaries, calendars, notes, agendas, announcements, meeting minutes, other written reports of events, administrative documents including proposals, progress reports, and other internal records, newspaper articles from the mainstream media or public newspapers are used to collect data for the case study research.

(b) Archival records- Records often take the form of computer files and records, and these records can be used in conjunction with other sources of information in producing a case study (Yin, 2009). Moreover, this may include public or national statistical data, service records of the organization, institutional records, such as budget or personnel records, maps, and geographical characteristics of a place. The applicability and usefulness of this data depend on the nature of the case study.

(c) Interviews - Since the case studies deal with human affairs or behavioral events, the interview is identified as an essential method for collecting data (Yin, 2009). Researchers conduct face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, or focus group interviews with respondents. The interviews contain unstructured and often open-ended questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Yin (2009), the researcher must pursue his or her path of inquiry, as outlined in the case study procedure and ask the fundamental questions unbiased throughout the interview session. Moreover, an in-depth interview is one genre of case study interview. In the in-depth interview, the researcher can ask relevant respondents regarding the facts of a situation as well as their thoughts on events. In other cases, the researcher also might push the interviewee to present her or his own thoughts regarding events, and such suggestions may be used as the ground for further investigation. As a result, the 'interview' could take place over a period rather than a single session. The interviewee may also recommend more people for the interview. 'Focused interview' is another type of interview, and it takes a short period. The researcher uses open-ended questions; however, the researcher follows the specific questions that have been developed in the case study design. The third type is the 'structured interviews,' which entails more structured questions, and this primarily produces more quantitative data.

(d) Direct observation- There could be formal to casual observations, and observational methods can be established as components of the case study procedure, and the fieldworker may be asked to rate the incidence of different kinds of behaviors across specific periods in the ground (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, the meetings, sidewalk activities, factory work, classrooms, and so on can all be observed in this way.

(e) Participant observation - This is a unique observation method in which the observer engages with roles within the researched activities. Among these engagements, living in a community, working as a staff member in an organization, and working as a central decision-maker are essential.

(f) Physical artifacts- This could be a piece of technology, a tool or equipment, a work of art, or other forms of tangible proof (Yin, 2009). These artifacts can be gathered or viewed as case study and extensively used in anthropological studies. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), photographs, art pieces, video recordings, web pages, e-mails, text messages, social media text, or any sound may include this.

Especially in using observations and interviews, the qualitative researchers should develop observation protocols and interview protocols before going to the ground for collecting case study data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The observational protocol includes a plan for recording observations in a qualitative study, and the interview protocol includes the plan for asking questions and recording answers during the interview process.

Purposive sampling was used to select information-rich SME entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka’s tourism and agricultural sectors who could provide direct insight into entrepreneurial practice, ecosystem engagement, collective action, and community-oriented value creation (Patton, 2015). Participants were identified through official sector classifications, geographical distribution, institutional contact points, and relevance to the research questions, with sampling continuing until sufficient depth and saturation were reached. Qualitative research is concerned with describing, understanding, and interpreting human experience (Polkinghorne, 2005). In qualitative inquiry, sample size is guided by the depth and relevance of the data rather than by a fixed number of participants determined in advance (Taylor et al., 2015). Accordingly, data collection continued until saturation was reached, that is, the point at which additional interviews generated little or no new information relevant to the emerging themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Guest et al., 2013).

3.3.5.2 Selection of cases

Multiple cases were selected for this study from the Tourism and Agricultural industries in Sri Lanka. Case selection followed a stratified purposive logic to support comparison across the two sectors, regions, enterprise types, and participant profiles, rather than statistical representativeness. This enabled the study to examine both shared patterns and sector-specific differences in how EE, CE, CWC, and IE were experienced and enacted.

In this study, the empirical cases are SME enterprises in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, while the interviewees are the entrepreneurs or focal informants representing those enterprises. This clarifies that the unit of empirical observation is the entrepreneur's account, while the case itself is the enterprise and its embedded relationships with employees, other enterprises, support institutions, and local communities.

a) Selection of cases from tourism industry

Consistent with the thesis definition (Chapter 2, section 2.1), entrepreneurship is treated as a contextually situated process of opportunity enactment and value creation that can be pursued by individuals and/or groups and can generate economic and non-economic outcomes. Accordingly, the tourism sample comprised SME owner-founders/co-founders and/ or owner managers who were actively engaged in opportunity enactment and value creation in their ventures. Cases were selected across sub sectors and locating using Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) establishment classifications and sectoral distributions.

According to the SLTDA's 2019 establishment survey, the total number of tourism establishments covered was 4,341 (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2020). Establishment categories used to frame the tourism sector composition are shown in Table 3.6. Tourism SME cases were selected using SLTDA establishment classifications and sectoral composition, while SME status was determined using the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2015) SME definition (Table 3.8). Reflecting the study's focus on SME tourism activity, respondents were drawn from SME-relevant categories including homestay owners, tour operators, tour planners, other accommodation service providers (e.g., guest houses and bungalows), and theme park owners. Selection also considered geographical spread, guided by the distribution of accommodation capacity across resort regions reported by SLTDA (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2020) (Table 3.7).

Table 3.6: Composition of the tourism establishments

Category of establishments	Number of establishments
Hotel and restaurants and accommodation	3,158
Travel agents and tour operators	994
Agencies providing recreational facilities	80
Tourist shops	87
Guides	-
National tourist organization	4
State sector	18
Total	**4,341**

Note. Adapted from Annual Statistical Report 2019 (Provisional Release) (Table 27, p. 99; Employment section, p. 34), by Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), 2020.

Table 3.7: The distribution of accommodation capacity

Region	Percentage
Colombo City (CC)	22.71
Greater Colombo (GC)	12.29
South Coast (SC)	35.02
Ancient Cities (AC)	17.97
Hill Country (HC)	6.23
East Coast (EC)	4.84
Northern Region (NR)	0.95

Note. Adapted from "Distribution of Accommodation Capacity by Region (Percentage), 2019" (Chart 18), in Annual Statistical Report 2019 (Provisional Release) (p. 29), Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2020.

Definition of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (2015) is used for identifying tourism SMEs for collecting data. Table 3.8 shows the definition.

Table 3.8: SME definition by the Ministry of Industries and Commerce

	Criteria	Medium	Small	Micro
Manufacturing Sector	Annual Turnover	Rs. Mn. 251-750	Rs. Mn. 16-250	Less than Rs. Mn. 15
	No. of Employees	51-300	11-50	Less than 10
Service Sector	Annual Turnover	Rs. Mn. 251-750	Rs. Mn. 16-250	Less than Rs. Mn. 15
	No. of Employees	51-200	11-50	Less than 10

Note. *Adapted from* Table 1 ("Defining SMEs in Sri Lanka") in *National Policy Framework for Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Development* (p. 4), by Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2015.

b) Selection of cases from agricultural industry

Building on Chapter 2 (Section 2.1) framing, agricultural entrepreneurship is approached as the enactment of opportunities and value creation within farming-related ventures, including economic and non-economic outcomes. Accordingly, the agriculture sample comprised agricultural entrepreneurs (owner-operators and/or owner-managers) who were actively involved in strategic and operational decisions within their ventures.

Case selection followed a stratified purposive logic. First, agricultural sub-sectors were identified using the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's industrial-origin breakdown of agriculture, forestry, and fishing (Table 3.9), and respondents were selected proportionally across sub-sectors to reflect sectoral composition.

Table 3.9: Contribution of agriculture, forestry and fishing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by industrial origin at current market prices (LKR mn), 2020

Sector	Contribution (LKR Millions)	Percentage
1. Growing of cereals (except rice)	37,501	3.00
2. Growing of rice	168,512	13.46
3. Growing of vegetables	133,317	10.65
4. Growing of sugar cane, tobacco and other non-perennial crops	4,567	0.36
5. Growing of fruits	116,135	9.28
6. Growing of oleaginous fruits (coconut, king coconut, oil palm)	109,612	8.76
7.Growing of tea	108,544	8.67
8.Growing of other beverage crops (coffee, cocoa, etc.)	3,864	0.31
9. Growing of spices, aromatic drug, and pharmaceutical crops	94,892	7.58
10. Growing rubber	17,422	1.39
11.Growing of other perennial crops	32,545	2.60
12.Animal production	139,961	11.18
13. Plant propagation and support activities to agriculture	13,178	1.05
14. Forestry and logging	105,760	8.45
15. Marine fishing and marine aquaculture	135,409	10.82
16. Fresh water fishing and freshwater aquaculture	30,702	2.45
Total	**1,251,921**	**100.00**

Adapted from: Central Bank of Sri Lanka. (2021). Recent Economic Developments: Highlights of 2021 and Prospects for 2022 (Statistical Appendix, Table 1: "Gross Domestic Product by Industrial Origin at Current Market Prices").

Agricultural cases were selected within the focal agricultural sub-sectors. To support geographical coverage and ensure that cases were drawn from areas where relevant activities are concentrated, respondent identification was guided by the Department of Census and

Statistics (2018) reporting of the main locations of key agricultural activities. Table 3.10 summarizes the principal areas associated with each activity and was used to guide the spatial distribution of case selection.

Table 3.10: Main areas associated with key agricultural activities

Sector	Areas
1. Growing cereals (except rice)	Anuradhapura, Hambanthota
2. Growing of rice	Kurunagala, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Monaragala, Rathnapura, Hambanthota
3. Growing of vegetables	Nuwaraeliya, Bandarawela, Dambulla, Rathnapura, Jaffna
4. Growing sugar cane, tobacco, and other non-perennial crops	Monaragala, Anuradhapura
5. Growing of fruits	Hambanthota, Anuradhapura, Monaragala, Rathnapura
6. Growing of oleaginous fruits (coconut, king coconut, oil palm)	Chilow, Puttalam, Kurunagala
7. Growing of tea	Rathnapura, Galle, Mathara, Nuwaraeliya
8. Growing of other beverage crops (coffee, cocoa, etc.)	Mathale, Kegalla,Kandy
9. Growing of spices, aromatic drugs, and pharmaceutical crops	Rathnapura, Badulla, Mathale
10. Growing rubber	Kegalla
11. Growing of other perennial crops (Cashew)	Puttalam, Chilow, Mathara
12. Plant propagation and support activities to agriculture	Peradeniya, Mathale, Kandy, Rathnapura, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Ampara

Note. Adapted from Economic Census 2013/14: Agricultural activities, General report (Department of Census and Statistics [DCS], 2018, Table 3.9).

To operationalize enterprise scale within agriculture and to ensure consistency in identifying the target group, the study applied classification of agricultural establishments of the Department of Census and Statistics (2018) (Table 3.11). This classification distinguishes the smallholding sector from the estate sector based on holding size. In line with the study's focus on smaller-scale entrepreneurial activity in agriculture, the sampling strategy prioritized entrepreneurs operating within the smallholding sector, while recognizing that the estate sector represents a distinct structural segment of the agricultural economy.

Table 3.11: Classification of agricultural establishments

Sector	Holdings	Percentage	Extent (acres)	Percentage
Smallholding sector				
a. Holdings of ¼ acre or less	2,034,331	46.73	239,677	4.25
b. Holdings of above ¼ acre or above	2,311,343	53.09	4,404,599	78.05
Estate sector				
Holdings of 20 acres or above	7,447	0.18	999,001	17.70
Total	**4,353,121**	**100.00**	**5,643,277**	**100.00**

Note. Adapted from Economic Census 2013/14: Agricultural activities, General report (Department of Census and Statistics [DCS], 2018, Table 3.2.1, p. 29).

3.3.5.3 Choice of interview

Data collection in multiple case studies employ diverse sources to ensure an inclusive comprehension of each case within its real-life setting (Halkias, 2022). This highlights that these different sources consist of interviews, observations, documents, and archival records. Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of empirical data because they enabled participants to explain their experiences, practices, and relationships in depth. Contextual understanding was supported by official sector statistics, policy documents, government reports, institutional information, and field notes, which helped situate participants' accounts within Sri Lanka's tourism, agriculture, SME, and institutional context. Brennen (2017) also supported stating that interviews are the most natural way to gather data asking questions and that has been deployed by the researchers over thousands of years. According to Longhurst and Johnston (2023), talking with people is an exceptional methodology to gather data. Further it discusses the semi-structured interview is an excellent way to gather data where two people converse verbally. The interviewer employs pre-defined questions to obtain data from other parties. Even though the semi structured interviews are powered by pre-defined questions, the interviewers allow the participant to express their insights freely. They discussed a five-step process: (1) formulating questions, (2) selecting and recruiting participants, (3) choosing a location, (4) recording and transcribing discussions, and (5) navigating ethical issues. Nathan et al. (2019) discuss about a ten-step process for conducting semi-structured interviews: (1) learning how to interview, (2) ethical considerations, (3) managing challenges and strategies in interviewing elite participants, (4) planning for interviews, (5) selecting participants to interview, (6) recruiting the participants, (7) planning and piloting the interview, (8) doing interview, (9) interview practice: listening, questioning, and probing, and (10) after interview works. Kvale (1996) drawn seven steps to be performed when employing qualitative interviews: (1) conceptualizing a research question and outlining the theoretical framework guiding the research, (2) designing the research study, (3) conducting the interviews, (4) transcribing the interviews, (5) analyzing the information obtained from the interviews, (6) verifying the information from the interviews, and (7) writing up the findings of the study. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) discuss a seven-step process for qualitative interviews: (1) thematizing, (2) designing, (3) interviewing, (4) transcribing, (5) analyzing, (6) verifying, and (7) reporting. This study follows the qualitative interview process proposed by Brinkmann and Kvale (2015).

Accordingly, ***thematizing*** involves guiding and aligning the purpose of the study. It entails crafting clear and focused research questions defining the theoretical framework of the study. The interview questions which included in the initial interview guide (Appendix B) were drafted based on the overarching research question. However, the interviews were planned to transcend the initial guide. That allowed the interviewees to express anything potentially diverse, more intense and multifaced than the guide. The initial interview guide was re-developed (Appendix C) after performing the mock interviews. Thus, the initial thematic frame on collective entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship eco-system, civic wealth creation and the interplay of these three was re structured and employed.

Designing helps to planning the methodological approach, selecting participants, the ethical considerations and that involves determining the number of interviews to be conducted. The study follows purposive sampling, and the geographical context is Sri Lanka. Participants are practicing small and medium entrepreneurs, and they were selected from tourism and agricultural sectors. The official definitions and the frameworks and the geographical distribution of establishments were used to identify and select the participants for the interviews.

The following process was followed by selecting participants and collecting data.

i. Participants were identified according to the selection criteria.
ii. The list of places/institutions where the entrepreneurs/participants are registered was developed.
iii. Official letters were sent to the identified organizations to obtain approval to contact participants for conducting interviews and to obtain contact details of entrepreneurs/participants.
iv. Invitation letters were sent to the selected participants along with the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form. In addition to that the participants were contacted and explained the objectives, anticipated benefits and the expected contribution to the study.

v. List of participants was prepared with the participants who sent back the Consent forms and prepared the final list of participants accordingly.
vi. The participants/entrepreneurs were contacted to make appointments for the interviews.

The third step is ***Interviewing:*** There were three phases of the interview process: mock interview phase, primary phase and follow-up phase. Several mock interviews were conducted in different modes and under different conditions to check the appropriateness of the method and conditions and to check the effectiveness of the interview guide. The interview guide was re-structured four times after the interviews. The nature of conducting the interviews also re-developed after these mock interviews. In the first round all the interviews were conducted via video conferencing. Several follow-up interviews were conducted face to face during 30th March 2023 to 13th April 2023. Except for a few interviews, others were mainly conducted in the participants' mother tongue. It helped them get their ideas across without the objections that language might cause. The interviews were conducted in settings appropriate and accessible for the participants, ensuring a comfortable environment conducive to open discussion. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes, providing ample time for participants to elaborate on their experiences and viewpoints. With the consent of the participants, interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy in capturing their responses.

Interviews were conducted with 26 participants. 14 participants were tourism entrepreneurs, and 12 participants were agricultural entrepreneurs. This cohort included 18 male and 8 female entrepreneurs, a distribution that aligns well with the gender demographics of entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. The age distribution of the respondents presents a diverse range. The youngest participants fall under the age group of under 35, with only two respondents aged 32 and 34, indicating a modest representation of the younger demographic. The age group of

35 to 39 years is more prevalent, featuring five respondents, with ages 37 and 38 being particularly common. The most represented age bracket in the study is 40 to 44 years, encompassing seven participants, reflecting a significant involvement of mid-career professionals. The 45 to 49 years age group, with three respondents, and the 50 to 54 years group, also with three respondents, show a moderate presence in the study. Interestingly, there is a notable representation of senior participants, with the 55 to 59 years age group and the 60 and above-age group each contributing three respondents. This diverse age range among the participants ensures a comprehensive perspective, encompassing insights from different stages of professional and personal life experiences, which is crucial for a study delving into the dynamics of collective entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship eco-system and wealth creation in key sectors of Sri Lanka.

The data collected reflect a diverse range of nationalities and religions among the participants. There were 13 individuals who identified as Sinhala Buddhist, three as Sinhala Catholic, and four as Tamil Hindu. Additionally, the group included one Tamil Catholic, four Muslims practicing Islam, and one Burgher Catholic. In total, the study encompassed 26 participants, reflecting a varied mix of cultural and religious backgrounds. Nationality and religion were documented to explore whether these factors influenced participants' perspectives and practices in relation to CE, CWC, and engagement with the EE.

In looking at how general education and business management education is faring; the following aspects were noticed. The largest group, consisting of eight individuals, has completed Advanced Level education. Following this, six participants hold bachelor's degrees. Interestingly, two participants have attained master's degrees. The group also includes three participants with Ordinary Level education and two with no formal education, reflecting a wide spectrum of educational experiences. Although the educational profile records formal schooling, participants' entrepreneurial understanding also reflected practical business experience, sector exposure, family business involvement, community and religious engagement, and training received through universities, government agencies, industry bodies, and other support institutions.

In relation to the unveiling drivers of their entrepreneurial motivation, respondents reflect a diverse range of personal, familial, and experiential factors. For some entrepreneurs, the decision to embark on this journey stems from a desire for more challenges and the opportunity to fully utilize their skills, as articulated by Respondent A (vegetable farmer). Childhood dreams and a long-standing ambition to be an entrepreneur are evident in responses from Respondents B (hotelier), Respondent K (greenhouse and organic farmer), Respondent O (homestay networker), and Respondent S (adventure-wellness operator). Family backgrounds and legacies play a pivotal role, with several entrepreneurs citing familial involvement in agriculture or other business ventures as significant influences. Respondents G (greenhouse farmer), Respondent L (tea producer), Respondent U (mixed-crop farmer), and Respondent V (tour operator) emphasize the influence of family traditions and a business-oriented environment from an early age. Others, like Respondent I (homestay owner), Respondent W (travel agent), and Respondent Z (cultural host), express the motivation to continue or transform existing family businesses. Adverse life events, such as personal struggles or the need for financial stability, have also driven entrepreneurs to start their own ventures. Respondents F (vegetable farmer), Respondent J (crop farmer), and Respondent P (event host) detail how life challenges, including personal setbacks and the need to provide for their families, motivated them to enter the entrepreneurial sphere. Educational experiences, exposure to community organizations, and religious inspiration emerge as motivational factors for some entrepreneurs. Respondents D (tour operator), Respondent H (tour planner), Respondent N (vegetable farmer), Respondent Q (community tourism operator), Respondent

R (cultural park owner), and Respondent X (flower farmer) highlight how education, community support, and religious institutions provided the inspiration and resources necessary to initiate their businesses.

These differences in sector, region, age, gender, education, religion, community exposure, and entrepreneurial experience were treated as sources of analytic depth, helping explain variation in how participants interpreted collaboration, ecosystem support, civic responsibility, and individualistic practice.

Respondents from the tourism industry have been selected by taking above considerations and when data was saturated responses were collected from 14 respondents. The summary of the selected respondents is given in table 3.12 below.

Table 3.12: Respondents from the tourism industry

Respondent	Services offer	Establishment	No. of Interviews
B	Accommodation, travel planning, guided tours	Colombo	02
D	Tour planning, accommodation, travel guidance, and other tourism-related services	Galle	01
H	Accommodation	Colombo	02
I	Accommodation, guided tours, local lifestyles experiences, travel planning	Nuwaraeliya	02
O	Tour planning, accommodation, transportation, and tourism researching	Hikkaduwa	01
P	Accommodation, tour planning, event management, transportation, referral management	Trincomalee	01
Q	Accommodation, tour planning, guided tours and cultural services	Batticaloa	01

R	Accommodation, tour planning, guided tours, cultural services, and event management	Jaffna	02
S	Guided tours, adventure, camping, ayurveda wellness, accommodation, and tourism content management	Ella, Badulla	01
T	Accommodation, tour planning, adventure and recreational activities, travel and logistics support	Dambulla	02
V	Accommodation, guided tours, water sports, local culinary experiences, and cultural tours	Mirissa, Mathara	02
W	Tour planning, booking services and other tourism logistic services	Colombo	01
Y	Accommodation, tour planning, guided tours, and tourist shop	Kaluthara, Colombo	01
Z	Accommodation, tour planning, guided tours, cultural services and engagements, and tourist shop	Anuradhapura	01

Note: Compiled by the author based on survey data

Respondents from the agricultural industry have been selected by taking above considerations and when data was saturated responses were collected from 12 respondents. The summary of the selected respondents is given in table 3.13 below.

Table 3.13: Respondents from the agricultural industry

Respondent	**Services offer**	**Establishment**	**No. of Interviews**
A	Cultivating indigenous rice	Gampaha	02
C	Export agriculture	Gampaha	01
E	Cultivation and agricultural innovations	Eheliyagoda	01
F	Cultivating vegetables	Badulla	01
G	Greenhouse cultivation	Bandarawela	02
J	Tea cultivation	Rathnapura	02

K	Cultivating vegetables in greenhouses	Welimada	01
L	Cultivation and value-added services	Colombo	01
M	Cultivation of commercial crops	Hambanthota	01
N	Cultivation of vegetables and fruits	Kurunagala	01
U	Cultivation of vegetables	Jaffna	01
X	Cultivation of vegetables	Hambanthota	02

Note. Compiled by the author based on survey data

Together, Tables 3.12 and 3.13 show that the 26 participants represent 26 SME enterprise cases, 14 in tourism and 12 in agriculture, while the number of interviews reflects initial and follow-up interview interactions.

The fifth step was transcribing. The recorded interviews were converted to the text format, and the interviews were conducted in local language translated to the English. The translated transcripts were again translated to their local language and verifying the accuracy of the insights given by the participants.

Analyzing is the next step proposed by the Brinkmann and Kvale (2015). The inductive thematic analysis employed in this and that was performed using open coding approach. A detailed outline is given in section 3.3.6.

The sixth step of the process is ***verifying***. This implies decisively investigating the data and the analysis to confirm that the conclusions drawn are well-supported and credible. A quality qualitative study should possess a clear and justified research question, indicating that the study is timely, original, rigorous, and relevant (Lingard, 2015; Stenfors et al., 2020). Further it Stenfors et al. (2020) highlight that, the alignment of the theoretical or conceptual framework with the research design, research question(s), and methodology employed, alongside the manner in which research findings are reported are critical requirements for ensuring the quality of a qualitative study. Critical reflection and a robust justification of the chosen framework that underpins the study are imperative for conducting high-quality qualitative research. Reliability and validity are two critical areas of all research and scholars claim that the rigor of qualitative studies is akin to the fundamentals of reliability and validity, highlighting that all these aspects are critical for a high-quality study (Brink, 1993; Cypress, 2017). Furthermore, Stenfors et al. (2020) discuss the widely used four criteria which ensure the quality of a qualitative study: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability which were originally discussed by Guba et al. (1994).

In section 3.3.7 it is explained about the aspects and strategies for ensuring the quality of qualitative research.

The final step is ***reporting***. This includes presenting the findings of the study in a manner that is consistent, engaging, and accessible. This study presents the direct quotes of the participants under the identified themes. These quotes and themes are integrated to build a story to address the overarching research problem.

3.3.5.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Longhurst & Johnston, 2023; Nathan et al., 2019; Yin & Campbell, 2018). This study is conducted in full accordance with the Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations of the University of Waikato (University of Waikato, 2024). As per the guidelines approval was obtained from the Waikato Management School's Ethics Committee (Appendix A) before commencing the data collection phase. The goals, anticipated benefits of the research, proposed method, plans to give participants information about the research goals, expected outputs of this research, the way of selecting participants, the way of inviting participants, the way of getting the consents of the participants, the way of ensuring privacy and confidentiality, the way of exercising social and cultural sensitivity were outlined in the application (Appendix D).

The preliminary engagement with study participants was initiated by sending the cover letter (Appendix E), the participant information sheet (Appendix F), and the consent form (Appendix G). The cover letter invites the participants to engage in the study and that mentioned the purpose of the study as well. The participant information sheet outlined the overview of the study, the role of the participants and time taken for the data collection process (interview), the way of keeping and handling data after the data collection, declaration to the participants and relevant contact details.

The consent form for the study is important in ensuring that participants are fully informed and comfortable with the data collection process. The signed consent form confirms that participants have read the information presented in the participant information sheet Participants admit that their questions about the study have been satisfactorily answered, with the assurance that they can seek additional clarification at any point. The consent form also features the right of the participant to withdraw from the research process within one month after data collection or to opt out of answering specific questions.

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained, and care was taken to ensure that the data was handled with sensitivity and respect. Since the discussions were conducted without touching any sensitive matters related to the privacy of the participants, there weren’t any conflicts, misunderstandings, or heartaches.

3.3.6 Data analysis

Researchers need to identify the steps in analyzing the diverse types of qualitative data. It entails segmenting and disassembling data as well as reassembling it. The process of qualitative data analysis in the study may begin with several introductory remarks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These key considerations include simultaneous procedures, knowing the data, using qualitative computer software programs for assistance (if applicable), an overview of the data analysis process, and specific coding procedures. In many aspects, qualitative data are more complicated to handle than quantitative data, and qualitative analysis takes a more significant amount of time and effort on the part of the researcher to read and reread data notes, focus on what is read, and draw comparisons founded on logic and opinion (Neuman, 2014). Moreover, most qualitative data analysis methods include coding and the development of analytic memos.

Thematic Analysis (TA) was employed in this study to analyze qualitative data. TA is a means for analyzing qualitative data (e.g., survey responses, interview transcripts, social media profiles, et cetera) involving the search of recurrent patterns [ideas, topics] through a set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a way for describing data but also includes interpretation of codes and thematic selection procedures. Aronson (1995) argued that TA is sliding into the ethnographic realm while (Joffe, 2012) confined the idea specifically to phenomenology. Taking a different viewpoint, Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that TA could be regarded as a stand-alone analytical method as a foundation for qualitative research methods.

Further, they describe that the TA can highlight the social, cultural, and structural contexts that shape subjective individual experiences in many interpretive methods (i.e., constructivism) and enable the creation of knowledge built through interactions between researchers and researchers, revealing socially constructed meanings. Joffe (2012) also supported the view that TA is particularly apposite for constructivism because it can reflect a given social construct by analyzing a broad array of data. In this way, constructivist thematic analyses will look for deeper and more latent themes within the collected qualitative data

(Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It is not catering to examine unique interpretations or experiences from a particular individual or data item since it focuses on share or common meanings. Theoretical flexibility is a common feature of TA, but underlying philosophies and methods for generating themes vary (Braun & Clarke, 2021b). TA characterized by the inclusion of researcher subjectivity is called Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

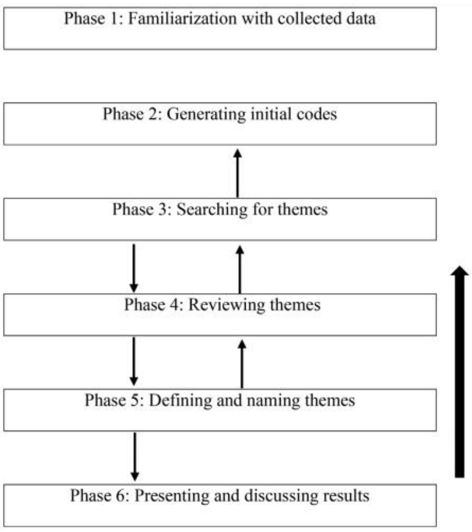
In TA, a theme is a 'patterned response or meaning' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82) originating from collected data focusing on a particular research question. These identified themes can be classed in two ways, as 'semantic' (or manifest), which treat data items manifestly or more directly, or as; 'latent' which reflect a deeper understanding of the ideologies and assumptions (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, I expect to employ latent themes that will capture the more profound ideologies the themes identified.

Theme identification can be inductive or deductive (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012). The researcher develops themes from the collected qualitative data in the inductive approach, similar to the Grounded theory application (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Varpio et al., 2020). In the deductive approach, themes are identified with the aid of existing theories, frameworks, or any other focus on the researcher's mind (Varpio et al., 2020). Thus, an inductive method tends to give a more comprehensive examination of all the data collected. However, the present study followed an abductive, theoretically informed thematic approach. Existing literature on EE, CE, CWC, and IE provided sensitizing concepts, but the analysis did not impose a fixed model on the data. Instead, empirical patterns were compared with the literature through iterative coding, theme refinement, cross-case comparison, and sectoral synthesis, enabling the TSM to be developed through interaction between empirical evidence and theoretical interpretation.

3.3.6.1 The Iterative process of qualitative data analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) method has become the most widely and commonly used technique of TA in qualitative research (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). They have presented it in six phases, and this method encourages the researcher to circle back to previous steps in light of new data or newly emergent themes that deserve additional examination to the preliminary phases. This iterative process has been graphically illustrated as in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: The iterative process of qualitative data analysis



Note. Adapted from Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101, Table 1.

Step 1: Familiarizing with collected data

The initial stage in TA is familiarizing the researcher with the complete data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Depending on the investigation, an array of data sources (e.g., field notes, photographs, audio, or video-recorded observations, in-depth interviews, et cetera) may be used. Transcribing audio data will help to familiarize with the data, although it is time-consuming. Rosenblatt and Wieling (2019) highlight that transcription and meticulous examination of transcriptions is a critical part for coding, highlighting the dominant trends in responses to the questions, and identification of statements from interviewees provide compelling quotations play an important role in TA.

In this study, all audio-recorded discussions were transcribed into text for analysis. As most interviews were translated into English, broad business terms used by participants were interpreted in relation to the surrounding interview context, enterprise type, and specific practices described, rather than being treated as evidence in isolation. Since this semi-structured interview consisting of open-ended questions, several respondents start with their life experiences and later in the discussions they move to the study contexts presenting their insights. All the transcriptions were printed, and they read all the hardcopies page by page. After examining the entire discussion, the data was organized according to the interview guide without making damage to the meaning of the insights, experiences and other readings presented.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

This is the accurate analytic phase in the process. After getting familiarized with data, researchers might jot down prospective data items, queries, and relationships between data items in the second phase. This stage produces codes, not themes. A code is raw data that can be evaluated significantly about the research question (Boyatzis, 1998). As akin to the themes, coding may also be knotted to semantic or latent meanings, and coding may be inductive or deductive (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Rosenblatt and Wieling (2019) highlight that it is important to form a comprehensive understanding of each participant during debriefing discussions. After that specific focus can be given to the answers for the questions which are developed based on study contents. Further they argue that inductive coding helps to independently derive emergent codes from the material gathered during data collection.

Accordingly, after examining the entire discussions and organizing the contents the main direct codes were highlighted. A rough draft outline of coding categories was developed and placed the interview codes highlighted from each interview in a suitable place in the outline. It was performed another close examination to identify the overlapped codes and finally codes were organized in a rational way.

Step 3: Searching for themes.

The third step examines the possibility of bundling the coded data extracts for broader potential themes. *Thematic maps* help visualize cross-relationships between concepts, primary themes, and subthemes while generating and organizing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further, researchers can even build a 'miscellaneous' theme to integrate orphan code that does not fit their present theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While main themes establish essential connections between data items and address essential research questions, the researchers cannot be assured of which topics will be retained, deleted, or otherwise adjusted in the last analysis until step 4 has been reviewed (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

After investigating the highlighted codes, they have been contrasted with the themes which were backed by the literature. Subsequently the main themes and the relevant main codes and other supportive discussion contents were highlighted. Used color codes for organizing them.

The process of interviewing was challenging, because of the diversity of the interviewees. As an example, when it was asking their opinion about the present tourism entrepreneurship ecosystem, the respondents criticized the party politics of the country. After the follow-up questions it was realized that they have some bad experiences with the ecosystem, and they believe the route cause is dirty party politics. And another example is when it was asking about their idea or reading on collective business practices, they start discussing their family life. Even after the follow-up questions it was very difficult to have a relevant discussion. Thus,

some of codes and discussions contents were not matched with the initial thematic framework. However, it was not behaved in a way that interfered with the ideas of the participants, and some codes that were completely outside the drafted thematic frame were highlighted separately to be used for further analysis. Because no code can be dismissed as unnecessary. As the data analysis continues, more possibilities may emerge to take them under new themes. Nevertheless, all the pertinent new themes were added to the further analysis.

Step 4: Reviewing themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) described this step in a two-tier process. At the first step of analysis in step 4, the researcher considers the coded data included in each theme to confirm that they are well fitted to the themes. Data extracts may be re-sorted at this point of the process, and themes may be altered to enhanced reflection and capture the coded data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). In the second step, the researcher ensures that the themes are well fitted to the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic map should visibly show how themes interlink and how the questions or the interest construction is represented (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

During this refinement process, participants' accounts were compared across sectors, regions, enterprise types, backgrounds, and relational contexts to distinguish isolated individual differences from contextually meaningful variation that informed theme development and cross-case interpretation.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes

In step 5, researchers describe each theme, explaining why the particular theme is essential for the broader study topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher also explores areas of overlap, finds emerging sub-themes, and explicitly defines the spectrum of each theme.

After the initial review of themes, they were continuously reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. This involved revisiting the transcripts and adjusting the themes as necessary. Thereafter the themes were named and defined.

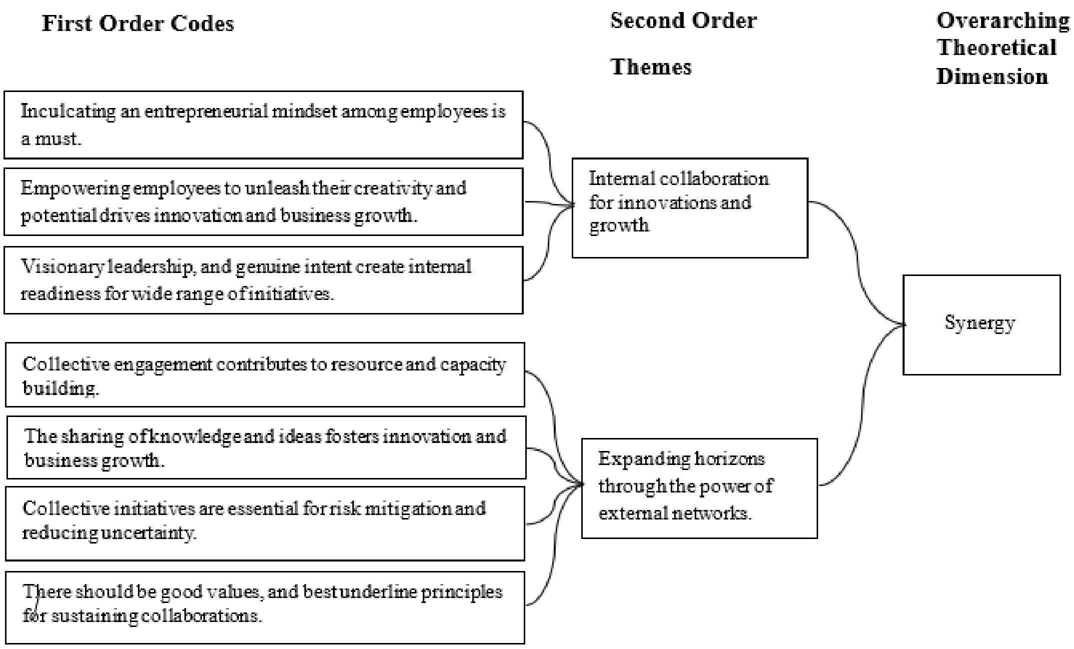
The dominant themes and the sub themes were defined by organizing the codes relevant to the key study areas which were derived from overarching research problems. The thematic framework consists already identified themes that were labelled considering the patterns of codes and also new themes were added to the initial thematic framework. In addition to that some initial themes were re-defined and merged due to the inability to find adequate or rich codes. These alterations were made to ensure the fitness between the themes and data.

Step 6: Producing the report/manuscript

This last stage comprises the final analysis and explanation of the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The report is to offer a clear, succinct, and logical description, not only of how a scholar interprets the data but also of the importance and accuracy of the selection of themes and interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Rosenblatt & Wieling, 2019). Thereafter, the reporting process was started analyzing themes and the interrelationship of themes towards the overarching research question.

The sample data structure is presented in figure 3.3 which reflects the level of data: first order codes, second order themes and overarching theoretical dimensions. This visual presentation shows how raw data is linked into meaningful themes. References to employees in Figure 3.3 reflect participants' accounts of internal CE within their own SME enterprises, including how owners, managers, and employees contributed to innovation, problem-solving, service delivery, and collaborative work.

Figure 3.3: Sample data structure



Note. Developed by the author from interview data

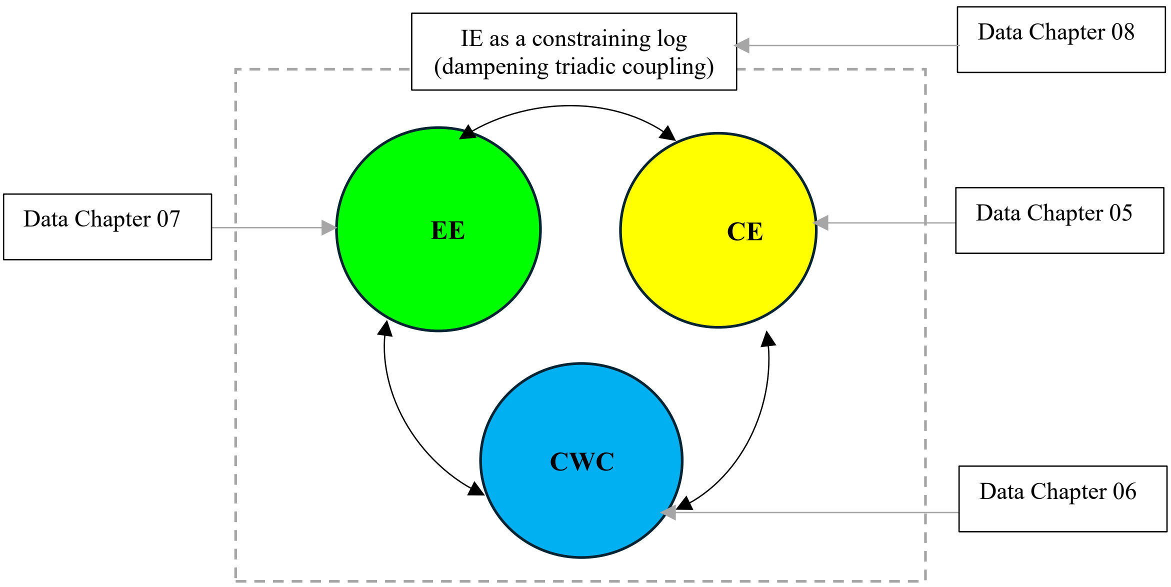
3.3.6.2 Manual Coding

In this study, manual coding was employed as a methodological approach for analyzing qualitative data. This tactical engagement immersed meticulously reading through the interview transcripts to identify and categorize codes, themes, patterns, and relationships directly observed from the content. Unlike automated coding methods that rely on software, manual coding allows for a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the data. Through manual coding, it has been ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the actual data, facilitating the emergence of rich, detailed insights that might otherwise be overlooked by automated processes.

Because coding was interpretive rather than mechanical, themes were retained where participants' accounts were linked to concrete practices, actor relationships, sector contexts, community outcomes, or constraints on collective action, with divergent accounts used to test and refine interpretations.

The analysis generated four empirically grounded strands, CE, EE, CWC, and IE as a constraining logic, which are reported in Chapters 5-8. The separation of CE, EE, CWC, and IE into different findings chapters was a reporting strategy rather than evidence that the domains were analyzed as isolated components. During coding and theme refinement, the analysis compared evidence across these components to identify influence, feedback, reinforcement, adaptation, and constraint. These cross-domain patterns provided the empirical basis for the development of the TSM in Chapter 9. Figure 3.4 summarizes the organization of the empirical chapters and sub-sections.

Figure 3.4: Organization of data chapters



Note. Compiled by author based on research data

3.3.7 Research Quality Considerations

Literature discloses substantial variability concerning the definitions and interpretations of qualitative research designs, the particular processes and procedures that differentiate one design from another (Cypress, 2017). However, each facet needs to be clearly addressed in research, along with an identification and discussion of possible errors (Brink, 1987). Reliability and validity remain fundamental elements across all types of research (Brink, 1993; Cypress, 2017; Morse, 2015). Moreover, Cypress (2017) highlights that the impact of factors that diminish reliability and validity cannot be actively addressed at the end of research using standards and criteria. The actions for ensuring validity and reliability should be taken during qualitative research process. The strategies depend on the methodological approach. In addition to that, it brings out the critical role of creativity, sensitivity, flexibility, and skills of the researcher in using the verification strategies for ensuring the validity and reliability. Tests to establish the validity and reliability of qualitative data are important to determine the stability and quality of data obtained. However, there is no single, coherent set of validity and reliability tests for each phase in case study research in the literature (Riege, 2003).

It is argued by researchers that the rigor of qualitative studies is comparable to the principles of reliability and validity, demonstrating that these concepts are crucial for confirming the overall quality of the research (Cypress, 2017). The term *rigor* has been identified discussed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) as trustworthiness (Morse, 2015). Furthermore, Cypress (2017) urges the use of term rigor than trustworthiness and the applicability of rigor in ensuring the quality of qualitative research. Consequently, rigor is principally defined as the quality or state of being very exact, careful, or with stringent accuracy. Morse et al. (2002), argue that without rigor, research is meaningless, becomes fiction, and obsolete. These authors define the rigor as the strength of the research design and the pertinence of the applied method to address the research questions. Qualitative research is anticipated to be conducted with utmost rigor due to the intrinsic possibility of subjectivity in these studies.

Guba and Lincoln (1989) discussed four criteria which determine trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Additionally, Guba et al. (1994) rendered them as credibility, reliability, confirmability, and applicability. Although these criteria have remained constant over time, the strategies for achieving each have changed over time (Morse, 2015).

Accordingly, the *credibility* of the research imposes clear and justified explication of the selected methodology (Guba et al., 1994). The researcher should clearly present the rationale for selecting a specific methodology for the study, the appropriate data collection method, the volume of data, the rationale for selecting cases, the questions or any other critical events which used for collected data are critical for ensuring credibility. Stenfors et al. (2020) claim that the need to assess and confirm the alignment of theoretical framework with the research design, the research questions, the methodology used in the study, and the reporting of the research findings for ensuring the quality of qualitative research. Further it highlights, high quality qualitative research requires critical introspection and a rationale for the chosen framework supporting the study. The data should be rich and appropriate, and they should reflect enough evidence to address the research questions (Morse, 2015). Further, they highlighted the importance of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and rich description for producing thick and rich data. It suggests spending more time on data collection and that helps to build up trust with the participants. Then the researcher can get thick and rich data.

Brink (1987) argue that researchers need to be ensured the validity and reliability in the studies which employ open-ended questions as they do not have correct answer from which to select. It becomes confronting for respondents to uniformly present acceptable responses, especially when the same questions are asked repeatedly. Therefore, the interviewer can repeat same question/s over time in the following interview/s to ensure stability. Furthermore, the researchers can use the alternate form of the question/s to validate the truth of the responses. Further, it proposed a well-designed interview guide to be used for ensuring the stability of the responses (Morse, 2015; Patton, 2015).

Negative case analysis is a strategy proposed by Morse (2015) to ensure the validity of qualitative research. It emphasizes that the researcher can't ignore or discard the negative cases as outliers in quantitative research. Further, it suggests that the negative cases should be analyzed purposely and that they should be compared with all other data to draw any new themes.

Dependability is another key pillar which decides the quality of qualitative study. That reflects the extent to which the research could be reproduced in similar environments (Guba et al., 1994). Riege (2003) argues that dependability verifies the steadiness and uniformity in the research inquiry process. It essentially evaluates if the methods or approaches employed throughout the study remain consistent. To ascertain dependability, one may inquire: are the research questions well-defined and do they align with the study design's attributes, and has the research been conducted with due diligence.

Confirmability ensures the connection between data and the findings (Guba et al., 1994). Further, it highlights that conformability is critical in determining the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research. It confirms that the conclusions depicted are based on the data collected and can be corroborated by others, thus improving the integrity and reliability of the research. Brink (1987) emphasizes once the researchers categorized the codes presented by the respondents, they can go back to the respondents and ask them if it is an exact representation of what they meant and presented. Morse (2015) identified member checking as the key strategy for ensuring the validity and reliability of qualitative research. It emphasizes that importance of giving the transcribed interviews back to the participants to correct the data and to obtain additional information. Further, it highlights another rendition of member checking to ensure the reliability of qualitative research. This is not mere than giving interview transcriptions to correct the responses or collecting additional information. Member checking should be integrated into the data collection phase, allowing the researcher to engage respondents with pointed inquiries. For example, the researcher might pose questions such as, "other members have discussed about...' or 'Other participants have rejected this...'; what do you think about, or how do you view these observations?" This approach facilitates a deeper exploration of participants' insights and perspectives.

The fourth aspect is the *transferability* that refers to the extent to which the findings of a study from one context are applicable to another context (Guba et al., 1994). It requires delivering comprehensive, detailed descriptions of the research context, methodology, and participants. As a result, researchers set the stage for other researchers to make informed decisions about the applicability of findings to new contexts. Riege (2003) proposes the using replication logic in multiple case studies, defining scope and boundaries of reasonable analytical generalization for the research, and comparing evidence with extant literature enhances the transferability of case study research.

The study context is Sri Lanka and that is discussed in the chapter four.

Reflexivity is another key pillar which ensures the quality of qualitative research (Stenfors et al., 2020). Reflexivity emphasizes the process where the researcher continuously immerses in introspection and articulation regarding his or her own role, perspectives, and impact on the study and its context. It reflects the understanding and acknowledging how the researcher's background, beliefs, and biases could affect the process from the articulation of research questions to data collection, analysis, and excesses of findings. Morse (2015) stressed the researcher should not be biased but be strategic to engage in the research process. It has been raised that pink elephant biasness: tendency to see what the researcher expects and inherent in qualitative methods: risk in not representing the general condition of the population as qualitative researchers select a small purposive sample.

As a Sri Lankan researcher with familiarity with entrepreneurship, SME practice, and community development, I remained reflexively attentive to possible positive assumptions about collective action and civic contribution by grounding interpretations in participant quotations, comparing supportive and contradictory accounts, and discussing emerging interpretations during supervision.

Moreover, ethical considerations also play a pivotal role in determining the quality of qualitative research (Stenfors et al., 2020). It highlights the importance of obtaining participant consent and protecting the participant's identity. Also, if the researcher is in a circle of power that can influence the participants, special attention should be paid to them. The way of adhering to the ethical behavior in conducting this study is discussed in section 3.3.5.4 Ethical Considerations.

3.4 Summary

This section has presented the philosophical foundation and the research paradigm that supports the case study research methodology applied in this study. It offered an overview of the case study method and its suitability for this research. The study employed holistic design across multiple cases. It also meticulously outlined ethical considerations, criteria for selecting cases, and the rationale for choosing the semi-structured interview format. Furthermore, the method of inductive thematic analysis for analyzing data was introduced. Considerations regarding the quality of the research were also delineated in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Sri Lankan Context, with a Focus on Tourism and Agriculture

4.1 Overview

Sri Lanka provides a distinctive setting for examining how entrepreneurs navigate collective action, ecosystem constraints, and civic outcomes. As a small island economy in South Asia, Sri Lanka combines strong place-based social ties with persistent economic volatility and institutional unevenness. These characteristics are especially visible in **tourism** and **agriculture**, two sectors that are deeply embedded in local communities while also being highly exposed to external shocks such as security incidents, pandemics, climate variability, and foreign-exchange pressures. In this study, tourism and agriculture are not treated only as "industries," but as **community-facing livelihood systems** where entrepreneurial decisions frequently intersect with social obligations, informal coordination, and public value concerns.

4.2 Geographic and socio-cultural setting

Sri Lanka (officially the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka) is located in the Indian Ocean, close to the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent. Its relatively compact land area, long coastline, and monsoon-driven climatic patterns shape both tourism seasonality and agricultural cycles (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2019). The country's terrain includes coastal plains and a central highland region, producing varied microclimates that support plantation agriculture (for example, tea in upland areas) and diverse tourism offerings (for example, beaches, wildlife, and hill-country experiences) (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020).

Sri Lanka's socio-cultural landscape is also marked by ethnic and religious plurality. Population composition matters for entrepreneurship because it affects language, trust networks, local legitimacy, and the informal institutions through which resources and opportunities circulate (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2019). In practice, community norms, religious institutions, and village-level social ties often operate as "soft infrastructure," shaping who collaborates, how collective arrangements emerge, and what forms of civic contribution are expected from business actors (Uphoff & Wijayaratna, 2000).

4.3 Sri Lanka's economic trajectory and "emerging economy" conditions

Since the late 1970s Sri Lanka has pursued a more open, outward-oriented economic policy orientation, shifting away from stronger state-led import substitution toward liberalization, foreign investment, and export-led growth (Athukorala & Jayasuriya, 2013; DeRosa, 2009). While liberalization created space for private enterprise and export expansion, it also exposed domestic firms to intense competition and uneven adjustment pressures, especially in industries facing productivity constraints or limited innovation capability (Athukorala & Jayasuriya, 2013; Samarawickreme, 2005).

Sri Lanka's development pathway has therefore combined meaningful social achievements, including improvements in human development, with recurring macroeconomic vulnerability, uneven formal support, and institutional frictions (United Nations Development Program, 2019). Recent scholarship cautions that the term "institutional voids" can reproduce a narrow and Western-centric reading of non-Western contexts if it implies institutional absence rather than institutional difference, informality, or uneven coordination (Bothello et al., 2019; Dieleman et al., 2022). Accordingly, this thesis uses the more precise language of institutional unevenness, formal support gaps, and ecosystem frictions. Sri Lanka is not treated as institutionally empty; rather, entrepreneurial practice is shaped by a layered institutional environment in which regulatory systems, financial arrangements, community norms, religious institutions, village-level relationships, and informal exchange systems coexist. The issue is therefore not the absence of institutions, but the uneven reliability, accessibility, and coordination of formal support. These conditions are directly relevant for this study because

CE may intensify when entrepreneurs mobilize relational and community-based institutions to compensate for formal support gaps, but it may also weaken when trust, accountability, or equitable value sharing cannot be sustained.

4.4 Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Sri Lanka

Entrepreneurship is widely positioned as a development lever in Sri Lanka, particularly through micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which dominate the enterprise population and employment generation (Gunawardana, 2020). Policy discourse consistently frames MSMEs as engines for job creation, regional development, and inclusive growth, while also acknowledging structural constraints such as access to finance, collateral requirements, capability gaps, and fragmented business development services (Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2015). A further complication is definitional inconsistency because institutions may classify firms using different thresholds (for example, employment, assets, or turnover), which affects eligibility for support and the comparability of research findings (Bandara et al., 2024).

In this context, entrepreneurial strategies are often shaped by survival logic and risk containment rather than long-horizon capability building. At the same time, Sri Lanka's entrepreneurs frequently rely on family labor, informal credit, and relationship-based exchange, which can strengthen resilience but may also limit scaling and formalization (de Silva, 2019). These conditions make tourism and agriculture especially useful for studying collective entrepreneurship because both sectors commonly operate through **dense informal coordination**, local interdependence, and community reputation effects.

4.4.1 SME challenges and ecosystem frictions

Beyond commonly cited financing and collateral barriers, Sri Lankan SMEs operate amid capability gaps, uneven and fragmented support provision, and coordination failures across agencies, conditions that can increase reliance on informal collaboration while also raising risks of mistrust and uneven benefit sharing (Bandara et al., 2024; de Silva, 2019; Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2015). These baseline frictions are repeatedly intensified by major national shocks, which reshape market access, institutional credibility, and day-to-day operating feasibility for small firms, especially in community-embedded sectors such as tourism and agriculture.

4.5 Civil war (1983-2009) and post-conflict institutional legacies

Sri Lanka's contemporary economic and institutional landscape, particularly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, was profoundly shaped by the 30-year civil war (1983-2009). The conflict generated large-scale displacement and asset loss, damaged connective and productive infrastructure, and constrained mobility and market integration, with sustained implications for livelihoods and local institutions (Athukorala & Jayasuriya, 2013; World Bank, 2018). In conflict-affected localities, governance and service delivery were frequently securitized and administratively fragmented, weakening the reliability of formal institutions and encouraging informality and survival-oriented enterprise strategies (World Bank, 2018). Following the end of the war in May 2009, reconstruction and renewed connectivity created space for entrepreneurial activity and sector expansion; however, recovery has remained uneven, with persistent development gaps and institutional frictions in conflict-affected localities (Buultjens et al., 2016; World Bank, 2018). This legacy is directly relevant for the thesis because it conditions how entrepreneurs mobilize resources, whether collective arrangements become feasible (or contested), and how civic-oriented outcomes can be sustained when institutional credibility and coordination capacity vary across regions.

4.6 COVID-19 as an economy-wide SME shock

The COVID-19 pandemic created an acute cross-sector disruption, affecting mobility, cash flow, supply chains, and workforce continuity, and increasing the need for rapid operational adaptation and informal coordination (Gunawardana, 2020). In tourism, stakeholder-based research highlights how resilience depended on cost restructuring, rapid adaptation, and new coordination practices among tourism actors (Karunarathne et al., 2021), while niche segments such as wellness tourism faced both constraints and repositioning pressures (Sivanandamoorthy, 2021). Crisis learning has also become central: evidence from Sri Lankan tourism SMEs suggests experiential learning shaped recovery actions and strategic responses when formal support was limited (Adikaram & Surangi, 2024), and crisis vulnerability was experienced unevenly depending on financial buffers, network ties, and the ability to mobilize support relationships (Adikaram & Hapugoda, 2025).

4.7 The 2022 economic crisis and SME disruption

Sri Lanka's macroeconomic collapse in 2022 constituted a further systemic shock for SMEs, driven by acute foreign-exchange shortages and import constraints that contributed to fuel scarcities, intermittent electricity supply, and major disruption to transport and basic operating routines (International Monetary Fund, 2023). For tourism SMEs, these conditions undermined service reliability and destination mobility, while civil unrest and uncertainty amplified reputational and demand risks in a sector dependent on confidence and continuity (Adikaram & Hapugoda, 2025; International Monetary Fund, 2023). For agriculture and agribusiness SMEs, crisis pressures compounded earlier policy volatility, most notably the 2021 chemical fertilizer ban and reversal, while fuel and electricity constraints disrupted irrigation, harvesting, processing, and farm-to-market logistics (Drechsel et al., 2025; International Monetary Fund, 2023). Together, these shocks reinforce the chapter's premise that enterprise viability, collective coordination, and civic value creation in Sri Lanka are repeatedly tested by macro-level instability and uneven institutional capacity.

4.8 Tourism entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka

Tourism is a prominent foreign-exchange-earning sector and a major source of employment in many regions, with a large share of activity generated by SMEs and family-run ventures (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, 2021). Tourism entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka is typically characterized by small-scale accommodation providers, guides, transport services, experience curators, and micro-enterprises connected to food, crafts, and wellness offerings. These ventures are inherently relational: they depend on trust, service quality, repeat visitation, and coordination among complementary providers in destinations.

4.8.1 Post-conflict expansion and recurring shocks

In the post-2009 period, Sri Lanka experienced a period of tourism growth, while scholarship warned that development strategies favoring large-scale investors could marginalize informal operators and weaken local resilience if community linkages are not protected (Buultjens et al., 2016). This tension between large-scale development and local enterprise sustainability matters because civic outcomes are often produced through local multipliers, community employment, and micro-supply chains rather than through enclave-style investment.

Sri Lankan tourism has also been shaped by repeated disruptions. The 2019 Easter Sunday attacks created a major shock and required entrepreneurs and policymakers to manage recovery under fear, uncertainty, and reputational damage (Jayasinghe et al., 2023). More recent evidence suggests that security-related events can influence tourism demand patterns and investor confidence, reinforcing the vulnerability of tourism-dependent communities (Bandyopadhyay et al., 2024).

4.8.2 Networks, community-based tourism, and collective action

Tourism entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka frequently depends on horizontal and vertical relationships: peer referrals, joint packages, shared transport arrangements, and destination-level collaboration. Research on community-based tourism in Sri Lanka points to entrepreneurship as a pathway for local participation and value retention, but also underscores the importance of institutional support, local governance, and coordination capacity (Kaluarachchige et al., 2021). Further, networking has been shown to matter for entrepreneurial outcomes in the tourism sector, especially for women entrepreneurs who may rely on relationship-based resources to overcome constraints in finance, market access, and legitimacy (Surangi, 2024). For this thesis, these dynamics provide a concrete basis for examining how collective entrepreneurship emerges through cooperation, shared opportunity recognition, and mutual support, while also remaining vulnerable to breakdown when trust, fairness, or accountability is contested.

4.9 Agricultural entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka

Agriculture remains a foundational livelihood sector, especially in rural regions, even as its share of GDP has declined relative to services over time. Sri Lankan agriculture is characterized by a large smallholder base and strong exposure to climate variability, input price fluctuations, and market coordination challenges. Agricultural entrepreneurship often operates through production decisions, post-harvest handling, buyer relationships, and participation in farmer organizations or cooperative arrangements.

4.9.1 Smallholders, commercialization, and entrepreneurial capability

Research shows that entrepreneurial orientation-like attributes (innovation, opportunity seeking, and risk taking) can be observed among Sri Lankan smallholders, with implications for rural development strategies that go beyond traditional extension approaches (Rosairo &

Potts, 2016). At the same time, agricultural entrepreneurship is frequently constrained by transaction costs, price volatility, and limited bargaining power, which encourage collective structures as mechanisms for market access and risk reduction.

Tea illustrates these tensions well. Tea smallholdings can provide stable income opportunities, but smallholders face practical constraints related to labor, quality management, and market intermediaries. Evidence from Sri Lankan tea smallholdings highlights both the potential and the constraints of sustaining cultivation under household-based systems, reinforcing how farm entrepreneurship is shaped by local resource realities (Wekumbura et al., 2017).

4.9.2 Value chains, contracts, and coordination problems

A recurring challenge in Sri Lankan agriculture is weak coordination in value chains, especially where farmers rely on intermediaries and where contract enforcement is limited. In maize out-grower systems, research finds that side-selling, farmgate price dynamics, and weak enforcement can undermine the intended "win-win" logic of contract farming, revealing structural limits to quasi-collective arrangements when incentives are misaligned (Kiriveldeniya & Rosairo, 2020). These findings are directly relevant to collective entrepreneurship because they show that "working together" can be fragile unless governance mechanisms and perceived fairness are credible.

4.9.3 Cooperatives, social capital, and performance

Agricultural collective action in Sri Lanka has long been studied through farmer organizations and cooperative governance. Classic evidence from Sri Lanka demonstrates that social capital embedded in farmer organizations can improve performance and productivity outcomes, especially when collective rules and shared benefits are sustained (Uphoff &

Wijayaratna, 2000). More recent research on cooperative vertical integration in Sri Lanka indicates that deeper cooperative integration can be associated with stronger financial performance among smallholder members, suggesting that structured collective arrangements can improve market outcomes when they effectively coordinate activities and reduce inefficiencies (Fernando et al., 2025).

4.9.4 Technology, institutions, and recent policy shocks

Agribusiness SMEs also face technology and institutional barriers. Qualitative evidence from agribusiness SME owners in Sri Lanka shows dissatisfaction with institutional support in key areas and highlights persistent obstacles in upgrading technology, commercializing products, and connecting to larger firms and formal markets (Bandara et al., 2024). These constraints reflect broader ecosystem weaknesses and underscore why entrepreneurs may seek peer networks or informal collaborations when formal support systems are insufficient.

Sri Lanka’s recent policy and economic shocks further intensified these pressures. For example, research on the 2021 chemical fertilizer policy shift documents significant production and livelihood impacts, illustrating how sudden policy moves can amplify vulnerability among farming communities and intensify the need for adaptive strategies and support systems (Drechsel et al., 2025). Such disruptions make the agriculture sector a particularly important site for examining how civic considerations (food security, local livelihoods, community stability) intersect with entrepreneurship.

4.10 Summary: why tourism and agriculture matter for this study

Sri Lanka’s tourism and agriculture sectors represent two community-embedded arenas where entrepreneurial activity is inseparable from local relationships, informal institutions, and recurring disruption. Tourism highlights networked service entrepreneurship under high exposure to demand shocks and reputation risk, while agriculture illustrates smallholder-driven enterprise under coordination constraints, policy volatility, and value-chain power asymmetries. Together, these sectors provide a grounded basis for examining how collective entrepreneurship is enabled, constrained, and sustained within an entrepreneurship ecosystem, and how civic-oriented outcomes can emerge through entrepreneurial action even when formal systems are imperfect or unstable.

CHAPTER FIVE

Collective Entrepreneurship (CE)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical foundations on Collective Entrepreneurship (CE) within tourism and agriculture entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka, highlighting how entrepreneurial actors work together to create value that extends beyond individual entrepreneurial efforts. Moreover, CE situates as a central mechanism in the broader interplay between Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE) and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC). The findings articulated here are grounded entirely in the narratives of the entrepreneurs, guided by findings organized into second-order themes and roles.

The responses regarding CE take a variety of forms, with some entrepreneurs enthusiastically embracing CE, while others explain why they keep a distance from collective engagements. These accounts range from initiatives built on informal relationships to collaborations formalized through formal, professional agreements, and from efforts aimed at improving individual enterprises to actions intended to drive broader social transformation. These practices reveal how CE operates as a proactive force influencing EE and CWC, and as an evolving process shaped by the support and expectations of its environment. Each role of CE is presented through key sub-themes derived from interview evidence.

Building on these multifaceted experiences of collective engagement in tourism and agriculture, ranging from internal teamwork and external partnerships to community-oriented initiatives, the following sections examine CE through its key roles, beginning with its capacity to generate Synergy among entrepreneurs. As a Synergy, this chapter portrays how entrepreneurs unlock collective potential by encouraging internal collaboration and building coalitions with external stakeholders, enabling entrepreneurs to create results that far exceed what could be achieved individually. As a **Synergy**, this chapter illustrates how entrepreneurs unlock collective potential by encouraging internal collaboration and building coalitions with external stakeholders, enabling entrepreneurs to create results that far exceed what could be achieved individually. As an **Enhancer**, the chapter shows how CE shapes a more conducive entrepreneurial environment by cultivating a vibrant business culture, building shared infrastructure and establishing platforms for joint business functions. As a **Catalyst**, it discusses how CE contributes to CWC by embedding business practices that are both socially inclusive and community oriented. It analyses how CE-driven entities that not only generate income but also empower marginalized groups, strengthen community bonds, preserve cultural traditions, and cultivate shared prosperity.

Through its evolving role, the chapter shows how CE adapts over time to conditions shaped by EE (its Enabler role) and CWC (its Facilitator role), highlighting how changes in the availability of infrastructure, training, funding, and civic trust reconfigure CE practices both formally and informally.

Accordingly, this chapter is structured into seven key sections. Followed by the introduction, the second section presents the Synergy role of the CE. The third section explores how CE works as an Enhancer. Fourth section presents the findings on the Catalyst role of CE. In the fifth section it discusses how EE and empowered community (CWC) shapes evolving process of CE**.** Section six compares CE practices between tourism and agriculture entrepreneurs. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the multifaceted involvements of CE while bridging to the examination of its interplay with EE and CWC in subsequent chapters.

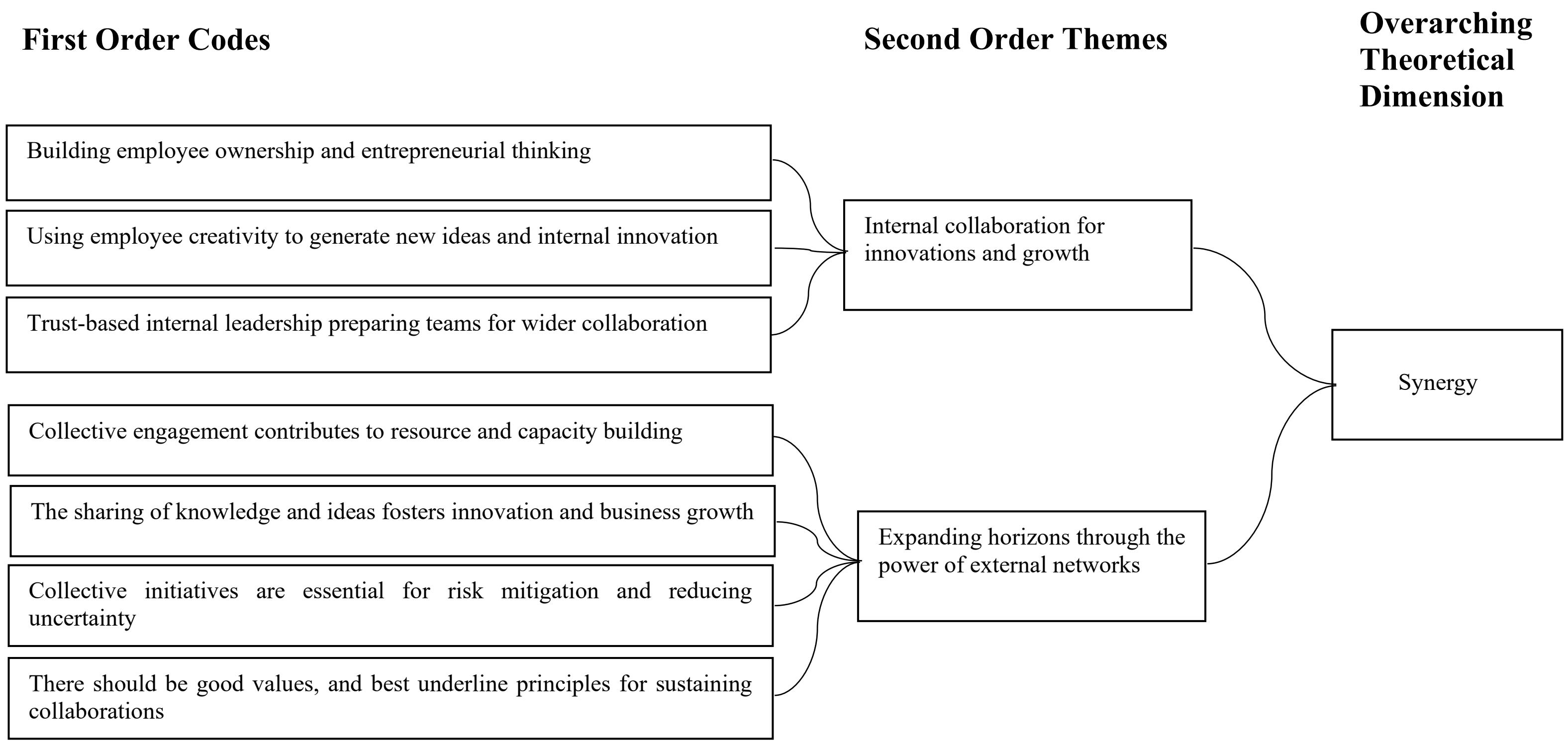
5.2 CE as a Synergy: generating greater results beyond individual capacities

This section explores how CE nurtures Synergy through collaborative efforts. It shows how the narratives suggest the ways in which collective work unlocks individual potential, driving both the growth and long-term sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures. Internally, teamwork and shared ideas spark innovation and continuous development. Externally, collective engagements with broader networks expand opportunities by offering fresh perspectives and resources crucial for entrepreneurial success. Together, these patterns highlight CE's Synergy role, wherein collective outcomes exceed the sum of individual efforts. Moreover, the findings underscore the values and required principles required to sustain such collective engagements over time. Figure 5.1: presents the data structure of the CE as a Synergy.

The Synergy role should not be read as implying that all entrepreneurs consistently favored collaboration; rather, it identifies the conditions under which collective practices became productive, while later findings on IE show how distrust, control concerns, or negative prior experiences can restrict collaboration.

Synergy is expressed through two interconnected second-order themes: internal collaboration for innovations and growth and expanding horizons through the power of external networks. Internally, Synergy emerges when entrepreneurs cultivate an entrepreneurial culture among employees and create structures that support initiative, creativity, and shared responsibility. Externally, Synergy is strengthened when entrepreneurs build coalitions with stakeholders to access resources, knowledge, and capabilities that extend beyond firm boundaries. Across these patterns, the data highlights several conditions that underpin and sustain CE-driven Synergy.

Figure 5.1: data structure of the CE as a Synergy



Note. Author's research data.

5.2.1 Internal collaboration for innovations and growth

This section examines how CE operates inside participants' ventures through internal collaboration for innovation and growth. Internal collaboration is interpreted through everyday enterprise practices such as staff autonomy, shared decision-making, informal teams, employee-led ideas, and preparation for wider partnerships. Although some respondents used broad business language, the analysis anchors these accounts in their sector, enterprise type, and specific internal practices.

Building employee ownership and entrepreneurial thinking

A resort operator highlighted the importance of improving entrepreneurial thinking and skills in-house. She explained that the owner is responsible for creating the right entrepreneurial atmosphere to empower employees and that, once empowered, staff begin to think and work like owners:

> We have created an environment in our company so that our staff feel that they are running their own business. We are taking many initiatives to improve their entrepreneurial mindset. That's when new ideas come, and work is done at the right time without forcing. As a result, we achieve outcomes that go beyond what each person could deliver alone. (Respondent T)

An event host's internal CE approach similarly inculcates an "owned" feeling in employees, treating the company as if it were their own. He emphasized that freedom, fair benefits, and recognition of individual talents build up loyalty and very limited turnover. This family-like environment, characterized by high employee engagement and long-term commitment, supports a collaborative and cohesive team culture:

> I have created an environment for my employees to work in thinking that they are working in their own company. It's easy when that happens. I have nothing to say from behind their back. As well as freedom to work, I give them fair benefits for their work. It is very rare for an employee to resign from my company. We work like a family. We follow a separate method to evaluate the special talents and dedication of the employees. Really, we gained more results than the sum of their individual efforts. (Respondent P)

A greenhouse and organic farmer emphasize the importance of creative ideas and innovative solutions from their staff. Recognizing that the owner cannot do everything alone, he values employee-driven innovation; a current project on urban agriculture and forestation was developed by a staff member, showcasing the significant role of internal collaboration in shaping new initiatives:

> The main thing that I expect from my staff is creative ideas and innovative solutions. As the owner of my business, I can't do everything alone. These days we are working on a new project to introduce some solutions for urban agriculture and urban forestation. Which is a concept developed by one of my staff. We don't have a big number of staff, but most of the time the staff work together informally wherever it needs greater results. (Respondent K)

These cases illustrate how cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset among employees fosters ownership, trust, and initiative, thereby creating Synergy that transforms individual contributions into stronger collective performance.

Using employee creativity to generate new ideas and internal innovation

A vegetable farmer stressed collaboration within in-house teams, particularly by leveraging an internal team member's special ability to identify emerging business trends and devise new business models. This indicates the systematic use of internal resources for growth:

> One of my in-house team members has a special ability to identify new business trends and develop innovative business models. She takes support and consultations from relevant parties wherever necessary, and it is a strong foundation for making effective external collaborations. So, I always capitalize on her special capabilities. I would be happy to say as a team, our combined effort creates results greater than the sum of individual contributions (Respondent A)

A greenhouse farmer noted that, although his company has no external shareholders, it encourages intrapreneurship by motivating their staff to generate new ideas, business models, and methods. Employees are free to propose and implement solutions as teams that maximize benefits and reduce costs, creating an enabling environment for internal cooperation and growth:

> My current business does not have shares for outsiders. I did not pool my resources with outsiders. But I promote entrepreneurship within the organization. My employees have the freedom for new ideas, they can develop new business models for the organization, they can think and plan new practices or processes which maximize benefits or for reducing costs. Our combined efforts deliver outcomes greater than the total of individual contributions. (Respondent G)

An adventure-wellness operator described using an organic organizational structure that promotes intrapreneurship, forming cross-functional and cross-hierarchical teams to generate productive outcomes from internal teams:

> Basically, my employees have the required freedom to experiment with new things in business. No punishments for the mistakes. If they have mental freedom, they will come up with so many new and productive things. That's what I need from my employees. There are several inside teams in my business. Innovation team, controlling team, new business registration team, marketing team, wellbeing team. I challenged the traditional mechanistic business structure, and I practiced organic business structure in my business. That's how it works with my internals. This is a strong path for effective external engagements (Respondent S)

Trust-based internal leadership preparing teams for wider collaboration

A vegetable farmer stated that he leads his internal team to develop small business models and explore new opportunities. Despite limited resources and a lean staff, the team is given freedom and facilities to work on these initiatives, balancing them alongside their regular duties:

> I have an internal team who develop small business models for me. I encourage and guide them to identify new business opportunities and identify possible ways to capitalize them. They have freedom, opportunities, and facilities to work on them. As a team, we multiply our impact by building on each other's strengths. I don't have a very big staff. But they take shared decisions, make informal groups to make greater outcomes. (Respondent A)

A tour planner identified the internal team as the key driver of business success, citing a strong culture of mutual trust and shared values. The respondent noted that team members trust their leadership and are genuinely motivated, frequently contributing innovative ideas and effective solutions:

> The main reason behind the success is my internal team. They always trust me. They know everything I do with genuine intension. What I always tell my staff is trust is the most important one in business. We trust each other. We have that culture. I know internal team also has real motivation. They always bring creative business ideas and solutions for business issues. This strong internal team helps me to have better partnerships with external parties. (Respondent H)

A resort operator emphasized the importance of developing internal teams with a long-term view. She highlighted the need for a well-prepared in-house team to effectively engage in future collaborations with external partners. To achieve this, the respondent forwards entrepreneurial thinking by providing team members with freedom and flexibility in their roles.

> I give priority to developing my in-house team with a long-term view. If we need to collaborate with investors or any other outsiders for collaborative businesses, I should have a well-trained team to work with them. I know I can't do it within two-three days. That is why I develop them by giving them freedom and flexibility to work as entrepreneurs. Collectively, our shared work creates value that none of us could produce independently. (Respondent T)

Under the second-order theme "Internal collaboration for innovations and growth," the analysis identifies three connected practices: developing employee ownership and entrepreneurial thinking, using employee creativity for internal innovation, and building trust-based internal readiness for wider collaboration. These accounts are interpreted as CE as Synergy because they show how internal collaboration converts employee ideas, skills, trust, and initiative into coordinated enterprise capability.

The next section presents how external collective engagements help for synergetic results.

5.2.2 Expanding horizons through the power of external networks

Respondents emphasized that engaging collectively with external stakeholders is crucial part of their entrepreneurial practices. This part of the analysis presents the narratives (see Figure 5.1), illustrating how CE enacts its Synergy role beyond the firm by building mutually beneficial collaboration with outside parties. Entrepreneurs collaborate with various external stakeholders for purposes such as knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and sharing of risk, responsibilities and challenges. Such engagements allow entrepreneurs to access new markets, undertake innovative projects, and achieve outcomes that would be impossible individually.

Collective engagement contributes to resource and capacity building

A vegetable farmer described several external partners, including suppliers, technical consultants, and government organizations, who are vital to the success of his business. He stressed that both formal and informal collaborations enable flexibility and collective strength, reflecting how external Synergy supports capacity building:

> We have different relationships with suppliers, investors, government organizations, technical support teams, etc. to share resources to capitalize different opportunities. We have formal and informal relationships with them. In addition to that we have a farm and few of our service providers also invested in that. I have a 30% share of that farm. There we cultivate indigenous rice. So, these external collaborations helped us deliver outcomes beyond our firm's capacity. (Respondent A)

A homestay networker explained how their collaborative network in tourism partners with over 250 households, star-grade hotels, and several taxi companies for accommodation and transport. They also work with a research firm to get new business insights. This demonstrates how collaborations expand their capacity and scope:

> We work with people who can provide hotel facilities and other accommodation facilities for the tourists we handle. We have signed up with 250+ households who can provide a separate room or rooms for the tourists. We partner with star-grade hotels and households basically. In addition to that we partner with several taxi companies as well. And we have a special collaboration with a research institute for getting new business insights. These external collaborations made lots of impossible tasks achievable for us. (Respondent O)

An event host described partnering with event managers, transportation agents, and tour planners, and offering commissions for tourist referrals. She co-founded a separate company with event managers to host unique events and invested in a digital marketing firm for promotion. She highlighted how these relationships extend their capabilities, brand visibility, diverse income streams and strengthen collective reputation:

> I work with over 50 partners; event managers, tour planners, ticketing and transport agents and give them commissions for referring tourists. I also co-own a new company with two event firms to promote our venue through unique events. Plus, I've invested in a digital marketing company with an ad firm it handles our ads and creates content for others too. I'm also linked to a charity that supports poor families, which helps boost our brand's goodwill. (Respondent P)

A tour operator noted that he manages multiple ventures under one umbrella. He owns a transportation service company to ensure dedicated transport support and has co-founded another business with four overseas partners to source materials (including food supplies). By forming collective ventures across value-chain activities, he reduced reliance on external vendors and increased capacity, showcasing Synergy through diversification:

> Apart from my tourism business, I have several businesses. I also have separate companies that have the right to get all the basic requirements for my tourism business. We, there people invested in and operate a transportation service company. We get all the transportation services from that company. And I started another business together with four of my friends who live abroad, and we take all the material and food from that company. This is what we achieved beyond our resource limitations. (Respondent V)

These examples collectively show how external engagements expand entrepreneurs' resource bases, market reach, and strategic capacities, demonstrating the Synergy role of CE beyond the firm.

The sharing of knowledge and ideas fosters innovation and business growth

A value-added farmer mentioned collaborative efforts with a partner organization in the southern province in Sri Lanka, highlighting knowledge sharing, mutual support in fulfilling orders, and raw material exchange. He emphasized that such cooperation enables each business to operate more efficiently without needing its own full infrastructure, showing Synergy through shared knowledge and facilities:

> I've connected with another company down south. We work collaboratively on some business projects. Yes, we share our knowledge. In addition to that, even if I don't place an order, I will deliver it to them. In addition, we also exchange raw materials. Partnering externally allowed us to overcome our internal limits (Respondent C)

A tour planner shared that her business operates through a broad tourism network involving government bodies, private organizations, and self-employed workers. She pointed out that these formal collaborations pool diverse knowledge and capacities, enabling the company to manage large scale tourism operations efficiently without owning its own infrastructure, showing how Synergy through shared knowledge and facilities:

> We have collective agreements with some external parties. We pool our resources with them to strengthen our capacities, especially other home stay owners. Because we don't have our own places all over the country. If we think about building our own places and developing our own staff to handle island-wide business operations it will take couple of decades for that. (Respondent H).

Similarly to others, a homestay owner built strong ties with suppliers, service providers, and government agencies. He explained that resources and ideas sharing across sectors boosts performance and stimulates experimentation in new business areas, indicating how inter-organizational learning drives Synergy:

> I work with some other external investors and management teams to run some business models collectively. Now I'm working with a software developer, two advertising firms, content development company, transportation company, air ticket booking company, and a photographic company to run some collaborative businesses. I have shares of these companies and those startups help me to get booking for my main tourism business. By connecting externally, we achieved results out of reach before (Respondent I)

A greenhouse and organic farmer emphasized the importance of strategic partnerships with suppliers and advisors to compensate for gaps in knowledge and resources. By co-creating with technically skilled partners, he converts knowledge gaps into learning opportunities, strengthening product development and process innovation:

> I develop some business models together with them. I partnered with my cultivation bag manufacturer, my chemical supplier, my seed supplier, and my advisor. Basically, I partner with someone in the event of I do not have a deep knowledge and resources to do that business by self. External engagements helped us accomplish more than internal efforts alone. (Respondent K)

A resort operator partners with various stakeholders, including travel guides, event management firms, local community groups, cultural service providers, and professional artists. Through these collaborations, he merges creative knowledge from multiple sectors to design innovative events and experiences, showing how expertise multiplies value creation:

> I am a partner with several parties. Travel guides, event management firms, local community organizations, cultural and ceremonial service providers, professional artists are the main parties that I'm work with. I have 03 profit sharing collaborations with 03 event management firms and several professional artists. My main purpose is sharing our knowledge expertise for doing new things. Collaborating beyond the firm helped us tackle otherwise unworkable tasks. (Respondent T)

Collectively, these cases present how sharing knowledge and ideas operate as key first-order code under the Synergy role of CE.

Collective initiatives are essential for risk mitigation and reducing uncertainty

A greenhouse and organic farmer explains that they initiated their farms and value-added products through collaborative projects with external partners. He emphasized the importance of seeking expertise for new and larger ventures, recognizing the inherent risks in business decisions. As a first-order code under the Synergy role, this reflects how shared expertise helps reduce uncertainty. When faced with risky opportunities, Respondent K prefers to mitigate these risks by forming partnerships with experts:

> I started my farms, value added products with the outsiders. Yes, they are collaborative projects. Whenever I think about new and big project, I always find experts for that. Because there is a risk with every business and with every business decision. That's how I made complex goals achievable managing business risk with the support of external experts. (Respondent K)

An adventure-wellness operator also formally networked with a group of outsiders for collective business projects. According to him the business model he developed is simple and the interested parties have mutual financial and non-financial benefits while the risk is shared. This again shows how Synergy emerges when partners align their strengths to handle uncertainty collectively:

> I do a tourism business. I partnered with adventure sports facilitators, Ayurveda doctors in the region, camping facilitators, tour guides, tour planners, some hotels owners, digital content creators. Basically, me and my team are searching for new business opportunities and the parties who need to be with us. After identifying suitable parties, we do a screening. I the external parties suit our core values we invite them to formal relationships. We do this to manage risk and to ensure the success and sustainability of big projects and events. (Respondent S)

A travel agent highlights teamwork as vital for knowledge transfer, joint marketing, innovation, skill complementarity, and mentorship to reduce risk and ensure long-term survival. Despite experience, they recognize their knowledge limits and collaborate with marketing agencies, airline booking agencies, and travel planners to innovate in tourism. This first-order code further demonstrates Synergy, where risk is managed through collective efforts:

> I mainly expect knowledge transfer, joint marketing, collaborative innovation, skill complementarity, and mentorship opportunities from teamwork for reducing business risk and ensuring long term survival. No matter how long I've been in business, I know very limited things. I work with two marketing agencies; I have joined projects with airline booking agencies and travel planners. That's how I turned barriers into achievable targets. (Respondent W)

Together, these interview evidence (see figure 5.1) show how CE creates Synergy by reducing uncertainty through shared capabilities and collective responsibility.

There should be good values, and best underline principles for sustaining collaborations

While external partnerships expand the scope of CE-driven Synergy, respondents emphasized that such collaborations are only sustainable when they are built on shared values and disciplined practices. Accordingly, the interview evidence indicates the value base and professional norms that entrepreneurs consider essential for maintaining trust, clarity of responsibilities, and long-term collective engagement.

A hotelier, a tour planner, and a greenhouse and organic farmer underline core values as highly influential in effective collective entrepreneurship. They declare the values of transparency, integrity, and accountability are major building blocks for trust and are thus very conducive to powerful collaboration. These values help partners operate as a unified team and support long-term collective success:

> So, personal level, yeah, that is true, what you said one is integrity and honesty. If you have those values, you will indicate the fact that you can be trusted. And accountability, the ability to be accountable for your actions is very critical. We follow these good practices and that's how we achieved results out of our reach before. (Respondent B)

> If we can't trust, believe each other, nothing else really matters. Each of us must be honest, both with ourselves and with our partners. Especially we need to be honest with our tasks and responsibilities. (Respondent H)

> In addition to that accountability, transparency, honesty, respect to everyone's ideas or opinions, and listening to others are important for greater collective success. (Respondent K)

A tour planner states that active participation plays a vital role in CE and the parties who work together to achieve a greater collective result should bring something special to the table and for that they have a responsibility:

> My experience is it needs an active participation in the collective tasks. Without having an active participation, it is not ethical to expect something from others. We also need to have respect, understanding that every partner in our collective brings something unique to the table, even if it's different from what we bring. By adhering to these principles, we achieved what we could not do alone. (Respondent H)

Since a homestay owner developed several collective business models pooling resources, knowledge, learning and experiences they highly value the collective engagements and collective projects powered and formalized by formal agreements:

> In my story we have written agreements for all the ventures and processes. Normally we highlight our duties and responsibilities at large. When we operate ventures, we develop action plans. In these action plans we identify tasks and responsibilities with deadlines. (Respondent I)

As an experienced entrepreneur an event host also specifically highlights the importance of transparency for effective CE initiatives:

> The most important thing is transparency, I think. I work with several parties in my business. I get tourists from them. I know from which source they come from. At the very beginning I developed that system makes transparency and trust. That's how we achieved more results beyond our limits. (Respondent P)

Under the second-order theme "Expanding horizons through the power of external networks," the findings show that CE enacts its Synergy role beyond the firm by combining resources, knowledge, and capabilities through partnerships. Across the findings, respondents highlight capacity building, shared learning and innovation, risk reduction, and the importance of shared values and disciplined practices for sustaining collaboration. Taking together, these narratives show how external collaboration enables outcomes that would be unattainable alone and strengthens collective performance.

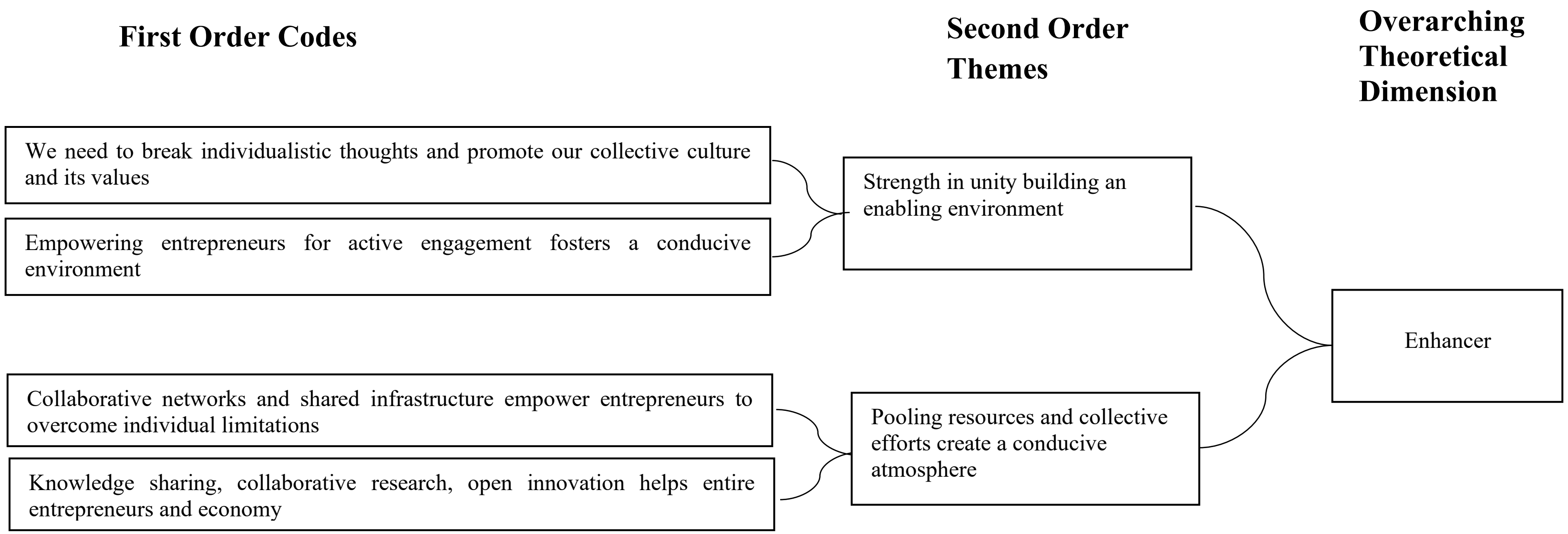
Across the Synergy role, the findings show that Synergy is important because it enables entrepreneurs to achieve outcomes beyond what isolated effort can deliver. The evidence indicates that CE produces this through (i) internal collaboration supported by an entrepreneurial culture, employee empowerment, and trust-based leadership, and (ii) external networks that enable resource pooling, knowledge sharing, and shared risk management. Respondents also emphasize that synergetic results depend on shared values and disciplined practices, including transparency, integrity, accountability, and clear agreements. Thus, Synergy emerges as a core mechanism through which CE strengthens innovation, growth, and collective performance within and beyond the firm.

Next theme presents how CE helps to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurs.

5.3 CE as an Enhancer: the role of CE in strengthening the EE

This section explores how CE operates as an Enhancer, shaping a more supportive and enabling EE. Guided by empirical patterns, this captures how collective actions help challenge individualistic norms, strengthen unity, and empower entrepreneurs for active engagement within the broader environment. The findings show that CE enhances the EE by promoting shared values, building collective strength, and creating conditions where entrepreneurs can access networks, knowledge, and shared infrastructure. In doing so, CE not only benefits individual ventures but also contributes to a more cohesive, resourceful, and conducive entrepreneurial landscape. Figure 5.2 presents the data structure of CE as an Enhancer.

Figure 5.2: Data structure of the CE as an Enhancer



Note. Author's research data

5.3.1 Strength in unity building an enabling environment

This theme, emerging from responses, highlights how CE enhances the EE by challenging individualistic thinking and promoting shared cultural values. Reflecting the narratives, Enhancer role strengthens unity and collective norms, fostering an environment that supports innovation, resource sharing, and long-term ecosystem development.

We need to break individualistic thoughts and promote our collective culture and its values

A greenhouse and organic farmer emphasized reducing individualism in entrepreneurship to build a more collaborative business environment. As reflected in this first-order code, challenging individualistic thinking strengthens CE's Enhancer role by promoting collective norms that benefit the wider ecosystem. He highlighted the role of education and open dialogues to promote collective practices that benefit all actors in the ecosystem:

> We need to break the individualism in entrepreneurship for a better business environment. If most entrepreneurs do collective work, the business environment becomes a more friendly one. We need to educate people. We can start some open discussions, schools, universities, business development support service providers, chambers, and trade associations can initiate that. That helps everyone in the system. (Respondent K)

A cultural park owner highlighted the value of sharing success stories to promote CE. He noted that showcasing such examples can inspire emerging entrepreneurs and make a supportive environment, reinforcing the Enhancer role by spreading a collective mindset with the EE:

> Opportunities should be created to adopt a similar approach by sharing success stories of collective entrepreneurship. Whenever I get an opportunity, I do it. We need more

successful entrepreneurs. Collectively we can. That is an inspiration for upcoming entrepreneurs as well. We need to create that environment. (Respondent R).

A greenhouse farmer shared that self-centered attitudes among entrepreneurs often hinder sustainable collaboration. Citing a failed profit-sharing proposal, they emphasized that beyond regulations and facilities, a collective mindset is crucial for building a healthier business environment:

> I worked with many entrepreneurs in my agricultural background. I have more bad experiences. You know most people are selfish now. Somehow, they need to earn money. That is not sustainable. I invited an entrepreneur to use one of his bare lands for a nursery. I offered him a profit-sharing mode. But he said he needs rent. After two years I can see the land, as it is. For a better business atmosphere, rules, regulations and facilities are not enough. We need people with good thoughts. (Respondent G)

The cultural park owner further described how his initial vision to establish a cultural theme park involved creating an inviting atmosphere to attract others to collaborate. Although it was challenging to convince partners at first, demonstrating the benefits led to increased participation. This narrative shows how CE enhances the EE by turning individual ideas into shared platforms:

> At the very beginning when I had the dream to start this cultural theme park... I created a cultural location there. I created the vibe. Then I invited people to join with their resources, and I showed them the benefits. I know how hard it was to convince you to join us. Now they realized. Now more people want to join us. I take this as a motivation for future entrepreneurs as well. Now Tourism entrepreneurs in the area are getting more benefits from our initiation. (Respondent R)

Collectively, this code shows how CE enhances the EE by promoting unity, reducing individualism, and strengthening a shared culture that supports a more enabling business environment.

Empowering entrepreneurs for active engagement fosters a conducive environment

A cultural tour guide noted that entrepreneurs facing challenges are more active, collaborative, and engaged, while those with easier paths often become passive and isolated. This first-order code shows how CE enhances the EE by reactivating disengaged entrepreneurs and strengthening collective participation:

> I'll tell you something special. When entrepreneurs have challenging businesses, they are always more active and link with others, take support from others, help others. Seeking collaborative events etc. When they have less challenges or easy-going business, or they don't have anything big to achieve they become lazy and get isolated. But there is a certain point they can't stay that lazy. Fist we need to wake these people. That's what I'm doing at my capacity. We need to go together with a strong voice. (Respondent Y)

A cultural park owner noted that many entrepreneurs are reluctant to join associations, despite their importance for building connections and fostering collective efforts. His experience shows how these networks support learning and shared problem-solving, reinforcing CE's Enhancer role:

> My very first concern is why some entrepreneurs don't want to join associations, clubs or chambers. At least we can get to know other entrepreneurs. We need that activation first. Then we can do many things. I'm happy to say, I joined many associations and chambers. I represent the management of some clubs as well. Whenever I meet

> entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs, I invite them to join with the society first. That's how we need to put out first step to learn from others, share our problems, seeking others assistance to overcome problems and doing business with others. (Respondent R)

A greenhouse and organic farmer described their involvement with associations and clubs to promote collaboration among entrepreneurs. He stressed educating entrepreneurs on working together and highlighted a shared-brand cultivation bag initiative that benefits many:

> I connect with some associations and clubs. I always educate public and fellow entrepreneurs on the importance of working together, instead of fighting alone. Especially I promote collective branding. Currently we introduced cultivation bags throughout the country under one brand and many entrepreneurs manufacture bags for the same brand. (Respondent K)

A greenhouse farmer, an official member of the provincial chamber, emphasized the importance of collective action among entrepreneurs. He encourages collaboration to strengthen their collective voice and influence within the EE:

> I'm an official member of our provincial chamber. I promote and encourage entrepreneurs to work together to strengthen our voice for fighting for good things, and requesting solutions for problems, and fighting with big giants in the market. (Respondent G)

Under the second-order theme "Strength in unity building an enabling environment," the interview evidence "breaking individualistic thoughts and promoting collective culture" and "empowering entrepreneurs for active engagement" show how CE strengthens shared norms and participation. Together, they illustrate the Enhancer dimension by improving the EE through a more collaborative and enabling business environment. The next second-order theme presents how pooling resources and collective efforts contribute to creating a conducive environment.

5.3.2 Pooling resources and collective efforts create a conducive atmosphere

Under the second-order theme "Pooling resources and collective efforts create a conducive atmosphere," CE performs its Enhancer role within the EE. The interview evidence "Collaborative networks and shared infrastructure empower entrepreneurs to overcome individual limitations" and "Knowledge sharing, collaborative research, and open innovation help the wider community of entrepreneurs and the economy" show how collective action improves access to resources and shared learning. Together, they evidence the overarching theoretical dimension of Enhancer by strengthening the ecosystem's conduciveness for entrepreneurship.

Collaborative networks and shared infrastructure empower entrepreneurs to overcome individual limitations

A value-added farmer shared that initial capital constraints delayed the launch of his first farm, despite efforts to secure bank funding. After starting the business with personal savings, he later worked with a farmer association to establish a collective fund to support entrepreneurs, particularly young newcomers, thereby enhancing the EE by widening access to start-up finance:

> When I planned to start my first farm, I could not find the capital. I tried a lot. Went to couple of banks. Had to wait few years until I got savings. After that I started my business somehow. Then together with our farmer association we developed a

collective fund to help our entrepreneurs, especially new young entrepreneurs. Many people are getting benefits from that fund now. (Respondent C)

A homestay owner explained that their team has developed various tourism-related systems which are accessible to all interested entrepreneurs. Because such systems were unavailable when she began, she now sees this first-order code in action, as CE enhances the EE by letting others build on shared tools instead of starting from zero:

> We develop a couple of tourism-related systems and business models. That includes advanced booking systems, promotional platforms, and research tools. They are open to anyone interested. When I started my business, I did not have such facilities and opportunities. But now we have developed them. No one needs to think from zero. They can be built based on the facilities that we have developed. (Respondent I)

A community tourism operator faced challenges with office space when starting her tourism business and initially operated online. Accessing a co-working space provided essential facilities and an official address. She emphasizes that such shared infrastructure enhances the EE by lowering entry barriers for small businesses and making the environment more supportive:

> When I opened my tourism business, I did not have space for an office. I used online modes as much as possible, But I needed an office for meeting my clients and for other formal meetings. Luckily, I was able to connect to a co-working space. That place has all the facilities, and I used that address for all of my official things. Still I'm working with them. I think we need more good practices like that to make a good business environment for all. (Respondent Q)

A tour planner credited the university business incubator for providing essential knowledge and consultation before launching his business. He developed his initial business model through this support, and she stresses that encouraging entrepreneurs to use such shared support and to give back their own experience enhances the EE by circulating expertise through the ecosystem:

> Before I started my business, I was able to get more consultation and knowledge from my university business incubator. I developed my initial business model there. It was a big help for me to do my business. We need to invite entrepreneurs to join such places and get services and knowledge. And as entrepreneurs we need to connect with these to give our experiences to other entrepreneurs. (Respondent H)

Together, this first-order code shows how CE works as an Enhancer by expanding shared resources, reducing individual constraints, and making the EE more supportive for a wider group of entrepreneurs

Knowledge sharing, collaborative research, and open innovation helps entire entrepreneurs and economy

A greenhouse and organic farmer initially lacked knowledge to design his greenhouse and export ventures, but guidance from state agencies and business-support organizations helped him build a viable business. This first-order code shows Enhancer role by demonstrating how shared expertise strengthens individual firms and the EE:

> When I developed my initial business plan for my greenhouses, I did not know about them deeply. But from the Sri Lankan Agriculture Ministry, field officers, fellow entrepreneurs I got the knowledge. When I developed my products to export it was the same. I did not have much knowledge of them. Finally, I was able to get them from

> Export Development Board Sri Lanka, and Chamber of Commerce, Sri Lanka. I really value them. I'm not here without their support. (Respondent K)

A homestay networker explained that their collaborative research institute shares tourism market insights with entrepreneurs through events and free services. This first-order code again highlights Enhancer role, as shared market knowledge helps the wider entrepreneurial community respond to industry trends and strengthens the EE:

> In our collaborative research institute project, we conduct market research about current trends and challenges of tourism in Sri Lanka. After carrying out research, we organize paid events where the findings are shared with other tourism entrepreneurs. Anyone can take that service. We have many free services as well. That helps everyone in the industry. (Respondent O)

Under the second-order theme "Pooling resources and collective efforts create a conducive atmosphere," the narratives on shared infrastructure and networks and knowledge sharing and open innovation show how CE improves access to finance, facilities, and expertise. Together, they evidence CE's Enhancer role by strengthening the EE's conduciveness for entrepreneurship through collective resource pooling and shared learning.

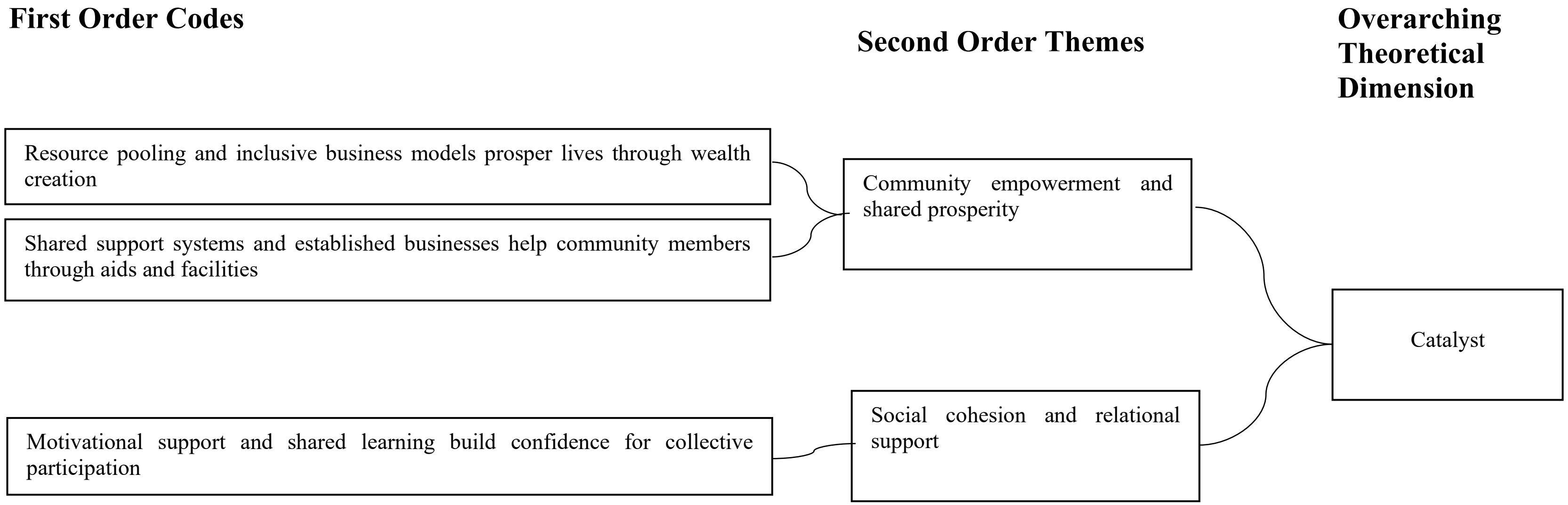
Together, the second-order themes "Strength in unity building an enabling environment" and "Pooling resources and collective efforts create a conducive atmosphere" show that CE strengthens the EE mainly through external, ecosystem-facing links, such as associations, shared platforms, co-working spaces, incubators, collective funds, and knowledge-sharing arrangements. These external collaborations widen access to resources and expertise, while the accompanying shift from individualism supports stronger participation and shared norms. Taken together, they demonstrate the Enhancer dimension by creating a more supportive and conducive entrepreneurial environment.

The next section presents CE as a Catalyst, showing how CE action extends beyond firms and industries to stimulate community-level development and broader civic outcomes

5.4 CE as a Catalyst: the role of CE in strengthening the CWC

This section explores CE as a Catalyst, showing how CE activity triggers CWC by empowering communities and deepening social ties. Drawing on narratives, the analysis groups insight into two second-order themes: community empowerment and shared prosperity, and social cohesion and relational support. Together, the participants' accounts show how CE's Catalyst role converts business initiatives into wider gains in livelihood security, dignity, and emotional support, as entrepreneurs design collective business models with and for residents. Figure 5.3 presents the data structure of CE as a Catalyst.

Figure 5.3: Data structure of the CE as a Catalyst



Note. Author’s research data.

5.4.1 Community empowerment and shared prosperity

The theme, guided by the narratives explores how CE acts as a Catalyst by enabling communities to pool land, labor, and capital into inclusive, sustainable business models that generate tangible civic wealth. The narratives in this theme show how such collaboration expands economic opportunities, empowers marginalized groups, and supports shared growth in resource-constrained environments.

Resource pooling and inclusive business models prosper lives through wealth creation

A greenhouse and organic farmer explained that through his work with the Ceylon Entrepreneurs' Club he sees community ventures emerging from entrepreneurs who already practice CE, and that promoting such collaboration helps turn shared resources into community-oriented businesses, highlighting Catalyst role of CE in this first-order code:

> We can see community-based ventures and startups only from the entrepreneurs who believe and practice CE. As an official member of Ceylon Entrepreneurs' Club, Sri Lanka, I experienced that. If we need more community empowerment projects and business models, first we need to promote CE. That's what we are doing through the club now with several government and private sector organizations. (Respondent K)

A community tourism operator described a fully community-based model where people contribute money, land, rooms, or labor and share the benefits, showing how resource pooling links CE to livelihoods and shared prosperity for both members and beneficiaries.

> My business organization is a community-based business model. The people who have different resources and different talents came together and created a business. Some of my community members put money, some of community members put their lands, some community members gave them their spare rooms, some community members

didn't have anything to invest, and they work fulltime. The business is built like that. So, this is a fully collective and community-based business. We work as a family, and our main goal is to empower the lives of our community members and others who take direct and indirect benefits from our business. (Respondent Q)

A cultural park owner uses a theme-park model where local partners earn by presenting Jaffna culture to tourists, illustrating within this first-order code how CE catalyzes both income generation and pride in place through shared cultural promotion:

> Because we created a cultural theme park to showcase Jaffna culture and experience to tourists. Tourists can engage with those who are in the cultural theme park to experience food, food preparation, clothing and some ceremonials. These partnerships are based on shared interests and a common goal of promoting local culture and boosting the economy. By working together, we can showcase the best of what Jaffna has to offer, creating a win-win situation for all parties involved. (Respondent R)

A homestay networker connects more than 250 households into one accommodation and service network so that spare rooms, maintenance work, and taxi services become regular income, further demonstrating in this first-order code how CE acts as a Catalyst for household-level empowerment:

> In our business we work with more than 250 households. They give their spare rooms for the tourists though our integrated systems. That means they can earn money from that. It is a real financial benefit for these families. If someone wants to upgrade their rooms to the standard, we help them tough our team. The maintenance team are also freelancers. They also get benefits. And our taxi networks. We selected the people who need some income for feeding their families. That's how we empower the community. (Respondent O)

Shared support systems and established businesses help community members through aids and facilities

A tour planner criticized limited start-up support and the strong focus on tax collection once firms grow, arguing in this first-order code that genuine assistance and visible reinvestment would better connect CE-driven business success to community wellbeing:

> I know the government support for starting and developing a business is less. But whenever we grow, they follow us to collect taxes. I hate that. That's why most entrepreneurs cheat on paying correct taxes. The government must help entrepreneurs genuinely. Then they'll be motivated to pay correct taxes on time. Then government can spend it on community. (Respondent H)

An event host explained that profitable, collectively supported ventures fund support for around 100 families a year, blood donation campaigns, and hospital donations, showing in this first-order code how CE's Catalyst role converts business gains into ongoing social support for the wider community:

> We do many social development projects, and we give more donations and support to the community. Annually we fully sponsored helping 100 families, conduct blood donation camps, and we donate health equipment to hospitals and many more. We can do it as we have a profit. I engage with our tourism association, and we do another series of CSR projects. My business partners, suppliers, staff who really contribute to this. I need to say, together we can grow and sustain overcoming individual challenges. Then we can do better for society. (Respondent P)

Under the second-order theme "Community empowerment and shared prosperity," the narratives on inclusive resource pooling and shared support systems show how CE operates as a Catalyst by translating collective action into community-level livelihoods and civic wealth. Unlike Synergy (mainly firm or partnership performance) and Enhancer (improving ecosystem conditions such as networks and shared infrastructure), these narratives show direct community outcomes: household income, inclusion of marginalized groups, and reinvestment of business gains into social support. Together, they evidence the Catalyst dimension through shared prosperity and community empowerment.

5.4.2 Social cohesion and relational support

This second-order theme explains how the Catalyst role of CE advances social bonds, motivational support, and cultural identity, capturing the intangible outcomes of CE for CWC. The narratives under this theme show how collective efforts strengthen community ties, support mutual learning, and preserve local traditions, creating a sense of belonging and shared purpose that extends beyond business goals.

Motivational support and shared learning build confidence for collective participation

A cultural park owner argued that lasting societal development depends on mindset transformation rather than one-off donations and described how emotionally engaging families in his tourism theme park keeps them motivated to participate without needing ongoing incentives; this first-order code illustrates Catalyst role in building confidence and sustained community engagement:

> Personally, I believe societal development happens only through a mind transformation. Not giving some donations or doing CSR projects. I don't want to underestimate them. They help a lot. But if we can emotionally influence the people, that transformation is sustainable. That's what I did in my area to promote community engagements to

tourism theme park. Now they are motivated. No need to give incentives, donations. Now they know the purpose of working and the way of working. (Respondent R)

A community tourism operator shared how she regularly visits schools, universities, and community programs to tell her story, using her entrepreneurial journey to motivate others to work with determination and clear goals, thereby spreading confidence and a growth mindset:

> I always go to school, universities and other entrepreneurship and community development programs to tell my story. I want to showcase them my secrets behind my success in my present lifestyle. I use them to motivate people to do something for themselves with determination, passion, and a target. I'm happy to say I get telephone calls, messages on success stories. I do this together with my Divisional Secretariat office. (Respondent Q)

A travel agent described launching the 'Hand' campaign and later a 'business clinic' to provide emotional and practical support for entrepreneurs, sending the message "you're not alone" and connecting them to training centers, incubators, and business development services; this first-order code shows Catalyst role in creating relational safety nets around entrepreneurial activity:

> We have started a new campaign called 'Hand'. We do awareness campaigns and consultation through business training centers, incubators and associations on how we can help entrepreneurs. We need to mentally support them. Our message is you're not alone; we're here for you. They can bring any business issues, and we help them. Recently we upgraded it to business clinic. Now they can meet business development support services through our business clinic. (Respondent W)

The second-order theme “Social cohesion and relational support” shows CE’s Catalyst role by creating intangible civic outcomes beyond business, including emotional support, confidence, and mutual learning. These collective efforts strengthen social bonds and shared purpose, supporting sustained community participation and civic wealth creation.

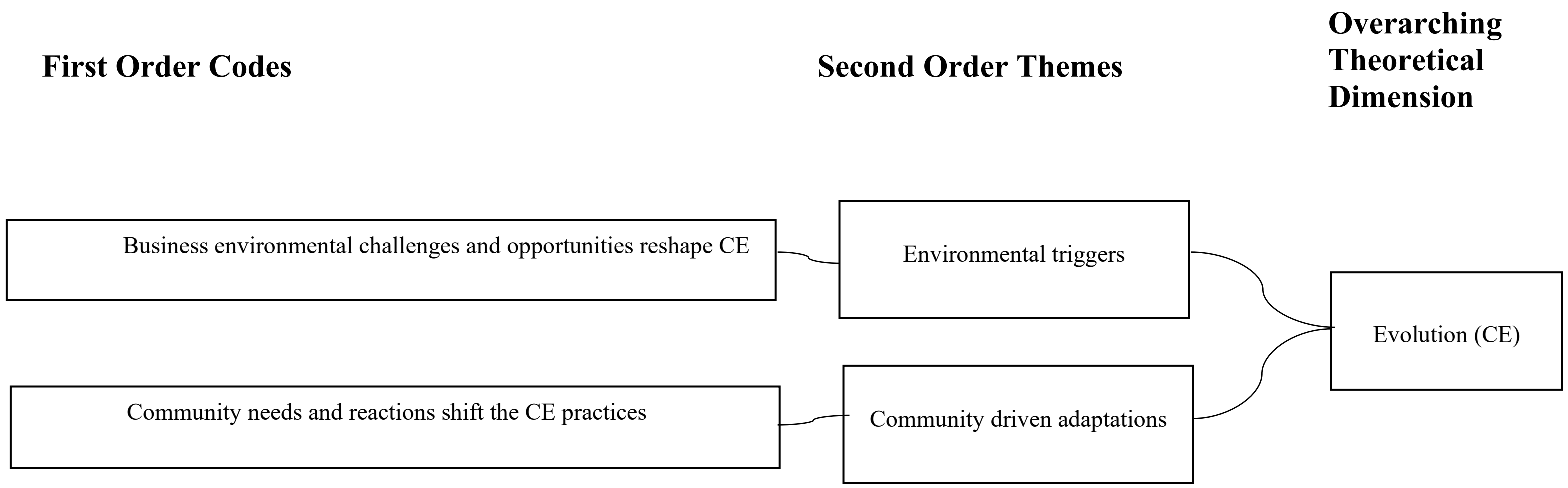
Together, “Community empowerment and shared prosperity” and “Social cohesion and relational support” show CE as a Catalyst for CWC by generating both tangible and intangible community outcomes. The narratives indicate that CE catalyzes civic wealth through inclusive livelihoods and community support, while also strengthening social bonds via emotional support and shared purpose.

The following section presents findings on the **evolving** role of CE, focusing on how EE and CWC shape CE practices responding to contextual challenges and community needs.

5.5 Evolving role of the CE

This section presents an overview of the evolving role of CE, highlighting how it is shaped by the influence of both the EE and CWC. The direct impact of EE on CE has been in the EE data chapter under the Enabler role. Similarly, CWC impact on CE has been discussed in the CWC data chapter under its Facilitator role. Here, drawing on empirical patterns that capture how changes in the business environment and, community context reshapes CE practices, the insights are organized into two second-order themes: Environmental triggers’ and ‘Community-driven adaptations. Together they show how contextual forces collectively reconfigure CE practices, as summarized in Figure 5.4 on the data structure of the evolving role of CE.

Figure 5.4: Data structure of the evolving role of CE



Note. Author's research data

5.5.1 Environmental triggers

This theme highlights the impact of EE on shifting CE practices. It was pointed out that almost all entrepreneurs, regardless of size or industry, need to have a favorable EE to start new businesses and develop existing ones. They also described how entrepreneurs engaged in CE change their collective practices in response to changes in EE.

Business environmental challenges and opportunities reshape CE

A greenhouse and organic farmer described how his collective journey began ‘from zero’ through grants, training, and links provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, universities, field officers, and export partners. This example under the first-order code shows how new support and infrastructure in the EE trigger ongoing renewal of its collective business models:

> You can see my story. I have started this farm from zero. I had nothing. I connected with the Ministry of Agriculture, university, field officers and obtained grants, knowledge and training. That helps to do business with my suppliers, working with exporters jointly. Whenever I connect with someone outside, I learn new forms of doing business collectively and new strategies for collective engagement. I always renew my collective practices with new opportunities (Respondent K)

A cultural park owner contrasted the early stages of his Northern Province theme park, when there was almost no institutional backing, with the present situation where many public, private, and community organizations are involved. As this support circle expanded, he completely redesigned the collective business model, showing how evolving ecosystem linkages reshape CE structures over time:

> In my tourism theme park business model, we are working with government sector institutions, private sector businesses, community, community organizations etc.

> Initially we did not have that support circle. Now we have totally renewed the collective business model according to the present nature supportive network changes. (Respondent R)

A value-added farmer illustrated the other side of this first-order code, noting that weak infrastructure and sudden policy shifts can destabilize collective ventures. When a large paddy cultivation project became uncertain after a government rice-import decision and partners withdrew, he redesigned the initiative with farmer associations, demonstrating how CE practices are reworked in response to environmental shocks:

> I had to face many challenges due to poor infrastructure, sudden policy decisions, and they make some of our businesses risky. Recently, we have developed a proposal for paddy cultivation on a large scale and with the government's decision to import rice, our business model become uncertain, and few parties left the project. Then we had to redesign that collective business with some farmer associations. (Respondent C)

Together, these narratives show how environmental triggers in the EE, both new opportunities and emerging constraints, continually drive the evolution of CE to Evolve as entrepreneurs adapt their collective arrangements to maintain viability and effectiveness.

Community driven adaptations

This theme emphasizes how empowered communities influence changes in CE practices. The responses revealed that community members communicate their needs and feedback within the entrepreneurial process, prompting corresponding adjustments and refinements in CE arrangements. As a result, CE evolves in response to community expectations, ensuring greater relevance, legitimacy, and alignment with local priorities.

Community needs and reactions shift the CE practices

An adventure and wellness operator explained that the “Diriya Aruna” program launched with a commercial bank initially failed, as three proposed collective models did not match participating families' expectations. Once successful entrepreneurs in the network began contributing ideas and feedback, the team redesigned the initiative and arrived at a workable collective model, illustrating how community reactions drive adaptive changes in CE:

> We started a program called ‘Diriya Aruna’ with a commercial bank to join families to our business network. The successful entrepreneurs are very active now; they also bring lots of new ideas and proposals to improve our collective business models. The three business models we initially proposed failed due to various reasons among the participants. However, the final model is now being implemented. (Respondent S)

A cultural park owner noted that families engaged in the Jaffna theme park first needed detailed guidance on what to do, but as they gained confidence, they started suggesting new offerings such as family meal sharing and collective branding. By incorporating these ideas, he and his partners reshaped the overall model, showing CE evolving through bottom-up adaptations from community members:

> When we gather families for the cultural theme park in Jaffna, we had to tell families everything. Especially what to do and what not to do. When we further empowered them, they actively helped us to change the entire business model. Based on their ideas and thoughts we introduce new collective practices like family meal share, collective branding for our products and some more. (Respondent R)

The second-order theme “Community driven adaptations” shows CE evolving through community feedback, as entrepreneurs revise collective models to fit local needs. This evidences the Evolution dimension by highlighting how CE practices are reshaped over time through bottom-up input from empowered community members.

Together, “Environmental triggers” and “Community driven adaptations” show that CE is continually reshaped by changing ecosystem conditions and community feedback. Taken together, they evidence the Evolution dimension as entrepreneurs revise collective models over time to remain viable and locally responsive.

The next section presents a comparison between practices of CE among entrepreneurs in tourism and agriculture.

5.6 CE in tourism vs. agriculture: a comparative perspective

The following section compares how CE is practiced among entrepreneurs in the tourism and agriculture sectors, highlighting key similarities and differences in their approaches to collaboration, resource sharing, and community engagement.

A total of 26 entrepreneurs participated in the study, and data collection continued until saturation was reached. Of these, 14 were involved in the tourism industry, while 12 fell under the agricultural sector. Table 5.1 presents a comparative summary of the respondents from the tourism sector in terms of engagement in collective or individualistic entrepreneurship practices. This data has been identified directly from information provided by participants in discussions. It was through spontaneity that the researchers identified whether they were either active or not in collective entrepreneurial practices.

Table 5.1: Comparative summary of engagements of tourism entrepreneurs in collective vs. individualistic entrepreneurship practices

Respondent	First order code/s	Practice
B	"Initially an entrepreneur should start alone aligning with his or her vision, later should be collective. That's what I did"	Transformative
D	"I connected with some parties to get advantages for my business only, Otherwise, I do not need any collective things"	Individualistic
H	"I really practice collective entrepreneurship, together we face challenges, learn from others and share benefits"	Collective
I	"I do collective projects with outsiders, and I need to do individually impossible tasks collectively"	Collective
O	"I need to be the market leader in my area; therefore, I do many collective businesses and projects"	Collective
P	"I'm collective entrepreneur and I do collective projects with my internal team and with some outside parties. Collective marketing campaigns are my main concern"	Collective

Q	“My business is a totally community-based business model and CE is the core”	Collective
R	“I have a cultural theme park, and I do business together with several parties collectively for shared goals”	Collective
S	“I believe CE and my employees have the freedom and facilities to work as entrepreneurs internally and I have partnered with several external parties as well”	Collective
T	“I work with several parties collectively and I have 03 profit sharing collaboration with 03 event management firms”	Collective
V	“Working together is something I have seen since childhood. So, CE is not really a new thing for me. I have connected with several parties to work collectively for shared benefits”	Collective
W	“I mainly expect knowledge transfer, joint marketing, collaborative innovation, skill complementarity, greater social impact, mentorship opportunities from teamwork. I am with people who are suitable for it and need it”	Collective
Y	“There are no separate divisions in my business. Teams have been created for all	Collective

	the important functions. I work a lot with parties like researchers, innovators, thinkers, analysts, writers, technologists, promoters, marketers, government officials, and my employees collectively”	
Z	“I do not do business with anyone. I don't want other people to destroy my family business. If other people join, they absorb and drink my business essence. If that happens, my business will be paralyzed”	Individualistic

Note. Author’s research data.

The responses from the tourism entrepreneurs show a clear distinction between the collective and individualistic approaches to entrepreneurship. A great majority, 11 out of the 14 respondents, engage in CE, laying much emphasis on cooperation, shared responsibilities, and the pooling of resources towards achieving common goals. Responses show the effectively overcome challenges, drive innovation through collaboration, and realize benefits accruing from mutual knowledge and social impacts as key reasons behind CE.

On the other hand, two entrepreneurs adopt an individualistic view, focusing on independence and self-reliance. They prefer to operate independently instead of intense cooperation, stating their fears about potential disturbances or violations of their company's core identity and control. Table 5.2 Comparative summary of engagements of agriculture entrepreneurs in collective versus individualistic entrepreneurship practices.

Table 5.2: Comparative summary of engagements of agriculture entrepreneurs in collective versus individualistic entrepreneurship practices

Respondent	First order code/s	Practice
A	"You know I can't do all the activities of my business by myself. Therefore, I need to get involved with others. I have several collective engagements"	Collective
C	"I've connected with another company down south. We work collaboratively on some business projects. I need to share knowledge therefore I work collectively"	Collective
E	"I have a secret formula for pest control; I connected with farmer societies to sell it. I need it to increase my profit"	Individualistic
F	"I do business alone. I do cultivations and I sell the products in the open market. That is, it. I do not have any collective work. No need to spend my time thinking about others and solving conflicts"	Individualistic
G	"My current business does not have shares for outsiders. I did not pool my resources with outsiders. But I promote entrepreneurship within the organization. I need to wait until I	Transformative

	confirm my stability before outside collaborations”	
J	“My business is a traditional business model and most of the time I manage all the key activities of the business. I didn’t use commonly built resources, I did not outsource any part of my business, I don’t do business with third parties”	Individualistic
K	“I connected with the people and the companies in the agricultural industry. Basically, I partnered with my suppliers and advisors. I develop some business models together with them”	Collective
L	“No collective work. We get services from service providers; we pay for them. We have employees, they have prespecified jobs. They do them. We pay salaries for them. That is, it and enough”	Individualistic
M	“During my business, I do some business with different parties. Especially with the political parties and politically supported people. When I need support, I connect with them”	Individualistic
N	“As I said before, I do not do business with a group of people. I have no such experience. I am a self-employed person. Because I don't need to be	Individualistic

	unnecessarily complex and stressed. I'm fine with the way I'm doing”	
U	“I do not do business with anyone. I must get services from other people while doing my cultivation. At that time, I pay them money and get those services. Nothing special happens beyond that”	Individualistic
X	“I do farming alone now. I have tried several times to cultivate together. But every time I face big problems. After that I decided to work alone. Now there is no big trouble. Now I work if I like or just stay”	Individualistic

Note. Author’s research data.

Responses from the agricultural entrepreneurs show a strong leaning towards individualistic approaches as revealed by 8 out of 12 entrepreneurs preferring to work alone instead of a team. This is because they want complete independence and self-sufficiency in running their affairs without external partnership. They often associate collective effort with added complexities, potential conflicts, or disruptions of their set business processes. To these entrepreneurs, the traditional, independent model provides simplicity and avoids complications related to coordination and allocation of resources.

However, there are some cases of CE within this group. Three of the entrepreneurs actively collaborate with other businesses, farmers' groups, or industry stakeholders in sharing ideas, strategizing business, or enhancing their profitability. This shows the realization that some activities or goals are better achieved by collaborating.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has unpacked the multifaceted roles of CE within Sri Lanka's socio-economic landscape, as shaped by the real-life experiences of tourism and agriculture entrepreneurs. The role of CE is crucial in the dynamic interplay of EE, CE, and CWC. In its direct impact, CE drives as a **Synergy,** an **Enhancer** and a **Catalyst**. As a **Synergy**, it explained how CE facilitates entrepreneurs for generating combined results greater than the sum of their individual efforts. In its **Enhancer** role, it explored how CE improves EE by making active and collective communications. Further it presented how CE contributes for positive societal transformations under **Catalyst** role**.**

In outlining its evolving role, this chapter presented how EE and CWC shape and contribute to the improvement of best CE practices. Moreover, while the direct impacts of EE and CWC on CE are presented in the respective data chapters, this chapter highlighted how environmental triggers and community adaptations contribute to shift in CE practices.

Moreover, it provided a comparative analysis of CE practices among entrepreneurs in tourism and agriculture sectors. Overall, this chapter lays the groundwork for further exploration of the interplay between EE, CE, and CWC. The next chapter discusses the active influence and evolving roles of EE.

CHAPTER SIX

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into the role and functioning of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE), drawing on the lived experiences of tourism and agricultural entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. While the broader study examines the interplay of Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE), Collective Entrepreneurship (CE) and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC), this chapter focusses findings on how the EE shapes entrepreneurial activity and societal transformation, and how CE and CWC, in turn, contribute to the evolution of the EE.

Building on this focus, the findings are organized around these three overarching roles of the EE. First, the **Enabler** role captures the direct influence of EE on CE by showing how ecosystem services, resources, and support systems facilitate entrepreneurs and collective engagements, helping them to survive, grow, and sustain their ventures. Second, the **Reinforcer** role explains the proactive influence of EE on CWC, highlighting how EE support systems create jobs, upgrade skills, and open equitable opportunities for different community groups. Third, under the **Evolver** role, the chapter presents how entrepreneurs and empowered communities feed back into the ecosystem by influencing EE policies, processes, strategies, and institutions. This evolving role is grounded in empirical patterns that reflect contextual opportunities and challenges, changing societal needs, and community expectations. These first-order insights are grouped into second-order themes that show how CE and CWC jointly push the EE to adjust its practices.

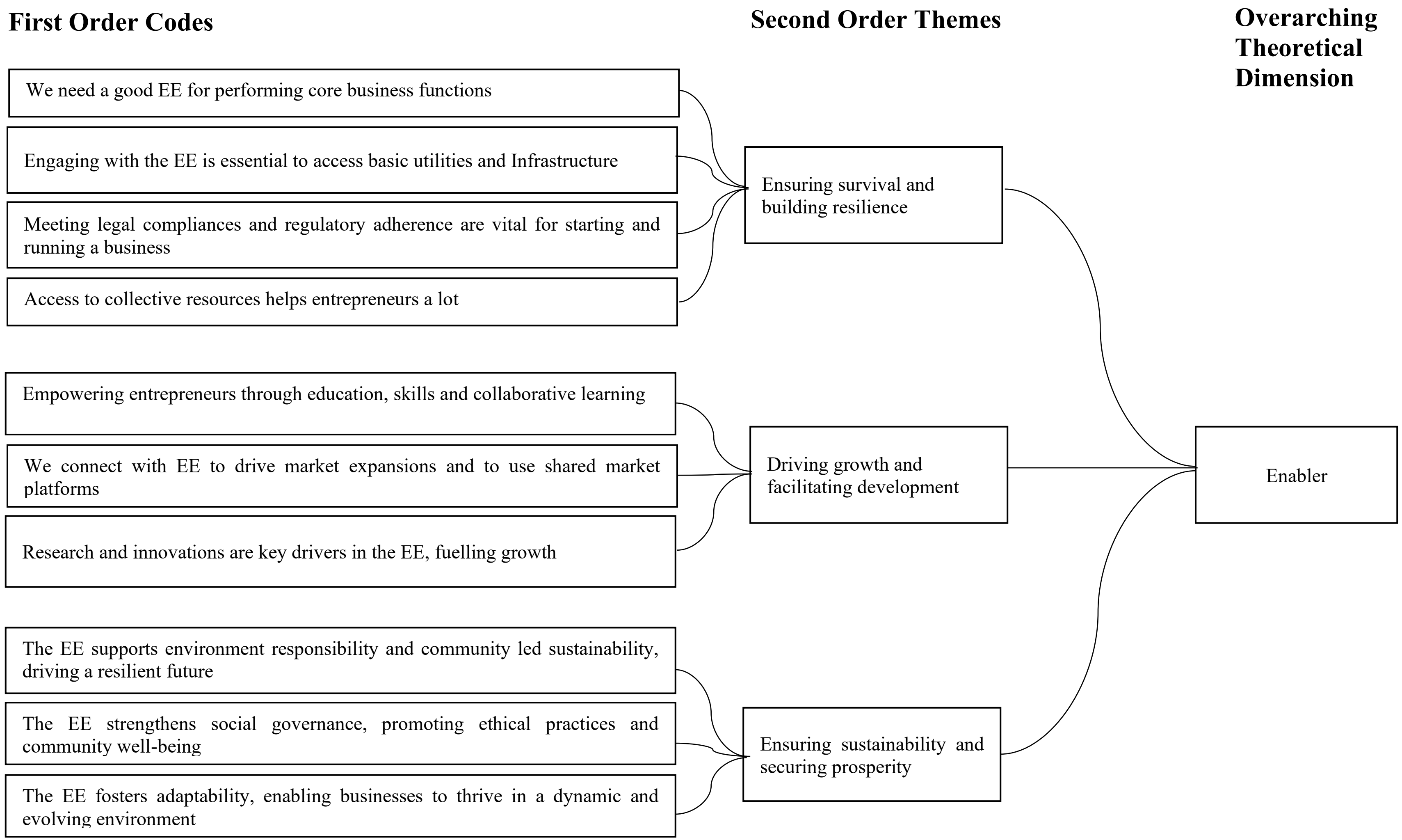
The chapter progresses through five key sections. Following this introduction, the second section details how the EE fosters an enabling environment for entrepreneurs, with specific attention to mechanisms that facilitate CE, such as strengthening collaborative networks and shared-resource platforms. The third section presents the societal impact of EE, demonstrating how EE support systems reinforce community development and transformation. The fourth section presents the findings on the evolving role of EE, showing how the ecosystem adapts to continued entrepreneurial and societal feedback. Finally, the conclusion synthesizes the multifaceted contributions of EE while bridging to the discovery of its synergies with CE and CWC in subsequent chapters.

6.2 EE as an Enabler: facilitating entrepreneurial success and connectivity

This section explores how the EE enables entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka, with particular focus on the tourism and agricultural sectors. The empirical findings show that an enabling atmosphere is not optional but essential for day-to-day operations and longer-term development. Drawing on the narratives (see Figure 6.1), the views of respondents are organized around three second-order themes that capture the Enabler role of the EE:

- Ensuring survival and building resilience
- Driving growth and facilitating development
- Ensuring sustainability and securing prosperity

Figure 6.1: Data structure of the EE as an Enabler



Note. Author's research data.

6.2.1 Ensuring survival and building resilience

In this second-order theme, entrepreneurs consistently noted that they must interact with ecosystem stakeholders to perform core business activities essential for survival. The theme explains what services a firm takes from outside, and how that affects survival. Most respondents, irrespective of industry, scale, ownership, or location, stressed that they must connect and work with relevant EE actors to carry out core operations such as production, sales, financing, and people management. The following narratives suggest how this Enabler function operates in practice.

We need a good EE for performing core business functions

Across the interviews, entrepreneurs highlighted that a strong EE is required for smooth production and operations, generating stable revenue streams, securing finance, and managing people. This first-order code shows the Enabler role of the EE by revealing how multiple actors outside the firm are woven into entrepreneurs' everyday business routines.

A vegetable farmer emphasized the crucial need to connect with the different parties in the EE for ensuring his cultivation and crop processing. He specifically mentioned external parties:

> Connecting with the required parties at the right time to smooth my production and crop management is a mandatory requirement for my survival. I work with so many parties like suppliers, research firms, warehouse owners, transport companies and few more. Especially we get new varieties and developments of seeds, fertilizer, knowledge on new methods of cultivation, some other technical supports to control hazards and other production related services. (Respondent A)

A hotelier similarly stressed that making required connections managing relationships with ecosystem actors are basic prerequisites for delivering effective services to the customers and other stakeholders. According to this respondent, no one can survive without a proper engagement with its ecosystem:

> How can a business survive without engaging in the ecosystem and without managing those relationships effectively. Reservations, booking management, accommodations, transportation, and payments are the key services that we get by connecting with many outside service providers and other business development support service agents. (Respondent B)

A greenhouse and organic farmer emphasized the importance of support system to generate sales and revenue. He stressed that interpersonal relationships with his suppliers is crucial to obtain quality input at a reasonable price so he can sell at a profit:

> I think generally a healthy supportive environment helps an entrepreneur to boost income, my partnerships with coco bag manufacturers, seed/chemical suppliers, and technical advisors directly helps me generate sales and revenue. For example, by collaborating with these partners, I've expanded my product offerings, like selling cultivation bags and agriculture input under my brand and added training services. (Respondent K)

A tour operator highlighted the crucial role of financial support in the EE, using both formal and informal channels for short-term needs and banks for long-term funding. He notes that operations would stall without these financial links:

> I engage with several parties in the network for my financial requirements. For the long-term financial requirements, I go to the banks and for the short-term financial

requirements I use both formal and informal channels in the system. How can I run my business without reaching out to the finance channels. (Respondent V)

The greenhouse and organic farmer further noted that start-up and growth funding from a World Bank project and commercial banks were essential to launch and scale his venture, underscoring how financial institutions enable both entry and expansion:

> I was able to get the startup funding from the World Bank project through the Ministry of Agriculture and whenever we need any short term and long-term financing, we get it through our banks. How an entrepreneur runs a business without getting the solutions of the parties who give short term and long-term financial facilities. (Respondent K)

Likewise, a tour planner underlined that managing revenue streams and growth requires working closely with professionals and organizations in the ecosystem to strengthen her team and the partners who deliver services under her brand:

> I need to pay my full attention to manage my revenue streams and growth of the business. Therefore, I connect with several professionals and organizations in the ecosystem to manage and growth my internal human force and the people who sign up with my brand to deliver services collectively. (Respondent H)

Taken together, the above examples illustrate the first-order concept of performing core business functions, which aligns with second-order theme **Ensuring survival and building resilience** under the Enabler role of the EE. These accounts show how access to suppliers, service providers, finance, and human resources underpins core business functions and basic resilience. The next first-order code explains how access to basic utilities and infrastructure helps entrepreneurs survive.

Engaging with the EE is essential to access basic utilities and Infrastructure

In addition to everyday business partners, entrepreneurs rely on public agencies and local authorities for transport links, utilities, and other physical infrastructure. This interview evidence indicates the Enabler role of the EE by revealing how these institutional actors provide the backbone on which firms operate. A tour operator stressed that entrepreneurs pay indirect and direct taxes to the government and therefore expect quality, standardized, and stable infrastructure and utilities; for this, he actively connects with relevant organizations:

> I think the government is responsible for providing quality and standardized and stable infrastructure and utilities for its entrepreneurs. Because we pay a huge indirect and direct tax. So, I connected with relevant government institutions to take those services. Otherwise, we can't carry our businesses. (Respondent D)

A crop farmer explained that she must work with local authorities, regional agencies, and rural support systems to access the infrastructure and utilities needed to run her enterprise, viewing these provisions as core responsibilities of policymakers:

> As a woman who is in the agriculture business, obviously I must work with local authorities, regional agencies, rural support systems which are essential to run a business. Providing these facilities and other basic utilities is one of the main responsibilities of the lawmakers and other responsible parties. (Respondent J)

Through this first-order code, the EE again appears as an Enabler, providing the physical and institutional infrastructure that makes basic business operations possible. The next code explains how legal compliance and regulatory adherence are also vital for survival.

Meeting legal compliances and regulatory adherence are vital for starting and running a business

This first-order code shows that the Enabler role of the EE includes clear rules, approval processes, and even digital systems that support legitimate business growth. A vegetable farmer emphasized the necessity of adhering to government-imposed rules, regulations, procedures, highlighting the need to obtain required licenses, approvals at different stages of the business lifecycle:

> How can we do business without adhering to the government rules, regulations and other good practices. We need to obtain required approvals, licenses, and need to follow procedures in different situations. Sometimes before starting the business. Sometimes, with the start, sometimes after incorporating. We can go astray if we don't adhere to the standards and good practices. (Respondent A)

Moreover, a cultural tour guide, who is heavily involved in community and collaborative initiatives, views compliance as mandatory for survival and reputation, noting that technology can streamline these processes:

> I have more community and collaborative initiatives, and I believe that we need to connect with the people and organizations in the business environment to ensure compliances. It is not only viewed as a necessary obligation but also as a foundation for growth, reducing legal risks and boosting reputation. In this digital age we need to embrace technology to streamline processes and improve productivity. (Respondent Y)

This first-order code reinforces the Enabler role of the EE by showing how supportive regulatory frameworks and systems reduce risk and create a stable platform for business continuity. The next code explains how access to collective resource pools benefits entrepreneurs.

Access to collective resources helps entrepreneurs a lot

Respondents highlighted that shared resource pools within the ecosystem (such as shared facilities, partnerships, or communal assets) strengthen their ability to survive. This first-order code reveals that the EE enables survival by giving firms access to others' assets and capabilities rather than requiring them to own everything themselves. A tour operator stressed that she works with many parties in the ecosystem to run her tourism business while managing multiple locations across the country.

> As a tourism entrepreneur, I don't have my own hotels and homestays around the country. But they have signup with many hotels and home stays, and they operate under my brand. This is the core of my business operations and additionally I connect with many more service providers to ensure smooth service delivery. (Respondent H)

A homestay network operator who dominates the market on the southern coast and attributes his success to collective work and effective use of resource pools:

> I'm working with 250+ accommodation providers and a research firm and these collective pools of resources help me to dominate the market and it's clear I can't exploit opportunities alone. (Respondent O)

Overall, this first-order code illustrates how the EE, acting as an Enabler, allows entrepreneurs to plug into shared resources to extend their reach, share risk, and build resilience. Together, the narratives under the theme Ensuring survival and building resilience demonstrate that a well-functioning EE enables survival by supporting core operations, providing infrastructure, ensuring regulatory compliance, and facilitating access to collective resources.

The next theme, driving growth and facilitating development, moves beyond survival to examine how the EE actively enables entrepreneurs to upgrade and expand their ventures.

6.2.2 Driving growth and facilitating development

Beyond survival, entrepreneurs turn to the EE to grow and develop their ventures. This second-order theme shows how the EE, in its Enabler role, opens opportunities for knowledge enhancement, capacity building, collaborative learning, market expansion, and innovation. The following narratives suggest how these interactions enable entrepreneurs to move from basic functioning toward development and growth.

Empowering entrepreneurs through education, skills and collaborative learning

Under this first-order code, entrepreneurs describe how EE actors such as universities, training providers, experts, and mentors strengthen their skills and confidence, thereby enabling venture growth. This demonstrates the Enabler role of the EE in building human and social capital. A tour planner acknowledged that despite her own educational qualifications, she actively collaborates with educational and research service providers, as well as industry professionals to continually upgrade her knowledge and skills:

> Even though I have certain education qualifications, I'm not an expert at anything. So, I actively work with educational and research service providers and some professionals to upgrade my knowledge and skills. This helps me lot. This is one of reasons behind my success and those connections empower me to manage more than hundred business units under my own brand. (Respondent H)

A greenhouse and organic farmer stressed that education and experience are more significant for entrepreneurial success, being most significant for entrepreneurship success. His formal education was important, complemented by lessons from early failures and learning from others. He now trains other farmers in greenhouse techniques and advocates for experiential education, mentorship, and team learning to equip more entrepreneurs:

> My Advanced Diploma in Entrepreneurial Business Management taught me how to turn ideas into viable businesses, and now I'm pursuing a master's to deepen that knowledge. But it's not just formal education; hands-on experience, I learn from others matters too. My early failures taught me practical lessons no classroom could. Today, I even trained other farmers, sharing skills like greenhouse management and cost-effective practices. (Respondent K)

Overall, this first-order code shows that EE is acting as an Enabler by upgrading entrepreneurial skills and diffusing knowledge that supports business growth. The following code outlines how entrepreneurs use the EE to drive market expansions and leverage shared market platforms.

We connect with EE to drive market expansions and to use shared market platforms

This first-order code captures how entrepreneurs rely on networks, associations, and strategic relationships in the EE to reach new customer segments and expand sales, reinforcing the Enabler role of the ecosystem. A pest-control producer works with several farmers' societies, using these collectives as key marketing channels for his value-added products and services:

> I work with several farmers' societies. I have a secret formula to produce some pest control solutions. I introduced them to the farmers through farmers' societies. (Respondent E)

A greenhouse and organic farmer mentioned a deliberate strategy of building strong relationships with suppliers and other partners to open new markets, for example, launching coconut cultivation bags and agricultural chemical ventures, and he is now exploring franchise opportunities:

> I think my story is bit unique and whenever I meet a good supplier or any other good party I try to make a business relationship with them. That's how we started our coconut bag, chemical businesses. That adds an extra market for me. These days we are looking for good franchises for expanding our market. (Respondent K)

A homestay networker underscored the importance of both formal and informal partnerships with local and international tourism actors to boost sales, and expresses sympathy for those who attempt to operate in isolation:

> We have formal and informal allies with local and international parties who are involved in the tourism industry. Those networks help us make sales a lot. I would like to express my sympathy if someone tries to do something on their own, rather than joining forces with others to earn income in the traditional way. (Respondent O)

Together, the narratives under this first-order code show the EE enabling growth by opening shared market platforms and collaborative channels that individual firms could not build alone. The next first-order code examines how research and innovation within the EE further fuel development.

Research and innovations are key drivers in the EE, fueling growth

This interview evidence indicates the Enabler role of the EE as a source of innovation capacity. A greenhouse farmer explained that he engages with foreign organizations involved in research and development (R&D) on greenhouse cultivation and modern organic farming to access new knowledge for business development:

> We engage with some foreign organizations who conduct research and development in the area of greenhouse cultivations and modern organic farming. The purpose is to get new knowledge to develop the business. (Respondent G)

A travel agent noted that connecting with experts has strengthened his research, innovation, and systems development, bringing fresh ideas and resources, improving efficiency, and enhancing adaptability:

> Connecting with experts has really helped me with research, innovation, and building better systems. By working with them, I get fresh ideas and resources that keep me ahead. It’s also made my business run smoother and helped me adapt faster to changes. It’s been key to growing and improving my business. (Respondent W)

Across this first-order code, the EE clearly acts as an Enabler by providing access to research infrastructure and innovation partners that individual firms could not develop alone. Overall, the codes under the theme Driving growth and facilitating development show how the EE supports entrepreneurs in learning, expanding markets, and innovating beyond basic survival.

The next theme, ensuring sustainability and securing prosperity, examines how the EE enables longer-term environmental, social, and economic resilience.

6.2.3 Ensuring sustainability and securing prosperity

Respondents indicated that entrepreneurial engagement with the EE increasingly centers on sustainability as a foundation for long-term prosperity. In its Enabler role, the EE supports entrepreneurs in adopting environmentally responsible practices, strengthening social governance, and remaining adaptable to change. The following narratives suggest how these sustainability-oriented interactions help secure a resilient future for both businesses and communities.

The EE supports environmental responsibility and community led sustainability, driving a resilient future

Under this first-order code, entrepreneurs describe how ecosystem actors, knowledge networks, and community-based models encourage environmentally conscious and resource-efficient practices, showing the EE as an Enabler of community led sustainability. A greenhouse & organic farmer highlights environmental responsibility as central to his work. He notes that most of his good practices and sustainable business strategies were learned through his networks and he stresses the need for a supportive atmosphere for such initiatives.

> See my greenhouse and our environment friendly practices, really, we give our maximum to the environment. Especially as agricultural entrepreneurs, we need to be more environmentally friendly as people who deal with the environment most. I learnt most of the good practices and other sustainable business strategies from my networks. We need a supportive atmosphere for this kind of practice. (Respondent K)

A community tourism operator explains that her tourism business in Trincomalee is collectively built by community investments of money, land, time, and labor. She emphasizes careful use of resources, minimizing waste, and widespread use of recycling, and calls for stronger national support to sustain these practices:

> Our tourism business is built by the community. Some invest money, others land or time. We work as a family to uplift everyone. In this model we avoid overusing resources, land, money, other resources, same. We carefully use everything and actually as a family unit we need zero waste. You can see we use more recycling products, and we do recycle as much as we can. The national support should be there to continue them. (Respondent Q)

The greenhouse farmer further described how sharing underutilized or vacant resources and good practices with other farmers helps save energy, space, and money, reflecting an intention to protect natural resources while improving productivity.

> Alone, we struggle. I started new practice to share our underutilized or vacant resources and best practices with other farmers. We were able to save more resources. That doesn't imply profit orientation only, but productive use of limited resources, protecting natural resources as well. (Respondent K)

Together, these accounts show the EE enabling environmental responsibility and community-led sustainability by diffusing green practices and supporting collective resource use. The next first-order code shows how the EE strengthens social governance and community well-being.

The EE strengthens social governance, promoting ethical practices and community well-being

This first-order code captures how entrepreneurs use EE relationships and structures to promote ethical conduct, protect cultural heritage, and widen community-level benefits, reinforcing the EE’s Enabler role in fostering social governance. A homestay network operator has partnered with more than 250 households, hotels, and taxi companies to provide tourist services, and he stresses that ethical behavior is central to his business model and long-term survival:

> We have signed up with 250+ households who can provide a separate room or rooms for the tourists, star-grade hotels, households taxi companies as well. One of my main responsibilities and one of my main expectations from my networks is being ethical. I’m a 100% accurate taxpayer and never practice unethical things for short term benefits. I think it’s my long-term survival. (Respondent O)

A cultural park owner in Jaffna explains that his community-based tourism theme park is built on shared interests, local cultural promotion, and economic improvement, with benefits flowing to both business partners and the wider village:

> In our Jaffna Cultural theme park is a fully community-based business model and partnerships are based on shared interests and a common goal of promoting local culture and boosting the economy while protecting our cultural heritage. The business partners and the entire community enjoy the benefits. (Respondent R)

These narratives indicate how the EE enables ethical conduct, cultural preservation, and shared well-being, thereby strengthening the social foundations of prosperity. The following code provides insight into how the EE fosters adaptability, enabling businesses to thrive amid change.

The EE fosters adaptability, enabling businesses to thrive in a dynamic and evolving environment

Under this first-order code, entrepreneurs describe how staying connected with diverse ecosystem actors helps them anticipate change, respond proactively, and manage complex markets, again highlighting the Enabler role. A value-added farmer identifies proactiveness as central to long-term success. By seeking advice from experts about new trends, disruptions, and emerging problems, he has been able to design modern tour packages and promotional strategies:

> I take advice, consultations from experts about new changes, trends, discontinuities, problems. I always believe that if we can take the first move, we can gain many advantages. We were able to develop modern tour packages and promotional strategies because of these updates. (Respondent C)

A homestay owner emphasizes the need to connect with different ecosystem actors to keep her tourism business updated and to navigate global political and cultural sensitivities when hosting guests from diverse backgrounds.

> As a woman entrepreneur in tourism, I connect with different parties to keep up my business updated. I work with them collaboratively. We need to connect with and deal with different people in the world and we need to understand even modern world politics beyond their cultural artifacts. Now I know how to work with Israyel tourists while keeping Palestine or other Muslims same time at our place. (Respondent I)

Overall, the narratives under Ensuring sustainability and securing prosperity illustrate how the EE, in its Enabler role, supports environmental responsibility, ethical and community-focused governance, and strategic adaptability. Together with the earlier themes on survival and growth, this section shows that a well-functioning EE not only helps businesses endure and expand but also anchors long-term sustainable prosperity. Importantly, these sustainability-oriented mechanisms further clarify the EE's Enabler role by showing that enabling is not limited to short-term operational support; it also involves providing the norms, networks, and institutional conditions that help entrepreneurs translate responsible practices into resilience and continued viability over time.

The following section presents insights into how the EE acts as a Reinforcer, empowering positive societal change beyond the firm level.

6.3 EE as a Reinforcer: underpin community development and transformation

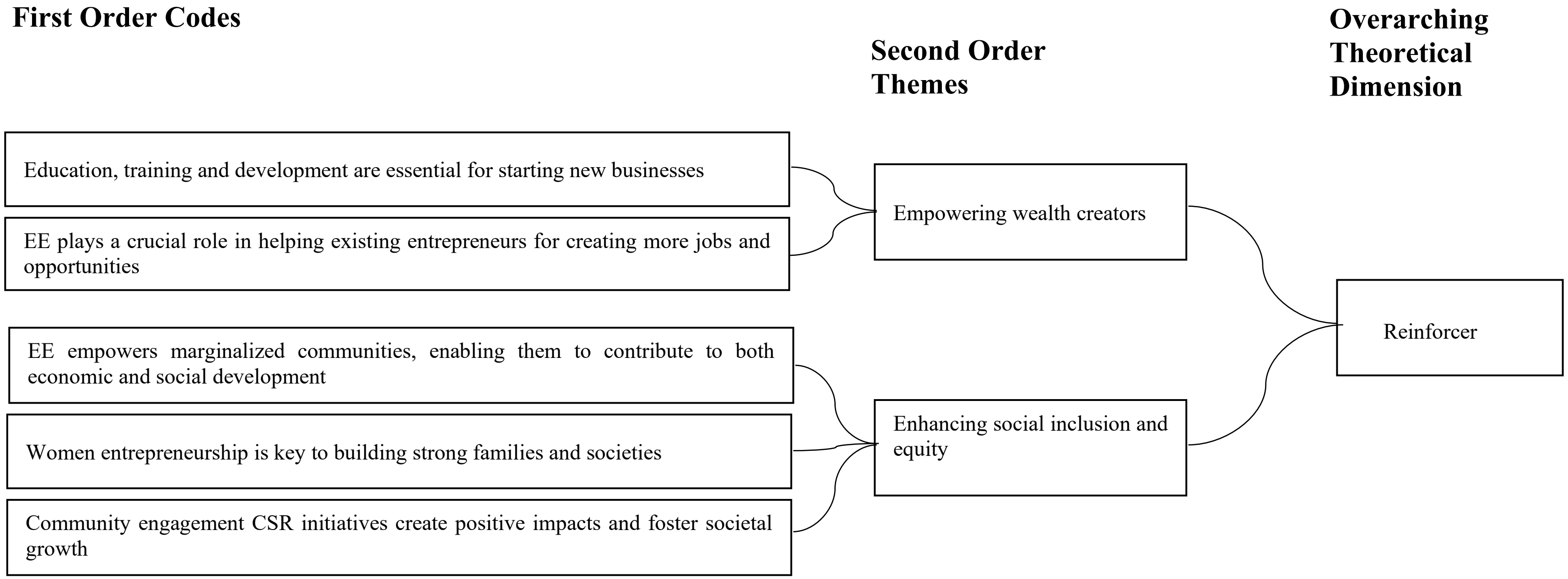
This section explores the societal impact of EE, showing how it acts as a Reinforcer by supporting community development and transformation. Two key second-order themes emerged from the responses:

- Empowering Wealth Creators
- Enhancing Social Inclusion and Equity

The first theme explains how the narratives on education, training, and support for existing ventures show EE enabling new business creation and helping entrepreneurs generate jobs and opportunities. The second theme demonstrates how narratives on marginalized groups, women's entrepreneurship, and community-oriented CSR highlight EE's role in widening participation and fostering positive societal change.

Figure 6.2: presents the data structure of the EE as a Reinforcer.

Figure 6.2: Data structure of the EE as a Reinforcer



Note. Author's research data

6.3.1 Empowering wealth creators

This theme emphasizes how the EE supports wealth creation by inspiring and equipping entrepreneurs, who are viewed as key "wealth creators" in their communities. Respondents stressed that the EE provides essential education, training, and ongoing support, enabling individuals to start new businesses and helping existing entrepreneurs expand, create jobs, and generate wider opportunities. Together, the empirical patterns in this theme show the Reinforcer role by equipping wealth creators who, in turn, drive economic development and sustainable civic prosperity.

Education, training and development are essential for starting new businesses

A vegetable farmer explained that a state-university diploma in entrepreneurship and business management inspired him to start his own business, through which he now creates jobs, contributes to the economy. This first-order code shows EE as a Reinforcer by demonstrating how entrepreneurship education turns potential entrepreneurs into wealth creators for their communities:

> Fortunately, I was able to follow the entrepreneurship and business management diploma from a government university. It motivated me to start my new agri business and now I'm a proud entrepreneur who created jobs and money for the country. The real pride is that more than 20 families live happily because of my business. (Respondent A)

A greenhouse and organic farmer credited entrepreneurship education and a business advisor's training for helping him secure a grant for a value-added agriculture venture, and he continues to upskill as he pursues a five-year goal of creating 1,000 jobs and supporting 5,000 families. Here, this first-order account again highlights the Reinforcer role: advisory and training services are being converted into ambitious plans for widespread job creation:

> I got entrepreneurship knowledge and training from a business advisor and as result of that I was able to get a grant from the Ministry of Agriculture to start my value-added agricultural business. Still I'm getting training and other supports to grow my business. My dream is to generate one thousand job opportunities within five years and look after five thousand family members through my business. (Respondent K)

Another vegetable farmer acknowledged the vital support provided by their church in starting their business, highlighting that similar assistance is extended to many others. As a result, a strong network has been formed, supporting the poor, schools, and hospitals, while members also help each other start and develop ventures. This first-order account reinforces the idea that education, guidance, and moral support from ecosystem actors help ordinary community members become wealth creators who reinvest benefits locally:

> I really value and appreciate the knowledge and resources given by the church for starting my business. My church helps me with lots of people, not only me to start new businesses and the request from the church is helping the community through our businesses. Now we have a big group of people who are helping poor people, schools, hospitals, and important thing is we also help each other to start new businesses and develop their businesses. (Respondent N)

Together, these accounts under the first-order code, "Education, training and development are essential for starting new businesses" portray EE as a Reinforcer that seeds new ventures and multiplies community-level wealth.

EE plays a crucial role in helping existing entrepreneurs to create more jobs and opportunities

A homestay network operator viewed his business growth as a way to repay the support he received (funded by taxpayers), leveraging free training to grow, create jobs, and ensure the community shares in the benefits. This first-order code illustrates how EE reinforces societal development by supporting established entrepreneurs who then expand employment and redistribute benefits:

> Personally, I’m not a selfish person and I am always happy to give something to society because we have got facilities to run our businesses with taxpayers’ money. We have a responsibility to serve them back. I’m still getting knowledge and training from universities and government organizations free of charge for improving my tourism business. That helps to develop our businesses and then we can create more jobs, and we take more resources from people and at the end of the day they also receive benefits directly and indirectly. (Respondent O)

A cultural park owner in Jaffna described how ongoing ecosystem training and support enable him to scale his authentic, community-engaged cultural park model to other cities to uplift poor communities, illustrating the EE’s Reinforcer role in expanding cultural and economic benefits:

> We get many local and foreign tourists to our cultural theme park in Jaffna. The most people love the place because of our cultural practices, engagements with the living styles of our people and our stories. We are still getting knowledge, training and other facilities from different people and organizations and I hope to expand this concept to few more cities. I need to see the smiles of the faces of all poor people living here. If we get more support, we can do it. (Respondent R)

Entrepreneurs highlighted that the EE provides ongoing support for their businesses through access to training, knowledge, and public resources-enabling sustained growth, job creation, and positive community impact. The following second-order theme explores how the EE further contributes to enhancing social inclusion and equity in society.

6.3.2 Enhancing social inclusion and equity

This theme explores how the EE acts as a Reinforcer of social inclusion and equity by empowering marginalized groups, supporting women-led enterprises, and encouraging community-focused CSR initiatives. Across the empirical patterns in this theme, EE support enables those who are often excluded to participate in entrepreneurship, thereby strengthening both economic development and societal well-being.

EE empowers marginalized communities, enabling them to contribute to both economic and social development

A cultural park owner described how his tourism village model supports war-affected, disabled, and economically neglected people whose lives have now improved, crediting government and security-force support for making this possible. This example shows the Reinforcer role of EE by channeling public and institutional resources into inclusive ventures that uplift the most disadvantaged:

> I sent you some photos of our entrepreneurs in the tourism village, here people are war victims. They faced many difficulties in their life, and some are disabled, and they are economically neglected group. See now they are enjoying their life. That’s what we need. I need to say security forces; government also helped us. You can take this model to the world to show that how we can empower poor people. (Respondent R)

(A tour planner, a homestay owner, and another travel planner echoed similar ideas, emphasizing the importance of empowering marginalized groups through the EE.)

Women entrepreneurship is key to building strong families and societies

A resort operator, observed that families led by women entrepreneurs tend to be more financially stable, allowing them to provide better education and quality of life for their children. She called for more targeted engagement to empower women in business:

> I do business with many women and most of these families are financially stable. They can give a good education to their kids, and they have a good life. I really want to see more projects in empowering women entrepreneurs. As a woman, I'm also getting some financial facilities, training and development under special schemes for women entrepreneurs. But we need more engagements. (Respondent T)

A homestay networker added that most homestay owners in his island-wide network are women, who are given priority because empowering them strengthens whole families and communities. He noted that partnerships with a bank and a university help these women start flexible ventures that fit around family commitments:

> In our island wide homestay signups, most of owners are women. We give women a special priority, because if we can empower a woman, that means building a whole family and society. We work with a bank and a university for promoting women startups as well. I know most of the women who work with us can't do fulltime jobs due to their family commitments and running their own business is somewhat flexible for them. With their disciplines and motherly qualities, they really dedicate themselves to our tourism model. (Respondent O)

Taken together, this first-order code reinforces the EE's Reinforcer role by showing how ecosystem programs and partnerships position women as central agents of family and societal stability. The next code discusses how EE helps CSR projects aiming at positive societal change.

Community engagement through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives creates positive impacts and fosters societal growth

A tour operator, described a CSR initiative run with the divisional secretariat to promote indigenous tourism, including a free social-media promotion and booking system for local residents, emphasizing that such opportunities build people's capabilities rather than offering one-off aid:

> I connect with divisional secretariat office, and we promote indigenous tourism in my area and we setup social media promotion, booking system for people in my area free of charge. It's my most impactful CSR project and I thought we need to make some opportunities to build people instead of giving something else. (Respondent V)

A greenhouse farmer highlighted a bank-led CSR project that built an irrigation tank that benefited more than two hundred families. This was followed by a joint initiative with the farmers' association to train one hundred farmers in modern agricultural practices, strengthening collective agricultural development:

> You know Sampath bank, Sri Lanka built tank under their CSR initiative in our area and now more than two hundred families are getting benefits from these agricultural activities. After this project our farmers' association also initiated CSR project together with them to train hundreds of farmers with modern agricultural practices. Now as a collective we are doing well. (Respondent G)

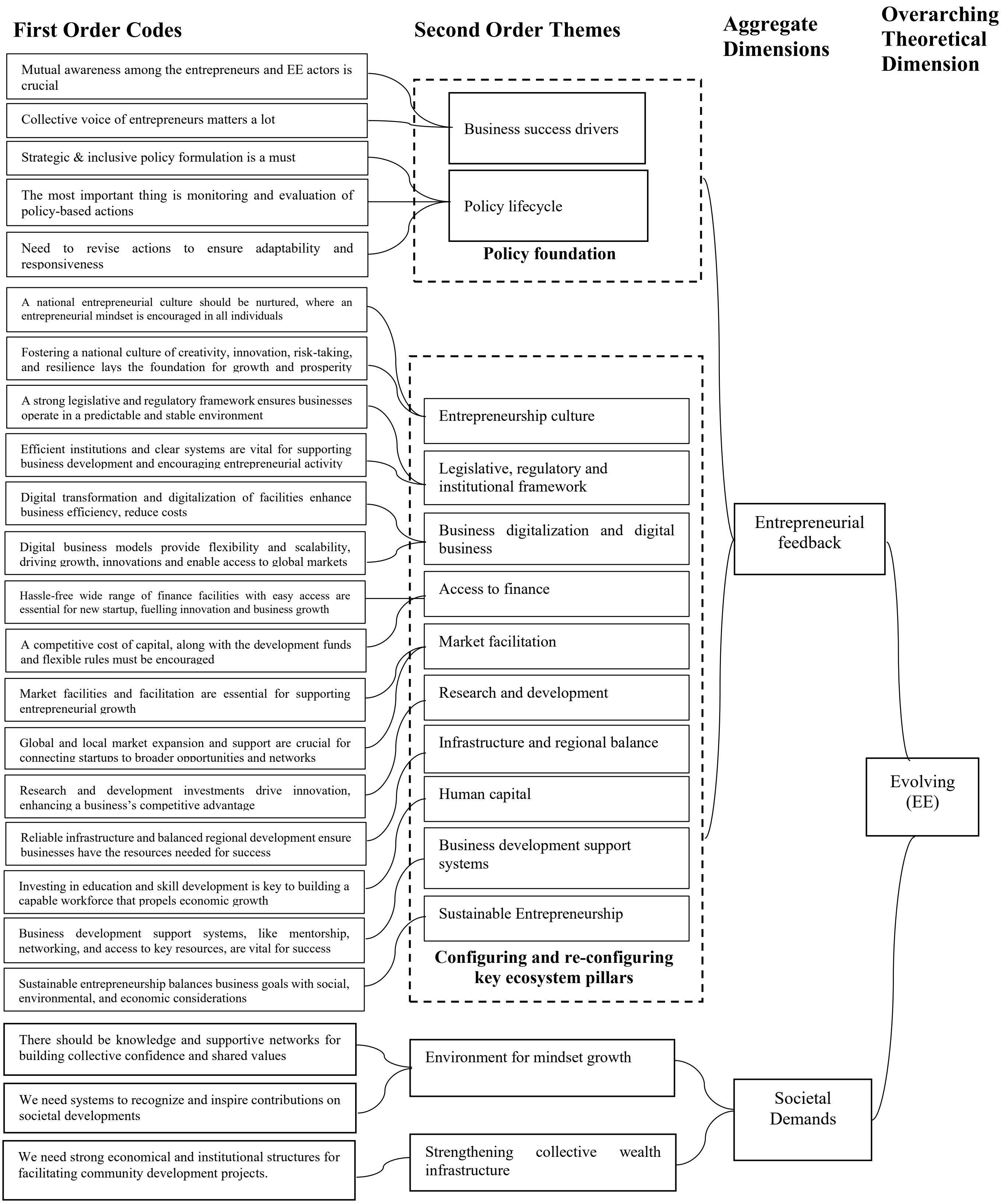
These empirical patterns on CSR show the Reinforcer role by illustrating how ecosystem actors and partner organizations create sustained, community-wide benefits through embedded projects rather than short-term charity. Together, the theme Enhancing social inclusion and equity demonstrates how the EE not only supports wealth creators but also broadens who can participate in and benefit from entrepreneurship.

The next section presents the findings on the evolving role of EE.

6.4 Evolving role of EE

This section examines how the EE itself is pushed to evolve, drawing on narratives that capture entrepreneurs lived experiences and aspirations. These first-order insights cluster into second-order themes around policy foundations, entrepreneurial culture, support systems, and market enablers. These themes coalesce into two aggregate dimensions, Entrepreneurial Feedback and Societal Demands, which together form the overarching theoretical dimension of an Evolving EE that is continually reconfigured by both practice and wider community expectations. (Figure 6.3 presents the data structure of the evolving role of EE).

Figure 6.3: Data Structure of the evolving role of EE



Note. Author's research data.

6.4.1 Entrepreneurial feedback

This aggregate dimension captures how entrepreneurs view themselves as central to improving the ecosystem, and how their feedback is shaping the evolution of the EE. It encompasses two second-order themes: EE Policy Foundation and Configuring and Reconfiguring Ecosystem Pillars. These themes together represent how entrepreneurial feedback drives the EE to adjust its structures and support mechanisms.

6.4.1.1 EE policy foundation: Business success drivers and policy life cycle

This second-order theme shows that entrepreneurs see themselves as integral to policy design and implementation, and that their expectations and experiences shape how the EE should evolve. By foregrounding the need for a proper policy foundation, respondents highlighted two interrelated concerns (captured in the first-order concepts "Business success drivers" and "Policy life cycle"): (a) the need to recognize what drives business success, and (b) the importance of a transparent, responsive policy process. These concerns are discussed below.

a) **Business Success Drivers: Critical success factors for business development, growth, and sustainability**

Entrepreneurs who are actively engaged with the EE stress that policymakers and other ecosystem stakeholders must understand entrepreneurs' real needs and success factors, while entrepreneurs themselves must understand the EE's role so they can communicate their needs effectively. These views underpin the first-order concept of business success drivers within the EE policy foundation theme, calling for mutual awareness between entrepreneurs and EE actors as a basis for an evolving ecosystem.

Mutual awareness among entrepreneurs and EE actors is crucial

A greenhouse and organic farmer highlighted that most entrepreneurs are not aware of the impact of the ecosystem on their businesses, whereas his own education and connections helped him to identify grants and facilities for modern, value-added agriculture.

> As I know, the saddest thing and the dark side is lack of awareness about the impact of ecosystem among entrepreneurs. Luckily with our education and connections I got to know about the World Bank grant and other facilities available for modern and value-added agriculture. But most of them think they can do everything by themselves. (Respondent K)

A crop farmer with twenty years in small-scale agribusiness, finds that despite many government officers and institutions, real support is hard to access because officials often misunderstand entrepreneurs' needs and entrepreneurs are unsure where to seek help.

> I started my business in a small scale; I'm doing this business for 20 years. But still, we have so many problems. Even though there are many government officers and organizations, most of them don't have ideas on what we need exactly. They need to see our requirements and success factors. Sometimes we also face challenges to know with whom we should connect. (Respondent J)

Together, these narratives illustrate the first order code "Mutual awareness among the entrepreneurs and EE actors is crucial" within the second order theme of EE policy foundation, highlighting shared understanding as a key business success driver in an evolving EE.

Collective voice of entrepreneurs matters a lot

A greenhouse farmer expressed frustration about the limited power of his individual voice when requesting legal or policy support. He stressed that entrepreneurs need to unite to form a stronger collective voice to address their challenges and advocate for support:

> When I really needed some legal or policy support for bringing some new breeds of seeds, I couldn’t make it. Authorities did not consider my request; they will not customize their services like that. I know my voice is not enough. Therefore, as entrepreneurs we need to unite and make a strong voice about our real needs and problems. (Respondent G)

A tour operator shared his experience of having to secure a loan at a 15% interest rate due to urgency, acknowledging that such high costs make business very difficult. He argued that entrepreneurs should unite to request special financial facilities from the Central Bank, noting that a collective appeal had successfully negotiated interest relief after the Easter bomb attacks:

> I received my recent loan at 15% interest rate. I got that because of my urgency. But I know it is difficult to do business at such a huge financial cost. But I was not able to at least discuss with the bank to reduce the cost. I think we need to unite and make a request to the Central bank to introduce financial facilities at special rates for the entrepreneurs. I can remember we made such request to the banks as a group to setoff some loan interests after the easter bomb attach. It worked at that time. (Respondent V)

A homestay networker, a community tourism operator, a cultural park owner, and a greenhouse farmer expressed similar sentiments, referencing the isolation they experience in accessing basic support (especially financial, legal, or policy-related support) when acting alone.

These accounts collectively form the first-order code “Collective voice of entrepreneurs matters a lot,” which reinforces the EE policy foundation theme and shows that coordinated entrepreneurial feedback is essential for shaping supportive policies within the aggregate dimension of Entrepreneurial Feedback.

Having established what entrepreneurs see as business success drivers, the next concern addresses how the policy process itself needs to function to support those drivers.

b) Policy Life Cycle: success-oriented policy formulation and implementation

Respondents pointed out the need for a strategic approach to policy that is grounded in business success factors and translated into concrete actions. Within the first-order concept “Policy life cycle,” they highlight three key requirements for the policy process: strategic and inclusive formulation, effective monitoring and evaluation, and adaptability and responsiveness. In other words, policies should be designed collaboratively, tracked for results, and updated as conditions change:

Strategic and inclusive policy formulation is a must

A fruit grower expressed frustration with the country’s poor rankings on ecosystem-related indicators (e.g. ease of doing business, global competitiveness), blaming government authorities for failing to resolve long-standing issues and for not understanding what entrepreneurs need:

> Look at our ease of doing business index, competitiveness index, you will feel sad. I don't know what governments have been doing for so long. Those people don't know

> what we need. We don't understand what those people do. We need to work on this collectively. (Respondent M)

A value-added farmer clarified that while the government should not handle everything directly, it is responsible for creating a strong policy foundation and a conducive environment. He argued that policy changes should follow open discussions with all ecosystem stakeholders:

> I'm not saying the government should do all of this. But the government is responsible for creating a conducive environment, especially for entrepreneurs in the country, because everyone else in this system works according to the model created by the government. So, I'm saying we should do things only after an open conversation with everyone in the ecosystem. (Respondent C)

A travel agent further noted that having policies is not enough, there must be clear mechanisms, adequate resources, and clear authorities to cascade them into actionable steps and strategies:

> Having policy is not enough and there must be clear mechanisms cascade them to actionable steps and strategies. The respondent further highlights that the actionable plans should be supported by adequate resources and clear authorities. (Respondent W)

Together, these views contribute to the first order code "Strategic and inclusive policy formulation is a must" within the broader first order code cluster on policy life cycle

The most important thing is monitoring and evaluation of policy-based actions

A greenhouse and organic farmer emphasized the need for performance-based monitoring systems for policy implementation. He drew past experiences where policies and projects produced few visible outcomes, causing entrepreneurs to lose faith in the process:

> Everyone knows in Sri Lanka different parties developed so many policies and some projects on them. But unfortunately, no one knows what has happened to them. Finally, they wasted our tax money, time, resources and still entrepreneurs are struggling. So, there should be performance-based monitoring. (Respondent K)

Need to revise actions to ensure adaptability and responsiveness

A community tourism operator highlights the disconnect between current entrepreneurial realities and outdated policy frameworks, arguing that laws and policies formulated decades ago need to be modernized to remain relevant and effective:

> The funny thing is that we are trying to implement laws and policies that were formulated for entrepreneurs thirty or forty years ago. Need to modernize them. (Respondent Q)

Taken together, the first order codes on strategic and inclusive policy formulation, on monitoring and evaluation, and on adaptability and responsiveness form the second order theme “Policy life cycle,” which strengthens the overall EE policy foundation. This second order theme contributes to the aggregate dimension of entrepreneurial feedback by showing that entrepreneurs expect policies to be strategically developed, transparently monitored, and continually revised in line with their evolving needs within an evolving EE.

The next theme presents the findings on how EE should be configured and reconfigured according to entrepreneurs’ perspective.

6.4.1.2 Configuring and reconfiguring ecosystem pillars for entrepreneurial excellence

This second-order theme presents how entrepreneurs assess and seek to reshape key ecosystem pillars. It draws on narratives that reflect challenges and gaps in the current ecosystem and proposes improvements to strengthen these pillars. Respondents identified ten key EE pillars based on their experiences, highlighting practical problems as well as suggested developments for each pillar. These insights are interpreted below as narratives feeding into the theme of configuring and reconfiguring ecosystem pillars.

i. Entrepreneurship culture

A national entrepreneurial culture should be nurtured, where an entrepreneurial mindset is encouraged by all individuals

An event host emphasized the need to cascade a “positive vibe of entrepreneurship” across the nation so that becoming an entrepreneur is a source of pride, supported by family, friends, and wider society:

> We need to cascade with the positive vibe of entrepreneurship throughout the nation. Becoming an entrepreneur should be pride. I think that automatically create a can-do attitude which is empowered by family, friends and the general society at large. We need to work as a team. (Respondent P)

Moreover, a value-added farmer also brings the importance of having a supportive closed culture for becoming a successful entrepreneur:

> My family background is supportive and encouraging me a lot and I have the freedom to do innovations, new startups which obviously associated risks, and uncertainty. I personally know the pain of the resistance of family and closed once for becoming a game changer in many situations with my friends and colleagues. (Respondent A)

A mixed-crop farmer further illustrated how strong communal support through his local Kovil (Hindu Temple) sustained his business during difficult times:

> I need to give full credit for my success in the Kovil for being with me throughout my entrepreneurial journey, especially during my bad times. Courage, faith, love, care, advice are all decisive for my success. (Respondent U)

Fostering a national culture of creativity, innovations, risk taking, and resilience lays the foundation for growth and prosperity across all

A cultural park owner argued that a national culture of creativity, risk-taking, and resilience is needed so more people feel confident pursuing innovations and new markets. Together, these accounts show how the entrepreneurial-culture pillar is expected to evolve if the EE is to act as an Enabler and as an evolving ecosystem:

> We need to encourage our people to hunt new opportunities in the global market. Once they are encouraged, they will start more new businesses, take risks for doing innovations and make proactive decisions. We need to eliminate traditional backward culture and establish proactive can-do attitudes. (Respondent R)

ii. Legislative, regulatory and institutional framework (LRIF)

A strong legislative and regulatory framework ensures businesses operate in a predictable and stable environment

A strong legislative and regulatory framework ensures businesses operate in a predictable and stable environment.

The first-order code "a strong legislative and regulatory framework ensures businesses operate in a predictable and stable environment" reflects frustrations with bureaucracy and fragmented institutions. A crop farmer described abandoning a sweet-manufacturing venture due to repeated registration hurdles:

> Before my Agri business, I wanted to register a sweet manufacturing business, and they asked me to submit so many documents, and I had to go to the offices to collect and submit forms for 06 days. Finally, they asked me to start the business first before the registration. I did have enough money, and my bank needed the registration for my small loan. Finally, I gave up. There should be an easy and practical way. (Respondent J)

A vegetable farmer faced delays and high costs for basic utilities when setting up her farm:

> I faced so many difficulties in getting power to my farm. They told me there should be a permanent house for getting electricity and I built a house. Then they told me you have to wait for around 03 months to get the connection. I had to pay a big amount for the connection. I can't understand this stupidity. (Respondent F)

Efficient institutions and clear systems are vital for supporting business development and encouraging entrepreneurial activities

A greenhouse farmer reinforced this point by calling for "one-roof" business services, showing how entrepreneurs want the LRIF pillar streamlined as part of an evolving EE:

> WE need to go to different government offices for different or sometimes for the same need. I don't know why they can't keep all the business-related services or related services under one roof with clear systems and guidelines. (Respondent K)

These experiences demonstrate how the first-order issues with the legislative, regulatory and institutional framework contribute to the second-order theme of configuring and reconfiguring ecosystem pillars. They highlight that for the EE to act as an Evolver, its rules and institutions must be simplified, better coordinated, and made more entrepreneur friendly.

iii. Business digitalization and digital business

Digital transformation and digitalization of facilities enhance business efficiency, and reduce costs

More than half of respondents stressed the need for improved digital infrastructure and services to increase productivity and competitiveness. An organic farmer highlighted the need for more business-friendly online services and awareness initiatives to support everyday operations:

> We have some digital facilities. But we need to have more basic facilities for managing our business operations. The government and other key players should introduce more business-friendly services online. In addition, it needs more awareness campaigns aimed at entrepreneurs. (Respondent K)

Digital business models provide flexibility and scalability, drive growth, innovations and enable access to global markets

Entrepreneurs with a certain level of education and experience discussed the need for introducing and creating awareness of new modes of digital business. They believe such models can help expand markets and accelerate business growth:

> Nowadays we can see new digital business models. So, people who provide IT services and government organizations need to introduce and train our entrepreneurs to embrace new technologies. Then we can go to new markets, and it helps to grow the businesses. (Respondent V)

Thus, the first-order code “business digitalization and digital business” feeds into the reconfiguring-pillars theme by showing that, in its Evolver role, the EE is expected to continuously upgrade digital infrastructure and skills to keep entrepreneurs competitive.

iv. Access to finance

Hassle-free, wide range finance facilities with easy access are essential for new startups, fueling innovation and business growth

Almost all respondents discussed access to finance, clearly identifying it as a critical ecosystem pillar. A hotelier highlighted the challenges in the availability and accessibility of financial products, noting the necessity for a broad range of funding options and frustration with the time delays in loan processing:

> We have very traditional facilities. No modern funding source. The most available facility is commercial loans. It is very difficult to do business at that financial cost. The very long loan approval timeframe further exacerbates the problems. (Respondent B)

An organic farmer emphasized the importance of expanding the range of financial facilities beyond conventional bank loans, calling for mechanisms like venture capital, crowdfunding, and angel investment to fund innovation and startups:

> Opportunities for entrepreneurs in our country to obtain the necessary funds need to be expanded. I think that both the government and the private sector need to popularize venture capital, crowdfunding, and angel investment within the economy targeting innovations and new startups. (Respondent K)

A competitive cost of capital, along with the development funds and flexible rules, must be encouraged

A greenhouse farmer pointed out issues with high interest rates, strict loan terms, lengthy approval processes, collateral requirements, and rigid risk perceptions in the current financial system:

> I think our country is the most difficult country to get a loan for doing business in. Considering the high interest rates, strict rules, and the need for collateral, it's better not to do business than to take out a loan to do business. (Respondent G)

An organic farmer shared a personal experience of being blacklisted due to an inability to repay a loan after the 2019 terrorist attacks disrupted business. This prevented him from obtaining new financing, highlighting inflexible policies toward entrepreneurs facing unforeseen crises:

> Some time ago, I was unable to pay off some instalments of a loan I took to start a business. The reason for this was that the business was completely disrupted due to the 2019 terrorist attacks. I blacklisted in the CRIB. After that, I couldn't get a loan from anywhere else. I don't understand this joke. (Respondent K)

Additionally, a hotelier pointed out the barriers faced by women and marginalized communities in accessing finance:

> When I went to Bank to get my first loan, I was told to bring a man from home. I don't understand why they need such collateral. Same issues are happening with disabled people as well. (Respondent B)

Together, these examples show how the first order code "access to finance" underpins the second order theme and indicate that, for the EE to function as an evolver, financial products, processes, and rules must be redesigned to be more inclusive, affordable, and responsive to entrepreneurial risk.

v. Market facilities

Market facilities and facilitation are essential for supporting entrepreneurial growth

A value-added farmer called for more training in market research, product development, and branding provided by government, education providers, and entrepreneur collectives:

> My view is that government, education providers and chambers or any entrepreneur collectives need to do more awareness and training programs on marketing research, strategies, opportunity identification, product development, branding and other marketing practices. Because most of us don't have updated knowledge. This need to be overcome collectively. (Respondent A)

A greenhouse farmer stressed the need for a government-backed digital platform to connect startups with corporations and government procurement opportunities, thereby opening up markets for entrepreneurs:

> We need a government-backed digital platform that connects startups with large corporations and government procurement opportunities. This supply chain linkage will open-up more opportunities for viable entrepreneurs and serve as motivation for prospective entrepreneurs. (Respondent G)

Global and local market expansion and support are crucial for connecting startups to broader opportunities and networks

An organic farmer specifically highlights the importance of facilitating global trade collectively.

> We have a small market here in Sri Lanka, definitely we need to go to global market. Even though there are more organizations and officers, we don't have a strong strategy. We need to open regional export incubators and complete export process must be carried out establishing export readiness in key areas across both goods and service sectors. So, entrepreneurs, government, banks we need to work together (Respondent K)

A resort operator emphasized the need for collective branding to overcome individual marketing challenges and reach more opportunities, and he noted the importance of more opportunities for entrepreneurs to showcase their products:

> Entrepreneurs should be encouraged to adopt collective branding strategies to enhance both local and global competitiveness. Selecting potential entrepreneurs and giving them some spaces for showcasing their products for foreign buyers and local customers. This should be formed both physically and virtually. (Respondent T)

Thus, the first-order code "market facilities" contributes to the reconfiguring-pillars theme by showing that, in its Evolver role, the EE is expected to develop training, platforms, export support, and collective branding mechanisms that continually open new opportunities.

vi. Research and development (R and D)

R&D investments drive innovation, enhancing a business's competitive advantage

A value-added farmer emphasized the need for new knowledge and innovations in areas such as crop varieties, irrigation systems, pest control, off-season production, and productivity improvements to address low yields and high costs, highlighting the importance of collective efforts:

> We need new knowledge and innovations on new crops, new irrigation systems, pest and disease control, cross seasonal products, and productivity improvements. Because our cost of production and the yield productivity is comparatively low in the region. We have more potential and opportunities. Collective practices and resource pooling must be promoted. (Respondent A)

An organic farmer emphasized the need for proper management of cultivation based on research to reduce post-harvest waste, highlighting that both authorities and entrepreneurs must work together to achieve this:

> Here, anyone can cultivate, anything, anywhere. This needs to be properly managed based on proper research. I hope post-harvest waste also can be reduced through it. So, the authorities and entrepreneurs need to work collectively for this. No one can do it alone. (Respondent K)

In this way, the first-order code "research and development" supports the reconfiguring-pillars theme and shows that the EE, as an Evolver, must progressively strengthen research–practice linkages to reduce waste and enhance competitiveness.

vii. Infrastructure and regional balance

Reliable infrastructure and balanced regional development ensure businesses have the resources needed for success

An organic farmer expressed anger at the poor quality of infrastructure in the country:

> Irrespective of the industries or sectors we need basic utilities, transportation, waste management, telecommunication, proper lands, storage and warehouse, national security, IT solutions etc. You know politicians and corrupted officials have ruined the country in the last 6-7 decades. Lack of proper lands, unreliable power supply, and limited access to general facilities made business stressful. (Respondent G)

Tourism-sector respondents specifically highlighted issues stemming from the urban–rural infrastructure imbalance:

> The main institutions and other facilities that affect tourism businesses are mainly located in Colombo and a few major cities. We need to come to Colombo to get the most of services. As you go further away from the city, there are a large number of places that do not even have a telephone signal. I say all those problems need to be resolved quickly. (Respondent I)

By foregrounding this first-order issue, entrepreneurs signal that the Evolver role of the EE includes progressively reducing regional disparities in infrastructure and basic services.

viii. Human capital

Investing in education and skill development is key to building a capable workforce that propels economic growth

A tour planner highlighted the importance of building entrepreneurial skills from early stages of education, emphasizing that entrepreneurship should be instilled as a lifestyle rather than just course content. They argued that early exposure creates a mindset foundation for future entrepreneurs:

> Development of human capital in the EE starts from early exposure to entrepreneurial mindset. Offering entrepreneurship basics at kindergarten and school levels promotes creativity, problem-solving skills, and entrepreneurial aptitude among young people. This foundation lays the groundwork for future entrepreneurs. (Respondent H)

An organic farmer strongly believes in collaborative efforts to develop human capital:

> Human capital development also thrives through collective efforts between educational institutions, industries, and entrepreneurs. We need to bring innovative hubs to universities and higher education institutions with the support of industries and there should be industry-led startup bootcamps that provide opportunities for hands-on experience, connecting students with real-world entrepreneurial challenges. (Respondent K)

These insights show how the first-order concept “human capital” contributes to the reconfiguring-pillars theme and indicate that, in its Evolver role, the EE is expected to build stronger education-industry-entrepreneur linkages over time.

ix. Business development and support systems

Business development support systems, like mentorship, networking, and access to key resources, are vital for success

A tour planner identified the need for better incubators, international networks, and cooperative projects to enhance entrepreneurship, suggesting that existing training centres act as small incubators connected to a central hub to provide more robust support:

> I think we need entrepreneurship incubators, global consultation networks, and collective projects focused on creating supportive systems that further strengthen the ecosystem, providing entrepreneurs with the resources, guidance, and collaboration they need to succeed. In addition to that all the training centers, and other facilitations centers should work as mini-incubator hubs and need to connect all of them to the main incubators. (Respondent H)

This first-order code feeds into the reconfiguring-pillars theme by showing that to act as an Evolver, the EE must gradually build more connected incubators, networks, and advisory systems.

x. Sustainable entrepreneurship

Focusing on sustainability allows businesses to create lasting value while positively impacting society and the environment

A cultural tour guide highlighted his commitment to business ethics, good governance, and eco-friendly practices in his community-based tourism network. He identifies the need for entrepreneurs to take the lead on sustainability responsibilities:

> As a community-based tourism entrepreneur we always promote business ethics, good governance, reducing energy consumption and we have many green practices. At least we need to take this lead. Otherwise, society and nature will create more problems for us. (Respondent Y)

An organic farmer proposed the necessity of practicing ethical agriculture in Sri Lanka, especially by promoting genuine organic farming. He stressed the importance of carrying out agricultural activities in a way that preserves natural resources and even suggested establishing a dedicated policy unit for this purpose:

> We need to bring ethical agricultural practices here. Need to promote genuine organic farming and need to agricultural activities while preserving our natural resources. We must have a separate policy division for this. (Respondent K)

The above insights on sustainable entrepreneurship reflect how entrepreneurs see ethical, environmentally conscious practices as something the EE should more strongly support. This reinforces the link between sustainability and the ecosystem's evolving policies.

Taken together, the narratives discussed above form the second-order theme of configuring and reconfiguring key ecosystem pillars which, alongside the EE policy foundation theme, explains how entrepreneurial feedback pushes the EE to operate as an Evolver that continually reshapes its own pillars. Importantly, the data suggests a mechanism of evolution: entrepreneurs experience bottlenecks in key pillars, articulate practical solutions, and thereby generate feedback that pressures ecosystem actors to refine institutions, strengthen coordination, and update support structures to remain relevant and effective.

6.4.2 Societal demands

This section explains how wider societal expectations push the EE to evolve. Drawing on first order codes about mindset growth and collective wealth infrastructure, the data cluster into two second order themes, “Environment for mindset growth” and “Strengthening collective wealth infrastructure”, which together form the aggregate dimension of Societal Demands within the overarching pattern of an Evolving EE.

6.4.2.1 Environment for mindset growth

This section explains how wider societal expectations push the EE to evolve. Drawing on narratives about mindset growth and collective wealth infrastructure, the data cluster into two second-order themes, “Environment for mindset growth” and “Strengthening collective wealth infrastructure”, which together form the aggregate dimension of Societal Demands within the overarching pattern of an Evolving EE.

Primarily, this theme explores how societal demands for knowledge, supportive systems, and recognition influence evolving EE practices. Respondents highlighted the vital role of the EE in developing growth mindsets and moving people away from dependency mentalities. They stressed the importance of creating an environment that fosters community development initiatives and noted their collective voice in communicating needed changes to relevant EE actors.

There should be knowledge and supportive networks for building collective confidence and shared values

A community-based tourism entrepreneur stresses that education and its support systems should develop both competencies and human values, and that responsible EE actors must build environments that enable such mindset shifts:

The one and only way to upgrade our society and living conditions of the people is developing their mindset through education and showing the beautiful paths for success. Education system plays a vital role, and we need to include and promote all the soft qualities like empathy, kindness, humanity, patience, etc. along with other competencies. If we can build one person in a family, it helps to build the whole family, and they'll contribute to society as well. But, for this there should be a well systematic environment. That's what I always inform the responsible firms and institutions to make that environment. (Respondent Q)

A cultural tour guide similarly links this first-order expectation to the need for training and networks that build confidence and trust for collective work, noting that he repeatedly communicates these expectations to EE actors, even when they do not respond:

When we have education, training, and proper networks, people feel more confident engaged with collective projects. It really helps to build trust, confidence, and shared values, otherwise no one comes forward. I have informed you of that many times and many people during last five, six years. Most of the time I didn't receive any feedback on them. This is not easy to develop this country. (Respondent Y)

An organic farmer pointed to the need for individuals with fresh and proactive mindsets to drive both economic and social progress in the country, emphasizing education and supportive systems as the route to cultivate such people:

We need new people with new, different, and proactive mentalities to make this country better. Not only economically but also socially as well. I strongly believe that we need to do it through education and its supportive systems. Whenever I get a chance, I communicate and socialize with that national need. (Respondent K)

We need systems to recognize and inspire contributions to societal developments

An event host calls for systems that celebrate genuine economic and social contributors in order to counter rising individualism and encourage wider responsibility.

> I wanted to say, now our society is gradually moving into an individualistic and selfish one. We need entrepreneurs, managers or general public who think about others and society widely. Our society needs a real transformation. We need new people. Whenever we see a positive vibe in society we need to encourage and inspire them. That is all about human psychology. I have informed the government many times to introduce such a system to encourage really economical and societal contributors. In some times I see such appreciations now. (Respondent P)

A cultural park owner pointed out that there was a lack of system support for recognizing economical and societal achievements, noting that despite appeals to government and non-government actors, no action was taken. As a result, his group initiated their own recognition program, which has proven highly effective in fostering a growth mindset among community members.

> Three years back I wanted to identify and recognize the economic and societal development achievements made by our members. I informed many government and non-government sector institutions to do it. No one did it and we started this achievement recognition by ourselves, and it is very successful to develop the growth mindset of the community members. (Respondent R)

Overall, these participants' accounts show how societal expectations around education, support, and recognition generate feedback that presses the EE to enable mindset growth as part of its evolution. The next theme turns to how similar societal pressures call for strengthening the infrastructure for collective wealth creation.

6.4.2.2 Strengthening collective wealth infrastructure

This theme explains how societal demands reshape the EE by calling for stronger collective wealth infrastructure, the shared facilities, funding mechanisms, and institutional support that enable broad-based wealth creation and community development. Through the first-order notion that "collective wealth infrastructure should be strengthened," respondents underlined the need for communal facilities and resources that allow more families and groups to participate in economic activities.

A field-crop farmer expressed the urgent need for collective facilities such as processing centers and storage facilities, emphasizing that without that much of the community's harvest goes to waste.

> We work with different community groups in farming, and we both face different challenges. We especially need proper processing centers and storage facilities. Otherwise, our harvests get wasted. If we have some good infrastructure facilities, we can work with at least another 10-20 families to develop them. I informed of this issue to several institutions, but still, I did not get any solution. (Respondent C)

A homestay owner also carried a similar view stressing that while many in her area are engaged in her business, greater opportunities could be discovered with proper collective resources.

> Many people in our village in my business and there are many more opportunities if we have proper collective resources. I have told the authorities on many occasions that if you want to generate money, you need to build some collective infrastructure.

Collective seed capital, shareable marketing platforms, community-based training and knowledge systems, etc. (Respondent I)

Taking together, these first order codes show how societal demands for mindset growth and stronger collective wealth infrastructure actively shape the EE. Communities do not simply receive ecosystem conditions; through their expectations, feedback, and grassroots initiatives, they contribute to the aggregate dimension of Societal Demands and thereby co-produce an Evolving EE that enables wider participation in entrepreneurial and civic life.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the lived experiences of entrepreneurs in the agricultural and tourism sectors regarding how they experience the EE through different perspectives. First, findings were presented on how entrepreneurs perceive the EE as affecting their day-to-day business affairs and collective engagements (CE). Next, the findings showed how the EE influences community development and social transformation (CWC) through its support mechanisms. Finally, the findings illustrate how the EE evolves, drawing on the experiences of entrepreneurs from their own business vantage points as well as from the perspective of the public in society.

The findings revealed that the EE plays multiple roles. Its Enabler role is crucial for entrepreneurs, as it creates a conducive atmosphere for ensuring survival and building resilience, driving growth and facilitating development, and ensuring sustainability and securing prosperity. Entrepreneurs engage with the broader EE in different capacities to satisfy these needs. They rely on the ecosystem, leveraging collaborative networks, shared resources, and innovation, to navigate challenges and seize opportunities that would be impossible or very difficult to address individually.

The findings also disclosed that beyond individual business success, the EE plays a pivotal role in community development and social transformation, as demonstrated under its Reinforcer role. It empowers marginalized groups, promotes women's entrepreneurship, and fosters collective wealth creation through education, training, and CSR initiatives. The ecosystem's ability to unite diverse stakeholders (government bodies, financial institutions, educational providers, local communities, etc.) creates a synergistic effect that drives more equitable economic growth and societal well-being.

Participants further shared rich insights into how the EE is evolving and how they believe it should evolve, expressed through positive experiences, grievances, criticisms, and new proposals. These broad ideas were organized under two main categories reflecting the Evolver role: entrepreneurial feedback and societal demands. Under Entrepreneurial Feedback, entrepreneurs highlighted (1) the importance of establishing a proper policy foundation, and (2) the need for configuring and reconfiguring ecosystem pillars (such as finance, infrastructure, human capital, etc.). Under Societal Demands, they focused on (1) the need for a conducive environment for mindset growth, and (2) the role of strengthening collective wealth infrastructure for societal transformation.

Thus, this chapter has set the stage for deeper exploration in subsequent chapters, where the interplay between CE and CWC will be examined to uncover their collective impact on Sri Lanka's developmental trajectory. The synergistic roles of the EE, as Enabler, Reinforcer, and Evolver, provide a foundation for understanding how entrepreneurial action and community outcomes are co-created, paving the way for an integrated discussion of EE, CE, and CWC in the broader study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Civic Wealth Creation (CWC)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents how Civic Wealth Creation (CWC) is enacted in the Sri Lankan context and how it impacts on societal progress. The broad objective of this study is to explore the dynamic interplay between entrepreneurial ecosystem (EE), collective entrepreneurship (CE), and CWC. Thus, this chapter also presents empirical data on the impact of CWC on CE and EE, and how CWC evolves and progresses through the influence of CE and EE. Certainly, this chapter provides a basis for a broader discussion of the interplay of these three variables in Chapter 08.

The roles and structures presented in this chapter are entirely grounded in empirical data, reflecting how participants themselves understand and enact their diverse perspectives of entrepreneurial involvements for societal transformations including civic-oriented entrepreneurship. The chapter presents the **Impact** of CWC in two complementary ways. First, it examines how community members, supportive regimes, and entrepreneurs act as wealth creators, drawing on Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) original CWC model and structuring the findings around economic, communal and social wealth creations. Second, it extends beyond this model to present how actions of these actors contribute to broader societal transformation in the Sri Lankan context. This dual focus ensures that the analysis remains anchored in established theory while also capturing the unique, context-driven perspectives and arguments shared by respondents.

Subsequent sections examine how CWC shapes and is shaped by CE and EE. Under its Facilitator role, CWC is shown to enable and strengthen CE, for example by building trust, norms, and shared capacities that allow groups to act collectively. Under its **Sustainer** role, CWC supports and stabilizes the EE, for instance by reinforcing ethical norms, inclusive practices, and long-term community-oriented investments. In each case, the discussion makes explicit how relevant first order codes feed into second order themes and higher-order roles of CWC.

The chapter also explores the **Evolving role of CWC**, focusing on how CWC practices are reconfigured through ongoing interactions with CE and EE. While the direct influences of CE and EE on CWC are discussed in the respective data chapters, the emphasis here is on how these feedback loops reshape the form, scope, and priorities of CWC over time.

Thus, the chapter unfolds across six distinct sections. Building on the introduction, the next section examines the **Impact** of CWC. The third section presents how CWC **Facilitates** CE. Fourth section explores how CWC effect on EE as a **Sustainer**. In the fifth section it presents the evolving role of CWC. The sixth section presents the sectoral patterns of CWC, and the conclusion wraps up the multiple involvements of CWC while establishing a foundation for exploring its dynamic interplay with EE and CE.

7.2 CWC as an Impactor

This section examines how CWC operates as an active Impact (Wealth Creation) mechanism in Sri Lanka, drawing on first order codes that capture respondents' experiences of economic, communal, and social value creation. These codes cluster into second order themes (for example, job and income generation, cultural identity and shared pride, capacity building and inclusion), which in turn form three aggregate dimensions of Economic Wealth Creation, Communal Wealth Creation, and Societal Wealth Creation under the Impactor role.

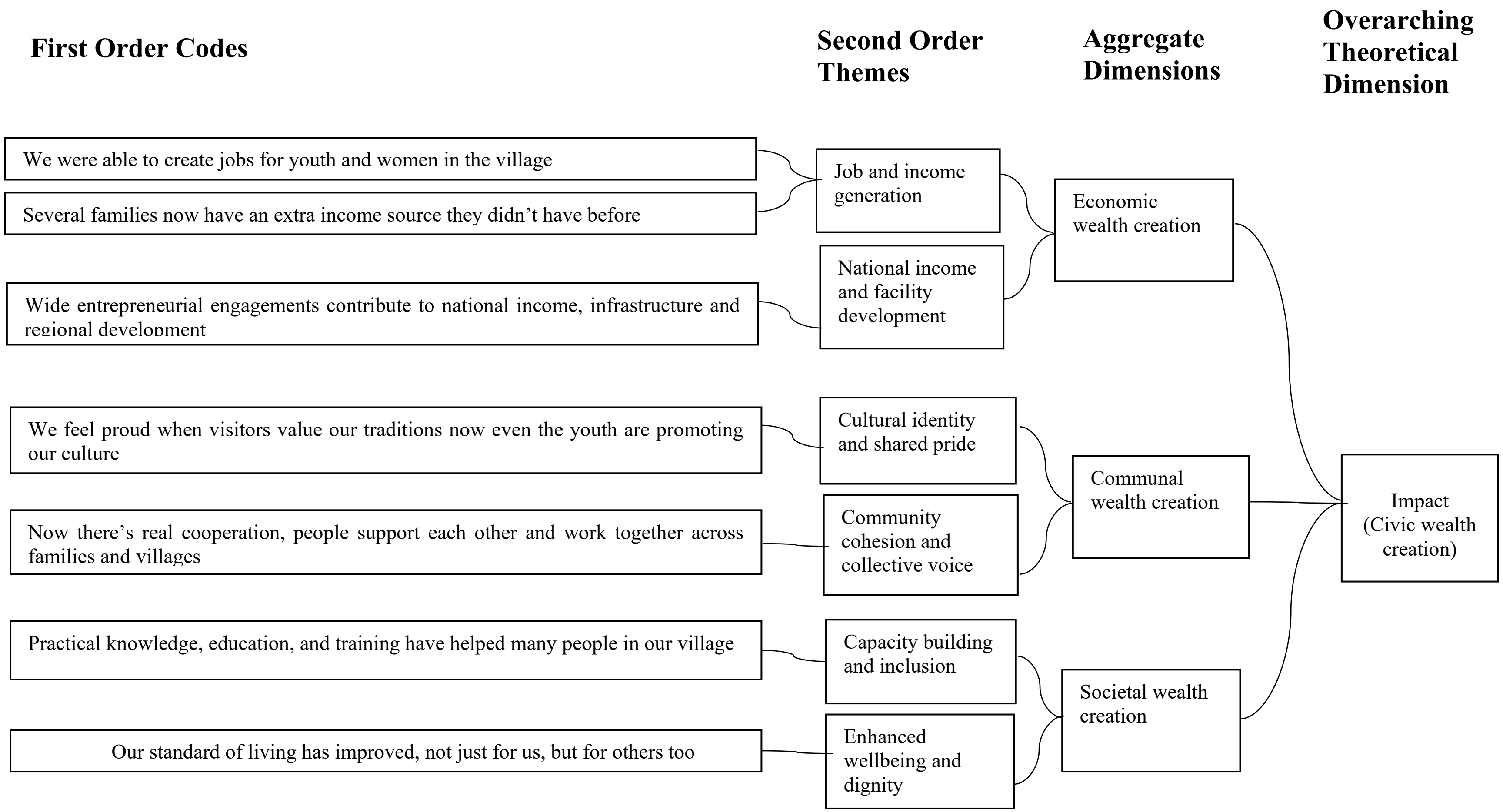
Building on Lumpkin and Bacq's (2019) view of CWC as the generation of economic, communal, and social wealth for community wellbeing, this study re-examines the model from the standpoint of embedded entrepreneurs who act simultaneously as market actors and civic contributors. Across the first order codes on individual upliftment, community benefit, and cultural and social change, entrepreneurs describe how their ventures create jobs, revive local culture, and strengthen collective identity.

To reflect these insights, the remainder of this section is organized into two parts. Figure 7.1 presents the core structure of CWC outcomes, with first order codes grouped into second order themes and aggregate dimensions that align with the original CWC framework. Figure 7.2 then extends this framework by showing additional first order codes that portray CWC as a survival mechanism and highlight blended stakeholder roles in resource-constrained and informally governed settings.

i. Empirical Patterns Aligned with the CWC Framework

Figure 7.1 presents the data structure of CWC as an impact mechanism, illustrating how first order codes relating to economic, communal, and social value map onto second order themes and aggregate dimensions under the Impactor role, confirming the relevance of Lumpkin and Bacq's (2019) model while foregrounding the primacy of economic survival and its tight linkage to community wellbeing in Sri Lanka.

Figure 7.1: Data Structure of the CWC as an Impact



Note. Author's research data.

7.2.1 Economic Wealth Creation

Economic wealth creation emerged as the most central aggregate dimension of CWC as an Impactor. Drawing on first order codes related to job and income generation and national income and facility development, this dimension captures how entrepreneurial activity underpins basic livelihoods and broader economic progress.

These first order codes show that such outcomes stem not only from individual efforts but also from support by government agencies and policy frameworks. Economic value was seen not just as personal gain, but as a key driver of social and communal progress within the CWC process.

7.2.1.1 Job and income generation

These codes show that local enterprises play an indispensable role in empowering women, youth, and regional households to become economically stable, reflecting the wider socioeconomic impact of entrepreneurship beyond individual gain. The following narratives illustrate how this first order code contributes to the second order theme of economic wealth creation under CWC's Impactor role.

We were able to create jobs for youth and women in the village

An organic farmer expressed pride in creating jobs that now support 20 families and highlighted their role in shaping a better future for others in the community. He valued the support of government organizations as well:

> I started my first vegetable farm six years ago. I was the only one who did everything on my farm and now I am able to develop business and provide 20 job opportunities. That means 20 families getting benefits from my business. Most of them are youth.

Personally, I'm proud of my contribution and I set a clear future for these people. I can't forget the support of Ministry of Agriculture and Development Officers for funding support, knowledge and training in this journey. (Respondent A)

A homestay networker stated that most homestay owners in their island-wide tourism initiative are women, who are given special priority to connect with their business operations based on the belief that empowering women strengthens families and communities. The initiative goes beyond financial support, helping women connect with the business community and realize their potential:

Most homestay owners in our network are women, and we give them priority because empowering women uplifts families and society. It's more than just earning a commission it helps them realize their potential. Government banks, the Tourism Authority, and local officers supported us with training and other facilities. (Respondent O)

A tour planner expressed a strong commitment to job creation, aiming to generate 100 new employment opportunities within two years by engaging youth and women through training and skills development initiatives:

We are fortunate enough to become entrepreneurs, and I have a dream to create at least another 100 jobs in the coming two years. That is why I started working with youth and women. We do more trainings and other skills development programs. We take much support from the government, Non-Government Organizations (NGO) to expand our business and create more jobs. That helps to rebuild our country. (Respondent H)

Similarly, Respondents, a homestay owner, an organic farmer, a cultural tour guide and an event host also emphasized the importance of creating more jobs as a pathway to rebuilding the economy and enhancing the livelihoods of local communities. Taken together, these narratives show that job creation operates as a direct mechanism of Economic Wealth Creation by expanding livelihoods for youth and women, thereby strengthening the Job and income generation theme under CWC's Impactor role.

Several families now have an extra income source they didn't have before

A value-added farmer explained how his export business works with farmer societies and 16 regional coordinators who receive commissions and other benefits. For these coordinators, the venture has become a valued second income stream:

> I work with many local farmers, farmer societies to collect quality agricultural products for exports. Now I have 16 reginal coordinators. They are getting commissions and some other financial benefits for the service. They are happy because they earn an additional income because of business. (Respondent C)

Similarly, a cultural park owner built his theme-park business with the support of the local Kovil community. As the park has grown, many families now earn income that they did not have before, demonstrating how civic-oriented ventures convert cultural assets into livelihoods:

> Basically, I developed my business with the Kovil community. To get their active participation, Kovil also helped me a lot. Now I have an inspired team. Now the community of our entire area is getting benefits from our cultural theme park. Most of the people get income which they didn't have before. (Respondent R)

Taken together, these accounts under the first-order code "We were able to create jobs for youth and women in the village; several families now have an extra income source they did not have before" within the economic wealth creation theme show how CWC generates household income, empowers women and youth, and supports community renewal.

7.2.1.2 National income and facility development

Alongside household-level benefits, participants also described how their ventures contribute to national income, infrastructure, and regional development. The first order code "Wide entrepreneurial engagements contribute to national income, infrastructure and regional development" sits within the second order theme of national income and facility development, which in turn strengthens the aggregate dimension of Economic Wealth Creation under CWC as an Impactor. The following narratives show how dispersed entrepreneurial activity reduces welfare dependence, circulates income across sectors, and supports new regional facilities.

Wide entrepreneurial engagements contribute to national income, infrastructure and regional development

A homestay network organizer explained that over 250 households now earn independently through her island-wide model, with some even paying income tax, and with continued government support she aims to scale to 500 homestays, further boosting local earnings and the tax base:

> 250+ households register with us now for giving their houses or rooms for tourists. I'm happy to say most of them received government monthly allowances for living. Now they do not need such assistance. Now they earn money. Some of them are pay income taxes as well. Now they really contribute to the economy. Our target is to increase number of homestays to 500 within next two years together with government support. (Respondent O)

A tourism entrepreneur explained that partnerships with event, transport, and marketing firms and joint investments in new projects multiply each rupee earned, as revenue circulates through linked businesses and contributes to wider national income generation:

> In our tourism business we have partnered with event firms, transport companies, marketing companies. Tother we invested in some projects as well. When we take one rupee we must generate around ten rupees. That ten rupees circulate among many people. Really help the economy. And we were able to turn around some low-income generating businesses into productive ones. (Respondent P)

A community tourism operator described co-developing a tourism information center in Trincomalee with government and fellow entrepreneurs, then establishing a training center that now operates as a business accelerator, supporting new ventures and strengthening regional entrepreneurial infrastructure:

> We started regional tourism information center and a help desk in Trincomalee. Got the support of government and fellow entrepreneurs in the area. We initiated a couple of new projects to start a training and development center as well. This work is as a business accelerator at the moment. (Respondent Q)

Taken together, these accounts under the first order code "Wide entrepreneurial engagements contribute to national income, infrastructure and regional development" show how CWC's economic wealth creation theme extends beyond individual ventures to reduced welfare dependency, expanded tax contributions, and new regional facilities. In doing so, they reinforce CWC's Impactor role as a driver of broader economic and infrastructural development.

7.2.2 Communal Wealth Creation

Communal wealth creation captures how CWC as an Impactor strengthens social bonds, cultural identity, and collective agency. Interview evidence on cultural pride and community cohesion cluster into the themes Cultural identity and shared pride and Community cohesion and collective voice, which together form the aggregate dimension of Communal Wealth Creation, as entrepreneurs describe ventures embedded in wider social structures that preserve traditions and nurture mutual support alongside economic goals.

7.2.2.1 Cultural identity and shared pride

Findings show that community-based entrepreneurial activities in tourism and agriculture revive pride in local heritage, crafts, and customs. The first-order code "We feel proud when visitors value our traditions, now even the youth are promoting our culture" illustrates how these initiatives engage youth and reposition culture as a shared asset, underpinning the second-order theme Cultural identity and shared pride within the Communal Wealth Creation dimension of CWC as an Impactor.

We feel proud when visitors value our traditions now even though the youth are promoting our culture

A Jaffna cultural theme park founder explained that initial doubts about tourist interest in Tamil culture gave way to strong engagement, with visitors now experiencing local food, rituals, and daily life, and formerly hesitant youth becoming proud guides and cultural storytellers:

> When I started the cultural theme park to showcase Tamil traditions in Jaffna, some people doubted whether tourists would be interested. But now, when I see visitors enjoying our food, learning our rituals, and truly appreciating our way of life, it makes

me proud. What's even more inspiring is that our own youth, who once hesitated to embrace these traditions, are now the ones proudly sharing our culture with others. They guide the tourists, explain the ceremonies, and show what it means to be Tamil. We feel proud when visitors value our traditions, and even prouder seeing our younger generation leading the way. (Respondent R)

A homestay network organizer encouraged families to open unused rooms while retaining traditional elements, so tourists live "as in a Sri Lankan home," return to the same families, and turn ordinary village life into shared pride and communal storytelling:

> Most families here had a spare room they never used. I encouraged them to open it up to travelers, not as a hotel but as a real Sri Lankan home. We didn't change much, kept the old clay pots, the garden kitchen, and the local meals. Tourists love it. They learn how to wear a saree, help cook rice and curry and sit outside listening to village stories. Some even come back to stay with the same family. It makes me proud to see our simple lifestyle becoming a part of someone else's memory of Sri Lanka. (Respondent O)

Across these narratives, the first order code on cultural pride and youth engagement shows how entrepreneurial initiatives transform everyday practices into celebrated heritage. In doing so, the Cultural identity and shared pride theme demonstrates how CWC, as an Impactor, generates communal wealth by reinforcing local identity, intergenerational pride, and a shared sense of "who we are."

7.2.2.2 Community cohesion and collective voice

This subtheme examines how community-based entrepreneurship strengthens trust, mutual support, and shared agency. The first order code "Now there's real cooperation, people support each other and work together across families and villages" illustrates how collective projects foster cohesion and a stronger collective voice. This first order code supports the second order theme of Community cohesion and collective voice, further deepening the Communal Wealth Creation dimension under CWC as an Impactor.

Now there's real cooperation, people support each other and work together across families and villages

A farmer-society leader described how a CSR-funded water tank, jointly financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, a bank, and the local farmer society under a pledge to "work together to uplift all lives," catalyzed new ventures like a community farm and kitchen, embedding cooperation in everyday village life:

> Ministry of Agriculture, a commercial bank, and our farmer society together we build a new tank as one of CSR initiatives of the bank. Their main request was encouraging community to work together to uplift all lives of the village. With that project we started to work more closely with everyone in the village. As a result of this now we have a community farm and a community kitchen as well. (Respondent A)

The homestay network organizer managing more than 250 homes noted that, even though tourists could bypass the platform after their first visit, homeowners choose to remain within the network. She attributed this to shared ethics, trust, and a sense of belonging to a collective, rather than narrow individual gain:

> Some people ask me how you manage 250+ homes. Because anyone can book those places directly from their second visit. But the way we work with homeowners, they never resort to such practices. At least we can pride ourselves on being able to empower those families who are part of this community with good ethics and values. (Respondent O)

A tour planner, a homestay owner, and an organic farmer also mentioned that they were able to build strong social bonds through their community-based business models and projects, highlighting how collaboration and shared purpose strengthened relationships within their networks.

Taken together, the first order code on cooperation and mutual support shows how the Community cohesion and collective voice theme captures a distinct strand of communal wealth within CWC as an Impactor. Community-based initiatives not only generate income and cultural experiences, but also build trust, shared norms, and a collective voice that can be mobilized for future opportunities and challenges.

7.2.3 Societal Wealth Creation

Although often seen as secondary to economic or communal value, social wealth creation emerged as a key strand of CWC as an Impactor. Narratives on practical knowledge and training and on improved living standards and dignity cluster into Capacity building and inclusion and Enhanced wellbeing and dignity, which together form the Social Wealth Creation dimension, as entrepreneurs linked their activities to growing skills, inclusion, and self-worth, especially for women and marginalized groups.

7.2.3.1 Capacity building and inclusion

This subtheme examines how entrepreneurial activities enhance community capabilities through education, practical training, and inclusive participation. The first order code "Practical knowledge, education, and training have helped many people in our village" shows how entrepreneurs move beyond their own skill development to create learning opportunities for others, thereby contributing to the second order theme of Capacity building and inclusion within the Social Wealth Creation dimension of CWC as an Impactor.

Practical knowledge, education, and training have helped many people in our village

A homestay networker ran hospitality training and ongoing discussions for homestay owners, stressing that tourism involves the whole village and that supportive attitudes to homestays benefit the wider community:

> When I joined community members for my tourism business, as homestay owners, I organized several awareness and training programs for them on hospitality. Time to time we organize more open discussions to share knowledge and experiences. We educate them to get the support of their community members for delivering outstanding hospitality beyond just accommodation. Tourists clearly connect with the village. The good vibe surrounded by homestays create benefits for the entire village. (Respondent O)

An organic and greenhouse farmer described starting with basic skills, gradually building expertise through multiple training, and then helping villagers meet quality standards in coco bag production to join his supply chain:

> As I told you before, I started my green house, organic farming, export business from the very basic level. I got lot of training and knowledge from different sources. Now we do many farmers training, sharing our practical knowledge. Especially when I started our coco bag manufacturing business, we did lots of training to get quality products. Then we were able to retain a couple of villages with our supply chain. (Respondent K)

Other entrepreneurs in agriculture and tourism similarly described knowledge-sharing sessions, on-the-job training, and exposure visits for community members, particularly women and youth, rather than leaving them as passive beneficiaries.

Collectively, these narratives indicate that civic contribution extends beyond income to skill diffusion and inclusion, linking this first-order code to the Capacity building and inclusion theme under Societal Wealth Creation within CWC's Impactor role.

7.2.3.2 Enhanced wellbeing and dignity

This subtheme focuses on how entrepreneurial activities improve living standards and foster a sense of dignity among individuals and communities. The first order code "Our standard of living has improved, not just for us, but for others too" captures how respondents interpret business success as shared progress rather than purely individual advancement, reinforcing the second order theme of Enhanced wellbeing and dignity within the Social Wealth Creation dimension.

Our standard of living has improved, not just for us, but for others too

The organic and greenhouse farmer noted that his and his partners' lives have improved and that expanding into several fields is driven by a desire to support thousands of family members through job creation:

> My life has totally changed and improved because of my business. Not only my life, but our business partners as well. I was able to expand the business to several fields together with our business partners. As I told you earlier, my dream is to generate one thousand job opportunities within five years and look after five thousand family members through my business. (Respondent K)

A vegetable farmer said his motivation comes from knowing that over twenty families live happily because of his business, rejecting the view that entrepreneurs merely extract value and instead framing entrepreneurship as a source of dignity for others:

> … the real proudness is more than 20 families live happily because of my business. That motivates me to work hard and do something more for the country. Some people think entrepreneurs exploit everything from society, and they enjoy a good life. That is totally wrong. We contribute to improving living conditions and increasing the dignity of many people. That's the superpower of entrepreneurship. (Respondent A)

The founder of the Jaffna cultural theme park noted that Kovil leaders, tourists, and government officers frequently commend the venture for giving local people a better life, which he attributes to strong teamwork and shared commitment:

> Whenever Kovil management, tourists or government officers come to our cultural theme park say, you guys are doing an amazing job here and you gave your people a better life through this business. That is the harvest of our strong teamwork. (Respondent R)

Through the first order code on improved living standards and dignity, this theme shows how CWC as an Impactor creates social wealth by enhancing how people live and how they see themselves, linking material improvement with pride, recognition, and a sense of being valued members of society.

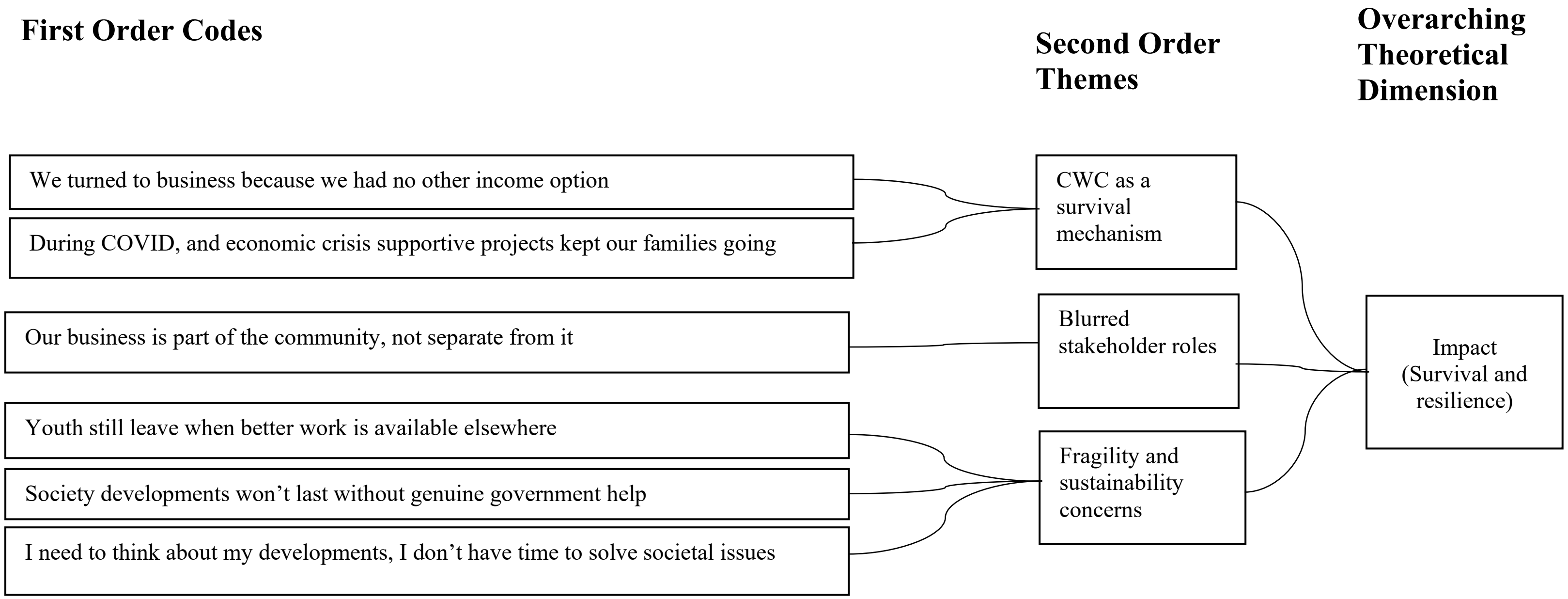
Across the CWC as an Impactor role, the preceding sections have shown how economic, communal, and social wealth creation work together. Economic wealth, particularly through jobs, business growth, and income, appeared as a foundational enabler; communal wealth emerged in strengthened cultural identity, social bonds, and collective voice; and social wealth surfaced in enhanced skills, inclusion, and dignity. Yet respondents also pointed to another layer of impact: in times of crisis and weak institutions, CWC became a survival mechanism, marked by fragility and blurred roles between entrepreneurs, civic groups, and community actors. The next section therefore moves beyond wealth creation to examine how

CWC drives broader societal transformation, reflecting adaptive and context-driven practices unique to Sri Lanka.

ii. Beyond wealth creation: CWC as survival and resilience

While the original CWC framework assumes coordinated action across enterprises, communities, and supportive regimes, the findings of this study reveal that, civic wealth often arises from necessity rather than proactive collaboration. Entrepreneurs acted as frontline responders to institutional failure, initiating community-focused ventures to cope with crisis and instability. This shifts the understanding of CWC from a deliberate model of value creation to a reactive, adaptive process shaped by uneven stakeholder engagement, weak regime support, and blurred civic roles. These insights call for an extension of the CWC model that accounts for its survival-oriented emergence and informal execution in resource-constrained contexts. Figure 7.2 Data structure of CWC as Survival and Resilience. The figure highlights how participants' reflections reveal CWC as both a survival-oriented mechanism and a socially embedded process, shaped by blurred stakeholder roles and structural fragilities.

Figure 7.2: Data structure of CWC as survival and resilience



Note. Author’s research data

7.2.4 CWC as a survival mechanism

The first order codes "We turned to business because we had no other income option" and "During COVID and economic crisis supportive projects kept our families going" show CWC operating as a survival mechanism rather than a planned civic project. These codes cluster into the second order theme CWC as a survival mechanism under the overarching dimension Impact (Survival and Resilience). In this view, entrepreneurship is a last resort for coping with personal crises, economic shocks, and weak institutional support, with civic benefits emerging indirectly from efforts to secure basic livelihoods.

We turned to business because we had no other income option

A vegetable farmer described turning into commercial vegetable cultivation after a marital breakdown and a period without income. With encouragement from the Grama Niladhari and neighbors, he began farming primarily to provide for his children:

> After my wife and I separated, I was mentally down. I had to spend a few months without a proper income source and after that I realized that I needed to do something to look after my children and the path I saw was cultivating vegetables commercially. I know the difficulties that I face by doing something to earn money. I got some support from my Gramaniladari and neighbors. That support system helped me a lot. Finally, I'm still doing this farming business. I need to earn some money for living. That is the only reason I have at the moment. (Respondent F)

Similarly, a flower farmer who lacked formal qualifications and relied on low-paid casual work began growing vegetables, fruits, and flowers with technical guidance from an agricultural officer:

> I did not have enough paper qualifications to do a job. I tried to with many casual jobs. But I did not get enough money. Finally, I started growing vegetables, some fruits and some flowers as well. I sell them to whole sellers. Still I'm doing that. I got some training from an agricultural development officer. Now I don't have any options, and I don't have any more dreams. I need to earn something for me and my family. (Respondent X)

A crop farmer also linked her tea cultivation to survival after severe family disputes over land and prolonged legal battles left her without income:

> I had so many issues with my relatives. Especially they tried to take family lands… they filed many law cases against me. I did not have any job. I faced so many difficulties in my life. I spent many days without food or sleep because of those challenges in life. Finally, I was able to grow some tea, and I continued it as my main income. I am really thankful to the Economic Development Officer, Gramaniladari and my neighbors for the support given. We need that kind of support more to make our own income. Now I have a stable income for me. (Respondent J)

Overall, these narratives show that CWC also emerges as a survival response in constrained contexts, linking this first-order code to the CWC as a survival mechanism theme that extends the Impactor role beyond conventional wealth creation.

During COVID, and economic crisis supportive projects kept our families going

The same survival logic appears in crisis periods. A cultural host described how successive shocks in Sri Lanka made business extremely difficult and how collective support was essential for continuing operations:

I'm really fed up in doing business in Sri Lanka. Easter terrorist attack happened in 2019, then COVID, then man made economic crisis. Many people gave up their businesses. Because of the support of fellow entrepreneurs, supportive organizations, credit facilities, and community we still survive. I really appreciate that wide support. That's what support we really need to fight difficult situations otherwise we can do our business, and we don't want to bother anyone. (Respondent Z)

A vegetable farmer added that his only experience of working closely with other organizations was during the economic crisis, when such cooperation became necessary to secure a minimum income:

Only occasion I worked with different people and organizations during the economic crisis to protect my business. I got some support, and I further expect special support from everyone to face difficult times to secure our living income as entrepreneurs. (Respondent F)

A tour operator expressed frustration with the government's response, viewing aid distribution as politically driven. They argued that entrepreneurs, as key contributors to the economy, should have been prioritized. Limited support left them feeling overlooked during a time focused on survival:

I was really disappointed with the way the government and other people work during the COVID and economic crisis. Their priority was giving aid to people. This is a pure political game, and their main concern was securing their votes. They had to give priority to businesspeople, because we are the people who make money for the country, we are the taxpayers. (Respondent D)

Across these first order codes, CWC appears less as an intentional project of civic transformation and more as a necessity-driven response to crisis, where survival and basic income take precedence and any wider civic value is contingent and fragile. The next theme considers how stakeholder roles in CWC often blur in practice.

7.2.5 Blurred stakeholder roles

The first order code "Our business is part of the community, not separate from it" underpins the second order theme Blurred stakeholder roles within the overarching dimension Impact (Survival and Resilience). Rather than seeing entrepreneurs, communities, and institutions as separate actors, respondents framed responsibility as shared, with entrepreneurs contributing as ordinary community members rather than as distinct civic leaders.

Our business is part of the community, not separate from it

A tour operator stressed that entrepreneurs are embedded in the same social fabric as everyone else and should not be singled out as sole agents of societal change.

> As you asked me about our contribution to societal transformation, I would like to say that we are also a part of society. We do business, we earn money, we are getting some facilities, at the same time public also getting same facilities. I think we don't need to do anything as a planned project for society development. They also have a responsibility to build their own. (Respondent D)

A vegetable farmer similarly argued that taxes and other payments already represent entrepreneurs' contribution to society, and that all citizens share responsibility for their own wellbeing:

As entrepreneurs we pay taxes, we pay more other payments as well. The entire society is getting benefits from them. As a part of this society, everyone has a responsibility to work hard. That's applicable to everyone in society. Apart from that we don't have special responsibility. Everyone needs to work for themselves. (Respondent N)

A mixed-crop farmer reiterated this position, rejecting the idea that entrepreneurs form a special category with additional obligations:

Everyone in this society needs to understand that 'there is no free lunch in this world. Everyone needs to stand on their own feet and needs to work. I choose to become an entrepreneur, and I work hard on that. As a member of this society, I'm doing my work. Everyone should do their roles by themselves. Therefore, no special measures are needed to build better societies or communities. We are not special groups to help communities specifically. (Respondent U)

These views show how the first order code feeds the theme of blurred stakeholder roles: CWC is understood as a diffuse, shared responsibility rather than a clearly coordinated project, and entrepreneurs position themselves as one group among many, not as designated civic change agents.

Fragility and sustainability concerns

The first order codes "Society developments will not last without genuine government help" and "Youth still leave when better work is available elsewhere" inform the second order theme Fragility and sustainability concerns, which also sits under the overarching dimension Impact (Survival and Resilience). These codes highlight doubts about whether civic wealth can be sustained when political incentives, institutional weakness, and shifting youth aspirations undermine long-term commitment to local development.

Society developments won't last without genuine government help.

A greenhouse and organic farmer argued that many national development initiatives have been driven by political agendas rather than genuine concern for impact:

> Past 7-8 decades politicians ruined the country. They used almost all the societal development projects or campaigns, education, health developments, poverty alleviation initiatives, and everything for their political campaigns. They did not care about the impact and real grassroot level issues. Most of them are media shows. (Respondent K)

Echoing this, a homestay networker criticized successive governments for failing to address basic needs while politicizing social problems:

> My personal view is that none of the governments properly identified the real social needs and proper timely solutions. Still many people struggle to find something to eat, no proper education for their kids, as well as poor health. The total responsibility with the governments. For their personal gains they used societal problems. (Respondent O)

A tour operator recounted abandoning a proposed community farm when a minister focused only on electoral gains, reinforcing uncertainty about system-level change:

> Six years back we tried to start a community farm. We needed land and we met several officers and finally had a meeting with the relevant ministers through one of my friends. He asked how many votes he can gain from this project. Finally, I gave up. That's how our system works. Do you think we can do any societal transformation within this setting? It is a waste of time and money. (Respondent D)

These narratives show how this first order code supports the theme of fragility: without authentic, accountable state involvement, civic initiatives are seen as temporary and easily undermined.

Youth still leave when better work is available elsewhere

A greenhouse and organic farmer emphasized the potential of youth to drive change, but also their tendency to pursue more comfortable or overseas opportunities.

> As I believe we need to empower youth in society. They have capacities, they are updated, they have radical ideas. We also started promoting modern agriculture. Unfortunately, whenever they got a foreign education or job opportunity or any other opportunity within their comfort zone, they go for that. It is not easy to make good societal transformations. (Respondent K)

A value-added farmer inked this into societal expectations and status norms that steer youth toward prestigious careers over foundational sectors such as agriculture:

> We never tell a farmer's child to become a farmer. We don't teach them to become farmers... In our country, you are told to become a doctor or an engineer... There is a big gap here. Especially the younger generation, they need very comfortable jobs and a comfortable life. They switch from one job to another one quickly. With this kind of practice, it is not possible to make and sustain social developments. Because if youth lose the battle, who can do it. (Respondent C)

A crop farmer expressed doubt about the next generation's willingness to continue their business or take on societal responsibilities, noting that their children prefer more comfortable lifestyles abroad and are reluctant to engage in hard work. This raises concerns about the future of locally driven development efforts:

I don't know if my children will do this business. Because they don't like to work hard in the sun and rain. Because they don’t like to stay here. They need to move to another country. If they don’t want to do the business that I already developed, do you think they will do and promote societal development responsibilities? (Respondent J)

These reflections show how the second first order code feeds the theme of fragility and sustainability concerns: even where entrepreneurial and civic initiatives exist, future continuity is uncertain when youth priorities and institutional arrangements do not support long-term local engagement. Overall, across the survival mechanism, blurred roles, and fragility themes, the first order codes in this section portray CWC in Sri Lanka as impactful yet vulnerable, shaped by necessity, diffuse responsibility, and structural constraints, rather than by stable, coordinated civic design.

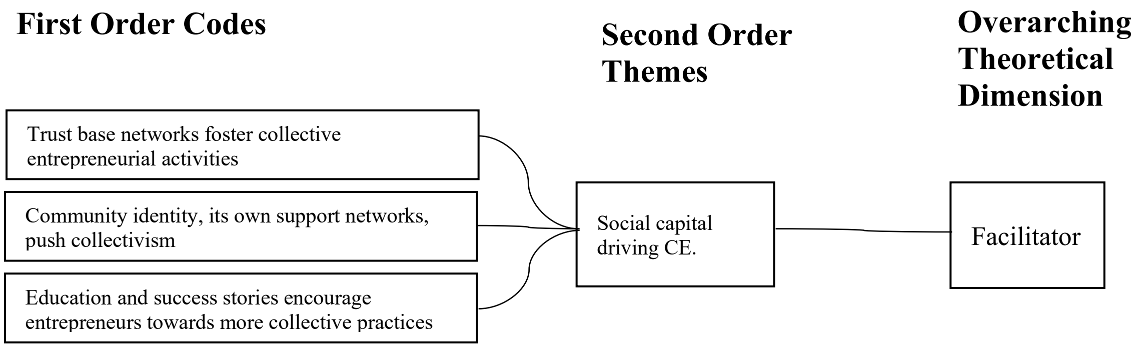
7.3 CWC as a Facilitator

This section explores how CWC functions as a Facilitator of CE by building the social capital that enables collaborative enterprise. Drawing on the narratives “Trust-based networks foster collective entrepreneurial activities,” “Community identity, its own support networks, push collectivism,” and “Education and success stories encourage entrepreneurs towards more collective practices,” the analysis groups these into the second-order theme “Social capital driving CE,” which forms the aggregate dimension of CWC as a Facilitator. Together, these participants’ accounts show how civic processes cultivate trust, shared identity, and learning spaces that encourage entrepreneurs to work collectively rather than in isolation.

Figure 7.3 presents the data structure of CWC as a Facilitator, illustrating how these empirical patterns are organized into the second-order theme of social capital and the overarching Facilitator role. In what follows, the section elaborates how social capital driving

CE is enacted in practice, showing how CWC creates the relational foundations on which collective entrepreneurship can thrive.

Figure 7.3: Data structure of the CWC as a Facilitator



Note. Author’s research data.

7.3.1 Social capital driving CE.

Guided by the narratives listed in Figure 7.3, this theme examines how trust, shared identity, and civic learning practices collectively form the second-order theme “Social capital driving CE” under CWC’s Facilitator role. The participants’ accounts show that successful collaboration depends not only on formal business structures but also on the strength of social values and support networks embedded within communities. Where trust, ethics, and mutual responsibility are nurtured, collective ventures flourish; where they are weak, attempts at CE often stall or collapse.

Trust base networks foster collective entrepreneurial activities

A travel agent affirmed that trust-based networks are crucial for collective entrepreneurial activities. While acknowledging mixed experiences with community groups, they emphasized that trust, loyalty, and honesty are key to effective collaboration. They added that fostering such values in society enables entrepreneurs to promote and sustain collective efforts:

I have both good and bad experiences in working with community members and community groups. It is all about trust, loyalty and honesty. As entrepreneurs we can't mold and totally change the values of people. But societal transformations need to inculcate good human values first. The people we are working with now, are good and we encouraged them to do and promote collective work (Respondent W).

A value-added farmer contrasted a failed, litigation-prone venture with an unaccountable farmer society with his current work with a carefully selected, trustworthy team, arguing that reliable groups and shared trust among the public, government, and entrepreneurs are essential for meaningful CE:

I tried to work with some farmer societies three years back. I gave them my products, and I asked them, we can do this business collectively and I don't need money at that moment and asked them to sell them first, make a fund and settle the money later. They took the products, and I had to take legal action finally to get money back. But now I work with a team, they are reliable, and honest. First, we need to change the minds of people and make this kind of group before collective work. It's everyone's responsibility including the general public, government and entrepreneurs (Respondent E)

A homestay networker stressed that trust and ethical conduct are essential for collective entrepreneurship. He noted that while many pursue short-term gains unethically, he values transparency and integrity:

One of my main responsibilities and one of my main expectations from my networks is being ethical. I'm a 100 percent accurate taxpayer and never practice unethical things for short term benefits. But most people I met try to find short term benefits from unethical practices. So as entrepreneurs and supportive organizations, we need to

> promote ethical practices in society. Now, I work with a couple of teams, they are pretty good. Because we changed their mindsets. (Respondent O)

These participants’ accounts show that trust-based networks are indispensable to the second-order theme of social capital driving CE. By foregrounding honesty, loyalty, and accountability, they illustrate how CWC facilitates CE through the creation of relational environments where entrepreneurs feel confident to share risks, resources, and responsibilities.

Community identity, its own support networks, push collectivism

A vegetable farmer described how her church not only helped her start her business but also acted as a hub for education, healthcare, and business support, showing how civic institutions can anchor CWC and encourage CE:

> I really value and appreciate the knowledge and resources given by the church for starting my business. My church helps lots of people... Now we have a big group of people who are helping poor people, schools, hospitals, and helping each other to start new businesses and develop their businesses. We have every support and facilities at our church now. (Respondent N)

A cultural theme park owner similarly credited his Kovil as the foundation of his entrepreneurial journey. Kovil provided land, legitimacy, and access to community groups, which later evolved into a wider collective business model. Through this first-order code, his account illustrates how strong community identity and support networks within CWC lower barriers to participation and draw new actors into CE:

> I need to give full credit for my success to Kovil for being with me throughout my entrepreneurial journey. I met the community groups wo are working in our cultural village through Kovil. We got the first land and other facilities from Kovil and now we

can develop the business with that support and now as a team we help others to connect with our collective business and start more collaborative businesses. (Respondent R)

An event host also described how his Mosque provided moral guidance and an interest-free loan to start his venture:

I had a passion to do a business, and my Mosque helped me a lot to start a business. They gave me motivation to do ethical business. I got an interest-free loan from the Mosque. That is the support I got in the initial stage. I often go to the Mosque to meet our community, and we discuss business issues, and opportunities. Especially, every Friday we meet after we pray. (Respondent P)

Across these narratives, the first-order code demonstrates that embedded community institutions act as civic anchors that channel material, moral, and relational support into collective ventures, thereby reinforcing the second-order theme of social capital driving CE under the Facilitator role

Education and success stories encourage entrepreneurs towards more collective practices

A greenhouse and organic farmer argued that breaking individualistic norms requires deliberate educational interventions, open discussions, and the use of success stories to model the benefits of working collectively:

We need to break the individualism in the entrepreneurship for a better business environment… We educate people, we do some open discussions at schools and universities together with business development support service providers, chambers, and trade associations. Especially we use success stories. That’s how I found good partners for our businesses. (Respondent K)

A community tourism operator similarly stressed that promoting CE must start at the societal level, with education and ethical reflection at its core:

> If anyone wants to promote CE, it should start from society. The main requirement is education. That is the only way we can. People are more selfish now. They are always looking for short cuts and easy money. They will do anything for money. Tother we need to do it. That is everyone's responsibility. We do our maximum for though some CSR projects. (Respondent Q)

An adventure wellness operator added that CE cannot be enforced but can emerge through experiential learning. By creating more opportunities for people to work together and by proposing government programs that connect societal groups into CE networks, he demonstrated how civic initiatives intentionally create the conditions for collective learning and practice:

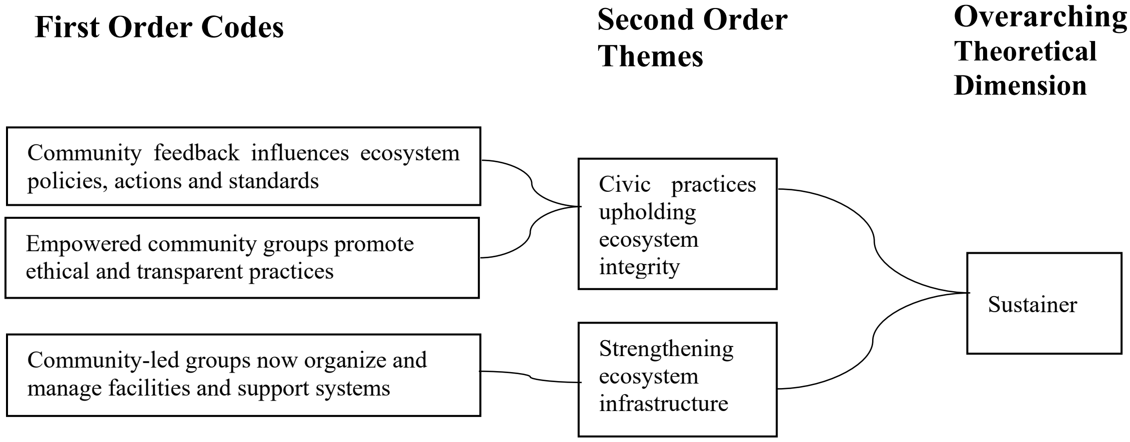
> We can't force anyone to become a collective entrepreneur. It is not possible, but what I experienced is some people getting it from experiential learning. We need to open more collective work opportunities targeting broader societal groups. We are doing it at our capacity. Last year I submitted a proposal to the government on connecting societal groups for CE processes. (Respondent S)

This cluster of participants' accounts shows how education, role-modelling, and experiential opportunities help entrepreneurs and community members to "learn" CE in practice. Overall, the theme of social capital driving CE demonstrates that CWC facilitates collective entrepreneurship not only through resources but through civic relationships, identities, and learning processes. The narratives on trust-based networks, community identity and support, and education and success stories jointly show how CWC's Facilitator role embeds collaboration-oriented values and practices into everyday community life, laying the groundwork for CE to expand and deepen across the ecosystem.

7.4 CWC as a Sustainer

This section explains how CWC operates as a Sustainer of the EE. Drawing on the first order codes "community feedback influences ecosystem policies, actions and standards," "empowered community groups promote ethical and transparent practices," and "community-led groups now organize and manage facilities and support systems," the analysis groups these insights into the second order themes of civic practices upholding ecosystem integrity and strengthening ecosystem infrastructure. Together, these themes form the aggregate dimension of CWC as a Sustainer, showing how civic actors help preserve the long-term health and legitimacy of the EE. Figure 7.4 presents the data structure of CWC as a Sustainer.

Figure 7.4: Data structure of the CWC as a Sustainer



Note. Author's research data.

7.4.1 Civic practices upholding ecosystem integrity

This theme focuses on the second order pattern of civic practices upholding ecosystem integrity. Across the first order codes, entrepreneurs describe how community voices, socially empowered groups, and public pressure shape ecosystem policies, actions, and standards, reinforcing the Sustainer role of CWC.

Community feedback influences ecosystem policies, actions and standards

A cultural theme park entrepreneur in Jaffna explained that his tourism model depends on community engagement, so he regularly listens to local ideas and adapts his operating practices to sustain support:

> In our tourism business, community is the main part. So, their ideas and experiences are more important to make a conducive environment for businesses. As a single business, we can't change the entire business setting, but we change and develop our practices according to the community requirements to get more engagement. (Respondent R)

A cultural tour guide working in coastal tourism similarly argued that government agencies shaping the EE must not design policies in isolation but systematically gather community feedback and work with socially empowered groups who can mobilize wider public engagement:

> Government role in setting up the ecosystem is more critical, and they need to take community feedback to develop new policies and standards in making a healthy environment for businesses. Especially socially empowered groups have power to influence the public. So, we need to use them as catalysts for productive changes. (Respondent Y)

A community tourism operator emphasized that most new entrepreneurs emerge from ordinary people and that their voices are almost absent in current policy processes, undermining the creation of a genuinely business-friendly environment:

> Like me, people who start new businesses come from ordinary people. I had many problems, doubts, ideas before starting my business. I know, it's the same for everyone. That's why the government, especially when creating a business-friendly environment, needs to consider the opinions of ordinary people before formulating policies and strategies. I don't see such practice in Sri Lanka, but it is a must. (Respondent Q)

These narratives under the first order code demonstrate that when community feedback is incorporated into policies and business practices, CWC sustains the EE by keeping its rules, standards, and support mechanisms aligned with ground-level realities.

Empowered community groups promote ethical and transparent practices

A tour operator who runs indigenous tourism initiatives recalled a recent campaign where residents collectively opposed a factory that was dumping waste into the environment:

As a person who has been in business for a long time, I know that the negative effects of business are reduced due to the pressures from society... Last month, we worked together to oppose a factory dumping waste into the environment. It was finally stopped with leading into introduction of new laws. (Respondent V)

A homestay owner stressed that public pressure is essential in contexts where many actors prioritize profit over ethics, noting how customers increasingly use social media to call out unhygienic or unsafe practices:

If the public doesn't come together and put pressure on, we can see more unethical and illegal business practices. Because most people do anything for money. When something goes wrong, the public comes together, and many ethical business practices are protected. You know, especially in our restaurants, when food is prepared in an unhygienic manner or when unhealthy ingredients are used, people object. I see a lot of people posting videos like that on social media every day. (Respondent I)

An adventure wellness operator stressed that public pressure is essential in contexts where many actors prioritize profit over ethics, noting how customers increasingly use social media to call out unhygienic or unsafe practices:

We have stood up for good things in society in many places together with the general public. Against the use of harmful chemicals, against harmful advertising, protecting the environment, against business practices that are against religions and cultures, and doing good things for society. I think the contribution of ordinary people is very important in creating a good business environment. (Respondent S)

Across this first order code, empowered civic groups function as informal regulators, pushing businesses and authorities towards more ethical, transparent, and culturally respectful practices. In doing so, CWC helps sustain the integrity of the ecosystem beyond what formal institutions can achieve alone.

7.4.2 Strengthening ecosystem infrastructure

This theme highlights how community-led efforts support the development and management of essential infrastructure within the ecosystem. Local groups actively organize facilities and support systems that enable entrepreneurial growth and long-term ecosystem sustainability.

Community-led groups now organize and manage facilities and support systems

A homestay networker described how, rather than waiting for government intervention, his team and local households jointly developed a community-based tourism model and resource network:

> Currently we are working with 250 households in our tourism business. As I told you we can't wait until the government makes all the facilities and systems for entrepreneurs. We have developed our community-based business model and resource network. We encouraged new entrants to join our home stay tourism business, and we provide training and all the facilities. (Respondent O)

A value-added farmer and farmer-association leader explained how his association set up a collective fund to support new and young entrepreneurs who struggle to access start-up and growth capital:

> Then together with our farmer association we developed a collective fund to help our entrepreneurs, especially new young entrepreneurs. Because I know the difficulty of finding initial capital for starting a new business and developing an existing business.

We take only a nominal interest rate, and we offer them a fair period of time to re-pay the loan. (Respondent C)

A vegetable farmer and a community tourism operator highlighted the vital role of religious-based groups in supporting entrepreneurship. The vegetable farmer noted that the Church offers financial, collateral, and mentoring support to help people start and grow businesses. Similarly, a community tourism operator shared that the Mosque provides interest-free loans and ongoing support through knowledge, networks, and market access:

> As I shared, my Church helps me a lot. Not only me, but my Church also helps many people to start and develop businesses. We have many people who have knowledge and experience. If someone needs money to start a business, the Church gives it, if some need collateral, Church arranges them, it has everything to help entrepreneurs. (Respondent N)

> I received an interest-free loan from the community organization I work with. Not only money, but the Mosque always helps the community with knowledge, experiences, contacts for bringing our products and services to the markets. It helps our community a lot. (Respondent Q)

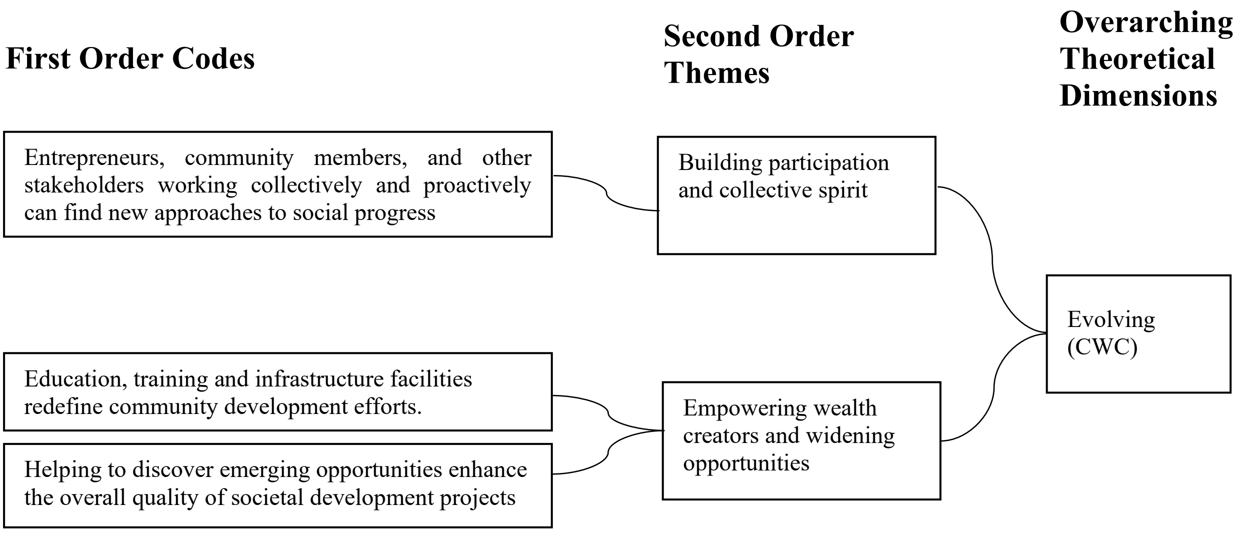
The first order code on community-led management of facilities and support systems shows how local associations, religious organizations, and business networks build and run the financial, training, and service infrastructures that many entrepreneurs rely on. These civic structures sustain the EE by filling gaps left by formal institutions and by keeping support rooted in local relationships and trust.

Overall, the Sustainer role of CWC emerges through these intertwined patterns: civic practices that uphold ecosystem integrity and community-led initiatives that strengthen ecosystem infrastructure. Through the linked first order codes and second order themes discussed above, CWC helps maintain ethical standards, responsive policies, and practical support systems, enabling the EE to remain viable and trustworthy over time

7.5 Evolving role of CWC

The evolving role of CWC captures how civic wealth creation is reshaped by pressures from CE and EE, gradually widening who participates and how it is practiced. Narratives cluster into two themes, building participation and collective spirit and empowering wealth creators and widening opportunities, which together form the dimension of CWC as Evolving, as CE drives inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups, while EE reshapes CWC through enabling policies, institutions, and infrastructure (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5: Data structure of the evolving role of CWC



Note. Author's research data.

7.5.1 Building participation and collective spirit

Guided by the first-order code "Entrepreneurs, community members, and other stakeholders working collectively and proactively can find new approaches to social progress," this theme of building participation and collective spirit under the evolving role of CWC shows that social change is more sustainable when it is participatory and co-created, with CE helping shift CWC from aid-oriented practices toward shared responsibility among entrepreneurs, communities, and the state.

Entrepreneurs, community members, and other stakeholders working collectively and proactively can find new approaches to social progress

A tour planner emphasized that rather than giving free aid, she encourages people to join wealth-creation activities with community and government support:

> Many people come to our organization to receive donations and assistance for various activities carried out for the public good. I do not just give money to anyone. I tell all of them that people cannot be uplifted by giving something free. Those in need of help in society need to be involved in wealth creation activities. For that, the people of society and the government need to work together. I do it as best I can. I tell everyone who comes to ask for help. I have told the government several times. I have given them many suggestions. As a result of that influence, I was able to start a new project for alleviating poverty through our regional secretariat. Many business owners linked many families with their supply chains or other business processes. (Respondent H)

A cultural park owner argued that outdated welfare schemes do not uplift communities and called for investing in “one person per family” to build skills, jobs, or businesses. He noted that his business community has already redirected CSR efforts toward this approach and urged the government to follow it as a sustainable model for societal progress:

> My opinion is that all other things that are given to people should be stopped except for the allowances paid to the disabled and the elderly. People and societies cannot be uplifted by these outdated methods. We should choose one young child from one family

and make him a fully qualified person. Then he should start his own business or find a good job within a certain period. One young person from one family can be sent to work abroad. I am saying that we should invest together to build one person in one family. I, our business community, have been proposing this to the government for a long time. We have stopped all the CSR work in our businesses and are now doing what we can to build one person in one family. I am still telling the government to stop the false work that is being done now and do this. (Respondent R)

Entrepreneurs such as a greenhouse and organic farmer, an adventure-wellness operator, a resort operator, and a travel-agency owner echoed similar calls to renew welfare and community development initiatives in line with modern economic, social, and technological realities.

Across these cases, the first order code shows CE actors deliberately shifting CWC away from handouts and toward participatory, skills-based and opportunity-oriented models, thereby strengthening the second order theme of building participation and collective spirit within the evolving role of CWC.

7.5.2 Empowering wealth creators and widening opportunities

This theme highlights how CWC evolves when wealth creators are empowered through education, training, and supportive infrastructure, and when communities are guided to discover new opportunities. Together, these forces expand participation, improve the quality of development projects, and shift CWC toward sustainable, future-oriented practices.

Education, training and infrastructure facilities redefine community development efforts

A greenhouse and organic farmer explained that by training undergraduates and securing support from regional offices, he launched value-added agricultural projects that turned unmarketable crops into new products. The initiative now benefits over 50 families, with plans to expand through government support to reach more than 500 households:

> I recently started new agriculture projects with some undergraduates. I forwarded them for special training sessions on post-harvest management. Now they have developed a series of new value-added projects, and after speaking with reginal agricultural offices for some facilities we were able to get them. We are now making value-added products from many agricultural crops that were previously unmarketable during the harvesting season. Now more than 50 families are getting benefits from new community business models. Everyone is getting a share of surplus. Now we are discussing with some government officers to expand this new model further to help more than 500 families who are living under government monetary aid. What makes us happy is that the people involved had never even thought of such things before when working to improve society. (Respondent K)

A cultural park owner highlighted how training and digital infrastructure help to find new avenues of societal development strategies. He explained that digital marketing programs for unemployed youth created income opportunities while promoting local culture, and ongoing mentoring with wider networks turned these efforts into sustainable civic wealth practices:

> We conducted a series of digital marketing awareness programs for the unemployed youth community in our region. We assigned a couple of projects to bring local culture and living experiences to the world through digital platforms. We showed them they can earn an income as well while taking some initiations to preserve and promote our local culture. We keep monitoring them and we connected them to different parties for more projects. (Respondent R)

Helping to discover emerging opportunities enhance the overall quality of societal development projects

A cultural tour guide explained that collaboration with international agencies, government bodies, and six villages introduced new strategies that built trust and cooperation while opening fresh opportunities. He noted that these efforts enhanced community development and led to two collective tourism brands, showing how discovering emerging opportunities helps new facets of CWC:

> Recently we worked with two international agencies, government institutions and community members for six villages. Our focus was to identify new strategies for enabling stronger trust, cooperation, and shared identity built through collective projects and civic participation. Community members experienced new strategies and opportunities for a better future. As a result of this new initiative, we were able to create two collective tourism brands for the global market. (Respondent Y)

A tour operator noted that training communities to fundraise through social media enabled multiple infrastructure, education, healthcare, and cultural projects, introducing innovative resource mobilization that enhances development and evolve CWC:

> We provided some training for the community members on how they can raise funds through social media for community development projects. As a result of this new initiation, we were able to complete five public infrastructure development projects, twelve education and healthcare development projects, and five cultural events. The online fundraiser was a new experience for the community members and now we were working on more new projects. (Respondent V)

Taking together, these first order codes show how CWC is evolving under the influence of CE and EE. By building participation and collective spirit, and by empowering wealth creators while widening opportunity spaces, civic wealth creation shifts from sporadic, aid-based interventions to more systematic, skill-intensive, and opportunity-oriented practices that better reflect the complexities of Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural communities.

7.6 Sectoral patterns in CWC

Based on a detailed analysis of the narratives, distinct sectoral patterns emerge in how Tourism and Agriculture entrepreneurs perceive and enact CWC. The data reveals that respondents from the tourism sector predominantly articulate CWC as a proactive and deliberate strategy for community development, while those from the agriculture sector present a more complex picture, often framing entrepreneurship and its civic benefits as a necessity-driven survival mechanism, alongside notable voices of strong contribution.

7.6.1 Tourism sector pattern: CWC is narrated as deliberate community uplift, defended through ethics and partnerships

Across the narratives of the tourism sector respondents, civic wealth is often framed as **intentional local uplift** that goes beyond private profit. They describe CWC through employment and inclusion, especially for youth and women. A tour planner (Respondent H) linked her contribution directly to job creation, noting a "*dream to create at least another 100 jobs for youth and women*," and arguing that tourism is a practical platform to generate employment. In the same direction, A homestay networker (Respondent O) connected tourism income to women's empowerment, stating that "*most of the homestay owners are women*" and that "*empowering women is … uplifting families and society*."

Tourism narratives also show a strong communal and place-based logic: CWC is expressed as keeping benefits circulating locally by activating underused household and village resources. A homestay networker (Respondent O) explicitly described turning unused rooms into local opportunity, saying "I did not even use those rooms … started my business … I can uplift my village." Likewise, an event host (Respondent P) framed CWC through destination development, arguing that local tourism can "develop the rural areas" and "recover and make those places valuable," which positions civic wealth as a community revitalization mechanism rather than only an individual gain.

In social wealth terms, tourism respondents repeatedly anchor civic wealth in cultural pride and identity reinforcement. A cultural park owner (Respondent R) explained that visitors value "our cultural heritage," and that seeing youth participate in cultural performances creates pride and continuity, showing civic wealth as something that strengthens identity and belonging, not only income. Similarly, a homestay networker (Respondent O) noted "We feel proud when visitors value our traditions," tying civic wealth to symbolic recognition and collective dignity.

A further tourism pattern is that civic wealth becomes a sustaining obligation through ethics and reputation. In the Sustainer dimension, tourism actors describe how maintaining legitimacy requires ethical conduct because the community will react. A travel agent (Respondent W) stated, "We always follow business ethics, otherwise society will punish," positioning civic wealth as protected by social accountability and informal sanctions.

7.6.2 Tourism counter-pattern: civic wealth is constrained by fragility, politicized support, and "business-not-charity" logic

Even within tourism, some narratives resist idealized civic wealth and stress fragility and conditionality. A tour operator (Respondent D) argued that civic wealth often becomes "a form of business for most entrepreneurs, not charity," implying that contributions can be instrumental and therefore unstable. The same respondent also cautioned that progress "won't last without genuine government help," pushing the interpretation that tourism civic wealth is vulnerable when policy and institutional support are weak or inconsistent.

7.6.3 Agriculture sector pattern: livelihood protection first, with civic wealth through jobs, market access, and community benefits

In agriculture, civic wealth is frequently narrated through livelihood security, where economic contribution to others is often an extension of sustaining the farm and household. Still, several agriculture respondents articulate clear economic civic wealth through wages, jobs, and local income circulation. A vegetable farmer (Respondent A) framed civic wealth as providing stable livelihoods to others, saying the "real proudness is … more than 20 families and 30 people can feed due to their salary." A greenhouse and organic farmer (Respondent K) similarly described ambition at scale, stating "My dream is to create one thousand job opportunities," which positions agricultural growth as a direct pathway to community uplift. A value-added farmer (Respondent C) explained that during the economic crisis he offered "commissions" to those who helped him procure inputs like pepper, indicating a survival-linked but still community-distributed economic logic. Moreover, agriculture has a distinctive communal cohesion pattern rooted in farmer networks and mutual support structures. A vegetable farmer (Respondent A) emphasized collective support among farmers, saying "Now there's real cooperation … people support each other … society is getting stronger," which frames civic wealth as relational strengthening in rural production communities. Further he linked dignity and wellbeing to being able to offer employment and stability, noting "Our standard of living has improved" and tying that improvement to broader social outcomes.

7.6.4 Agriculture counter-pattern: CWC is frequently narrated as survival-bound, with blurred responsibility and sustainability doubts

Compared to tourism, a stronger and more frequent agriculture pattern frames civic wealth as secondary to survival. A vegetable farmer (Respondent F) described entrepreneurship as a necessity after personal disruption, emphasizing that “I need to earn some money for living… That is the only reason I have now.” which positions civic wealth as happening only if survival needs are met. A flower farmer (Respondent X) also aligned with that, noting “I don’t have any options, and I don’t have any more dreams. I need to earn something for me and my family.”

This survival framing also appears in more extreme hardship narratives: A crop farmer (Respondent J) recalled periods “without food or sleep,” and explained that cultivating tea became her “main income” and no willingness to contribute for social development beyond that. In the same survival-bound logic, a mixed-crop farmer (Respondent U) argued that “New businesses are always running behind earning money for survival,” and therefore “do not have time to consider society.” Agriculture narratives also show blurred stakeholder roles, where civic wealth is reframed as already fulfilled through compliance and taxes rather than proactive community development. A vegetable farmer (Respondent N) said, “We are not special … We are paying taxes. That is our contribution,” while also noting that “we have laws,” implying civic responsibility is institutional, not entrepreneurial.

Finally, agriculture respondents stress fragility and sustainability concerns, especially around policy instability and politicization. For instance, A greenhouse farmer (Respondent K) noted that even after community contributions, “youth still leave the village,” questioning the durability of civic wealth without broader structural change. A value-added farmer (Respondent C) highlighted political interference that undermines community-oriented contributions, describing how some religious or community organizations become "linked to politics," reducing genuine civic outcomes.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined how CWC is enacted in Sri Lanka tourism and how it contributes to societal progress through diverse roles. Findings show that CWC in Sri Lanka creates wealth in line with Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) framework but also extends beyond it. As expected, CWC generated economic, communal, and social wealth. Respondents described how income and jobs were created, how families and communities became stronger, and how cultural identity and pride were preserved. Economic wealth often acted as the basis for these wider outcomes, especially in settings where survival was the main concern.

While CWC is often seen as a change agent of societal transformation, findings from this study show that it also emerges as a response to local realities. In many cases, civic wealth practices were not the result of long-term planning but developed out of necessity during crises, weak institutions, or fragile environments. Respondents highlighted CWC as a survival mechanism, where entrepreneurial and community activities were pursued in the absence of alternatives, especially in times of instability. They also pointed to fragility and sustainability concerns, noting how weak institutional support and outmigration threatened the continuity of collective initiatives. At the same time, blurred stakeholder roles were evident, with entrepreneurs, community groups, and civic actors overlapping and working interchangeably.

The analysis further showed how CWC functions as a Facilitator, supporting CE by cultivating trust, solidarity, and civic conditions that motivate entrepreneurs to work collectively. Through peer learning, mentoring, and civic engagement, CWC enabled the diffusion of values that underpin sustained entrepreneurial collaboration. Similarly, under its Sustainer role, CWC was shown to reinforce EE by upholding ethics, strengthening governance, and supporting community-based infrastructure and services that maintain the ecosystem's long-term relevance.

Moreover, the chapter highlighted the evolving role of CWC, demonstrating how it is continually reshaped by its interaction with CE and EE. Education, training, supportive infrastructure, and collective projects not only widened opportunities but also shifted the very form of CWC from ad-hoc community responses to structured, future-oriented civic initiatives. Community voices and societal demands played a pivotal role in pressing for mindset transformation and stronger collective wealth infrastructures, further evidencing how CWC evolves as both a proactive and adaptive civic process.

Sectoral patterns reveal clear contrasts in how CWC is understood and enacted. Tourism entrepreneurs largely describe CWC as a deliberate strategy for community uplift through jobs, inclusion, local partnerships, cultural pride, and ethical accountability, though some note fragility and a "business-not-charity" logic shaped by politicized support. Agriculture entrepreneurs more often frame CWC as livelihood protection, where civic benefits arise through employment and farmer networks, but many portray it as survival-bound, with blurred responsibility and sustainability concerns under instability and hardship.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE)

8.1 Introduction

This data chapter examines **Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE)** and explains why some entrepreneurs deliberately choose to operate independently rather than pursue collective engagements. Building on Chapter 05 on Collective Entrepreneurship (CE), which demonstrates how synergy can be generated through collaboration, this chapter presents the contrasting empirical pattern: entrepreneurs who prefer to "go it alone" and keep a distance from joint planning, shared decision-making, and collective initiatives. Within the triadic interplay, IE is positioned as a constraint on synergy, helping explain why collaborative efforts do not always expand and why some potential ecosystem and civic benefits remain partial or unrealized.

Drawing on interview narratives, the chapter shows how IE is formed, justified, and enacted in practice, and how it shapes entrepreneurs' willingness to participate in networks, share knowledge, and engage in collective responses to wider challenges. The chapter also highlights sectoral patterns, showing that IE is comparatively more prevalent and normalized among many agricultural entrepreneurs, while tourism respondents are generally more collective, with only a small minority displaying strongly individualistic boundary-setting. The chapter concludes by synthesizing the findings to clarify what IE means for synergy across CE, the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE), and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC) within the broader triadic framework, and to provide an empirical base for the comparative analysis developed in Chapter 08.

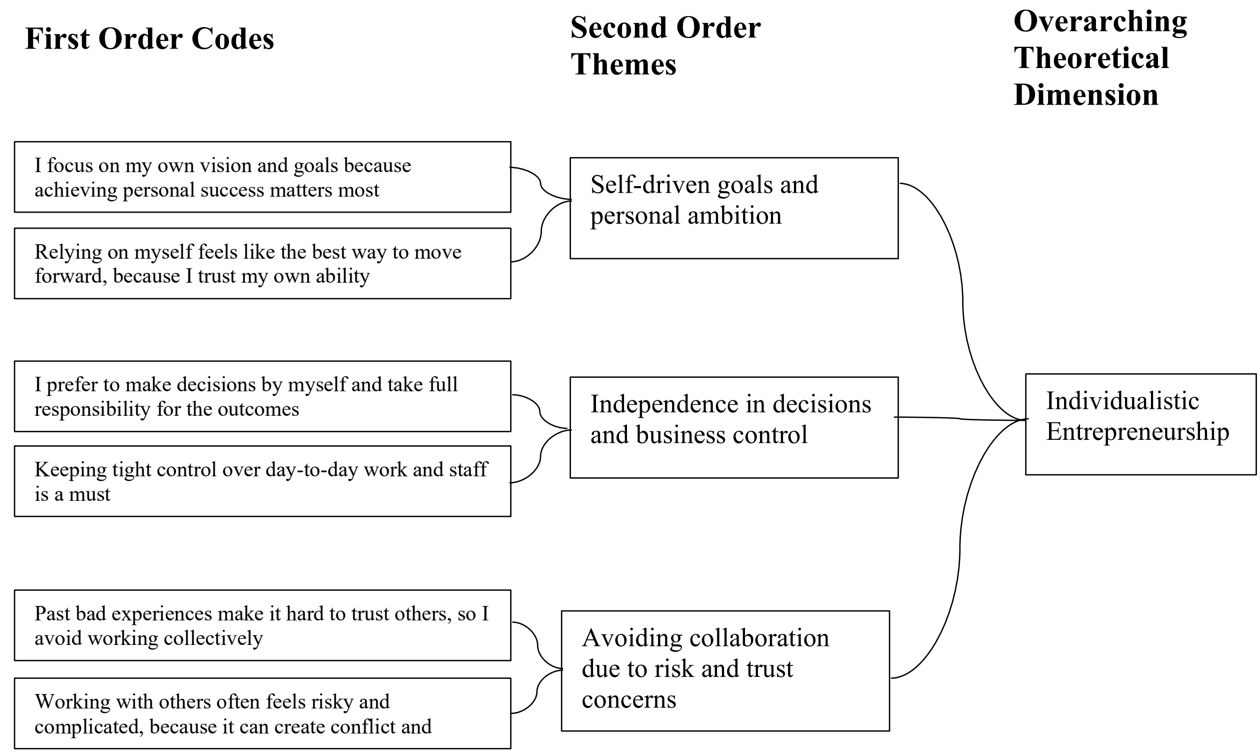
This chapter should be read as a boundary-condition analysis rather than a contradiction of the CE findings, because IE explains how distrust, control concerns, unequal effort, or negative prior experiences can restrict collaboration even where collective practices are beneficial in other contexts.

8.2 Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE)

IE is characterized by three interconnected second-order themes that emerged from the interview data (see Figure 8.1): self-driven goals and personal ambition, independence in decisions and business control, and avoiding collaboration due to risk and trust concerns. Together, these themes depict IE as an empirically grounded entrepreneurial orientation in which individuals deliberately protect a personal business journey through strong goal focus, tight operational control, and cautious distancing from collective engagements. The findings show that IE is not simply the absence of CE, but an active and justified stance that entrepreneurs frame as necessary to safeguard identity, stability, and accountability.

Accordingly, the chapter is organized around these three themes, each developed through empirical patterns and respondents' narratives to show how IE is enacted in practice.

Figure 8.1: Data structure of the IE



Note. Author's research data.

8.2.1 Self-driven goals and personal ambition

This theme captures the motivational core of IE, where entrepreneurs frame success as a personal destination that must remain aligned with their own vision, sacrifice, and pace. Across the narratives, respondents consistently justify individualism as the most reliable way to protect what they see as a "personal journey," especially when collective work is perceived to dilute focus, slow progress, or require compromises that threaten identity and direction. Two empirical patterns anchor this logic. First, entrepreneurs prioritize their own vision and goals because personal achievement matters most. Second, they rely on themselves, emphasizing self-trust and self-sufficiency as the safest and most efficient route forward. Together, these accounts show how ambition and self-reliance actively reduce the perceived value of collective work and limit willingness to share ideas, plans, and resources.

I focus on my own vision and goals because achieving personal success matters most

A cultural host described IE as being anchored in a clear personal vision and a strong sense of achievement. He framed individualistic entrepreneurship as the best way to keep the journey aligned with one's own vision and to avoid being slowed down by others. For this respondent, working alone meant clarity of direction and the ability to move quickly, whereas working with others required waiting, negotiating, and pursuing someone else's goals:

> The person who makes a journey according to his own vision is a genius. He is the one who has the most ability to go to his own success. Because when working together with others, you must work with the vision of others. It is difficult to move forward clearly according to one's vision. The other one must wait for someone else to work. You must depend on someone else. I don't think that depending on others, you can move forward quickly and reach your goals. One's journey alone is clear. Because you don't need to work for other people's visions and goals. A journey that clearly looks ahead is suitable for today's times. The best thing for that is to do business alone. (Respondent Z)

A vegetable farmer avoids working with outsiders because they prioritize protecting his personal vision and goals. He perceives collective work as an intrusion that disrupts his dreams, so he prefers to pursue his business according to their own dreams rather than accommodating others' agendas:

> I am not interested in doing business or any other social work together with outsiders. I have a reason not to, because I value my personal vision and goals. If we work together for something my personal vision is interrupted by others. I don't like it. I need to work according to my dreams but not for others. (Respondent F)

A tour operator justifies individualism as necessary to achieve a personal vision built through sacrifice and self-responsibility. He argues that working with others would dilute focus because everyone pursues their own dreams:

> Since my childhood I have had a dream to be a rich person in the country. I worked hard and I sacrificed many things in my life. I gave up my leisure time, my sleep, my friends, relatives to reach my vision. I strongly believe that no one can bring my vision to my hand. I'm the only person responsible for this. I'll not be able to reach my vision if I work with others. Because they also have their own dreams. This is a pure individualistic world created by individual dreams. If everyone reaches their dreams, we can't see any social problems in this world. (Respondent D)

A tea producer links working alone to protecting confidential plans after witnessing their father lose opportunities by sharing ideas with others. He frames success as the main source of social acceptance, which reinforces a self-focused approach and low concern for others' needs or problems:

> I have my own plans, only my family knows it. I never share that with anyone. Because my father had to face so many problems after discussing his plans with his friends and fellow entrepreneurs. He lost many business opportunities as well. I do not want to experience them again. I have to share them with others if I work with other people. That is why I work alone. I prefer this. I think I am successful only if I achieve my plans. Others will accept me only if I succeed. Those who fail are not accepted anywhere. I don't care about other people's work or other people's problems. I only think about my success. (Respondent L)

Together, these narratives illustrate how a strong personal vision and ambition form the foundation of IE. Entrepreneurs perceive their goals as deeply personal and non-negotiable, viewing collaboration as a potential dilution or distraction from their unique journey. This first-order code feeds directly into the second-order theme of Self-driven goals and personal ambition, highlighting how personal success is prioritized over collective outcomes.

Relying on myself feels like the best way to move forward, because I trust my own ability

A resort operator suggested that some individuals choose to operate individually because they see their specialized skills, knowledge, and resources as personal advantages that should not be shared. Having been repeatedly rejected when seeking collaboration, they portray individualism as a deliberate strategy to protect exclusive benefits and control over success:

> I experienced that people have strong individual desires because they have very uncommon skills, substantial knowledge of something, unique resources, and very depth secrets for success. They think that they don't want anyone to share the benefits, because they can do all of them with their knowledge, resources, and talents. Then they prefer to work alone. In my business journey I got rejected by that kind of people many times when I tried to work collectively. (Respondent T)

A tour operator who also offers wellness services explained that his spa package is a personal creation with a distinct philosophy, and that partnering would dilute its "soul" by turning it into a generic mix. He welcomed collaboration for logistics (e.g., transport/bookings) but insisted the creative and spiritual core must remain under one vision to protect authenticity and quality:

> My spa package is built around a very specific philosophy and energy. It's my personal creation. I've seen other ventures try to partner and suddenly it becomes a generic package, yoga from one person, food from another, meditation from a third. It loses the soul. In tourism, yes, you can collaborate on transport or bookings, but the core product,

the essence, must remain under one vision to maintain its authenticity and quality. That's why I keep the creative and spiritual core completely under my control. (Respondent D)

A tour operator echoed the view of the resort operator highlighting individualism as a mindset shaped by education, wealth, networks, and experience, leading some entrepreneurs to believe they can succeed entirely on their own and therefore feel little obligation to support others. When he invited entrepreneurs to join an SME marketplace and livelihood initiative, many refused, justifying their stance by arguing that success depends on personal resources and that "free support" for others is pointless and likely to fail:

> Individualism is a philosophical notion of someone. Because of one's education, or because of abilities, or own wealth, or personal connections, or experience, they believe that they can do everything by themselves. They don't care about others. I had many personal experiences on this. Couple of years ago we needed to create a marketplace for showcasing products of SMEs and we needed to develop some government benefitted poor families as entrepreneurs. I invited many entrepreneurs to join that. But they did not join me. They told me to become an entrepreneur, there should be their own wealth, personal connections and experiences. Their final justification was no point in giving anything free for anyone and that would end up with a huge failure. (Respondent V)

A vegetable farmer described IE as rooted in confidence in their own capability and a preference for not depending on others. She further described how early life experiences taught him to manage independently and to trust his own ability to find solutions:

> I like to work alone. It's more convenient for me. I can take decisions as I want, and when I need them. No need to discuss with others, no need to inform others. I think I

got that from my family. Because I had to stay in the school hostel from my grade 6. That means I had to start my hostel life at 13 years of age. I used to do all the stuff by myself. After schooling I had to stay at one of my relative’s places for several years. So, I think from that time I did my own thing, so I got used to it. So now I like it. I prefer to work alone at my own expense. I got into business because of my church. Our parish priest helped me a lot when I said I wanted to do my own thing. I got to know that a government officer frequents our church. He arranged to give me a government land on lease basis for many years. I started my cultivation there. Several employees work in my business. I still have a lot of help from my church. When I have a problem, when I need encouragement, I come to church and talk. I would like to continue like this. So, I like to work alone. As I told you, I got that habit from my childhood. Not only me but my sisters are also same. I think that it’s the influence of the family. Because our mother was very lonely when she was young. Our mother told us from a young age that we should be able to do our work alone. (Respondent N)

A fruit grower views individualism as strategically useful because personal connections, especially political ties, bring direct benefits like land and government support. They argue that group-based engagement dilutes this personal influence and reduces results:

In my experience, individual entrepreneurship has often worked in my favor. There's a certain advantage when you connect with parties on a personal, individual basis. For instance, I've managed to receive significant benefits like land, government support, and even fertilizer through my individual connections, especially with political members. In today's setting, it's become almost essential to have that political backing to smoothly run a business. When you present yourself as part of a group, sometimes the personal touch is lost, and it might not yield the desired results. (Respondent M)

These narratives demonstrate how self-trust and perceived self-sufficiency reinforce IE. Entrepreneurs who believe they possess unique skills, resources, or resilience see little need for external collaboration. This first-order code strengthens the second-order theme by showing how confidence in personal capability justifies and sustains individualistic practices, further limiting engagement with collective entrepreneurial networks and support systems.

The second-order theme of Self-driven goals and personal ambition reveals that IE is often rooted in a deeply held belief that personal success is both paramount and best achieved alone. This contrasts sharply with the shared visions and collaborative goal setting seen in CE. Entrepreneurs expressing this theme frequently articulated how this mindset directly limits their participation in broader ecosystem networks and civic initiatives, as noted by Respondent V, who observed that such entrepreneurs "don't care about others" and see collective support as "pointless." This theme thus represents a foundational constraint on synergy within the triadic interplay.

8.2.2 Independence in decisions and business control

This theme explains IE as a governance preference. Entrepreneurs express a strong need to make decisions alone, retain full responsibility for outcomes, and maintain clear authority over staff and daily operations. Two narratives shape this theme. First, entrepreneurs emphasize independent decision-making and personal accountability. Second, they stress tight control over work processes and employees to avoid ambiguity, conflict, or perceived loss of power. These narratives show how IE is reinforced through managerial practices that are structurally incompatible with shared leadership and collaborative governance.

I prefer to make decisions by myself and take full responsibility for the outcomes

A mixed-crop farmer values autonomy and personal accountability, emphasizing that he accepts full responsibility for both profits and losses. In contrast, he associates collective work with blame-shifting and unclear responsibility when failures occur, which conflicts with their preference to operate independently without submitting to others' wishes:

> I am running my business as I want. I get what I want from my business. Sometimes it is profitable. Sometimes there is a loss. It can happen in any business. I take full responsibility for any decision, and any result created by my decision. I have seen many issues in collective works on taking ultimate responsibility in terms of failures. Everyone passes the blame to others. I don't like doing business together. It doesn't suit me. I don't like to submit to anyone or work according to someone else's wishes. (Respondent U)

A vegetable farmer prefers working alone to protect autonomy and clear accountability, arguing that they can take responsibility for outcomes when operating independently. Based on experience, she sees collective work as diluting responsibility, where no one can be clearly held accountable:

> I am not a very educated person. I don't need a lot of education to grow my vegetables. I want to do my business the way I want. I don't want to do things together with a lot of other people. Because I take responsibility for what I do. When a lot of people come together, there is no one to be held accountable. I know that from experience. (Respondent N)

A flower farmer rejects collective work after a failed group farming venture where they carried the day-to-day workload while others expected equal profits. The experience of being left with unpaid group loans reinforced their belief that collective arrangements lack shared responsibility and can create unfair burdens, leading her to avoid collaboration altogether:

> Couple of years ago I joined with few farmers we got land on lease basis and started cultivating flowers. All of them were busy with their other businesses and personal work. Finally, I was the only one who attended the day-to-day operations. But others expect their profit share. After that I stopped that. Still, I pay for some loans from my personal money. No one wants to settle and clear them. I never engage with any kind of collective work after that. (Respondent X)

These narratives emphasize how autonomy and personal accountability are central to IE. Entrepreneurs value the freedom to make decisions independently and accept full responsibility for outcomes, which they contrast with the perceived ambiguity and blame-shifting of collective work. This first-order code underpins the second-order theme of Independence in decisions and business control, illustrating how a desire for clear, singular authority discourages collaborative governance and shared leadership.

Keeping tight control over day-to-day work and staff is a must

A fruit grower identified the benefits of collectivism for the organizations operating in modern dynamic settings. But, based on personal experience, he finds that individualism plays an important role, especially where the personal touch is required. Further he highlighted the autonomy of individualism has served him better:

> In the present setting I'm operating in, that direct, personal touch can often be the decisive factor. So, while collective entrepreneurship can be crucial for some, in my scenario, the individual approach has proven more beneficial. My personal involvement

in business decisions and on my staff is very critical. In fact, my business would grind to a halt without me. I need to be there to control my employees. (Respondent M)

A vegetable farmer emphasizes keeping tight control by maintaining distance from employees and limiting their freedom, so authority remains clear and day-to-day operations stay manageable. The same control-oriented mindset extends to outsiders, as she avoids collectives because shared action is seen as taking on other people's irresponsibility and diluting accountability, preferring instead to run the business strictly on her own terms:

> I keep the employees of my business at a certain distance. Because they are my employees. When you work with them unnecessarily, when you give them freedom or power unnecessarily, it is difficult to control them. I need to be strict in my business. In my business I need to be bold. My decisions should be bold. There should be weight to my voice. I follow the same principle when I work with outsiders. Sometimes people ask me to join their societies, or any other collectives to demand or fight together for common issues in doing business and solving societal problems. If we have many issues in doing business, we need to stop it and need to do a job. If everyone works responsibly and ethically, we can never see social issues. People are not responsible, are not accountable and ethical. So why should we take their burdens. I do my business as I need. I worked so hard for this. Even government runs after me to collect taxes, but not to develop my business. I need my freedom to do whatever I value personally. (Respondent N)

Echoing the previous view, a crop farmer adopts a directive, tightly controlled management style where staff follow instructions rather than share authority. Working alone is presented as a way to safeguard autonomy and prevent employees or outsiders from influencing day-to-day decisions:

From the very beginning I did business alone. I had and still I have employees in my business. Basically, I give them the required directions on what to do and what not to do. They do it. That is my way. No one needs to control me. Even my staff or outsiders. (Respondent J)

The need for tight control over daily operations and staff emerges as a critical component of IE. Entrepreneurs maintain authority by limiting employee freedom and avoiding shared decision-making structures. This control-oriented approach, as Respondent N explained, extends to avoiding external collectives to prevent taking on "other people's burdens." This first-order code reinforces the second-order theme by showing how operational control is prioritized over relational or network-based management, directly inhibiting participation in broader entrepreneurial networks (EE) and community initiatives (CWC).

The second-order theme of Independence in decisions and business control demonstrates that IE is fundamentally about preserving autonomy and avoiding perceived dependencies. Entrepreneurs within this theme explicitly link their management style to a reluctance to engage with external networks, as articulated by Respondent N: "I follow the same principle when I work with outsiders… I do my business as I need." This preference for clear, singular authority actively limits their participation in broader EE networks and CWC initiatives, thereby acting as a structural constraint on synergy within the triadic interplay.

8.2.3 Avoiding collaboration due to risk and trust concerns

This theme explains IE as a protective response. Entrepreneurs describe collaboration as emotionally, financially, and reputationally risky, often drawing on past failures, betrayal, and broader perceptions of selfishness in the social environment. Two narratives capture this reasoning. First, negative experiences in groups erode trust and create lasting caution. Second, entrepreneurs frame collective work as complicated, conflict-prone, and likely to reduce their control. These codes reflect a protective mindset where individualism is seen as a safer alternative to the uncertainties of collective engagement.

Past bad experiences make it hard to trust others, so I avoid working collectively

A pest-control producer rejected collective work after repeated losses of time, money, and assets through collaboration. He attributed these experiences to a wider culture of selfishness and opportunism, making collective action feel unsafe and unworkable:

> I have had bad experiences working together for team benefits or societal benefits for all the time is not compatible. I lost money, my time and many assets due to collective work. Now the people of our country have become very selfish. Our people are ready to sell even their parents if they get enough. Do you think you can do collective work with people in Sri Lanka? Believe me, most people are crooks, thieves, and lazy. People waiting to steal from other people's things. (Respondent E)

A tour operator attributed his individualistic approach to repeated partnership failures that caused significant losses, leading him to distrust collective work. These bad experiences reinforced the view that most collaboration is self-serving, so he now prioritizes personal targets and uses relationships only when they support their own goals:

> I had problems with some of the people I met initially. I failed three times because of wrong partnerships. I lost everything. I realized that people are selfish and even if they do not stand, raise a hand without a benefit. After that I became a selfish person, and I worked with some people to make a path to achieve my personal goals through them. I think all the entrepreneurs work with others to get strength to achieve their personal goals through others. No one is willing to work to do something for others unless doing some charities. The funniest thing is there is a personal agenda even behind charities.

> Sometimes to create social capital, sometimes for their satisfaction, sometimes to clean their black money, sometimes to take tax advantages, sometimes to dilute their unethical business practices, sometimes as a marketing strategy to promote their brand. All these are very individualistic reasons. Now I'm thinking only about me and my targets. (Respondent D)

Similarly, a tea producer presented his preference to work alone as a protective response to negative family and business experiences, including legal troubles arising from dealing with others. Having learned from these setbacks, he frames individual work as a way to avoid additional stress and uncertainty, especially when partners are seen as unreliable:

> My family and my experiences with people in doing business and some social works are not so good. We had to face some legal actions as well. We have really learned a lot. Now I work alone. Why do we need to have an additional headache? We need to do business to get rid of pain. So, why do we embrace pains of working with non-reliable people. (Respondent L)

A mixed-crop farmer rejects collective work after a group venture collapsed due to members misusing bank funds and disappearing. Having personally assumed financial risk through a mortgage, he lost trust in collective initiatives and now avoids collective work entirely:

> We together couple of farmers and sellers formed a business to grow some vegetables in a village. We had a severe capital issue, and we talked to a bank, and I also signed some mortgage documents. Finally, three of our members misused the funds and they disappeared. Now, I do not want to do anything collectively. (Respondent U)

A cultural host described moving from individual problem-solving to collective advocacy only after realizing the issues were beyond personal capacity. However, when the group's efforts were politicized and "hijacked," leading to backlash and personal retaliation, he concluded that collective action for majority benefit is too risky and now avoid it entirely:

> We had some issues in transportation and communication in doing tourism businesses in our area. That affects many businesses. Personally, I tried to solve them in my own capacity. But I could not. Then as a group we met government officers, politicians and many parties. Finally, our efforts were highjacked by political crooks and it ended up a protest against the government. Personally, I had to face many problems from politicians after that. I never do anything with anyone for the benefits of majority. (Respondent Z)

A vegetable farmer linked his preference to work alone to a major personal crisis and social abandonment that forced him to rebuild life and business independently. Having recovered step by step and repaid debts on his own, he now views self-reliance as the safest path to progress after "terrible experiences.":

> I had a good family life, and I lost that 16 years ago. I lost a lot of things after that. After my wife left me, I became addicted to drugs. I lost my money. My relatives distanced themselves from me. My friends became distant from me. After a while, I realized what life is all about. I started thinking about my children. I felt that I should leave something for them. After that I started growing vegetables on a small scale. Because I didn't have the knowledge to do anything beyond that. I have improved it little by little and reached where I am today. I had a lot of debt. I paid for them all. Now I feel free. But I have not stopped my journey. People who have gone away from me are now trying to come to me. But I don't care about them. I know I lost a lot of things

in the past because of my own fault. But now I am a man who thinks and works a lot. I do the work alone without bothering anyone. I think after people have terrible experiences; people learn that they are the only ones. After that, people like to work alone and make their own progress. (Respondent F)

A crop farmer echoed the vegetable farmer's view that hardship and abandonment can drive entrepreneurs toward self-reliance. Following divorce and legal disputes with relatives, they preferred working alone to avoid conflict and protect basic family needs:

I got divorced from my husband few years ago. I had so many issues with my relatives. Especially they need to take family lands and other family properties from me, they filed many law cases against me. Now, I do my own business. When it comes to my personal and business things I'm the only one who makes decisions all the time. I think that is easy for me. No conflicts, no arguments, and simply no troubles. I do not need to do big things. I need to feed my family and parents. For this purpose, I need some money and with the present business I can earn this. You know there are ups and downs in any business. Sometimes I could achieve my expected income, sometimes I could not do that. But generally, my business and its income are enough to meet my basic financial expectations. I think because of my personal life and past experiences I like to work alone. I don't want to connect with anyone for the benefits of society, or others. Because I was the only with me in my bad times. (Respondent J)

These accounts show how past negative experiences with collaboration create lasting distrust, making entrepreneurs wary of future collective engagements. The emotional and financial losses described validate their choice to work alone. This first-order code directly supports the second-order theme by illustrating how historical breaches of trust become justifications for sustained individualism, creating a significant barrier to rebuilding collaborative relationships within the ecosystem.

Working with others often feels risky and complicated, because it can create conflict and reduce my control

A tour operator positioned collective benefit as a desirable ideal but argues that contemporary society is shaped by conflict, rivalry, and self-interest across families, businesses, and workplaces. Because these individual motives have weakened trust and cooperation, they view working collectively as an unnecessary risk and therefore choose to focus on what they can control rather than trying to "correct society.":

> If all people value and believe in collective benefits, this world be a greater place. Unfortunately, people are not like that. My experience is now people fight each other for different reasons. There is competition to defeat each other, you can see that in families, in businesses, in workplaces, and in the large society. Individual motives destroyed society. It is risky now to think about work collectively. Why should we take that unnecessary risk. I do what I can, and I do not want to correct society. I know that I can't do it. (Respondent P)

Across both narratives, a tea producer and vegetable farmer depict Sri Lankan society as dominated by self-interest, where people support others only when there is something to gain and may even harm or exploit others to secure personal advantage. This perceived absence of trustworthy, genuinely cooperative relationships leads them to avoid collective engagement and instead prioritize self-reliance, focusing narrowly on protecting and advancing their own business:

This is a very pathetic society. Many people only look at their own benefit. There may be people who go on a successful journey with a good group of people. I have never met people who can really work together for everyone's' benefits. I have seen a lot of people trying to gain an advantage by crushing others or stealing something from others. So, now I'm thinking about me and my business. It is dangerous to work with selfish people. (Respondent L)

Do you think that we have a collective society in Sri Lanka now? If people don't have something to gain, they won't stand up for someone else. I know and I understood that by my personal experience. Now I work for myself. Not for others or not with others. (Respondent F)

A mixed-crop farmer explicitly linked his individualism to its effect on community development:

People ask why I don't join the village farming society. I tell them: when I tried, I lost money and time. Now I focus only on my land. The village can develop without me. I pay my taxes, I employ two workers, that's my contribution. But meetings, projects, committees? That's for people who have time to waste. (Respondent U)

The perception of collaboration as inherently risky and complicated reinforces IE. Entrepreneurs associate collective work with conflict, loss of control, and exploitation, making independence seem safer and more straightforward. This first-order code strengthens the second-order theme by showing how anticipated social and operational risks outweigh potential benefits of collaboration, leading entrepreneurs to withdraw from network participation and community-oriented projects.

The second-order theme of Avoiding collaboration due to risk and trust concerns reveals that IE is often a protective response to real or perceived systemic failures. Entrepreneurs' narratives are filled with stories of betrayal, loss, and social distrust, leading them to view collective action as inherently dangerous. As Respondent D noted, collaboration often involves hidden “personal agendas”, making independent operation the only trustworthy path. This deeply ingrained caution directly limits their engagement with entrepreneurial networks (EE) and civic initiatives (CWC), as they consciously avoid situations where trust is required. Thus, this theme represents a critical psychological and relational constraint on synergy within the triadic interplay.

8.3 Sectoral patterns in IE: tourism vs. agriculture

8.3.1 Overview of sectoral differences

The narratives reveal distinct sectoral differences in the expression of IE. These differences help reconcile the CE findings with the more individualistic accounts in this chapter. Tourism respondents more often described collaborative engagement because the sector depends on interdependent service networks, while agricultural respondents more often emphasized independence, self-sufficiency, and reluctance to collaborate due to unequal effort, weak accountability, failed collective arrangements, or limited protection for small producers.

The data suggests two distinct sectoral expressions of IE. In tourism, IE tends to be selective and boundary-setting, where entrepreneurs remain open to collaboration for supporting activities but protect the core product, brand, or creative identity. In agriculture, IE is more often normalized and defensive, grounded in concerns about unequal effort, weak protection for small farmers, and repeated failures of collective mechanisms. The subsections below develop these patterns using respondent narratives and highlight how sector-specific IE reshapes engagement with EE and contributions to CWC through mechanisms of control, accountability, and trust.

8.3.2 Tourism: selective individualism within a collaboration-rich sector

Tourism entrepreneurs often operate in interdependent value chains where service quality depends on coordination with transport providers, event firms, accommodation partners, guides, and community hosts. Against this collaborative backdrop, the minority who express IE do so primarily to protect a distinctive core offering or to avoid dilution of a personally crafted identity. A tour operator (Respondent D) captures this boundary-setting logic by describing a wellness package as a personal creation that can become “generic” when split across multiple providers and “loss the soul”. In the same narrative, the respondent draws a clear boundary between peripheral collaboration and core control, noting that collaboration may be acceptable for logistics such as transport or bookings, while the essence of the product must remain under one vision.

This form of tourism IE is therefore not a full withdrawal from collective work. Instead, it reflects selective participation that keeps the entrepreneur at the center of decision-making and creative authority. Similarly, other accounts in this chapter show that some tourism entrepreneurs treat unique knowledge, resources, and success “secrets” as personal assets that should not be shared, which further limits openness even when they interact with others. Accordingly, in practice, tourism IE often emerges as a strategy of safeguarding reputation and authenticity in a market where the business is personally identified with the owner’s vision, values, and service style.

8.3.3 Agriculture: normalized self-reliance and defensive independence

Agricultural entrepreneurs describe IE as a practical necessity embedded in everyday production routines. Independence is often justified through the need for clear accountability and the avoidance of unequal burdens. A vegetable farmer (Respondent N), for instance, rejects large-group collaboration by emphasizing personal responsibility and a desire to run the business “the way I want”, arguing that when many people come together, accountability becomes unclear. Similarly, a flower farmer (Respondent X) describes a collective cultivation attempt that failed because others did not attend day-to-day operations while still expecting profit shares, leaving the respondent with continuing debt obligations. These experiences normalize the belief that working alone is safer and fairer because responsibility remains identifiable and burden transfer is reduced.

The data also indicate that trust in collective mechanisms is weakened by perceptions of weak protection for small farmers. A mixed-crop farmer illustrates this point through the collapse of a cooperative fertilizer arrangement, attributing failure to the capture of benefits by powerful members and concluding that the system does not protect small farmers. Importantly, this respondent does not reject collective action in principle. Instead, the narrative suggests that if collective arrangements were reliable and equitable, the calculation might change. This nuance reinforces that agricultural IE is often defensive, shaped by repeated experiences of system failure, rather than an inherent dislike of collaboration:

> I work alone in my paddy field. But it's not that I don't see the value in working together. We tried a cooperative for buying fertilizer. It collapsed because a few powerful members took the bulk for themselves and left the rest of us with nothing. The system doesn't protect the small farmer in a group. Until there is a structure with real accountability and fair rules, working alone is the only way to guarantee my family's

food. If there were a truly fair and transparent collective mechanism, my calculation might change. (Respondent U)

8.3.4 How IE reshapes engagement with the EE

Narratives show that IE does not remove entrepreneurs from the ecosystem. Instead, it reconfigures engagement from reciprocal, relationship-based participation into selective, independence-preserving interaction. A consistent pattern across individualistic accounts is information containment and autonomy protection: entrepreneurs limit transparency, avoid shared planning, and minimize dependence. A tea producer (Respondent L) illustrates this clearly by stating, "I have my own plans, only my family knows it. I never share that with anyone", positioning non-disclosure as a deliberate safeguard against opportunity loss. Similarly, a vegetable farmer (Respondent N) frames working alone as procedural ease and independence, emphasizing "No need to discuss with others, no need to inform others".

A second mechanism is transactional or instrumental use of ecosystem resources, where engagement is shaped less by mutuality and more by controlled access to services, benefits, or contacts. A vegetable farmer (Respondent N) extends her "strict" control logic beyond employees to outsiders, rejecting invitations to "join their societies… to demand or fight together for common issues," arguing, "So why should we take their burdens. I do my business as I need to do it."

Here, collective ecosystem participation is framed as carrying others' irresponsibility, not as shared problem-solving. Respondent M also captures this individualized ecosystem logic by describing how "direct, personal touch can often be the decisive factor" and concluding that, in his scenario, "the individual approach has proven more beneficial". Rather than building broad collective platforms, IE entrepreneurs often pursue one-to-one channels and personalized ties that deliver outcomes without requiring shared commitments or sustained relational obligations.

Tourism: In tourism, IE often appears not as total isolation but as tight boundary-setting around the core offering. A tour operator who offers wellness services (Respondent D) provides a highly explicit articulation: his spa package is “my personal creation,” and partnering makes it “a generic package… It loses the soul.” He accepts collaboration for “transport or bookings,” but insists that “the core product… must remain under one vision”. This is a distinctly ecosystem-facing posture: ecosystem ties are allowed for enabling functions, but co-creation and shared ownership are resisted when they are perceived to dilute identity, quality, or authorship. A cultural host (Respondent Z) expresses a related logic through the language of ownership and protection, warning that if others join “they absorb and drink my business essence… my business will be paralyzed”. In these accounts, EE engagement remains functional but becomes intentionally shallow, because ties are kept at the level of coordination rather than joint development.

Agriculture: In agriculture, IE more commonly produces an ecosystem relationship anchored in self-reliance and avoidance of collective obligations, often justified through convenience, control, and conflict avoidance. A vegetable farmer’s (Respondent N) preference for working alone is directly linked to convenience and decision autonomy, while her broader stance rejects collective mobilization as a distraction from personal work and responsibility. A vegetable farmer (Respondent F) offers a similarly independence-centered framing: he is “not interested” in doing business “together with outsiders,” because collective work interrupts his “personal vision and goals,” and he needs to work “according to my dreams but not for others”

These accounts show an ecosystem engagement pattern that is minimalist and controlled: entrepreneurs will use ecosystem services, when necessary, but resist the relational density of societies, associations, or cooperative structures that demand time, compromise, and shared decision-making. Taken together, the sectoral expressions suggest that IE narrows the form of ecosystem participation. Entrepreneurs still interact with market actors, officials, and institutions, but they do so in ways that protect independence, restrict information sharing, and avoid mutual dependence. The outcome is an ecosystem that is accessed as a set of resources and channels, without necessarily strengthening the collective relational fabric that underpins wider synergy or cumulative learning across ventures.

8.3.5 How IE constrains CWC

IE also reshapes how entrepreneurs interpret civic responsibility, often reducing CWC from a shared developmental commitment into a secondary, optional, or diffuse obligation. When success is framed as a personal journey, respondents commonly position community outcomes as either (a) not their responsibility beyond baseline citizenship, or (b) risky because collective activity is seen as exploitative or politicized.

A strong pattern is the reframing of civic contribution as "enough" through individual compliance and effort, rather than collective community-building. In the CWC narratives, a vegetable farmer (Respondent N) argues that entrepreneurs already contribute through payments and taxes: "we pay taxes… Apart from that we don't have special responsibility. Everyone needs to work for themselves". A mixed-crop farmer (Respondent U reinforces) the same stance even more bluntly: "there is no free lunch… We are not special groups to help communities specifically" A tour operator (Respondent D) similarly rejects the premise of planned civic projects, emphasizing that entrepreneurs are "also a part of society" and "we don't need to do anything as a planned project for society development"

These accounts do not deny social embeddedness, but they limit the scope of intentional civic action, which in the triadic interplay terms can restrict how entrepreneurial activity spills over into wider civic wealth through collective mechanisms.

A second pattern is civic withdrawal driven by distrust and negative experiences, where IE is justified as self-protection in a context perceived as selfish or unsafe. A tea producer (Respondent L) not only keeps plans within the family but also explicitly narrows empathy and concern: “I don’t care about other people’s… problems. I only think about my success”. A pest- control producer’s (Respondent E) narrative escalates this into a broader societal diagnosis, describing collective work as incompatible with “team benefits or societal benefits,” claiming he lost “money… time and many assets,” and portraying people as “crooks, thieves, and lazy”. A tour operator (Respondent D) links his own shift toward individualism to “wrong partnerships” where he “lost everything,” concluding, “Now I’m thinking only about me and my targets”

In these stories, civic engagement is not just low priority. It is framed as naive, costly, and vulnerable to exploitation, making withdrawal appear rational and necessary.

Agriculture: visible disengagement from community organizations and collective initiatives. Agricultural narratives show particularly clear cases where IE translates into non-participation in community structures and a deliberate avoidance of meetings, committees, or shared programs. A mixed-crop farmer’s (Respondent U) account of “no free lunch” and lack of special obligation aligns with this withdrawal logic: civic contribution is reduced to personal work and self-reliance, rather than coordinated community projects. Respondent V offers a related civic implication when describing attempts to create a marketplace and livelihood initiative for poor families, where many refused and justified it as “no point in giving anything free for anyone,” expecting it would end in “a huge failure”.

Such narratives indicate how IE can weaken the social willingness required for collective initiatives that generate broader community benefits and coordinated local spillovers.

Tourism: In tourism, IE tends to constrain CWC less through total disengagement and more through restricting co-creation and shared ownership pathways. A Tour operator's (Respondent D) insistence that the "core product… must remain under one vision" and a cultural host's (Respondent Z) fear of others "absorb… my business essence" suggest that, even in a sector where community-based models and shared branding can expand civic value, individualistic actors may protect the heart of the venture from collective shaping. As a result, employment and local spending may still occur, but the scope for deeper civic wealth pathways such as shared product development, collective identity-building, or community-led enterprise platforms becomes narrower because collective ownership and co-created value propositions remain limited.

Overall, the narratives show that IE constrains CWC by (1) redefining civic responsibility as diffuse and baseline rather than organized and collective, and (2) legitimizing withdrawal through experiences of mistrust, loss, and perceived opportunism. Together, these narratives show that IE does not eliminate ecosystem and civic engagement, but it limits their depth and collective orientation, thereby restricting synergy and reducing the potential for broader spillovers to EE and CWC within the triadic interplay.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented IE as a distinct and deliberate entrepreneurial orientation, articulated through the voices of Sri Lankan tourism and agriculture entrepreneurs. The analysis, structured around three second-order themes, provides a comprehensive understanding of how and why entrepreneurs choose to operate independently.

The first theme, Self-driven goals and personal ambition, reveals that IE is fundamentally motivated by a strong personal vision and self-reliance. Entrepreneurs prioritize their individual dreams and capabilities, viewing collaboration as a potential distraction or dilution of their personal success. The second theme, Independence in decisions and business control, highlights how IE is sustained through a preference for autonomy, clear accountability, and tight operational control. Entrepreneurs value the freedom to make decisions alone and maintain authority over their business processes, avoiding shared governance structures. The third theme, avoiding collaboration due to risk and trust concerns, demonstrates that IE is often a protective response to negative past experiences and perceived social risks. Stories of betrayal, financial loss, and systemic failure reinforce a preference for working alone as a safer, more predictable path.

Sectoral differences emerged clearly, with agricultural respondents more frequently expressing IE linked to self-sufficiency, control, and past collective failures, while tourism respondents, though predominantly collective, contained IE cases tied to protecting uniqueness or reacting to partnership breakdowns and politicized collective experiences. The data further indicates that IE influences how entrepreneurs interact with broader support systems and community initiatives. Individualistic entrepreneurs often engage with the EE in limited, transactional ways and show reduced participation in CWC-oriented projects, unless such engagement aligns with clear personal benefit or is perceived as low-risk and non-obligating.

This chapter, together with the preceding data chapters on CE, EE, and CWC, provides a robust empirical foundation for examining the full spectrum of entrepreneurial behavior in Sri Lanka's tourism and agriculture sectors. It establishes IE as a meaningful constraint on synergy within the triadic interplay and sets the stage for a detailed comparative analysis of how individualistic and collective orientations differentially shape entrepreneurial outcomes across sectors and across the EE and CWC pathways they enable or restrict.

CHAPTER NINE

Discussion and Development of the Conceptual Model

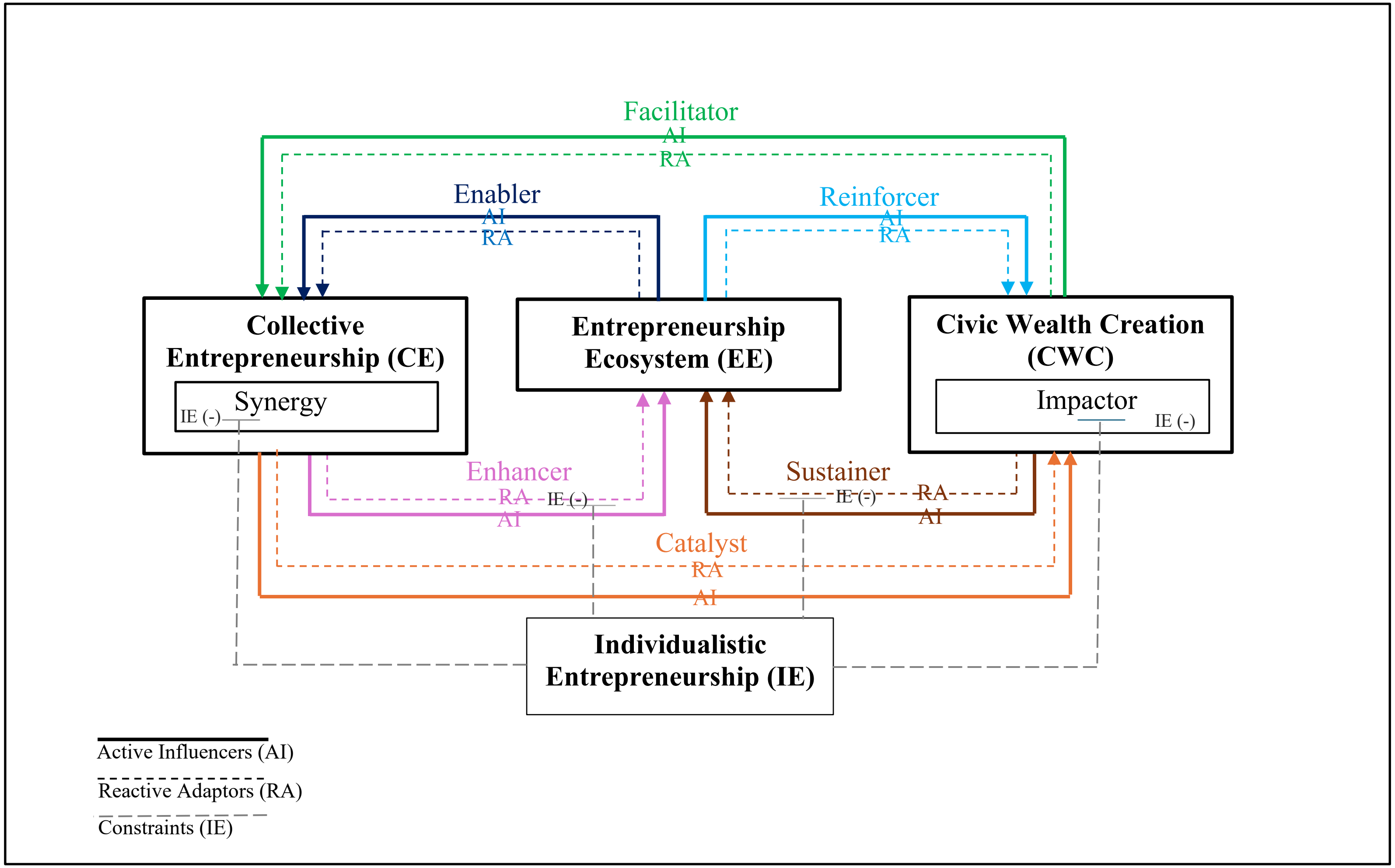
9.1 Introduction

This thesis develops the TSM as an original integrative analytical lens derived through an abductive movement between empirical analysis and the underpinning literature on CE, EE, CWC, and IE. The model was not imposed as a fixed abstract framework before data analysis, nor was it used as an ideal type against which cases were evaluated. Rather, the literature provided sensitizing concepts, while the final role labels and pathways, including Active Influence, Reactive Adaptation, and IE as a constraining practice logic, were refined through iterative coding, cross-case comparison, and sectoral synthesis. The TSM is therefore presented as an empirically grounded model that explains how CE, EE, and CWC operate as interdependent domains whose effects are realized through reciprocal influence, feedback, adaptation, and constraint.

Stemming from the above analysis, this chapter presents the findings through the **Triadic Synergy Model (TSM)** (see Figure 9.1). The TSM provides a structured lens for discussing how EE, CE, and CWC operate as interdependent domains, while IE functions as a constraining practice logic within these relationships.

The chapter is organized as follows. Section 9.2 introduces the TSM and outlines its core analytical logic. Sections 9.3 to 9.5 examine CE, the EE, and CWC respectively, explicitly linking each domain to its role within the triadic system. The empirical analysis of Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE) is presented in Chapter 8; here, IE is integrated as a cross-cutting constraining practice logic to explain boundary conditions, tensions, and dampened feedback loops across the triad. Section 9.6 compares sectoral patterns across tourism and agriculture. The chapter concludes by synthesizing the discussion in preparation for the concluding chapter, where theoretical and practical implications are addressed in detail.

Figure 9.1: Triadic Synergy Model (TSM)



Note. Developed by the author. Solid arrows denote Active Influence (AI); dotted arrows denote Reactive Adaptation (RA); dashed grey lines denote constraints (IE)

9.2 Empirical Foundations of the Triadic Synergy Model (TSM)

This thesis develops the TSM as an original integrative analytical lens derived through a theory-informed iterative movement between empirical analysis and the underpinning literatures on CE, EE, and CWC. The model was not imposed as a fixed abstract framework before data analysis. Rather, the literature provided guiding concepts, while the final role labels and pathways, including Active Influence, Reactive Adaptation, and IE as a constraining practice logic, were refined through iterative coding, cross-case comparison, and sectoral synthesis.

Reading Figure 9.1. Figure 9.1 frames the discussion as an interdependent triad linking CE, the EE, and CWC. Solid arrows denote **AI pathways**, meaning cross-domain influence through which one domain actively shapes the conditions, practices, or outcomes of another domain. Dotted arrows denote **RA pathways**, meaning feedback-driven adjustment over time. The repeated IE (-) markings indicate constraining practice logic that dampens triadic coupling; the empirical basis for IE is developed in Chapter 8 and integrated here to explain boundary conditions, tensions, and weakened feedback loops (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997). Importantly, not all role labels in Figure 9.1 are treated as AI pathways. **CE-as-Synergy** is a within-domain mechanism (how collective organizing produces venture-level capability), and **CWC's Impactor pathway** is a within-domain evaluative pathway (how civic outcomes are expressed/assessed). These labels are used in the discussion to clarify internal operation and interpretation, while AI is reserved for role-based cross-domain influence across CE-EE-CWC. Table 9.1 summarizes the role labels and pathways in Figure 9.1 and clarifies how each is operationalized in this chapter.

Table 9.1: Summary of Figure 9.1 role labels and pathways

Domain	Cross-domain AI roles (solid arrows)	Within-domain mechanism/pathway (not an AI arrow)	RA emphasis (dotted arrows)	IE (-) constraint points
CE	**Enhancer**: collective practices that strengthen EE functioning by translating support into usable capacity **Catalyst:** collective organizing that converts enterprise activity into civic endowments	**Synergy:** coordinated collective action producing outcomes beyond individual capacity and enabling sustained collective capability	Collective arrangements are revised through learning, shocks, and changing support regimes; partnership portfolios, participation rules, and governance routines are reconfigured over time	IE reduces shared decision rights and resource pooling, weakens sustained participation, and intensifies coordination risk where trust and accountability are weak
EE	**Enabler:** availability, accessibility, and coordination of supports/institutions conditioning feasibility **Reinforcer:** network/intermediary alignment strengthening or weakening the durability of CE and civic pathways	Not applicable; the EE Evolver role is treated under RA because it reflects feedback-driven ecosystem adaptation.	Ecosystem functioning adjusts through feedback from entrepreneurial actors and societal demands; interaction quality and connectivity co-evolve rather than remaining static	IE narrows ecosystem engagement toward transactional, low-commitment interactions, weakening collaborative learning, shared infrastructure development, and relational governance work
CWC	**Facilitator:** civic relationships and social capital enabling collective organizing and legitimacy	**Impactor pathway:** articulation/assessment of civic outcomes as realized endowments (economic/communal/social) and their societal significance	Ecosystem functioning adjusts through feedback from entrepreneurial actors and societal demands; interaction quality and	IE narrows multi-stakeholder engagement and co-creation depth, weakening the translation

	Sustainer: stakeholder engagement and support regimes stabilizing civic endowments and the conditions for continuing collective action	connectivity co-evolve rather than remaining static	of entrepreneurial activity into durable civic endowments

Note. Developed by the author. The table guides Figure 9.1 by summarizing the TSM labels and clarifying how each role is operationalized in this chapter.

In this chapter, AI denotes cross-domain role-based influence (how one domain actively shapes conditions, practices, or outcomes in another), while RA denotes feedback-driven adjustment over time as actors revise practices, governance arrangements, and support regimes in response to outcomes, shocks, and constraints (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022). TSM is therefore used to interpret the evidence as role-based mechanisms operating through AI pathways and RA feedback loops, rather than as standalone themes.

Taken together, the findings justify the TSM as a mechanism-based structure in which (i) **AI pathways** explain how CE, EE, and CWC shape one another through role-based influences, that is, purposive initiating actions within one domain that mobilize resources, coordinate actors, and generate spillovers into the other domains (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022). In contrast (ii) **RA pathways** explain how these domains adjust through feedback and contextual pressures over time, that is, how actors revise practices, governance arrangements, and support regimes in response to outcomes, shocks, and constraints, thereby generating reinforcing or weakening feedback loops across the triad (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022). Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter uses the model to interpret each domain by specifying its empirically evidenced AI and RA roles and by identifying the boundary conditions and tensions under which coupling is strengthened or weakened, particularly where individualistic orientations constrain synergy, dampen feedback to ecosystem evolution, and limit civic impact (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997; Wurth et al., 2022).

9.2.1 Why a triadic lens is required

A triadic lens is required because CE, EE, and civic outcomes are often analyzed through partial or two-domain (pairwise) relationships that understate reciprocal influence and feedback across all three domains (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Wurth et al., 2022). CE cannot be reduced to "working together" because collective action is a coordination and governance problem shaped by interdependence and distributional tensions (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Sorenson, 2003; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017), and its durability depends on relational governance, trust-based exchange, and knowledge flows that are difficult to sustain where relational conditions and social capital are weak (Levin & Cross, 2004; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In parallel, ecosystems are theorized as heterogeneous and evolving relational systems rather than fixed "containers" (Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018), and persistent critiques emphasize that ecosystem attributes do not translate uniformly into outcomes because causal mechanisms and mobilization processes are often underspecified (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). CWC further strengthens the need for a triad by conceptualizing civic outcomes as co-produced through multi-stakeholder engagement rather than isolated firm decisions (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019), shaped by converging and competing stakeholder logics (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Thornton et al., 2012) and sustained through engaged participation rather than symbolic or episodic activity (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023).

Taken together, these premises indicate that robust interpretation requires a framework that can simultaneously trace (i) how CE generates synergy through coordinated collective actions and, coordination, enhances ecosystem functioning and catalyzes civic wealth, while also adapting as ecosystem conditions and civic expectations shift (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023;

Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Spigel, 2017; Tiessen, 1997; Wurth et al., 2022; Yan & Sorenson, 2003); (ii) how the EE enables and reinforces (or constrains) collective entrepreneurial engagement and civic wealth pathways, and how ecosystems co-evolve through entrepreneurial participation and wider societal feedback rather than operating as fixed "containers" (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Isenberg, 2011; Leendertse et al., 2022; Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022) ; and (iii) how CWC is co-produced through stakeholder engagement and social-capital relations that facilitate collective organizing and shape governance/legitimacy conditions in support regimes, while civic outcomes and participation patterns evolve over time under contextual constraints and power asymmetries (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Lumpkin et al., 2024; Thornton et al., 2012; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

9.2.2 Individualistic entrepreneurship (IE) as a constraint logic in the TSM

IE is treated as a constraining logic within the entrepreneurial practice field that conditions the feasibility and durability of collective engagements and varies in its implications across institutional and social contexts (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997). In Figure 9.1, IE operates as a negative moderating force on triadic coupling through **three constraint effects**, each of which weakens both **within-domain operation** and **RA evolution** in the relevant domain. IE is not treated as the simple opposite of CE, but as a boundary condition that can narrow or weaken CE-EE-CWC interactions when trust, accountability, fairness, or shared benefit are absent.

First, IE weakens CE's Synergy mechanism and constrains the evolution of CE practices over time. By privileging autonomy and unilateral control over shared decision rights and resource pooling, IE reduces the willingness to sustain coordinated collective action beyond episodic cooperation, thereby limiting the governance routines and participation disciplines through which synergy is produced and stabilized (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Tiessen, 1997; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017). This constraint intensifies in low-trust environments where collective organizing relies on social capital to reduce perceived relational risk and where knowledge exchange is contingent on trust-based relationships, thereby weakening both synergy durability and learning-driven redesign of collective arrangements (Levin & Cross, 2004; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Second, IE dampens the feedback pathways that enable the evolution of the EE. Mechanism-oriented critiques emphasize that ecosystem attributes do not translate uniformly into outcomes because participation, mobilization, and feedback processes vary across contexts (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Wurth et al., 2022). Where individualistic orientations narrow engagement with ecosystem networks toward transactional and low-commitment interactions, collaborative learning, shared infrastructure development, and relational governance work are reduced, weakening the feedback processes through which entrepreneurial actors and civic demands would otherwise reshape ecosystem functioning (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022).

Third, IE weakens CWC's Impactor pathway and constrains the evolution of civic engagement and support regimes over time. Because CWC theorizes civic outcomes as co-produced through sustained multi-stakeholder engagement and enacted participation, IE narrows the depth of co-creation by framing civic responsibility as individual, baseline, or non-obligating, thereby weakening the expression and durability of civic endowments captured through the Impactor pathway (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). This also limits the relational practices and beneficiary-centered capability building through which civic expectations, participation, and support regimes evolve, particularly under power asymmetries and contextual constraints (Frid & Vedula, 2019; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Accordingly, IE is represented in Figure 9.1 as dampening (i) CE Synergy and CE evolution, (ii) EE evolution, and (iii) CWC civic impact (Impactor) and CWC evolution, thereby weakening reinforcing feedback loops across the triad (Liñán et al., 2016; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Tiessen, 1997; Wurth et al., 2022).

9.3 CE within the TSM

This section interprets the CE evidence through the TSM by specifying how CE operates inside the triad and how it affects travel across domains. The section is organized around CE's three AI roles in the model, namely Synergy, Enhancer of the EE, and Catalyst for CWC, and then examines CE's RA dynamics, boundary conditions, and tensions. Table 9.2 provides a navigation guide for Sections 9.3.1 to 9.3.4 by summarizing the CE roles shown in Figure 9.1 and the mechanisms evidenced in the findings.

Table 9.2: CE within the TSM: roles, mechanisms, and constraints

CE element in the TSM	Status in the TSM	What is evidenced in the data	Core conditionalities/tensions
CE as Synergy	Within-domain CE mechanism	Coordinated collective action that expands what entrepreneurs/ventures can achieve beyond individual capacity through internal organizing and external partnering	Fragile without relational governance: trust, role clarity, accountability, contribution recognition; vulnerable to opportunism, secrecy/control, and politicization
CE as Enhancer of EE	Cross-domain AI (CE → EE)	Collective practices translate ecosystem "attributes" into usable entrepreneurial capacity through collective voice, shared infrastructures, and coordinated learning routines	Underperforms where participation is weak, trust erodes, or collective spaces are captured by narrow interests
CE as Catalyst for CWC	Cross-domain AI (CE → CWC)	Collective organizing distributes opportunity and builds community capability through structured participation, asset pooling, and reinvestment routines that yield civic endowments	Civic outcomes weaken when engagement becomes episodic/transactional or where power asymmetries undermine participation and legitimacy
CE evolution, boundary conditions, tensions	RA + constraints (feedback and breakdown)	CE arrangements are iteratively redesigned in response to ecosystem conditions and community feedback; synergy, enhancer, and catalyst effects vary as collectives adapt	Breakdown conditions: low trust, role ambiguity, passive/extractive participation, opportunism/free-riding, secrecy/control, politicization; sectoral nuance shapes how these present

Note. Developed by the author. Summarizes evidence reported in Chapters 5-8.

9.3.1 CE as Synergy (value creation through collective action)

Synergy is evidenced as the practical achievement of "greater results beyond individual capacities" through coordinated collective action, rather than as a generic preference for working together. Respondents frame synergy as the ability to complete complex tasks, diversify activity, and expand reach by combining complementary contributions and pooling resources, aligning with CE's foundational claim that collectivity enables opportunity pursuit beyond what isolated entrepreneurs can mobilize (Leyden & Link, 2013; Tiessen, 1997). This directly addresses a recurring critique that CE is invoked without specifying how synergy is produced and sustained (Cairns et al., 2024; Doh et al., 2019). Here, synergy is treated as an achieved coordination condition that depends on ongoing organizing and governance, not episodic cooperation (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017).

Synergy is generated through both internal and external collectivity (Bijman & Doorneweert, 2008; Cook & Plunkett, 2006; Franco & Haase, 2017; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). Internally, synergy is enacted through deliberate organizing practices that cultivate employee ownership, initiative, and participation in improvement. This is evidenced through autonomy for experimentation, "no blame" learning norms that legitimate trial and error, and informal self-organization around operational improvements (e.g., operations, customer experience, wellbeing, marketing), including in small ventures. Such practices align with conceptualizations of CE as collective capability emerging from shared participation and distributed initiative, and they foreground micro-foundations that are often under-developed in discussions centered on ownership structure or inter-firm collaboration alone (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Yan, 2017). In this sense, synergy is not a property of "having a team"; it is produced when entrepreneurs harmonize capabilities so individual strengths become collective assets, and when employee initiative is treated as an input into innovation rather than optional suggestion, supporting the argument that CE should be analyzed through coordination processes and organizing practices, not only structural forms (Hruskova, 2024; Ribeiro-Soriano & Urbano, 2010; Santos & Spann, 2011).

Externally, synergy is produced through coalition-building and partnerships that expand horizons, diversify capabilities, and overcome resource constraints. Entrepreneurs described relying on portfolios of complementary actors, suppliers, investors, government agencies, exporters, technical teams, research institutes, households, transport providers, hotels, charities, and peer entrepreneurs, to strengthen service capability, diversify income streams, and extend reach. This reflects cross-boundary CE and networked capability building (Child et al., 2005; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Reuer et al., 2019; Miles et al., 2005; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). In tourism, partner-owned assets (e.g., household accommodation networks) enable scaling beyond owned infrastructure; in agriculture, advisor/supplier ties and peer exchange reduce knowledge and input gaps (Czapiewska, 2021; Parzonko & Sieczko, 2018).

Synergy durability is repeatedly linked to relational governance: trust, clarity of responsibilities, active participation, and enacted values (transparency, accountability, integrity), reinforced through written agreements, action plans, contribution-recognition practices, and partner screening. These patterns align with CE's governance framing (coordination, interdependence, distributional tension) and with trust-based exchange arguments for sustained knowledge sharing and joint action (Doh et al., 2019; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Levin & Cross, 2004; Manouchehrabadi et al., 2021; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000; Yan & Sorenson, 2003; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017).

9.3.2 CE as Enhancer of the EE (collective practices that strengthen ecosystem functioning)

Beyond venture-level synergy, CE is evidenced as enhancing ecosystem functioning by improving how ecosystem supports are accessed, shared, and converted into entrepreneurial capacity through collective practice. This is analytically salient given repeated critiques that EE research can be expansive yet under-specified on mechanisms, particularly how ecosystem "attributes" translate into outcomes across contexts (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). The evidence specifies a translation process: collective organizing turns ecosystem resources into usable capacity through shared platforms, pooled effort, and coordinated learning routines, consistent with relational accounts emphasizing connectivity and interaction quality (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022).

A further enhancer mechanism is building shared resources and learning infrastructures that reduce entry barriers and widen access (e.g., association funds, shared tools/platforms, co-working/shared spaces, incubator/university-linked mentoring and training). However, this effect is conditional: where participation is low, trust declines, or collective platforms are captured by narrow interests, ecosystem-wide benefits thin out, reinforcing that ecosystem performance depends on relational governance and interaction quality (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018).

9.3.3 CE as Catalyst for CWC (from collective enterprise to civic endowments)

CE operates as a catalyst for CWC when collective designs distribute opportunity and build community capability, yielding tangible and intangible civic endowments. This aligns with CWC's argument that civic wealth is co-produced through multi-stakeholder engagement and durable support regimes, not incidental spillover from firm performance (Bailey &

Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019, 2022). It also responds to ecosystem critiques that community-level outcomes are invoked but weakly traced, requiring mechanisms that link entrepreneurial organizing to wellbeing (Cairns et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022).

Tangibly, civic wealth emerges through community-embedded models that pool local assets (land/rooms/labour/transport/small investments) and broaden livelihood access through structured participation, consistent with engaged participation and resource mobilization mechanisms (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Nicholls, 2010). Community-based tourism provides a clear illustration: households are integrated into income streams via hosting and service roles, sometimes prioritizing vulnerable families, converting underutilized assets into distributed opportunities (Dubb, 2016; Jørgensen et al., 2021). Cultural-economy ventures combine income with recognition of identity, dignity, and pride, aligning with communal wealth logics (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

Civic wealth is also catalyzed through reinvestment and shared support systems that link enterprise viability to recurring community contributions (families, health campaigns, local institutions), framed as ongoing relationships rather than episodic charity (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

Intangible civic endowments are described through social cohesion and relational support, confidence building, "mindset transformation," and connection to training/incubators, consistent with social capital and capability-building accounts of civic wealth (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Frid & Vedula, 2019; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Overall, the evidence supplies mechanism detail on how participation, pooling, reinvestment routines, and relational support become civic endowments over time (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

9.3.4 CE evolution, boundary conditions, and tensions (when synergy breaks down and what these changes in the TSM)

CE is adaptive rather than fixed: collective arrangements evolve through feedback from ecosystem conditions and community responses. Environmental triggers (shocks, policy shifts, infrastructure limits, emerging opportunities) reshape partnerships and business models. Accounts describe gradual expansion of collective practices as training, grants, and institutional support become available, indicating that changing support regimes alter feasible forms of CE (Bacq et al., 2022; Leyden & Link, 2013). Volatility can also disrupt collectives (partner withdrawal), prompting redesign and reliance on associations or alternative networks, consistent with process views of ecosystem evolution through interaction and feedback (Cairns et al., 2024; Hruskova, 2024; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022).

Community-driven adaptation is evident where initial models are resisted as misfitting local constraints and then redesigned through participant feedback, shifting toward co-creation and beneficiary-centered change (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Cairns et al., 2024; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Nicholls, 2010). As capability grows, participants move from recipients to co-designers, reinforcing iterative learning and redesign rather than linear implementation (Lomuscio, 2024; Siivonen et al., 2020). In TSM terms, this means CE's synergy/enhancer/catalyst effects vary with redesign, so CE cannot be treated as a stable "input" to EE or CWC.

Boundary conditions are clear: synergy weakens or collapses under low trust and high perceived exploitation risk, passive/extractive participation, unclear responsibilities, weak accountability, secrecy/control ("business essence"), and politicization/capture of collective spaces. These conditions align with CE's governance framing and partnership governance research (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Sorenson, 2003; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017). Opportunism and unequal burden sharing are especially corrosive, producing resentment and eventual collapse (Cairns et al., 2024). Sectoral nuance sharpens this: in tourism, individualism often appears as boundary-setting (protecting uniqueness/quality) while collaboration remains feasible for interdependent functions; in agriculture, defensive individualism can be reinforced by histories of collective failure and weak enforcement, intensifying accountability concerns (Auschra et al., 2019; Bijman & Doorneweert, 2008; Czapiewska, 2021) Across both sectors, the core constraint is not "lack of collaboration" but weak relational governance, low trust, unclear roles, poor accountability, and weak safeguards against free-riding, which dampens synergy and constrains CE's capacity to enhance EE or catalyze CWC (Levin & Cross, 2004; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Overall, this section strengthens the TSM by specifying CE as a contingent, governance-dependent mechanism whose triadic effects (CE→EE; CE→CWC) rise or fall with participation durability and redesign capacity, and whose breakdown conditions explain when reinforcing loops fail rather than assuming CE is uniformly beneficial (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Leendertse et al., 2022; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022).

9.4 EE within the TSM

The EE evidence positions the ecosystem as an operative field, supports rules, infrastructures, and intermediaries, that conditions (i) day-to-day feasibility, (ii) whether CE becomes durable, and (iii) whether civic benefits are reinforced and sustained within the TSM. This speaks to critiques that EE work often lists "elements" but underspecifies mechanisms linking them to outcomes (Acs & Storey, 2004; Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). The EE results sharpen this by showing how entrepreneurs experience enablement and reinforcement as "workable access" pathways (compliance/procedures, shared resource pools, skills/knowledge providers, market platforms, finance access, infrastructural utilities), and how the ecosystem adapts through feedback and societal demands rather than remaining static (Cavallo et al., 2018; Dubini, 1989; Feld, 2012; Isenberg, 2011; Mason & Brown, 2014). In TSM terms, the EE functions as an AI (enabling CE and reinforcing civic pathways) and a RA (reconfigured through feedback), while IE can dampen both coupling and evolution (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997; Wurth et al., 2022). Table 9.3 shows the EE within the TSM.

Table 9.3: EE within the TSM: roles, mechanisms, and constraints

EE element in the TSM	Status in the TSM	What is evidenced in the data	Core conditionalities / IE constraints
EE as Enabler	Cross-domain AI (EE→CE)	Enablement experienced as workable access to compliance/procedures, infrastructure, shared resources, skills/knowledge, market channels, and finance, often framed as necessary for survival/continuity	Enablement things when access is costly/uncertain or execution gaps persist; IE narrows engagement to transactional interactions, weakening shared learning and collective feedback
EE as Reinforcer of CWC	Cross-domain AI (EE→CWC)	Inclusive and community-embedded support regimes (e.g., women empowerment, community capability infrastructures, CSR-linked and public, private initiatives) broaden participation and stabilize civic pathways	Reinforcement is conditional: uneven access and low coordination reduce civic durability; IE strengthens private-gain orientation and weakens inclusive participation
EE evolution, boundary conditions, tensions	RA + constraints	Emphasis on policy lifecycle: strategic and inclusive design, monitoring/evaluation, and revision to maintain responsiveness; entrepreneurs shape EE through organized feedback	IE weakens collective voice and trust-based coordination needed for feedback aggregation and reform; politicization and low credibility undermine ecosystem learning

Note. Developed by the author. Summarizes evidence reported in Chapters 5-8.

9.4.1 EE as Facilitator and Enabler of CE and entrepreneurial capability

A core EE pattern is that an enabling ecosystem is experienced as necessary for survival and continuity: entrepreneurs rely on external systems for core functions (operations, revenue stability, finance, skills/people management). This aligns with the view that entrepreneurial activity is conditioned by interdependent actors and institutions rather than firm-level resources alone (Acs et al., 2014; Mason & Brown, 2014; Stam, 2015). However, the evidence is more specific: enablement is repeatedly framed as practicable access points, where ecosystem quality is revealed through how smoothly external systems translate into daily continuity (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Stam, 2015).

A distinctive enabling pathway is regulatory and procedural infrastructure: compliance and approvals are framed as foundations for legitimacy and reputational security, and respondents link digital uptake to making these processes workable. This supports arguments that institutional clarity reduces uncertainty and frictions (Acs et al., 2014; Feld, 2012; Stam, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2014). while also specifying the mechanism: workable compliance reduces legal/reputational risk and increases feasibility of sustained engagement with partners and intermediaries, conditions that matter for CE durability and longer-run civic projects (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020).

Enablement is also evidenced through access to shared resource pools, where entrepreneurs plug into partner-owned assets and capabilities (e.g., operating through networks rather than owning all infrastructure). This addresses the critique that resource "presence" does not guarantee outcomes unless actors can mobilize and recombine resources through relationships and access channels (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022). Shared pools compress time/capital requirements and strengthen resilience, consistent with constraint-navigation arguments (Desa & Basu, 2013) and network-based growth accounts

(Coviello & Munro, 1995). In TSM terms, this enabling pathway also underpins CE by widening the feasible scope for collective organizing as a strategy rather than a costly ideal (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Tiessen, 1997).

Beyond survival, respondents position the EE as enabling growth through skills, knowledge, and confidence built via universities, mentors, experts, and training providers. The mechanism emphasis is collaborative learning and knowledge circulation, not mere "training availability," matching relational ecosystem critiques that prioritize interaction quality over inventories of components (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs also emphasize market facilitation (access to shared market mechanisms and connectors) and finance conditions (ease of access and workability), echoing classic intermediary and funding arguments while keeping the practical distinction between availability and accessibility central for inclusiveness and coordinated investment (Acs et al., 2014; Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Feld, 2012; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2014).

Finally, an enabling claim in the EE evidence is that a functioning ecosystem increasingly includes sustainability-oriented supports (environment/community sustainability), social governance (ethical practice and wellbeing), and adaptability capacities under ongoing change. This reflects the evolution of ecosystem thinking beyond narrow firm-growth metrics toward wider development and wellbeing concerns, and it aligns with process views that ecosystems are reconfigured through changing demands and expectations rather than fixed sets of inputs (Cavallo et al., 2018; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Kansheba, 2020; Spigel & Harrison, 2018).

9.4.2 EE as Reinforcer of CWC through inclusive and community-embedded support regimes

The EE findings also position the ecosystem as a Reinforcer of civic wealth creation, by showing that civic outcomes are strengthened when ecosystem programs deliberately broaden participation and embed community development objectives. This aligns with CWC's argument that civic wealth is co-produced through multi-stakeholder engagement and durable support regimes rather than firm-level choices alone (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). It also responds to ecosystem critiques that community-level outcomes are invoked but weakly traced, requiring mechanisms that show how ecosystem arrangements reinforce (or weaken) civic endowments (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022).

A central reinforcer pattern in the findings is inclusion-oriented ecosystem support, especially targeted empowerment of women entrepreneurs, framed not only as economic participation but as strengthening family wellbeing and community stability. Mechanistically, ecosystem partnerships (e.g., banks and universities) provide finance facilities, training, and development schemes that make flexible entrepreneurship feasible for those constrained by care responsibilities, widening who can participate (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Wurth et al., 2022). Interpreted through TSM, this is a reinforcer effect because inclusion-focused supports enlarge the participant base and embed benefits at household/community level rather than concentrating gains among already-advantaged actors (Bacq et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

Reinforcement is also evidenced via CSR-linked and public-private initiatives that deliver community-wide benefits (e.g., building shared infrastructure such as irrigation and capability-building through training delivered via associations and partner organizations). The key point is that these are framed as capability and infrastructure endowments, not episodic charity, consistent with CWC's durability logic and with critiques that ecosystem performance should not be reduced to startup counts or firm growth alone (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Stam, 2015). In TSM terms, EE does not reinforce CWC automatically; it reinforces civic wealth when support configurations widen access, embed community benefit logics, and sustain capability-building infrastructures over time (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

9.4.3 EE evolution, boundary conditions, and tensions, including IE as a constraint on feedback loops

A major EE theme is that the ecosystem is experienced as evolving, continually reconfigured by entrepreneurial feedback and societal demands, consistent with evolutionary accounts that emphasize interaction, learning, and legitimacy dynamics (Cavallo et al., 2018; Nicotra et al., 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018). Entrepreneurs articulate two linked pressures: (i) **entrepreneurial feedback** calling for workable policy foundations and upgrading key pillars (regulatory systems, finance access, digitalization, infrastructure balance, human capital, market facilitation), and (ii) **societal demands** for stronger structures that support community development and shared values. Theoretically, this matters because it directly engages critiques that ecosystems are often treated as "pillar lists" without explaining the revision processes by which ecosystems become more responsive (Manning & Vavilov, 2023; Wurth et al., 2022).

The evidence makes the EE "lifecycle" explicit: strategic and inclusive policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation of policy-based actions, and revision to maintain adaptability and responsiveness. This aligns with concerns that execution gaps and weak translation from policy to practice lead to ecosystem misapplication (Isenberg, 2010; Jung et al., 2017; Ross & Colin, 2017) and with calls for clearer causal accounts of how ecosystem interventions translate into outcomes and how feedback informs redesign (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Brown et al., 2023; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022). It also supports the view that entrepreneurs can shape ecosystem formation and change through organized participation rather than being passive recipients (Acs & Storey, 2004; Dubini, 1989; Feld, 2012; Spigel, 2017).

This is where IE becomes analytically critical. Individualism shapes entrepreneurial behavior and varies in its effects across contexts (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997). Because collective organizing and information exchange depend on trust-based relational conditions and social capital (Levin & Cross, 2004; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) IE can raise perceived collaboration costs and reduce participation in collective forums, weakening collective voice and the feedback aggregation needed to signal constraints, coordinate demands, and legitimate reform (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020). This provides a mechanism-based explanation for why similar ecosystem elements can produce different outcomes: differences arise not only from what exists, but from whether entrepreneurs organize in ways that allow resources and feedback to circulate (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022).

IE also shapes the EE's civic role: where individualistic logics dominate, supports are more likely to be accessed for private gain and short-term advantage, weakening inclusive participation and the stability of community-embedded initiatives. In TSM terms, civic reinforcement weakens because the cooperative conditions required for sustained stakeholder engagement, coordination, and legitimacy are harder to stabilize (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022; Leendertse et al., 2025; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Overall, the EE section strengthens the TSM by specifying the ecosystem as an evolving configuration whose effects depend on (i) workable and inclusive policy design, (ii) monitoring/evaluation that prevents execution gaps, and (iii) revision capacity that enables adaptation, while recognizing that IE can weaken feedback loops and civic reinforcement by undermining relational conditions for collective participation and ecosystem learning (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Cavallo et al., 2018; Isenberg, 2010; Jung et al., 2017; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

9.5 CWC in the TSM

The CWC evidence positions civic wealth as a visible endowment domain, economic, communal, and social/societal, co-produced through multi-stakeholder engagement and capable of shaping CE and EE over time. This aligns with the CWC proposition that civic wealth is generated through stakeholder interaction and support regimes rather than incidental spillover from firm performance (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). It also responds to ecosystem critiques that community-level outcomes are frequently invoked but weakly traced, requiring mechanisms that show how entrepreneurial organizing becomes civic endowment and how civic dynamics feed back into entrepreneurial practice and ecosystem governance (Cairns et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022). In TSM terms, CWC is analyzed as (i) Impactor (what civic endowments look like), (ii) Facilitator of CE (CWC→CE), (iii) Sustainer of EE (CWC→EE), and (iv) a domain that evolves under boundary conditions and IE constraints (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Table 9.4 presents CWC within TSM.

Table 9.4: CWC within the TSM: roles, mechanisms, and constraints

CWC element in the TSM	Status in the TSM	What is evidenced in the data	Core conditionalities / IE constraints
CWC as Impactor	Within-domain pathway (endowment expression/assessment)	Economic wealth (jobs/livelihood stability), communal wealth (identity/pride/cohesion), social/societal wealth (capability-building/inclusion/wellbeing); civic wealth as survival/resilience under shocks	Endowments are durable when participation becomes routinised; fragile when support regimes are weak and engagement is episodic
CWC as Facilitator of CE	Cross-domain AI (CWC→CE)	Civic embeddedness supplies trust, legitimacy, reputational standing, and participation capability that lowers coordination risk and enables collective organizing	IE reduces shared responsibility and willingness to participate, weakening trust-based collaboration
CWC as Sustainer of EE	Cross-domain AI (CWC→EE)	Civic voice/feedback supports ecosystem legitimacy and responsiveness; ethical enforcement (community monitoring); community-led infrastructures (funds, networks, access channels) substitute for weak formal supports	Requires credible governance and active participation; IE + politicization reduce legitimacy and weaken civic monitoring/infrastructure maintenance
CWC evolution, boundary conditions, tensions	RA + constraints	Civic wealth deepens as participation expands and opportunity spaces widen; four tensions qualify durability	(i) role diffusion; (ii) fragility under weak/politicized institutions; (iii) youth exit; (iv) survival-first vs transformation; IE dampens reinforcing loops (CWC→CE and CWC→EE)

Note. Developed by the author. Summarizes evidence reported in Chapters 5-8.

9.5.1 CWC as an Impactor

The CWC evidence positions civic wealth not as an "add-on" after entrepreneurship, but as an outcome domain produced through multi-stakeholder interaction and capable of shaping entrepreneurial organizing and ecosystem functioning over time. This fits the CWC view that civic wealth comprises economic, communal, and social/societal endowments co-produced through stakeholder engagement (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019) and further specified through engagement mechanisms for enacting positive social change (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). It also addresses calls in ecosystem scholarship for clearer mechanisms to trace community-level outcomes beyond firm metrics (Cairns et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022).

The most prominent impact claims concern **economic wealth creation**, particularly jobs, livelihood stabilization, and widened income opportunities (including for women and youth). This aligns with the view that economic endowments are civic when entrepreneurial activity expands opportunity access beyond the entrepreneur and improves welfare trajectories (Bacq et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Importantly, respondents repeatedly link income and employment to family stability and dignity, indicating that economic civic wealth is interpreted as vulnerability reduction rather than output alone (Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025).

A second impact pattern is **communal wealth** grounded in cultural identity, shared pride, and cohesion, outcomes treated as civic wealth because they strengthen belonging and collective efficacy beyond monetary gain (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). A third pattern is **social/societal wealth** through capability building, inclusion, and wellbeing (training, mentoring, practical education), framed as empowerment via participation rather than symbolic CSR, consistent with CWC's emphasis on engaged participation and capability development (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

A distinctive extension of CWC theory in the findings is the emergence of civic wealth as **survival and resilience**, particularly under crisis and constrained conditions. Classic CWC framing emphasizes stakeholder coordination that creates durable endowments (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019), yet respondents repeatedly described civic outcomes arising from necessity-driven organizing during shocks, where collaboration and support become essential to maintain basic livelihoods. This introduces an important tension with overly programmatic readings of CWC: civic wealth can be produced not only through deliberate "change engagement" but also through reactive coping and informal support structures that stabilize households and communities when formal systems underperform (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Cairns et al., 2024). In that sense, the thesis contributes by showing that civic wealth can be generated under constraint as a practical survival logic, complementing calls to ground civic wealth explanations in real contextual pressures and differentiated stakeholder capacity (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025).

Finally, the findings reveal a clear conceptual tension around **stakeholder responsibility**. Some respondents resisted the implication that entrepreneurs are uniquely responsible for societal transformation and framed civic improvement as distributed across citizens, enterprises, and the state. This complicates simplified "hero entrepreneur" narratives and fits CWC's own institutional-logic premise that civic outcomes emerge from the convergence and contestation of different stakeholder logics (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Thornton et al., 2012). The contribution here is interpretive: the study suggests that civic wealth creation is not only a question of "more engagement," but also of **legitimacy and role expectations**, who is seen as responsible, and under what governance arrangements civic outcomes are considered fair and sustainable (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

9.5.2 CWC as Facilitator of CE in the TSM

Beyond outcomes, the evidence shows CWC operating upstream as a Facilitator of CE by generating the relational conditions that make collective organizing feasible. Respondents emphasize trust-based networks, loyalty, accountability, and reputational standing as the basis for mobilizing partners and participants into collective entrepreneurial arrangements. This aligns with social capital arguments that coordination capacity depends on trust, norms, and ties that lower relational risk (Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000) and with CE's governance framing that collective action requires stabilizing relational governance (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017).

Facilitation is not abstract: civic embeddedness and legitimacy enable access to groups, knowledge, and collaboration partners, converting civic standing into coordination capacity and supporting the view that effective knowledge transfer is contingent on trust (Levin & Cross, 2004). n TSM terms, CWC facilitates CE when civic endowments (trust, shared identity, recognition, community cooperation) create a relational "surface" upon which CE routines can be built, reframing CWC as an antecedent mechanism rather than only downstream impact (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

A second facilitation mechanism is capability-building that teaches collectivity: education, awareness, and training enable communities and entrepreneurs to participate in collective arrangements. This aligns with engagement frameworks that emphasize readiness and participation capability (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Hiatt, 2006) and clarifies a mechanism: civic practices that build participation competence expand the feasible space for CE by reducing fragility associated with passive or inconsistent participation (Franco & Haase, 2017; Yan & Sorenson, 2003).

9.5.3 CWC as Sustainer of EE in the TSM

The evidence also shows CWC functioning as a Sustainer of the entrepreneurship ecosystem by reinforcing ecosystem integrity, legitimacy, and practical support infrastructures. Respondents describe civic voice shaping ecosystem policies, actions, and standards, and they frame community feedback as necessary for a "healthy environment for businesses." This aligns with process accounts that ecosystems evolve through interaction and feedback (Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022) and clarifies a civic governance mechanism: civic voice stabilizes ecosystem responsiveness and credibility, strengthening the conditions under which ecosystem supports remain legitimate and usable (Leendertse et al., 2022).

A second sustaining mechanism is civic enforcement of ethical and transparent practice. Respondents describe community pressure (including social media visibility) challenging exploitative practices and protecting environmental/cultural integrity. This aligns with CWC's attention to power asymmetries and contested stakeholder interaction (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019) and implies that civic monitoring can function as an informal governance layer that supports ecosystem legitimacy and trust (Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015).

A third sustaining mechanism is community-led infrastructure and support systems (associations, networks, collective funds, access channels, interest-free supports) that widen participation when formal systems are difficult to access. This evidence aligns with resource mobilization accounts and demonstrates how civic organizing can operate as ecosystem "infrastructure," sustaining entrepreneurship through locally organized support capacity (Bacq et al., 2022; Cairns et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

9.5.4 CWC evolution, boundary conditions, and tensions (including IE effects)

The evidence indicates that CWC is evolving rather than fixed: civic wealth deepens as participation expands and as opportunity spaces widen. Respondents describe civic wealth strengthening when entrepreneurs, communities, and support actors build participation structures and guide communities to recognize and pursue new opportunities (innovation, new products, market access). This aligns with CWC's emphasis on engaged participation and collaborative innovation as foundations for durable civic outcomes (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). In this sense, civic wealth becomes more robust as it shifts from fragmented "helping" to repeatable participation routines and opportunity-oriented collective action.

At the same time, four boundary conditions and tensions qualify when civic wealth can reinforce CE and sustain EE, and when it becomes fragile or contested. **First, blurred stakeholder roles and responsibility diffusion** are evident where civic responsibility is not uniformly accepted as an entrepreneurial obligation; some participants frame transformation as shared responsibility and resist positioning entrepreneurs as special civic agents. This complicates normative CWC narratives that presume aligned civic intent and settled responsibilities across actors (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). **Politicization under weak or politicized institutional environments (IE)** emerges strongly: respondents stress that civic developments do not endure without genuine, accountable government involvement and that politicization undermines long-term impact. This specifies how institutional credibility and governance quality condition civic and entrepreneurial value creation (North, 1990; Scott, 2014) and supports the view that civic outcomes depend on regimes of support and power, not enterprise goodwill alone (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023). **Third, youth exit and continuity risk** introduce an intergenerational boundary condition: the tendency for youth to leave for “comfort-zone” opportunities threatens the persistence of community-based initiatives and civic endowments, weakening the ongoing capacity for local collective action (Cairns et al., 2024; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). **Fourth, survival-first logics versus transformation goals** highlight a structural tension in necessity-driven contexts: civic wealth may still be produced, but it is more contingent, less coordinated, and more shock-sensitive, making sustained transformation difficult without stronger institutional backing and credible support arrangements (North, 1990; Scott, 2014).

Consistent with the TSM, the findings also indicate a clear **IE constraint on civic impact and feedback dynamics**. Where institutional support is distrusted or politicized, and where individualistic orientations reduce willingness to participate and share responsibility, CWC outcomes become narrower and less durable, dampening the reinforcing loops through which CWC would otherwise facilitate CE and sustain EE (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In TSM terms, these IE conditions reduce the depth of civic endowments by limiting engaged participation (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019), weaken trust-based collaboration necessary for the CWC→CE pathway (Franco & Haase, 2017; Levin & Cross, 2004), and constrain the CWC→EE sustainer pathway because legitimacy, ethical enforcement, and community-led infrastructures depend on collective participation and credible governance arrangements (Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022).

Overall, the evidence positions CWC as a dynamic process of endowment creation that strengthens as participation becomes routinised and opportunity discovery widens (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). However, civic wealth is not guaranteed: role ambiguity, weak or politicized institutions, youth exit, and survival-first constraints each reduce durability and dampen the reinforcing feedback loops the TSM specifies.

9.6 Sectoral synthesis: Tourism vs Agriculture (Sri Lanka)

This section synthesizes sectoral differences without repeating the detailed findings already presented in the sector chapters. The purpose is to show how the triadic system behaves differently across tourism and agriculture by comparing (i) Active Influence (AI) pathways, where one domain shapes another, and (ii) Reactive Adaptation (RA) pathways, where domains adjust over time in response to feedback, constraints, and shocks. A sectoral lens is warranted because ecosystem conditions and organizing forms are widely recognized as heterogeneous and mechanism-contingent, meaning similar "supports" can generate different outcomes depending on how actors coordinate and how rules, intermediaries, and norms operate within an industry (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

9.6.1 Sectoral differences in AI

CE's active influence is more consistently visible in tourism than in agriculture. In tourism, collective organizing is frequently enacted as a practical capability-expansion mechanism. Entrepreneurs tend to mobilize portfolios of complementary actors and shared resource pools to deliver bundled services, coordinate quality, and extend reach. This makes CE's synergy function more available as an active force shaping both ecosystem use and civic outcomes, consistent with the general claim that collective entrepreneurship expands opportunity pursuit beyond isolated capacities (Leyden & Link, 2013; Tiessen, 1997). In agriculture, collective action is more selective and less stable. Collaboration appears more bound to immediate operational needs and is more readily withdrawn when coordination becomes difficult. The sector contrast is not simply "tourism collaborates more." It is a difference in how feasible it is to sustain collective practice under prevailing coordination risks, which is central to CE theory's governance framing (Franco & Haase, 2017; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). In agriculture, collective arrangements are more likely to face free-riding concerns, contribution disputes, and perceived unfairness, which intensify the need for credible governance and monitoring structures (Williamson, 1985).

The CE to EE enhancement pathway is stronger in tourism and thinner in agriculture because the coordination base differs. Tourism's service interdependence pushes entrepreneurs into repeated interaction with intermediaries and peers, which supports shared learning and collective problem-solving. Where collective engagement is routine, it is easier for entrepreneurs to translate ecosystem elements into usable capacity through shared platforms, referrals, and joint market-facing efforts. This aligns with relational ecosystem arguments that ecosystem performance depends on connectivity and interaction quality, not only on the presence of resources (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017). Agriculture, by contrast, shows more individualized engagement with ecosystem elements (inputs, buyers, transport), which can meet survival needs but provides fewer pathways for collective upgrading of the ecosystem itself. The implication for the TSM is that agriculture's EE can be "present" yet less likely to be actively shaped by entrepreneurs unless organizing mechanisms strengthen.

The CE to CWC catalyst pathway is more structured and visible in tourism than in agriculture. Tourism more often converts local participation into civic benefits through community-embedded arrangements that integrate households and local service roles into enterprise activity. This supports the general civic wealth claim that community-level endowments emerge through multi-stakeholder participation rather than firm performance alone (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). In agriculture, civic benefits are evident but more often experienced through livelihood stabilization and family welfare rather than through clearly organized community-participation models. This difference matters because CWC is not only about outcomes; it is also about the durability and organization of participation. Where civic benefits remain dispersed and individualized, they are less likely to consolidate into sustained civic infrastructures that feed back into collective enterprise or ecosystem governance (Frid & Vedula, 2019; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

EE's active influence on entrepreneurship is more operationally embedded in tourism, but more uneven and survival-linked in agriculture. Tourism ventures commonly depend on continuous ecosystem coordination for market access, quality assurance, and service delivery, which makes the EE an everyday enabler rather than an occasional support. In agriculture, ecosystem engagement is also necessary, but the sector tends to frame it more narrowly around immediate production and market survival. This aligns with the broader ecosystem critique that "attributes" do not translate uniformly into outcomes because outcomes depend on how entrepreneurs can access and mobilize supports through workable coordinating arrangements (Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). In TSM terms, tourism more often displays a stronger EE to CE enabling channel (because the ecosystem is engaged through repeated coordination), whereas agriculture more often displays a thinner channel unless intermediaries and credible coordination mechanisms reduce access and bargaining frictions.

CWC's active influence back onto CE and EE is more visible in tourism than in agriculture because civic participation infrastructures differ. Where tourism produces community participation and shared identity benefits, these civic processes can increase legitimacy and trust, which in turn reduces relational risk and supports collective organizing. This is consistent with the social-capital logic that trust-based ties and shared norms lower coordination costs and support knowledge exchange (Levin & Cross, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Agriculture can also generate civic legitimacy, but where benefits are perceived as private survival outcomes rather than collectively produced endowments, the feedback into CE and EE is weaker. The practical consequence is that tourism more frequently develops reinforcing loops where civic legitimacy and participation support collaboration and ecosystem engagement, while agriculture more frequently experiences the triad as fragmented.

IE's active influence operates as a stronger dampening force in agriculture than in tourism. In agriculture, individualistic organizing tendencies appear more dominant and more tied to distrust and expected conflict. This weakens synergy and reduces participation in shared learning, collective voice, and civic initiatives. In tourism, individualism often appears more bounded, for example, protecting uniqueness or controlling quality, while collaboration remains viable because service interdependence makes partnering difficult to avoid. This sectoral asymmetry extends and specifies the view that individualism's effects on entrepreneurship are context-dependent and mediated by relational and institutional conditions (Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997), by distinguishing "distrust-based IE" (agriculture) from "bounded IE" (tourism) and showing how interdependence and relational governance shape the degree of dampening. In TSM terms, agriculture's stronger IE constraint more directly suppresses the reinforcing loops that would otherwise link collective organizing to ecosystem upgrading and civic outcomes, thereby sharpening IE as a boundary condition for triadic coupling rather than a uniform cultural backdrop.

9.6.2 Sectoral differences in RA

CE adapts differently across sectors, with tourism tending toward network deepening and agriculture tending toward selectivity or retreat. Tourism entrepreneurs more often expand collaborations as ventures develop, and their collective arrangements become more structured as they learn what stabilizes coordination. This matches CE arguments that durable collectivity requires governance routines and relational mechanisms rather than episodic cooperation (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020). In agriculture, collective attempts more frequently generate breakdown experiences that reinforce reluctance to re-enter collective forms. This is consistent with governance perspectives emphasizing that perceived opportunism and unequal burden sharing undermine collaboration unless credible safeguards exist (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Williamson, 1985). The sectoral implication is that CE's reactive adaptation is path-dependent: repeated negative experiences can lock agriculture into more individualistic trajectories, while repeated coordination practice can help tourism stabilize collaboration.

EE adapts through feedback more visibly in tourism than in agriculture because feedback is more organized. Tourism shows stronger evidence of entrepreneurs using associations, intermediaries, and joint initiatives to communicate needs and shape support structures. This aligns with the view that ecosystems evolve through interaction and feedback, not through static "ingredient lists" (Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022). Agriculture shows strong demand for ecosystem upgrading, especially around market access, innovation support, and coordination, but the reconfiguration process is more constrained by fragmentation and weaker collective feedback channels. This supports the mechanism-based critique: ecosystem change depends not only on recognizing gaps but also on having workable organizing structures that translate constraints into coordinated responses (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022).

CWC adapts in tourism through routinized participation, but in agriculture it is more shock-sensitive and survival-inflected. Tourism's civic outcomes appear more likely to be sustained through repeatable participation structures and identity-linked benefits that reinforce local engagement. Agriculture's civic outcomes, while meaningful, are more vulnerable to volatility and continuity challenges because they are more tightly tied to household survival conditions and less consistently institutionalized through stable participation infrastructures. This matters because CWC scholarship emphasizes durability, stakeholder engagement, and governance as conditions for sustained civic endowments (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). Where civic value is produced under survival-first constraints, it can still be real, but it tends to be more contingent and less protected from shocks, which weakens the strength of feedback into CE and EE over time (Cairns et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2024).

IE shapes reactive adaptation by amplifying sectoral divergence over time. In agriculture, individualistic resistance can intensify through repeated experiences of distrust, disputes, and perceived unfairness, making future collective experiments less likely. In tourism, individualism more often remains selective, so the system can still adapt through collaboration where it is functionally necessary. The implication for the TSM is boundary-defining: where IE becomes a stable organizing logic, learning loops and reinforcing feedback weaken; where IE is bound, the system can still evolve through collective engagement and civic participation.

Overall tourism displays a more complete triadic reinforcement pattern, with stronger and more frequent pathways connecting CE, EE, and CWC through repeated coordination and community participation. Agriculture displays a more constrained pattern in which coordination fragility, weaker feedback organization, and stronger IE resistance reduce the continuity and strength of reinforcing loops. The key contribution of this sectoral synthesis is not that one sector is "better," but that the triad operates under different boundary conditions. These sectoral differences provide an empirical explanation for why similar domains can produce different trajectories, consistent with calls for mechanism-based, context-sensitive ecosystem analysis (Leendertse et al., 2022; Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Although this study is not designed as a cross-country comparison, the Sri Lankan tourism and agricultural sectors offer analytical transferability to other emerging-economy contexts shaped by macroeconomic vulnerability, uneven formal support, fragmented institutional coordination, and strong informal or community-based institutions. The sectoral comparison therefore contributes beyond the Sri Lankan case by showing how CE, EE, and CWC interact under institutional unevenness, and how IE can weaken these interactions when trust, coordination, and shared accountability remain fragile.

Although this study is not designed as a cross-country comparison, the Sri Lankan tourism and agricultural sectors offer analytical transferability to other emerging-economy contexts, where entrepreneurs also navigate macroeconomic vulnerability, uneven formal support, institutional frictions, and strong informal or community-based institutions. The sectoral comparison therefore extends beyond the Sri Lankan case by showing how CE, EE, and CWC interact under institutional unevenness, while IE may weaken these interactions when trust, coordination, and shared accountability remain fragile.

9.7 Summary of the theoretical contributions

This thesis makes a theoretical contribution by developing and presenting the TSM to explain how the EE, CE, and CWC shape one another over time, while showing how IE can weaken these reinforcing effects. The contribution is mechanism-based. Instead of treating EE, CE, and civic outcomes as separate topics, the thesis explains how they connect through specific influence pathways and feedback processes, and why positive effects are not guaranteed. This responds to key critiques in ecosystem research that many studies list ecosystem factors but explain less clearly how those factors translate into outcomes across different contexts (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Contribution One: The TSM integrates EE, CE, and CWC through two system logics, Active Influence and Reactive Adaptation, and it places IE as a clear dampening force within the system. Active Influence explains how one domain shapes another through visible pathways. Reactive Adaptation explains how the domains adjust in response to feedback, shocks, and pressures. This supports relational and evolutionary ecosystem arguments that emphasize interaction quality, feedback, and change over time rather than static "ecosystem ingredients" (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Wurth et al., 2022). It also strengthens civic outcomes theorizing by treating civic wealth as a visible outcome domain rather than a vague downstream impact (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). The study further extends and re-specifies the model by positioning IE as a cross-cutting constraining practice logic that reduces collective feasibility and weakens knowledge sharing when trust is low, thereby building on work on individualism as context dependent and relationally conditioned (Levin & Cross, 2004; Liñán et al., 2016; Tiessen, 1997; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). This contribution is evidenced across Sections 9.2-9.6, where influence pathways, feedback dynamics, and constraint effects are traced through CE, EE, CWC, and sectoral synthesis.

Contribution Two: This study advances CE theory by specifying how CE synergy is produced and stabilized, and why it breaks down, by specifying the micro-foundations of internal and cross-boundary collectivity. CE research often assumes that collectivity creates value, but it is frequently criticized for limited clarity on how synergy is achieved and sustained in practice (Cairns et al., 2024; Deschamps & Slitine, 2024; Hruskova, 2024). The contribution is to refine the internal-versus-cross-boundary debate by theorizing synergy as a dual configuration, built through internal organizing and external partnering, and by specifying the coordination work through which these configurations generate capability rather than episodic cooperation (Bijman & Doorneweert, 2008; Cook & Plunkett, 2006; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Tiessen, 1997; Yan & Sorenson, 2003; Yan & Yan, 2016, 2017). A further contribution is to sharpen synergy's boundary conditions by identifying its governance dependencies: synergy is contingent on disciplines that manage unequal effort, opportunism risk, and distributional tensions, and it degrades when role clarity, accountability, and contribution recognition weaken (Doh et al., 2019; Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Manouchehrabadi et al., 2021; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). These mechanism specifications and breakdown conditions are developed in Sections 9.3.1 and 9.3.4 through the detailed discussion of synergy practices, boundary conditions, and tensions.

Contribution Three: This study advances EE theory by specifying the mechanism that links ecosystem "elements" to outcomes: CE operates as a translation layer that converts ecosystem supports into usable entrepreneurial capacity and thereby strengthens explanations of ecosystem evolution. Ecosystem scholarship highlights networks, intermediaries, and coordinated support, yet it is often criticized for under-specified mechanisms and uneven operationalization across contexts (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Isenberg, 2011; Leendertse et al., 2022; Mason & Brown, 2014; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). The contribution is to theorize how collective practice performs this translation through shared infrastructures, pooled learning routines, and collective voice, making "interaction quality" observable as a capacity-building process rather than a descriptive ecosystem attribute (Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017). A further contribution is to sharpen implementation boundary conditions: ecosystem support is effective only when access is workable and coordination is feasible, not merely when programs or institutions exist on paper, thereby connecting translation failure to execution gaps and uneven uptake (Cavallo et al., 2018; Jung et al., 2017; St-Pierre et al., 2015; World Economic Forum, 2014). These mechanisms are developed in Section 9.3.2, extended in the EE discussion, and consolidated in the sectoral comparison in Section 9.6.

Contribution Four: This study advances CWC theory by specifying endowment pathways and feedback effects in an emerging-economy, cross-sector setting and by theorizing why civic wealth is contingent rather than automatic under institutional constraint and IE resistance. Instead of treating civic wealth as a downstream "impact," the contribution is to clarify how civic wealth consists of economic, social, and communal endowments co-produced through interaction among communities, support regimes, and enterprises (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019, 2022). The framing also integrates civic and transformation-oriented accounts of multi-stakeholder engagement and systemic change processes (Mulder & Loorbach, 2018; Singh et al., 2020; Turner & Zolin, 2012), and with work emphasizing beneficiary-centered co-production and social capital as conditions for durable participation and coordinated action (Frid & Vedula, 2019; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2025; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). A key theoretical move is to place constraints and IE resistance inside the same system logic as CWC, thereby specifying mechanisms through which civic wealth pathways weaken even when entrepreneurship is active. Civic endowments erode or fail to consolidate when participation infrastructures are thin, governance credibility is weak or politicized, and sustained collective engagement is infeasible under contextual pressures, conditions that dampen CWC's feedback into CE and EE and limit endowment durability (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Cairns et al., 2024; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022). In effect, the contribution is not "more civic engagement," but a boundary specification: civic wealth persists when credible support regimes stabilize participation and when IE is constrained rather than dominant. This contribution is evidenced in the CWC discussion and in the sectoral synthesis in Section 9.6, which compares how civic pathways and constraints operate across tourism and agriculture.

Taken together, these contributions position the thesis as a mechanism-based advancement in triadic entrepreneurship research in an emerging-economy, cross-sector setting. The TSM provides a structured explanation of how entrepreneurial practice, ecosystem conditions, and civic endowments co-evolve, while showing that reinforcing effects depend on governance credibility, participation durability, and the strength of individualistic resistance within practice. Chapter 09 builds on these contributions by setting out the implications for theory and practice, along with limitations and directions for future research.

9.8 Conclusion

This discussion chapter interpreted the study's empirical evidence through the TSM to explain how the EE, CE, and CWC operate as interdependent domains that can mutually reinforce or constrain one another over time, while also incorporating IE as a constraining practice logic that dampens synergy, ecosystem evolution, and civic impact. The chapter moved beyond thematic description by specifying how the triad functions through AI and RA pathways, thereby responding to recurring calls in the literature for clearer mechanisms that connect ecosystem conditions, entrepreneurial practice, and civic outcomes.

Across the chapter, the findings showed that CE is not a generic claim of "working together," but an achieved coordination capability that produces synergy only when internal and external collective practices are stabilized through credible governance, sustained participation, and value-consistent relationships. Where these stabilizing conditions hold, CE enhances EE functioning by translating ecosystem resources into usable capacity through shared infrastructures, pooled learning routines, and collective voice. The findings also demonstrated that CE could catalyze civic endowments when collective enterprise is designed around stakeholder participation, inclusion, and community capability building, positioning civic wealth as a durable outcome domain rather than an incidental "impact" claim. At the same time, the evidence identified clear boundary conditions and tensions: low trust, role ambiguity, opportunism, politicization, and survival-first constraints weaken collective practice and reduce the durability of civic endowments, thereby interrupting the reinforcing loops expected in the triadic system.

The sectoral synthesis further showed that the triadic system does not operate uniformly across tourism and agriculture. Tourism displayed more consistent reinforcement across the triad, supported by higher interdependence, stronger routine collaboration, and more visible community participation infrastructures. Agriculture displayed more constrained reinforcement, where stronger IE resistance, coordination fragility, and weaker collective feedback channels reduced the continuity and strength of triadic loops. This sectoral comparison sharpened the TSM by clarifying that the model's reinforcing pathways are contingent and context-sensitive rather than universal.

Overall, the chapter established the empirical logic for the thesis's theoretical contributions by demonstrating how EE, CE, and CWC co-evolve through identifiable influence and adaptation mechanisms, and by showing how IE functions as a practical constraint that dampens synergy, ecosystem upgrading, and civic impact. The next chapter builds on this foundation by presenting the theoretical and practical implications of the study, articulating limitations, and outlining a future research agenda.

CHAPTER TEN

Conclusion

10.1 Summary of the study

This study examined how the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE), Collective Entrepreneurship (CE), and Civic Wealth Creation (CWC) interact over time in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, while accounting for the constraining influence of Individualistic Entrepreneurship (IE). It responds to a persistent limitation in entrepreneurship scholarship: ecosystems, collective entrepreneurship, and civic outcomes are frequently examined in partial or pairwise ways, leaving limited clarity about mechanisms, reciprocal influence, and feedback-driven adaptation across domains (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Leendertse et al., 2022; Spigel, 2017; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022). To address this gap, the thesis developed and applied the Triadic Synergy Model (TSM) as an analytical lens that conceptualizes EE, CE, and CWC as a mutually constitutive triad shaped by two linked logics: Active Influence (AI) and Reactive Adaptation (RA). This triadic framing aligns with process-oriented and configuration-sensitive accounts of ecosystem development that emphasize interdependence, mobilization, and evolution rather than static factor lists (Cao & Shi, 2021; Cavallo et al., 2018; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Roundy et al., 2018; Stam & Spigel, 2016).

The overarching research question asked how and to what extent EE, CE, and CWC interact over time in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors, and how IE influences these interactions and their entrepreneurial and civic outcomes. This was examined through four subsidiary research questions focusing on ecosystem mobilization, the enactment and governance of CE, the production and sustainability of civic endowments, and the mechanisms through which the three domains interact over time under the possible constraining influence of Individualistic Entrepreneurship.. Across these questions, entrepreneurship was positioned not as a purely individual act, but as socially embedded action shaped by context, institutional arrangements, and relational governance (Audretsch, 2012; Chandra, 2018; Gartner, 1985; Gomes-Casseres, 2019; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). This orientation also aligns with critiques of individualized “hero entrepreneur” narratives and calls for more contextualized explanations of entrepreneurial action (Audretsch et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2023; Ogbor, 2000; Santini, 2020).

Methodologically, the study adopted a qualitative, context-sensitive approach to capture how entrepreneurs and stakeholders interpret ecosystem conditions, coordinate collectively, and engage with communities in ways that generate (or undermine) civic wealth. This choice reflects arguments that entrepreneurship in emerging economy settings requires attention to lived experience, institutional constraints, and relational dynamics that are not easily reduced to universal indicators (Harima, 2020; Ribeiro-Soriano & Urbano, 2010; Urbano et al., 2019). Analytically, a findings-led strategy was used to move from empirical patterns to mechanism claims across domains. This helped address a known weakness in ecosystem research where descriptive “pillar lists” are not translated into mechanisms explaining outcomes (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Three integrated conclusions emerged. First, entrepreneurs experienced the ecosystem as a patterned environment that enables and constrains action through infrastructure, institutions, intermediaries, markets, finance, and networks, supporting the view that ecosystems are not merely collections of components but systems whose outcomes depend on how actors mobilize and connect resources (Isenberg, 2010; Mason & Brown, 2014; Spigel, 2017). In Sri Lanka, access to formal supports was uneven and often shaped by institutional fragility, politicization, and resource constraints. This reinforces critiques that ecosystem “quality” cannot be inferred solely from the presence of supports; it must be understood through mobilization capacity, coherence, and trust-based connectivity (Cairns et al., 2024; Roundy et al., 2018).

Second, CE operated as a governance-dependent converter that transforms dispersed resources into coordinated value creation when governance conditions are present. Rather than treating CE as a simple preference for collaboration, the findings emphasized that CE is a coordination and governance problem shaped by interdependence, incentive divergence, and distributional tensions (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Tiessen, 1997; Yan & Sorenson, 2003). Across both sectors, synergy depended on role clarity, credible rules, transparency, and mechanisms for conflict resolution, mapping closely to governance-centered accounts of collective value creation (Child et al., 2005; Shapiro et al., 2018).

Third, civic wealth operated as both an outcome and an enabling infrastructure. Civic outcomes included employment and livelihood support, community cohesion, skill development, inclusion, and improvements to facilities and services. Simultaneously, civic infrastructures, trust, shared norms, community participation, and perceived legitimacy, reduced coordination costs and enabled CE to persist, extended the social capital scholarship and CWC's emphasis on stakeholder engagement and support regimes (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). A contextual correction emerged strongly: in resource-constrained environments, economic viability often becomes the stabilizing base that allows communal and societal wealth to persist, suggesting that CWC processes in emerging economies may be more tightly coupled to livelihood logics than is often assumed (Bacq et al., 2022; Brenton & Slawinski, 2023).

Finally, the study concludes that the triad operates through ongoing reciprocal influence and adaptation: CE mobilizes and strengthens ecosystem resources when governance and trust exist; civic wealth outcomes reinforce legitimacy and participation (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey

& Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019), feeding back into collective viability and ecosystem stability; and ecosystem supports condition whether these loops are sustainable. Within this dynamic, IE emerged as a systematic dampener. IE is theorized not as a separate domain but as a constraining logic privileging autonomy, unilateral control, and private appropriation, reducing willingness to share decision rights, resources, and information, thereby weakening CE synergy and civic wealth durability (Hechavarria & Reynolds, 2009; Thornton et al., 2012; Tiessen, 1997).

A sectoral synthesis showed a shared triadic logic but different configurations. Tourism's place-based, reputation-sensitive character made community legitimacy and collective coordination more visible and strategically relevant, creating conditions where civic engagement could operate as a stabilizing asset. Agriculture was more strongly shaped by survival-first logics under volatility and institutional fragility, intensifying protection strategies and weakening long-term collective commitments. This supports configuration-sensitive claims that ecosystem dynamics vary across sectors and contexts (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Spigel, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022).

10.2 Contributions to theory

This section clarifies the study's strongest theoretical contributions as explicit claims. Because this is a qualitative, Sri Lanka-based study, the contributions are offered as analytically generalizable mechanism claims that can travel beyond the case, while the Sri Lankan context is used to specify boundary conditions and context-anchored refinements.

This study's **central** theoretical contribution is the TSM: an original, mechanism-based analytical lens that explains how EE, CE, and CWC operate as an interdependent triad that alternately shapes and adapts to one another over time, while IE functions as a cross-cutting constraining practice logic that dampens coupling and weakens feedback loops. The TSM specifies role-based pathways that make system dynamics visible: AI captures cross-domain influence, and RA captures feedback-driven adjustment in response to outcomes, shocks, and constraints (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

The model also clarifies boundaries between cross-domain roles and within-domain processes: CE-as-Synergy is a governance-dependent coordination mechanism (not an AI arrow), and CWC's Impactor is an endowment assessment pathway (not cross-domain influence). In doing so, the TSM advances EE theory by positioning CE as the translation layer through which ecosystem supports become usable capacity, extends CE theory by locating synergy and breakdown in relational governance and participation durability, and extends CWC theory by treating civic endowments as outcomes and enabling infrastructures that can feed back to sustain CE and EE, while showing how IE erodes trust, knowledge flows, and shared investment, weakening reinforcement over time (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Leendertse et al., 2022; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Second, the study contributes to EE theory by clarifying that ecosystem elements matter through mobilization and conversion mechanisms, not mere presence. Ecosystem resources (finance, programs, infrastructure, intermediaries) do not automatically become entrepreneurial capacity; they become usable only when actors can access them credibly and connect them through relational and organizational channels (Cavallo et al., 2018; Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017). By specifying CE as a converter, the study helps address the "missing mechanism" problem in EE research where resource availability is assumed to translate into outcomes without identifying the mobilizing processes (Stam, 2015; Wurth et al., 2022).

Third, the study contributes to CE theory by re-positioning CE as a governance-dependent mechanism domain rather than a generic "collaboration" label. Synergy is not an automatic effect of collectivism; it is an emergent property of governance routines that stabilize expectations and manage distributional tensions (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Shapiro et al., 2018). The study strengthens CE boundary-condition theorization by foregrounding fragility and breakdown dynamics (role confusion, perceived capture, free-riding, conflict escalation), rather than assuming collaboration will persist when collective benefits are visible (Cairns et al., 2024; Deschamps & Slitine, 2024).

Fourth, the study advances CWC theory by adding novel mechanism detail from an emerging-economy, crisis-prone setting. It validates CWC as a mechanism-based explanation of civic outcomes by showing that civic endowments were consistently described as multi-dimensional (economic, communal, and societal) and relationally co-produced through stakeholder participation, shared norms, and enabling support regimes, rather than as automatic spillovers from venture success (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019).

Extension to CWC, the study theorizes CWC-as-survival/resilience: in tourism and agriculture, civic wealth frequently operated through livelihood stabilization, household protection, and maintaining minimum community functioning under crisis and scarcity, making economic endowments a practical threshold condition for sustaining communal and societal wealth in resource-constrained contexts (Bacq et al., 2022; Brenton & Slawinski, 2023). Further, the study reconceptualizes civic wealth as civic-conditioning infrastructure within the TSM: CWC functions not only as an Impactor (how endowments are expressed/assessed) but also as a Facilitator/Sustainer (trust, legitimacy, participation capability) that feeds back to stabilize CE coordination and EE functioning through AI/RA pathways. Moreover, the Sri Lankan evidence foregrounds boundary conditions that are often treated as residual in CWC accounts: fragility and reversibility of civic wealth under institutional instability/politicization, responsibility diffusion and role ambiguity across stakeholders, and intergenerational continuity risks (e.g., youth exit) that weaken reinforcement mechanisms and stall movement from survival-first civic action to more durable civic strategies (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin et al., 2024).

Fifth, the study contributes to IE theory by treating IE as a constraining practice logic within the entrepreneurial field, not merely a trait or preference. IE operates through identifiable coordination mechanisms, reduced trust, weakened knowledge sharing, and higher coordination costs, that dampen collective governance and civic reinforcement even when ecosystem resources exist (Levin & Cross, 2004; Thornton et al., 2012). The sector comparison supports the claim that IE effects are context-dependent: tourism's stakeholder visibility can raise the reputational costs of purely individualistic behavior, whereas agriculture's volatility can intensify protective logic and private appropriation strategies (Liñán et al., 2016; Meyer, 2020).

Taken together, the TSM contributes an integrative explanation that makes reciprocal influence explicit: ecosystems enable and constrain but do not automatically produce outcomes; CE converts and amplifies ecosystem resources through governance; CWC captures both civic endowments and the infrastructures sustaining collective action; and IE dampens coupling and feedback-driven evolution.

10.3 Contribution to entrepreneurship research

This study contributes by demonstrating a mechanism-oriented qualitative strategy for entrepreneurship systems and a within-country cross-sector comparison that clarifies configuration effects and boundary conditions.

Methodologically, the study illustrates how qualitative evidence can be translated into explicit mechanism statements, converter mechanisms (CE), reinforcement mechanisms (CWC), and constraint mechanisms (IE), responding to calls for stronger causal reasoning and mechanism specification in EE and related literatures (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Chaudhary et al., 2024; Wurth et al., 2022). This approach avoids the common descriptive trap of "listing pillars" by showing (i) how ecosystem resources are mobilized, (ii) how governance stabilizes (or fails) collective action, and (iii) how civic legitimacy and participation capability operate as a civic-conditioning infrastructure that can sustain (or weaken) collective entrepreneurship over time (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019; Woolcock, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). In doing so, the study offers a practical template for empirically tracing CWC not only as downstream civic outcomes but also as system-relevant mechanisms (e.g., legitimacy, trust, participation routines) that feed back into CE and ecosystem functioning.

The within-country comparison between tourism and agriculture strengthens inference by holding national institutions constant while observing variation in stakeholder visibility, interdependence, and shock sensitivity. This responds to heterogeneity concerns in ecosystem research by demonstrating how similar ecosystem "elements" can have different effects across sectoral configurations (Cao & Shi, 2021; Spigel, 2017; Wurth et al., 2022). As a research scaffold, the TSM also provides a structured way to trace AI and RA pathways empirically, encouraging future work to specify which mechanisms explain coupling, damping, and reconfiguration over time and to operationalize these pathways for comparative or mixed-method testing (Fischer et al., 2025; Spigel & Harrison, 2018).

10.4 Implications for practice (Sri Lanka)

This section translates the TSM into action-oriented implications for Sri Lanka. To clarify "who should act" and "at what level," implications are signposted by level and linked to AI/RA pathways.

(a) Entrepreneurial and collective practice

The study indicates that CE succeeds when governance is treated as core practice rather than assumed collaboration. Entrepreneurs and collective leaders should therefore build CE intentionally through minimum governance routines: role clarity, transparent decision rules, benefit-sharing arrangements, and low-cost conflict-resolution mechanisms (Franco & Haase, 2017; Haase & Franco, 2020; Shapiro et al., 2018). These routines strengthen the CE→EE pathway by enabling collective mobilization of ecosystem resources (markets, finance, training) and reducing coordination failure.

(b) Managing IE within networks

IE tendencies, knowledge hoarding, reluctance to share decision rights, private appropriation, can be managed through practical "cooperation safeguards": transparent reporting of contributions and benefits, rotating leadership roles, agreed grievance channels, and small trust-building projects (shared training, joint procurement, shared market information). These practices reduce perceived capture risks and stabilize participation under uncertainty, experiencing synergy and helps sustaining the CE→CWC, and CE→EE reinforcement loop.

(c) Civic practice

In Sri Lanka, community trust and acceptance are not optional, they are part of the infrastructure that keeps ventures and collective initiatives stable, especially during shocks.

Entrepreneurs should therefore make civic contribution routine rather than occasional, By routinising local hiring/procurement, reinvestment in shared capabilities, and community feedback, entrepreneurs strengthen stakeholder engagement and support regimes that build economic, communal, and societal wealth and reinforce these endowments over time (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). These routines strengthen trust, legitimacy, and participation, lowering coordination costs and helping collective efforts remain viable over time.

(d) Ecosystem contributors

Intermediaries and support organizations should strengthen "bridging" functions that convert fragmented supports into usable capability. The study shows that credible intermediaries reduce transaction costs, align programs with entrepreneur needs, link collectives to markets/finance, and reduce opacity in multi-stakeholder initiatives (Cavallo et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017). In Sri Lanka, intermediary credibility is especially critical under institutional fragility and politicization; therefore, transparent governance, trust-building, and consistent delivery become key contributions to the ecosystem's mobilization capacity.

10.5 Implications for policy

This section summarizes the TSM into policy for Sri Lanka.

(a) Policy design

The study suggests that policy should be designed around mobilization capacity, not only resource provision. Training, finance schemes, and infrastructure create value only when entrepreneurs can access and combine them through credible coordination channels. Policy should therefore reward intermediary capability and collective governance capability (e.g., eligibility criteria that value transparency routines, stakeholder participation, and accountable decision processes). This targets EE→CE conversion and strengthens the ecosystem's ability to mobilize resources effectively (Wurth et al., 2022).

(b) Depoliticization and institutional credibility

Institutional credibility is functional infrastructure: when program delivery is perceived as politicized or unstable, trust erodes, IE is activated, and collective investment becomes irrational (Powell et al., 2018; Urbano et al., 2019). Policy should therefore prioritize predictable timelines, public eligibility criteria, transparent selection, review and grievance mechanisms, and consistent monitoring and reporting. These design features stabilize expectations and reduce the "rule volatility" that undermines CE and civic continuity.

(c) Civic wealth as explicit development objective

Policy should treat civic wealth as a development objective and ecosystem asset, not an external social agenda. Program evaluation should incorporate durable civic endowments (capability building, inclusion, participation, improvements to services) alongside venture metrics, recognizing that in Sri Lanka civic wealth is often livelihood-stabilizing rather than purely transformative (Bacq et al., 2022; Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). This strengthens the CWC reinforcement pathway by keeping civic infrastructures visible and incentivized, rather than optional.

(d) Ecosystem architecture

The study indicates that ecosystem learning requires institutionalized feedback loops. Coordination platform sector roundtables, destination-level councils, market-information systems, and co-designed training pipelines, help translate CE and CWC signals into ecosystem adjustment rather than episodic responses (Fischer et al., 2025). For Sri Lanka, where shocks are salient (COVID recovery, economic crisis), policies should also include stabilization tools (rapid advisory access, temporary coordination support, bridge funding tied to transparent governance) to protect civic infrastructures and reduce regression during crises.

10.6 Boundary conditions and research limitations

Boundary conditions. The TSM is most applicable where entrepreneurship is place-based and stakeholder-intensive, where collective coordination is required for market access or reputation, and where civic outcomes are tightly coupled to livelihood conditions and local service gaps, conditions strongly reflected in Sri Lanka's tourism and agriculture (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Spigel, 2017). Caution is needed when coupling conditions weaken where participation is episodic; roles and accountability are diffused; institutional credibility is low or politicized; or collective arrangements are vulnerable to capture and free riding. In such contexts, the model predicts weaker conversion and reinforcement pathways, and stronger IE dampening.

Limitations. Qualitative design offers explanatory depth but not statistical generalization. Temporal claims about AI and RA are inferred from patterned accounts rather than measured longitudinally through repeated observation of the same collectives (Fischer et al., 2025; Wurth et al., 2022). Data collection occurred post-COVID and during Sri Lanka's economic crisis, which may intensify survival-first logics and shape how respondents interpret institutional supports. Finally, while the study focuses on EE, CE, CWC, and IE, other influences (macro shocks, global market dynamics, and fine-grained power relations) were not examined in depth and may interact with triadic mechanisms (Scott, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012).

10.7 Future Research

Future research can build on this thesis by extending and testing the TSM, strengthening causal and temporal inference, and deepening understanding of boundary conditions and tensions.

(1) Qualitative process studies to refine the TSM mechanisms. Future research should deepen and sharpen the TSM by using longitudinal qualitative designs (repeat interviews, observation, document tracing) to map how AI and RA unfold in real time. This would clarify how mobilization, governance repair, legitimacy reinforcement, and regression occur, and help specify the typical sequences and turning points through which EE, CE, and CWC become mutually reinforced, or break down.

(2) Boundary conditions: credibility, power, and responsibility diffusion. A second priority is qualitative inquiry into the boundary conditions that shape triadic coupling, especially under institutional fragility. Future work can examine how politicization and perceived unfairness affect trust, how intermediaries gain or lose legitimacy, how collective arrangements become captured or contested, and how blurred stakeholder roles create responsibility diffusion that weakens civic durability. This would strengthen the study's cautionary claims by showing where TSM applies strongly and where it requires mindful interpretation.

(3) Qualitative evaluation of practice- and policy-relevant designs. A third direction is qualitative evaluation of "what works" in strengthening coordination and civic durability without creating dependency or capture. Case-based research can compare governance routines (role clarity, transparency, dispute resolution, benefit-sharing), community engagement routines (feedback forums, co-design), and ecosystem coordination arrangements (platforms and intermediaries), tracing which designs stabilize collective action and reduce IE-driven

breakdown. This would produce actionable design principles while staying grounded in lived experience and context.

10.8 Closing synthesis

Entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka's tourism and agricultural sectors is most convincingly explained through a triadic, feedback-oriented system. EE shapes feasibility and reinforcement; CE converts and amplifies ecosystem resources through governance-dependent coordination; and CWC captures both civic endowments and the civic infrastructures that sustain collective action. IE functions as a constraining logic that can fragment relationships, weaken synergy, and dampen feedback-driven evolution, especially under institutional fragility and scarcity. By developing and applying the TSM, the study provides an integrative mechanism framework that advances theory across EE, CE, CWC, and IE and offers actionable guidance for building more credible, coordinated, and civically durable entrepreneurial development pathways in Sri Lanka.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Approval of Ethics Application

WAIKATO MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
TE RAUPAPA

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Waikato Management School
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Channa Gajanayaka
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17 June 2026

Dear Channa

Ethics Application WMS 22/46
The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective.

The above research project, as outlined in your submitted application, has been Ethics Approval for Research by the Waikato Management School Human Research Ethics Committee.

Please note: should you make changes to the project outlined in the approved ethics application, you may need to reapply for ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research.

Kind regards,

Amanda Sircombe

Amanda Sircombe
WMS Research and Postgraduate Manager

Appendix B: Initial Interview Guide

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective.

Interview Guide

Collective Entrepreneurship

1. How do you sense, believe and value the notion of collective entrepreneurship?
2. Why collective entrepreneurship should become a timely discussion in highly volatile modern business setting that you are working on? How does it work with insiders and outsiders?
3. Who do you collectively partner with in doing business? Under what circumstances?
4. How does the collective nature of these partnerships work?
5. What do you expect from those collectives or partnerships in most?
6. What values at personal and organizational levels are needed to make the partnership work?
7. Can you describe how to demolish the barriers of individualistic intentions and lead people towards collective goals?

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

8. What parties do you work with within the entrepreneurial ecosystem (entrepreneurial atmosphere/conducive environment) that facilitates entrepreneurship?
9. Could you prioritize who you work with most in the ecosystem?
10. Should our country have its own entrepreneurial ecosystem in a globalized market?
11. How should entrepreneurial ecosystems function in a market where physical representations are not essential?
12. How should the entrepreneurship ecosystem be configured or re-configured to empower entrepreneurship in the tourism/agri sector in Sri Lanka?

Civic Wealth Creation

13. How can the regime of support together with enterprises and community members identify and prioritized the societal changes? or how to value required interventions?
14. How can the regime of support (International aids, government organizations, business angels, universities, established large organizations), enterprises (profit oriented firms, social businesses, not for profit entities, cooperatives) and community members pool critical resources, methods, strategies as well as legitimate power focused on positive social change through entrepreneurial activities?
15. How to internalize and sustain the positive social transformations created? How to take the responsibilities? What should be the governing mechanism?

Appendix C: Improved Interview Guide

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective.

Agriculture: Smallholding sector- a. Holdings of ¼ acre or less, b. Holdings of above ¼ acre but less than 20 acres

Tourism: Firms of which annual turnover of less than LKR 750 million and employees less than 200

Interview Guide

A) Entrepreneur and venture background (Conversational)

CQ1. To start, can you tell me the story of how you became involved in this business/venture?
Probes (as needed): *What motivated you at the beginning? What were the early steps? Key turning points.*

CQ2. Can you describe your business today, what you do, who your customers are, and how you operate day-to-day?
Probes: *Products/services; seasonality; supply chain; workforce/roles; main markets.*

Optional classification probes (only if not already clear):

- Agriculture: approximate landholding size / type of farming.
- Tourism: approximate size/turnover/employee range.
  (Keep these as "ranges" rather than exact numbers if sensitivity is an issue.)

CQ3. Thinking about the last few years, what major events or shocks affected your business most, and how did you respond?
Probes: *COVID period; economic crisis; policy changes; climate events; local conflict/instability; market disruptions.*

B) Collective Entrepreneurship (CE)

CQ4. Can you describe a time when you worked **collectively with others** (inside or outside your business) to solve a problem or pursue an opportunity?
Probes: *Who was involved (suppliers, competitors, associations, community groups, family networks, cooperatives)? What triggered working together?*

CQ5. How do these collective arrangements usually work in practice?
Probes:

- *How partners are selected (trust, reputation, location, ethnicity/religion, prior ties)*
- *Coordination (meetings, WhatsApp groups, leaders, rules)*
- *Resource pooling (money, equipment, labour, information, market access)*
- *Decision-making and conflict resolution*
- *What makes collaboration succeed or break down?*

CQ6. What outcomes do you usually get from collective action, and what do others get?
Probes: *Reduced risk; shared marketing; bargaining power; learning; access to finance; crisis support; new ventures.*

Optional deepening probe (only if it fits the conversation):

- *Are there situations where you prefer to act individually rather than collectively? Why?*

C) Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (EE)

CQ7. When you look at your business environment, who or what has helped you most to start, survive, or grow?
Probes (choose relevant): *banks/MFIs; informal lenders; government agencies; local authorities; NGOs; buyers; intermediaries; industry associations; universities/training; diaspora; platforms; religious/community institutions.*

CQ8. Can you walk me through how you typically access key resources (finance, labour, information, permits, technology, markets)?
Probes: *What is easy vs difficult? Costs/time? Informal "workarounds"? Who acts as a broker/gatekeeper?*

CQ9. Where does the ecosystem fail you or constrain you most, and how do you cope?
Probes: *Regulation; corruption/patronage; policy uncertainty; infrastructure; shortages; market volatility; weak institutions; trust deficits.*

D) Civic Wealth Creation (CWC)

CQ10. Beyond business performance, what changes (if any) has your business/collective activity created for your community or locality?
Probes: *Jobs/livelihood stability; local services; skills; community projects; inclusion of youth/women; rebuilding aftershocks; trust and cooperation.*

CQ11. Can you describe a specific example where your work (or a collective) contributed to a community outcome?
Probes: *Who benefited? What resources were mobilised? Who initiated? What made it possible? Any unintended negative effects?*

CQ12. Who are the key actors that shape "what gets solved" in your area, and how are priorities decided?

Probes: *local government; political actors; NGOs; business leaders; community organisations; religious leaders; cooperatives; buyers.*

E) Interplay

CQ13. Think of one recent challenge or opportunity. Can you explain, step by step, how your ecosystem relationships and collective action shaped what happened, and what the community outcomes were (if any)?
Probes: *What came first? What changed next? What feedback effects occurred (e.g., collaboration strengthened ties; ties improved access; outcomes changed legitimacy/support)?*

CQ14. Over time, how do you see changes in (1) the ecosystem around you, (2) collaboration/collectives, and (3) community outcomes influencing each other?
Probes: *What improved? What deteriorated? What conditions need to exist for positive cycles vs negative cycles?*

F) Wrap-up

CQ15. If you could change **one thing** (policy, support program, market rule, local institution) to improve entrepreneurship and community outcomes in your sector, what would it be, and why?
CQ16. Is there anything important I didn't ask that would help me understand your experience?

Appendix D: Application for Ethics Approval

Application for Ethical Approval
Outline of Research Project

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Template:
Use clear and simple language. Avoid technical terms wherever possible.
*Please allow **at least two weeks** for your application to be reviewed by the WMS Ethics Committee*
You must gain ethics approval prior to the commencement of data collection for your research project
See How to fill out the form for guidance.

1. IDENTIFY THE PROJECT.

1.1 Title of Project: The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective.

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1.2 Supervisor's name and contact information (if relevant)

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Phone: +6421446745
Director of Post Graduate Studies, Strategic Management, and Entrepreneurship
Waikato Management School
University of Waikato

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University of Waikato

1.3 Anticipated date to begin data collection
2022 May

2. DESCRIBE THE RESEARCH.

2.1 Briefly outline what the project is about, including your research goals and anticipated benefits. Include links with a research program, if relevant.

1

This study focuses on how does the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation take place in Sri Lanka? Entrepreneurship has extensively been recognized as a driver for economic growth and development (Acs & Storey, 2004; Audretsch et al., 2015; Harper, 2003; Mason & Brown, 2011; Peprah & Adekoya, 2020; Szirmai et al., 2011; Yu, 1997) and Wennekers and Thurik (1999) highlighted that in contemporary open economies, entrepreneurship is more critical than it has ever been for economic growth. Progressively, the attention of scholars in various social sciences has shifted towards entrepreneurial research (Urbano et al., 2019), and entrepreneurship has now become a prominent lifestyle choice in both developed and developing countries, a concept that has sparked the interest of scholars and policymakers all over the world in the topic (Gutterman, 2018).

Consequently, a new paradigm, known as the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (EE), has recently emerged that goes in the direction of offering a holistic view of entrepreneurship (Cavallo et al., 2018), and EE has recently gained much attention from scholars and policymakers (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Audretsch et al., 2019; Audretsch & Link, 2017; Roundy et al., 2018; Spigel, 2017; Spigel & Harrison, 2018; Ullah, 2019; Volkmann et al., 2019). EEs have been broadly known as complex, dynamic, and emerging frameworks (Acs & Storey, 2004; Isenberg, 2010; Spigel, 2017), creating conducive developing and sustaining entrepreneurship environments. Eventually, although there is a dynamic stream of EEs studies, scholars have yet to agree on a commonly agreed and theoretically grounded definition (Roundy et al., 2018; Stam, 2015). In the literature, there are different definitions to the EE, and According to most definitions, an EE has a geographically specified boundary that involves various interconnected entities and variables such as human capital, networks, and institutions (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017). World Economic Forum (2014, p. 9) defined EE "as a system of interrelated pillars that impact the speed and ability with which entrepreneurs can create and scale new ventures in a sustainable way." Accordingly, eight pillars have been configured, namely; accessible markets, human capital/workforce, funding & finance, support systems/mentors, government & regulatory framework, education & training, major universities as catalysts, and cultural support. However, a commonly formulated EEs do not exist and apply to all the contexts and need to stop emulating EEs, and homegrown or own EEs should be developed and employed identifying and aspiring key actors (Alvedalen & Boschma, 2017; Isenberg, 2011). Further, cross-country, cross-industry, and cross-societal studies are required since recent studies have focused on one specific context (Audretsch et al., 2019). Thus, this primarily studies the functioning and configure of the EE to ensure entrepreneurship development and sustainability in Sri Lanka.

According to Manouchehrabadi et al. (2021); Reich (1987); Urbano et al. (2019); Yan and Sorenson (2003); Yan and Yan (2017), entrepreneurship is not exclusive to the company's founder or top executives; indeed, it is a capability and attitude that pervades the organization because competitive advantage comes from continuous, incremental innovation and improvement of a range of ideas that propagate throughout the organization as everyone has the opportunity and capacity to participate. CE notion is most often found in the social economy and ethnic entrepreneurship literature, and it is utilized in different primary ways, and the domain of entrepreneurship research, the term collective is generally used to describe multiple actors engaged in the entrepreneurial process (Burress & Cook, 2009; Cook & Plunkett, 2006). Haase and Franco (2020) envisioned CE as individuals' capacity to collaborate, innovate, and create within organizations. Manouchehrabadi et al. (2021, p. 371) defined CE as “an association of entrepreneurs”. Cook and Plunkett (2006, p. 427) defined CE as the “emergence of jointly owned patron-controlled entities seeking rents at multiple levels exhibiting group innovation attributes, opportunity-seeking behavior, and uncertainty bearing characteristics be analyzed as a separate and unique phenomenon." According to the Yan and Sorenson (2003, p. 37) CE is the "synergism that emerges from a collective, and that propels it beyond the current state by seizing opportunities without regard to resources under its control." Santos and Spann (2011, p. 444) defined CE as the "combination of using the whole employee base for sourcing ideas, collective intelligence methods for the down-selection of promising ideas and entrepreneurship techniques for commercializing these ideas in a corporate setting." In this way, the talents, intelligence, and perspectives of individual team members are combined in CE, resulting in a solid collective capacity to develop and innovate (Urbano et al., 2019). Mourdoukoutas (2011) defines CE as a network organization that enables a diverse group of individuals to share the risks and retunes related to the exploration and exploitation of new business opportunities. Most entrepreneurship research focuses on advanced countries, with little published about the changed market conditions in emerging economies (Ratten, 2014) and especially lack of entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka (Abayasingha, 2019; Liyanage, 2020) preeminent ground and motivation in selecting CE. Entrepreneurship as a collective action is being discussed in various ways, and literature on CE is limited (Yan & Yan, 2016). Entrepreneurship as a phenomenon necessitates the formation of teams to take place, but there are still debates concerning how such teams should be conceptualized, whether heterogeneous entrepreneurial groups have any common characteristics, and why this is so.

When community members, supporters, and entrepreneurially minded actors collaborate to pool resources and develop new capabilities, positive societal transformation occurs, and an integrated framework is developed, which is called Civic Wealth Creation (CWC) that accounting for the social, economic, and community bequest created by local communities in order to explain and enlighten how societal impact occurs across types of stakeholders (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). In contemporary societal transformation activities, they highlight the significance of citizen engagement and entrepreneurial commerce. In further consideration, it has been proposed that the "civic" level of analysis is a setting that eloquently encapsulates the range of situations in which several societal change initiatives occur, emphasizing the role of citizen engagement and entrepreneurial commerce in creating changes. The term civic encompasses a wide range of community-focused settings at the center of many social change activities. The term civic also emphasizes the importance of local engagement and a sense of social obligation beyond purely economic factors. Because of the role in developing knowledge and support of local circumstances, citizens from the communities being supported are beneficiaries and vital players in problem-solving and enterprise development.

Moreover, the CWC concept values "wealth" beyond money and material properties. Contrary to the narrow notions of wealth that do not grasp the range of returns that many social transformations seek to achieve, societal wealth represents a collection of intangible, non-unique material benefits of wealth. Furthermore, the CWC framework emphasizes the intentionality required to effect positive social change or sustain a community's civic vitality. A new form of stakeholder theory is used to address the purposeful activities involved in determining and achieving civic-level objectives. Instrumental stakeholder views are employed to examine how communities having common goals create civic wealth via the interplay of many stakeholders with distinct but common interests. Accordingly, the study focuses on 'how can we create positive social change and sustainable impact?' and studies 'how multilateral work collectively in the process of social transformation?'

Finally, This study focuses on how does the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation take place in Sri Lanka? This is a cross-industry study using tourism and agricultural sectors.

Anticipated benefits of the study

- The study will contribute to a rising area in entrepreneurship, that of the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation in an emerging context.

- The findings of this study would contribute to the current entrepreneurship literature by creating knowledge on the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation.

- The study helps the entrepreneurs articulate new strategies and redefine the existing strategies to develop and sustain tourism and agricultural entrepreneurship by identifying the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation. Since tourism and agriculture are prominent strategic sectors in the economy, this will enhance both individual and societal benefits.

- The findings of the study will help policymakers, entrepreneurship education providers, and business development support service providers understand how to use the entrepreneurial ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation for a broader socio-economic transformation identifying cross-sectoral and other contextual differences.

2.2 Briefly outline your method

The study follows a qualitative approach. This focuses on studying how does the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation take place in Sri Lanka? Seeing the reality of being a part of the culture or institution of the real people. The study uses the Case Study Research (CSR) approach as it recommends investigating a complicated and under-explored domain, which researches a current phenomenon inside its real-world setting (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The proposed study relies on a multiple case study approach. Since this is a cross-sectoral study, two cases will be selected from the tourism and agricultural industries in Sri Lanka. Small and medium tourism entrepreneurs will be the respondents of this tourism case study, and they will be selected according to the tourism establishments report by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2020b) and the list of distribution of accommodation capacity available in 2019 published by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2020a). For the agricultural case, agricultural entrepreneurs will be selected proportionately for collecting data according to the sectors specified by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2021). The definition presented by the Department of Census and Statistics (2018) will be used for identifying smallholding entrepreneurs.

In-depth interviews will be used as the primary mode of collecting data in this study. Purposive sampling will be used in selecting participants for the interviews. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested, data collection will stop when theoretical saturation has been reached. Thematic analysis will be selected in this study to analyze qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a means for analyzing qualitative data (interview transcripts, social media profiles, et cetera) involving the search of recurrent patterns [ideas, topics] through a set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.3 Describe plans to give participants information about the research goals.

The aims of the study and any other pertinent information will be fully disclosed in the Participant Information Sheet used for data gathering. Furthermore, the researcher will inform participants verbally about the goals of the study and assure them that the information is being collected for scholarly purposes. The Participant Information Sheet and the Consent form will be sent to the respondents two weeks before data collection begins. Channels of the Tourism Development Authority (to connect with the tourism entrepreneurs) and Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and Division Secretariat offices (to connect with the agricultural entrepreneurs) will be used in communicating. Consent forms signed by the participants who wish to participate in the interview are obtained from the relevant institutions. The researcher then prepares a final list of entrepreneurs to be selected and joins them for the interviews. Primarily the meetings are conducted physically, visiting the entrepreneurs, and dates and times for the interviews will be scheduled at their convenience upon consent.

2.4 Identify the expected outputs of this research (e.g., reports, publications, presentations), including who is likely to see or hear the reports or presentations on this research

- The doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Waikato, New Zealand, will be the principal outcome. Furthermore, several publications and conferences are being targeted as publishing avenues for the time being.

- The targeted research journals are the Global Strategy Journal, Journal of Small Business Management, Journal of Business Venturing, International Business Review, Journal of Knowledge Management, Journal of Business Research, Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, Journal of International Business Studies, Sri Lankan Journal of Entrepreneurship, Vidyodaya Journal of Management.

- Targeted research conferences are the Australia and New Zealand Academy of Management (ANZAM) Conference, Academy of Management Conference, Annual Waikato Management School Student Research Conference, and International Conference on Business Management organized by the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

- Academics, practicing entrepreneurs, policymakers, doctoral candidates, and students in Sri Lanka would be the target audience of this study. Published academic journal articles will be widely accessible to students, academic staff, and subscribers of the journals.

2.5 Identify the physical location(s) for the research, the group or community your potential participants belong, and any private data or documents you will seek to access. Describe how you have access to the site, participants, and data/documents. Identify how you obtain(ed) permission from relevant authorities/gatekeepers if appropriate and any conditions associated with access.

- The initial preparation of the study is carried out from Sri Lanka, and communication is done through Zoom meetings, and the data location and target participants are in Sri Lanka. The criteria mentioned in section 3.1 will be the foundation for selecting participants.
- The in-depth semi-structured interviews are designed to collect data about study questions and not elicit private data. The questions about the entrepreneur perspective, experience, and insights on the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation will be collected throughout the interview. If any of the responses inquire about private data, the researcher is responsible for ensuring the respondent's psychological and emotional safety. Additionally, the researcher ensures that the participant's anonymity in

publishing research outcomes (journal papers, conferences, proceedings, and Ph.D. thesis). Furthermore, the researcher permits the respondent to terminate or withdraw from the interview at their discretion if they are distressed or uninterested in responding.

- The researcher will obtain the consent of respondents to participate in the interviews through the Tourism Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and Divisional Secretariat. The researcher himself will conduct the interviews. If the travel restrictions imposed due to the COVID 19 pandemic interrupt traveling to some parts of the country, a virtual method will be selected with the respondents' consent.

3. OBTAIN PARTICIPANTS' INFORMED CONSENT, WITHOUT COERCION.

3.1 Describe how you will select participants (e.g., special criteria or characteristics) and how many will be involved.

Prospective participants (Tourism and Agricultural Entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka) will be contacted and asked their willingness to participate via the Tourism Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and Divisional Secretariat.

The following criteria will be used to select participants for the study.

- Small and medium tourism and agricultural entrepreneurs.
- The definition given by the National Policy Framework for Small and Medium Enterprise Development (Ministry of Industry and Commerce, 2015) will be used In selecting tourism entrepreneurs. Accordingly, the SMEs' annual turnover must be between LKR 16 Mn. to LKR 750 Mn, and the number of employees should be between 11 to 200.
- The definition presented by the Department of Census and Statistics (2018) will be used for identifying smallholding entrepreneurs. Accordingly, agri-entrepreneurs with less than 20 acres of their land will be selected for the study.
- The firm must be registered at the Tourism Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and Divisional Secretariat or Registrar of Companies.

The data will be gathered without regard for a predefined number of participants, as it is not necessary to establish the number and kind of participants in advance (Taylor et al., 2015). As Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested, data collection will stop when theoretical saturation has been reached. i.e., the point at which no or little new information will be extracted from the data (Guest et al., 2013).

3.2 Describe how you will invite them to participate.

Participants will be contacted through the Tourism Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and Divisional Secretariat instead of directly approaching the researcher to encourage their willingness to participate in the interview. When it comes to contacting ventures directly in Sri Lanka, there are no legal stipulations. The researcher contacts the respondents through the closest formal authorities to establish credibility and confidence.

The Consent form (Annex 1) and the Participant Information Sheet (Annex 2) will be sent to the respondents two weeks before data collection begins. The researcher will send the documents to the participants via the Development Officers attached to the Divisional Secretariats and Tourism Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, Department of Export Agriculture, and Division Secretariat offices to communicate. Consent forms signed by the participants who wish to participate in the interview are obtained from the relevant institutions. The researcher then prepares a final list of entrepreneurs to be selected and joins them for the interviews.

3.3 Show how you provide prospective participants with all information relevant to their decision to participate. Attach your information sheet, cover letter, or introduction script. See document on informed consent for recommended content. Information should include, but is not limited to:

- **what you will ask them to do;**
- **how to refuse to answer any particular question, or withdraw any information they have provided at any time before completion of data collection;**
- **how and when to ask any further questions about the study or get more information.**
- **the form in which the findings will be disseminated and how participants can access a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.**

The participants who have been selected will be contacted by telephone to schedule the date, time, and location for the interview. Interview appointments will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for the participant. Additionally, during the interview, the researcher may ask some follow-up questions to obtain additional clarification after each question. The respondent has the option of declining to answer any questions throughout the interview, and he or she has the option to cancel the interview at any time if he or she so desires.

Participants will be informed on the Participant Information Sheet that they have the right to withdraw from the study without giving any reason within one month of the data collection being completed. It is possible to notify the researcher of their decision to withdraw within one month of the data collection via email or phone. All the researcher's primary and alternative contact information will also be provided in the information sheet distributed to the participants.

Each participant will be assigned a unique identification number that will be used to identify them in future communications. Participants can contact the researcher using the provided contact information if they require any explanation after completing the data collection or any questions about the study's findings. They should provide the unique number in their correspondence. The completion of the study will be communicated to the participants, and if anyone is interested in knowing the findings, they will be disclosed when the thesis has been completed. In addition to the thesis and publications, the findings of the study will be presented at conferences and other venues. It is anticipated that the Participant Information Sheet will include information on the participants' right to seek a summary of the findings after the thesis has been completed. According to the information sheet, all acquired data will be destroyed three years following the thesis submission date, which has also been communicated to the participants.

3.4 Describe how you get their consent. (Attach a consent form if you use one.)

Tourism Development Authority, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Export Agriculture, and the Divisional Secretariat will each provide the consent form to the prospective participants of the study. These organizations will gather signed consent forms and a list of participants who have voluntarily decided to take part in the interview from those who have expressed an interest in participating. Following that, the researcher will contact the participants who have been selected.

3.5 Explain incentives and/or compulsion for participants to be involved in this study, including monetary payment, prizes, goods, services, or favors, either directly or indirectly.

There are no direct financial or non-financial incentives to participating in research. Their motivation is their satisfaction in connecting to a study that focuses on developing and sustaining Sri Lankan entrepreneurship. Also, the policies and strategies formulated based on the findings of this study will benefit them and the country as a whole.

4. MINIMISE DECEPTION.

4.1 If your research involves deception – this includes incomplete information to participants -- explain the rationale. Describe how and when you will provide full information or reveal the complete truth about the research including reasons for the deception.

This research does not involve deception.

5. RESPECT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

5.1 Explain how any publications and/or reports will have the participants' consent.

As previously stated in section 2.4, the thesis, conference publications, and journal publications will be the primary deliverables of the research study. The Participant Information Sheet is detailed, with a section mentions the participant's consent to publish the research outputs in the forms mentioned above. Before providing their consent, participants will be required to read the information sheet provided.

5.2 Explain how you will protect participants' identities (or why you will not).

A unique identification number will be assigned to each interviewee (interviewee 1, interviewee 2…interviewee n), and the researcher will do all the communication using that identification number only. Further, the subsequent data presentations of all the forms of publications (the thesis, journal articles, and conference proceedings) will follow the assigned numbers. The transcripts and recordings of the interviews will be saved on the researcher's computer, which will be password-protected. Furthermore, the hard copies and the voice recorder will be kept safe in a cabinet in the researcher's office until the project is completed. The researcher will be the only one who has access to the cabinet's lock and key.

5.3 Describe who will have access to the information/data collected from participants. Explain how you will protect or secure confidential information.

The researcher and his two supervisors will have access to the data gathered.

6. MINIMISE RISK TO PARTICIPANTS.

'Risk' includes physical injury, economic injury (i.e., insurability, credibility), social risk (i.e. working relationships), psychological risk, pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, and cultural dissonance and exploitation.

6.1 Where participants risk change from participating in this research compared to their daily lives, identify that risk and explain how your procedures minimize the consequences.

First and foremost, psychological obstacles will be reduced by clearly explaining the study's objectives and assuring participants that the data will be utilized solely for academic research purposes. However, if any of the responses ask for private information, the researcher ensures the respondent's psychological and emotional well-being during the interview. A 5 to 10-minute break will be given if the researcher sees that the subject is experiencing any distress while conducting the interview. If the researcher notices any indicators of discomfort in the subject while conducting the study, he or she will be referred to a counseling facility for further evaluation. If the participant requests it, the researcher will arrange for him or her to meet with a counselor or a psychotherapist. As long as the participant does not require this, the researcher will respectfully exit the premises.

The participants' interviews will be planned according to their time availability, and the interviews will only be conducted at the participants' convenience. As a result, there will be no significant disruption to the participant's regular schedule.

6.2 Describe any way you are associated with participants that might influence the ethical appropriateness of you conducting this research – either favorably (e.g., same language or culture) or unfavourably (e.g., dependent relationships such as employer/employee, supervisor/worker, lecturer/student). As appropriate, describe the steps you will take to protect the participants.

In collecting data for this study, the researcher always respects the participants' cultures and their other peculiarities. During the data collection process, it is not expected that there would be any cultural conflicts, language hurdles, or any other sort of improper misbehavior. In order to communicate effectively, the majority of Sri Lankan entrepreneurs would choose either Sinhalese or Tamil as their first language, with the other as a second language. As a result, interviews will be performed in a language that is understandable to the participant. Primarily the researcher is fluent in the Sinhala language, and the service of a Tamil Language translator will be taken when necessary. The discomfort caused by language between the participant and the researcher is eliminated through this.

6.3 Describe any possible conflicts of interest and explain how you will protect participants' interests and maintain your objectivity.

There is no expectation of a conflict of interest between the researcher and the study participant. Explanation of the study's goal in written form (Participant Information Sheet) will aid in the reduction of any conflicts of interest. Furthermore, because the research is an independent scholarly endeavor, no other entity will be able to influence the interpretation of the data in any manner. Participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw their consent at any time within one month of the data collection being completed. The researcher will maintain a professional approach at all times.

7. EXERCISE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY.

7.1 Identify any areas in your research that are potentially sensitive, especially from participants' perspectives. Explain what you do to ensure your research procedures are sensitive (unlikely to be insensitive). Demonstrate familiarity with the culture as appropriate.

The researcher will outline the purpose of the research to the participants and provide them the Participant Information Sheet. There will be no sensitive or humiliating questions presented during the interview that could cause distress to the participants. Additionally, one of Sri Lanka's psychologists will review the interview guide to ensure that it does not contain any culturally sensitive information.

The researcher was born in Sri Lanka and had many first-hand experiences working with entrepreneurs in each corner of the country. Therefore, the researcher has a thorough understanding of the culture. The researcher will invite entrepreneurs and communicate with them in a preferred language by the participants, which will eliminate the cultural and language discomforts. When it requires the service of a language translator, he or she will be selected through a reasonable background investigation and recommendation of an authorized organization.

7.2 **If the participants as a group differ from the researcher in ways relevant to the research, describe your procedures to ensure the research is culturally safe and non-offensive for the participants.**

The research will be conducted in the researcher's home country, Sri Lanka, where the researcher thoroughly understands the prevalent culture and entrepreneurship roots. The sole difference between the study participant and the researcher is that the researcher is in a different profession. However, as the researcher has over ten years of first-hand experience in entrepreneurship development working with entrepreneurs, a productive professional relationship can be established.

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Appendix E: Letters Sent to the Participants

ජී.එම්. චන්න ගජනායක
ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ කථිකාචාර්ය
ව්‍යවසායකත්ව අධ්‍යයනාංශය
කළමනාකරණ අධ්‍යයන හා වාණිජවිද්‍යා පීඨය
ශ්‍රී ජයවර්ධනපුර විශ්වවිද්‍යාලය, ශ්‍රී ලංකාව.

ආචාර්ය උපාධි පර්යේෂක
කළමනාකරණ සහ අලෙවිකරණ පාසල
වයිකාටෝ විශ්වවිද්‍යාලය
හැමිල්ටන් 3240, නවසීලන්තය

2022 අගෝස්තු 18

මහත්මයාණෙනි/මහත්මියනි
පර්යේෂණයක සාකච්ඡාවකට සහභාගී වීම
චන්න ගජනායක වන මා ශ්‍රී ජයවර්ධනපුර විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ, කළමනාකරණ අධ්‍යයන හා වාණිජවිද්‍යා පීඨයේ, ව්‍යවසායකත්ව අධ්‍යයනාංශයේ ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ කථිකාචාර්යවරයකු ලෙස සේවය කරමි. දැනට, මා නවසීලන්තයේ වයිකාටෝ විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ ආචාර්ය උපාධිය හදාරමින් සිටින අතර "ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සංචාරක සහ කෘෂිකාර්මික අංශවල ව්‍යවසායකත්ව පරිසර පද්ධතියේ, සාමූහික ව්‍යවසායකත්වයේ සහ ප්‍රජා ධනය නිර්මාණය කිරීමේ අන්තර් ක්‍රියාකාරීත්වය" පිළිබඳව පර්යේෂණයක් සිදු කරමි. මෙම පර්යේෂණයේ ප්‍රතිඵල ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ සංචාරක හා කෘෂිකාර්මික ව්‍යවසායකත්වයේ ඉදිරි දියුණුවට යොදා ගැනීම පිණිස අවශ්‍ය පාර්ශවයන් සමග කටයුතු කිරීමට අපේක්ෂා කරමි.
මා විසින් බෙදා හරින ලද සබැඳියට ඔබගේ සම්බන්ධතා තොරතුරු ඉදිරිපත් කිරීමෙන් මෙම අධ්‍යයනයට ඔබගේ අදහස් ලබා දීමට ඔබ කැමැත්ත පළකර ඇත. පළමුව මෙම අධ්‍යයනයට සහභාගී වීමට එකඟ වීම ගැන මම ඔබට ස්තූතිවන්ත වෙමි. මෙය Zoom හෝ WhatsApp මගින් පවත්වන කෙටි සාකච්ඡාවක් වන අතර ඔබගේ අදහස් ලබා ගැනීමට විනාඩි 30-45ක කාලයක් ගතවනු ඇත. සාකච්ඡාව සඳහා ඔබගෙන් දිනයක් සහ වේලාවක් වෙන් කර ගැනීම සඳහා මම නැවත ඔබ හා සම්බන්ධ වෙමි.
මේ සම්බන්ධයෙන් ඔබගේ සහයෝගය ඉතා අගය කොට සලකමි.
ස්තූතියි
මෙයට
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ජී.එම්. චන්න ගජනායක
ආචාර්ය උපාධි පර්යේෂක
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හැමිල්ටන් 3240, නවසීලන්තය
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1

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Doctoral Researcher
School of Management and Marketing
University of Waikato
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand

18th August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

Participating in a Research Discussion

I, Channa Gajanayaka, serve as a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Entrepreneurship Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. Currently, I am pursuing my doctoral studies at the University of Waikato, New Zealand and I'm doing a study on "The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors in Sri Lanka". I look forward to working with the relevant parties to utilize the results of this study for the future development of tourism and agricultural entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka.

You have expressed your interest to provide insights into this study, by submitting your contact information via the link that I have shared. First I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. This is a short discussion conducted through 'Zoom' or 'WhatsApp' which takes 30-45 minutes to get your insights. I will contact you again to reserve a date and time for the discussion.

I highly appreciate your support in this regard.

Thank you

Yours Sincerely

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+642902099856

Appendix F: Participant Information Sheet

Attachment 01

Participant Information Sheet

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural Sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective.

Overview

My name is Gajanayaka Mudiyanselage Channa Jayampathi Bandara Gajanayaka, and I am a PhD candidate in Management and Sustainability at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. This study mainly focuses on 'how does the interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation take place in Sri Lanka?'

What will you have to do and how long will it take?

You are invited to participate because I believe that you are someone who can provide the information for the research project titled *"The interplay of the entrepreneurship ecosystem, collective entrepreneurship, and civic wealth creation in the tourism and agricultural sectors- A Sri Lankan perspective"*. Before providing your information, please read and understand the "Participant Information Sheet" and the "Consent Form for Participants" attached herewith. If you are willing to participate in the interview, you have to present your ideas, opinions and insights to the questions, which will take 60-90 minutes of your time.

You have the right to refuse to answer any questions, and you can terminate or withdraw from the interview at any point, if you feel that you are distressed or uninterested in responding. It is possible to notify the researcher of your decision to withdraw even within one month of the data collection via email or phone. However, please inform the researcher of your withdrawal decision through any of the contacts given below.

What will happen to the information collected?

I will be the only person involved in collecting the data. The collected information will only be available to the two supervisors and me. The Participants' identity will keep confidential throughout the process. Participants will not be named, and I assign the number for each only for analysis purposes. Therefore, your real names will not appear in the research reports or any publications.

The collected information will be used only for study purposes such as my PhD thesis, journal publications, and academic conferences. Further, one copy of the data will be securely held with the supervisors. After completing the study, all the hard copies of questionnaires and other relevant documents will be destroyed as per the University of Waikato guidelines. Furthermore, I will keep all the digital data in a protected hard drive with a securely stored password for three years after the completion of the study.

Declaration to participants

Hereby I declare the interview data will be used only for academic purposes, and the data will be held confidentially while ensuring the participant's anonymity. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact either:

Researcher:
Gajanayaka Mudiyanselage Channa Jayampathi Bandara Gajanayaka (Student ID: 1521401)
School of Marketing and Management
University of Waikato, New Zealand
Mobile: +94 71 222 5080
Email: channa@sjp.ac.lk

Chief Supervisor:
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In addition, this research project has been viewed by and received ethics approval from the University of Waikato's Human Research Committee. If you have any questions or concerns relating to ethics, please contact:

Research & Postgraduate Research Manager - Waikato Management School

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Hamilton 3240
The University of Waikato, New Zealand

Appendix G: Consent Form

Attachment 02

Consent Form for Participants

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Interplay of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Collective Entrepreneurship, and Civic Wealth Creation in the Tourism and Agricultural sectors- A Sri Lankan Perspective.

Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Information Sheet for Participants** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within one month of data collection or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.

☐ I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet** form.

Signed: ____

Name: ____

Date: ____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Researcher:
Gajanayaka Mudiyanselage Channa Jayampathi Bandara Gajanayaka (Student ID: 1521401)
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