

In the face of crisis, we have a plan B

Ante la crisis tenemos un plan B

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Resumen

Cuando parecía que los momentos más difíciles de la última gran recesión quedaban atrás, en 2020 la COVID-19 vuelve a hacer tambalear un sistema globalizado. Fenómenos como los ciberataques a gran escala, las crisis financieras, el cambio climático o las pandemias, que emergen cada vez a una mayor velocidad, han pasado a ser riesgos sistémicos endémicos. Es tal la interconexión que la transformación del modelo de desarrollo actual parece ineludible. El renovado paradigma de lo común, conformado por iniciativas cooperativas (auto) transformativas, y su cristalización en las Empresas B, que van más allá del objetivo de generar ganancias económicas procurando maximizar su impacto positivo a través de una gobernanza y liderazgo innovadores, parecen posibilitar una mayor sostenibilidad ambiental y social y una mayor justicia, solidaridad y autonomía humana. Mediante una revisión bibliográfica para la identificación de las singulares características de los líderes de las Empresas B y sus modos de gobierno abiertos y cooperativos, este artículo contribuye a una comprensión de la contribución que el paradigma de lo común realiza a las problemáticas sociales que desde lo local han adquirido una escala global.

Palabras clave: liderazgo; empresas b; transformación; innovación

Abstract

Just when it seemed that the most difficult moments of the last great recession were behind us, 2020's COVID-19 shakes up a globalized system once again. Phenomena such as large-scale cyber-attacks, financial crises, climate change or pandemics, which are emerging at an ever-increasing speed, have become endemic systemic risks. The interconnectedness even makes the transformation of the current development model seem inescapable. The renewed commons paradigm, made up of (self) transformative cooperative initiatives, and its crystallization in B corporations which go beyond the objective of generating economic profits, seeking to maximize their positive impact through innovative governance and leadership, seem to make possible greater environmental and social sustainability, and greater human justice, solidarity and autonomy. Through a bibliographic review to identify the unique characteristics of B-corporation leaders and their open and cooperative modes of governance, this article promotes deeper understanding of how the commons paradigm contributes to social problems that have transitioned from a local to a global scale.

key words: Leadership, B corporations, transformation, innovation

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1. Introduction

The financial crisis of 2008 has (re)occurred in many places in the world and has been related to other crises in multiple dimensions —political, social, environmental and, most recently, health. When it seemed that the most difficult moments of the last great recession were behind us, 2020's COVID-19 disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, has shaken up a globalized system once again.

Phenomena such as large-scale cyberattacks, financial crises, climate change or pandemics that emerge with increasing speed (Smith et al., 2014) have become endemic systemic risks (Goldin & Mariathan, 2015). The crisis is not isolated nor stagnant, it is rather a bundle or a sum of crises mixed so intimately with each other that it is hard to distinguish its causes and effects (Ramonet, 2011). The structural and planetary economic, geopolitical, environmental, social and cultural consequences that COVID-19 has already caused (Goldin & Muggah, 2020) are examples of this.

The interconnection between these dimensions is such that it is complex not to question the neoliberal development model that was imposed since the 1980s (IMF, 2016). A globalized model focused on the individual interest as the engine of progress, fostering competition as opposed to solidarity claiming to provide welfare through two main processes: economic growth and efficiency (Berzosa, 2013; Herrero, 2010; Unceta, 2009; Latouche, 2008). In fact, what some have come to consider the consequences of a systemic crisis (Ramonet, 2011; Bartra, 2009; Beinstein, 2009; Petras, 2009; Veltmeyer, 2009) are for others the turbulence generated by the transition towards a distinct socioeconomic model that is yet to be defined (Subirats & Vallespin, 2015; Streeck, 2011; Bauman, 1999). Definition of an alternative model that needs the transition itself to gain precision and clarity. A transition in which, among other structural issues, need to be addressed: 1) environmentally and socially unsustainable production processes, 2) poverty and global social and economic inequalities, 3) the role and interrelations between public, social and business institutions.

Faced with this new scenario, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2020) seem to propose an alternative way of dealing with the systemic crises mentioned above. These include objectives that appeal to the convergence and alignment of the capabilities and forces of all kinds of interest groups, as if they were great human missions (Mazzucato, 2018: 4-6). The transition to a more ecologically and socially sustainable model seems to be a horizon shared by both international public organizations (UN, 2018) and by the 193 countries committed to and adhering to the 17 SDGs and the respective laws, policies and programs that they develop nationally.

The work they carry out is being complemented, strengthened and in some cases questioned in order to produce more structural transformations by other initiatives that would form part of what is known as the commons paradigm. Initiatives and actors that are not framed within the State or public institutions nor the private-market sphere, which from the local democratic and autonomous experimental practice seem to create real paths not only towards greater environmental and social sustainability but also against poverty and inequality and towards greater justice, solidarity and human autonomy. In fact, as recognized by the United Nations in its SDGs (2016), the alignment of the public institutions at its multiple scales together with its recognition and support of collective and community based initiatives that are already moving towards more sustainable and just scenarios could become one of the central elements in the resolution of global challenges such as, poverty, hunger, gender equality, or climate change (UN, 2019; Comodi et al., 2012).

Communal resource management (Chamoux & Contreras, 1996), government of the commons (Ostrom, 2011), democracy of the commons (Subirats, 2011), commons (Lafuente, 2007) or common-instituting praxis (Laval & Dardot, 2015) are conceptualizations that, over time, have recurrently aimed to show collective ways of managing social goods, different from those that would come from what is understood as the public-state and

the private-commercial sector, which also reach and encompass typically corporate legal figures. Bypassing the paternalistic relationship with the public sector and/or the acceptance of market forces, the commons show the possibilities and potential of collective self-organization for the management of the different social goods that make up the repertoire of resources from which different societies are built and developed.

Contrary to ideas such as G. Hardin's in *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968), or statements regarding how free wealth for all is valued by no-one, because the individual who waits for their proper time to use such wealth will simply find that it has been taken by another (Gordon, 1954: 135), the extensive field analyses carried out and compiled by scientists such as E. Ostrom (2011) clearly show that self-organized management systems for common property resources are real and valid alternatives that can develop high levels of sophistication and that, in most cases, obtain better results than those predicted by classical economic theory.

In the varied ecosystem that comprises the commons, a diverse conglomerate of companies with a social and ecological orientation has a specific presence and capabilities. The case in which this article delves is the B Corp movement.

2. The unappealable reality of the commons

As in countless places in the world, in our environment, there are multiple practices that are part of the commons. In fact, this praxis does not stop continually emerging and consolidating. We are faced with a vast, rich, diverse, and dynamic constellation of local and collective (self) transformative practices. The following are just an small sample of this reality: 1) the *Guifi.net* experience (Guifi.net), which operates throughout the Iberian peninsula but incorporates the specificities of the different regions, is an open and participatory project that is organized horizontally which aims to generate interconnections in which the infrastructure belongs to everyone and guarantees the openness, neutrality and freedom of the internet; 2) *Goienet*, a cooperative project for the generation and consumption of a basic good such as energy with which energy sovereignty would be recovered through a model change in which consumption is entirely renewable and responsible; 3) the aforementioned *Auzolan*, a forum for coordination and cooperation that stimulates the start-up of community groups and projects in all the municipalities of the Basque Country; 4) *Ekhi*, an initiative that, through the implementation of a collectively and democratically managed social currency, local businesses adhere to a set of values and behaviors related to equity, sustainability, gender equality and the promotion of culture and contribute to the recovery of monetary and economic sovereignty; 5) *Goteo*, a social network for collective financing and distributed collaboration which promotes the autonomous development of creative and innovative initiatives that contribute to the development of the commons, free knowledge and/or open source; 6) *Mecambio*, an initiative in which it is possible to find suppliers from any field of activity that promote forms of consumption and sustainable, fair, distributed production and that in turn generate a sense of community beyond the supplier-client separation; 7) *Etxekoop*, a cooperative of social initiative that aims to provide its members with access to socially, economically and environmentally sustainable housing and complementary services related to energy, water, waste, communication, mobility and others; 8) *Baserritik*, a project that encourages the cooperation of a large number of agricultural workers, through the union of the variety of foods they produce and the provision of the tools necessary for their sale; or 9) *Arreglamicalle*, a meeting place for citizens and municipalities for the management of incidents in the municipality —more specifically, an online platform that helps local corporations effectively manage incidents through citizen participation. 10) The movement of B companies, which through an alternative approach to the market logic aim to offer concrete solutions to social and environmental problems.

2.1. Delving into the contemporary conception of the commons

The commons are not only formulas of self-government that coexist with the dynamics of what is understood as common in its State form and by the private-mercantile. According to C. Laval and P. Dardot (2015), the common

encompasses all those (self) transformative activities produced by subjects who, through joint action, are capable of creating new institutions in constant change in search of higher levels of human autonomy. The commons play a determining role, not only in the political and social sphere but also in today's economic and cultural production (Bollier, 2003; Rifkin 2014).

In fact, there is an immense universe of grassroots social and innovative initiatives in all spheres of life, in rural and industrialized environments, that are meeting needs that neither the market economy nor the power of the State are covering. The constellation of the commons worldwide is so vast that there are not still global figures. As an example of the relevance of the commons and just focused on the common lands, land owned and governed collectively by a number of persons, in England there are 7,000 registered commons (IASC, 2020).

Nevertheless, the commons are not just small-scale projects that improve our daily lives, but they form a germinal approach to re-imagining our future together and reinventing social organization, the economy, infrastructure, politics and state power itself. The commons is a social framework for people to be free without repressing others, to enact equity without bureaucratic control, to promote solidarity without coercion, and to assert sovereignty without nationalism (Bollier et al, 2019). The great goal of the commons is not just the sustainable use and consumption of resources. The commons pretend to break with the logic of the impoverishment of a majority for the benefit of a minority. Their aim is to develop a social economy with different logics and values, alternative to the traditional dual system of private-market and public-state.

Communal management formulas are not a novel practice, not at least in all its aspects. Traditionally, the concept of common goods or those also named by E. Ostrom as Common Pool Sources (2011) were mainly limited to self-management models of natural resources such as water, land or forests. However, the incessant advances that are taking place today in areas such as biotechnology or Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), through their impact on intellectual and cultural assets, as well as the greater political awareness and social aspects of some segments of society, have facilitated the penetration of the notion of the commons in previously unimaginable environments, endowing it with previously unknown potential. From ancestral experiences such as the Valencia Water Court (Ostrom, 2011: 135-155), to the robust online social order and economy that is free of customary commercial constraints created by self-organized people through the use of free software and Creative Commons licenses (Bollier, 2009), or the cooperativism based on collaborative production and mutual aid, the economic life of the commons, and the social organization of many local communities (Vieta, 2010), show the great diversity of forms that communal praxis can acquire. Thus, historical examples of communal management, such as forests, fisheries, or groundwater resources, are increasingly complemented by a more comprehensive set of domains: knowledge commons, digital commons, urban commons, health commons, cultural commons, business commons, etc.

It is possible to understand, therefore, that the commons are experiences of self-government that, embodied in collective action, are oriented towards autonomy and social and ecological justice. A heterogeneous and diverse conglomerate of practices, also related to business, that configure the common instituting praxis. Transformative formulas of self-government of human beings, institutions and the rules that are given to order their mutual relationships (Laval & Dardot, 2015: 519). This ancestral but renewed way of conceiving our relationship with natural, social, and cultural wealth could be promoting the creation of alternative social enterprises aimed at higher levels of social and ecological justice.

2.2. The transforming potential of commoning

The mode of government chosen in a community for the management of goods, as well as the ethical principles and the purpose of this community that make a practice, also related to business, part of the common. As stated by Zubero (2013), the so-called common goods are not mere goods, they are not "things" separate from us; they

are not even just shared goods. They are social practices of commoning based on the principles of sharing, caring, and producing in common (Zubero, 2013: 26). In other words, the decision of a group to organize itself to manage a good based on solidarity, social and ecological justice (Byrne & Glover, 2002: 10), relying on democratic values such as freedom, equality or fraternity, are the elements that promote commoning.

Commoning means that the common can be (re)produced. It comprises social practices for the management of shared resources, which cannot only mean the recovery of assets that were once the subject of common practice, but could also reinvent the modes of government of those who have traditionally been delegated to the market logic or the State. It is the action and not the resource that constitutes the common. In the same way that any good can be transferred from public management to market management, they could also be subject to common practice.

From this perspective of social and economic practice, the commons can be seen as a bet for the future, in a way of relating, cooperating and self-organizing that has always existed and that is once again placed on the academic, political, economic and social. In the opening speech of the 2010 International Conference on Commons, D. Bollier conveys the following message:

We know that our strength is based on the fact that we are involved and socially committed not as mere consumers or as rootless cosmopolitans. We celebrate our differences, even in the fight for the development of a new type of global solidarity based on common models of resource management: our land, our water, our social infrastructure, our money, our energy resources, our creativity and knowledge, our social life. In each place, in each historical situation, common goods can be manifested in different ways, but always with a spirit of the common (Bollier, 2010).

Thus, any good can be the object of collective and common self-government as long as it is impregnated with the ethical principles indicated above, such as ecological and social justice. From the great diversity of self-organized models influenced by factors such as the typology of the property to be managed or the cultural particularities rooted in local communities, the commons seem to be showing a real alternative to the traditional logic of the State and the market.

2.3. The influence of the commons in the public, private and social spheres

The commons deeply put into question the convictions and beliefs about the most optimal management formulas for all kinds of goods, showing that there is an infinite number of ways to organize socially, not just private-commercial or public-state. In addition to discussing, through praxis, the mere existence of three separate and unique spheres of the public, the private and the social sphere, the common also contains the potential to influence their purposes, models of government and values. Some examples are practices such as *Goienet* for ecological energy management, *Guifi.net* for the provision of a free and neutral internet, *Etxekoop* for the solution of problems of access to housing in a cooperative way, or some B corporations.

Questioning socially constructed spaces and institutions favors the inoculation of values such as global solidarity, social and ecological justice, fraternity and equity to the rest of the spheres.

Thus, traditional public management, influenced by the common, would tend to higher levels of citizen participation and transparency. It could even be said that there would be greater democratization of the public. Proposals such as good government or open government are not a novelty in this sense. Similarly, organizations traditionally located in the social sphere, would come closer to the idea of the common to the extent that they were more autonomous from the Public Administrations and presented more participatory and democratic modes of government. Mercantile companies altered by common values and ways of doing things would possibly present higher levels of social and ecological awareness, generalizing practices such as, by all known, corporate

social responsibility or even popularizing proposals such as the economy of the common good or Social and Solidarity Companies whose development and consolidation is part of the strategy of the European Union (2018).

2.4. The principles of the commons that decide the involvement of people

In this moment of profound transformations of hitherto known social, economic, political and cultural institutions, during which environmental problems stress the urgency of change, the commons must contribute in terms of business so that the transition to a socially and ecologically sustainable and just global society can be as painless and humane as possible. For this task, it is essential to determine the concrete principles of the common that, in turn, make it possible to appeal to the change actors themselves; and facilitate the articulation of different visions, fields of work, as well as reflection and action (see Figure 1).

Table 1
Breakdown of the normative and applied dimension of the common

Normative dimensions	Applied dimensions
1. Reciprocity and co-activity	1.1 Cooperative governance
	1.2 Generation of networks
2. Human autonomy	2.1 Voluntary association
	2.2 Self-sufficiency and autonomy
3. Social justice	3.1 Mechanisms to promote equality and reduce the risk of exclusion
	3.2 Democratization
	3.3 Non-profit activity
	3.4 Socioeconomic externalities
4. Ecological justice	4.1 Environmental technologies
	4.2 Circular activity
	4.3 Environmental externalities
5. Scalability	5.1 by expansion
	5.2 by reproduction

Note: Own elaboration

The normative dimension refers to the values that indicate the desirable social goal of common practices, that are the source of the conduct within the group. This social goal is to be achieved through rules of behavior common to each member of the community. Each of the values that make up the normative dimension have a set of criteria related to the applied nature of the commons. This defines a norm of the commons that is specified, among others, in modes of government, technologies used, mechanisms to promote equality, specific to each common practice.

Above the material incentives that traditionally have seemed to be the fundamental decision-making elements to launch a business, the extensive existence of the commons worldwide and the principles they boost allow a more rigorous understanding of the underlying reasons of local communities and their members to coproduce

and consolidate socially and environmentally sustainable initiatives. Thus, the collective involvement and cooperation of people are essential to achieve this transformation. The people who make up these ordinary communities, also in their business aspect, and the leadership they may acquire at any time, undoubtedly have a series of values and motivations different from those produced in traditional companies (Roth & Winkler, 2018). As noted above, B corporations are an example of this, a type of company that uses market mechanisms to provide concrete solutions to social and environmental problems. The main purpose of the B corporation model is to promote positive social, economic and environmental change, but without ceasing to generate the value, profits and employment that traditional companies provide. They will be analyzed below.

3. B Corporations

The movement of companies constitutes in this sense a new model, which contributes and forms part of the commons paradigm. B corporations (Honeyman & Jana, 2019) are a type of company that uses the power of the market to give concrete solutions to social and environmental problems, aligned with the previously seen concepts of commoning, based on the principles of sharing, caring and producing in common. Among the distinctive features of these companies (Chen & Kelly, 2015), good governance, the obligation to maintain a reasonable distance between the highest and lowest wages, the search for an impact in all facets of the activity, and the promotion transparency and socio-environmental management stand out.

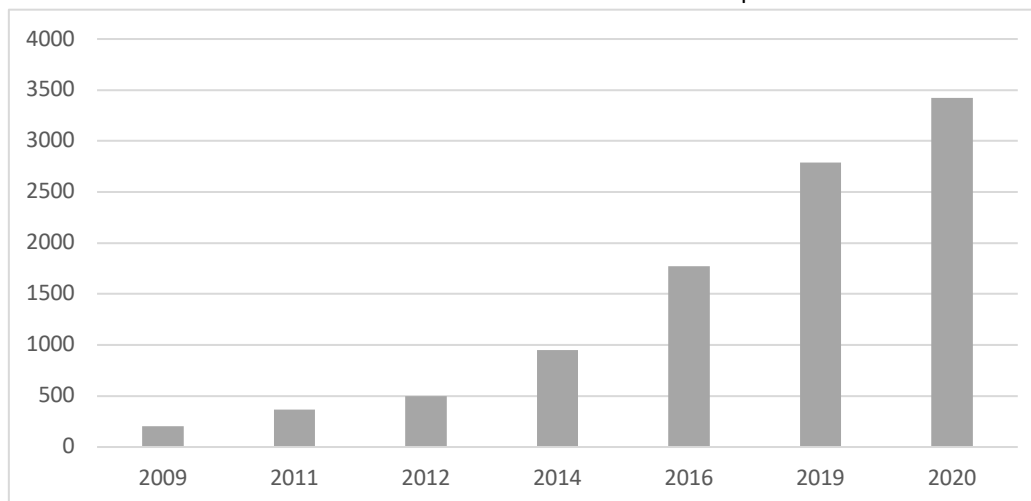
It emerged as an initiative of B Lab, a company co-founded in 2006 by Jay Coen Gilbert (Marquis, Klaber, & Thomason, 2010; Sanford, 2011) seeking to create the necessary conditions for companies that have a sustainable vocation to prosper.

Since then, the relevance, contribution and the processes boosted by B Corps towards a more sustainable and fair model has been the subject of many researches, analysis and debate among scholars (Gehman et al, 2019; Cao, Gehman, & Grimes, 2017). There are controversies over 1) the need for legislative changes to encourage the expansion of the B Corps (McDonell, 2017; Noken, 2012; Sneirson 2009), 2) the utility of the B corporation as an effective organization for implementing corporate social responsibility from the ethical perspective (André, 2012), 3) the opportunity of adding social and environmental dimensions of value to entrepreneurship (McMullen & Warnick, 2016), 4) the effective evaluation of the impacts of many different industries, policies, and practices (B Corporation, 2020), or 5) the efficacy of the choice of becoming in a B Corp taking into account the enhancement of the creation of a public benefit, as well as the improvements in accountability, transparency and stakeholder engagement (Del Baldo, 2019). B Lab and its Standards Advisory Council, is progressively addressing some of these controversial issues communicating the measures implemented in their official web page (B Corporation, 2020).

Despite these relevant debates, this new paradigm seems to have the potential and the chance of shifting the meaning of success in business, rethinking the purpose of companies in society (Westaway, 2012). In this sense, the financial performance of companies can be understood as an indispensable tool to achieve the objectives set by the company, but not as the ultimate goal (Hickman, Byrd & Hickman, 2014). The success of a company cannot be measured exclusively by its financial result, its turnover, or dividends, but it is of decisive importance how its business model integrates the benefits with the impact on society and the environment in a measurable and scalable way.

The number of B companies has been growing significantly year-by-year (Villela, Bulgacov, & Morgan, 2019). In May 2019, there were 2,788 certified B Corps in 64 countries, being South America the largest number of members and most active community outside of the US. Nowadays, there are 3,422 companies, 150 industries in 71 countries (B Corporation, n.d.).

Figure 1
Evolution of the number of certified B Corps



Note. Own elaboration from data of BCorporation.eu, visited on 17 July 2020

Thus, in a globalized market economy like the current one, the economic sustainability of B business initiatives becomes a lever for achieving the common goal of greater social and environmental justice.

Currently, there are more than a thousand (Sistemab, n.d.) companies worldwide that have obtained a B Corporation Certification (Wilburn & Wilburn, 2015), granted by the OSC B Lab (Bcorporation). This new model protects the company's mission, by statute, making sure that it meets its social and environmental purpose. B corporations have another way of understanding the market. Instead of being mainly focused on the profit maximization, they are committed to the contribution and generation of common value for all, along the lines of the commoning processes mentioned above. Thus, the integration of B models in traditional businesses encourages its approach to the paradigm of the common good.

B corporations are characterized by being innovative models that pursue Triple Impact (Cordes, 2014):

- 1) Purpose: creating a positive impact in the social and environmental spheres, aligned with the achievement of higher levels of social and environmental justice promoted and defended by the commons paradigm.
- 2) Responsibility: taking into account as a primary purpose the interests of workers, the community and the environment. This principle converges with the collective, cooperative and community vision of common instituting praxis. Without community, there is no praxis.
- 3) Transparency: publishing an annual report on the social and environmental impact certified by an external and independent body that can verify the data. It is linked to the normative principles of 1) reciprocity and co-activity and 2) human autonomy of the common (s). In this new paradigm, it is crucial to communicate and be accountable for the impacts generated by the business praxis.

B corporations have specific characteristics (see Table 2) that make them clearly distinguishable from the traditional business model.

Table 2
 Characteristics of B companies in relation to classic companies

B corporations	Traditional corporations
Commitment to creating a positive impact on society and the environment	Investment maximization and dividend distributions
Defends interests of employees, the environment and the community in general. Included in statutes.	Defends shareholder interests
Obligation of the certification process that protects the mission and enhances the triple positive impact in a transparent way	They may or may not enter quality processes, with a different level of involvement than companies B
Being interdependent, they are part of a global movement of companies for socially and environmentally sustainable and just transition	Being interdependent, they are mainly focused on boosting connections and relations with others in order to improve their business indicators and performance
Aim to transform the world into a better place to live	Obtaining economic performance
In case of sale, commitment of the person who acquires the company to continue with its same purpose	There is no compromise

Note: own elaboration

One of the benefits of being a B corporation (Lacovara, 2011) is being part of a global community of leaders who integrate the social and the environmental into the company's DNA. For these leaders, a company not only has to generate a return to investors, but it has to create value for its customers, employees, the community and the environment (De la Garza, Carpio, López & Rodríguez, 2020). The constitution of a global community is a fundamental element of the escalation of common local practices for the resolution of challenges that are, without a doubt, systemic and global. Thus, the social and economic measures that B companies may be applying to mitigate the consequences of the current health crisis will generate a greater impact to the extent that they can escalate to national, supranational levels (as is the case of the European Union) and even worldwide.

The assessment and understanding of the expected economic and social externalities to the common instituting practice are also answered by the B Corp movement. To guarantee the good work of B corporation, they can measure their impact using a free application that allows them to measure their social and environmental performance (Steingard & Gilbert, 2016). B corporations are subject to a rigorous evaluation (Marquis, Klaber & Thomason, 2010), through the international IRIS methodology (Frank, Loutskina & Yemen, 2019), which measures their governance, environmental protection policy, attention to workers and the relationship with their community and interest groups (stakeholders).

“B corporations want to build a new sector of the economy in which the race to the top isn't to be the best in the world but to be the best for the world” (Honeyman & Jana, 2019, p. 1). B corps represents one of the keys to building the new economy; an economy whose success is measured by a triple impact: the maximization of financial profits together with the generation of social and environmental value.

4. The governance and values of the leaders of the commons paradigm and B corporations

As previously mentioned, the principles of commonality are sharing, caring and producing (Zubero, 2013), all of which are necessary for a transformation to occur through praxis. In addition, B corporations have been described, which represent a paradigm shift in the way of doing business. It is a concept that emerged at the

beginning of the century in the United States that has formed a whole global movement of companies committed to improving our world.

In the commons paradigm, the model of government is oriented towards social practices of commoning (Zubero, 2013). The regulation of the commons is specified, among others, in modes of government that promote equality and social and ecological justice. Governance in B corporations points to these same principles, concretizing them in good governance that integrates a reasonable distance between the highest and lowest salaries, transparency in the impact of actions, and socio-environmental management (Chen & Kelly, 2015). In both, governance points to a look towards social and ecological justice, coherence and equity.

Under a style of open and cooperative government (Díez & Atela, 2019) that is emerging with force, there are people who show particular characteristics to exercise leadership appropriate to the practice of the common and its crystallization in the business field, such as the case of B corporations. People who move with motivations and values that support a leadership style different from the traditional, more transformative, conscious and coherent and upright.

But what specifically differentiates these leaders from those of traditional companies?

4.1. Leadership oriented towards the common

Mainly a transformative leadership style, oriented towards people and communities and the groups they build, towards the common. It is a style of directing towards a common good, with leaders concerned with people, with the collective, and with contributing to society and the environment.

Collective care is the *leiv motiv* of the leaders of B corporations and the rest of the companies and initiatives that make up the constellation of the commons through commoning processes. These are not leaders who have as their objective the financial result of the company at the end of the year and the distribution of a dividend to the shareholders, nor the growth of the company at all costs. They are concerned and socially oriented leaders, who are able to give up part of their benefits for the common benefit of all. They do not lead with a spirit of obtaining wealth, but of collective care, in the widest sense of the word. They are leaders for and by the collective, who through the same community praxis are capable of generating new social, political, economic and cultural institutions that, in turn, have the potential to transform social values towards greater sustainability and social and environmental justice. Regulatory transformations that promote the common good against excessive individualism. They place the care of people and the environment at the center against excessive productivity.

Regardless of the different leadership styles (Robbins & Judge, 2017) that each of the CEOs of these companies may have, who can certainly be different, this is not the case with the approach they have towards the common. The values, understood as significant priorities that are reflected in human behavior (Rengel, Ramírez, & Campoverde; 2019), that the people who lead behind the commons paradigm and the B companies possess, have to do with social justice, ecological justice, equity, global solidarity, equality, freedom, transparency, coherence and commitment.

Since the commons can only be understood as a (self) transforming praxis, individual and collective values that have an impact on day-to-day activity and viceversa. Indeed, common praxis is capable of generating new institutions influencing social values, transforming from action collective values. Thus, an action aimed at achieving greater coherence and consistency between ideals and performance. This alignment avoids cognitive dissonance, that is, it prevents thinking in one way and acting in another (Cooper & Carlsmith, 2015), influencing a consonance between thought and behavior, which benefits leaders and helps them reach their self-actualization and a development of their emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2001). In future empirical researches,

it would be of great relevance to analyze the emotional dimension of these leaders, especially the collective emotions that could be making them pull towards the common purpose.

4.2. Characteristics of the leaders of the common

Some characteristics of the people who assume at a given moment the leadership of a group under this paradigm and who sustain these values are:

Responsible leadership combined with a global perspective. Aligned with the normative dimension referring to Reciprocity and co-activity. A perspective that allows the behavior of the common not only within the community but also in relation to other ecosystem initiatives. Intra and extra company cooperation. Thus, in its broadest sense, it has to do with looking at the planet as a system, as a unit, as a whole, consciously (Kofman, 2008). Responsibility towards customers, workers, the community, society and the various agents that comprise it and, of course, the environment. This responsibility is considered from an interrelation perspective. Thus the company is conceived within a much larger system, which is society, and this in turn is within another: worldwide. Everything that is done in one system influences the others. There is no autonomy without connection. All initiatives depend on the rest of the ecosystem. This interrelation is of vital importance in the principles of the commons paradigm, since what the person does influences the company, society and the planet and vice versa. Thus, the vision of a person who assumes leadership from this conscious perspective is attentive to the influence that the company has on the environment and, in addition, recognizes the profound interdependence between nature and economic and social activity. Caring for the common home, our habitat, and that of the rest of living beings is a central element of this leadership. The relationship between human beings and nature is multidirectional and systemic.

Leadership with a deep social and environmental purpose. A person aware of the sacred (Begnini, 2019), understood as what which gives meaning to life, the purpose of the leader's vision, what dignifies and deserves care. What is sacred is very particular to each person. However, the conscious leader has a purpose linked to respect and care for the common and unconditional responsibility (Kofman, 2008). A leadership capable of conceiving environmental as well as social and cultural richness, with greater shares of social and ecological justice, and turn that vision into a collective purpose. From solidarity and fraternity, a leadership that integrates and harmonizes common interests with their own. The values materialize in the behavior of greater environmental and social sustainability. A convergence of the values of a society and personal purposes and convictions was common. Regenerate and protect the planet through business activity and purposes steeped in common collective values and cooperative behaviors facilitated by transformational leaderships (Kofman, 2008).

Leadership with fairness and equity. Under the commons paradigm, structural transformations are carried out that are reflected in global solidarity and a fair and equitable distribution that favors equality between communities in different regions of the world. It integrates a sustainable business model, not only in terms of economic benefits but sustainable for society and the environment. This can be seen in B corporations, which use the market to give concrete solutions to social and environmental problems, based on the principles of sharing, caring and producing in common.

A leadership-oriented to communication, with presence, inspiring, and with the ability to share a collective vision. A leadership that inspires when communicating authentically is able to interrelate, engage and make others feel part of a common purpose (Flores & Flores, 2018). It leads and motivates towards the commons paradigm with a shared, attractive and authentic vision (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005), with the ability to resonate with what is happening both in society, in the environment and with people who are part of the common project.

From this perspective, having a presence and communicating has to do with reaching people's hearts, their deepest values, and inspire them to promote and defend greater social and ecological justice. Make individual

purposes a collective purpose and vice versa. A bidirectional process between the individual and the collective that, by virtue of being and through praxis, allows understanding and making assumptions of the common purpose. Showing coherence between action and discourse, they reach people's commitment to a common project, and ideals become real experiences.

A leader who inspires and who in turn is inspired by the community (or by his team in the business field). A leader who, in the same way, motivates and is motivated. A leader and a team that achieve a mutual commitment. A leadership that, in this context, 1) is able to encourage the execution of complex actions and decisions, 2) promote a collective initiative, 3) consider risks and assume responsibilities (Bass, 1985).

5. Conclusions

Since January 2020, with the pandemic of COVID-19, our societies seem to have become more aware of the importance for our economies and companies to place social and environmental care in a central management position. A care that is inevitably collective and that must also transcend people and include nature and the environment. People and communities seemed to be unaware of the extent to which reproductive work, social and environmental sustainability had been subordinated to productivism and profit maximization as the main objective of companies. Given the new recognition of the fragility of our societies and the global uncertainties and shocks faced today, it seems reasonable to transition towards paradigms such as the commons and the conglomerate of initiatives that comprise it. B corporations, through a transformative and collective leadership style, offer the possibility of advancing towards a more resilient system and momentarily transcend the worries and guilt that come from the past and the future, and gain a greater awareness of the present. B corporations, through a specific leadership mode, are part of the conglomerate of initiatives of the renewed commons paradigm.

Table 3
Convergence between the paradigm of the common, the principles of B corporations and the leadership oriented towards the common

Normative dimension of the common	Principals of B corporations	Characteristics of common-oriented leadership
1. Reciprocity and co-activity	1.1 Defends interests of employees, the environment and the community in general. It is included in statutes	1.1.1 Equanimity and equity
	1.2 In case of sale, commitment of the purchaser to continue with the social and environmental purpose of the company	1.1.2 Communication-oriented, presence-inspiring, and capable of sharing a collective vision
2. Human autonomy	2.1 Obligation of the certification process that protects the mission and enhances the triple positive impact in a transparent way	2.1.1 Inspiring and inspired by the community
3. Social justice	3.1 Aim to transform the world into a better place to live	3.1.1 Deep social and environmental purpose
4. Ecological justice	4.1 Commitment to creating a positive impact on society and the environment	
5. Scalability	5.1 They are part of a global movement of companies for change, being interdependent	5.1.1 Responsibility combined with a global perspective

note: own elaboration

In recent weeks, in the midst of a pandemic, multiple experiences seem to have emerged that would form part of the commons paradigm. From the group of taxi drivers who offered their service for only transferring patients and without profit (Telemadrid, 2020, May 14), to associations and informal networks of volunteers caring for vulnerable people (Stop the curve), hotels that are made available to hospitals, the mask maker movement working with 3D printers to mitigate their overdemand, etc.

Despite their inestimable value, the behavior of some conventional companies showing greater solidarity and support for the public health system by making their globalized logistics systems temporally available and sharing part of the benefits obtained (De Aragón, 2020) or the huge efforts made by the public institutions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 may not be enough. Facing the largest global recession since the Great Depression of 1930s (IMF, 2020), private-market and public-state powers endeavor could be positively complemented by the commons paradigm. In fact, on its business dimension, the B corporation movement has also been activated by this common mission (Aragón, 2020). Among others, Triodos Bank has implemented support measures for companies, organizations and the self-employed; Ulule has made its portal available to receive or support projects affected by COVID-19, reducing the commission to 0% and looking for collaborators; and Comgo has activated a campaign to receive donations for projects that face some of the challenges derived from COVID-19.

All these movements and initiatives are led by people and communities who have values oriented towards the common, with a vocation to improve society towards a sustainable collective life. People who, through their leadership and commitment, contribute to a change and transformation towards greater justice in relation to the people around them, the communities all over the world, and, ultimately, of a global society. It is still too early to know the political, economic, social and cultural structural transformations that the COVID-19 could generate and also the direction that these may take. However, the commons paradigm and its crystallization in the business environment through the movement of B corporations and the people leading it are an already existing a reality, a basis for the impacts generated by the global pandemic to lead to a future scenario of greater sustainability and social and ecological justice.

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