

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

# How does collaborative economy contribute to common good?

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Email: rmorsan@upo.es**Abstract**

Collaborative economy emerged as a response to the need of people to exchange, produce and share in a more humane and cooperative manner. However, the growth of collaborative economy organizations and the terminological confusion have led to debates about their possible effects, both positive and negative. In this study, we have created a guideline that can be used to evaluate the contribution of organizations considered within collaborative economy to common good. We used the conceptualization of common good, which, from its Aristotelian-Thomist philosophy, was developed by the personalist-humanist perspective of management. Our analysis leads us to conclude that the evaluation of the contribution of any organization to the common good must take into account how the participants develop their virtues, the creation of the community and its impact on the common good of society. At the end of the article, we present the aspects that society must take into account regarding collaborative economy. Firstly, society, in general, must approach collaborative economy as a tool that must complement others in the search for solutions to economic and social problems and, secondly, the governance of the platform-network is essential to foster organizational models that favour the common good.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

People shared and collaborated from the beginning of civilisation. However, the emergence of the Internet “has marked a new era of sharing,” due to the volume of activities and to the new ways of performing activities (Belk, 2010; Leadbeater, 2009). The collaborative economy (CE), or sharing economy, has a turnover of \$15 billion dollars and, according to a report published by the consulting company PriceWaterhouse Coopers (2015), it will have a turnover of \$335 billion dollars by 2025. For this reason, *Time* magazine declared CE as 1 of the 10 ideas in 2011 that would change the world.

Currently, there is not a consensus or a widely accepted definition in the academic scope or amongst public institutions for CE (Acquier et al., 2017; Codagnone & Martens, 2016; Curtis & Lehner, 2019;

Sutherland & Jarrahi, 2018) In addition, the term CE is accompanied by the development of other concepts that are usually employed as synonyms, such as *platform capitalism* (Sundararajan, 2016), *collaborative consumption* (Botsman & Rogers, 2010), *peer-to-peer economy* (Bauwens, 2005), or *access economy* (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). As Acquier et al. (2017) emphasised, CE is an “umbrella construct” because its breadth makes it possible to relate new phenomena, carry out empirical studies, and create academic communities. However, such amplitude reduces academic rigour, which leads to the proliferation of, sometimes contradictory, definitions for the development of theoretical and empirical frameworks (Hirsch & Levin, 1999).

For the purposes of this research and following Botsman and Roger (2010), we consider CE as activities of production, distribution, or consumption that share resources through distributed networks of

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connected individuals and communities and opposes the traditional way based on centralised and hierarchical institutions. According to the European Commission (2016), CE involves three categories of participants: (a) service providers who share assets, resources, time, and/or skills; (b) users of these; and (c) a platform that connects providers with users and that facilitates transactions between them. People share and exchange goods or intangible assets, such as time or skills (time banking), create local currencies, or publicly aggregate knowledge or collectively problem-solve, such as in Wikipedia or Open Street Map. In addition, people can connect outside formal institutions or organising structures to collaborate on making or designing projects and products, or they can organise and fulfil the distribution of goods directly to peers.

These activities can be performed with different organisational structures, lucrative and non-lucrative, in both public and private initiatives (Owyang, 2016; Schor, 2014; Shareable, 2017). For example, in short-stay renting, Airbnb is a for-profit company, Fairbnb is a co-operative, and Couchsurfing is a B-corporation. Moreover, there are global companies in mobility, such as Uber (transportation services) or BlaBlaCar (vehicle sharing), known as “unicorn” companies (i.e. a start-up with capital of over 1 billion dollars), competing with a small-scale neighbourhood-based car sharing organisation, as Majorna. While Majorna has no employees, members take turn jointly performing tasks such as washing and maintaining cars and making decisions (Jonsson, 2007).

As stated by Acquier et al. (2017), CE is a positive concept, since it refers to attitudes and values that are based on sharing, collaboration, and cooperation. However, the proliferation and growth of CE organisations and the terminological confusion have led to debates in the academic, political, and legal realms of their possible effects, both positive and negative, which require further research (Martin, 2016; Muñoz & Cohen, 2017). For instance, some authors consider that CE favours equality, as it brings new opportunities (Sundararajan, 2016), whereas others believe it is an instrument of the capitalist system to exploit workers and consumers (Scholz, 2016). In fact, under the name of a collaborative economy, there are companies that only create platform capitalism, extrapolating the capitalist objectives and procedures to the new platforms of production, exchange, and consumption. For many people this is, at present, the most popular form of CE, and some authors have labelled this as “neoliberalism on steroids” (Morozov, 2013). Thus, according to some authors, Airbnb is a clear example of CE, whereas others believe it is simply a capitalist enterprise (Belk, 2010). The term “collaborative washing” is starting to be used to describe the stowaway behaviour of keeping the appearance of a company developing a CE model. Hence, CE has been considered a marketing tool, since centralised control is maintained, accumulating power for decision-making, with an environmentally unsustainable organisational behaviour (Opciones, 2013).

The economic, social, and medical crisis that COVID-19 has brought has accentuated the social tendency to question the contribution of companies to society. Clearly, there is need for a reformulation of corporate objectives beyond the maximisation of profits and responsibility for the impacts of economic activities on society. The purpose of companies and their services to society are issues of debate today. In this context, CE activities and organisations are often justified from the perspective of a better service to society:

more efficient use of resources, appearance of new opportunities, and creation of communities (Sundararajan, 2016).

Therefore, the objective of this study is to evaluate CE based on its contribution to society. To assess the extent to which CE activities serve people and society in general, we will examine and assess the orientation of CE activities on the common good. To this end, we use the conceptualisation of common good, which, from Aristotelian-Thomist philosophy, was developed from the personalist-humanist perspective of management (Melé, 2009; Sison & Fontrodona, 2012, 2013). The fundamental reason for this choice of theoretical framework is that, from our view, it has the greatest operational development and applies the concept of common good to organisations more accurately. In fact, Sison and Fontrodona (2012, 2013) were able to conceptualise the common good of the firm from this theoretical framework. Thus, we created a guideline that can evaluate different initiatives labelled as CE, since the purpose is not to determine what CE is but how the new forms of economic organisation contribute to the progress of society.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. First, we present a delimitation of the concept of common good that can be used to analyse a broad range of activities CE. Second, we describe the fundamental elements on which the concept of CE is based and assess their contribution to the common good. For this analysis, we selected the following dimensions: shared resources, distributed networks, trust and reputation, platform, openness, mission-driven, governance, and knowledge and technological policy. The final section provides a discussion and the main conclusions are drawn from this analysis.

## 2 | THE COMMON GOOD OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

The concept of the common good has been used by different philosophical, political, and economic fields, although its definition is ambiguous since its inception in political philosophy (Hollenbach, 2002; Simm, 2011). Argandoña (1998) distinguished amongst three approaches to the concept of common good based on the view of human nature.

The first approach is the collectivist attitude, where the individual good is suppressed or becomes residual. The person is a component of society and is not an independent subject of moral choice. Thus, the individual good of a few people becomes the common good of all, or the state supersedes the interests of the individuals, as stated by Hegel (Sulmasy, 2001).

The second approach to the concept of common good is based on the individualistic consideration of human nature. The individual is the only reference in political consideration; therefore, the common good is constituted from individual interests. Here, the life project is individual and private, and society is an instrument to carry out such project. Within this individualistic conception, there are two different approaches to determine the common good: aggregative and shared. Aggregative is based on utilitarian contributions developed in the economic scope where the common good is identified with the term “social well-being” and derives from the aggregation of individual utilities (Bentham, 1996; Mill, 1998). For the shared approach, the

individual chooses to live in society to share elements that make life easier and creates bonds through a social contract with other people depending on the individual interest. In this perspective, the parameter of what is “good” is defined in the private sphere, and the design of the social conditions or “common good,” which corresponds to the public sphere, must be designed according to a criterion of justice (Argandoña, 1998). Such a criterion is defined from different philosophical perspectives. Thus, the common good may be focused on guaranteeing the rights to private property (Nozick, 1974), the equal distribution of rights and resources (Rawls, 1971), or the expansion of individual freedoms or human capacities, as a foundation based on human rights (Nussbaum, 2001; Sen, 1999). This instrumental perspective recognises the importance of being able to participate in society, self-respect, collaboration, and political participation. However, the evaluation criteria are not related to the well-being of the individual in society, but to the possibilities of choosing the life that each person desires (Deneulin & Townsend, 2007).

Lastly, the third approach to the common good is based on an anthropological view of the human being as a naturally social animal and the intrinsic value of the person (Melé, 2009). Here, the individual needs to live in society to improve:

Every human being needs a social life, which for him/her is not an optional extra, nor a whim, nor the product of an instinct. To say that man is a social being means: (1) that he needs others to satisfy his/her own needs, and (2) that he/she improves him/herself (becomes “more human,” exercises and develops his/her capacities) in his/her relationships with others. Therefore, living in society is not a limitation for the individual, but a good in itself. (Argandoña, 1998, p. 1094)

From this perspective, the common good derives from the sense of belonging to a community and interacting with other people.

In the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition, on which this perspective of common good is based, humans are instinctively political and social animals (Aristotle, 1985) who can only achieve their own good and happiness as a community.

The classical theory of the common good was revisited in the 20th century, mainly by Catholic thinkers, including Maritain, Hollenbach, and Dupré. For Maritain, the common good is constituted by goods that humans share intrinsically in common and that they communicate with each other, such as values, civic virtues, and a sense of justice (Deneulin & Townsend, 2007). Similarly, David Hollenbach (2002, p. 81) describes the common good as “the good realized in the mutual relationships in and through which human beings achieve their well-being.”

Table 1 summarises the three approaches to the concept of common good based on the view on human nature.

The latest way of conceptualising the common good has the greatest operational development and applies the concept of common good to organisations more accurately. Thus, to analyse how the CE can be evaluated based on its contribution to the common good of society, we will analyse the concept of common good according to the perspective initiated by Aristotle and developed from the personalist-humanist perspective of management (Arjoon et al., 2018; Melé, 2009; Sison & Fontrodona, 2012, 2013).

According to the Aristotelian conception of human actions, every activity is oriented towards a purpose, which is its specific good. This good is what completes such activity and makes it perfect. Therefore, what is good for a human being is anything that completes the person as being human. The term used for the purpose of every human activity is *eudaimonia* (Aristotle, 1988).

*Eudaimonia*, that is, completing oneself as a human being, is attained by the development of virtues (artistic, technical, intellectual, and moral), since these develop the faculties of the human soul. However, humans are social beings by nature, which means that they need others to reach their plenitude, which is achieved through

**TABLE 1** The three main approaches to the concept of common good based on the view on human nature

Vision of human nature	Relation amongst individual interest and common good	Concept of common good	Authors
Collectivism	Common good over individual good	Defined by a group (state) for all members of society	Hegel
Individualism	The common good is instrumental to individual interest	Aggregative  Defined for consensus	Mill
			Bentham
			Nozick
			Rawls
			Sen
Nussbaum			
Personalism	The common good is an intrinsic part of the individual good	Based on considering human being as a naturally social animal and the intrinsic value of the person	Aristotle Aquinas Dupré Maritain Hollenbach

Source: Authors.

relationships with other members of their society (the Greek *polis*, from Aristotle's perspective). Thus, to accomplish *eudaimonia*, each person must strive to develop their virtues to the maximum in the internal scope and in their relations with other members of the community (Aristotle, 1985). This generates the common good, which is individual, as it is good for each person and is common, since it can be enjoyed only when it is created jointly by a community, participating in the relations with its members (Aquinas, 2007).

Therefore, from this perspective, the common good can be considered "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment" (Vatican Council II, 1965, n. 26). These conditions are (Melé, 2009, p. 236):

- *Socio-cultural values shared in a community*, including a respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, safety, order, and peace with justice, especially emphasised by Personalism.
- *Organisational conditions*, which permit access to healthcare, educational, cultural, and religious goods, and respect for human freedom, truth, justice, and solidarity.
- *Economic conditions*, which favour human growth in such a way that everyone can enjoy reasonable well-being.
- *Environmental conditions*, such as the maintenance of an appropriate human habitat for current and future generations.

Then, according to the personalist vision of the common good, in relation to CE activities, three elements must be analysed: the existence of a community that collaborates; the conditions of that community for the personal flourishing of participants; and the contribution to the general common good of society in which the community is registered. Next, we will briefly analyse these elements.

First, there must be a community. The spectrum of possible forms of production, consumption, or distribution ranges from a network of exchanges in which the participating agents have hardly any relationship of any kind to a structure standardised by contracts and hierarchy that takes the form of a company (Powell, 1990). CE activities are positioned in the middle of these extremes, insofar as they are more than a network (because they seek the creation of a collaborating community), but they do not have the hierarchical and institutionalised structure of companies.

Nevertheless, if there is no company, the activity of production, consumption, or distribution of goods or services is merely an exchange network and do not turn into a community. This type of structure (a food market, exclusive exchange platforms, and so forth) contribute to the common good in a completely different way (Bruni & Zamagni, 2007), and it is outside the objective of this research to analyse this contribution. For the common good to exist, there must be a unity of something in common: a community.

Each community has its specific and unique common good, which depends on established objectives and on its participants, thus: "the common good of any group or community, including the firm, could only come about as the result of the joint deliberation, decision, and action among all its members" (Sison & Fontrodona, 2013, p. 615).

For firms, community is established through contracts and developed through joint work. Sison and Fontrodona (2013) defined the common good of the business firm "as collaborative work, insofar as it provides, first, an opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, virtues, and meaning (work as *praxis*), and second, inasmuch as it produces goods and services to satisfy society's needs and wants (work as *poiesis*)" (p. 612).

Similarly, interaction systems based on collaboration can be considered as relation networks. The proximity of a network to the concept of community depends on the behaviour of its members and its structure; that is, the relationships established in these networks can either be merely commercial or build up a community. This differentiation is important, since the sense of belonging to a community determines the common good and the participation of the members in that common good.

According to Krause (2001), there are three elements in a community: belonging, interrelation, and common culture. Belonging refers to the subjective feeling that an individual is part of a network of mutual support relations that can be trusted and shares certain values and objectives with other members of the community. This individual identification with others and the community results in group identity (Krause, 2001). Network interrelations refer neither to the need for a shared physical territory nor to the need for face-to-face contact. They allude to the existence of communication, which allows mutual influence and interdependence. Specifically, each participant of a community depends on other members to jointly create community (Melé, 2009). Lastly, common culture refers to the system of shared symbols (Wisensfield, 1996), since it is essential for a community to have its own social representations and, thus, shared interpretations of community experiences (Krause, 2001).

This characterisation of communities indicates that not all networks are consolidated as communities, but that all communities have a network structure. The varied collaborative movements have a network structure; however, depending on specific characteristics, they will become a larger or smaller community, depending on the extent to which they promote belonging, interrelations, and common culture.

Therefore, regarding the creation of a community, in a collaborative movement:

the common good is fostered when members of a community strive to contribute to improving the community, to the benefit of everyone, including themselves. (...) Consequently, the common good is not only shared by those who are members of a community but also it is created by cooperation among those who form a community. (Melé, 2009, p. 235)

Second, the community must provide the conditions for full development of participants. Organisational networks, created to share use or ownership of resources or to serve as an exchange platform, are based on the established relationships, and the common good of these communities will be linked to fruitful relationship creation to

achieve individual perfection and development of virtues. This entails, on the one hand, the social, economic, and environmental conditions that allow the flourishing of communities, and, on the other hand, the conditions that favour the development of virtues of the participants.

Likewise, in communities of a CE, the virtues associated with participation in the community will be, first, those that are necessary for the creation of stable and fair relationships: prudence, justice, generosity, friendship, solidarity, empathy, and so forth. For instance, Melé (2009), regarding the participation of human beings in communities, pointed out:

the specific requirements of the Personalist Principle regarding benevolence and care include caring for collaborators in an organization, fostering their professional and human growth, helping others in solving problems, and facilitating the harmonization of work and family life, among other issues. (p. 237)

At the theoretical level, Benkler and Nissenbaum (2006) have argued that virtue leads people to participate in sharing economy and that participation may give rise to virtues (which these authors group into four clusters). In the first place, the virtues related to the exercise independence of will, initiative and self-reliance, as are autonomy, independence, and liberation because “participation in peer production constitutes an arena of autonomy, an arena where they are free to act according to self-articulated goals and principles” (Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006, p. 405). Second, virtues such as creativity, productivity, industry, because peer production offers a medium for contributing our thoughts, our knowledge, our know-how towards a meaningful product. The third group of virtues has to do with virtues that involve giving to others to benefit them at a cost to the giver: benevolence, charity, generosity, and altruism.

“Participants in commons-based peer production benefit others by contributing time and effort that could, in principle, be spent in more directly self-serving pursuits. In helping others, in small ways such as donating spare cycles, or larger ways such as creating carefully researched encyclopedia entries without receiving conventional, tangible payments or favors in return, peers exercise kindness, benevolence, charity and generosity” (Benkler & Nissenbaum, 2006, p. 407).

In the last cluster of virtues pointed out by Benkler and Nissenbaum the virtues also imply giving, but the giving “does not merely involve agents parting with something of value, but agents working in cooperation with others to give or produce something of value to all” (2006, p. 408). These virtues are sociability, camaraderie, friendship, cooperation, and civic virtue.

At a practical level, as far as we know, there are no studies that expressly show the development of certain virtues in CE movements.

However, research that analyses in-depth different CE systems have highlighted virtuous behaviours: loyalty (Jacob et al., 2004; Wheatley et al., 2011); non-competitive behaviour (Caldwell, 2000); friendships (Jacob et al., 2004; Wheatley et al., 2011); and civic virtue (Kuznetsov, 2006; Lakhani & Wolf, 2005; Oreg & Nov, 2008).

Third, the common good of any community is embedded in the common good of larger communities; consequently, it should be consistent with the common good of society (Melé, 2009).

Contribution to the common good of society is more a matter of gradation than of absolute terms, and it is difficult to measure and, therefore, to compare. All economic activities contribute to the common good of society to a certain extent, since they provide goods and services necessary to obtain conditions for the fulfilment of all participants in society. However, this contribution to the common good has a minimum threshold. For an economic activity, the minimum threshold for contributing to the common good of a network or society is the respect of human dignity of persons involved in it, which implies favouring some crucial virtues. For example, for-profit companies or platforms contribute to the common good of the society to the extent that they meet the conditions established by Sison and Fontrodona (2012, 2013).

In summary, the evaluation an organisation's contribution to the common good must consider the creation and perfection of the community, how the participants develop their virtues, and its impact on the common good of society. Therefore, the aim of the next section is to analyse the elements of CE organisations to assess contributions to the common good.

### 3 | COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY AND THE COMMON GOOD

Collaboration and sharing have always existed amongst relatives, close friends, and communities. However, this way of organising has expanded in recent years for two reasons: on the one hand, the rise of different cultural values, favoured by the economic and environmental crisis; on the other hand, the hatching of the Internet and the culture of open software, which facilitates access to information and resources through new digital devices (Sundararajan, 2016).

The rise of the cooperative culture has allowed, amongst many other collaborative economic activities, the emergence of communities of people who decide to create their own currency (local currency), share working spaces (coworking), exchange time (time banking), share common spaces in houses for the elderly (cohousing), and so forth. These types of activities, if they do not use a digital platform, are known as an offline CE (Cohen & Muñoz, 2016).

The Internet allows the creation of digital platforms; thus, economic activity is conducted as long as there is a network of suppliers and demanders connected through the platform. Since most of the activities related to CE have been developed through online platforms, many authors consider that such online platforms must exist to define an activity as CE (European Commission, 2016; Stokes et al., 2014). From our point of view, as is later justified, the true

reason for collaboration is not the platform but the community, and community can be created without the Internet.

The diverse CE typologies result from several combinations of elements (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017). As the definition of CE is without consensus, we identify the dimensions of CE discussed in the relevant literature. We select scientific articles that offer a systematic review and analysis of literature on the characteristics of CE.

We use Web of Science, because it creates a consistent and representative sample of broader trend in current CE literature (Harzing & Alakangas, 2016). First, this database was explored for works containing one of the following search terms in title, abstract, or keywords: “sharing economy,” “collaborative economy,” “peer to peer economy,” or “platform economy”; and at least one of these terms: “literature review,” “typology,” “characteristics,” “characterization,” “features,” “framing,” or “elements.” We found 389 articles.

Second, articles focusing on a single definition, one characteristic from different perspectives, or a specific economic sector were removed from the review. Overall, this resulted in a final set of 12 publications. The dimensions analysed in each of these 12 works are shown in Table 2.

The dimensions proposed by Muñoz and Cohen (2017) and Acquier et al. (2017) were selected, because they are the pioneering works and the most cited works on the Web of Science. Then, we identified which specific characteristics of the CE were considered in each study and its correspondence (total or partial) with initial categorisation (Saldaña, 2015). The name is different, but the description is similar, and in other cases, several dimensions are used to describe only one. Finally, the dimensions cited less than three times were excluded.

From this analysis, the following dimensions were chosen: shared resources, distributed networks, trust and reputation, platform, openness, mission-driven, governance, and knowledge and technological policy. The following description assesses their contribution to the common good. Our assertions are in italics following each description.

### 3.1 | Shared resources

The most extensive definition of shared resources is applied to any activity that involves the use rather than transmission of goods, which allows either optimising new resources, searching for accommodation for used resources, or facilitating the optimisation of under-utilised resources (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Schor, 2014). This possibility expands to all types of goods: tangible, durable and nondurable, services, skills, knowledge, financial funds, and so forth. Likewise, these resources can be accessed through barter, renting, loans, gift-giving, or second-hand sale, either based on a price, or not.

Initially, shared resources were applied to consumption activities; however, currently, it is applied to collaborative activities that comprise all the processes of economic activity: design, production, and distribution (Stokes et al., 2014). Therefore, “sharing economy” and “collaborative economy” are synonyms.

The “shared resources” label has been extended to the labour sphere (Stokes et al., 2014), with its own name: gig economy.<sup>1</sup> This label has been extended to money lending, as long as financial companies do not conduct the transaction, since these are considered “unused” resources that one agent offers another, and this is not the main economic activity of the supplier (Belk, 2014).

However, no consensus on this definition exists. For example, Belk (2007, pp. 126–127) stipulated that, “in sharing, two or more people may share the benefits (or costs) that flow from owning something. Rather than distinguishing what is mine and yours, sharing defines something as ours.” Therefore, the exchange activities are “pseudo-sharing” or business relationships masquerading as communal sharing.

Considering this for CE, there are four different ways of sharing resources, depending on whether there is a transmission of goods and remuneration in exchange for such transmission (Table 3).

Regarding the creation of the community and how participants develop their virtues, second-hand selling and pseudo-sharing (like any relationship limited to an exchange with payment) can be informed by important virtues that contribute to the common good of society: spirit of service, truthfulness, faithfulness (the virtue that inclines the will to fulfil a promise) or loyalty, justice (in setting prices), and so forth. However, both giving and sharing activities allow the development of virtues of human relationships, such as generosity and solidarity. The connotations of sharing are interdependence, trust, community, levelling, selflessness, giving, and caring, commensality, and fellowship, even if the majority of those with whom we are sharing are unseen and unknown others (John, 2013). These acts generate bonds and interrelations (interdependence) that favour trust and promote the creation of the community. As Belk (2014, p. 17) stated the “key intention in sharing is not granting or gaining access, but helping and making human connections.” Therefore, although a payment exchange (pseudo-sharing and second-hand sale) can contribute to the common good of society, giving and sharing favours the creation of a community to a greater extent.

Though, to what extent do the different ways of using the resources contribute to the common good of society in general? For analysis, we consider the economic and environmental conditions of the common good of society (Melé, 2009). The actions related to sharing (in any of its four possibilities) imply a reduction in the prices of goods and services, since the purchase of a new product is not required, which improves the quality of life of the users. Moreover, satisfying needs of society with existing resources promotes sustainability, which contributes to the quality of life for future generations. Likewise, this provides the possibility of additional income for those who have such unused resources. Therefore, a CE is an instrument to confront challenges, such as excessive consumption and income inequality, as it creates more opportunities (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017). However, greater access to goods could increase consumption (rebound effects) (Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016), although this element depends on the values of the participants, and it is not specifically co-substantial with the act of sharing (Kemp & van Lente, 2011).

TABLE 2 Characteristics of Collaborative Economy considered in literature

Authors	Shared resources	Distributed networks	Trust and reputation	Platform	Openness	Mission-driven	Governance	Knowledge and technological policy	Others
Muñoz and Cohen (2017)	Under-utilised resources	Peer-to-peer interaction		Platform		Mission-driven	Governance	Technologies reliance	Funding
Acquier et al. (2017)	Shared resources/access	Peer-to-peer		Platform	Access		Community		
Sutherland and Jarrahi (2018)	Flexibility (resources)	Flexibility (persons)/ match making	Trust building	Match making/ transactions management	Extending reach	Facilitating collectively	Facilitating collectively	Technology	
Plewnia and Guenther (2018)	Idling capability	Market structure				Market orientation			Economic Sector
Leung et al. (2019)	Consumption practices		Triadic relation			Business model			Public policy, employment, externalities, and interest groups
Ranjbari et al. (2018)	Idle capacity/ temporary access/ collaborative consumption	Peer-to-peer connection	Trust and network-based activity	Online platform	Convenience of participation	For-profit			Sustainability, near zero marginal cost
Curtis and Lehner (2019)	Idling capability/ shared goods and services/ownership	Platform as an organisational model		Platform as an organisational model/ITC-enable as web				ITC-enable as infrastructure	Motivation of users, providers, businesses, and the community
Netter et al. (2019)					Membership	Rules	Hierarchy/ monitoring/ sanction		
Ryu et al. (2019)	Type of sharing/ reliance of ownership					Communal or commercial			Industrial sector/ geographic
Lambert et al. (2019)						Economic model	Governance		Networking
Fuster Morell and Espelt (2019)						Economic model/social responsibility and impact	Governance	Technologies policy/Data	Funding
Schlagwein et al. (2019)	Sharing/no transfer/ underutilised	Peer-to-peer		Intermediary commercial or not/IT facilitated		Intermediary commercial or not			

Source: Authors.

**TABLE 3** Different ways of sharing resources

	Transmission	No transmission
Remuneration	Second-hand sale	Pseudo-sharing
No remuneration	Gifting	True sharing

Source: Authors.

The contribution of collaborative economy activities to the common good is greater the more resources are shared, since sharing resources

- facilitates the development of virtues related to justice (such as truthfulness, solidarity, generosity, equity);
- facilitates the development of trust between community members; and
- makes a more sustainable use of resources.

### 3.2 | Distributed networks

CE involves a group of people willing to collaborate in diverse economic projects or in a set of goods available for shared use, in which an extensive interconnection between the participants exists.

Networks are typified by reciprocal patterns of communication and exchange (Powell, 1990). The foundation of a network is that a participant depends on the resources controlled by the other participants, and the common use of the resources allows for joint benefit. In contrast to companies, networks (nodes) linked participants in a way that none of them, not even a stable group of participants, has filter power over the information transmitted in the network. Therefore, networks provide relationships between complementarity and interdependence in horizontal relations. CE network participants are both sharers and users of available resources, time, or skills. Those who jointly intervene in both processes are *prosumers*, with new roles as co-innovators and co-decision-makers. Thus, we find prosthetic designs thanks to the collaboration of thousands of people in open projects (Blättel-Mink, 2014; Pérez de Lama Halcón & García Sáez, 2018).

As in the case of shared resources, theoretical controversy exists concerning the elements that should participate in CE networks. Depending on participating elements in the networks, CE business models have been called access economy, on-demand economy, and peer-to-peer economy.

An “access economy” is when a company does not sell the product but gives access to the network for the temporary use of its decentralised goods (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Rifkin, 2000). In this case, the owner of the platform is also the owner of the assets, and therefore, there is only one provider. The main function of the platform ensures the correct use of its assets and offers a quick and safe service to the users. In fact, technological changes are leading

companies to focus on offering access services instead of selling products. For example, Mercedes rental its vehicles, using its dealerships as rental stations. However, although this functioning system generates a network of resources, for the purpose of this study, we cannot consider it as a CE because no relationship between users or community exists.

In other networks, a business-to-people (B2P) relationship is established, which is known as “on-demand economy,” since the provided services are adapted to the needs of the demanders (Rodríguez, 2017; Sundararajan, 2016). This is the case with Uber, where the drivers are professional and offer transport services.

Peer-to-peer (P2P) economy refers to networks or platforms conducted between peers: equally privileged, equipotent participants in the platform (Bauwens, 2005; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; European Commission, 2016). In P2P relationships, there is no position of dominance, power, or hierarchy of one agent over another, as all participants cooperate to obtain a product or service that benefits everyone. Therefore, there is not rivalry between collaborators who exchange information and resources cooperatively to reach the common objectives, thus facilitating the creation of a community. In distributed networks, information plays a fundamental role. The most useful information is rarely inferred from shifting price signals, nor does it flow through the formal chain of command in an organisation (Powell, 1990). Information flow is achieved through trust, which is built through relations of long-term reciprocity and mutual support (Axelrod & Hamilton, 1984). BlaBlaCar is an example of a P2P platform. Its website and mobile apps connect drivers and passengers willing to travel together between cities and share the cost of the journey.

Broadly defined, P2P platforms include exchanges between “peer organisations,” not only consumers (C2C), which have been classified as business-to-business (B2B) (e.g. Cargomatic), or Government-to-Government (G2G) (e.g. MuniRent) (Codagnone & Martens, 2016). However, the borders between B2P and P2P are not clear, since professionalisation is not absolute, as it is determined by legal framework (Hausemer et al., 2017), depending on the income, dedication, and so forth. This poses problems of specification with important consequences in the application of labour, tax, and commercial laws.

In any case, P2P or B2P, a decentralised network of peers has a positive impact on society, since it allows participants to make decisions faster, favours adaption to change, and provides greater flexibility to adapt to the special circumstances of each environment. In addition, distributed power facilitates peer-to-peer relationships, which are fundamental for belonging and shared values in the community (Krause, 2001). The contribution to the common good lies in the creation of networks nodes located anywhere in the world, the speed of reputation build-up, and the possibility of decentralising interactions, which opens new interaction possibilities between people. Thus, interactions amongst people (even exclusively in the digital scope) expand opportunities, including economic, cultural, and political participation, and the creation of joint projects. This way of generating the common good improves the organisational and economic conditions of society (e.g. sharing



lifestyles, sharing vehicles, and co-creating projects). Some examples include Humanitas, a senior care meets student dorm in shared intergenerational living, and Solarshare Bond, a renewable energy investment cooperative for local commercial scale projects (Shareable, 2017).

The contribution of collaborative economy activities to the common good is greater the more distributed networks are created or developed that favour balanced relationships (there is no dominant power) within the network.

### 3.3 | Trust and reputation

There are many definitions of trust, although none are completely accepted by the academic community. According to Mayer et al. (1995), trust is:

the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party. (p. 715)

Researchers have highlighted a large number of linked variables that build trust between persons: satisfaction (Ganesan, 1994), communication (Friman et al., 2002), shared values (Brashear et al., 2003), and affectional bonds (Nicholson et al., 2001). Likewise, other authors suggested that individuals build trust through an intentional process based on repeated interactions (Liu & Leach, 2001) and on common values and goals (Brashear et al., 2003).

For CE, build trust in platform and in participants has been a crucial challenge and a necessary condition for success (Codagnone & Martens, 2016; Sanz et al., 2009). According to Powell (1990), there are three network success factors: know-how, demand for speed, and trust. These factors explain how new technologies allow the development of new organisations and business models (Gansky, 2010), since the Internet enables the transmission of information globally, and trust is built through the information that participants provide on the network. Two of systems that use platforms to build trust in participants are reputation systems and third-party verification systems (Mazzella & Sundararajan, 2016).

According to Jøsang et al. (2007), reputation is what is generally said or believed about the character or position of a person or object. Reputation can be measured either qualitatively or quantitatively for each user from scores, suggestions, and valuations of other users about experiences of sharing services, purchasing products, and so forth. (Stokes et al., 2014). This information is shared with other network users connected, thus creating a digital reputation. Rifkin (2014) stated that, “practically, all the major collaborative networks have created reputation systems to classify the honesty of their members” (p. 320). The other guarantee system that platforms offer

is the authentication of user identities or actions, ensuring the veracity of information provided by agents. These systems favour compliance with regulations, build digital trust, and reduce information asymmetry, thus constituting a reliable form of self-regulation that guarantees the protection and safety of the consumer (Codagnone & Martens, 2016). Digital reputation that results in trust amongst the participants promotes community, since trust is necessary for cohesion through the feeling of belonging and for the development of interpersonal relationships (Krause, 2001).

Regarding the way communities based on trust or reputation generate common good for society, we highlight that trust and reputation are fundamental to avoid moral risk that derives from the access to the assets. Additionally, they reduce transaction costs associated with search and management of information (Bromiley & Harris, 2006; Chiles & McMackin, 1996). Universal access to information and the indices of reputation and trust provided by CE platforms drastically reduce these costs between users and providers (Henten & Windekilde, 2016), who can be from remote countries. Thus, trust networks have expanded beyond nearby environments. Without this element, the exponential growth of CE could not be explained.

The contribution of collaborative economy activities to the common good is greater the more they favour relationships based on trust between participants.

### 3.4 | The platform

The platform is the place (physical or virtual) where collaborative activity is conducted, and it includes an organisational structure that allows the development of the network and communication between the participants. Platforms help to make resources and participants more accessible to each other on an as-needed basis. They offer a set of protocols or standards typically designed to facilitate connection, coordination, and collaboration (Hagel, 2015). These elements are essential for the creation of community.

There are two topics of discussion about the platform: should be digital and what are its functions?

With respect to the digitalisation of the platform, there are three alternatives: tech-driven, tech-enabled, and low/no-tech platforms (Muñoz & Cohen, 2017). Tech-driven business models do not require interaction outside of the platform to complete a transaction (e.g. Upwork). The tech-enabled category represents business models that use technology to connect participants, but these require a later offline exchange or interaction (e.g. Airbnb and BlaBlaCar). Lastly, when the platform technology is used only as support and is not essential for conducting transactions, these are low/no-tech platforms (Majorma). The absence of a technology to assist the network does not affect the existence of community, since there are offline activities with a marked collaborative nature, in the way that a group of participants share resources, such as the case of social currency, time banking, and urban gardens (Cohen & Muñoz, 2016; Schor et al., 2016).

The relationship between technology and the common good of the community depends on the extent that technology promotes stable relationships, which are based on trust, and allows participants to develop virtues. Friendship is difficult to build without face-to-face contact. However, an increasing number of social networks allow the establishment of stable relationships through technological tools such as Skype and Instagram, which can promote the creation of a community. In fact, without these technologies, it is usually difficult to access or maintain distance relationships.

The second topic for platforms to consider is which functions to include. To simplify services offered by platforms, we discuss three consecutive levels. First, there are platforms that merely allow contact between participants; thus, their function is exclusively intermediary, and their responsibility is to facilitate contact. These platforms barely contribute to the personal plenitude of the people involved in the network, since the chance that these relationships may build a community depends more on the efforts of the users than on the services offered by the platform. Second, there are platforms that offer a variety of services to the participants aimed to reduce uncertainty. Amongst these services, the reputation systems stand out, which generate reputation indicators that users score and maintain or the verification of actions or identities of users by the platform. Along with this primordial service, other frequent services are the guarantee of payments and service provisions and mechanisms for resolving doubts. Third, there are platforms that aim to care for participants. These platforms go beyond the provision of services, as their purpose is based on the maintenance of the well-being of the community. These platforms include (in addition to those of the previous levels) open-information systems, mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts between participants, insurances associated with the actions of the participants, promotion of events and activities that favour interrelation, and the development of the shared values. For example, Fairmondo, a platform that matches suppliers and consumers of ethical products, is a member-owned cooperative, and the open source and environmentally friendly products maximise community building. Considering contribution to the common good as community building and promotion, these platforms, which aim to consolidate the relationships and care for participants, facilitate the development of the common good to a greater extent than those that merely offer reputational services.

The contribution of collaborative economy platforms to the common good is greater the more they facilitate the interrelationships among the participants and guarantee the development of stable communities based on trust.

### 3.5 | Openness

The openness of a network can be determined by how easily providers and users can enter and exit (Sundararajan, 2016), which depends on multiple factors. Regarding the common good of the community,

it is important to consider initially the physical characteristics of the asset, as is the case of a neighbourhood community swimming pool, which is shared and has a congestion point.<sup>2</sup> However, Wikipedia allows shared use, but it does not deplete. Thus, it enables more users to join without excessive expenses (Reagle, 2010), as the openness of the shared good is conditioned by its characteristics.

However, regardless of the characteristics of the good, from the common good perspective, this openness implies the reduction of barriers, which allows for greater inclusion (Schlag & Melé, 2020) and diversity of participants.

The openness of the collaborative economy contributes to the common good the more it facilitates access to the community (there are fewer barriers to entering).

### 3.6 | Mission-driven

Regarding the purpose of the company, there are different objectives in the broad typology of models within CE (Cañigüeral, 2016; Muñoz & Cohen, 2017):

- *For-profit companies*, where the main objective is to maximise benefits for owners (e.g. Cabify).
- *Social companies, cooperatives, and B-corporations*, where, although a for-profit character is maintained, social and environmental motivations are prioritised over economic benefits (e.g. Som Mobilitat and Couchsurfing).
- *Non-profit organisations and associations*, where the main motivation is to advance a social purpose (e.g. Goteo and Freecycle).

We have previously established that for-profit companies or platforms contribute to the common good of society, as it produces goods and services to satisfy needs. Nevertheless, entities with a social objective (exclusively or along with profit motives) create a basic element of community building and have a positive impact on society (Muñoz & Cohen, 2018). They create community by promoting common objectives beyond the achievement of financial gain. These common social objectives revert to the community, favouring its development and the union of the participants around the values of human dignity and life in the community. Regarding the economic conditions of the common good, Melé (2009, p. 236) stated: "Economic growth is instrumental and subordinated to people, not the other way around." For that reason, those organisations that explicitly include social and environmental objectives of their economic activity in their mission are demonstrating to the community and greater society that economic benefits pursuits are instrumental for a greater good.

An example is Goteo.org, a non-profit platform that presents projects with clear social objectives, where users participate by funding with the monetary contributions. Another example is Som Mobilitat, a non-profit consumer cooperative that offers services and products of mobility to promote sustainability.

The contribution of collaborative economy organisations to the common good is greater the more explicit their social and environmental objectives are.

### 3.7 | Governance

Governance is “the set of rules concerning who gets to participate in an ecosystem, how to divide the value, and how to resolve conflicts” (Parker et al., 2016, p. 158). Therefore, governance systems include “a set of protocols that determines who can participate, what roles they might play, how they might interact, and how disputes get resolved” (Hagel, 2015, p. 80).

To distinguish different business models of CE, we focus on the formal aspects of governance: property and its acquired rights; the generation of value and the processes of its distribution within the organisation; and power, according to the rights, processes, and structures qualified for decision-making.

From these elements, we identify three governance models of organisation-based platforms: capitalist companies; platform cooperatives and social companies; and organisations managed under commons criteria. In the case of capitalist companies, the three elements that determine governance are concentrated with the shareholders of the platform. These companies are under the generic term of *platform capitalism* (Sundararajan, 2016). There are *platform cooperatives*, where members of a cooperative, workers or non-workers, are the owners, and they have the power to decide the distribution of the value. However, in this case, each partner has one vote in strategic matters decided in the general assembly (e.g. Loomio) (Scholz, 2016). Lastly, there are goods that are jointly developed and maintained by a community and shared according to community-defined rules. These goods, called commons, are managed under participatory systems and community self-management (Bollier, 2014).

Concerning the first aspect of governance, goods and their attached rights, governance models that distribute power facilitate peer-to-peer relationships, which are fundamental to generate the feeling of belonging and shared values in the community (Krause, 2001). Therefore, the cooperative systems in which the goods of the platform lie in the partners promote the common good of the community itself to a greater extent.

Second, when tackling the generation and distribution of value amongst participants in the network and members of the platform, the structures that account for non-financial contributions and the distribution systems that fundamentally revert to all the participants promote the creation of a community through the feeling of belonging and the development of the virtues of justice, solidarity, and generosity.

Finally, regarding decision-making, the governance practises that empower participants are related to: (a) assigning power in decision-making according to the contribution to the generation of value and not exclusively to the economic contribution; (b) inclusive systems of decision-making to consider the opinion and value provided by all stakeholders; and (c) the creation of mechanisms of decision-making

that foster the participation and discussion of everyone, as it is important to include and facilitate all those interested in the decision-making process. These practises create a greater common good, as they favour the dimensions of belonging, interconnection, and shared values. Likewise, the discussion processes and participatory systems of coordination strengthen the connections of participants with the community. The common good “is a practical matter to be decided on by a firm's members through joint deliberation or dialogue” (Sison & Fontrodona, 2012, p. 232).

To generate governance systems that build up the community, it is fundamental to ensure transparency in all the processes. This transparency requires participants to obey common rules, to have a shared language, and to believe in the same values. Transparency promotes integration amongst the different participants of a platform, which makes it easier to solve complex problems and allows external participants to collaborate effectively with the platform.

The contribution of collaborative economy platforms to the common good is greater the more they

- distribute property and acquired rights among the participants;
- revert obtained benefits to all participants;
- favour inclusive and participatory decision making; and
- promote transparency in the platform.

### 3.8 | Knowledge and technology policy

Other topics of debate are data ownership, confidentiality, and the nature of knowledge. In this context, we refer to knowledge as the process of creating and systematising information and results of cognitive abilities that are socially dispersed. These are generated through the participation of users of the network and produce an integrated and shared body of knowledge that is constantly evolving (Benkler, 2006). Knowledge, unlike private property, is a good in which consumption is non-rival, although it can be made exclusive through patents.

The way that data and information are managed corresponds to different conceptions of knowledge ownership. Moreover, data and information are owned by the platform, which then monetises them, as is the case of Amazon, Google, and Facebook.

Moreover, knowledge is considered as a common good (Hess & Ostrom, 2007). The information generated by participants is a jointly generated value, which is made available to the community for analysis and/or possible commercial exploitation. The public dimension of collaborative production, through licencing, used by Creative Commons and copyleft, or open data guarantees access to resources, protecting them from privatisation. This is the case of Wikipedia or citizens' science projects.

Additionally, technology or type of software behind these initiatives can use service-closed source software or a free and open

**TABLE 4** Elements of collaborative economy and its contribution to community build-up

Community build-up			
Less ←————→ More			
Sharing resources	Pseudo-sharing/second-hand selling	Sharing	Gift
Decentralised networks	Access economy	B2P	P2P
Reputation	Third-party verification system	Reputation system	Trust
Platform responsibilities	Interconnection	Risk reduction	Care of participants
Openness	Difficult to access and/or exit		No barriers to enter and exit
Mission-driven	Profit	Social benefit + profit	Social
Governance	Capitalist company	Cooperatives	Organisations as commons
Knowledge and technology policy	All rights of contents and tools are reserved	Part of the contents and tools are open access	Open (Copyleft)

Source: Authors.

software that allows replicability, improvement, and dissemination of the activity, such as LINUX or Arduino. The logic in the management of technology under free software implies that created knowledge is improved, since it is shared. Furthermore, it does not mean that it is free of cost, as it is managed with copyleft licences and under four liberties (Stallman, 2002): (a) use; (b) study to learn how the programme works and modify and adapt it to specific needs; (c) distribute copies to help other users; and 4) publish improvements so the entire community can benefit.

Free technology provides communal control of the means of production in a digital environment (Benkler, 2006; Bollier & Helfrich, 2014). These projects are sustainable since they are funded by third parties, with applications adapted to particular uses, requiring a charged price or contributions from participants (Fuster Morell & Espelt, 2019). The management of knowledge, either data or technology, under this formula, allows for its shared use for its continuous improvement through the contributions of participants, making them part of the common good of the community. The management of information and knowledge as commons, which does not appear in many definitions of CE, is essential for the conceptualisation of CE made by Benkler (2006) or Bauwens (2005).

The impact of sharing on the common good of society is obvious. LINUX and www have demonstrated that sharing knowledge, instead of limiting its access, generates benefits for all humanity, and as sustainable projects, they correspond to the logic of abundance versus scarcity (Bollier & Helfrich, 2014; Hess & Ostrom, 2007).

The contribution of collaborative economy activities to the common good is greater the more they favour the creation, sharing, and diffusion of knowledge.

Table 4 summarises how the elements of a CE contribute to community building.

## 4 | DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a guideline to assess the contribution of organisations of CE to the common good: CE organisations contribute to the common good to the extent that they build a community through the generation of the feeling of belonging and interaction, which involves communication, mutual influence, interdependence, and common culture.

Society must approach the CE as a tool that complements others in the search for solutions to economic and social problems. The debate is not about UBER or traditional taxi service, but which mobility model society wants and how these two types of companies can contribute to its achievement.

Governance of the platform network is essential to foster organisational models that promote the common good. Sharing economy initiatives can combine features of different models, and they can facilitate new ways of collaboration for stakeholders with a common objective. The emergence of an offline CE occurred during the recession, due to decreased market opportunities and the need for new models (Martin, 2016). However, digital platforms allow for the scalability of collaboration hitherto unimaginable.

Next, we discuss the positive and negative aspects of CE and their impact on society. Positive effects for society include the following. First, the cheapening of goods and services, since the use is cheaper than the property, although this can be an incentive to further increase consumption. Second, CE provides a more efficient use of available resources, as new production is not necessary to satisfy demand. Third, CE decreases transaction costs, access barriers, and hierarchies, which has provided new opportunities for consumers and small companies.

However, these contributions to the social common good must be explained. Digital platforms have externalities and network economies (Shapiro & Varian, 1999). This is a situation in which the increase in the number of network participants increases the utility for all of them; as a result, the most efficient market structure is a

monopoly. Given the current technology, this is a hazard of digital platforms that are aimed exclusively at making profits (Codagnone et al., 2018; Rifkin, 2000). Murillo et al. (2017) highlighted a basic aspect of traditional capitalist behaviour: the success of digital platforms is based on scalability and expansion, that is, the more users, the better. In addition, in this competitive environment, success belongs to whoever arrives first, and the winner gets everything. However, this growth is only guaranteed with external capital. The main objective of investors who support digital platforms for collaboration or exchange is to create new markets or expand the existing ones by mediating the supply and demand of unused goods or services. Obviously, this is done in exchange for an expected profit in the future that would compensate for the high risk of investing in new business models.

If the platform takes advantage of the opportunity for a natural monopoly, its interest will not align with users of the network, resulting in the deterioration of the working conditions and rights and/or consumer rights. Furthermore, there will be an increase in unfair competition between online and offline participants of the activity due to cost differences in costs and regulatory frameworks. Therefore, the platform's contribution to the common good will be negative.

For CE to continue creating common good for society and confront the significant power of large corporations, some authors propose strengthening principles that determine CE by increasing platform cooperatives, which are open-source projects based on community creation and the distribution of the generated benefits. Scholz (2016) highlighted 10 principles for *platform cooperativism*: collective property of the platform; decent payment and income security; transparency and portability of the data; appreciation and recognition of the generated value; group decisions in the workplace; a protective legal framework; transferable protection of the workers and coverage of social benefits; protection against arbitrary behaviour in rating systems; rejection to excessive vigilance in the workplace; and the right of workers to disconnect.

The first advantage of platform cooperativism is that profit generated from sharing information, instead of being owned by the stakeholders of a multinational company, reverts to the generators of the information. The second advantage is that they are cooperative activities between local agents, since there must be an initial funding and a democratic and transparent management for their sustainability. Additionally, they can generate new projects based on trust and knowledge of participants, which the platform builds. Third, the platform generates reliable information, since there is public participation. Reliable information is a common good, since, unlike private property, it is produced with participation, its use does not decrease the utility of other goods, and the more people participating, the greater the profit for everyone. The addition of new participants increases the added value of the product, instead of reducing it (Scholz, & Schneider, 2017).

The public sector could follow three policies: regulation, development, and innovation (Acquier et al., 2019). Regulation is necessary to promote practises to encourage positive externalities and to reduce the negative ones. To do this, regulators should use independent studies on the environmental and social impacts of

platforms, access data from platforms and produce external data. Second, organisations with hybrid governance models must be fostered by combining the activist logic of mission-driven platforms and commercial logic. Governments, educational institutions (business, engineering, or design schools), and investors could develop these kinds of projects. Third, non-profit institutions are innovative spaces that combine social and technical innovations. Governments (local or central) may promote them as a different way to develop new strategies and policies, as has already been implemented in Seoul, Bologna, Amsterdam, Barcelona, and San Francisco.<sup>3</sup>

The world is constantly changing, and technological transformations will continue altering market and business models. CE opens doors for companies to change their relationship with clients and to conceive them as participants that add value with ideas and proposals. Likewise, citizens have ways to self-organise (transportation, food, and energy).

Collaborative Economy has emerged as a response to the need of people (peers) to exchange, produce, and share in a more humane and cooperative manner. In opposition to the competitive system that depletes resources and increases inequality, this socioeconomic system is an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable alternative. Strengthening this movement is the greatest challenge for CE agents. A possible form is open platform cooperativism, specifically, and approaching social economy, in general, with which the former shares many values (Vicente et al., 2017). Other formulas could include participatory funding processes and regulations against competition. Once again, the future brings a wide range of collaborative possibilities.

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#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Gig economy is defined as "the exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment by task basis" (Lepanjuuri et al., 2018, p. 4).
- <sup>2</sup> A good is non-rival if a person's consumption does not reduce the benefits of another user's consumption of the good, but it could have a congestion point, when a new user reduces utility of others (e.g. roads). A good is non-excludable if a person's consumption of it cannot practically be excluded (Ostrom, 1990; Samuelson, 1954).
- <sup>3</sup> These cities belong to a non-profit association called: Sharing Cities Action ([www.sharingcitiesaction.net](http://www.sharingcitiesaction.net)), which promotes socioeconomic development, collaborates in the regulation of and negotiations with platforms, defends and adapts labor and digital rights, and promotes public innovation, criteria for platform differentiation, and the promotion of platforms with a positive impact.

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