The Emerging Enterprise

10 archetypes of corporations of 2050
2024

Plurality University Network

u+

Réseau Université de la Pluralité

In a future marked by climate change, recurring crises, and technological transformations, how will the very nature of corporations, their business models, and ways of operating be transformed? And what role could corporations play with regard to these changes?

This reflection is rendered all the more necessary as virtually no foresight on the future of corporations exists[1]. The Emerging Enterprise project, led by the Plurality University Network, aims to fill this gap.

From 2020 to 2022, The Emerging Enterprise brought together representatives from more than 40 businesses operating in France, as well as one trade union (CFDT), the National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions (Anact), and researchers, to imagine 12 companies of the year 2050 with the help of 5 (mostly) science fiction writers.

The methodology blended classic foresight elements with the use of imagination and fiction.

Out of these fictional corporations of the future, we have extracted 10 "Archetypes" of businesses of the future, some quite different from today's businesses, others more recognizable yet significantly transformed.

These archetypes are not predictions. They are not all lovable, nor are they easy to judge - and different readers will have different opinions on many of them. As in today's reality, they have to deal with their share of contradictions. Read them as invitations: to discuss, to project and situate yourselves, and to act for change.

The "Emerging Enterprise" website contains additional material. There, you will find:

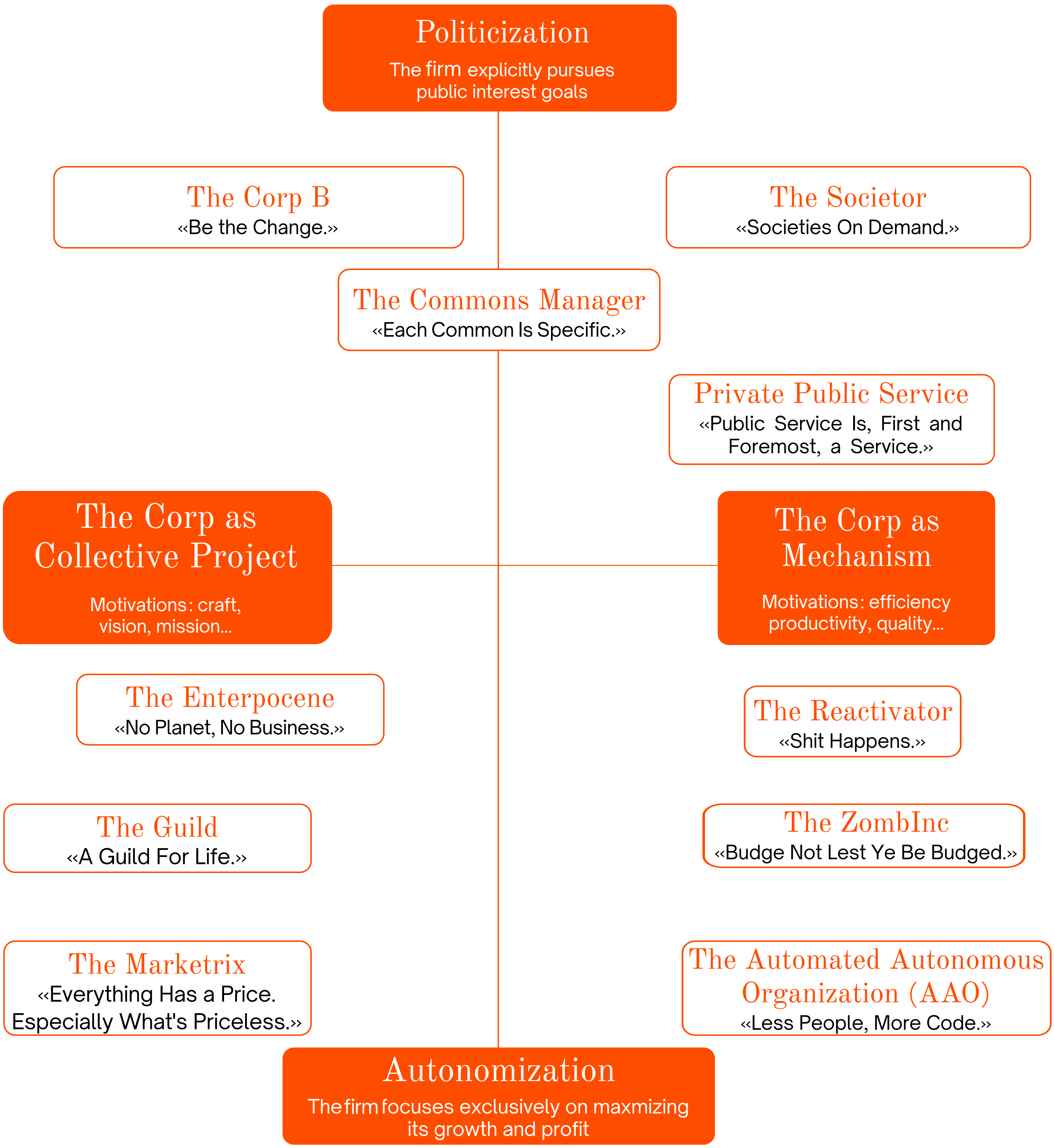
- *A brief that describes the project and explains how the archetypes were built and relate to one another;*
- *(in French) Ten booklets, one per archetype, that contain their description (which you will find in the pages below), but also one of the fictions created by the project's participants, illustrated by students of Geneva's school of arts and design (HEAD), as well as the reaction of several experts and professionals.*

https://www.plurality-university.org/projects/lentreprise-qui-vient

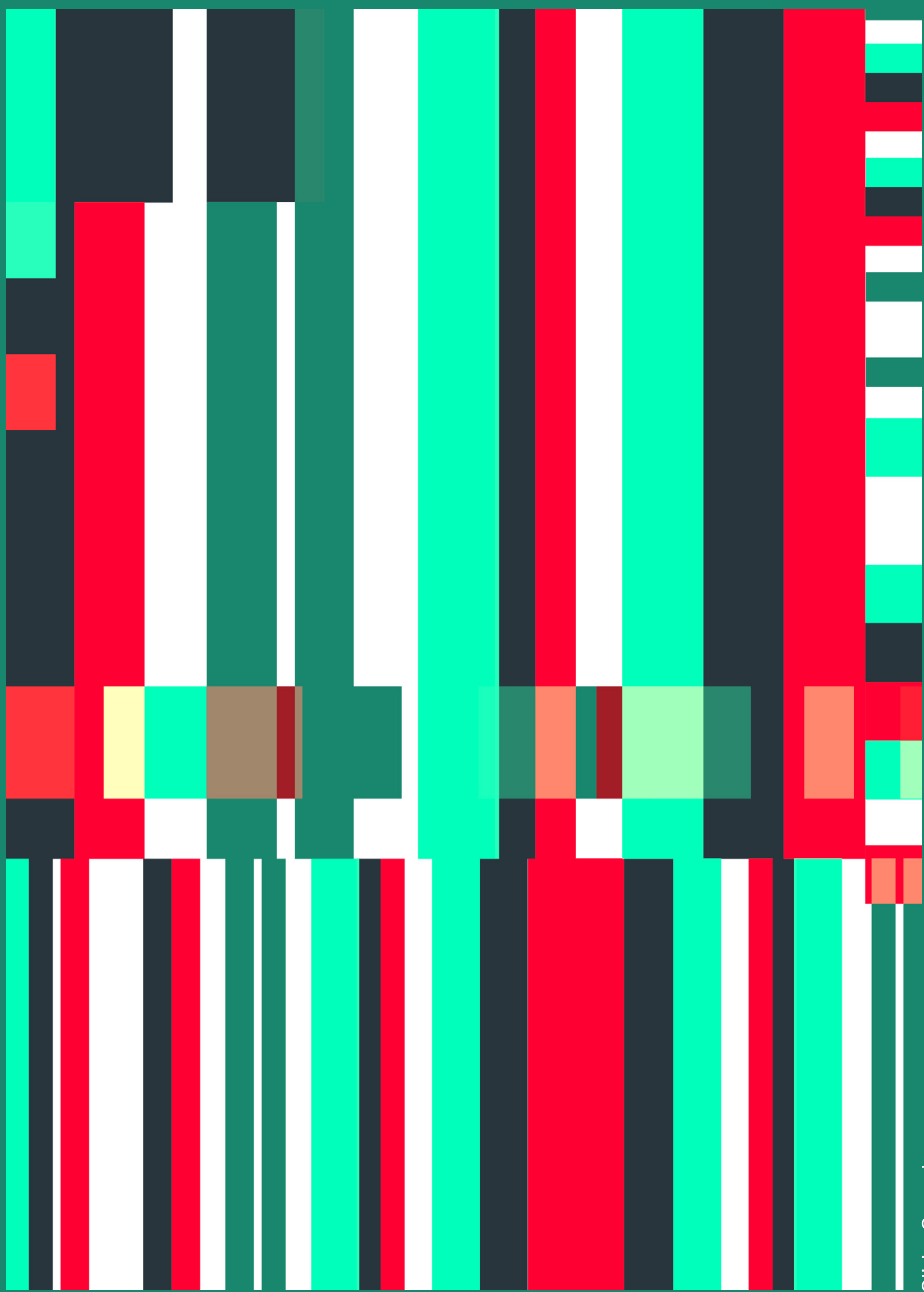
1. There is plenty of foresight on the futures of Work, but we know of only two projects on the future of corporations: "Future of the Corporation" by the British Academy (2017-), and Institute For The Future's "Equitable Enterprise Initiative" (2022-).

Contents

The 10 archetypes

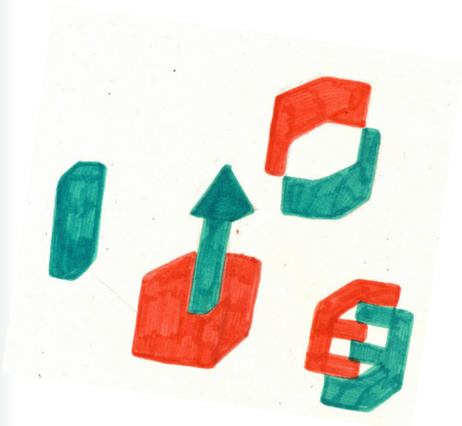


The Corp B



Olivier Conrad

A Corp B[1] is an enterprise built around a purpose considered to be of public interest, typically because other types of institutions or organizations seem to be unable to achieve it. The principal difference between a Corp B and the B Corps and purpose-driven companies of 2024, is that the mission precedes the enterprise, and in principle, the organization does not outlive the mission. Some Corp Bs even make the disappearance of their own market their mission (see the section on NoCorps on page 3).



A Corp B may arise from a group of entrepreneurs, a citizens' petition, or a public initiative. In all cases, the granting of this status is subject to approval after public consultation. The process was passed into French law in 2038. Elsewhere, the Corp B label is granted by NGOs, foundations, and in some cases other Corp Bs, which can make the system rather opaque.

The company's existence is supposed to end when its mission is complete, becomes obsolete, or another arrangement becomes more suitable. Given the tax and social advantages enjoyed by Corp Bs, the organization's assets are considered public and revert to a common fund upon company dissolution.

1. Named after the "B Corps" that flourished in the early 2000's.

SLOGAN

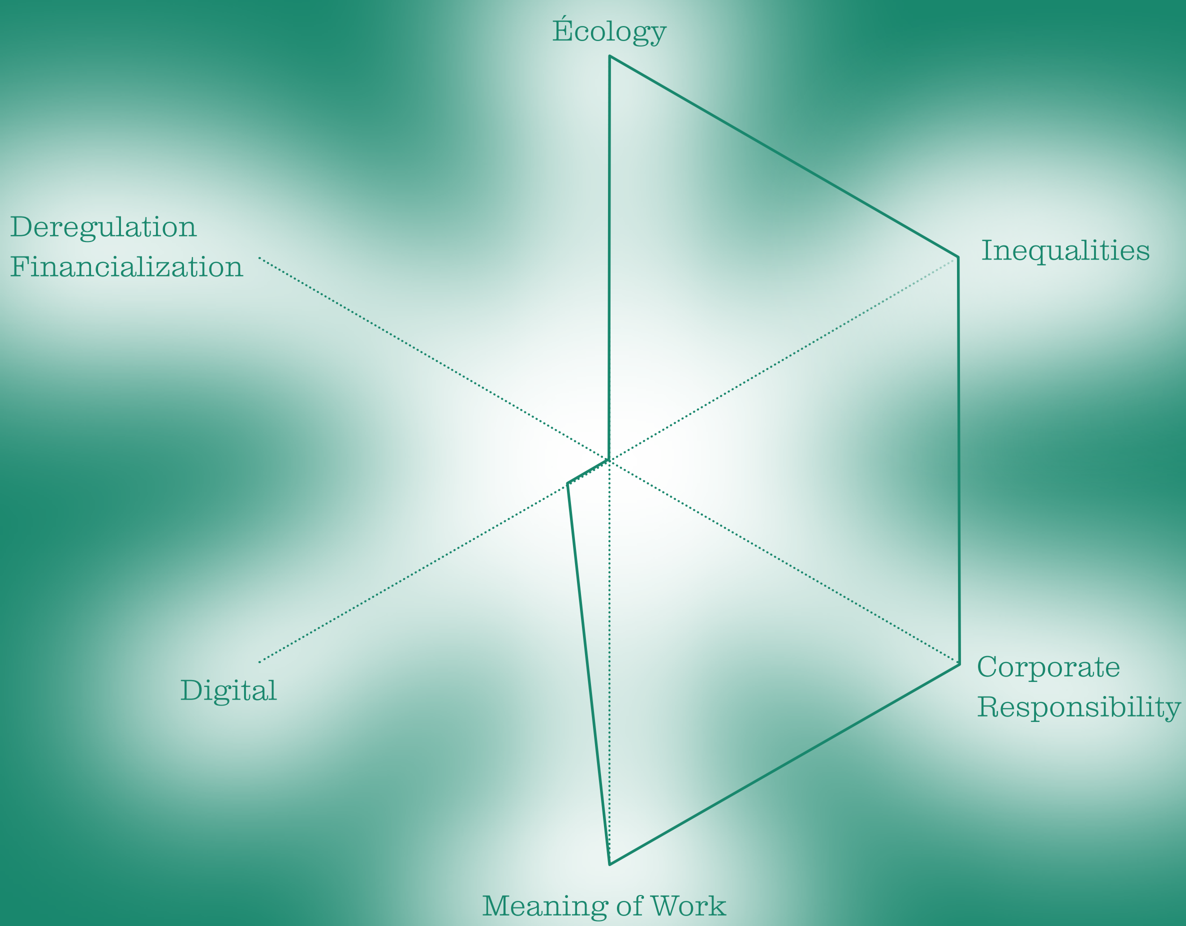
“Be the Change.”

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

The mission precedes the company and in principle, the company does not last beyond the mission.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Accomplishment of the mission.



What do Corp Bs produce?

A Corp B produces goods or services that meet “public interest” needs, whether defined by the law, societal values, or the Corp B itself. However, a Corp B is defined less by its production than by the objective it pursues and its “theory of change” (see box below).

Examples of Corp B activities created between 2038 and 2050:

- Providing migrants and other vulnerable groups without a fixed territory with an identity and a holistic administrative and social environment
- Assembling ad hoc teams to respond quickly to unconventional disasters
- Transforming a limited natural resource into a commons[2]
- Managing a new commons: a field of knowledge, a natural resource, a water basin, etc.

> Theory of Change
>
> Theory of Change (ToC) is a methodology or a criterion for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation that is used in philanthropy, not-for-profit, international development, and government to promote social change.
>
> Theory of Change defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions. Its innovation lies in (1) in making the distinction between desired and actual outcomes and (2) requiring stakeholders to model their desired outcomes before they decide on forms of intervention to achieve those outcomes.
>
> (source: Wikipedia)

What is their business model?

Although in principle all kinds of business models are possible, certain models have been conceptualized specifically for the Corp B. These include “impact contracts,” in which remuneration is comprised of a fixed and a variable component, the latter depending on the Corp B’s results in relation to its public interest mission.

2. A natural or immaterial resource that a community manages for individual and collective benefit, so that it remains accessible to all members of the community. See also the “Commons Manager” archetype.

Any financial, natural, or human capital invested in the Corp B is remunerated according to a complex formula that accounts for the duration of the investment, the risk incurred, and the investor or contributor's level of engagement with the company.

Most Corp Bs are "profit-capped," that is, they are expected to generate the means to operate and invest and are encouraged to share the venture's success with all their contributors, but their profitability (as well as the use of their profits) is closely monitored.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

A Corp B is considered "property of collective interest," which means that it can only be sold, merged, or dissolved under conditions similar to those in which it was created. Financial investment, labor, or other forms of contributions confer the right to participate in strategic decisions, but do not confer any exclusive or transferable property rights. In many cases, capital is held by foundations or trusts that act as guarantors of the company's mission.

Strategic decisions are made by participative governance bodies that comprise many kinds of stakeholders, with users/beneficiaries/customers generally taking precedence. When the corporate mission includes an environmental dimension, these stakeholders also include non-humans, with animal/plant species or entire ecosystems (e.g. a river and its watershed, an ocean) represented in a variety of ways. Given this, along with stringent transparency requirements, Corp B governance can be cumbersome and complex at times.

How are they organized and managed?

Corp Bs see themselves as living organisms, organized according to principles inspired by biology. In managerial terms, this is inspired by the "liberated company" experiments of the 2000s[3].

Its organization is based on "cells." Each cell is responsible for its own specific functions, but also contributes to the smooth running of the whole enterprise. The cell makes operational decisions without systematically consulting management. It sets is own objectives, manages its own budget, allocates its own resources, and evaluates its own performance. Cohesion is accomplished through regular exchanges between cells, rather than through vertical reporting.

3. "An organizational form that allows employees complete freedom and responsibility to take actions they decide are best» - Isaac Getz, 2009 (see Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberated_company).

The teams that make up each cell are well-versed in collective intelligence and decision-making methodologies. Within and between cells, employees and teams share knowledge and best practices, creating a continuous learning environment within the company.

The Corp B strives for resilience rather than optimization: the duplication and redundancy of functions, in addition to a diversity of professions and profiles, reinforce these companies' adaptive capacity.

How do they measure performance?

The key performance measure is the social and ecological impact of the enterprise's activities. Economic results serve that priority, rather than the other way around.

Corp Bs believe that many of their objectives should not be measured quantitatively. They systematically question the relevance of each indicator, seeking to minimize their number and make them understandable to everyone.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

The lifespan of a Corp B is sometimes fixed in advance, but it can also be linked to its mission. Achieving its goal is not always straightforward or easy to predict, leading to some situations where Corp Bs exist longer than necessary, while in others management decides to close the company abruptly.

For these reasons, Corp Bs often set a "cruising" size, beyond which they will not grow further, or only slightly. Whether by choice or necessity, they are more often than not encouraged to let other Corp Bs operating in different sectors or territories replicate their techniques or products.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

The lifespan of a Corp B is sometimes fixed in advance, but it can also be linked to its mission. Achieving its goal is not always straightforward or easy to predict, leading to some situations where Corp Bs exist longer than necessary, while in others management decides to close the company abruptly.

For these reasons, Corp Bs often set a "cruising" size, beyond which they will not grow further, or only slightly. Whether by choice or necessity, they are more often than not encouraged to let other Corp Bs operating in different sectors or territories replicate their techniques or products.

A special case of Corp B: The NoCorp

An NoCorp is a company that sets as its goal the elimination of its own market, or at least the significant reduction of its size. Starting with an ecological or social concern, it may seek to:

- Remove an activity from the commercial domain, for example by providing services or content free of charge, or transforming a limited resource into a "commons."
- Make the need it meets disappear, for example by developing a community's ability to do things themselves rather than consume a product or service.

For such a company, disappearance is the ultimate marker of success. This is also why it is in general easier to create an NoCorp from scratch than to transform an existing business into an NoCorp.

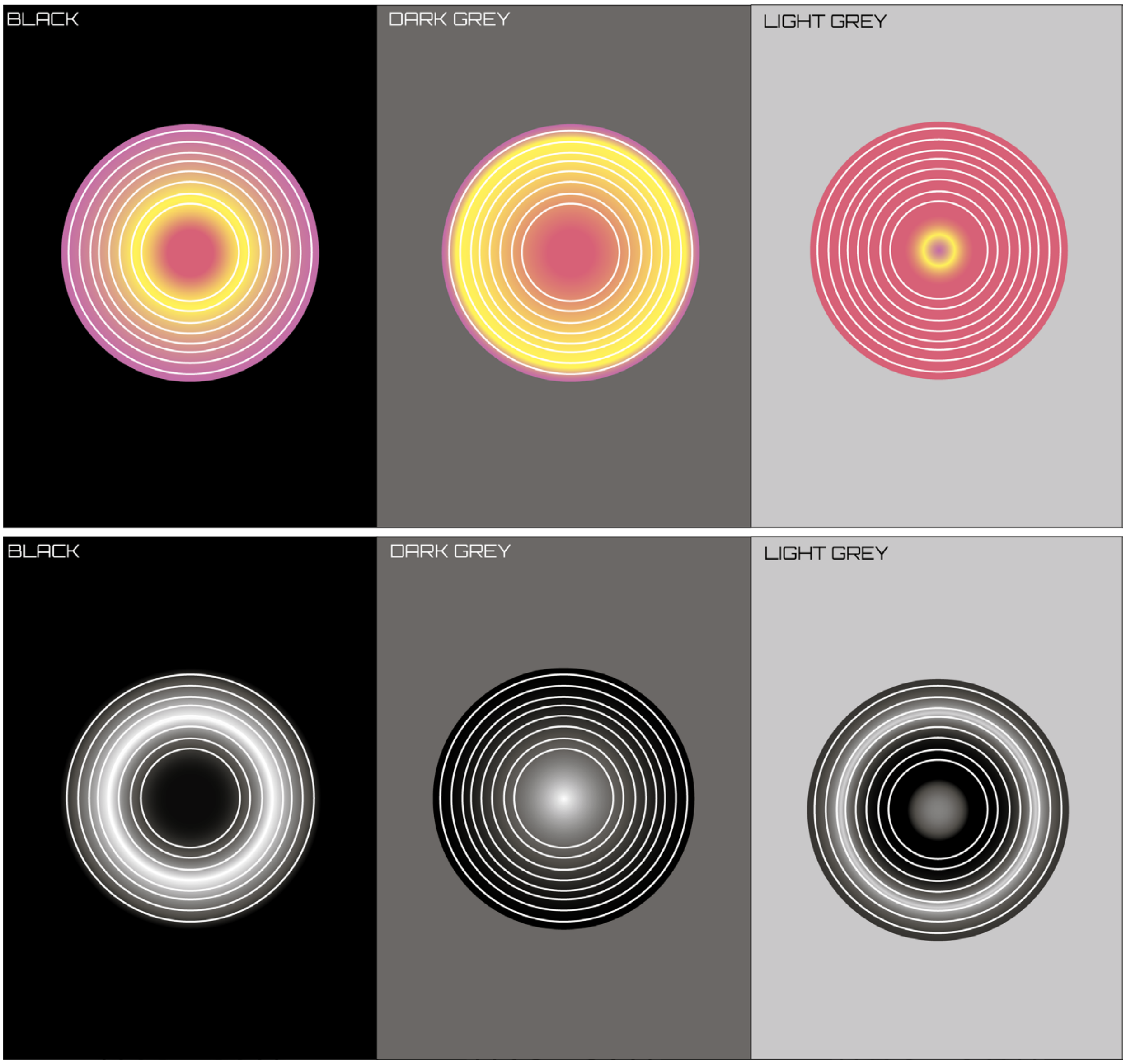
What risks do they face?

The typical risks faced by a Corp B are:

- Premature obsolescence of its mission, for example due to the emergence of a more dynamic or innovative Corp B tackling the same issue.
- Cumbersome governance, even in day-to-day decision-making.
- Technocratic drift, with management taking precedence over governance structures and focusing on the development of the organization, to the detriment of its mission.
- The resistance of traditional commercial enterprises. This can manifest in the form of price wars, legal action (e.g. for selling at a loss or counterfeiting), or innovations designed to shift the market's frame of reference.
- "Mission-washing," in which organizations claiming to be Corp Bs do not respect its criteria, or use this advantageous status at their launch stage only to abandon it later—a practice which is in principle illegal, but often observed.

Seeds of the future in the present

- Wikipedia, which has in a way wiped out the market for encyclopedias, while broadening access to encyclopedic content.
- Today’s purpose-driven enterprises and B Corps are of course seeds, but they may not always follow their principles to their logical conclusion. What happens to a purpose-driven company when its purpose has been achieved? Or what good is a mission that can never be accomplished?
- Companies such as Faith in Nature in the UK have appointed “Nature” to their Board of Directors.



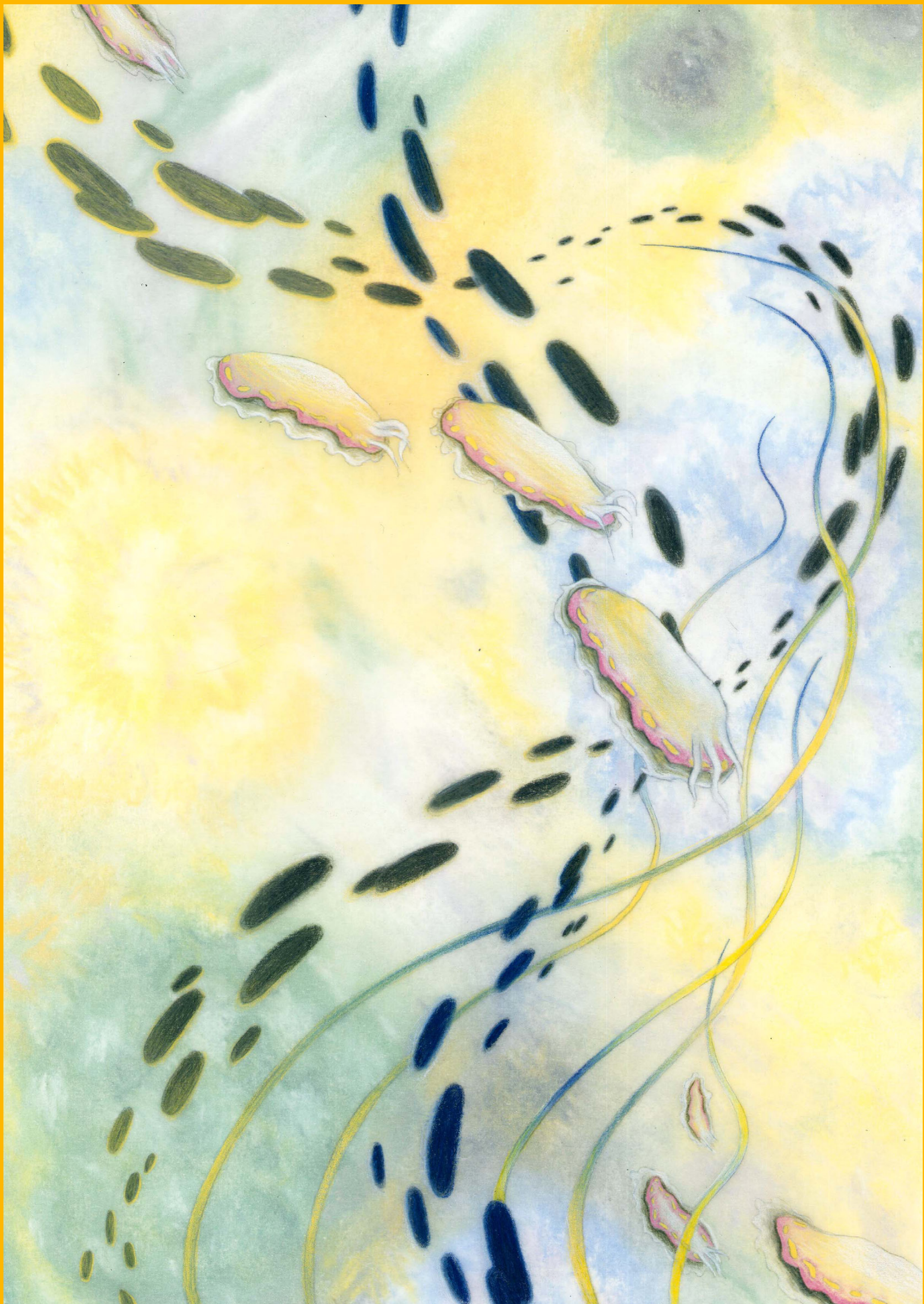
Nefeli Bodmer

If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype's description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise's participants: Equal!
- Comments by three practitioners and experts: Thomas Gauthier, futurist; Philippe Lemoine, entrepreneur and writer; Geneviève Ferone Creuzet, Prophil.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva's School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Enterpocene



Rahel Rippel

Enterpocenes4 are companies of their time. While they do not set out to change the world, they strive not to degrade it. Their day-to-day objective is to reconcile business goals with social and ecological imperatives, while adapting to the constraints and uncertainties of climate change.

They aim to create long-term value for all of their stakeholders, including employees, customers, partners, the communities in which they operate, and the planet. This is not always easy. Regulations, financial and non-financial reporting requirements, and the expectations of employees and stakeholders make governance complex and burdensome. Minimizing impact often comes into conflict with shareholder expectations, market demands, and competitive pressures.

Only by working in an ecosystem with each other, as businesses that share the same goals and challenges, can Enterpocene companies reconcile these tensions.

SLOGAN

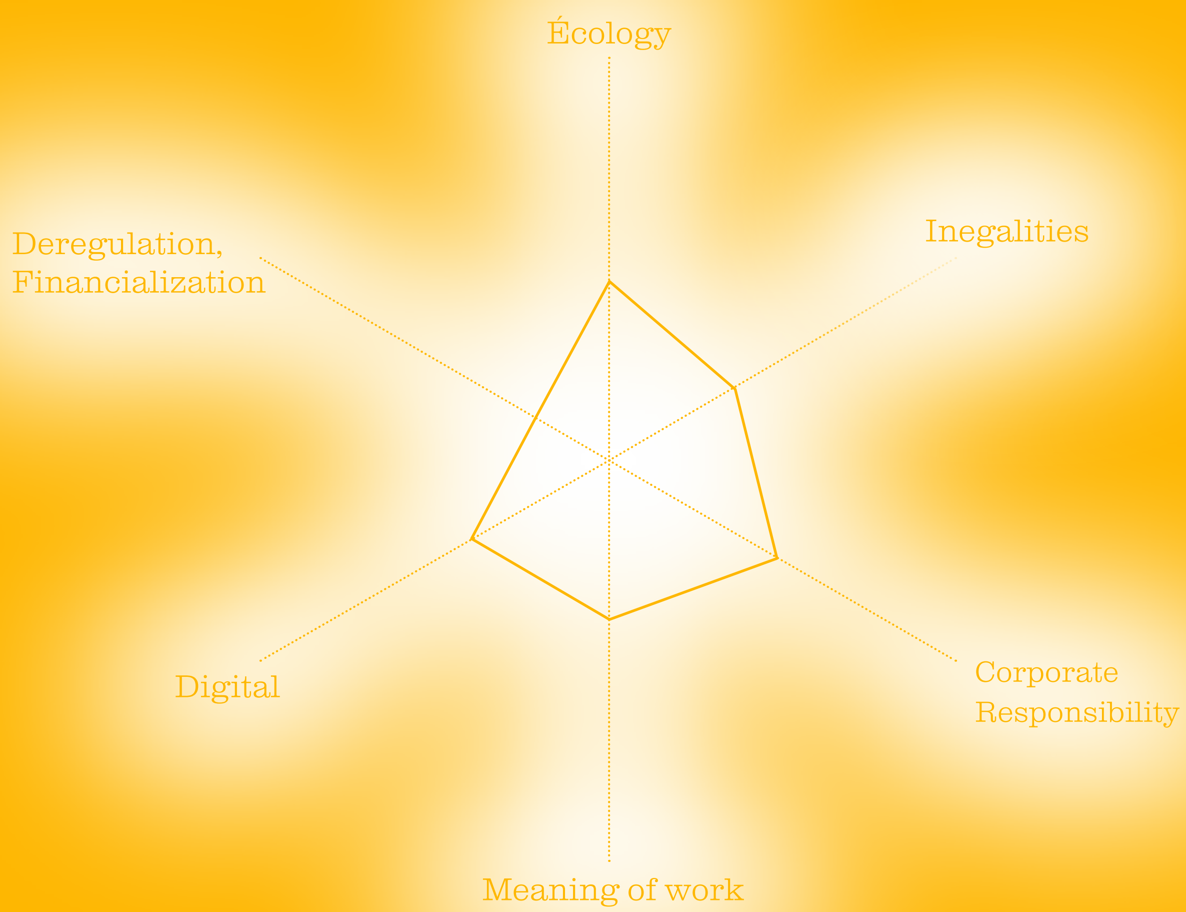
"No Planet, No Business."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Does not set out to change the world, but endeavors not to make it worse.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Numerous financial and non-financial measures—some would say too many.



What do Enterpocenes produce?

Enterpocenes can be found in all sectors and markets (B2B, B2C, etc.). Their uniqueness lies not in their activity, nor their mission, but rather their deep awareness of the fact that in addition to the goods and services that form the heart of their business, they also generate impacts (negative or positive) on natural, human, social, and intellectual “capital” – and need to own up to these impacts.

The challenge for an Enterpocene is to achieve its economic goals while taking these impacts into account as naturally and seamlessly as possible. Enterpocenes seek to adopt sustainable practices in all areas, from the management of worksites and staff to production and the lifecycle of products or services. They tend to seek out certifications and labels, even if the processes to obtain them are costly and complex.

Because they can never reduce their negative impacts completely, Enterpocenes also frequently engage in “offsetting” through involvement in philanthropic activities and encouraging employees to engage in volunteer work.

What is their business model?

Enterpocenes attempt to establish production methods and economic models that are at once virtuous and profitable.

The eco-design of their products and services aims to optimize the use of resources and take responsibility for the externalities of production, generally involving customers and ecosystem partners in the process. Though high cost at first, this approach gradually yields results in terms of sales and efficiencies.

The Enterpocene develops business models based on the ultimate benefits and use of products and services, rather than on volume sold. With this “functionality-based” approach, Enterpocenes aim to develop recurring revenues, maximize product lifespan, and better manage a product’s end of life.

This is generally only possible when working in an ecosystem with many other Enterpocenes. It is through the collective that Enterpocenes respond collaboratively to customer needs, pool equipment, organize short supply chains and a form of circular economy, or manage Commons (see the Commons Manager archetype).

Enterpocenes also benefit from a flourishing business in carbon credits and other markets for “pollution rights,” and do not hesitate to resort to these forms of compensation when they cannot take direct responsibility for their external impacts. Although there is awareness of the limits and the gray areas of these practices, sometimes there is no other solution.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

Most Enterpocenes are traditional commercial companies. Without reorganizing around a public interest “mission” that seems out of reach (see the Corp B archetype), they nonetheless feel the need to align their profitability and impact goals.

This starts with capital control. They are wary of investment funds focused on short-term profitability, instead preferring long-term investors. Often, employees are also shareholders. Profits are largely reinvested in the company.

Most Enterpocenes have attempted to establish governance bodies to ensure the representation of both visible (employees, partners, customers, local authorities) and invisible (nature or a natural ecosystem, future generations, etc.) stakeholders. However, because they were all creating them at the same time, they found it difficult to populate these bodies. Once again, the ecosystem approach has provided a solution through the creation of committees that oversee several Enterpocenes.

Who works for or with them?

Employees are one of the “capitals” that an Enterpocene attempts to enhance or even renew in its day-to-day business. They therefore tend to internalize core tasks, from design and production to customer service and accounting. With the goal of retaining staff, Enterpocenes engage in many initiatives in the areas of equal opportunity, quality of work life, and training.

These businesses also consider their ecosystem—the Enterpocenes with whom they work— to be an integral part of the company, and vice versa. Issues of employee loyalty, co-decision-making, and value sharing are also considered at this level. However, this presupposes that all components of the ecosystem participate equally, and this is not always the case.

How are they organized and managed?

An Enterpocene works to involve its employees and its ecosystem in the design of sustainable products and services and in the company’s overall performance.

This leads it to favor fixed salaries and collective bonuses over individual performance rewards, but the objective evaluation of global performance criteria is difficult to achieve and leads to never-ending discussion. Some employees embrace this, while others tire of it and leave the organization.

How do they measure performance?

Beyond economic performance, Enterpocenes are careful to measure their environmental and social impact. They use measurement tools like lifecycle analysis, carbon footprint, and employee well-being indicators.

They also strive to integrate these elements into the “multi-capital” (or triple bottom-line) accounting that a growing number of financial, public, and commercial partners are demanding. However, the complexity and instability of the methods, absence of recognized standards, lack of available skills and software tools mean that Enterpocenes have to devote considerable effort to this task without achieving truly satisfactory results.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

Enterpocenes seek “reasonable” growth that does not increase either their negative impacts or their risks, preferring moderate but sustainable profitability to short-term profit maximization.

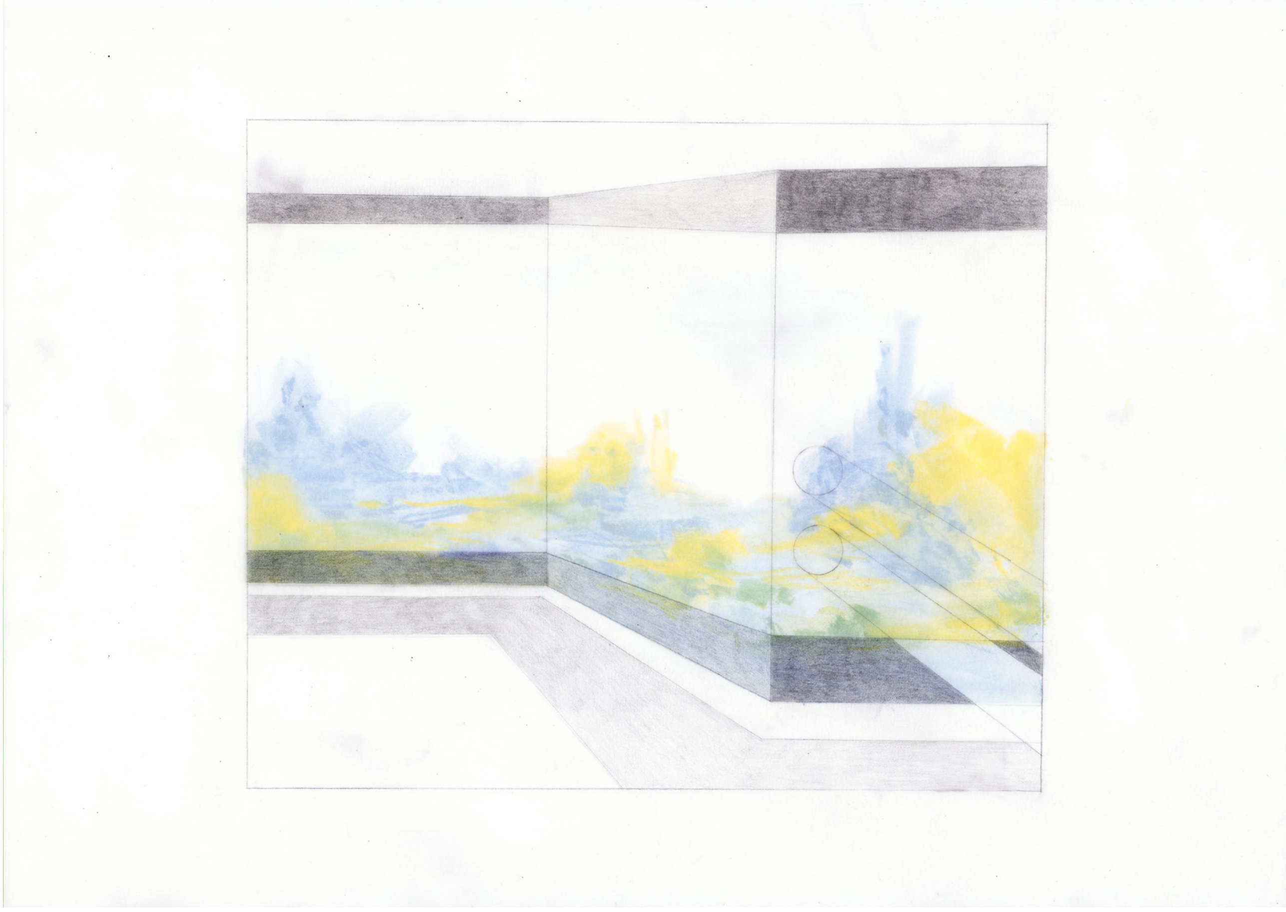
In smaller Enterpocenes, whose shareholder base often is concentrated in the hands of the organization’s management, leaders also must grapple with the issue of transfer of ownership.

What risks do they face?

- Detractors who find them far from the mark and compare them to “Corp Bs” operating in the same sectors (see corresponding archetype).
- Competitors with less scrutiny and lower prices.
- The complexity of simultaneously managing production and extra-financial indicators generates three risks: inefficiency, “green (or social) washing,” and, quite simply, poor decision-making based on ambiguous indicators.

Seeds of the future in the present

- Enterprises that have implemented Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investment criteria.
- The proliferation of methods for measuring the environmental and social impacts of companies, including associated labels and certifications, and multi-capital accounting approaches.



If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype’s description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise’s participants: Lacterre.
- Comments by five practitioners and experts: Cécile Renouard, Campus de la Transition; Marie Ekeland et Charly Berthet, 2050.do; Olivier Desbiey, Axa; Valentina Carbone, ESCP Business School.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva’s School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Commons Manager

Louise Monnard

In 2050, the increasing scarcity of essential resources such as water, energy, and land for agriculture is prompting a growing number of communities to manage them as “Commons.” The challenge of continually developing new ways of coping with climate change, along with the need to do so collectively, also prompts similar shifts in the fields of knowledge, data, software, etc.

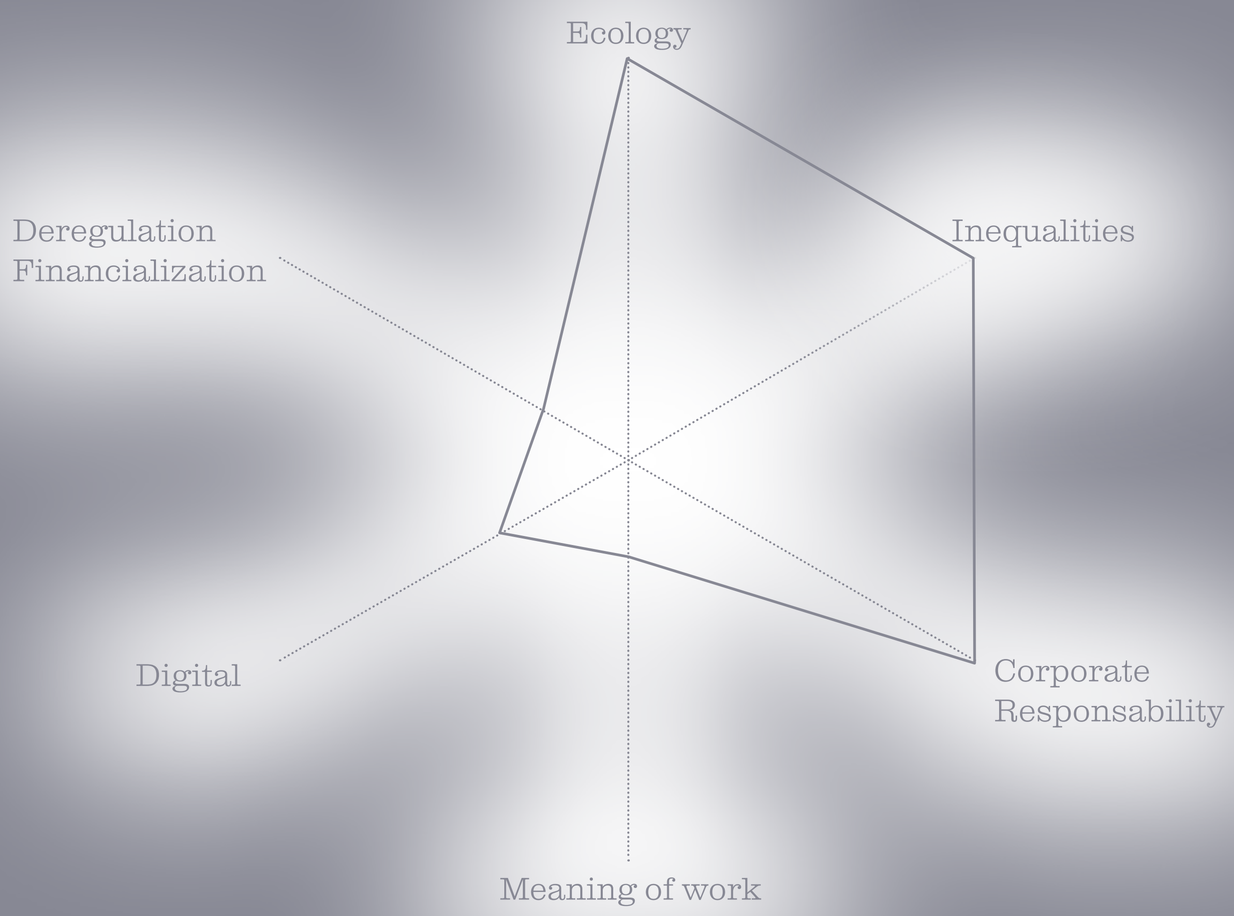
Commons are multiplying. But they are not always easy to manage, and members of the attached communities lack time to participate in their governance. Commons Managers respond to this difficulty by taking on the task of setting up and managing Commons on behalf of the communities in charge.

While meeting a real need, these companies, some of which are very powerful, are raising concerns of a rampant privatization of Commons.

SLOGAN
"Each Common is Specific."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE
An organization responsible, on behalf of a community, for managing shared resources ("Commons") to ensure their access and preservation.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Preservation and development of the Common resources in their portfolio.



? What do Commons Managers produce?

A Commons Manager manages (or sometimes creates) a Common on behalf of the community in charge of it. It ensures that the fundamental principles guiding the management of the Common are implemented.

Most of the Commons Managers’ work contains the day-to-day management of the resource: technical (maintenance and development), democratic (governance, resolution of conflicts of use), ecological (preservation), and economic (monitoring of uses, sometimes external marketing of the resource to generate the income needed for its administration).

Commons Managers also play an upstream role in the engineering and transformation of certain resources into Commons: inventory and delimitation of the resource, creation of decision-making and management mechanisms, etc.

Finally, the largest Commons Managers create links between the Commons they manage.

What is a Common?

A Common is a shared resource within a community, which all members of the community have access to and which they manage together. The Common refers simultaneously to the resource, the community, and the social practice that defines and implements its governance, access, and day-to-day management rules.

A Common can be a limited resource (freshwater in a watershed, a forest, a renewable energy production system, a shared vehicle fleet, etc.), in which case its use must be regulated to preserve it as well as guarantee equitable access for all community members.

However, a Common can also be an “intellectual” resource (knowledge, data, software, etc.) that is not finite, but whose collective management ensures both its development and access for all.

Commons are therefore an alternative form of resource management to both the public sector and the market. The key to their success lies in the quality, inclusivity, and sustainability of their governance.

What is their business model?

The business models of Commons Managers vary according to the nature of the resource and the needs of the community using it. The most common business models are:

- **Delegation:** The community pays the Commons Manager a fixed fee calculated according to the nature of the management contract (e.g. day-to-day management, organization of the governance), to which services are added according to a pre-agreed scale (e.g. for emergency work, resolving a conflict of use). Delegation works well for local resources, both natural and otherwise, such as machinery, agricultural seeds, etc.

- **Contribution:** The Commons Manager does not execute management tasks directly, but organizes the participation of community members, including individuals, companies, associations, and public institutions, keeping a record of everyone's contributions. This model lends itself particularly well to the management of intangible resources like open-source software, data, knowledge, etc.

- **Common-Private Partnership (CPP):** The Commons Manager takes full responsibility for the Common. It engages in ensuring its sustainability and guarantees equitable access to community members, relieving them of all governance and management tasks. This model is most common when the shared resource is expensive, as in shared vehicle fleets or windmills, or when the Common is vast and complex, for example water in a watershed.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

Some Commons Managers are commercial companies, while others are cooperatives. Some NGOs, as well as local authorities, have also created their own Commons Managers, with the aim of preventing private actors from gaining control of their Commons.

The selection of a Commons Manager is determined by a vote from the community concerned, most frequently following a call for bids.

During their term, the Commons Manager is accountable to the community from which they derive their mandate. Although Commons Managers are required by law and in practice to be transparent, the increasingly technical nature of Common management sometimes means this requirement is purely formal.

Who works for or with them?

The economics of a Commons Manager are based on the pooling of tasks, so that a single team can manage several Commons at the same time.

While technical skills (forest management, solar park or database maintenance, etc.) specific to each Common under management are frequently outsourced (if possible within the community attached to the Common, though this is not required), other skills are developed internally: namely community management (governance, facilitation, conflicts of use, etc.) and the skills required to create a Common (notably legal, social, and economic).

In the field, the management mandate may require that part of the day-to-day work is carried out by community members. In this manner, they become in some ways part of the Commons Manager’s staff, although not remunerated by it and somehow representing their client.

How are they organized and managed?

A Commons Manager may operate in a fairly traditional way, but since its employees are specialists in collective management, most of these organizations are run in a participatory, even democratic, fashion. This is made even more true by the fact that these skills are in high demand, so efforts are made to retain staff.

In the field, the Commons Manager relies both on its shared teams and the network of specialists whose expertise enables it to implement, for each Common, the best collective management practices with and on behalf of the community concerned.

How do they measure performance?

As enterprises, Commons Managers seek to maximize the number of Commons in their portfolios, their loyalty, and their profitability. With regard to the Commons they manage, the key performance indicator is the preservation or development of the Common, as well as the accessibility of the services it provides.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

While some Commons Managers are content to operate within a narrow scope, therefore limiting their growth, the larger ones seek to grow in the hopes of pooling their resources as much as possible. They are also seeking a new source of profit in the development of inter-Common exchanges and collaborations.

What risks do they face?

- The breakup of Commons into resources that are too small to make outsourced management viable.

- The increasing complexity of both the technical management of Commons and their governance, which raises costs and ultimately distances the management of the Common from its community base.

- Competition between Commons Managers, which drives prices and services down, and sometimes leads to Commons breaking up to be managed by two competing Commons Managers, resulting in the destruction of value for all parties.

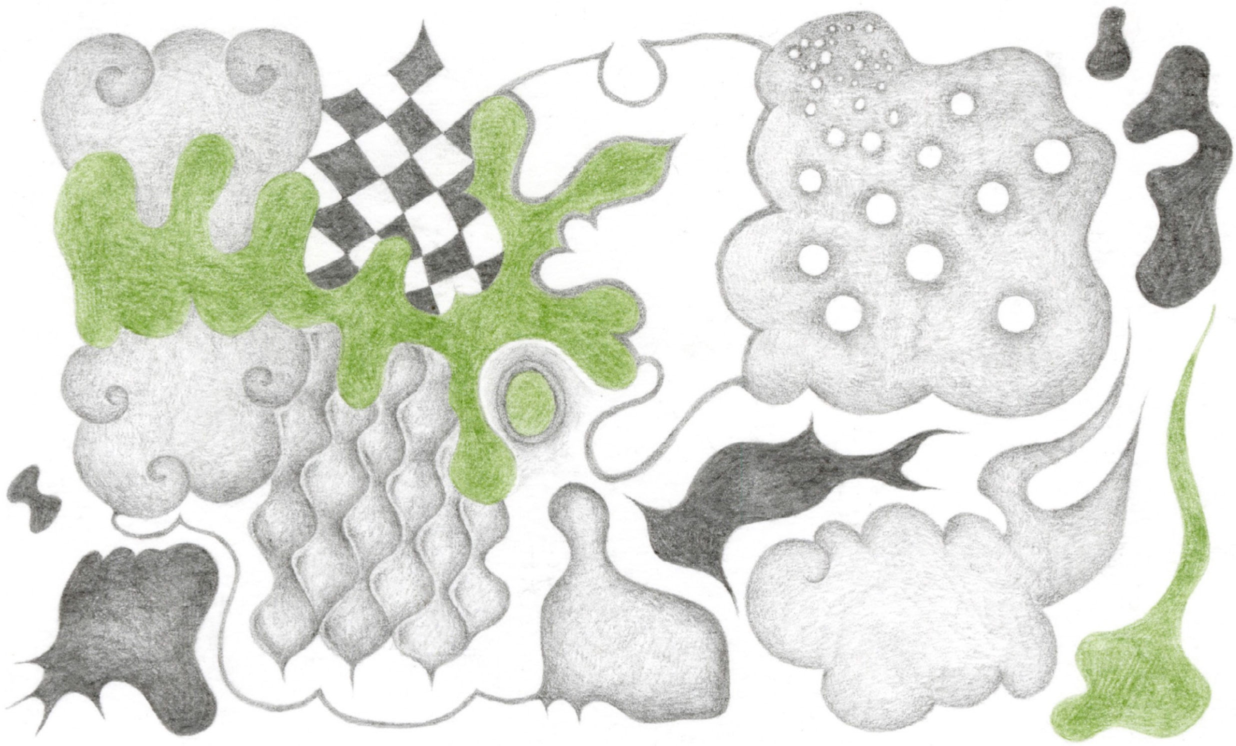
- Accusations of creeping privatization, leading to takeovers by nonprofits or public institutions (remunicipalization of Commons, similar to the water sector in France in 2000-2010).

Seeds of the future in the present

- Private companies managing urban water or waste networks, sometimes accused of dubious practices in order to win public service contracts and make those resources profitable.

- Public-private partnerships designed to improve the management of public services and reduce their budgetary costs, but whose medium-term results are sometimes the opposite.

- The professionalization of the management of digital Commons, such as public data repositories, open-source software forges, etc.

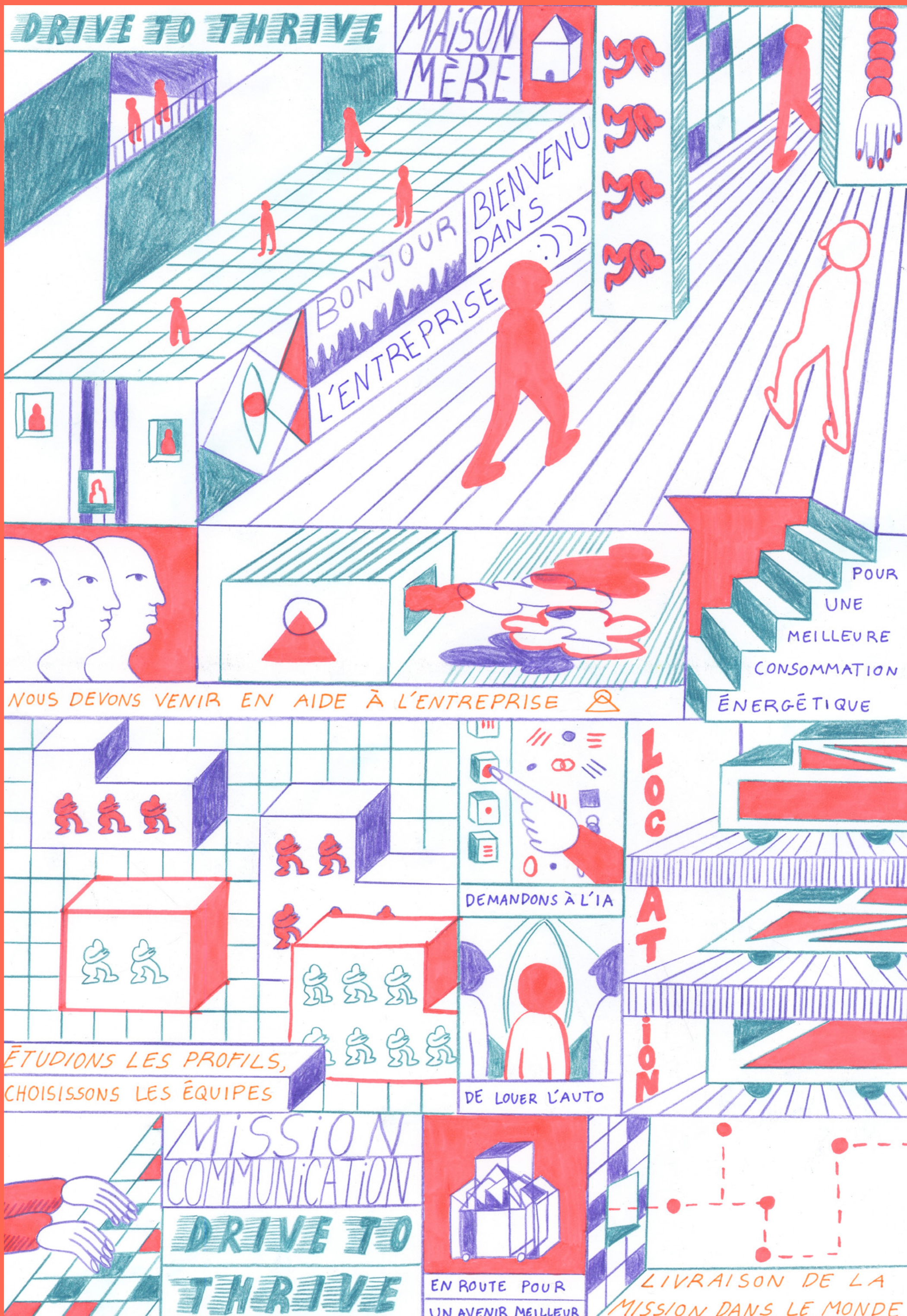


If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype’s description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise’s participants: EcoBreizh.
- Comments by three practitioners and experts: Valérie Peugeot, SciencesPo; Pascale Guiffant, Open Lande; Elisabeth Laville, Utopies.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva’s School of Arts and Design (HEAD)

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Reactivator



In 2050, the operations of many companies are rendered irregular, even sometimes intermittent, due to numerous external factors: lack of energy or water, heatwaves, pandemics, geopolitical or financial crises, supply or distribution issues linked to events around the world...

A reactivator is a company that has transformed these dysfunctions into its business.

Reactivators help organizations whose activity is stopped or temporarily slowed down by an external event minimize their losses by mobilizing their unused assets towards alternative uses.

In a way, they have taken over from insurance companies, which have stopped insuring these losses due to their frequency.

SLOGAN

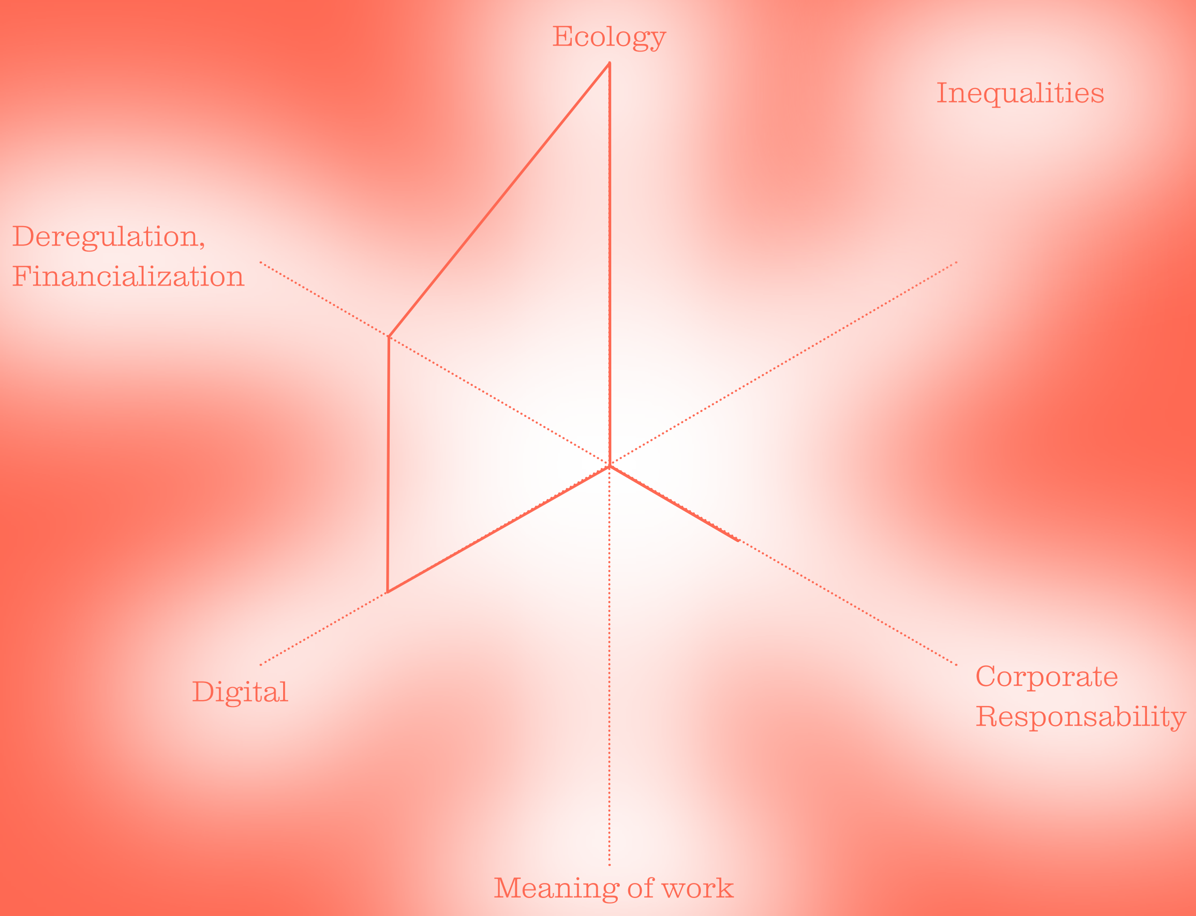
"Shit Happens."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Helps organizations whose business has temporarily slowed or been interrupted minimize their losses by mobilizing their unusable assets elsewhere.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Ratio of "Remobilized assets / Unused assets under temporary management."



What do Reactivators produce?

The main objective of a Reactivator is to help companies get through difficult times by finding alternative uses for their unused assets, whether people, inventory, machines, worksites, etc. Reactivators do not handle financial assets.

A Reactivator begins by assessing the client company’s “remobilizable assets,” in other words those assets which could be used temporarily elsewhere. Preferably this assessment happens before any incident. The Reactivator then commits to a minimum remuneration for all assets should a crisis render them unusable by the client.

When an issue occurs, the Reactivator takes care of reallocating the assets the client can no longer use: finding uses for existing inventory, in particular perishable products; making worksites and equipment available to other companies or using them for other purposes like housing or training; employing staff in other tasks, either for other organizations, on community work, or in training… The Reactivator then organizes the “return” of these assets to the client company once the problem has been resolved.

Optionally, Reactivators can also help their client companies become less vulnerable to these events (known as “antifragility”) by developing their resilience, organizing stress tests, pooling equipment or part of their workforce, etc.

What is their business model?

A Reactivator’s corporate clients pay a fixed annual premium, which includes an annual revaluation of their remobilizable assets.

However, the majority of a Reactivator’s income comes from making the unused assets of its clients available to other companies, local authorities, or NGOs. Reactivators strive to reach a certain critical size, having operations in a sufficient number of markets and territories to easily find uses for the assets in their temporary care. The Reactivator guarantees a minimum return on assets to its corporate clients, so it must therefore find outlets for most of them.

The ”antifragility” consulting service is typically valued as a percentage of losses avoided.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

Some Reactivators have their roots in insurance companies, and their governance is that of a traditional private company.

Others, however, have been created by business ecosystems, usually on a regional or sector basis. They take the form of cooperatives, formal or informal clusters, or sometimes commercial companies, with the founding organizations providing joint governance.

Who works for or with them?

A Reactivator relies on a large number of skilled teams. At the head office, in addition to management and administration, the teams are largely composed of risk managers, asset valuers, and market makers, who are in charge of matching the supply and demand for temporary assets.

In the field, there are client managers, antifragility consultants, and market prospectors, who search both for new customers and opportunities for available assets. The organization also has a vast network of external specialists, capable of intervening in all manner of situations.

How are they organized and managed?

Reactivators are characterized by the diversity of their areas of intervention and their responsiveness to unexpected, sudden events.

They have, as such, developed the “flash organization” model at scale: in less than 24 hours, a Reactivator can set up a team anywhere, and above all, find expedient, effective solutions to immediate challenges.

While the head office exudes the image of a classically hierarchical organization, operations in the field are very autonomous, organized as small commando units of a generally stable composition so that their members develop trust and routines.

How do they measure performance?

Key indicators are the number and profitability of the assets for which the Reactivator assumes temporary responsibility. Increasingly sophisticated models evaluate this performance in relation to the number and severity of events likely to affect client companies.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

A Reactivator derives profitability from economies of scope: the more diverse its areas of intervention, the greater the chances that its clients will not be in crisis simultaneously, and the more likely it will find takers for the assets temporarily under its care.

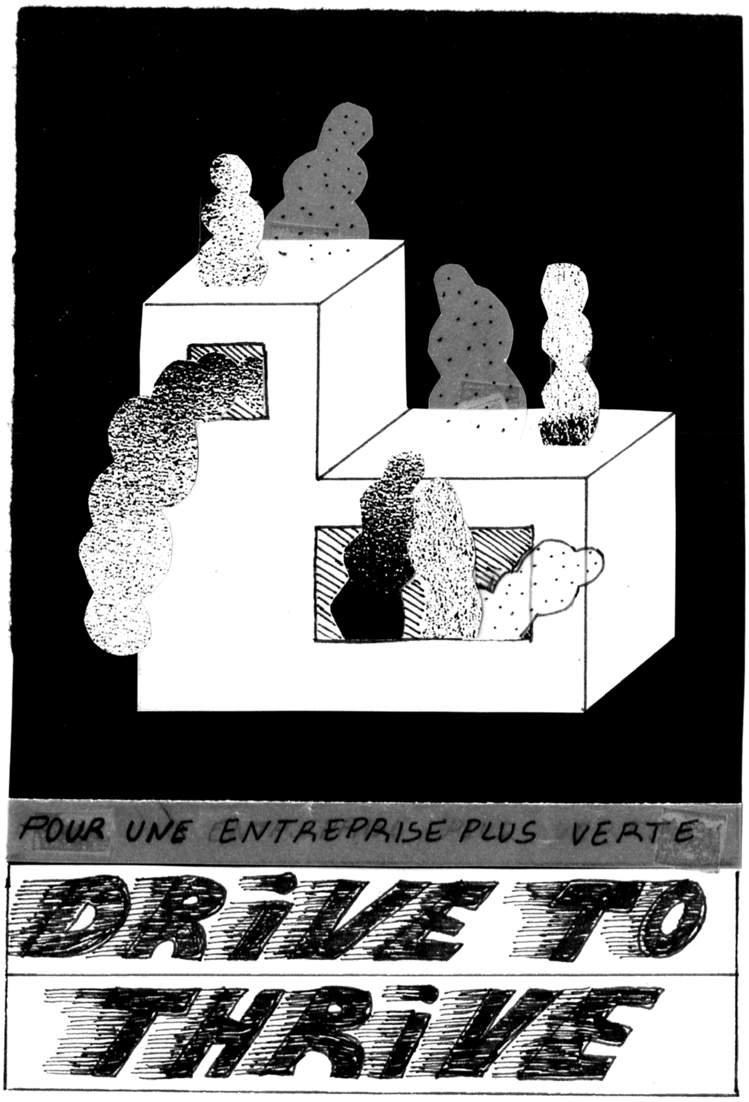
It is therefore in a Reactivator's interest to grow, network, or both.

What risks do they face?

- Stability, certainty, normality, or the absence of crisis.
- The resilience of client companies—which leads to suspicions that Reactivators are not truly helping their clients to become "antifragile."
- The damaging of assets by the companies that use them temporarily.
- Decline in demand due to business acceptance of intermittent production.
- The excessive recurrence or simultaneous occurrence of crises, which prevent the company from recouping value from the assets it takes over.

Seeds of the future in the present

- The "sharing economy," embodied by platforms like Airbnb and BlaBlaCar (a ride-sharing platform), has based its model on increasing the use of underutilized assets.
- The Dutch startup Floow2 (www.floow2.com) enables companies to share or rent out their underutilized assets.



If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype's description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise's participants: Drive To Thrive.
- Comments by four practitioners and experts: Marianne Julien, Air Liquide; Nicolas Siorak, Business Alliance for Climate Resilience; Alexandre Monnin, Origens Media Lab; Marie Vernier, Le Labo de l'ESS .
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva's School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Guild

A Guild provides a certain category of professionals with a stable or even lifelong job and the conditions for their continued development, while placing them with organizations that need their skills.

A Guild provides a certain category of professionals with a stable or even lifelong job and the conditions for their continued development, while placing them with organizations that need their skills.

Guilds seek to ensure that other companies are obliged to go through them in order to gain access to certain skills. The Guild plays a social security role for its members and may even cover enhancements to their cognitive or physical capabilities.

Guilds emerged originally in response a progressive, but major shift in career development: people stay with organizations for shorter and shorter periods of time, and as a result, companies are unable or unwilling to assume responsibility for employees’ professional development. Guilds also compete with work-for-hire platforms by offering their members stability, security, and job prospects.

As they originate from trade unions, journeymen, temp agencies, business coalitions, and employment cooperatives, most Guilds eventually evolve towards a cooperative model.

SLOGAN

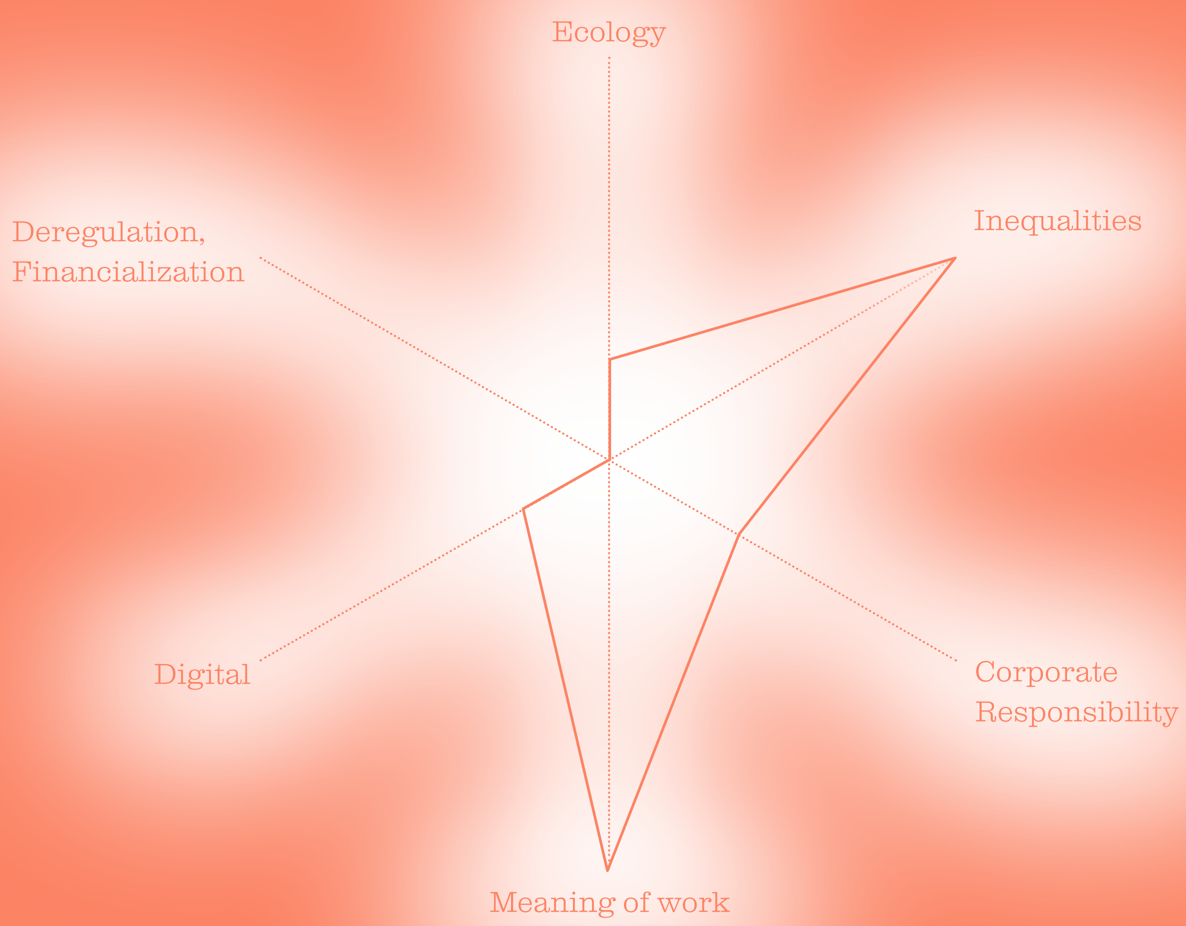
"A Guild for Life."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Provides a certain category of professionals with lifelong employment and professional development, while ensuring their placement with companies and organizations that require their skills.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of members, "Value of services & payments to members/ Revenue" ratio.



What do Guilds produce?

Guilds typically specialize in a limited number of in-demand skills: IT specialists, marketers, construction craftsmen, maintenance specialists, crisis managers… However, some bring together a wider range of less-skilled professions. The largest Guilds can employ several million people.

For members, a Guild principally provides a stable income, as well as personal and professional development services ranging from training to the technological enhancement of certain physical or cognitive characteristics. It can also provide social insurance functions such as health and retirement benefits. Professionals are salaried employees of their Guild and can remain there for the rest of their lives—unless of course, their profession changes—while exercising their skills within other organizations, usually for the duration of a project.

For client companies and organizations, Guilds put together ad hoc teams to meet one-off or long-term needs. However, the people made available remain employed by the Guild.

The corporate world is now divided into two parts: “personnel” companies – the Guilds – and “production” companies – all of the other businesses whose teams are effectively drawn from the Guilds, project by project or need by need.

What is their business model?

The Guilds’ business model is typical of multi-sided models: the Guild employs its members and pays them a salary comprised of a fixed part, paid even when they are not working, and a variable part tied to the value of contracts with production companies. Certain costly services, such as physical or cognitive enhancements, are invoiced to members, unless the enhancement has a strong market potential with client organizations. By uniting the majority of people with certain skills, Guilds force organizations in need to turn to them. However, production companies benefit by reducing their workforce and fixed costs.

Government authorities may also contribute a share of the Guild’s income, as it performs key public service functions for society through training, employment, and social insurance.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

Guilds have diverse individual histories. Some have their roots in trade unions, others in temporary employment agencies, and still others in coalitions of companies wishing to pool their resources. Some were also built from the beginning as cooperatives, along the lines of today's Freelancer's cooperatives.

As they develop, however, most Guilds evolve towards a cooperative model, with professional members owning and governing the enterprise. Some of these cooperatives grow to employ millions of people directly, while others are organized on a distributed basis, with a "network hub" federating hundreds of local cooperatives or cooperatives specialized in niche trades.

Who works for or with them?

At the core of each Guild, relatively small teams develop and manage shared services: training and professional development, R&D, social insurance, matching supply and demand for skills...

In the field, local Guilds or agencies, organized by geography and/or market, support the network of members and manage placement services with client organizations. They employ agents in charge of member services, community managers, as well as representatives who negotiate contracts and projects with organizations.

Finally, professional members are of course part of the Guild's workforce, under contractual arrangements that can be quite diverse: salaried employment, self-employment, free association...

How are they organized and managed?

While the organization described above is the most widespread, each Guild has its own management culture, often rooted in its history. Some operate in a very hierarchical way, with the “head office” imposing uniform rules through a shared information system, while others leave a great deal of autonomy to local guilds and agencies. Still others operate on a collective basis, with members deciding everything together, including freely choosing their projects.

In all cases, members are demanding of their Guild and are neither afraid to express their opinions, nor to refuse or quit certain assignments. However, in addition to their social status, the Guild is also the source of their professional identity and their community. It is therefore difficult to leave, which limits professional mobility.

How do they measure performance?

Financial performance is measured in two ways: the first is classic accounting, while the second evaluates direct financial transfers (income) and indirect transfers (insurance, training, enhancements...) to members—similar to how a foundation evaluates what percentage of donations received are redistributed toward projects.

Less quantifiable metrics like skills development and happiness at work are also assessed.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

Most Guilds specialize in a particular set of trades or skills. In this “market,” they seek to secure at minimum a geographic monopoly, so that customer organizations are forced to use them.

Some Guilds leave it at that, but others set their sights on federating several trades, thus enabling unlimited growth.

What risks do they face?

The typical risks faced by a Guild are:

- **Market fragmentation:** Since their model is based on controlling the labor supply, this breaks down if several Guilds compete in the same professions or territories.
- **Uberization:** “Meta-platforms” are trying to insert themselves between Guilds and companies.
- **Ethics:** Certain Guilds are accused (sometimes by own their members) of accepting ethically questionable projects, or of placing members in a dependent situation, forcing them to accept certain “enhancements” demanded by client companies.
- **Social conflicts:** Dissatisfaction among members, who also own the Guild, can lead to its collapse.
- **Evolving professions:** The Guilds’ organization by trade may come into tension with their rapid evolution, or make professional mobility challenging for members.

Seeds of the future in the present

- **‘Permanent temp’ (from the French «CDI interimaire»):** A temporary employment agency enters a permanent work contract with an employee, providing them with stable employment and placing them on successive assignments with its client companies. Between assignments, the agency continues to pay the employee and provide training.
- **Freelancer’s cooperatives:** for example, Guilded, incubated by the US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, is “a cooperatively-owned platform and hub for freelancers that provides freelancers access to the benefits of the social contract provided by traditional employment. Guilded brings the power of pooled benefits, collective purchasing, and collective advocacy to freelance and gig economy workers.”
- **Journeymen:** A traditional institution of apprenticeship and training in manual and technical trades. Aspiring journeymen spend time with masters who pass on their experience and skills. Professionals then become part of a lifelong support network.
- **The Worker Monopsony concept proposed by the Institute for the Future:** A marriage between a union and a cooperative, where “worker-owned organizations become the employer of record for local trade union members. These latter-day guilds then supply their workers to local industries, displacing generic gig platforms as a staffing agency and securing worker benefits.”

4. Institute for the Future, “Re-working the Future, Strategy for building enterprises in the 21st century,” 2023: https://www.iftf.org/projects/equitable-enterprise-initiative-reworking-the-future/

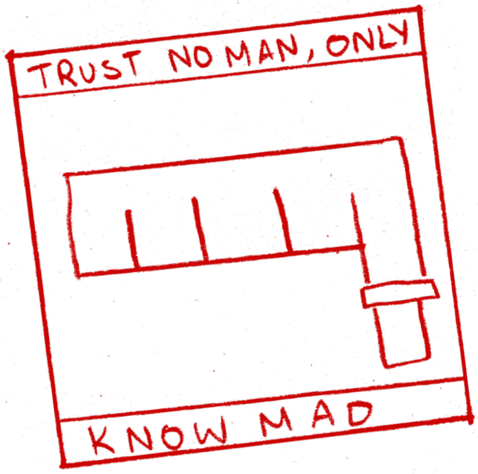
If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype’s description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise’s participants: Oazo.
- Comments by two practitioners and experts: Sylvie Joseph, Observatoire des cadres et du management; Amandine Brugière, Anact.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva’s School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Private Public Service

A Private Public Service (PPS) is the commercial provision of an “essential” service which in the 20th century was generally provided by or under the control of a public institution.



These companies have emerged either as a result of the withdrawal of public players, an explicit demand for “disruption,” a new context such as mass climate migration, or the need for a new service that the public sector cannot or will not provide (e.g. universal income).

Initially quite popular, PPSs are now facing difficulties: contradictions between their public-interest objectives and their governance, competition from NGOs and other companies, conflicts of priority between the populations they serve and others…

SLOGAN

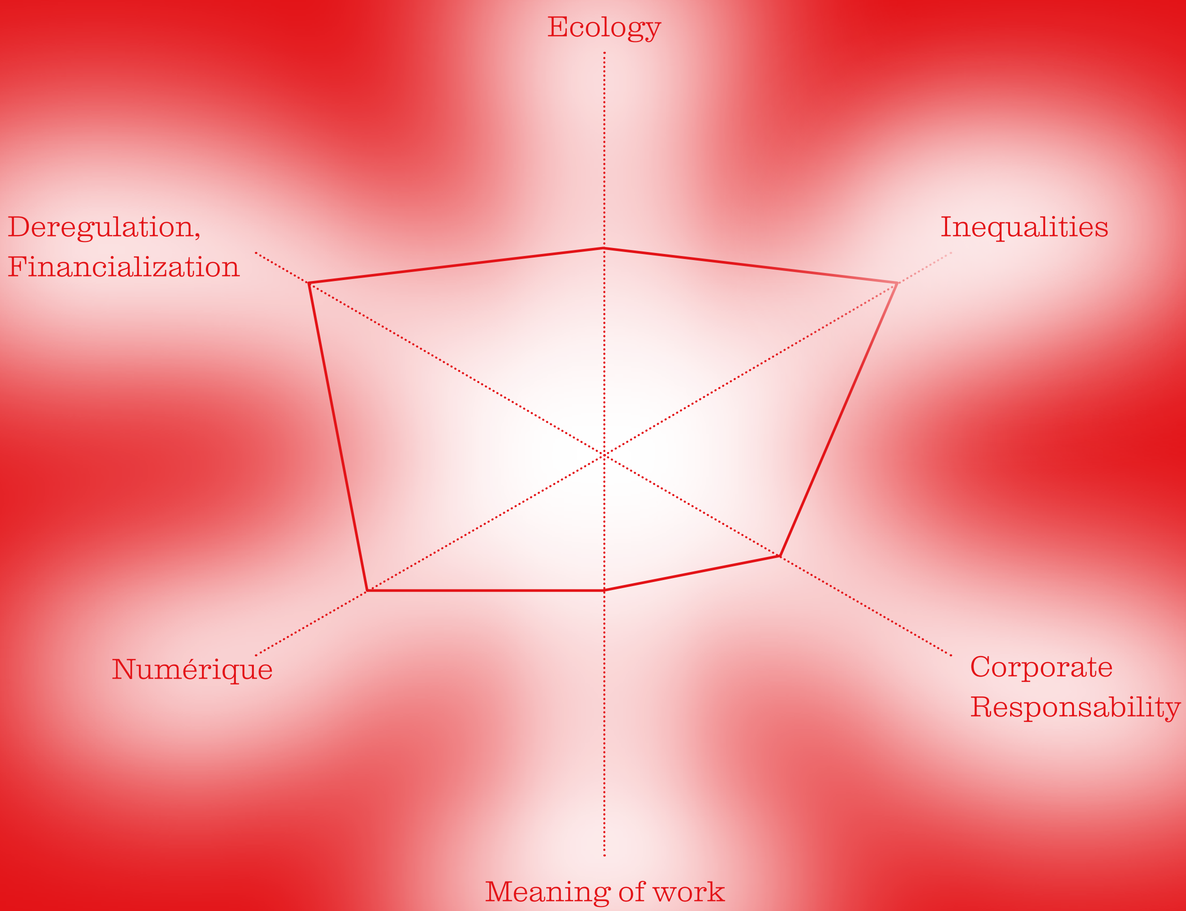
"Public Service Is, First and Foremost, a Service."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Provides on a commercial basis an "essential" service (social protection, healthcare, education, energy, etc.) which in the 20th century was generally provided by or under the control of a public institution.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Access to rights and/or essential services.



What do Private Public Services produce?

A Private Public Service focuses on one or more “public interest” missions historically (at least in the context of former welfare states) associated with public institutions or provided under their control:

- Civil registrar, administrative management, and life history: Papers, status, rights...
- Social security and healthcare, including new benefits like universal income
- Education
- Municipal services such as energy, water, mobility and dismobility, waste management, circular economy management...
- Security and resilience, including the response to climate risks.

These services are provided on the company’s own initiative and under its own responsibility, with no a priori delegation or control from public institutions. This means that PPSs are not obligated to apply the principles—universality, equity, continuity—that govern “traditional” public services. They are sometimes described, ironically or not, by the acronym “LaaS” (Life as a Service).

What is their business model?

The SPP business model is based on a variable (and unstable) balance between three sources:

- Individual beneficiaries, either in the form of subscriptions or based on results (health and well-being, access to employment or housing, etc.).
- Funding from public institutions, NGOs, or even crowdfunding campaigns, based on expected or real benefits. This can be calculated using volume, or on the contrary, on its reduction (decrease in demand for energy, mobility, or the use of healthcare services, etc.), which results in some suspicion that PPSs may arbitrarily be reducing access to certain services.
- A “quid pro quo” market, where the service is delivered to individuals in return for work, often in the form of projects for companies, public institutions, and NGOs.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

Some PPSs have their roots in the communities they serve, for example refugee camps, while others have arisen from private, clearly for-profit initiatives.

Their governance reflects this origin, even if they all encounter the same tension between, on the one hand, the need to manage large-scale, complex programs and, on the other, the requirement for a form of collective control associated with the (admittedly often self-proclaimed) public interest nature of their mission. Gradually, many PPSs have adopted charters or principles and values. They have also, at least on the surface, integrated their public and NGO funders into their decision-making bodies and involved their customer-collaborators in their strategic choices.

The oft-mentioned need for external control bodies clashes with the typically trans- or a-geographical nature of most PPSs.

Who works for or with them?

A PPS employs a significant number of workers both at the headquarters and in its territorial "hubs."

At the local level, dedicated teams often collaborate with complex ecosystems of players, while "customers" participate in the creation of value—for example, by meeting skills needs, sharing human-powered means of transport, or providing "solidarity services" (e.g. disaster response, help for vulnerable people).

PPSs are a nexus for the emergence of many kinds of new professions: "ecosystem repairer" (EcoBreizh), "demobility organizer" (Cleanway)...

How are they organized and managed?

At the headquarters level, the information technology system is often the critical resource—and at its core sits an artificial intelligence whose decisions are expected to be rational, if opaque. This AI is sometimes caught between several objectives which have been programmed into it, such as ethics, the public interest, and the organization’s profitability.

The local level is typically organized in the form of hubs, franchises, or local collectives. While reliant on the PPS’s central IT and service infrastructure, hubs often enjoy considerable freedom in terms of decision-making and organization.

How do they measure performance?

The most important metric is financial. PPSs believe that their profitability inherently reflects the quality of the public service they provide.

PPSs also publish many other indicators on the service provided, the value created, satisfaction, benefits in terms of public health or education, etc. The generation of these metrics remains complex, little standardized, and at times opaque.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

Most PPSs are moving towards a form of gigantism, searching for economies of scale and scope. Some, notably those serving migrants, refugees, and nomads, serve several hundred million people and are evolving into a kind of non-geographic quasi-State.

However, a minority of PPSs are exploring the opposite path, of self-limitation: facilitating copying and replication (including by opening up their data and algorithms) and making themselves as unnecessary as possible (by disseminating knowledge, facilitating self-production of their services, etc.).

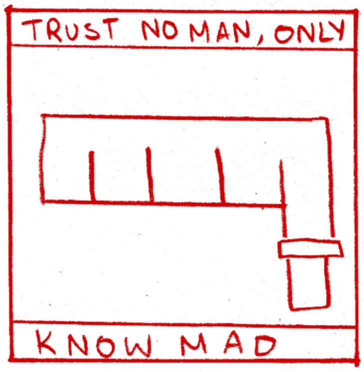
What risks do they face?

The typical risks faced by a PPS are:

- Political risk: PPSs provide services previously expected of public institutions, but without their legitimacy.
- Competition from NGOs and governments, which SPPs no longer hesitate to characterize as "unfair."
- Diverging development on the part of local entities, which complicates systems and poses continuity issues when customers/users move.
- Conflict between the populations served and others: PPSs could be accused of "profiting from the misfortune of some by undoing the good fortune of others."

Seeds of the future in the present

- Utilities run as corporations, whether they be public or private: water, energy, public transport, waste management, prisons, private education…
- Private health insurance and pension funds, e.g. in the United States.
- Numerous migration-related initiatives: "Refugee Nation," migrant reception and work placement companies (e.g. eachOne and its slogan, "Migrants are value on the move")…



If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype’s description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise’s participants: Knowmad.
- Comments by three practitioners and experts: Pierre-Antoine Marti, Futuribles; Yoan Ollivier, designer, VraimentVraiment; Alexis Bonnel, Agence Française de Développement (AFD).
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva’s School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Societor

Mailys Deck

Complex identities and allegiances, community retreat in the face of crises and polarization, weakened public institutions, digitalization of social experiences (social networks, metaverses, online gaming…): for many people, the “society” to which they wish to belong is no longer the traditional combination of a territory, a culture, a history, and the institutions it has shaped.

Mostly the offspring of digital companies, Societors enable human groups to form societies according to their own terms: defining criteria and signs of belonging, adopting shared rules, creating their own history, culture, and institutions, and even developing their own economy… Once these mechanisms have been agreed upon, they are most commonly translated into computer programs, bringing the day-to-day operations of a Societor closer to that of an Automated Autonomous Organization (see corresponding archetype).

These companies thus create a sort of market for social organization. This is both an infinite source of social inventiveness and a factor in the deepening of fractures between communities, all while making the search for global solutions to environmental and social crises even more complicated.

SLOGAN

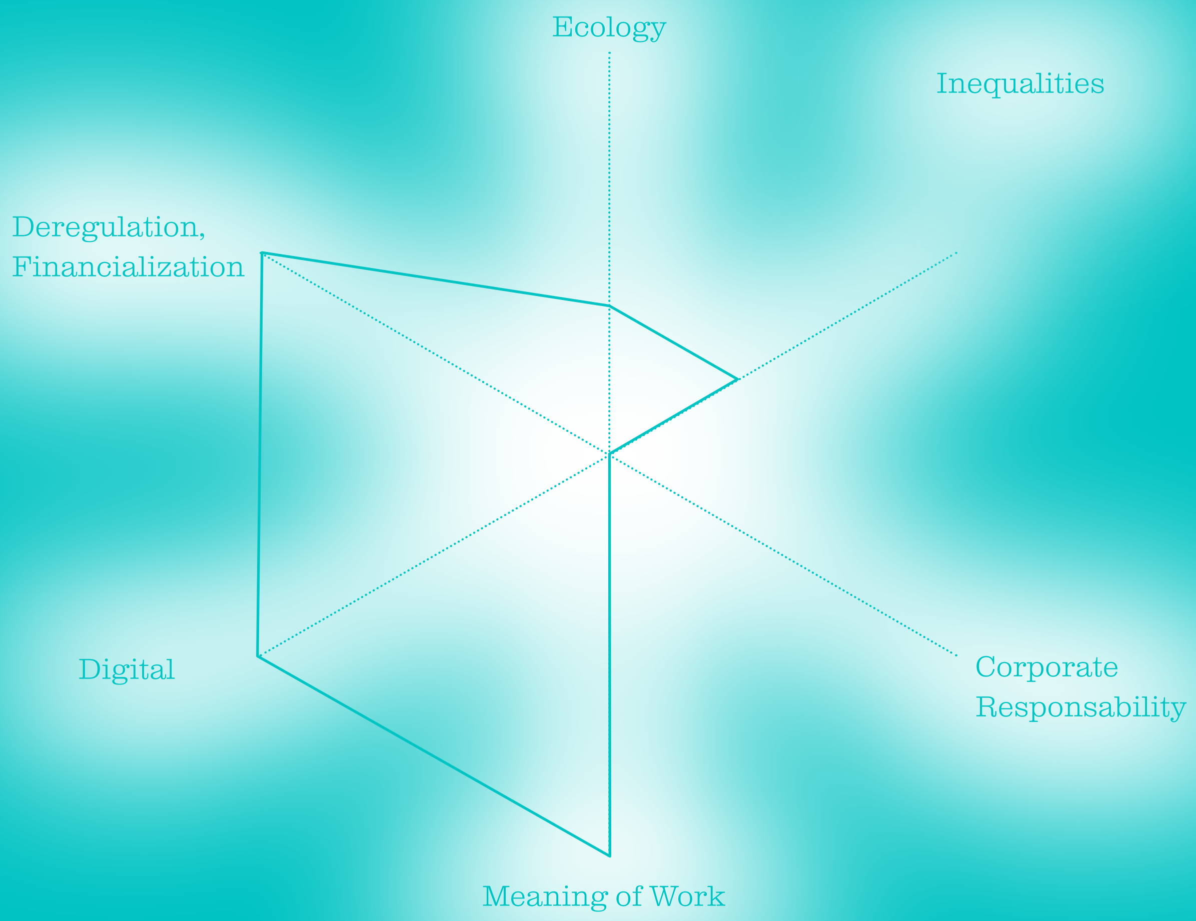
"Societies On Demand."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Provides the tools and infrastructure to enable human groups to build whole "societies" on their own terms.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Stability of "on-demand societies," density of social ties within them.



What do Societors produce?

There are two types of Societor:

- Community Service Infrastructures (CSIs) provide the shared foundations of an “on-demand society.” They define and implement the rules of membership and conduct, oversee collective decision-making and management mechanisms, manage the economy, and organize social ties. In collaboration with the founding members, they create a history and symbols. A CSI generally manages a large number of societies.

- Society Programming Interfaces (SPIs) are specialized platforms that provide the basic tools that CSIs use to create different societies: member management (membership, expulsion, migration...), decision tools, behavior management, etc.

Life in On-demand Societies

An ODS (on-demand society) may be based in a territory (an enclave, an artificial island…) or exist without a geographical area. Some ODSs institutionalize pre-existing communities (e.g. a religious community or activists-occupied areas such as France’s ‘Zones à Defendre’), while others are created from scratch and need to “recruit” their members.

One person typically belongs to several societies, even if each tends over time to discourage “society shopping.” In 2050, it is rare, but not unheard of, for people to cut all ties with the territory they live in: they may remain citizens of a country, working in traditional organizations, while living most of their social and cultural life in one or more ODSs. Migration from one ODS to another is frequent. One of the services offered by Societors allows people to “port” their individual profile from one society to another.

What is their business model?

The Societor business model is not based on the sale of products or services. Their income is generated from the very operation of the societies they manage, which makes their economics look like that of a government: they collect “taxes” to ensure the provision of shared services to the society, and their profitability is akin to what a state would call a “budget surplus.” When the society has its own economy, which is not always the case, a Societor also earns money on the ”balance of payments,” i.e., the balance of funds flowing in and out of the society.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

The majority of Societors are private companies, almost all of which have their roots in the digital world: social networks, massive multiplayer games, metaverses, etc. They differ from each other according to the type of social structure they implement: libertarian, authoritarian, theocratic, socialist, hedonistic, environmentalist, survivalist, etc.

While dependent on the Societor that manages it, each ODS implements its own governance. Some have their own legal personality, while others do not.

In most cases, once adopted, the constituent elements of ODSs are translated into self-executing computer programs (smart contracts), which are themselves usually managed by artificial intelligence.

A number of cooperative Societors, born of alternative digital cultures, are trying to make their mark by offering more democratic, ecological, and empowering models of society, in addition to day-to-day operations based on collaboration between the members of that society rather than relying exclusively on smart contracts.

Finally, the environmental challenge has led several governments, and even some Societors, to attempt to create a universal framework for sustainability, limiting each SOD’s consumption of resources to levels that are tolerable for the planet. In 2050, this framework is still struggling to gain broad adoption.

Who works for or with them?

Corporate Societors generally employ a few thousand people, tasked with designing and developing tools and services and increasing the number of SODs in their portfolio. These include neuro-specialists, who develop “gamified” behavioral guidance systems; social network specialists, who evolve the role of community manager; “linkers,” who organize connections between different societies and facilitate migration...

Finally, the members of each society are as much collaborators as they are users of the Societor: their work contributes to its functioning and its economy.

How are they organized and managed?

A Societor mainly exists in the cloud, bringing together specialists on a project basis and constantly rearranging itself.

This organizational structure has the advantage of making it very difficult to find those responsible in the relatively frequent cases where conflicts arise between “traditional” and on-demand societies.

In the field, most of the day-to-day work is done by AI and smart contracts. A small team, usually assigned to several societies, continuously monitors the situation in each society and, if needed, organizes group deliberations to change a particular policy. This mix of control by the Societor, AI intervention, and democracy is the source of much confusion.

How do they measure performance?

The main metrics tracked by Societors are the number of societies in their portfolio and their members, churn, the density of connections, and, of course, the profitability generated through the management of each society.

The environmental sustainability of SODs is only really taken into account by the few Societors that use it, with varying degrees of success, as a point of differentiation.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

Most Societors aspire to infinite growth, even going so far as to envision replacing certain failing states or local authorities. However, some of the more specialized or militant organizations set limits on the size and number of SODs they manage.

What risks do they face?

The typical risks faced by a Societor are:
- Instability and attrition: many of the societies managed by Societors are built on fragile foundations, which can lead to serious dysfunction or even violence.
- Lack of energy and other destabilizing consequences of climate di-

sasters, which weaken societies that are highly intensive in their use of digital resources.

- Competition from open-source and collaborative Societors, which may prove better adapted to environmental challenges.
- Competition between SODs which, as they have fewer and fewer shared values, may come into conflict over territories, resources, members… not to mention their inability to take collective responsibility for planetary issues, particularly environmental ones.

Seeds of the future in the present

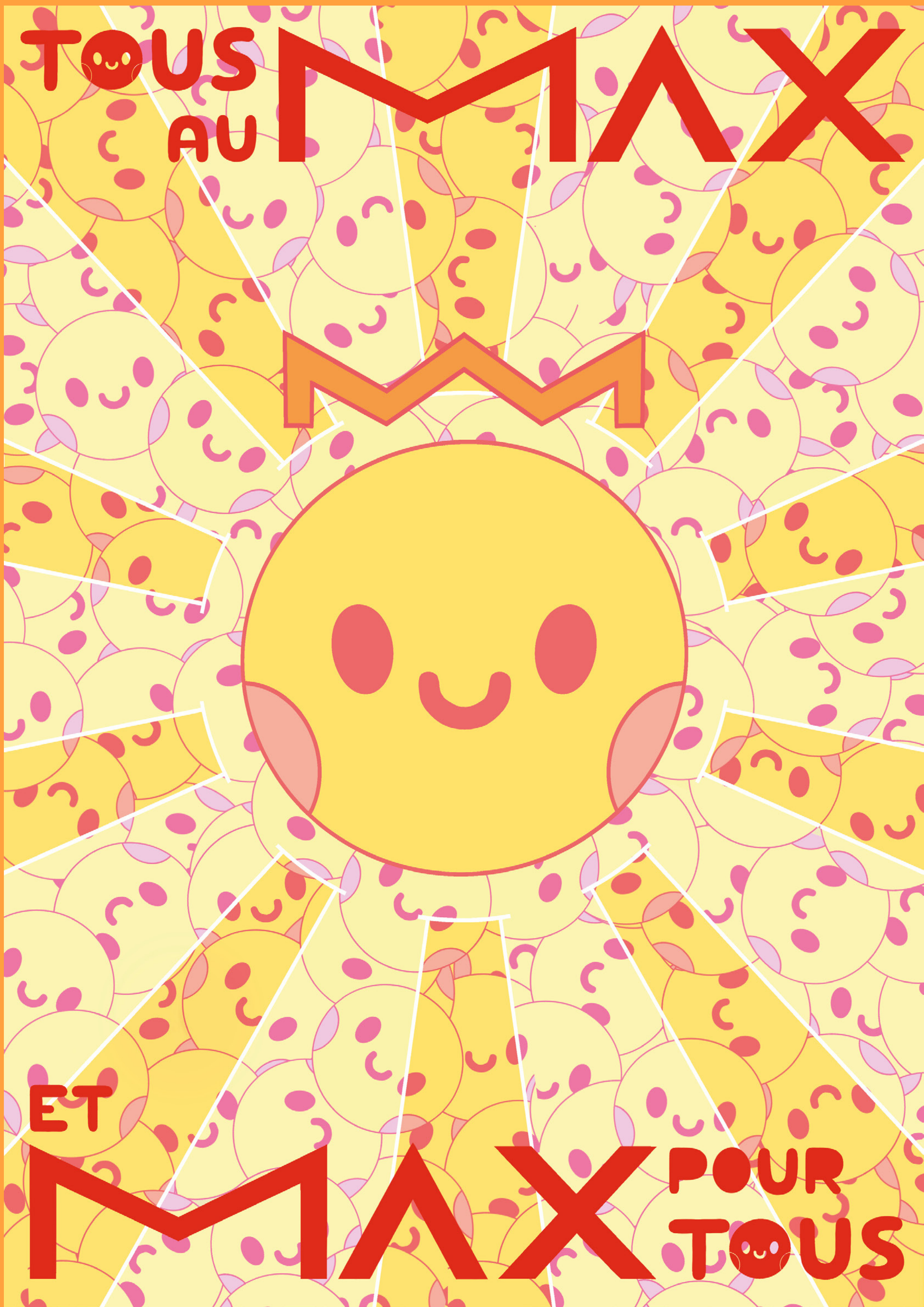
- The "tribes" of social networks and guilds of online games.
- The evolution, documented in recent decades, toward multiple, shifting, self-selected social affiliations, in a continual construction of one's social identity.
- The rise of self-segregated communities based on religion, ethnicity, or wealth (gated communities or artificial islands for the wealthy)…
- In Malka Older's "Infomocracy" cycle (2016), the majority of the planet is divided into units of 100,000 people, who choose their political system every 10 years by voting for a transnational party: libertarian Liberty, technocratic Policy1st, corpocratic PhilipMorris, psychedelic RastaGov…

If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype’s description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise’s participants: Fungi.
- Comments by two practitioners and experts: Geoffrey Delcroix, Ubisoft; Guillaume Quiquerez, Central Méditerranée.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva’s School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Marketrix



Sofia Soares Rodriguez

A Marketrix is dedicated to extending the definition of what is considered a commodity. It firmly believes that price is the best possible indicator of the value a society places on things, whether tangible or intangible, and that the free market is the most efficient and effective way of allocating resources to meet both individual and collective needs. For a Marketrix, issues like climate change are the result of market failures that should be corrected by putting a price on the environment and the activities that harm it.

On the strength of these convictions, Marketrixes pursue what has not yet been priced in order to optimize them: public spaces, friendships and family relationships, the remaining public services (including police and the justice system), and of course natural ecosystems, public goods, ideas, and knowledge. Marketrixes can be found in a wide range of sectors.

Marketrixes are dynamic, hyper-reactive, market-oriented, and fully committed to success. Everything else is, in their eyes, a distraction or resistance to progress.

SLOGAN

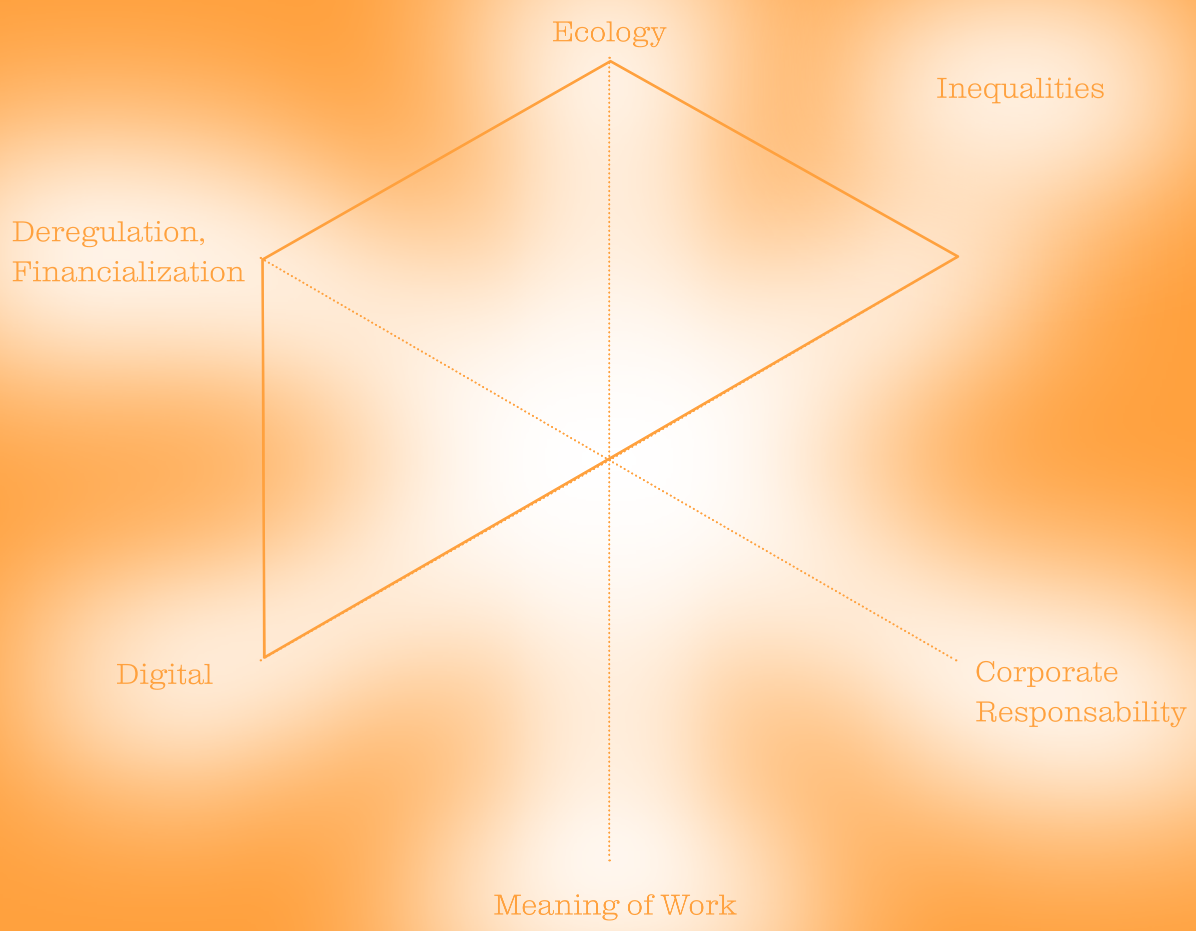
"Everything Has a Price. Especially What's Priceless."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Believes that all problems and needs, even the most basic, will find the best possible answer if the markets put a price on them.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Financial.



What do Marketrixes produce?

For a Marketrix, anything can be a product. There is no limit to what they can sell. In sectors that are already commoditized, they continually create new markets. In those that are not, they give full rein to ingenuity: Marketrixes sell, for example, clean air, access to communal resources like the countryside or public space, ideas, mutual aid, justice, security, equity...

As an example, a famous Marketrix of 2050 offers a range of services to meet people’s emotional needs: planned and monetized dates, pet rental, on-demand delivery of personalized moments of happiness, psychotropic injections...

What is their business model?

Marketrixes are experts in inventing and optimizing business models. They also monetize their internal resources—data, of course, but also, where necessary, infrastructure and personnel—to maximize utilization.

They do not shy away from financial speculation, believing that if there is a market for it, it has to somehow be socially useful.

Whenever they privatize a public good or service, they don’t hesitate to demand remuneration from public players, at least on a transitional basis, for taking over the work from them.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

While usually shareholder-owned, Marketrixes value the entrepreneur above all else, whether the startup founder, the risk-taking manager, the visionary investor, or, further down the hierarchy, the “intrapreneur.” On the other hand, they are wary of large investment funds, stakeholders like public regulators, and labor unions.

The management team forms the heart of a Marketrix. Its legitimacy derives from its ability to innovate, its aggressiveness in the marketplace, and, of course, its cost-cutting efficiency. Managers are also typically shareholders and play a leading role on the Board of Directors.

Facing social pressure to develop more and more non-financial performance indicators—which they view as useless or even detrimental—the Marketrixes are building an increasingly dense “ecosystem” of think tanks, schools, entrepreneurial support services, investment companies, consultants, digital service providers, lobbyists, etc. around themselves.

Who works for or with them?

Marketrixes are typically organized in one of two ways.

The most traditional internalize key functions in the name of efficiency, fluidity of relationships, and security. The commercial relationship stops at the company doors, at least for cross-functional and design activities. As a result, these organizations can have a considerable number of employees.

Others push the commercial logic to its limit by organizing themselves in such a way that each function and division maintains a customer-supplier relationship with the others. Their staff are rarely salaried. This makes it very easy to outsource a large number of functions. These Marketrixes pride themselves on their "leanness" and agility. Relying on digital tools, these businesses can go so far as to become Automated Autonomous Organizations (see corresponding archetype), employing almost no one.

How are they organized and managed?

Innovation is the heart and soul of a Marketrix, so the organization is constantly reconfigured around innovative projects or the implementation of their results. They strongly value the ability to work in agile project teams.

The other essential function is market and customer intelligence, as well as the design and simulation of business models, supported by digital tools and teams of data scientists.

The performance and engagement of employees is measured on a continual basis. Marketrixes do not have time to invest in individuals; they expect employees to be fully productive from day one. Inadequate performance is quickly penalized.

How do they measure performance?

Performance metrics are primarily financial: sales, profit margin, growth. The Marketrix information system precisely tracks all actions and transactions at this level. Each employee, machine, division, activity, and product is analyzed as an economic unit in its own right and must demonstrate profitability.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

The Marketrix dynamic requires growth. They are constantly on the hunt for new markets and uncharted territories where things do not yet have a price tag.

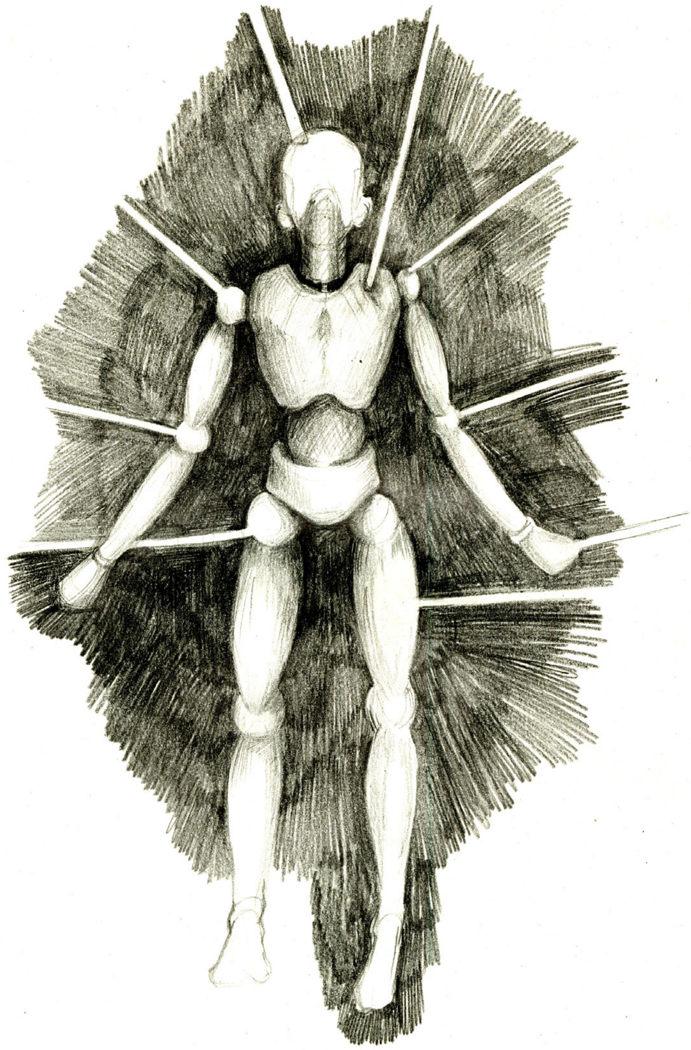
What risks do they face?

The typical risks faced by a Marketrix are:

- The negative impacts of environmental and social crises on business, which Marketrixes are sensitive to, but do not feel responsible for. They assess them either as risks or commercial opportunities.
- The challenge to their business models by government intervention, either regulatory or fiscal, or by collective action on the part of workers, consumers, citizens...
- Competition from non-market alternatives, be they public, cooperative, community-based, open source, etc. The Marketrix ecosystem is waging a constant legal and economic war against them.

Seeds of the future in the present

- Airbnb, Vinted, Leboncoin...: Platforms that monetize previously free forms of exchange.
- Biotech companies obtaining intellectual property rights to the human genome.
- Buy n Large, the fictional company in the film Wall-E (Andrew Stanton, 2008), which also appears in several other Pixar films. After starting in frozen yogurt production, it progressively expanded into all sectors of activity, owning some 2 million subsidiaries including governments and hospitals... After rendering the Earth uninhabitable (and creating the cleaning robots of which the cute Wall-E is a representative), it gathers humans in space, in a sort of mega theme park dedicated to consumerism.

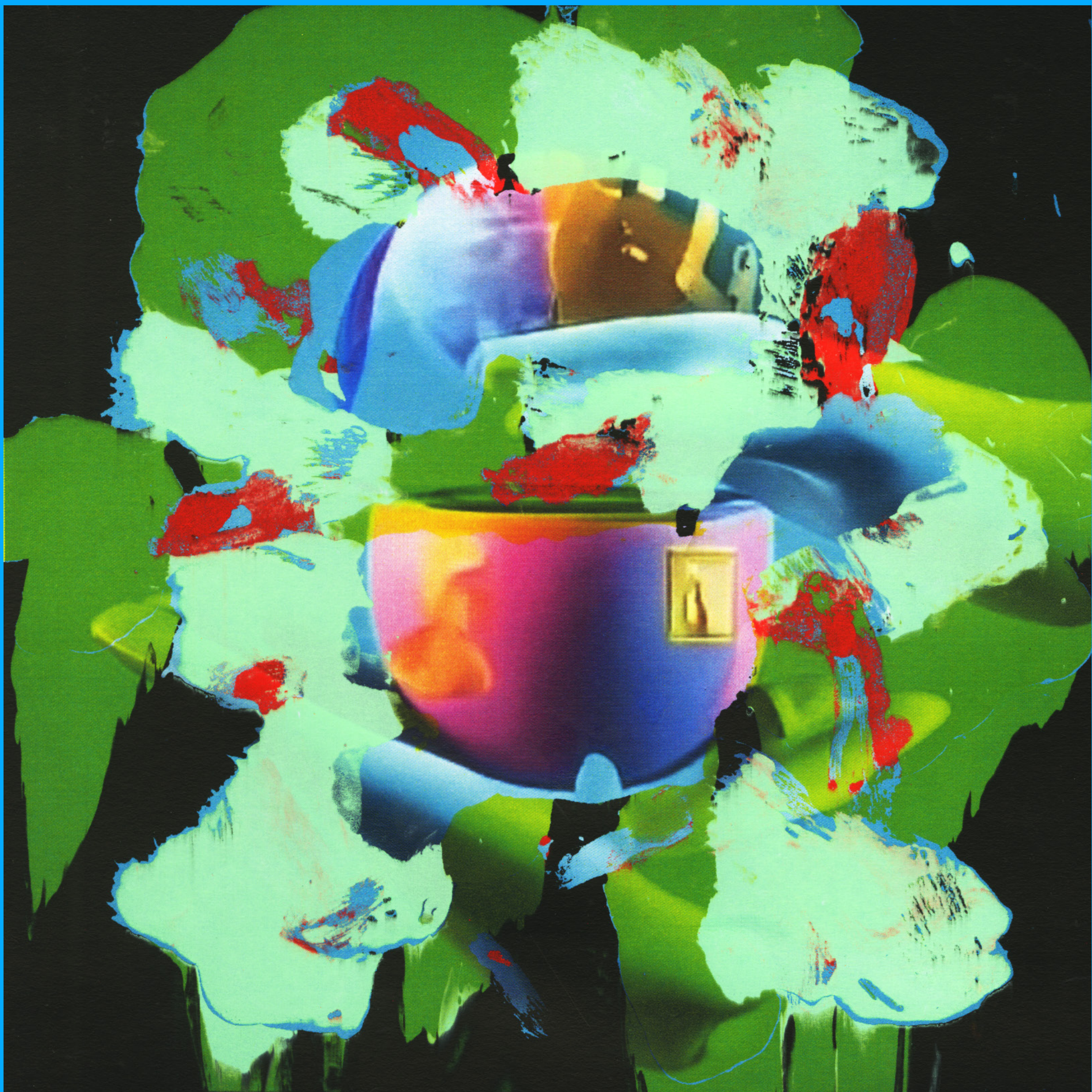


If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype's description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise's participants: MAXimus.
- Comments by two practitioners and experts: Edwin Mootoosamy Guillemané, Choses Communes; Philippe Zaouati, Mirova.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva's School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

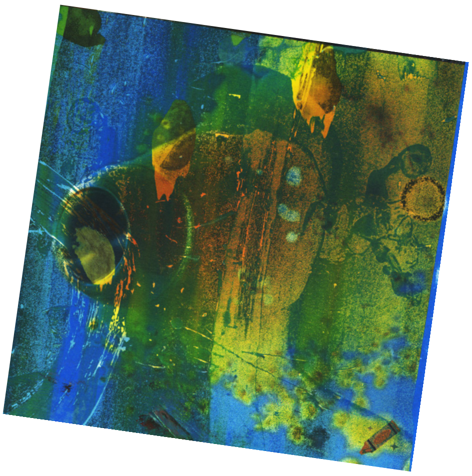
www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Zombinc



Stanyslas Leray

A ZombInc (Zombie Company) is a company whose activity clearly no longer corresponds to the needs and constraints of the times, but which nevertheless continues to operate—both out of self-interest and because many other ZombIncs have a vested interest in each others’ survival.

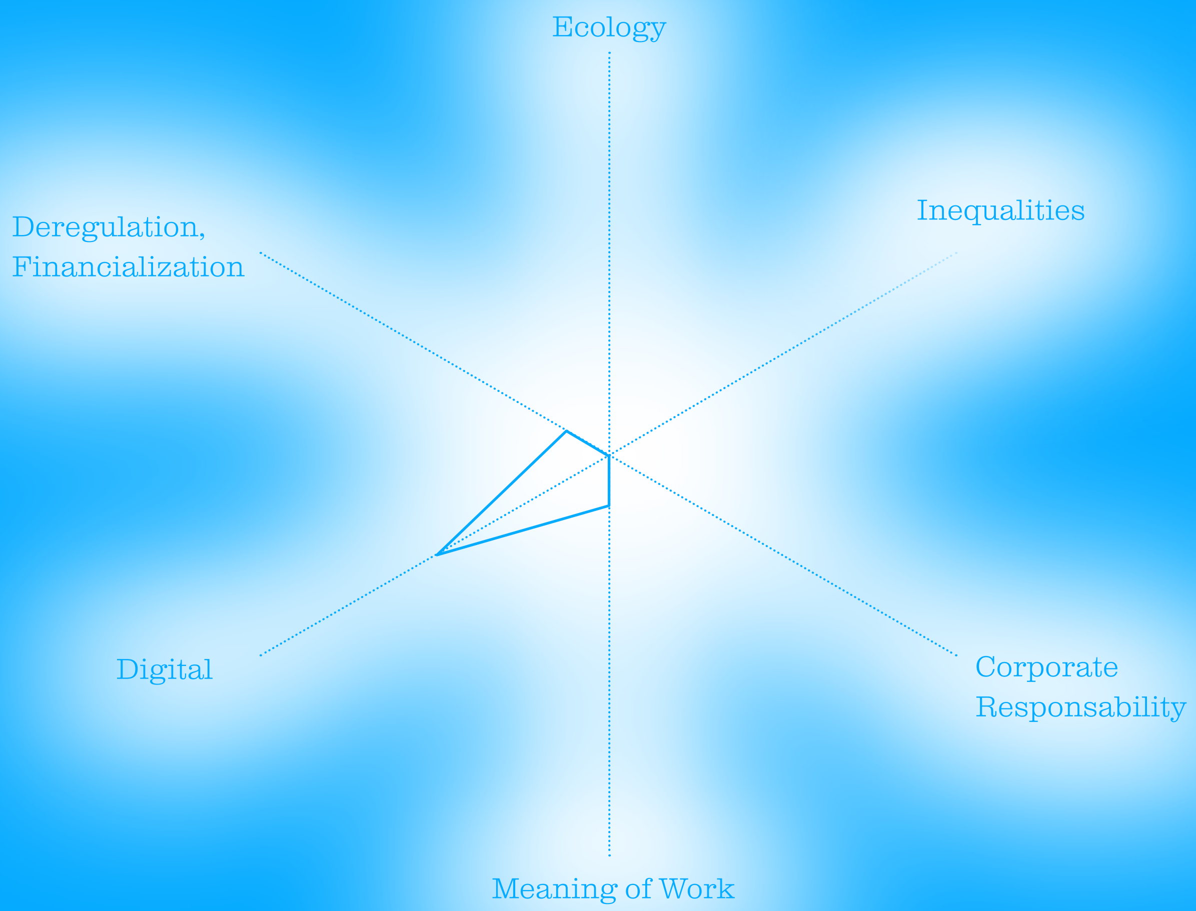


Their activity depends on finite resources, produces waste and other undesirable impacts, and meets no meaningful need or concern. They open up no new horizons. They do not particularly inspire those who work within them. Yet they continue to operate.

SLOGAN
"Budge Not Lest Ye Be Budged."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE
Clearly no longer corresponds to today's needs, but in spite of this continues to operate.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Profitability, stability, longevity.



What do ZombIncs produce?

ZombIncs can be found in almost every sector and are not always easy to identify: while the “zombie” nature of the production of corporate swag or ultra-processed food is not in doubt in 2050, the status of tourism and commercial airlines are still being debated.

Zombie activity is supported by a whole ecosystem of private companies that have invested in them, sell to and/or buy from them: banks, insurance companies, technology providers, consultants, real estate, distribution, etc. National and often local public institutions support many ZombIncs in the name of employment and social stability.

What is their business model?

Most ZombIncs have existed for many years. The weight of their past investments generates significant fixed costs, making any pivot—let alone cessation—very difficult. A ZombInc therefore spares no effort to cut costs and make its operations more efficient.

While their business models are typically very conventional, ZombIncs compete in their ingenuity in playing with public systems, whether in terms of taxation or social programs, support for the (digital, environmental) modernization of companies, or carbon markets.

Often possessing significant financial and/or real estate assets, many ZombIncs also generate a significant proportion of their revenue from financial investments or even speculation.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

ZombIncs can be found in every category, from listed companies to family businesses, cooperatives, semi-public companies, and so on.

With the exception of companies owned by investment funds, which are primarily interested in selling off assets, power in the ZombInc belongs to the management rather than the owners. Managers have an intimate knowledge of the business, the financial and legal mechanisms that ensure the company’s longevity, and a vast network of contacts.

Without going as far as co-management, ZombIncs maintain good relations with the unions, who also have an interest in the continuation of operations.

Who works for or with them?

ZombIncs seek stability, so the majority of their staff are on long-term contracts. Recruitment criteria give priority to formal skills acquired in specialized schools. The average age within the company is fairly high, as is tenure.

To retain staff, ZombIncs pay particular attention to quality of life and work conditions. They are not unpleasant places to work. The main psychological problems tend to fall under the heading of “brown out,” i.e. psychological distress associated with a loss of meaning in one’s work.

A small contingent of specialized managers and consultants move from ZombInc to ZombInc as reorganization needs arise. They bring their experience and expertise in in cost-cutting, turnaround, crisis management, digital transformation, and, in recent years, green transformation to the table.

How are they organized and managed?

Most ZombIncs, especially the larger ones, are constantly reorganizing. In a way, these reorganizations are the closest equivalent to a search for meaning. In their constant quest for optimization, ZombIncs successively test all of the management models within their reach, whether lean management, the liberated company, the purpose-driven company, biomimicry…

How do they measure performance?

This question holds little relevance for a ZombInc. They generate and monitor the metrics required by law, banks, and financial markets. They rarely need external injections of capital, which protects them from the new requirements of investment funds. When they do, their accumulated assets usually enable them to borrow the sums they need at low cost.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

Growth remains an objective for ZombIncs, but they are wary of accelerating (or decelerating) too quickly. The priority is durability.

What risks do they face?

The typical risks faced by a ZombInc are:
- Disruption: the emergence of young, more agile companies with

different business models. Zombie startups also exist.
- The physical impossibility of continuing operations, whether due to lack of resources or climatic changes (heat, storms, rising sea levels).
- Social and/or legislative pressure that makes the business less and less socially acceptable.
- The difficulty of replacing staff who are either retiring or suffering from brown out.
- The eco-anxiety of a new generation of managers, exposed by chance or design to the reality of environmental crises, who can no longer justify (to themselves) the continued pursuit of their activity.
- The greed of investment funds interested in these companies for their assets, who do not hesitate to dismantle them and sell their activities separately.

Seeds of the future in the present

- The concept of “zombie technology,” introduced by researchers José Halloy and Alexandre Monnin: technologies “that we try to keep alive as much as possible, because they generate economic growth (...). However, from the point of view of planetary limits and resource availability, they are doomed.”
- David Graeber’s ‘bullshit jobs’: “A form of paid employment that is so completely pointless, unnecessary, or pernicious that even the employee cannot justify its existence even though, as part of the conditions of employment, the employee feels obliged to pretend that this is not the case.”
- Any resemblance to an existing company is purely coincidental...

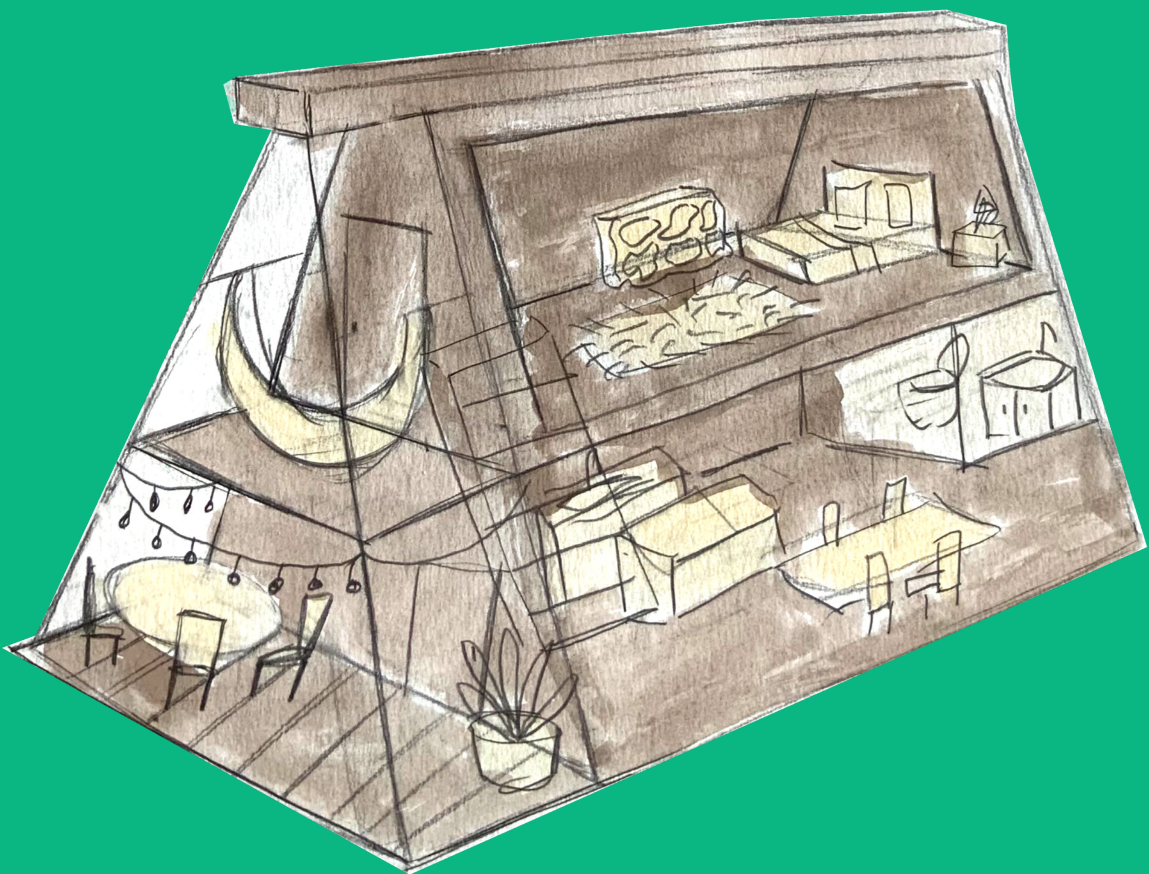
5. David Graeber, «On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs: A Work Rant», Strike! Magazine, August 2013

If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype's description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise's participants: Health'R.
- Excerpts of posts and articles describing signs of this future in our present: Statistics Canada on 'zombie corporations'; David Graeber on 'bullshit jobs'; José Halloy on 'zombie technologies'.
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva's School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

The Automated Autonomous Organization (AAO)



Sophie Anderegg

An Automated Autonomous Organization (AAO) is a company that relies on digital technologies, in particular artificial intelligence, cryptography, and blockchain, to:

- *Automate virtually all tasks (including decision-making and design), as well as interactions within the company and with its external environment;*
- *Ensure control of the company by its owners, by transforming every decision into a self-executing computer program (smart contract) and guaranteeing total traceability of operations (using blockchain).*

An AAO typically employs very few people. It subcontracts what it cannot automate in-house, and its relationships with suppliers themselves are managed by algorithms.

One particular sub-type of AAO is called a Decentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO), which is managed collaboratively by its investors and/or contributors.

SLOGAN

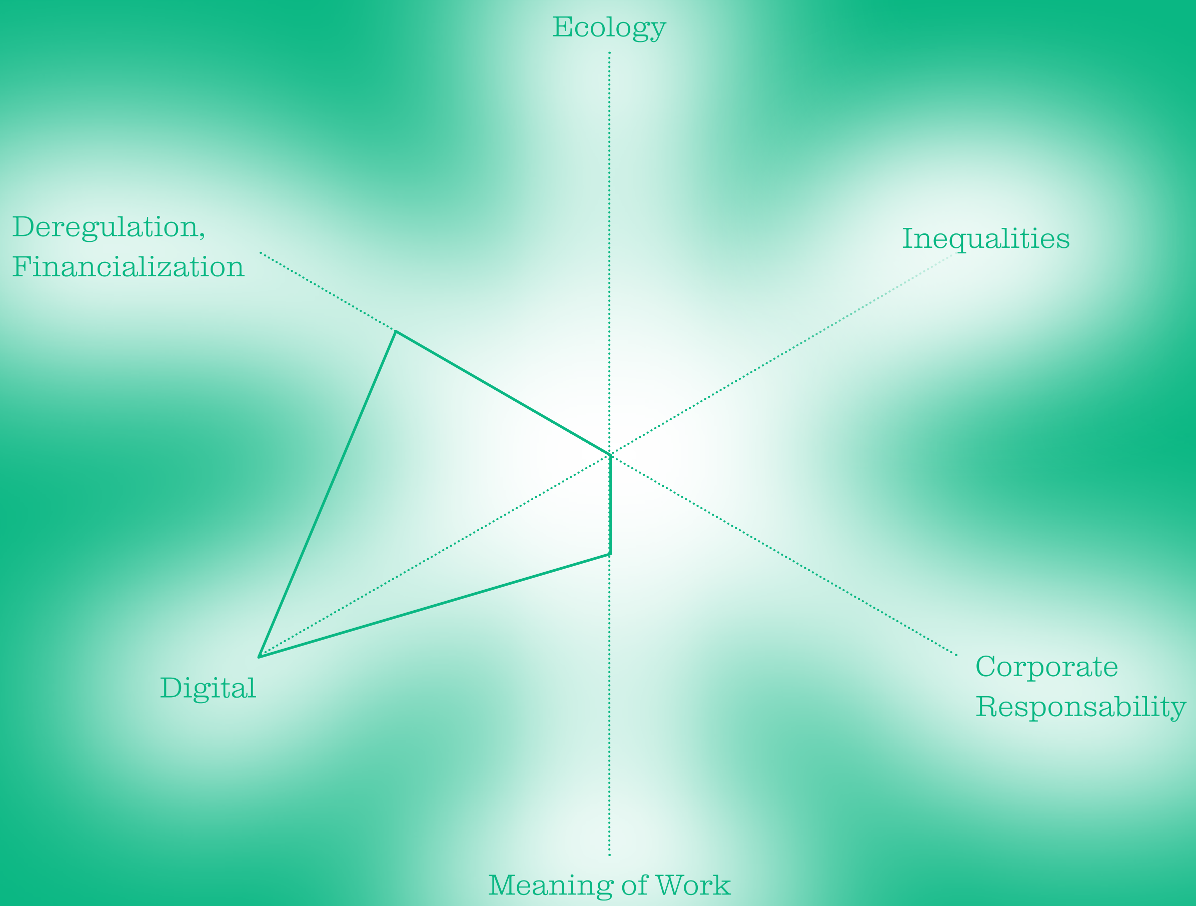
"Less People, More Code."

DISTINCTIVE FEATURE

Based on two founding principles: maximum (and in fact, near-total) automation, and absolute control of the organization by its owners, who may or may not also be contributors.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Everything is quantified, everything is an indicator.



What do Automated Autonomous Organizations produce?

An AAO can offer any product or service that lends itself to automated or machine-controlled production—in other words, nearly anything.

In practice, most AAOs tend to focus on a very specific activity and leverage other AAOs to complete their offerings. Services formerly provided by a single company are now provided by swarms of AAOs, joined together through smart contracts.

Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs), which add a mechanism for collective decision-making by their contributors to the AAO model, focus mainly on the management of common resources (e.g. investment fund capital), or on the administration of networks of independent contractors collaborating on shared projects.

Microglossary of AAO Technical Terms

Blockchain: A distributed database that manages records such as transactions, measurements, votes, etc. in a secure and tamper-proof manner. It relies on cryptographic techniques, the distribution of verification across a large number of computers, and the replication of the database across many servers. One of the goals of this technology, which is used in particular to issue and manage cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, is to secure exchanges without the need for trusted intermediaries.

Smart contract: A computer program (usually stored on a blockchain to verify its integrity) whose function is to translate decisions into a sequence of computer instructions that are automatically executed when the specified conditions are met.

What is their business model?

There is no business model specifically associated with AAOs. However, they are able to very precisely measure the economic value created and distributed within complex ecosystems of players and revenue sources. AAOs are therefore becoming the ideal place to experiment with new business models, which can be tested and adjusted quickly in line with observed results.

Who owns them, and how does their governance work?

Most AA0s are traditionally owned by shareholders, whose decisions are translated directly into self-executing computer programs, making their power absolute and uncontested. Management—when there is management—executes these decisions and translates them into operational solutions that are also automated.

DA0s are, in theory, governed democratically by all holders of co-ownership shares (tokens representing either a financial investment or a contribution in the form of work). Various mechanisms enable decisions to be made at different levels, e.g. changing the company's operating procedures or allocating funds to a particular project. Once a decision has been made, it is encoded into a smart contract on a blockchain, which constitutes the DA0's main tangible infrastructure.

There is typically no formal provision for the involvement of other stakeholders. However, some DA0s make all or part of their code, data, and transaction history accessible through a public blockchain, offering a certain degree of transparency.

Who works for or with them?

AA0s explicitly aim to employ as few people as possible, hence the slogan "less people, more code." In centralized AA0s, the workforce is limited to a nucleus of managers and designers, who are usually shareholders in the company. In DA0s, the relationship with the enterprise takes the form of contracts and "tokens" which confer voting and ownership rights in return for a financial or labor investment. Many AA0s and DA0s have no employees.

The main human work conducted within the company is the design of rules and products. However, a growing proportion of this work is being carried out by artificial intelligences (AI). All other tasks requiring human work are sourced externally, with AI taking care of finding the necessary skills and contracting with them.

How are they organized and managed?

Management is minimal: partners design rules and translate them into computer programs. Complex projects are accomplished by bringing together several AAOs.

How do they measure performance?

Performance is measured continuously (since everything is managed through digital processes) and relatively transparently (thanks to the blockchain). Metrics are focused entirely on what machines can quantify and are therefore oriented towards financial outcomes and productivity.

How do they manage their evolution over time?

AAOs generally do not set limits for themselves in terms of turnover, profitability, capitalization, or number of employees. Instead, they aim to limit the size and complexity of the organization.

As such, there is no hesitation to split up into several AAOs, whether to separate distinct activities or to make particular functions, territories, etc. autonomous. This has led to an increasing number of “cascade” AAOs (a parent AAO generating several dependent AAOs, which may in turn divide) and “swarm” AAOs (several independent AAOs joining forces on a temporary or permanent basis to meet a complex need).

What risks do they face?

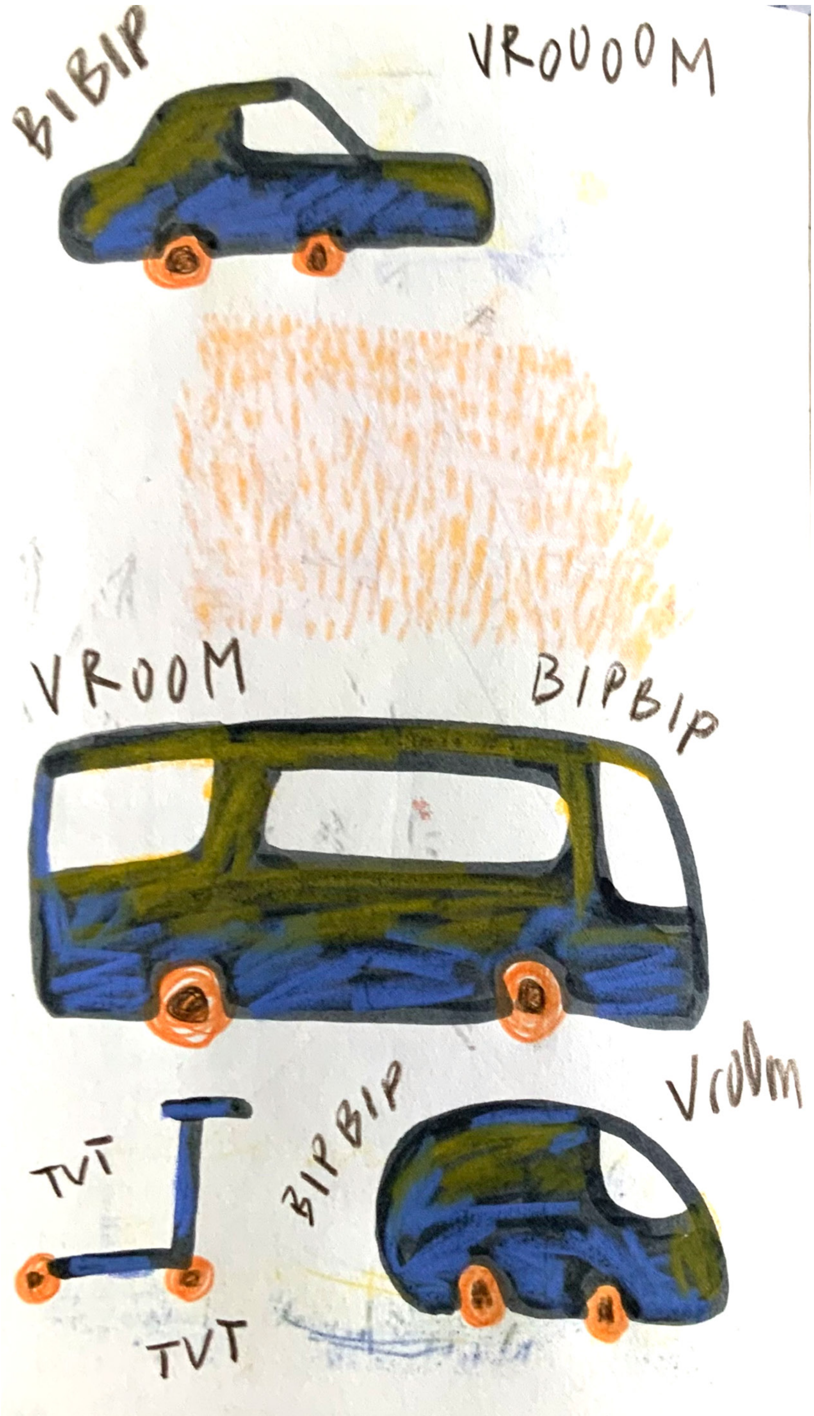
The typical risks faced by an AAO are:

- The availability of energy, communication networks, and essential IT capabilities in the context of environmental crises.
- Dependence on programmers and AI, which can introduce hard-to-detect biases (or bugs) into decision-making algorithms.
- The opacity and non-negotiability of algorithmic decisions.
- In DAOs, the emergence of de facto hierarchies and the all-too-human challenges of making collective decisions.
- The emergence of unexpected phenomena resulting from the interaction of thousands of independent smart contracts.

Seeds of the future in the present

- The AAO represents the culmination of a managerial trend that has its roots in the work of Nobel Prize-winning economist Herbert Simon (1916-2001). This purely rational approach to organizations, focused on efficient decision-making, has resulted in an increasingly close relationship between managerial theories and their translation into digital tools. Before blockchain and AI, this took the form of integrated management software programs like ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) and SOA (Service-Oriented Architecture), which characterizes each corporate function as an autonomous entity, maintaining customer-supplier relationships with other functions, and communicating via standardized, digitized processes, namely APIs (Application Programming Interfaces).

- According to DeepDAO (https://deepDAO.io/organizations), by May 2023 nearly 13,000 DAOs existed, managing some $21 billion in assets—although that value consists mainly of volatile cryptocurrencies and as such varies considerably from month to month.



If you read French, you can download a beautiful booklet dedicated to this archetype, which contains:

- The archetype’s description (same as above)
- One of the fictional corporations of 2050 imagined by The Emerging Enterprise’s participants: CleanWay.
- Comments by two practitioners and experts: Stéphane Distinguin, EY Fabernovel; Anthony Masure, Haute école d’art et de design de Genève (HEAD).
- Several illustrations by students of Geneva’s School of Arts and Design (HEAD).

www.plurality-university.org/fr/projets/lentreprise-qui-vient

A project by the Plurality University Network, in cooperation with Ingrid Kandelman (L'Onde Zéro) and Philippe Hagmann (Le travail redistribué).

Writers: Sophie Coiffier, Catherine Dufour, Li-Cam, Alex Nikolavitch et Ketty Steward.

The Illustrations were created in 2023 by students at the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD): Erik Backdahl, Sofia Soares Rodriguez, Ines Orispää, Rahel Rippel, Nefeli Bodmer, Olivier Conrad, Juliette Cuenoud, Stanyslas Leray, Laura Abate Stepanova et Louise Monnard, Mailys Deck, David Humberset, Fabien Duvoisin, Sophie Anderegg, Lena Kindler, Morven Broeksmit, Hyenjee Cho.

Graphic design: Juliette Lépineau

2024

In a future marked by climate change, recurring crises, and technological transformations, how will the very nature of corporations, their business models, and ways of operating be transformed? And what role could corporations play with regard to these changes?

From 2020 to 2022, The Emerging Enterprise led by the Plurality University Network brought together representatives from more than 40 organizations, to imagine 12 companies of the year 2050, with the help of 5 science fiction writers. from these fictions emerged 10 “Archetypes” of businesses of the future, which are presented here..

Read them, not as predictions, but rather as invitations to discuss, to invent and change.

Mailys Deck