

Louvain School of Management

**Analysis of the impact of
organisational structures on access to
the contributive economy in cycle
logistics: Comparative study of the
cases of Urbike and UrbeeZ in the
Brussels-Capital Region**

Author(s): D'haene Aline
Supervisor(s): Mossay Emmanuel
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Part I : Introduction

Despite the many calls for greater awareness of over-consumption in our societies, the growth in demand for freight transport keeps increasing. The growing world population and the various global economic developments are not encouraging this trend towards a trivial decline. In traditional logistics models, freight transport accumulates negative externalities. It is one of the main contributors to the emission of atmospheric pollutants. In urban centres, it also contributes to congestion, deterioration in air quality, and noise nuisance.

In light of these concerns, cyclologistics has established itself as a key solution. The transport of goods by cargo bike is a clever adaptation of city-centre logistics that is applicable to a large proportion of last-mile deliveries and transport. Brussels is a very a dense and congested urban centre where mobility increasingly a sensitive topic, many companies are involved in last-mile cyclologistics.

I was introduced to this innovative sub-sector of logistics through the cooperative Urbike, as part of my Master's internship. I was able to develop a more complete vision of the challenges of urban logistics using cargo bikes, and the companies' landscape in that sector. I began to question how much change these firms could actually generate, and what impact they could have on a city such Brussels.

Recognising the potential of the cyclologistics sector to contribute to the common good, I wondered how much impact it could have, and under what conditions it could best be harnessed. I asked to what extent this potential might depend on the organisation model chosen by a company. In other words, whether two businesses with broadly similar activity in the cyclologistics sector could achieve the same potential in terms of contribution despite functioning with two different organisational models.

I gathered information on emerging visions of the economy, such as the economy of Degrowth or the Donut Economy, to narrow down with a solid foundation what type of organisation was theoretically more fitted to gather the potential of fulfilling the criteria of a contributive economy.

1. Research question and hypothesis

My reflection revolved around the following topic :

Analysis of the impact of organisational structures on access to the contributive economy in cycle logistics: Comparative study of the cases of Urbike and Urbeez in the Brussels-Capital Region

The underlying hypothesis of this topic is that the cyclologistics sector has a high initial potential for action in the light of the various challenges threatening today's society, but that this potential can be increased and harnessed more effectively if the activity is pursued using a management method in line with the value system of the contributive enterprise.

2. Methodology

To answer this, a literature review will first be carried out, to provide a knowledge base of the concepts used and the matrix of the economy for the common good, which is the evaluation tool chosen for this analysis.

Secondly, I will draw up a portrait of the Brussels cyclologistics industry. In this portrait of the sector, two companies that meet a similar demand but operate according to two different organisational models will be analysed in the light of the matrix, Urbike and Urbeez. These analyses will be based mainly on interviews with the managers and online documentation.

Following this, the potential contributions of each company should be made more observable and comparable. The final step of this report will therefore be to compare the companies and their contribution to the common good, and to analyse and contextualise the results obtained. Finally, after a review of the limitations of this study, conclusions will be drawn on the work carried out, and future suggestions will be formulated.

Part II : Literature review

This dissertation deals with companies operating in the cyclologistics sector, focusing in particular on the organisational form they adopt. Several concepts emerge from the topic of this dissertation, and it is therefore appropriate to define them based on the literature available to this day.

Firstly, given the subject chosen, it is appropriate to briefly explain the issues specific to the cyclologistics sector, to ensure an accurate study of the criteria for comparison and evaluation of the companies operating in it. We will take an abbreviated look at the current economic context, in order to address the various emerging economic concepts and the principles associated with them. Afterwards, we will discuss the tools of evaluation that emerge from those new visions of the economy. Simultaneously, we will study the various forms that organisations can take in Belgium, in order to understand their impact on the potential of cycling activity.

1. Cyclologistics

1.1. The problems of urban centres

Urban centres are places where there is a very diverse demand for the delivery of goods, between private individuals and businesses. It is in these centres that the last phase of the delivery process takes place, also known as last-mile delivery (Aljohani & Thompson, 2020). Last-mile delivery is often one of the thorniest points in the logistics process, due to the pollution and costs it generates, or its lack of efficiency (Gevaers et al., 2014).

Brussels is a dense and highly congested city. In 2023, it ranked tenth out of 387 cities (*TOMTOM Traffic Index Ranking*, 2023). In the Brussels region, road transport is responsible for a quarter of CO₂ emissions and is one of the main contributors to the emission of atmospheric pollutants (Duprez & Bastin, 2021). There, it accounts for 90 percent of goods transported in the region. The number of short journeys and frequent stops that characterise the delivery of goods in city centres is a major factor in this. The pollution caused by the transport of goods is not only environmental, but also noise-related (Dablang, 2009), and spatial. Vans and light trucks take up a considerable amount of space on roads and in parking areas. In 2021, a survey spread in the framework of the Good Moove plan highlighted that

11% of intra-Brussels traffic was carried out by vans. At night, almost 9 out of 10 parked goods vehicles are vans (Bruxelles Mobilité, s. d.).

In the city, a solution to the problems raised that is in line with sustainability must pursue several objectives simultaneously. It must aim for sobriety by limiting unnecessary travel, be economical with space, resources and energy, be aware of the environment and consider the living conditions. These issues also call for socio-cultural responses. The success of responses aligned with sustainable development depends on how public authorities reach decisions in the face of demands from divergent interests, and on the involvement of private players and citizens (Lieberherr-Gardiol, 2007).

1.2. Cyclological response

Robichet et al. (2022) put forward the use of cargo bikes as a sustainable, economically feasible and efficient alternative for some goods deliveries in metropolitan areas. Oliveira et al. (2017) list various studies that recognise the economic, environmental and social benefits and opportunities of cyclologistics.

Ecologically, cyclologistics immediately leads to a significant reduction in GHG¹ emissions. Emissions from cargo bikes are mainly due to their manufacture and the materials extracted from them, particularly in the manufacture of batteries, their transport and the electricity they choose to use. The ASBL European Cyclists's Federation has calculated that each user of an electric bike emits a total of twenty-two grams of CO₂ per kilometre. In comparison, a car driver produces 271 grams of CO₂ per kilometre (Blondel et al., 2011). It should be pointed out that we have not addressed the contribution of automobile transport to emissions of fine particles or sulphur and nitrogen oxides, which are partly attributable to it.

By reducing atmospheric pollution, the development of cycling also reduces the occurrence of illnesses resulting from it, and thus has an impact on health. For individuals and delivery companies alike, an active mode of transport has numerous benefits in terms of both physical and mental health. People who actively travel by bike age better than more sedentary individuals, are more independent, and suffer fewer mental illnesses or illnesses linked to inactivity (Green et al., 2021).

¹ Greenhouse Gases

From a socio-economic point of view, if this logistical solution is deployed with the necessary resources, it enables road space to be allocated in a way that revitalises town centres. On the one hand, environments that allow people to walk or cycle encourage social interaction (Green et al., 2021), and on the other hand, pedestrians and cyclists make better loyal customers for shops, contributing more than car drivers to their annual turnover (ADEME, 2003). Cargo bikes can also be versatile and effective local tools (Brard, 2020) enabling consumption habits to be aligned with the circular economy. From a social point of view, the development of cyclologistics is also leading to the development of particularly difficult-to-relocate jobs (Roger & Ramirez, 2023).

1.3. Challenges to implementation

As a result, a number of companies have formed around the proposal of a last-mile delivery service using cargo bikes, while at the same time, others have adapted their existing logistics chain and redesigned all or part of their process to include it. Between 2021 and 2023, the Brussels Economy and Employment grant enabled 331 Brussels SMEs to invest in a cargo bike or bike trailer, for a total investment of around one million euros (Belga, 2023). Despite this type of support from the city for the adoption of cargo bikes, there are still obstacles to the use of these vehicles to their full potential in urban areas.

The development of these businesses highlights the need for appropriate infrastructure to guarantee the safety of both cyclists, who are becoming increasingly numerous, and other road users (Nürnberg, 2019). This point is also supported by Jean-René Carré. He points out that, historically, the car has grown thanks to various sources of support. The public authorities have promoted the car, the regulations surrounding it have been adapted, they have provided incentives, financial support and infrastructure, and they have socially valued the use of the car (Carré, 1998). The author suggests that the democratisation of cycling as a mobility tool requires similar approaches.

The status of cycle courier, a profession that is inevitably spreading with the development of cyclologistics, is also a source of challenges. The players in this sector are threatened by the spread of the "uberisation" of the profession. The Deliveroo and Uber Eats models are based on linking up customers and delivery service providers via their platforms, and paying them on a per-stroke basis. The latter have self-employed status and have to assume the risks of the business themselves, whether in terms of social security or fluctuating demand for deliveries,

and therefore their income. The precariousness of this status must therefore be addressed (Jehin, 2018).

Furthermore, when it comes to presenting this solution to potential customers, companies come up against the scepticism of retailers, who fear efficiency losses due to time and volume constraints, and therefore additional costs (Brard, 2020). Finally, one of the key factors in the successful deployment of cyclologistics through a city centre is the hubs in the various corners of the city. Therefore, in a city where the cost of these hubs is very high, the cost factor will act as a brake on development (Robichet et al., 2022).

2. Leverage to meet economic, social and environmental challenges

The distinctive feature of the emergence of the new economic concepts studied in this dissertation is that they are reactive to the context in which we are evolving. This context is that of a fluctuating and uncertain world. We are living in an era of global accountability in the face of the direct and harmful consequences of human activity. The first concept of sustainable development was formalised in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development as a form of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (cited in Jacquet & Tubiana, 2006), a definition reaffirmed at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. This identified the 3 fundamental pillars of the principle of sustainability, also known as sustainability, namely the economic, social and ecological dimensions (Jacquet & Tubiana, 2006). In 2015, the UN adopted the seventeen sustainable development goals for 2030. Taking a holistic approach, they focus on the “5 P”; populations, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships (UNSDG, 2022).

We are currently halfway between the adoption of these SDGs and their deadline. However, UN Secretary-General António Guterres points out that we are either stuck or have backtracked on more than thirty percent of the SDGs (ONU, 2023). In its latest report, the IPCC unequivocally attributed global warming to human economic activity. It ostensibly identifies energy and land use, as well as unsustainable lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production, as the causes contributing to the increase in GHG emissions since industrialisation (IPCC, 2023).

In 1967, we read that the sole purpose of businesses was first and foremost to maximise profits (Belzile, 1967). Today, many contemporary economists are reinventing the company

and attributing to it a crucial role in the prospects for future economies. If businesses are to play a part in the transition to a sustainable world, they need to break away from the traditional model that has dominated them until now.

2.1. Regenerative economy

Regenerative Economy is a conception of economy that aims at the net creation of positive impact. Its regenerative nature differentiates it from sustainability seen through the prism of zero impact (Sempels, 2023). The main idea behind this vision is to enable living organisms, both humans and their ecosystems, to continuously access their unique capacity for self-renewal. The regenerative enterprise is therefore the one that creates the right conditions for regeneration.

2.1.1. Contributive economy principles

The concept of the contributive enterprise, as proposed by Bonnifet & Puff Ardichvili (2022), is a vision of the firm that responds to the various challenges of the economic context.

A contributive company is defined through 5 pillars:

1. aligning with scientific facts
2. working for the common good
3. integrating stakeholders
4. management based on perceived value and impact, both neutral and positive
5. valuing intangible capital

First and foremost, a contributing company is aligned with scientific facts. The principles governing environmental, social and economic phenomena have been established. So any company that wants to survive must align itself with them.

Secondly, its mission must be to work for the common good. To do this, it engages in dialogue with its stakeholders and follows up these dialogues in its decision-making process. The integration of stakeholders concerns players both inside and outside the company and opens the way to the emergence of disruptive ideas, favoured in this model which values communication in the broadest sense (Bonnifet & Puff Ardichvili, 2022).

So far, a contributing company is therefore an initiative that has organised itself around its system, intending to have a positive impact on it. Hamant proposes that the business model that reflects an initiative is not an input constraint, but the response to the company's *raison d'être*. Once the scientific facts have been taken into account, a company's business model should be the answer to the problem (*Parce que les guichets physiques seront plus résistants que les réseaux numériques*, 2023). This is the purpose of the third principle of the contributive enterprise. Any contributive enterprise must be organised according to a contributive model. Aspects specific to the predominant models, such as shareholder pressure or disconnection from the scarcity of resources, are obstacles to a company's ability to contribute. This is where cooperative models and social enterprises come in.

Fourthly, it implements management based on perceived value, i.e. that takes into account the impact it has on its stakeholders.. At the very least, the contributive company aims to avoid generating any negative externalities.

A final idea behind this organisational model is the development of intangible capital. This refers to the company's values, knowledge and know-how (Bonnifet & Puff Ardichvili, 2022).

2.1.2. Regenerative principles

The LUMIA collective is active for the common good. It aims at creating a strong and robust scientific knowledge that can be shared with many various stakeholders in order to support the changes needed toward a Regenerative Economy. In 2023, it identified eleven principles that can qualify a company as regenerative, which they also call a company contributing to socio-ecological regeneration (Lumiå, 2023). The network the collective has worked with to compile such a throughout definition of the concept is rich with other organisations and individual experts in the field, such as the C3D or the ADEME. These principles are as follows :

1. the creation of positive overall value at economic, social and environmental levels,
2. adopting a holistic vision,
3. limiting and detaching ourselves from infinite growth,
4. support for ecosystem services (ecosystem regeneration),
5. sharing monetary value with stakeholders,

6. the primacy of robustness over performance,
7. the creation of nurturing relationships,
8. the creation of reciprocal and co-evolving cooperative relationships,
9. paying attention to the molecules used and their risk of entering the biological cycle,
10. circularity,
11. the local aspect and sobriety

This can be seen as an expanded conceptualisation of the contributive firm, a proposition for a strong, yet ambitious, framework around the concept.

2.2. The company model as a leverage

In Belgium, since the first of January 2024, the deadline for compliance with the new CSA of 2019, a company with legal personality in Belgium may only be organised in one of the following forms: simple company, limited company, limited liability company, general partnership, limited partnership, cooperative or association. At present, the conventional business model is that of the investor-owned company, the limited company.

Corporate social and environmental responsibility, supported by ISO 26000 certification, was born out of the challenge of sustainable development. Historically, however, it has mainly been used as a tool to enhance the value of companies. Its impact is often measured in terms of public image, employee relations and financial performance. A new directive, the CSRD, has been in force since the first of January 2024. It aims to provide detailed sustainability information for companies, intending to make the transition to a sustainable economy (Conseil de l'Union européenne, 2022).

However, according to Parrique (2022), the necessary initiatives will not come from private, hierarchical, for-profit companies. In particular, he mentions that one way of enabling companies to make decisions that benefit the general interest is to make them cooperative.

Alongside conventional businesses are cooperatives and mutual societies, associations and the public sector, which Evers & Laville (2005, cited in Defourny & Nyssens, (2013)) group together under the term "third sector". This classification highlights the distinct separation

between conventional companies seeking to maximise profit and companies whose purpose is not to make a profit.

2.2.1. The social enterprise

Social enterprise is a concept that has been researched in particular by the EMES, a network of university researchers and research centres. This organisation defines it in terms of nine characteristics, which are subdivided into economic, social and governance criteria (SPF Economie, 2023).

Economically, the company must provide the goods and services that justify its existence. Through its activity, it must be able to assume the monetary risks associated with its status as a social enterprise and respect a minimum number of paid jobs.

Secondly, its social purpose must be explicit, and the fruit of a collective movement. Depending on its legal form, it may not be able to redistribute its profits, or only to a limited extent.

In terms of governance, they must be highly autonomous, must have voting rights that are independent of the quantification of capital contributions, and must include their stakeholders in their decision-making processes (Defourny & Nyssens, 2013).

In 2021, the social economy represented fifteen percent of the entrepreneurial landscape in Brussels (Observatoire Économie Sociale, 2023). In Belgium, since January 2024, the application of the new CSA has restricted this designation, through the "social enterprise" registration, to cooperative enterprises, by means of article 8, paragraph 5, of the CSA. As a cooperative, one of the effects of the registration is to support the alignment with the essence of the cooperative movement.

However, the Brussels region has defined a legal framework that opens up this designation to other forms of organisations. The ordinance of the 23rd of July 2018 on the approval and support of social enterprises sets out the criteria for an enterprise to be approved as a social enterprise at the level of the BCR². Given the conditions laid down, the forms that will be found there will tend to be forms of enterprise belonging to the third sector.

² Brussels-Capital Region

In a Europe-wide study, Rousselière et al. (2024) argue that social enterprises have a particular capacity to promote social and environmental innovations, and have the indirect effect of stimulating innovation in general, and not just within social enterprises. They attribute this in particular to the absence of shareholder pressure, which leaves room for reinvestment in meaningful projects. Compared with SMEs, social enterprises are generally better at generating social innovation, but less good at environmental innovation, due to a lack of access to economies of scale, more limited resources, or less potential bargaining power for producers of sustainable materials. Finally, their study highlights the need for public policy to support the development of the social economy.

2.2.2. The cooperative organisation

The cooperative is a type of organisation known in various forms such as worker, consumer, producer, agricultural or credit cooperatives (Birchall, 2013). Cooperatives that bring together several of these stakeholders are called multi-stakeholder cooperatives. Historically speaking, the cooperative society is by no means a new phenomenon, which also means that it is well documented.

In Belgium, there has been a 28.6 percent increase in the number of NCC³-approved cooperatives over the last 10 years (Staessens et al., 2021). The renewed interest in the cooperative society can be explained by the communication done to promote it by the CNC, but also by the advantages of this structure in certain contexts. Although cooperatives have existed in their various forms for a long time, it was in 1995 that the International Cooperative Alliance defined the cooperative identity through values and principles, through the Statement on the Cooperative Identity.

Co-operatives will therefore promote self-help, responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. They will be guided by the principles of open voluntary membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information, cooperation between co-operatives, and commitment to the community (ICA, 1995).

Under the Belgian CSA, cooperative societies and associations therefore have identities that are distinct from limited companies. Through this new Code, the cooperative society is given

³ National Cooperation Council

back its original distinctiveness, thus reviving the fundamental philosophical values associated with it. The purpose of Article 6:1 of the CSA is to define this form of organisation. Paragraph 4 of this article states that the articles of association must develop a cooperative intention, understood as consistent with the ICA declaration. Thus, one of the effects of the Code is the disappearance, or correct appointment, of "false" cooperatives, which were formed to take advantage of the possibility of variable capital and registered shares (Vanwelde, 2019)

Smart, a workers' cooperative, differentiates the cooperative company from the joint-stock company on the basis of seven criteria (Richoux & Pletschette, 2022), which are set out in the table below.

	Limited company	Cooperative company
Partner's context	shareholder provides capital and expects a return in the form of dividends	User of the company must apply and be accepted by the other members
Share and cooperative share	Share Investment pending return on capital	Cooperative share Financial contribution to help with operations
Capital and shares	Fixed Capital Number of fixed shares with variable value Gain = dividends	Variable Capital Number of share variables based on the number of shareholders, at a fixed value Gain = interest in shares (limited)
Redistribution of profits	Profit = target Maximisation objective redistributed in the form of dividends	Profit = means known as the operating surplus Discount: partial redistribution to cooperative users
Surplus earnings	Join the capital The holders of capital are co-owners and dispose of the company as they wish	Become non-distributable Management surpluses are placed in reserve and cannot be shared out; they become the property of the cooperative, which is collective.
Relationship to ownership	Power dependent on number of shares held	1 cooperator = 1 voice
Knowledge management	Expertise	Economic citizenship involving awareness, involvement, information Educational project, transmission of knowledge

Tableau 1 - table comparing the characteristics of limited companies and cooperatives, based on Richoux & Pletschette, 2022

i. **Strengths of the cooperative model**

The co-operative movement is a controversial one. Some advocate the benefits of this model given its potential for resilience in times of crisis, while others remain sceptical toward it (Kramper, 2012).

On the one hand, cooperative organisations in all sectors seem to remain more stable in times of crisis (Birchall & Ketilson Hammond, 2009). The term “crisis” names here periods of recession following financial crises, such as the post-2008 period.

Costa et Delbono (2023) compare various sources of literature on the resilience of cooperatives and draw various conclusions, supporting the view that cooperative enterprises are more resilient than conventional enterprises in times of economic downturn. Co-operatives draw their strengths from their focus on their members and their local focus. They exist for their members, not for profit, and this impacts on their decision-making. This alignment between an enterprise's purpose and its investors can engender loyalty, commitment, knowledge sharing and participation, supported by economic incentives (Birchall & Ketilson Hammond, 2009). The control exercised by the members can also engender behaviour that minimises risk-taking, which can contribute to the sustainability of these businesses (Birchall, 2013). The operating principle of the model, particularly concerning the redistribution of the management surplus, is also advantageous. Alongside patronage refunds, the surplus, which cannot be shared out, provides a definite safety buffer in the event of a crisis where job insecurity rapidly arises. Cooperatives that have survived the various economic shocks of the early 21st century have emerged with their financial structure virtually intact. Cooperatives benefit from various advantages that enable them to react better to macroeconomic changes. Costa et Delbono (2023) conclude in their own study, on the basis of GDP per capita and the employment rate, that there is further evidence of a positive link between employment in cooperative enterprises and the employment resilience of the region.

ii. Weaknesses of the cooperative model

On the other hand, despite the advantages highlighted for this model, various cases of failure testify to the difficulties encountered in such organisations. Sceptics of the cooperative model have focused on the factors endogenous to the instability of these enterprises. The way cooperatives are structured around the seven ICA⁴ principles has its share of disadvantages.

⁴ International Cooperative Alliance

Difficulties in raising funds are said to result in particular from the fact that voting rights are granted equally to all members, without taking into account the weight of each member's financial contribution (Kramper, 2012). This point is supported by (Birchall, 2013), who stresses that under these conditions, members have no particular financial incentive to take more shares, or to participate concretely in management, or even to be loyal to the company. Secondly, while non-distributable capital can provide a safety buffer in times of crisis when the capital is very high as a result of the company running smoothly, it can act as an incentive to change the form of the company to take advantage of the profitability of the business and extract more money for the members. At the same time, if the business is doing badly, complex decisions such as potential restructuring may be ignored for too long because of the financial security provided by the non-distributable profits. Democratic management also exposes members to differences of opinion. Cooperatives may also tend to take a short-term view to benefit from rebates. All these concerns would affect the organisation differently depending on the stage of maturity they are at (Kramper, 2012).

The disadvantages of the above model can be criticised. The risks of inducing a change of model and of a lack of participation or loyalty on the part of members relate to the intrinsic motivation of members to participate in the cooperative. While members should not be idealised as entirely disinterested beings, their motivation should not be limited to extracting monetary interests from the enterprise.

The cooperative enterprise is therefore a model which operates in a complex way and which can experience many factors of success and failure. Nevertheless, it has the potential to provide a response to today's challenges, justifying the renewed interest in it.

Operating on the model of a cooperative enterprise, a social enterprise, or a combination of the two, is, therefore, a relative guarantee of at least neutral prospects in terms of negative impacts. If we add to these contributory and regenerative principles, this minimum threshold gives us the prospects of a regenerative economy.

3. Existing impact assessment tools

3.1. In the conventional economy

Numerous tools relating to Corporate Social Responsibility exist, providing non-financial indicators for analysing the impact of companies' economic activities. In 2010, CSR⁵ and its certification under the ISO 26000 standard took a step towards impact assessment. This standard is one of the foundations of the LUCIE label, which proposes a continuous improvement approach to CSR. Legally once again, the entry into force of the new CSRD⁶ imposes precise reporting on European companies of various sizes in various timeframes, starting with large companies in 2024. In addition to these standards, there is also the Global Reporting Initiative, which aims to bring companies into contact with their various stakeholders, the BCorp label and its high-performance standards, and the EFQM⁷ management model.

3.2. In the Economy for the Common Good

Felber (2022) defines the economy of the common good as an economy that pursues the goal of economic activity as set out in constitutions, articulated towards the pursuit of general well-being. In his view, to achieve this, economic activity must shift its focus from the accumulation of profit to the preservation of the commons and cooperation.

Measures centred on monetary value, such as GDP, are unsuitable for measuring performance from this perspective of the economy. Parrique (2022), a promoter of degrowth as a response to the issues at stake, agrees with this observation. Jancovici (2014) engineer and creator of carbon accounting, explains that GDP is an indicator that has been chosen and is rapidly becoming incapable of providing a true picture of physical flows. Even when this indicator appears to be growing, it makes future costs invisible by excluding them from its calculation. Other principles mentioned are the adoption of democratic practices, transparency, support for efforts, the abandonment of unbridled growth in favour of growth as a means to an optimal size, and the abandonment of competition in favour of cooperation (Felber, 2022).

Felber presents a balance sheet for the common good in the form of a matrix proposed by the Economy for the Common Good movement, focusing on human dignity, solidarity, justice, ecological sustainability and democratic decision-making power, and how these values are expressed for the various stakeholders. The matrix of common goods, combining values and

⁵ Corporate Social Responsibility

⁶ Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

⁷ European Foundation for Quality Management

stakeholders, is a tool for assessing the contribution of entrepreneurial activities. The ECG movement provides tools that ensure an appropriate assessment of the company in light of the 20 themes that make up the commons matrix.

VALUE	HUMAN DIGNITY	SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	TRANSPARENCY AND CO-DETERMINATION
STAKEHOLDER				
A: SUPPLIERS	A1 Human dignity in the supply chain	A2 Solidarity and social justice in the supply chain	A3 Environmental sustainability in the supply chain	A4 Transparency and co-determination in the supply chain
B: OWNERS, EQUITY- AND FINANCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS	B1 Ethical position in relation to financial resources	B2 Social position in relation to financial resources	B3 Use of funds in relation to social and environmental impacts	B4 Ownership and co-determination
C: EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING CO-WORKING EMPLOYERS	C1 Human dignity in the workplace and working environment	C2 Self-determined working arrangements	C3 Environmentally-friendly behaviour of staff	C4 Co-determination and transparency within the organisation
D: CUSTOMERS AND OTHER COMPANIES	D1 Ethical customer relations	D2 Cooperation and solidarity with other companies	D3 Impact on the environment of the use and disposal of products and services	D4 Customer participation and product transparency
E: SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT	E1 Purpose of products and services and their effects on society	E2 Contribution to the community	E3 Reduction of environmental impact	E4 Social co-determination and transparency

Figure 1 - Common Good Matrix, as available at <https://www.ecogood.org/apply-ecg/common-good-matrix/>

3.3. In the Donut Economy

The ECG movement is supported in particular by Kate Raworth, an economist known for her proposal of the economy represented in the shape of a doughnut, and the fair and safe space for all that it houses (Raworth & Bury, 2021). This space is contained by a social foundation below which humans suffer critical deprivation, broken down into twelve issues, and an ecological ceiling beyond which the planet is critically degraded, bringing together nine planetary limits.

Based on known technologies and taking into account population forecasts, Schlesier et al. (2024) have examined the existence of this space between humans and the planet, and concluded that it is feasible with a confidence level of at least 73 percent, albeit under certain conditions. These include complete decarbonisation, as a necessary but not sufficient condition, coupled with a profound change in consumption habits towards sobriety.

Raworth proposes a vision of the economy based on a systemic perspective, detached from GDP or profit growth. It's a vision of the economy as more human, regenerative and

distributive than in a conventional economy. In her view, new measures of the impact of business should focus on the human, social, ecological, cultural and physical sources of value, which is no exaggeration of the values studied by the ECG matrix.

The relevance of the Donut lies particularly in its visual dimension. A study by the ASBL Confluence examined the situation of the city of Brussels around the fair and safe space of the Donut (see part III). The Brussels donut illustrates the need for social and environmental actions on a macro scale. It is an important visual key to understanding the situation in the BCR.

3.4. Discussion over assessment tools

While an analysis using existing tools of the conventional view of the economy could be interesting, it is important to refocus on the idea that guides this work, which is not limited to the study of negative impacts and their mitigation, but seeks to go further, by assessing the regenerative potential, i.e. the creation of positive net value.

Therefore, taking into consideration the definitions of the contributive firm we explored, and the study of access to contributive economy that we aim to do here, The ECG matrix seems to be the most fitted tool to use. Previously existing tools might prove too limited in regards to the analysis that constitutes the topic of this report.

The following section will use the Donut tool to highlight what the potential of contribution to the common good is in the Brussels-Capital Region, more precisely, what is achievable by the field of bike delivery logistics, and under which conditions.

Part III : Potential of cyclologistics in the Brussels-capital region

This section aims to highlight the potential contribution to the common good inherent in last-mile cycling in the BCR. To this end, this part will make use of the Brussels Donut tool and focus on the indicators that were chosen to establish it. As the Donut is a portrait of the current situation in the Brussels region with regard to social and environmental dimensions, it is capable of highlighting areas that present critical risks, and areas where there is room for action. The latter will be linked to the identified potential of cyclologistics. This part will finish on the exploration of the actors in this sector active in the BCR, in order to explain the choices of analyzing Urbike and Urbeez.

1. Brussels' Donut

The underlying hypothesis of this paper is that the cyclologistics sector has a high initial potential for action in the light of the various challenges threatening today's society, but that this potential can be increased and harnessed more effectively if the activity is pursued using a management method in line with the value system of the regenerative enterprise.

If we look at the seventeen SDGs, we can safely come to the conclusion that such an initiative in logistics could positively impact at least seven of these goals. Among other things, this sector promotes a healthy lifestyle, which impacts on SDG 3. It resort to clean energy sources (SDG 7), participates in technological innovation and infrastructure development (SDG 9) and, consequently, in the transformation of cities (SDG 11). The Donut draws on the SDGs in its analysis, but also makes it possible to consider potential on a more local scale, in this case a region.

The analysis of the BCR realized through the Donut is subdivided into 4 sections, called lenses. Those correspond to either a local or a global perspective taken on either the social foundation or the environmental ceiling of the Donut. Each of the criteria are being observed through indicators that are mentioned and explain on the website of the Donut. The representation of this tool is as can be seen below. The color code of the donut expresses the degree to which the aspect studied is contained within the fair and safe space of the Donut, based on specific targets set for the observed criterion.

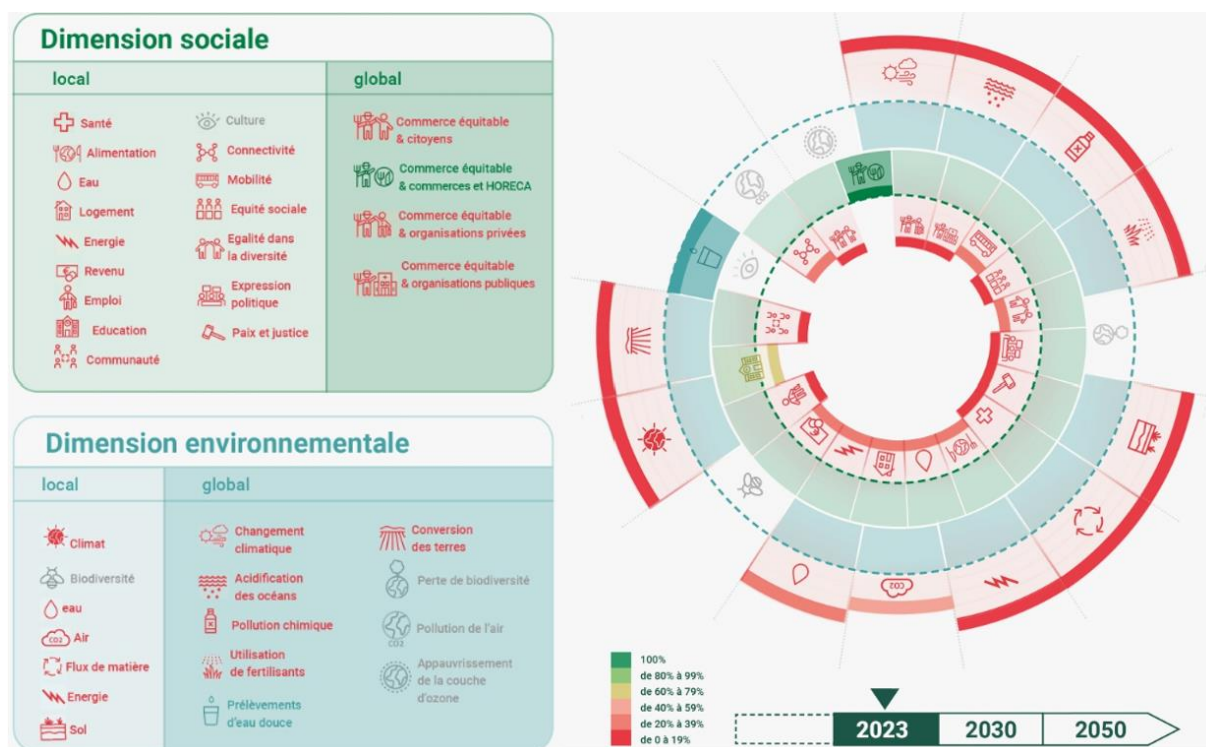


Figure 2 - Brussels' donut 2023 as available on <https://donut.brussels/bruxelles/3-1-macro-portrait-fr-new/>.

1.1. Limitations of Brussels' Donut

Naturally, we must bear in mind the limitations identified by the authors of this representation. They mainly mention the lack of indicators, the generalization when addressing questions of equity or income distribution, and the fact that those indicators were chosen. They also mention the failure to study the interaction between the various elements of the BCR system under assessment, despite this being an intrinsic principle of the tool. Finally, this report also neglects the specific contribution of each BCR municipality. Nevertheless, the measures considered to assess each aspect of the Donut are relevant quantification proposals in terms of impact study.

1.2. Social-Local lens

1.2.1. health

Life expectancy, rates of mental illness and perceptions of general health are indicators used in the Donut, and are all areas that the development of cycling can affect directly and indirectly. Directly, it will affect cycle couriers, who will be exposed to all the benefits of cycling; their ageing, mental health and general state of health will be considerably better than those of less active people.

Indirectly, the development of this solution has the capacity to raise awareness through its visibility. In view of the growing demand for deliveries, more bicycles, as an efficient way of delivering goods in urban centres, using roads for delivery purposes, also drives the development of infrastructures that allow these types of flows in a safe way for all users. This push in infrastructures also benefits indirect stakeholders, who can now benefit from them.

The sector is home to projects such as CairgoBike, which supports households to try out cargo bikes. These programs are made possible by the participation of industry players such as Urbike. At the end of the project, just over 70% of the households supported were converted (Belga, 2023). One of the underlying ideas of this project is also to show households and young families, who may be more resistant to this solution given their needs, that it is feasible, given the number of individuals who will now be taking to the streets.

1.2.2. employment

A cyclologistics activity creates jobs that cannot be relocated, and can therefore have a lasting impact on employment throughout the BCR. In the Donut, this aspect is studied in terms of employment and unemployment rates, and estimated job satisfaction. To have a lasting effect on the last two indicators, being a cyclologicistic business isn't enough. Full potential of the activity has more chances at being harvested when adopting a more regenerative corporate vision. In social enterprises, it is easier to find initiatives aimed at reintegrating those excluded from the labour market. Work satisfaction can be observed in different types of organisations, however it will be more easily observed in organizations that allow for the involvement of each employee through a more vertical system. A company in this sector being based on a highly anthropocentric value system also helps to prevent the massive uberisation of this developing market, thus protecting against job insecurity.

1.2.3. income

Companies in the sector with models based on strong human values practice particularly fair levels of income. Indicators of this element in the Donut, such as disposable income or the proportion of the population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, have the potential to be positively affected by the emergence of the cyclologistics sector.

1.2.4. community

In terms of community, the Donut measures this factor notably through the level of satisfaction with social contacts and time spent in associative environments. The development of cycling in general makes city centers more dynamic, particularly where it is accompanied by a more equitable reallocation of the public road space available to each user. Decarbonized city centers are more conducive to social interaction, and to becoming places of public exchange, or in other words, third places. At the same time, the number of bicycle-related community organizations is multiplying with the growing adoption of bicycles. Molembike, for example, is a non-profit organization that promotes social cohesion through cycling, by organizing introductory cycling courses and bike tours (*Molembike - La cohésion sociale par le vélo à Bruxelles*, 2024).

In particular, this non-profit organisation focuses on getting women into the saddle, through the Hironde'ELLES program. The Good Moove report showed that in 2014, women accounted for just one-third of cyclists (Barette, 2020). Although there are many factors influencing this figure, such as the feeling of road safety, which lies mainly in the hands of public organizations, this program is part of a pursuit of gender equality in terms of bicycle use. CyCLO is also a non-profit organization focusing on bicycle repair and training in bicycle maintenance and use.

1.2.5. mobility

In terms of mobility, the cycling sector extends its potential impact on 4 of the 5 indicators studied. The first indicator concerns the modal share of sustainable transport, which is inevitably impacted. Another indicator is the average number of cars per inhabitant. The growing obsolescence of the car, driven by projects such as the Good Moove plan for example, in the face of other modes of soft mobility, has the potential to drive this indicator down. Thirdly, there is the criterion of the number of cycle paths on the roads, which, as mentioned above, can only increase in the face of growing cycling activity.

Finally, the last mobility lever it can impact is that of the average speeds of the public transport systems that share the roads. Reducing congestion by relieving cities of delivery vehicles, which the cargo bike can effectively replace, can have a positive impact on traffic in urban centers. However, to have a real effect on public transport, the city needs to support this development in such a way as to avoid any rebound effect, of re-congestion due to the attractiveness of the potential time-saving for private motorists. This can be avoided in several

ways. The time saved by decongestion must benefit public transport without benefiting private transport, which is one other aspect of the Good Moove plan. This means reallocating the roadway to give each user a dedicated space. At rush hour, a car requires two and a half times more space than a cyclist, five times more than a pedestrian and ten times more than a bus (Crozet, 2019). In 2014, fifty-nine percent of road and parking space was still dedicated to cars. Three percent was dedicated to public transport, two percent to bicycles and the remaining thirty-six percent to pedestrians (Barette, 2020).

1.3. Social-Global lens

This social floor perspective focuses on fair trade practices from the point of view of citizens, the HORECA sector, and private and public organizations. Although it is not entirely obvious which of the evaluated criteria can be specifically influenced by cyclologistics, it is fair to mention that this logistics solution in urban centers is potentially a promoter of short circuits, by facilitating transport in urban centers. When attached to a strong value system, it has the capacity to promote circular economies by selecting the businesses it accompanies.

1.4. Environmental-local lens

1.4.1. Air quality

Air quality in the Brussels region is measured by trends in sulphur oxide, nitrogen and fine particle emissions. Given the contribution of road transport to these emissions, the promotion of sustainable mobility through cycling and cargo bikes has a strong influence.

1.4.2. Ground quality

One indicator of this environmental dimension is the proportion of surfaces that are watertight. These surfaces are the pavements of streets, parking lots and squares, as well as buildings. At the other end of the spectrum are parks, vegetation and water areas. Railway areas fall somewhere in between, depending on the type of surface used. Reducing the car's footprint in order to rework the permeability of the ground is particularly possible if former car and van users require less road space for their transport needs, through cycling and cargo bikes. Infrastructure is certainly required for its development, but for an equivalent size of roadway, the space requirement for cyclologistics enables greater flows of people and goods.

The latter is particularly visible through the worldwide demonstration called the Critical Mass. This is a multi-purpose manifestation revolving around the use of bikes. Among other elements, it requests better infrastructures and allocation of space by monopolizing it every last Friday of the month with a fleet of at least a thousand protesting cyclists.

1.5. Environmental-Global lens

CO2 emissions on a global scale are used directly as an indicator of both climate change, as a GHG, and ocean acidification due to its reabsorption and reaction within the oceans. To measure soil conversion, the ecological footprint per capita is used. It has already been established in this work that the 3 factor measurements mentioned can be directly influenced by cyclologistics development. In addition, although the extraction of materials for cargo bike batteries, like any other battery, is a practice with long-term risks, the emissions impact of bike production is much lower than that of a car.

1.6. Resume of achievable impact

In a nutshell, the use of a cyclologistics solution, specifically when using a business model in line with the principles of regenerative enterprise, thus extends to multiple aspects of both the social floor and the environmental ceiling. This solution provides the factors mentioned with ways of accessing the Donut's fair and safe space for all. On the one hand, it has the potential for direct action; through its activity and the flows it replaces, or the enhanced employment it can create locally. On the other hand, it has an indirect potential: it can act as an influence, via the awareness its visibility generates, the communities that are attached to it, or even by encouraging new road layouts.

2. Brussels' cyclologistics landscape

In Brussels, a large number of companies are active in cyclologistics. Focusing on those that offer a last-mile delivery service, different types of actors can be distinguished.

Some of the businesses in the delivery landscape are rethinking their delivery processes, and are working on shifting at least part of their flows to cyclologistics. To achieve this, these companies are either subcontracting or bringing the service in-house. Examples in this category include the logistics company Ziegler, Arid Group and Bpost.

Other businesses are combining the use of cargo bikes with other transport solutions to meet a substantially similar demand. Urbeez is a limited liability company harnessing urban multimodality to meet delivery needs in the metropolitan area. Its aim is to enable carbon-free logistics in urban centers. Its fleet consists mainly of cargo bikes, but it also uses other electric transport technologies, including motorbikes, scooters and electric vans.

Some firms, like Shippr, use the platform economy to provide a delivery service that include the cargo-bike solution as a mean of transportation. Born in Brussels in 2017, the firm adds to the cargo bikes solution other low-emission vehicles such as vans and traditional trucks. However, Shippr functions in a similar way as Takeaway, Uber Eats, or even Uber itself, through a platform. This means that the delivery service providers and the clients are directly connected through the platform. To become a service provider, a courier, an individual must only create an account and fill some data. This leads to an insecure situation for the service providers, as he must handle all his personal costs in terms of safety and personal insurance by himself. His income is highly dependent on the platform and on demand. This phenomenon is also known as uberisation. Through such platforms, the job of a bike courier is becoming increasingly precarious.

Aside from those, some firms have made a commitment to only use bikes for their delivery activities. Hush Rush or PedalBXL are example of such firms. A few of those firms are additionally cooperatives with a social purpose. This was recently still the case of Dioxyde de Gambettes (GO₂) or Molenbike. GO₂ was among the pioneers of the bike delivery movement in the BCR. It has now been acquired by Cargo Vélo, a limited liability company. Molenbike's activity started propelled by the incubator "Seeds", and launched to provide a service to its first customers, Farm. Nowadays, the activities of Molenbike have stopped. Based on the discussions I had with Antoine from Molenbike, one of the reasons for the cessation of activities of these two structures may lie in the lack of internal structure they suffered from in order to properly manage all aspects of the customer management process and delivery service, which subsequently affected their volumes, and therefore the feasibility of the activity. Antoine informed me that none of Molenbike's couriers had ever been able to make a living from that activity, and that the administrative work was basically done on a voluntary basis.

Urbike is one of those companies that is active in last-mile cycling while also being active in the social economy through its model. Although it might have been seen as less cooperative

by others because of ideas about what a cooperative should look like, how it should be run, or its size, Urbike is still an active cooperative to this day, certified as having a social purpose under the new CSA.

3. Selection of firms for evaluation and comparison

When asked to identify competitors in the field, Angelino, manager of Urbeez, states that it is difficult to agree on direct competitors for a business when working in last-mile cyclologistics. According to him, the businesses in this sector all provide significantly different services, whether in terms of their fleet, their form of company or their employment practices.

With the idea of being able to compare companies that operate according to two different organisational models that are interesting to compare, it is necessary to select two companies in the sector that meet a similar demand in the Brussels region. In terms of volume and type of customers, as well as in terms of stability, Urbike and Urbeez stand out as the two most comparable companies.

Furthermore, as mentioned, Urbeez operates according to a model which in the literature review can be described as a conventional model, that of a limited liability company. Urbike, on the other hand, operates according to a type of organisation that is not conventional and has been described as coming from the "third sector" earlier in this work. In this light, it is possible to carry out a comparative analysis of the influence of their organisational model on their contributory nature.

Finally, in terms of the availability of analysable resources and the network that could be activated in the field, the managers of these two companies proved to make themselves highly available and willing to share information.

Part IV : Analysis through the common good matrix

The Economy for the Common Good provides various tools for analyzing a company's contribution according to its resources in terms of data, time and size. Given these factors, the analysis of the two companies will be carried out using the evaluation quick test for companies proposed by the ECG. This quick test features two questions for each slot in the matrix. These questions aim to gather the information needed to evaluate the company for that particular box and to give it a score ranging from four, an exemplary score, to minus four, a score reflecting extremely risky practices. A benchmark score of zero will be attributed if the company meets the legal requirements, reflected by CSR standards. After the quicktest, the company obtains a score, ranging from one to eighty, with each twenty-point plateau being given a commentary on the company's observed contribution.

The Economy for the common good has other tools at its disposal, such as the Compact Common Good Balance Sheet, which could also have been used as part of this analysis. However, the quicktest was chosen, mainly for reasons linked with the gathering of the requested information for evaluation. On the one hand, the information required for the evaluation through the quicktest was more easily gathered through interviews. On the other hand, the two companies do not report in the same way in all the fields studied and therefore have different or missing data in some fields. Using a tool that is quicker and simpler to use in general enables a more equal comparison of the companies.

However, in order to make the analysis as objective as possible, ratings were assigned using the workbook that accompanies the Compact Balance Sheet. The Compact Balance Sheet aims to analyze in a more throughout and factual way the same matrix. Each case, it provides levels of maturity toward exemplary behavior. For each box, there is an expression of how a company functions when it is exemplary, experienced, advanced, a beginner, or when it limits itself to respecting the law. In addition, the risky behaviours associated with these boxes are also illustrated. Those steps are detailed in appendix 3, in the shape of a table. The latter therefore helps to determine what is originally aimed to be evaluated for each case, allowing to assess the answers of the managers in comparison.

1. The cases of Urbike and Urbeez

The following sections will present both firms based on the data collected through the interviews with both Philippe Lovens (appendix 1) and Angelino Capretti (appendix 2). The guide for the main interview was the ECG quicktest. The assessments of Urbike (appendix 4) and Urbeez (appendix 5) are structured as tables, that both mention all the ECG quicktest questions and the answers given or found.

1.1. Urbike

Urbike is a multi-stakeholder, last-mile, cyclo-logistics cooperative. In March 2018, the cooperative was born out of the “BCklet” project. This project was carried out by the Brussels region, also involving other actors such as, among others, the cooperative Smart, or key clients such as Bpost or Multipharma. The company’s activity has since then developed in the BCR, and extended in Belgium to the cities of Gent and Leuven.

A central factor in the development of Urbike has been their use of the Fleximodal trailer solution. The key feature of this trailer is its compatibility with europallets. The europallet format is a standard format used in traditional logistics. Therefore, using the Fleximodal solution meant being able to capture existing flows.

Another aspect of the company is that it is involved in the Social Economy. In 2020, Urbike was the Brussels laureate of the Social Economy Prize. One of the goals of the company is to create fair working conditions and generate solidarity and social justice in the supply chain. It’s been awarded other prizes in its development, such as the hub.awards aimed to highlight the companies with a positive impact on society, the Ashoka Impact program award, the “Logistics Project of the Year 2020” award, or the be.circular award. Currently, Urbike is in the process of obtaining the "ecodynamic company" label in the Brussels-Capital Region. As Philippe points out, labels are a way for Urbike to keep extending its thinking on as many subjects as possible in relation to the company.

Philippe mentioned that one of the ideas behind the model of the firm is to prove that such a model, embedded in the social economy, can work. An ambition is for this model to exist as a “tool-kit” for the social cooperative, which any project leader could use.

1.1.1. Services

Urbike offers a last-mile logistics solution, committed to a fleet made up entirely of electric cargo bikes. The company provides the delivery service itself, which can be included to

delivery rounds or dedicated to the client company. Urbike also offers companies support in adopting the bike delivery process. In this regard, the company is a reseller of material, and provides training to properly internalise the process. Finally, Urbike Consulting is dedicated to tailored guidance in the matter of urban logistics.

1.1.2. Ownership structure and financial resources

As mentioned, Urbike is a multi-stakeholder cooperative. The company now accounts for more than six hundred cooperators. The goal of the company isn't to build a business that can be sold when mature enough, being financed by so many actors therefore also acts as guarantee that this won't happen. The ownership structure is crucial to the activity of the firm, as it embeds it deeper into the social economy. A central aspect of the company is that one cooperator equals one voice. A cooperator's power within the company is unaffected by the type of share he owns, or the amount. This democracy and limited gains on capital allow the capital to remain a means to the continuation of the activity, and not a goal.

i. Share structure

The company statutes distinguish five types of shares, lettered from A to E. "A" shareholders are at a number of four, which is now aimed to increase. Those shares are historically reserved for the co-founders, but are currently opening to those who will carry the activity of the firm in the long term.

"B" shares are reserved for any employee of the firm, who has been working in the firm for a minimum of six months, including employees working for Urbike through Smart. The price of those shares is reduced compared to the others, in order to increase their accessibility towards employees.

"C" shares are aimed at partners, such as clients or suppliers. Among suppliers, Smart is a cooperator through this kind of share. Among clients, Carodec is a cooperator alongside some other small businesses.

"D" shares are for sympathisers. As can be observed on the figure below, those represent about ninety-five percent of the shares, and reunites citizens. Those shares have been labelled "finance solidaire", a label guarantying the financing of activities with social or environmental output. Those shareholders benefit from the mechanism of tax shelter, an incentive meant to encourage individuals to invest in SMEs. In terms of expectations on

investment, one challenge the company faced was to manage expectations individuals inherited from the traditional model of investment, notably in terms of time. The first

While “D” shareholders are directly investing in the company, they could be part of investment institutions, thereby indirectly finance the company, which brings us to “E” shares. Those are reserved for institutional shareholders, such as Invest Brussels, Citizen Fund or the Foundation for Future Generations. As intermediaries, their expectations are traditionally more challenging to manage, as the intermediary has to pay itself as well. However, institutions that have invested in Urbike know from the outset that the monetary spin-offs will be small. Institutions are limited to a maximum of 6% of dividends, and cannot benefit from the Tax Shelter mechanism. Their investment is therefore based on a will to make an impact.

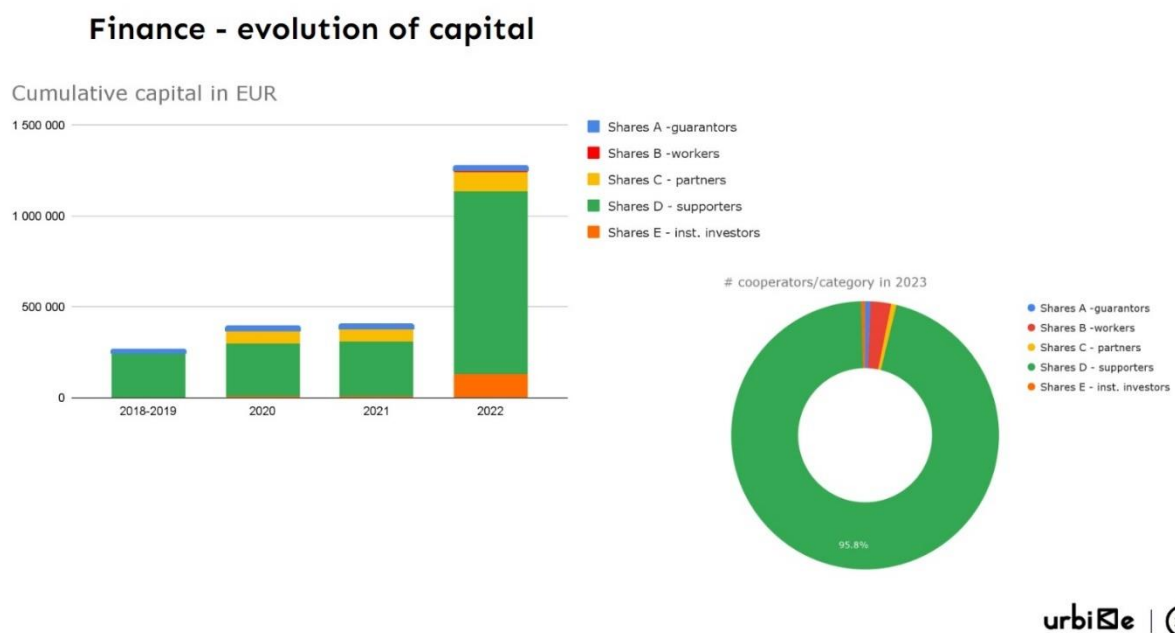


Figure 3 – Evolution of the breakdown of the contributions to Urbike’s capital by type of share, from 2018 to 2023. Information provided by the company.

Urbike works with two banks, Triodos and KBC Brussels. The first was selected in an idea of coherence with the culture of the company. The second allowed functionalities that Triodos didn’t allow back when there were needed, such as compatibility between the firm’s ERP and its accounting system.

Urbike might be growing, but it keeps a start-up mindset. In regards with risk management, it means that a small tremor can take on a big magnitude. In its financing, it translates as constantly watching over the balance between cash and profitability, and sensitive ratios.

However, Philippe mentioned that what the company considers as its best barrier against financial risk is to have a person from the “financial world” as the head of its administrative committee.

1.1.3. Suppliers

Urbike has a variety of suppliers, from service suppliers to trailers, bikes, or equipment used by couriers. Its supplier selection process is imprinted with the core values of the company, therefore some criteria are the local factor, the human resource management, and the quality and reparability of products.

As mentioned, Fleximodal is the supplier of trailers and their compatible modules. This supplier is located in France, where it produces the equipment with local partners as much as possible. To manage its impact due to transportation with Fleximodal, deliveries are consolidated, never express, and trucks are optimized. For textile equipment, Patagonia, a BCorp and FairTrade certified company, is a main supplier. For services, Urbike works with the cooperative Smart for autonomous couriers, and the cooperative Exaris for student and interim workers. Aside from that, the company also has smaller suppliers such as Nars, a courier which supplies its service. In terms of equipment for the offices, Urbike resorts to second-hand in order to diminish costs as well as lower the impact on the environment.

1.1.4. Employees

Social justice is one of the core aims of the firm. Urbike seeks to tackle the phenomenon of uberisation that grows with the platform economy. Consequences of this are the profession becoming precarious, people working as freelance with no security. In that regard, Urbike, alongside other organisations, has created training to the job of bike courier. Salaried employment is the best solution for a courier, and would be Urbike’s choice if it could afford it. However, the firm operates in a market with flexible demand, therefore it needs certain flexibility.

Through working with Smart, the company ensures that its independent employees are protected and defended. Schedules are ideally provided one month beforehand to allow those employees to manage other jobs they would have. While it isn’t compulsory, Smart employees are paid the same as salaried employees. Indeed, even though the parity commission is set for logistics, when employing people through Smart, you may choose the

parity commission you use, potentially less advantageous to couriers. Moreover, while the company could work with other interim providers, they have chosen to work through the cooperative Exaris, a “social” interim agency coaching jobseekers without qualifications.

Salary disparity is limited by article fifty-three of the statutes of the firm, respecting the principle of moderate wage pressure. In terms of employee well-being, it must be said that Urbike has very little employee turnover.

Urbike collects unsold food for their clients every Monday, which they get to share. Fruit baskets are bought, and soup is bought or made with unsold items in winter. In terms of mobility, it is common measure for everyone to come biking to work.

Employees in the firm have access to meaningful decision power as they can become its cooperators. Philippe has mentioned that an ambition for the future of the firm is for it to truly be managed by its employees, by the couriers. This process carries challenges and can be slow. It takes efforts to stray away from a hierarchical system to one of self-management. Nonetheless, the company has used external help to engage on that road and is internally continuously evolving toward that model.

1.1.5. Clients

The company aims to build longtime partnerships with its clients, which requires transparency and trust. Clients become so if their flows are feasible, and remain so if a good relationship can be built. Clients, as employees, get attached to this relationship in a way that dissuades them from breaking up the partnership for as little as a lower price, for example. As an example, at the moment of the interview, Philippe disclosed considering the end of a partnership with a client because trust was missing from their relationship. Such relationships are detrimental to everyone, clients as well as employees.

Prices are openly disclosed, and clients are handled equally. However, there are individual preferences toward small independents who fit the values spread with Urbike better than big firms do. However, inspiring big firms to change their process is also important to Urbike.

Ideally, clients would be cooperators. This would allow them to gain access to retributions, typical of cooperatives. At the moment, all Urbike does for clients is to rework to lower prices if the company can earn well and enough on a client.

1.1.6. Culture, impact and community

Urbike wants to generate change. In its activity, the organisation cooperates with many firms and public institutions. The training for the job of courier were created namely with employment institutions for example. This training are one of the ways for Urbike to communicate their values and give for the common good. The company also works with other actors of the industry, such as Urbeez, or in the past such as Molenbike, GO₂, or Hush Rush. It also has collaborated with “la Fédération des coursiers à vélo” as well as “la maison du coursier”, to work on the recognition of the job of bike courier, as a company as well as individuals from the staff. As a firm that wants to encourage change, Urbike also supports demonstrations such as the Critical Mass, which it lends material to, encourages participation among all workers, or even hosted as the last step of the protest this year.

In terms of education, the company frequently participates in event linked with the social Economy, and the Shifting Economy, it collaborates with students at least once a week. Philippe, the CEO, is a member of an entrepreneur network reuniting about 30 members, and communicates about Urbike’s ways to those leaders of big firms, leaving space for reflection.

In regards to its impacts, Urbike collaborated with Tapio to evaluate them. Their evaluation is publicly available.

1.2. Urbeez

Urbeez is a limited liability company, founded in May 2020, in the heat of the Covid crisis, with the ambition to become the first green urban logistics society in Europe. The company is based on three principles ; the exclusive use of electric vehicles, exclusively working through salaried employment and using a strategy of local services and micro-fulfilment. The objective of the company isn’t to be against e-commerce but to show that it is feasible ecologically, as Angelino mentioned.

It started its activity in Brussels. The capital and its constraints in terms of traffic or road conditions are an ideal training ground for preparing a replicable logistics solution much so that through raising two and a half millions euro from investors specialized in logistics, the company quickly expanded its activities. It has since then spread to Gent and Antwerpen, and Paris. Since its acquisition by PPP, it’s also active in Vaasa, in Finland.

1.2.1. Services

UrbeeZ's fleet of electric vehicles consists mainly of cargo bikes but also includes scooters, small motorbikes and electric vans. The company puts many types of vehicles to the trial of carbon-free delivery in its activity. The best investment the company can make is in vehicles with a high reparability rate. The more a vehicle last in time, the more value the company creates.

In terms of deliveries, UrbeeZ offers them for food or packages, for micro-mobility devices, an example of which being e-scooter management, as well as dedicated and branded deliveries. Aside from that, the firm also offers micro-fulfilment, meaning stock management in strategic places to render a more efficient and fast delivery process.

The customer shapes the service. The company remains flexible towards the demands of its clients. However, one of the main objectives of the company is to remain simple, in Angelino's words. That means, simple for all stakeholder; clients get a turnkey solution and a transparent price. Once they decide to work with the company, clients have little to no more thinking to do for themselves in terms of the delivery process.

1.2.2. Ownership structure and financial resources

At first, UrbeeZ was owned by two founders and shareholders. Angelino and an investor, who decided to leave the project. Angelino Capretti is the Managing Director of UrbeeZ. In 2023, UrbeeZ was acquired by PPP, Europe's leading specialist in the daily distribution of newspapers, previously a client of UrbeeZ. The idea for PPP is to work toward their goal of making newspaper delivery as carbon-neutral as possible. Since the acquisition of the company in 2023, he has shared the ownership with the CEO of PPP, Michel d'Alessandro.

While shareholding allowed the company to launch itself, nowadays it is financed through bank credits. Compared to shareholding, this allows the company to keep administration simple by having fewer reporting obligations. The financial partners chosen by the company are based on their size, and their renown. In that regard, it works with BNP Paribas as a bank, and BDO for financial services.

The company has put many vehicles on the trial of carbon-free delivery. In terms of investment, the best the company can make is in itself, in vehicles with a high reparability rate. The more a vehicle lasts in time, the more value the company creates.

1.2.3. Suppliers

Urbeez's suppliers are mainly its vehicle suppliers. It gets very little equipment shipped since it does not equip the staff a lot, except for reflective waistcoats, or some phones. All the material the firm gets shipped originates from Europe, except for spare pieces for bikes, which mostly come from China. Working with suppliers in Europe, where the products are assembled and finished, is a main criteria for Urbeez, both for the environment, and the quality of the product, and thereby its reparability.

The company always avoids unnecessary transport and over-packing from its suppliers. If large pieces have to be supplied, the final assembly is done at home, for more efficient truck transportation. This positively impacts both the transportation costs and the environment. Aside from this, the criteria employed are compliance with European standards.

Urbeez keeps very simple relationship with its suppliers and always knows who it's dealing with. For supplies assembled in Europe, the firm provides deposits and completes the payment at completion. All suppliers are paid at delivery, without any delay of payment. They never had to face financial risks such as non-delivery of pre-paid goods.

1.2.4. Employees

Urbeez accounts for about sixty salaried employees in the BCR. The commitment toward salaried employment only has been one of the pillars of the company since its creation, which provides security to the employee, avoiding spreading the precarious status of self-employed couriers. Urbeez is constantly recruiting, and does not discriminate, it remains open to all profiles. Some profiles integrate the company with experience in the field, some others don't have any. In collaboration with UNAGO, the company rehabilitates former prisoners. The latter are trained for the job to the use of bikes, or other vehicles, and employed by the company.

In terms of working arrangements for the employees, they aren't subject to an obligation to work or imposed working days. Everyone declares their availabilities per week, and a planning is then made, with efforts to ensure the fairest possible distribution. Employees also get to accept the missions they've been attributed, nothing is forced upon them.

Employees benefit from fair and equal working conditions. They are paid by the hour, and are free of objectives of time or performance. Urbeez is known as a pleasant place to work and knows great fidelity from its collaborators, which builds a stable team, a valuable asset. What

is most important to the company is that everyone manages to get along, that there's a real sense of camaraderie, and that people help each other out when problems occur. The company highly values the team spirit among its employees. If a profile becomes problematic in that sense, the decision to end the collaboration is up to the managers.

On a day-to-day basis, employees mostly spend their day outdoors. They load their vehicles, then leave for their delivery rounds and handle their tasks autonomously, with a compulsory break.

In terms of decision-making process, it is rather pyramid-shaped. There are the 2 associates, under them are the operational managers, allocating tasks and duties, then there are the workers making deliveries. However, maintaining a fluid flow of information is very important for the firm. As an example, the decision process when evaluating a new vehicle requires involvement from different employees. The mechanics department gives their opinion on the reparability rate, and the operations department gives their opinion on the use of the vehicle, on its advantages and disadvantages. The final decisions, based on the feedback, is in the hands of the managing partners. When facing problems in day-to-day activities, employees can decide for solutions themselves. If the problem is a recurring one or is of great magnitude, they can refer to higher management.

1.2.5. Clients

Urbeez decides on a potential client based mainly on the criteria of feasibility. It has an offer aimed to fit all retail businesses. The organisation has been able to capture major flows, it is the only one to provide bike deliveries for Amazon in Belgium. Its customer base also includes IKEA, or Colruyt Group. Dott or Felyx are clients of the firm for its micromobility service. The firm “Bière de quartier” is a client of the micro-fulfilment offer.

Every client knows the rates charged. Major customers like Uber or Amazon have very specific processes. When it comes to Urbeez's processes, the price is the same for everyone, and so are the ways of working. Urbeez want to offer an all-in-one price, without hidden costs. It offers quality with a very available and present client service, it focuses its efforts on client satisfaction. For the client, it means he can just pay the price and offload himself from his delivery process.

1.2.6. Culture, impact and community

In terms of company culture, the activity of the firm gives a good basis of values. All employees come to work either walking, biking, or through common transportation thanks to the advantageous location of the offices. The minimal goal for the firm is that regard is to allow everyone to not come by car. Aside from that, the company never built any electrical station themselves and use existing buildings.

Urbeez cooperates with other companies in the industry, Urbike being one of them. For example, they pass on customers or prospects. Two big projects are passed on to Urbeez, too small or specific ones to Urbike. Aside from that, it's also a member of a networking community called B12.

In terms of impact, Urbeez does not assess their impacts. However, they are more than willing to collaborate with several universities, including the VUB and UCL. The company is all for fruitful exchanges and transparency. It is in line with proving how doable the solution is, even worldwide. In March 2024, it participated in the Impact Mission 2024 in New York.

In terms of involvement, Angelino believes there's a company for everything, and their goal is to prove city centre last-mile deliveries can be done 100% electrically. However, the company also involves itself through charity investments, committing to one charity investment a year. Urbeez is indeed a shareholder of "Team for the Planet". The latter is an organisation aiming to finance open-source innovations throughout the World. Investing in that organisation will bring no financial dividends on shares, but it will reward shareholders with what is called "Climate dividends", representing the amount of greenhouse gases not emitted or sequestered through the investment. This year, the company invested in Oxfam.

Finally, the firm has, along with other colleagues of the sector, signed the "Green Deal Logistique Urbaine" charter, to evolve toward low-carbon logistics in Brussels. It is also a member of the Belgian Cycle logistics federation, as mixed carriers. One of its tasks in that regard is to communicate about the successful implementation of innovative practices through case studies.

Part V : Discussions of results and conclusions

First of all, conclusions taken from this analysis have to be done so in light of the limitations that follow this part.

Urbike and Urbeez are companies which, through their logistics activity in the BCR cover a very similar sector, even if Urbeez has a fleet which is hundred percent electric, but not solely composed of bikes, which allows it to capture some customers different from those that Urbike can capture. The main difference between these companies is not only the way they're organised. Urbike is a cooperative society with a social purpose, whereas Urbeez is a limited liability company. Using the quick test of the common good matrix on both and discussing and comparing the results therefore can provide an idea of the influence of the structure of the firm.

Based on the test and the information-gathering method used, Urbeez was awarded a score of 37. Urbike came out of the quicktest with a score of 76. Although these scores need to be qualified by their limitations, such a difference is nonetheless interpretable.

Firstly, it should be noted that none of the companies has risky behaviours, and therefore a negative score, for any of the cells in the matrix. Moreover, both firms are at least in a zero-impact scenario through their activity.

Secondly, for a number of boxes, Urbeez adheres to the legal bases, whereas Urbike goes beyond them in all cases. At Urbike, the very purpose of the company, its value system, goes beyond the activity of cyclologistics. Alongside the aim of spreading this efficient and sustainable logistics solution, Urbike's aim is to spread an organisational model that is fair and humane.

The areas that cost Urbeez the most points in terms of contribution are the ownership and financing of the company, the B areas, and the company's suppliers, the A areas. For the latter, Urbike uses labels as an incentive to push the reflection quite deeply, it questioned even the cleaning products used by their cleaning service suppliers. In comparison, Urbeez sought to guarantee a "made in Europe" provenance, and quality. These criteria are important to analyse when choosing a supplier, but remain insufficient to obtain higher scores in terms of contribution.

In Urbike's evaluation, all the values expressed concerning the company's owners and financial services, i.e. all the B boxes, received an exemplary assessment based on the answers given to the questions. Aspects that are inherent to Urbike are being assessed, for example, when it comes to the distribution of dividends, or the ownership. On the basis of its responses and its organisational structure, Urbeez has lost many point in the section, solely based on its ownership structure and the decision making processes in the company. Urbike is in the process of evolving toward shared governance, while it remains very pyramidal in Urbeez.

In terms of the condition of courier, Urbeez, among its 3 founding pillars, mentions very positive commitments to the common good. The company aims to achieve zero emissions while adding a social dimension through its commitment to salaried employment only, which fight uberisation alongside the training that the company does. Urbeez, due to its size, did have more ability to work toward avoiding discrimination practices, while Urbike mentioned it was too fragile to be able to take on prison rehabilitation, for example.

Generally speaking, we can see that business models allow Urbike and Urbeez to achieve rather different goals. As Angelino mentioned, it's thanks to its proximity to public institutions that Urbike has been able to act as a game changer for bike delivery, changing the rules, and paving the way. It's through this same means and its vast network that Urbike is also trying to act on the condition of the bike courier.

They also diverge in ambition, Urbeez is expanding its solution throughout Europe while Urbike remains in Belgium, which also results from the fragility of the firm, compared to Urbeez. Both wish to prove their solution, but Urbike additionally wishes to prove its model. All in all, it seems that Urbeez is very much aligned with its "zero impact" objective, while Urbike has more potential for regenerative impact. However, Urbike tends to be more fragile.

In conclusion, the cyclologistics sector is indeed one brimming with contributory potential. As hypothesized, operating with a contributory model enables Urbike to go further along the contributory spectrum, but this doesn't necessarily mean that Urbeez's potential stops at what has been evaluated here. Much of the potential for contribution is assessed through the structure of the organization. However, this does not prevent Urbeez from making a definite contribution to the common good, through specific employment policies, strong values, or impact investment.

1. Limitations

Firstly, the test itself, and the results that emerge from it, are based on what was declared during the interview, and this is the biggest weakness of this analysis. In fact, the more a cell in the matrix is evaluated by elements that can be quantified, declared and verified, the more accurate the analysis will be. The results obtained should therefore be seen as referrals. Any more precise interpretation of the results would suffer from a lack of rigour. All it would take is for someone else to ask the same questions I've asked of the same company managers to come up with different answers.

Secondly, the guidance offered by the tool may remain vague on certain questions for a company that is not familiar with the subject. As mentioned above, a company manager who is already aware of the issues may come out with a better score than a manager who is just starting to ask the questions as a contributing company. An experienced manager may be more familiar with the indicators that can be evaluated, and therefore understand more adequately when to declare them, when faced with one or other question. This is also detrimental to the inter-company comparison that can be made using the tool.

It's also worth pointing out my personal evaluation bias. My ambition with this dissertation was to adopt a critical point of view, using an established tool with solid foundations, to minimise my influence on the results, in line with my affinities.

Secondly, this analysis cannot be extrapolated to other companies adopting a model like that of Urbike or Urbeez. It can be used to get an idea of the results that can be expected from the analysis, but the analysis needs to be repeated for each company.

2. Further research

Different reflections arose throughout writing this report.

Firstly, as this analysis is not set in stone, it seems that an assessment in terms of evolution could be an interesting analysis. It could have been an interesting topic to analyse how a start-up cooperative evolves and how its potential in terms of contribution evolves with it. How contribution can be, or not, dependent on the maturity of a cooperative.

There could be added value in an analysis carried out using the Compact or Full Balance sheet provided by the CGE. The resulting analysis could provide greater precision and more interpretable quantifiable results.

Another question that arose when working on this subject was what results the analysis could give in a different sector, perhaps better suited to completing an analysis using the ECG matrix.

There could also be a lot of value in studying the impact that support from public institutions has on the firms aiming towards a regenerative economy and how it affects their longevity or the speed at which they reach goals of contribution to the common good.

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Abstract :

This paper is a comparative analysis of the potential of two companies involved in last-mile cycle logistics in the Brussels-Capital Region. The two companies being compared are Urbike, a social cooperative, and Urbeez, a limited liability company. The purpose of this comparison is to determine the influence of their legal forms on their contributive potential. They are analysed through the lens of the common goods matrix. The information was gathered through interviews with managers of these two companies and through research, making it predominantly declarative. The analysis shows that while the two companies are active in a sector with a high potential for positive impact, the cooperative analysed has a generally higher contributive potential than the limited liability company in regards to contribution to the common good. However, due to the limitations of the study, it is not possible to conclude that this is attributable to the respective legal forms of these organizations. Nevertheless, once these limitations are taken into account, this analysis highlights differences and similarities between these two companies that can be partially explained by their organizational structures, for example, in terms of collaboration with public authorities, work reintegration, or employment policies.

UNIVERSITÉ CATHOLIQUE DE LOUVAIN
Louvain School of Management

Place des Doyens, 1 bte L2.01.01, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve
Boulevard Emile Devreux 6, 6000 Charleroi, Belgique
Chaussée de Binche 151, 7000 Mons, Belgique
www.uclouvain.be/lsm