Financial Services as a "Common" Good

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Camille Meyer
France
Post-doctoral researcher at the University of Victoria, Canada*
Member of the Centre for European Research in Microfinance, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium

* The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Organization he is affiliated to.

Financial services are essential to the growth of economic activity in both developed and developing economies. However, multiple economic, social and environmental crises have recently called the functions of financial services into question in the public mind (Melé et al., 2017) and financial intermediaries are sometimes considered greedy and untrustworthy (Carucci, 2017). To promote ethics in finance, a number of citizens and practitioners have started to redirect funds into activities that aim to generate social and environmental benefits (Nicholls & Pharoah, 2008). In this article, we investigate how the growing sector of social finance can promote ethics and trust in finance. To this end, we explore whether social finance can be considered as a common good and promote personal and collective wealth.

The concept of the commons is increasingly debated in the academic literature examining social finance (Hudon & Meyer, 2016; Meyer & Hudon, 2017; Paranque, 2016; Périlleux & Nyssens, 2017; Servet, 2013, 2015). The commons refers to collective ways of organizing economic activities according to shared values and ethical principles (Bollier & Helfrich, 2014). This concept is closely tied to the notion of the common good, and these two words share the same etymological roots in the Latin word *communis*, meaning "common" and "which belongs to several or all". The concept of 'commons' can shed new light on finance in that it understands financial organizations as communities of people who share similar beliefs and purposes. It can also be instructive through its openness to new forms

La notion de communs se réfère à des façons collectives d'organiser les activités économiques d'après des valeurs partagées et des principes éthiques. Ce concept est étroitement lié à la notion du bien commun, le terme commun provient du mot latin communis, qui signifie « commun » et « qui appartient à plusieurs ou à tous ». Par conséquent, cette notion peut apporter un nouvel éclairage sur la finance en considérant les organisations financières comme des communautés de personnes partageant des croyances et des buts semblables. Dans cet article, nous examinerons si la finance sociale peut être considérée comme un bien commun pour promouvoir la richesse personnelle et collective. Nous utiliserons trois traditions académiques et tendances de recherche dans la littérature en économie et en gestion : 1) l'économie institutionnelle, 2) les études sur les organisations à but non lucratif, et l'éthique des affaires.

of governance, which are more participatory and inclusive.

To investigate the extent to which social finance can be understood as commons, we use three academic traditions and research trends in the economics and management literature: 1) institutional economics (e.g. Ostrom, 1990, 2010), 2) nonprofit and organization studies (e.g. Bushouse et al., 2016; Lohmann, 2016) and 3) business ethics (e.g. Akrivou & Sison, 2016; Argandoña, 1998; Melé, 2009, 2012). Each of these traditions has investigated commons from a particular approach, whether focusing on the shared resources, the management and governance mechanisms, or ethics and responsibility. Our investigation of finance as commons is based on multiple examples of social finance services, namely responsible investment, stakeholders' banks, community microfinance, and complementary currencies.

This article proceeds as follows. First, we present some characteristics of social finance. Second, we develop three approaches to and theoretical perspectives of the commons, in particular with regard to studies in institutional economics, nonprofit and organization, and business ethics literature. Third, we investigate the extent to which social finance can be considered as commons and promote the common good. Fourth, we summarize our findings and establish how social finance can promote ethics and trust in finance.

The rise of social finance

Social finance is an emerging phenomenon of interest to investors, policy-makers, social entrepreneurs and citizens (Benedikter, 2011; Lehner, 2016). Social finance refers to the deployment of financial resources for primarily social and environmental returns. It is a broad and heterogeneous field that covers a wide range of instruments and practices, such as *socially responsible investment* (Louche et al., 2012), *social banking* (Cornée & Szafarz, 2014), microfinance (Armendáriz & Labie, 2011; Hudon & Sandberg, 2013), and complementary currencies (Seyfang & Longhurst, 2013).

The demand for social finance is increasing worldwide. In the United States, the **Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment identified that the sector had** $8.72 trillion professionally managed in assets in 2016 – which represents a 33 percent increase since 2014 (US SIF, 2016). This growing trend is also seen in Europe. Eurosif, the association for European Sustainable and Responsible Investment, identified about 21 trillion euros in responsible investment assets under management in 13 European countries in 2015 (Eurosif, 2016: 56). In Europe, such assets grew by 25% from 2013 to 2015 indicating an increasing market for social finance.

More broadly, this sector raises questions about the nature of financial

La finance sociale se réfère au déploiement de ressources financières pour des bénéfices principalement sociaux et environnementaux. Il s'agit d'un champ large et hétérogène qui couvre un large éventail d'instruments et de pratiques, tels que l'investissement socialement responsable, la banque sociale, la micro finance, et les monnaies complémentaires. De plus, ce secteur soulève des questions sur la nature des services financiers dans les sociétés modernes. La finance sociale représente quelque chose de nouveau dans la société : une aspiration individuelle et collective pour changer le rôle de la finance en faveur de l'intérêt collectif.

services in modern societies. As highlighted by Nicholls and Pharoah (2008) social finance "is about more than just the flow of money into social or environmental projects. It is an ethos about the way money is used […]. So, social investment can be seen as the discourse around such flows that is developing in concrete terms in the new institutions of supply, intermediation and demand" (Nicholls & Pharoah, 2008: 11). Hence, social finance is part of a broader philosophical debate about the role of money in our economies and the ethos it conveys. From this perspective, it echoes the long ethical and theological traditions of condemning greed, speculation and usury (e.g. Aquinas, 1981; Aristotle, 1925). In this philosophical tradition, the pursuit of wealth accumulation as an end and not a means is considered as leading us astray from virtue and the social nature of humans.

As that suggests, social finance conveys certain ethical perspectives toward finance and its relationship with society. Social finance acts as a driver for economic change, particularly when developed by grassroots actors involved in "new social economic movements" (Gendron et al., 2009). *Several* bottom-up initiatives are spreading worldwide to (re)take control of the financial and banking system in order to promote economic stability, community development and financial inclusion (Lietaer et al., 2012). These social actors often aim to build another financial system, one more embedded into local realities and responsive to needs that are not met by purely commercial actors. These grassroots experiments often rely on collective decision-making to decide which activities to finance, while promoting new social ties and sociability among users and investors (Cornée & Szafarz, 2014; Hudon & Meyer, 2016).

All the above arguments show that social finance is a promising and expanding phenomenon. In a context of financial crisis (Sun et al., 2011), it represents something new in society: an individual and collective aspiration to change the role of finance in the collective interest.

The commons and the Common Good

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'- On care for our common home*, Pope Francis (Francis, 2015) highlights the interdependence between ecology, society and the economy. Considering poverty, social inequalities and environmental degradation – from climate change, to the overexploitation of fishing resources and loss of biodiversity – Pope Francis calls for a deep change in the economic system and the adoption of a responsible long-term perspective. From this point of view, individuals and organizations are responsible for their actions and inactions with regard to the environment and social degradation. The preservation of "our common home" therefore requires an economy

Le pape François appelle à changer profondément le système économique et à adopter une perspective responsable de long terme. À cet égard, les individus et les organisations sont responsables de leur action et inaction en ce qui concerne la dégradation environnementale et sociétale. La préservation de « notre maison commune » nécessite une économie qui soit plus inclusive et qui prenne soin en même temps des êtres humains et de la nature. Dans cette ligne, les acteurs économiques devraient suivre des principes éthiques dans le but d'atteindre le bien collectif et individuel. Le concept de communs convient pour établir l'interdépendance entre la société et l'économie. En effet, les communs sont de plus en plus fréquemment développés par la société civile pour résoudre des problèmes socio-économiques à travers une organisation collective.

that is more inclusive and caring, both of human beings and nature. To this end, economic actors should follow ethical principles targeting both collective and individual good (Frémeaux & Michelson, 2017; Melé, 2009).

The concept of commons is sufficient to establish the interdependence between society and the economy. Indeed, commons are increasingly developed by civil society to resolve socio-economic problems through collective organizing (Bollier & Helfrich, 2014). Social movements use the term 'commons' to qualify new organizations with the objective of promoting both personal and community interest (Dardot & Laval, 2014). The academic literature proposes various interpretations and definitions of the commons. In this section, we present three main theoretical approaches to the commons in the economics and management literature.

Commons as accessible and shared resources

The understanding of commons was confined for many years to common goods, or common-pool resources (CPRs). In institutional economics, CPRs are resources that are subtractable through use (consumption by one user decreases the amount of the resource available for others) and non-excludable (excluding someone from having access to the resource is difficult and costly). These two characteristics vary in terms of degree, from high to low. These characteristics incentivized commons scholars to focus on natural CPRs (Ostrom, 1990, 2010), such as fisheries, groundwater and irrigation systems, communal land and the climate. Because of their characteristics of subtractability and non-excludability, CPRs could presumably be overexploited, as individuals would tend to maximize their own appropriation of the resource. This is the so-called "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin, 1968), where users of a shared resource are guided by their own interest and unable to cooperate.

However, the pioneering work of Elinor Ostrom revealed that the tragedy of the commons is avoidable. Ostrom's seminal work *Governing the Commons* (Ostrom, 1990) shows many examples of CPRs that were collectively managed by communities, without requiring public intervention or privatization of resources. Communities can self-organize and develop adequate institutional arrangements to ensure the sustainable use of CPRs for long-term periods. These institutions rely on strong social ties and cooperation among users. Users self-govern and monitor their behavior to avoid overexploiting the resources. Ostrom's work shows that shared resources can be preserved and remain accessible if users set up effective institutions. This analysis of collective governance has been used for multiple settings (Lohmann, 2016), including community finance (Hudon & Meyer, 2016).

La compréhension de ces biens a été confinée durant de nombreuses années aux ressources communes. L'ouvrage précurseur d'Ostrom « Governing the Commons » (Ostrom, 1990) donne de nombreux exemples de ressources communes qui étaient collectivement gérées par des communautés, sans intervention publique ni privatisation des ressources. Les communautés peuvent s'auto organiser et développer des arrangements institutionnels adéquats afin d'assurer une utilisation durable du ressources communes pour des périodes de long terme. Ces institutions reposent sur de forts liens sociaux et la coopération parmi les utilisateurs : les utilisateurs auto-dirigent et contrôlent leur comportement pour ne pas surexploiter les ressources. Ostrom montre que les ressources partagées peuvent être préservées et demeurent accessibles si les utilisateurs mettent en place des institutions efficaces. Cette analyse de gouvernance collective peut être utilisée dans de multiples contextes, y compris la finance.

Collective action in commons

Building on Ostrom's theory of the commons, several nonprofit and organizational scholars have analyzed how non-natural commons could be established (Bushouse et al., 2016; Coriat, 2015). Therefore, the understanding of commons evolved from an "essentialist approach" (Périlleux & Nyssens, 2017), defining commons by their intrinsic nature and the characteristics of CPRs, to a "constructivist approach", based on the idea that commons are socially constructed through practices and cognition (Dardot & Laval, 2014).

Hence, commons can potentially emerge from resources that are shared and collectively managed. This is known as 'commoning' (Meyer & Hudon, 2017). Commoning is a widespread practice in self-managed organizations, and in projects where users co-produce rights and duties linked to a shared resource (Coriat, 2015). Examples of commoning include transition towns, collaborative consumption of food, and complementary currencies (Bollier & Helfrich, 2014; Meyer & Hudon, 2017).

From this we can conclude that commons are created through the voluntary association of people sharing common purposes and values (Lohmann, 2016). Based on the principle of self-management and autonomy (Bushouse et al., 2016), commons are embedded in territorial contexts as users decide how to share and manage these resources for common objectives. These commons therefore both rely on, and strengthen, social relationships at local scale, whilst fostering a shared social identity enabling users to cooperate and act collectively (Bollier & Helfrich, 2014).

The common good of communities and society

Commons are developed by, and provide support to, communities. Commons organizations, like other organizations, are "communit[ies] of persons" (Melé, 2012) in which people meet to achieve common objectives (Gomez & Jones, 2000). However, commons organizations usually go beyond the sole interest of their members and also engage in the interest of society (Nyssens & Petrella, 2015).

Hence, commons organizations follow the common good principle with the objective of contributing to the collective interest (O'Brien, 2009; Sison & Fontrodona, 2012). The common good principle is particularly present in the social teaching tradition of the Catholic church (e.g. Conférence des Evêques de France, 2014), which aims to foster social justice, responsibility and fraternity in modern societies. In this contect, the common good is the philosophical principle that "entails cooperation to promote conditions that enhance the opportunity for the human flourishing of all people within a community" (Melé, 2009: 227). It refers to the inherent tendency of human beings to associate, collaborate and socialize in order to achieve common objectives (Aristotle, 1925).

The common good principle is also attached to the personalist philosophical approach, which holds respect for human dignity and individual rights sacred (Melé, 2012). It assumes that societies should provide conditions that foster humans' flourishing through the achievement of their personal goals. Individual flourishing is crucial for collective well-being since the

Plusieurs chercheurs et experts de la société civile ont analysé comment des biens communs non naturels pouvaient être établis. Ainsi, ils peuvent potentiellement provenir de ressources qui sont partagées et gérées collectivement : ceci s'appelle le « faire en commun ». Il s'agit d'une pratique largement répandue dans les organisations autogérées, et dans les projets où les utilisateurs coproduisent des droits et des obligations liés à une ressource partagée. Les biens communs sont créés à travers l'association volontaire de personnes partageant des buts et des valeurs communs. Ils reposent donc sur et renforcent les relations sociales au niveau local, tout en favorisant une identité sociale partagée qui permet aux utilisateurs de coopérer et d'agir collectivement.

Table 1: Definition and characteristics of the different concepts linked to the commons

Concept and Terminology	Definition and Characteristics
Common goods	We define common goods as the resources characterized by intrinsic dimensions of subtractability of use and non-excludability of access. As such, these goods are synonymous with common-pool resources, or traditional commons. Examples of common goods are environmental resources that are open-access and deplete with consumption. This approach to common goods is used mainly in institutional economics and environmental science.
Commons	Commons can be considered as shared resources that are collectively managed by a group of users who design and implement the rules for their provision, allocation, withdrawal, control and monitoring. Commons are therefore not defined by the internal characteristics of their resources but by collective organization that institutionalizes them as commons. Examples of commons are digital and informational commons, or urban commons. This concept of commons is increasingly present in nonprofit studies, organization theory, and computer science
Common Good	The common good is a philosophical principle guiding individual and collective action to contribute to the wellbeing of society. Taking into account the collective dimensions of individuals in societies, there are multiple meanings, since the common good will depend on collective-choice and virtue behavior. According to this idea, individual and collective action should not be undertaken if it destroys others' wellbeing. This concept is mainly present in business ethics, philosophy and theology.

Les organisations de biens communs suivent le principe du bien commun avec l'objectif de contribuer à l'intérêt collectif. Le principe du bien commun est particulièrement présent dans la tradition de l'enseignement social de l'Eglise catholique qui vise à favoriser la justice sociale, la responsabilité et la fraternité dans les sociétés modernes. Le bien commun est considéré comme le principe philosophique qui « entraîne la coopération afin de favoriser des conditions pour augmenter le bien-être humain de toutes les personnes à l'intérieur d'une communauté » (Melé, 2009: 227). On se réfère à la disposition des êtres humains de pouvoir s'associer, collaborer et socialiser afin de réaliser des objectifs communs. Le bien commun suppose que les sociétés devraient fournir des conditions qui favorisent l'épanouissement humain à travers l'accomplissement de leurs objectifs personnels.

fulfilment of society both results from and contributes to individual welfare (Frémeaux & Michelson, 2017).

For the sake of clarity, Table 1 presents a summary of these three meanings of the commons and their respective scholarly disciplines.

Social finance and the commons

In this section, we investigate the extent to which social finance can be considered as commons, however these are understood. Our analytical framework relies on the three approaches of the commons described in the above section: 1) commons as accessible resources, 2) commons organized collectively, and 3) commons promoting the common good.

Finance as private or common goods?

Commons were historically attached to natural common-pool resources meeting the two characteristics of subtractability and non-excludability (Ostrom, 1990). However, finance can instinctively be considered as a private good as it is easy to prevent people from having access to financial services and the amount of money used by one person is not available for other users. By way of illustration, credit is a substractable good, in the sense that the consumption of credit diminishes the total amount available for others. Also, as billions of individuals do not have access to financial services, these services are not easily accessible and exclusion is prevalent (Demirgüç–Kunt et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, several microfinance organizations aim to promote financial inclusion. In these cases, access is facilitated and contributes to less "excludability" of these resources. For example, in their analysis of a community bank in Brazil, Hudon and Meyer (2016) show that collective and participatory governance can make financial services more "commons-like" and accessible. The authors argue that organizational form and corporate governance affect the nature of the financial services provided. In this case, microfinance community banks include multiple community stakeholders in strategic decision-making. These stakeholders have the tendency to use the microfinance organization to promote local development and financial inclusion. Therefore, they tend to promote inclusive financial programs, ask for limited – if any – collateral and to lend to community members registered with the credit bureau.

Other types of social finance services can be driven by economic inclusion aims. This is, for example, the case with complementary currencies (Lietaer et al., 2012). These monetary systems are developed by local nonprofits and business networks with the objective of promoting supplementary means of exchange to businesses, La gouvernance collective et participative peut rendre les services financiers plus similaires aux biens communs et accessibles. Par exemple, les banques communautaires de micro finance au Brésil incluent dans la prise de décision stratégique de multiples parties prenantes communautaires. Ces parties prenantes ont tendance à utiliser l'organisation de micro finance pour promouvoir le développement local et l'inclusion financière. Des monnaies complémentaires peuvent aussi être centrées sur le but de l'inclusion économique des organisations et les gens qui sont traditionnellement exclus des systèmes monétaires officiels. Ces monnaies doivent aussi permettre de promouvoir une nouvelle sociabilité dans le commerce et les échanges sociaux.

Les organisations qui promeuvent la participation des parties prenantes dans la gestion stratégique et opérationnelle mettent

organizations, and people who are traditionally excluded from official monetary systems (Seyfang & Longhurst, 2013). There is a broad diversity in these systems. Some are used in barter markets, whereas others are shaped as local currencies to promote consumption on a local scale. Well-known examples of complementary currencies are time banks, which are used to exchange services and goods in neighborhoods. For example, people can exchange one hour of piano or language lesson for bike repairing or gardening. These currencies are usually based on reciprocity with the objective of building social ties and promoting social inclusion (Servet, 2013, 2015). They also convey a strong symbolic power as they value territories and local identity (Blanc & Fare, 2016).

A substantial number of these currencies emerged and were used during financial and economic crises. In these cases, citizens started to use these currencies to access goods and services they could not acquire with official currencies. Several inclusion mechanisms are implemented in these monetary systems, such as free access to credit and no demands for previous acquisition of capital or the provision of collateral. These currencies also have the objective to promote a new sociability in trade and social exchange (Meyer & Hudon, 2017).

Stakeholder participation in financial organizations

Both community banks and complementary currencies rely on the participation of multiple local stakeholders – such as customers, staff members, community leaders and representatives of local nonprofits and government – in their governance and management. As Ostrom (1990) explained, the efficient management of natural commons relies on the establishment of rules that are collectively defined, produced and respected. In a similar vein, financial commons could emerge from collective action. Financial commons could refer to the resources that are shared and regulated by institutional arrangement co-established by stakeholders (Nyssens & Petrella, 2015).

Based on this approach, organizations promoting stakeholder participation in strategy and operational management are potentially commons organizations. Co-governance of resources is particularly present in grassroots social finance organizations, such as community banks and complementary currencies, but also in more established organizations, such as stakeholder banks. Stakeholder banks, also known as social banks (Cornée & Szafarz, 2014), are financial institutions promoting both social and financial objectives. They are distinct from

en place potentiellement une logique de biens communs.
La co-gouvernance des ressources est particulièrement présente dans les organisations de finance sociale locale, telles que les banques communautaires et les monnaies complémentaires, mais également dans les organisations mieux établies telles que les banques coopératives.
Les banques sociale sont des institutions financières qui promeuvent des objectifs à la fois sociaux et financiers. Elles se distinguent des banques commerciales traditionnelles car elles veulent promouvoir de la valeur pas seulement pour les actionnaires, mais aussi pour toutes les autres parties prenantes, telles que les employés, les clients et les communautés. La structure organisationnelle de ces banques favorise une orientation sociale plus forte : les banques communautaires et sociales ont une plus grande propension à promouvoir l'inclusion financière et elles ont un impact positif sur le développement économique local.

traditional commercial banks in the sense that they aim to promote value not only to shareholders but also to other stakeholders, such as employees, clients and communities.

Stakeholder participation can take different forms. For example, cooperative banks are owned and controlled by members on the basis of 'one member, one vote' and community banks have community representation on their boards of directors. Nonetheless, participation is not systematic and not easy to organize. Many social banks do not have a participatory governance structure and sometimes larger cooperatives do not use the 'one member, one vote' feature even if they have it.

However, studies investigating stakeholder participation have shown that the organizational structure of these banks favors a stronger social orientation: community and social banks have a greater tendency to promote financial inclusion by dealing with customers who are underserved by commercial banks. By doing this, they have a positive impact on local economic development. According to Almandoz (2014), motivated owners and deposit holders in US community banks aim to focus first on community needs and have a smaller tendency to prioritize profits.

Likewise, Cornée, Kalmi and Szafarz (2016) showed that social banks' depositors and investors share a common social identity with borrowers as they adhere to similar sets of values. The authors argue that a common social identity engenders "reciprocity" among lenders and borrowers: funders accept the "financial sacrifice" of lending below market rate whilst borrowers show a lower probability to default (Cornée & Szafarz, 2014). These results bring to the forefront the difficulty of having both social and financial returns, since social and environmental benefits are often at the expense of financial considerations (Nicholls & Pharoah, 2008). It might be this cost that reflects the individual commitment to the collectivity: it is a personal financial sacrifice for the development of other members of the community.

Promoting the Common Good

Beyond financial inclusion and stakeholders' participation, social finance has features of commons when it promotes the common good. We base our understanding of the common good on the social teaching of the Catholic church: the common good is founded on both societal and individual development and fulfilment (e.g. Argandoña, 1998; Conférence des Evêques de France, 2014; Frémeaux & Michelson, 2017). Social finance, and particularly responsible investment, can promote the common good when using screening mechanisms to direct finance towards ethical activities for individual and collective interests (Louche et al., 2012). Responsible

La finance sociale, et en particulier l'investissement responsable, peut promouvoir le bien commun en utilisant des mécanismes de sélection afin de diriger la finance vers des activités éthiques. Les investisseurs responsables acquièrent généralement des actions d'entreprises basées sur des facteurs éthiques prenants en considération l'environnemental, le social et la gouvernance. La sélection négative consiste à éviter et à exclure l'investissement dans des entreprises qui mènent des activités qui ne sont pas conformes aux valeurs des investisseurs (pornographie, l'alcool et les arme). Au contraire, la sélection positive consiste à investir dans des entreprises ayant une forte responsabilité sociale et des impacts sociaux positifs.

investors typically acquire companies' shares based on ethical factors such as environmental, social, and governance considerations.

Negative screening consists of avoiding and excluding investment in companies that are engaged in activities considered not in conformity with investors' values. Activities in pornography, alcohol and weapons are typically screened negatively. In contrast, positive screening consists in investing in enterprises that have strong corporate social responsibility and positive social impacts. Generally, both positive and negative screenings help promote the fulfilment of human beings, and further social development and/or ecological preservation.

Environmental preservation

Banks and investment funds have an important role to play in preserving and protecting the environment. Recently, they have been urged by several social movements to massively divest from fossil energies to contain climate change. An increasing number of financial actors have agreed that it is their historical responsibility to promote the decarbonization of the economy and have started to divest from fossil fuels (e.g. Mooney, 2017; Morgan Stanley, 2016). To illustrate: the insurance company Axa decided to remove around €500m of coal investments from its portfolio (Harvey, 2015), based on the role of ethics and values in investment decisions and the reputation risk that fossil fuels represent for companies (Carrington, 2015).

Divestment from greenhouse gas emitting activities is an important and necessary step for containing and mitigating climate change. It certainly contributes to promoting ethics in finance and provides concrete examples of what responsible financial actors can do to preserve the environment. It is also worth mentioning that the preservation of the environment should not be restricted to work on climate but also embrace forest, seas, and biodiversity preservation – to name but a few (Francis, 2015). Hence, the responsibility of investors is broad and can also apply to a vast array of natural resources.

Promoting human dignity and decent work

Promoting the common good is inseparable from the promotion of individual and personal good (Frémeaux & Michelson, 2017). According to Catholic social teaching, human dignity is one of the key ethical elements involved in personal good. As work has a central role in our lives, human dignity is increasingly shaped through working conditions and decent work (Conférence des Evêques de France, 2014).

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) decent work "involves opportunities for

Récemment, les banques et les fonds d'investissement ont été pressés par plusieurs mouvements sociaux de se désengager massivement des énergies fossiles afin de freiner le changement climatique. Un nombre croissant d'acteurs financiers ont reconnu leur responsabilité historique en promouvant la décarburation de l'économie et ont commencé à se retirer des combustibles fossiles. Le désengagement des activités émettrices de gaz à effet de serre est un pas important et nécessaire afin de freiner et d'atténuer le changement climatique. Cela contribue certainement à promouvoir l'éthique en finance et fournit des exemples concrets de ce que les acteurs financiers responsables peuvent faire pour préserver l'environnement. La préservation de l'environnement ne devrait pas être réduite au climat mais devrait aussi inclure la forêt, les mers, la préservation de la biodiversité, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns.

work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men"[1].

However, decent work is a major challenge in global supply chains. This is particularly the case in the textile industry. The Rana Plaza tragedy showed that the working conditions in the textile industry remain dangerous in developing countries (Jopson et al., 2014). In 2013, a textile factory working for international clothing companies – the Rana Plaza – collapsed and killed more than 1,100 workers. This tragedy revealed the parlous working conditions of the Bangladeshi workers and fostered a debate about the responsibility of multinational corporations outsourcing to suppliers who do not respect decent work (Croft, 2016).

To prevent similar disasters, financial actors could promote decent work by financing companies who show responsibility in their supply chain management. Banks and investment funds could invest in companies promoting decent work and having a code of conduct. Since this would increase the due diligence costs of financial intermediaries, investors could refer to auditors and the multiple forums and networks promoting ethics and responsibility in finance. Such networks provide expertise for institutional investors to incorporate environmental, social and governance factors into their investment and ownership decisions. They are present in the USA (US **Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment**), Europe (Eurosif, Principles for Responsible Investment), Australia and New Zealand (Responsible Investment Association Australasia), France (Forum pour l'Investissement Responsable), and the United Kingdom (UK Sustainable Investment and Finance Association), to name but a few.

1 Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm on 23 June 2017.

Building an inclusive and responsible financial system

Financial resources, such as credit or currencies, are often considered as private goods. However, our investigation shows that some organizational mechanisms increase access to these resources, making them more inclusive and commons-like. This is particularly the case of grassroots microfinance organizations, such as community banks, and complementary currencies. Therefore, based on solidarity and inclusivity principles, social finance can promote access to financial services – a crucial aspect of social integration and a key factor in economic development and poverty alleviation (Hudon, 2009). As argued

La promotion du bien commun est inséparable de la promotion du bien individuel et personnel. Comme le travail occupe un rôle central, la dignité humaine est de plus en plus façonnée à travers les conditions de travail. Un travail décent est un défi majeur dans les chaînes d'approvisionnement globales. C'est particulièrement le cas dans l'industrie textile où les conditions de travail demeurent dangereuses dans les pays en développement. Les acteurs financiers pourraient promouvoir un travail décent en finançant des compagnies responsables de leur gestion de chaîne d'approvisionnement. Comme cela augmenterait le coût de la « due diligence » des intermédiaires financiers, les investisseurs pourraient se référer aux auditeurs et à de multiples forums et réseaux de promotion éthique et de responsabilité en finance.

by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus, access to finance offers those traditionally excluded the means to develop new economic opportunities and, therefore, is instrumental in human fulfilment (Yunus, 1999).

Corporate governance and institutional design are important in conditioning the provision of these resources. Social finance organizations, such as stakeholder banks, use several participatory mechanisms enabling clients, employees and other stakeholders to participate in strategic management. The inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making not only favors collective action in finance but also has a positive impact on the social orientation of finance. Stakeholder banks promote a sense of reciprocity and social identity among financial clients (Cornée & Szafarz, 2014; Paranque, 2016). This can be a strong factor in generating trust in banking activities, even though it has a financial cost for investors.

Finally, with a particular focus on responsible investing, we discovered that social finance can also contribute to the advancement of the common good. More precisely, we explored two possibilities for finance to have positive impacts on climate change mitigation:divesting from oil and coal industries and improving working conditions in developing countries by investing in companies that promote responsible supply chain management. Ethical considerations on environmental preservation, and the promotion of human rights and dignity, correspond to the historical responsibility investors have towards societies and communities.

Financial commons for ethics and trust in finance

The recent crises have damaged the general perception of the financial and banking sectors. Increasingly, society denounces the greed and speculation associated with these sectors and the risk they represent to economic stability (Carucci, 2017). To contain public opinion defiance, there is a need to promote ethics and trust in finance.

In this article, we have adopted the lens of the commons to explore how social finance can contribute to restoring both public trust and ethics in finance. The commons refer to conventions and interrelations in socio-economic activities. They are not only ruled by market mechanisms, but also include reciprocity and gift characteristics among financial users (Servet, 2013). This favors a new form of sociability among users, as well as transforming the relationships between collectives and individuals on one hand and finance on the other. For example, complementary currencies foster new forms of exchange and trade while simultaneously building social ties among exchangers and stakeholder banks bring a common social identity and a sense of belonging to financial intermediation (Périlleux & Nyssens, 2017).

Commons require cooperation and rely on coordination between actors. Greater participation of users in governance allows both depositors and borrowers to determine their common concerns and decide on actions to achieve their interests (Hudon & Meyer, 2016). Hence, the construction of participatory spaces in banking institutions can redefine the financial resources according to the needs expressed by users and their representatives. While financial services are the subject of international deregulation, community redefinition of finance in participatory spaces allows it to be embedded in the social, cultural and political structures of each territory.

To conclude, considering finance as commons enables to reflect on the relationship between finance and society. The commons approach conceives of economic and financial activities as essentially human activities, embedded into social relationships, values and ethical concern for the common good. Therefore, the commons propose to understand what is shared and common in human communities. Considering social finance as commons therefore advances a new project of society in which the collective interest predominates and is considered as essential for individual fulfillment. Hence, focusing on the interdependence and interconnectedness among investors and society can potentially generate a renewed perception of responsibility in the financial sector for human dignity, social justice and environmental preservation.

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