

# Measuring the nexus of the common good.



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## I. Introduction

The goal of this article is to propose a metric of the common good allowing us to measure the quality of the common good achieved at the level of a local community. It builds on the results of a previous research seminar, held in Puebla (2017) that laid the foundations for the more advanced matrix of the common good proposed in the present paper. This article is divided in three sections. The first revises several of the remarks and comments made during the first seminar. More specifically, it narrows the focus of the metric on the *nexus of the common good* and adjusts the normative dimensions proposed to measure the quality of the nexus. The second section describes the five *normative dimensions* held as constitutive of any common good's dynamic. Finally, a third and last section describes the integration of these normative elements through their reciprocal relationships, forming a *normative pentagram*. We suggest that the density and the quality of the relationships between normative elements can be taken to be the matrix of a measure of the common good achieved at the level of a local community. For only the integration and coherence of the different normative elements within the nexus can give us an accurate account 'how human' our social interactions actually are.

## First Part : Results from the first research seminar

### 1. Addressing remarks and comments

Many comments and remarks were made during the Puebla seminar. We gathered here some that we thought were the most relevant to further develop a metric of the common good.

*A. Simplicity of the metric.* Several interventions made clear that any metric should try to be as simple and elegant as possible. It is important for a metric to be easy to explain and simple to understand. Both exhaustive description and complexity are also to be avoided for the sake of a clear and non-ambiguous interpretation of the results. The proposed matrix failed both criterion. The daunting task was then for the redaction committee to select the most relevant dimensions and propose a metric that could be more easily understood and communicated without losing the strength of our theoretical approach (the nexus of the common good as resulting from an integrated set of interactions and social goods). In addition, we were also told to clarify the use we would give to the metric. The purpose served by a metric should influence the way we draft it. Was it to be a diagnostic tool? Would it rather serve to assess public policies? Or was it to become a general statistical indicator? The last was rather doubtful given the possibilities to repeat the measurements over time series.

In reaction to these remarks, the committee decided to narrow its focus on a *metric of the nexus alone*. Other measures or proxies for specific common goods as health, education or associative life already exist. What is lacking is a metric of *how specific common goods build up - along a common good dynamic - into a nexus of the common good*. The descriptive and normative dimensions of this dynamic make up our new matrix of the nexus. Moreover, the committee also tried to translate the technical vocabulary used in the first paper to a more straightforward language and we do believe that the new matrix is more elegant than the previous one. We finally settled the use of the metric as being first a diagnostic tool aimed at assessing development priorities at the local level.

*B. Empirical foundation of the model.* A second group of remarks raised the question of the empirical foundations of the model. Whatever the value of the theoretical foundations of the matrix, we could not forgo some kind of empirical verification of the proposed metric. The remark's sticking point was to respect the local population's voice in setting the normative dimensions of the nexus. The metric was deemed, in other words, too rigid and the fear was that its universality would squash the *inherent diversity* we should expect to find at the local level. The present paper is sensible to this claim. The normative pentagram where each normative dimension is assessed through its relations to all the others opens the way for *partial orderings* but at the same time maintain a single normative framework. So no straitjacket here. In addition, we also reassessed the importance of *agency freedom* – that is the freedom of the people gathered together into the nexus – as a key element of the common good's dynamic. Rather than voice, we thought that the personal and the collective 'freedom to act' was a *sine qua non* condition to the existence of a common good's dynamic. This was actually implicit in the previous

paper, but not sufficiently mirrored in the proposed matrix. No nexus of the common good can exist in a society of slaves even if high levels of well-being are achieved (No *Brave New World* in a common good approach to development). We now propose agency freedom as one of the five normative dimensions of the metric.

Moreover, the widespread use by International Agencies of Community Driven Development (CDD) programs over the past 20 years has gathered a fair amount of evidence for the necessity to ground development programs on collective action<sup>1</sup>. The unexplained and often controversial efficiency of CDD programs can be seen in many ways as an empirical verification of our normative model. Indeed, the CDD programs, as formalized by the World Bank (Narayan, 1995), are strikingly similar to our model of a common good's dynamic. The experiences gathered along these programs also highlight some of the recurrent difficulties of CDD development project, namely the capture of collective agency by existing elites or the development of corruption (Appiah, Baldwin, Karlan, Udry, 2016). Our insistence on the three social functions of governance, justice and stability as *social functions* of the nexus should, however, answer these shortcomings of CDD programs.

*C. The commons' literature.* A third group of remarks rounded on the suggestion to revise the most recent literature on public goods and 'commons'. The production and collective administration of common pool resources was now well documented and could significantly enrich our model. We did so (Acheson, 2011; Anthony & Campbell, 2011; Faysse & Mustapha, 2017; Laborda & De Moor, 2013; Rudel, 2011; Bollier, 2013) and found many similarities between the approaches, especially regarding the importance of participation, rules and shared rationality as mean to coordinate the production and the governance of the commons. The often detailed analysis of conflict-resolution mechanisms among the agents was also very helpful. But several points of difference also appeared between the two approaches. First about the nature of the commons: there is an overall prevalence of studies dedicated to *natural resources* and how communities gather around their production and administration. We, however, have rather highlighted the interaction creating a social good, insisting on the shared meaning that specific common good has for its community (communality of the common good). In our approach, most common goods are immanent to their production and can't be reduced to their individual utility function.

Secondly, this literature is highly specific and contemplates usually the production, management and distribution of one 'commons'. The wider social or economic context is absent or left open (Bollier 2013; Bollier & Helfrich 2015). The question of wider social justice for example, is usually not addressed (that is beyond the restricted circle of the commoners). We, on the contrary, want to focus

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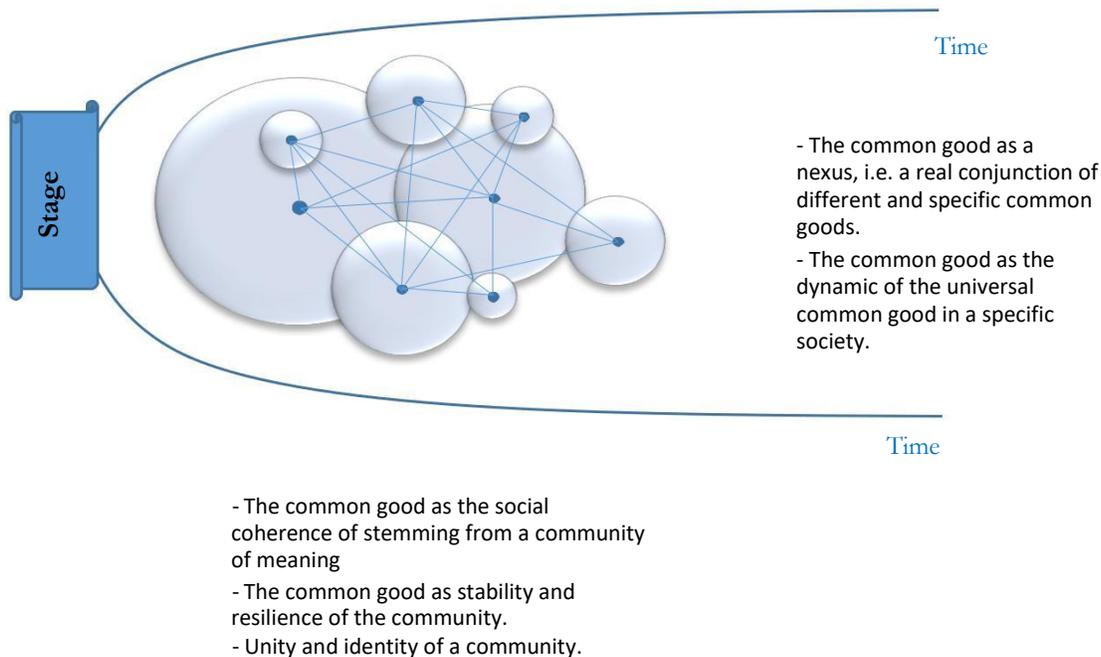
<sup>1</sup> Building on the contributions of Social Capital theories (Putnam, 2000) and the Commons movement (Oström, 1990; 2007), CDD programs are widely used nowadays. Their aim is to improve local public good or services by engaging the local community. The idea is to strengthen the social capital of the local community in order to promote local social responsibility for the project. The World Bank alone invests 1.3 billion USD each year in CDD programs (mostly in infrastructure development project). The capacity of these programs to build social capital are however contested (Adveenko & Gilligan, 2014), most probably because of the over insistence to measure social capital through individual altruistic social preferences. The anthropological model displayed in our own approach should be much more efficient to explain and capture the community building process the World Bank wants to achieve.

on a ‘nexus of the common good’, i.e. how different ‘commons’ build up and integrate to generate a society. Our model is larger and includes a teleological dimension.

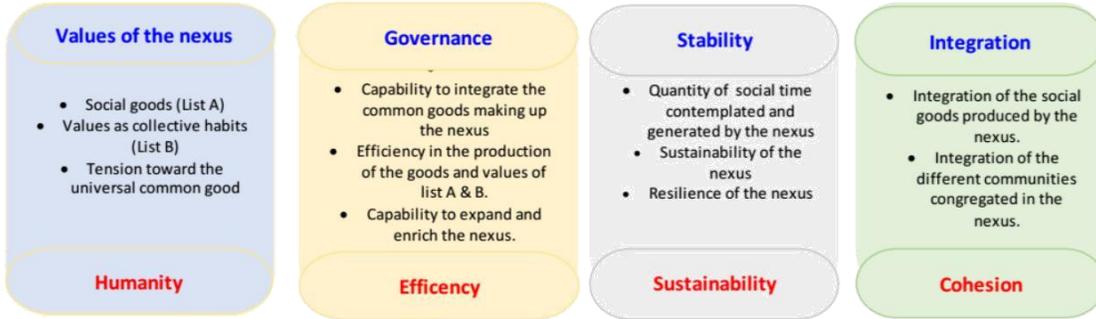
*D. Justice and the common good.* Last but not least, some sharp remarks were directed at the relationship between justice and the common good. Many questions were left open by the example of the school in the previous paper. Whereas the meaning of the school was shared by a large circle, the benefit of education was distributed to a much more restricted public. How could we bridge the two? Could the shared benefit’s distribution avoid the <sup>4</sup> question of individual appropriation, that is, avoid individual utility functions? Moreover, what did we understand with justice at the level of the nexus and what role would we give to the Law? The committee was sensible to the argument and tried to answer some of these questions. We don’t claim to have fully succeeded, but justice has become – along agency freedom – one of the ‘new’ normative dimension of our model. It is one of the three social functions regulating the nexus’s organization, (i.e. the order and practical rationality of the nexus). We will argue that deprived of justice, the nexus’ dynamic decays and progressively implodes along the fault-lines of systemic violence and exclusion.

## 2. Toward a new matrix of the common good

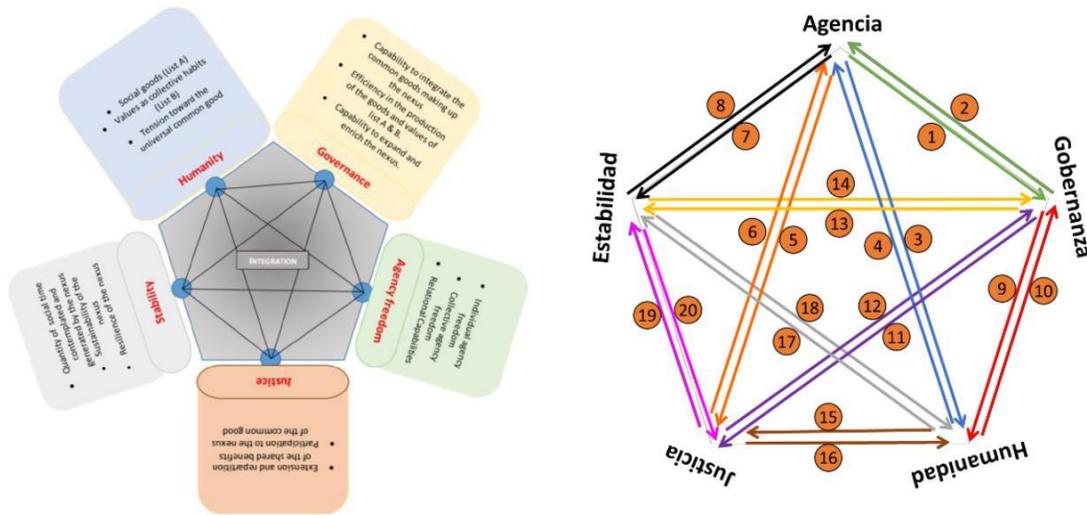
The previous research paper represented the nexus of the common good as following:



We also suggested in the former paper that the quality of the nexus could to be assessed along the four following normative dimensions:



We modified this first version of the matrix of the common good by ordering them in a pentagram as shown in the subsequent graph:



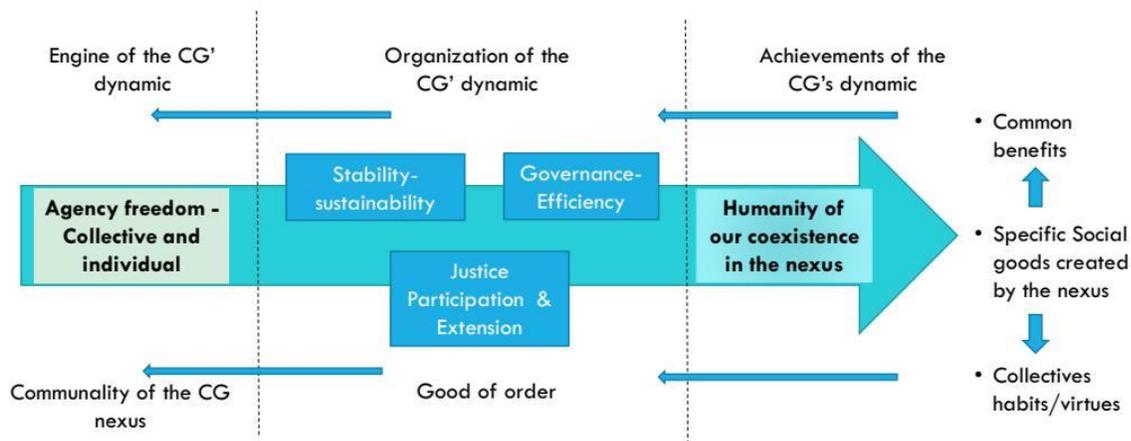
We included two new dimensions, namely ‘Agency freedom’ and ‘Justice’. We also rebranded ‘Values of the nexus’ as ‘Humanity of the nexus’ and finally took out of the dimensions ‘Integration’. This was perhaps the most important move, for we didn’t take it out but reorganized the other dimensions into a pentagram so that the *normative density and quality of their relations* would account for the *density and quality of the nexus*. In other words, it is how the different normative dimensions combine with each other that will inform us about the quality of the nexus for example how ‘Governance’ enhances the participation of people, i.e. ‘Agency’, how more ‘collective Agency’ fosters the rule of law, i.e. ‘Justice’, or how a collective habit of justice generates ‘Stability’.

The following pages will be dedicated to explain this bold move, as we describe in the second part each normative dimension and then in the third part the new normative pentagram.

## Part II. Description of each of the normative elements of the matrix

This second part describes the different dimensions composing the matrix of the common good. We argue that the combination of these five normative dimensions give an adequate insight to the quality of the nexus of the common good. The existence of each dimension and the density and integration of their mutual relationships may be considered as a proxy to the achieved quality of the nexus.

*A. Two preliminary remarks.* Two remarks to begin with. First, these normative dimensions are derived from the *process* by which a society aims at the common good. They mirror the different stages of a common good's dynamic. May understand them as answering the following questions: How can we maintain a common good dynamic in the nexus? Which are the norms governing this dynamic? Which are the normative conditions set to an ever deeper and broader integration of the nexus? Secondly, these normative dimensions are not to be mistaken with the specific common goods existing in a society. They emerge *at a systemic level* as (i) precondition, (ii) social functions and (iii) systemic achievement of a dynamic of the common good. We may represent them as follows:



*B. Quick description of the dimensions.* Where 'agency freedom' - both individual and collective - is the *engine* of the common good's dynamic. Without agency freedom no dynamic of the common good can emerge in a society. The freedom to act together – each with others - is at the bottom of the emergence of a nexus of the common good. In a society of slaves, no dynamic of the common good can exist. The quality of this freedom is thus to be considered as the first normative element by which we will assess the overall quality of the nexus.

Then we identify three key *social functions* organizing the dynamic and needed to lead the nexus toward the universal common good; social functions that are normatively bound to the achievement of the common good. (i) '*Governance*' describes the capacity to lead the nexus toward an ever broader and deeper integration and to open it to new people and challenges. It thus describes the many layers of governance existing in a society and their capacity to resolve conflicts, increase and deepen the overall common good and lead the society toward a common future. (ii) Another and separate key social

function is *Justice*. We are looking here to the different processes and institutions by which people have a share to the social goods produced by the nexus. It encloses the way people participate to the generations of the social goods and how the common benefits are shared among the population. (iii) Finally a third key social function is *Stability*. While we are familiar with governance and justice as existing social functions, stability is not usually recognized as key to achieve an order conducive to the common good (at least in Western countries). Stability or durability describes the social institutions preserving the achieved humanity of the nexus and seeing for its long future. These are the institutions that preserve, transmit and reinvent the nexus' humanity providing it with stability, resilience and sustainability. Each of these three key social functions are correlated subsequently checking and correcting the two others. Together they drive and organize the nexus into a dynamic for the common good.

Finally, the *Humanity* of the nexus can be seen as the systemic achievement of a common good dynamic. It denotes the human quality of our coexistence in the nexus; how we relate and act together as human being in that particular society. More precisely, we characterize 'humanity' as the achievement of a core set of social goods (list A and B) shared to the overall population both as common benefits and common practices.

We will now review each of these normative dimensions.

## 1. Agency freedom

*A. Definition of 'Agency'*. 'Agency freedom' both collective and individual is the engine of the dynamic of the common good. By agency freedom we mean the *capacity to freely act and interact with others in a society*. We understand this freedom not in terms of rights but as the effective, real freedom to engage others and act together, freely cooperating to the consecution of social goods. Basically, it describes how a given population gathers around common issues, drafts some solutions and achieves them. It is first and foremost a positive freedom. How familiar, how accustomed are people to discuss common issues, organize and solve them together. In other words: how much agency freedom is embedded in this particular culture. But it is also a negative freedom. Are people free to take these initiatives? Does the legal and administrative framework of the State give them the possibilities to organize around common issues? Is there a space left between the market and the state for people to bring together common goods? The more robust this agency freedom is in a given population, the more steam and energy will exist in the nexus of the common good. The less agency freedom there is, the more violent, unstable, fragmented and inhuman the nexus will be. Agency freedom accounts for the inventiveness and creativity existing in the nexus; it accounts for the collective capability to generate commons in the nexus.

*B. Agency freedom as a positive collective freedom*. This is why we may consider agency freedom as one of the normative condition to the existence of a common good's dynamic in a society. It is nothing new. The proud defence of freedom in Thucydides' work is precisely a recognition of agency freedom, considered as a valuable *and* collective social good. The Athenians are not thinking of the law as a formal body of rights. Freedom is either real and effective or it is not. Consequently, freedom is seen

as a *collective achievement and duty* (you have called to behave as a free person by all the others), not an individual right. We are free together, because together we value that freedom, live and organize according to it, and fight in common to defend it, if necessary. Pericles sees in that freedom the ground of the flourishing of Athena and its glory among the other ancient cities. It is the ground and the goal of the common good in his speeches (Palmer, 1992).

The puzzle is that today we use to think about agency freedom the other way round. Indeed, the social contract theories postulate that collective agency freedom will somehow derive from the recognition of equal individual rights. As collective good, agency freedom is seen as a consensus among free individuals defining equal formal rights for all. This arrangement leaves to the State the duty to protect and promote the formal rights of each citizens. But how will these ‘rights’ collaborate together? How will they build up to be more than an aggregate of individual freedoms? This has always been a difficult question for liberal democracies (individual rights versus collective rights). Our approach is different. We don’t start from a formal set of universal rights and freedoms that each individual has to enjoy, but from the *effective capability to freely act together*. We think of agency freedom as a positive collective freedom through which each member of the group actualizes its own liberty. As such, individual and collective agency freedom are considered as concomitant. It is pointless to disentangle the two. What came first: Individual freedom or collective freedom? Empirically, we are born in social relationships that shape the acquisition of our own personal freedom. Thus it does not seem vain to understand agency freedom, both as a collective and a personal capability, as a tell-tale indicator of the quality of the engine of the common good’s dynamic in a society.

*C. Agency freedom as a negative freedom.* This does not mean that we don’t appreciate the importance of the negative freedom requirement of such agency freedom. On the long run the rule of law, administrative requirements, economic restrictions deeply shape our collective agency freedom. Thus any measurement of agency freedom will have to assess it as a *positive freedom* people enjoy and enact and a *negative freedom* people can enjoy given the wider institutional context. Our focus on the quality of the nexus of the common good precisely requires both. The real, effective agency freedom displayed by a population is the mixt of the positive capability and the constrains of the wider institutional context.

## 2. Governance

*A. Definition Definition of ‘Governance’.* If agency freedom can be seen as the engine of the nexus of the common good, then governance is its steering wheel. The nexus is not an autopoietic system but a human construct, slowly knotted together and modified by each passing generations. As a complex and dynamic equilibrium the web of social goods and communities making up the nexus is never a given. Its inherent fragility requires constant cares. It needs governance just to conserve itself and even more so to adapt and project the nexus toward a common future. It is this key social function of the

nexus that we call governance.<sup>2</sup> As a systemic social function governance is needed to drive the existing nexus of the common good toward a deeper and broader integration. It is here to moves the whole nexus in the right direction, i.e. toward the universal common good. It does so by looking to further a common good's dynamic between the different social goods, attending conflicts, new situations, preparing for incoming challenges. Governance is not just the present administration of the nexus, but the driving force that prepares and invents the future of our coexistence.

*B. The goals of 'Governance'.* We may thus distinguish two goals to the governance of the nexus. (i) The first aims at projecting the nexus into the foreseeable future. It deals with the future of the dynamic. It is an act of *prevision*, of *reinvention* and *transmission* of the nexus. It begins with the *prudent prevision* of future events or situations that may affect the existing nexus and how to adapt to them; it embraces a *creative reinvention* of the nexus, tackling its many limitations and projecting it toward the universal common good; it involves a *respectful transmission* of whatever humanity the nexus has been able to generate in the past. (ii) The second goal aims at furthering the existing nexus of the common good. It is about the present of the dynamic. According to this second objective, governance aims at promoting a deeper integration of the nexus by furthering 'agency freedom' and the 'communality of the common good' among the members of the nexus. It does so however, not exclusively but in conjunction with the two other social functions organizing the nexus: *justice* and *durability* (more about hereafter).

*C. A fragmented and polycentric social function.* Now governance is by no mean a single, totalitarian function, but must be recognized as fragmented and polycentric. The nexus' governance can't be reduced to one formal institution, but is rather implemented by a wide array of organizations. Among them, a first group of social processes covers the generation of a 'communality of common good'<sup>3</sup>. These are basically the many processes that allow the questions of the common good to emerge, be answered and get implemented. What do we value together? What do we want to achieve in common? How can we achieve it together? A second group is made of the institutions projecting the nexus into a foreseeable future, anticipating social changes, political power plays, technological developments, economic shifts and preparing for them. Finally, a third group of institutions deals with the management of the public square. But for all the importance and authority of this group of state institutions, they can't possibly account alone for the whole governance of the nexus<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, the all-important tasks covered by the first and second group of institutions are usually rather poorly performed by the modern state administration.

*D. Micro, mezzo and macro level.* Moreover, governance to be effective needs to fully span the micro, mezzo and macro levels of any social system. A first requirement then is for the three levels to be

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<sup>2</sup> A such governance can also be thought of as a specific common good, but one arising from the necessity to forge between the social goods a dynamic of the common good. It is out of the need to drive the social goods toward an ever deeper nexus of the common good that governance exist. Without it, the existing system stagnate, becomes rigid and decay.

<sup>3</sup> Ostrom, E., \*\*\*

<sup>4</sup> A claim that was sustained in the pretence of the modern State to be the dominant and even exclusive institution that has authority over the public sphere. The role of civil society regarding governance is nowadays widely recognized, but still lack a real systematic involvement in the functioning of state bureaucracy.

articulated as a condition for the governance of the nexus to be effective. So far, so good; nothing new about this. But a common good perspective will also insist on the following: governance does not trickle down from the top, but rather builds up from the local level toward the national level. As a complex cooperation game, the common good dynamic starts with real local people and real local problems that must be solved in common. Then, when a solution requires to be brought to a next level of collaboration (mezzo/macro), power will be delegated further up, to a wider level of cooperation and governance. This movement of delegation can be called an ‘organic subsidiarity’, where end decisions are not only kept as close as possible to the people they will affect, but where decision are only transferred to the higher level of governance, when they can’t be resolved at the present level. Only the respect of this ‘organic subsidiarity’ brings about both the authority *and* the efficiency of governance. Top down, centralistic forms of governance may well be more efficient on the short term, but on the long one they tend to rely more on coercion than public support, lacking therefore on authority and sustainability. Indeed, the authority of governance is directly link to the communality of the common good, i.e, the capacity for people to exercise their freedom of agency, their political agency through governance processes. Whenever public decisions, public policies are decided elsewhere and without consultation with the people they affect, then the authority of the decision or the policy will decay on the long run. People do not obey a policy only because it brings about a utility or because they fear punishment, but because it makes sense, generating a common good *ne* value. Hence a governance for the common good is but a federation of institutions that governs in common. Its ordinary functioning is an organic subsidiarity which brings about stability and efficiency only on the long run.

### 3. Justice

*A. The social function of justice.* In a common good perspective, the social function of justice can’t be reduced to giving to each his due. The approach is different. We do not start with individuals. We do start with collaboration and interaction. Justice then appears as a task, a collective goal concerned rather with the production and distribution of collective goods. As we saw in the previous paper, common goods are ‘shared’ in many different forms. We may share a common good by sharing its *meaning* and its *value*. We may share a common good, by sharing the *practical rationality* and the *collective habits* deployed for its consecution. We may still have a share to the common *benefit* it creates, comparting therefore with others the access to a specific service or good. So that no distribution of ‘benefits’ can be thought of without referring to the shared ‘consecution’ and ‘meaning’. The last being the more crucial. Our understanding of the complex equality that rules the distribution of common benefit depends largely on the meaning given to the common good (Walzer, 1981). Moreover, most of the common benefits are non-tangible and do not diminish by being participated to others. Focusing on how we share common goods then significantly widens our conception of justice, which will have to consider (i) the shared meaning (communality of the common good), (ii) the shared consecution (participation in consecution) and (iii) the shared benefit (common use). The last being not always deemed as the more important.

*B. Justice as a social function of the nexus.* Now a society is made of a dynamic integration of many common goods. Justice does not arise here as a given. To the contrary, it rather appears as a hard won victory; the result of a balancing act between the social meanings of the common goods, the production of these common goods and the distribution of the shared benefits among the members of this society. The requirement of justice builds up slowly in a society through complex social processes that progressively *state what is fair* and implement *just interactions* in the nexus. This dynamic balancing act is what we name the social function of justice.

Indeed, justice like governance is a social function, i.e. a complex set of processes and institutions required for the nexus to be driven toward an ever deeper integration. From a common good perspective, justice has to do with the ‘we’ of the nexus, with ‘our togetherness’, the fact that people ‘hold together’ in a differentiated but integrated society. It displays the fact that our existences are deeply interconnected through the many social goods organizing our society. Our interactions in the nexus are so tightly intertwined that we hardly can disentangle ourselves from them. Our everyday life depends on the existence of the nexus; on the communal life we share in this nexus. Justice from this perspective does not seek the unity of the society or even a formal equality among the different members of the nexus. Justice is about solidarity among the people belonging to the nexus; *a solidarity regarding a fair generation of the different social goods making up the nexus and a just distribution of the common benefits among the people*. It is part of what we have called the good of order; the order needed for a dynamic of the common good to flourish within the nexus. Without justice such dynamic will falter and fail and the nexus will slowly implode along the fault lines of poverty, violence and exclusion.

*D. The tasks of justice.* The tasks of the social function of Justice are twofold. On one side justice sees for the nexus not to *disintegrate*. It fights exclusion, violence and poverty. It deals with the external limits of this ‘we’ as well as with its many internal tensions. On the other side it seeks to *promote a dignified and flourishing life for each and for all in the nexus*. It furthers solidarity through a deeper integration of the nexus. The first task does account for a ‘thin understanding of justice’, while the second points toward a ‘thick conception of justice’. Both tasks are correlated. To look after the excluded, to battle for basic rights and to seek human flourishing are part of one and the same process: creating a deeper inclusion of the nexus.

Under the first task, justice will define the *standard rules and norms* that should apply for each interaction and between the many interaction composing the nexus. Exactly as each interaction develops a set of rule and norms organizing our cooperation, so do the social function of justice for the nexus: it sets the basic norms that allows the different interactions of the nexus no only to co-exist but to be coordinated to each other; it fixes the reciprocal expectations put on all interactions existing in the nexus. For the same reason, it also states the basic norms that should apply within each interaction. These freedoms and rights making up the Law prevent the dissolution of the nexus by holding each community responsible for each other. The Law by requiring basic freedoms and rights is imposing to all members of the nexus a *common responsibility, a shared duty each has to assume in order to act in the nexus*. The Law makes up the basic rationality ruling what is possible or not within that nexus.

*E. Justice and human flourishing.* However convincing, this still oversees a very problematic point. To proclaim a constitution is but a very easy task compared to making these rights and freedoms real for each and everyone in the country. For formal rights to become real they need to be implemented. And hereby lays the most difficult challenge to a contractualist narrative of the Law<sup>5</sup>. Empirically the Law is rather the end result of a complex historical process than a sudden creation by a constituent assembly<sup>6</sup>. The formal freedoms and rights enshrined in a constitution are built upon customs, norms and collective habits; rather like the tip of an iceberg, highly visible but floating above the surface of the water for the huge mass of ice drifting under it.

Coercion is not the basis of the Rule of Law. The respect of the Law has much more to do in a society with the existence – or not – of collective habits of justice and solidarity. The state relies on the citizen's usual respect of the law for the Law to be enforced. This is the well know paradox stated by the legal principle *nemo censetur ignorare legem* (nobody is thought to be ignorant of the law). Nobody is expected to ignore the Law because everybody, through our collective interactions, uphold the Law. The legal norm is thus known through the customs that makes it explicit to all. The Roman, as always practical, still new that collective habits of justice were the living shape of our corpus of Law. Collective habits are the true books where justice is safeguarded in a society.

Going back to the previous point, we may understand now why a common good approach highlights human flourishing as part of the task of justice. Collective habits and virtues can't be just proclaimed by law. The fullness of justice is a common task. It is a collective goal that will be achieved through our interactions in the nexus or not at all. Justice then, as an essential part of human flourishing is something that we must achieve together, fomenting collective practices of justice. A task at which the state's apparatus has been quite poor to say the least.

#### 4. Stability, sustainability and resilience

*A. Definition of 'Stability'.* While we are familiar with governance and justice as existing social functions, stability is not usually recognized as key to achieve an order conducive to the common good<sup>7</sup>. Stability or durability describes the social institutions preserving the achieved humanity of the nexus and seeing for its long future. These are the institutions that preserve, transmit and reinvent the nexus' humanity providing it with sustainability and resilience.

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<sup>5</sup> In Hobbes view, the Law must be imposed to the unruly actors of the society and need consequently the State's power to enforce the rule of the Law and prevent all these potentially petty truants to encroach to the freedoms of their counterpart.

<sup>6</sup> The Law is never invented 'on the spot' by a bunch of 'highly rational' freedom fighters that would have taken the time for a cosy discussion.

<sup>7</sup> It is unusual to think about stability as a social function. To begin with, is stability not an odd attempt to oppose 'social progress' and furthers 'traditional values'? Worse even, does it not empower 'reactionary forces' in society? The Illustration was crafted around a rejection of the past, and some topics like stability, are still widely rejected as opposed to modernity or progress. But stability, understood as the sustainability of the nexus's equilibrium, as little to do with the French Revolution. Stability is a permanent, normative and empirically well documented requirement to human flourishing.

*B. Peace and stability as common goods.* Whoever has known a country torn out by war realizes how precious peace and stability are to our coexistence. What people hope for during war is the possibility to live together in peace, to plan for the future, to have access to a social time that goes beyond the instability of the war-time. What people hope for, is the possibility to access the long term where human projects like getting married, raising children, launching a professional career make sense. They are acutely aware that this can't be achieved without having peace, that is 'living together' in a state of peace. This is not a private quest. War does not leave you the possibility to insulate your privacy from others. War 'invites' itself into your home; invades your life, your future – and disrupt them. You need peace to have it back. And you need the others, all the others, to generate peace and live together in peace. A private stability is only possible as long as we do all share a common future.

*C. Stability and sustainability.* But our ability to open up this common future depends of the quality of the present equilibrium of the nexus, which in turn largely rely on the history of this nexus. The quality and sustainability of the traditions, the laws, the institutions we have inherited from the previous generations are therefore all critical elements of our present ability to project ourselves into a common future. It is on the past - or against it - that we build a common future, hence the importance of as sustainable common good's dynamic tiding together the specific commons goods it hosts.

The present concern for the environment and the very real threat to our common survival by global warming has brought to the forefront the question of sustainability. Global warming is the legacy of our over-consumption of fossil energies during the last 150 years. This past shapes our present. Our production system and our consumption habits are shaped by the abundance of coal and oil. We have developed and internalized a dependency to the rationality of the fossil energies. This is precisely the conundrum of climate change. We now know that in order to have a common future, we need to change the way we produce and consume goods. We need to change the present nexus of the world economy to one which is sustainable. What is at stake – and we know it now without further ado – is our common future as humanity.

Stability is thus the overall sustainability on the long run of the nexus' functioning. Without such sustainability, no dynamic of the common good can be maintained. Stability as a social function describes the capacity to articulate the long past to the long future and maintain the nexus's dynamic toward the universal common good. While *governance* is responsible to drive the nexus toward the future; whereas *justice* looks for the human equilibrium of the nexus; *stability* is responsible for the long term human sustainability of the nexus.

*D. The tasks of 'Stability'.* Which could be the task of a social function of stability? Stability's currency is time. But not any time, the time of human flourishing. So that basically stability as a social function is looking to generate a *duration* – a continuity in time – that may bring about human flourishing in the nexus. While governance generates newness and justice fairness, stability generates continuity. We may thus distinguish two tasks to the social function of stability. The first might be the transmission of the

past; the necessity for a people to be rooted in a common history of what it means to be human<sup>8</sup>. Human beings need to be rooted. They need to access the living memory of a people to receive from the common treasure of history most of their intellectual, spiritual and moral life. This is at least the claim made by Simone Weil<sup>9</sup>. Now this collective memory does not auto-replicate itself mechanically. No memory does. As individuals, we select from our past those events we deem meaningful and then knot them together as narratives of the self; narratives that should explain who we are. Something similar occurs at the level of the nexus. Past collective experiences are knotted together to build up a collective memory, a common treasure of intellectual, spiritual and moral life on which every member rely to build itself as a human being. We call it culture. But then this collective memory needs to be transmitted to the new generations. The tragedy is that this transmission process can be disrupted, either because of wars or mass migration or by a conscious decision to forgo this collective memory (cultural genocide). How many cultural identity were lost due to the destruction of the institutions that conveyed their collective memory?<sup>10</sup> Education, especially family education and public basic education, have always been recognised as the basic institutions of this transmission. Hence, the first task of the social function of stability may be understood as this *transmission of the common memory of what it means to be human*.

The second task derives from the first one. The transmission of culture is not sought for itself. To transmit a memory of what it means to be human is but a mean for another end. It serves the capacity for a people to project itself into the future as a human community. It attends to create the long-time of our common flourishing as human beings. Hence the second task may be understood as this social crafting of a long-time, a human long-time. The second task of stability is then the crafting of a creative continuity. To transmit is not a sterile reproduction of the past. To transmit is to reinvent in order to create a long future for all. To transmit is to open up the past toward a common future which always will be different from the past. To transmit is to be open to the newness of otherness. It is to be capable to assimilate what is different and other into our own future identity.

The social function of stability is responsible for the continuity of our humanity. It is this continuity that gives to the nexus its resilience. Whereas the length of time – toward the past, toward the future – coherently encompassed by the nexus informs us about its sustainability.

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<sup>8</sup> We understand history as the accumulated culture of a people that has shaped their understanding of what it is to be a human being and how to behave as such. It is not to be confounded with a history of political power, social organization or a the history of production/distribution.

<sup>9</sup> Simone WEIL, *L'enracinement. Prélude à une déclaration des devoirs envers l'être humain*, Paris, Gallimard, 1949, 61.

L'enracinement est peut-être le besoin le plus important et le plus méconnu de l'âme humaine. C'est un des difficiles à définir. Un être humain a une racine par sa participation réelle, active et naturelle à l'existence d'une collectivité qui conserve vivants certains trésors du passé et certains pressentiments d'avenir. Participation naturelle, c'est-à-dire amenée automatiquement par le lieu, la naissance, la profession, l'entourage. Chaque être humain a besoin d'avoir de multiples racines. Il a besoin de recevoir la presque totalité de sa vie morale, intellectuelle, spirituelle par l'intermédiaire des milieux dont il fait naturellement partie ».

<sup>10</sup> We could mention the discovery of America and the disruption of the pre-Colombian cultures or either the Khmers Rouge regime and its will to craft an entirely new culture.

## 5. The humanity of the nexus

*A. Definition of 'Humanity'.* The humanity of the nexus can be understood as the overarching result of a common good's dynamic. the 'Humanity' of the nexus can be seen as the systemic achievement of a common good dynamic. It denotes the human quality of our coexistence in the nexus; how we relate and act together as human being in that particular society. More precisely, we characterize 'humanity' as the achievement of a core set of social goods (list A and B) shared to the overall population both as common benefits and common practices.

*B. Our humanity as a common achievement.* Our humanity is not so much a given as a goal<sup>11</sup>. It is something that is given potentially – we are certainly all human beings - but needs to be freely achieved (how 'human' is our social coexistence?). Any doubt about the distinction should be measured against the differences existing between societies. Undoubtedly some societies are more human than others. Who could claim that the Gulag and say, a Parish community, do not differ in humanity? Our humanity is a collective result; it is something we achieve together.

*C. Humanity as an immanent result of a common good's nexus.* Our common humanity is the immanent result of a common good's dynamic. It is not so much 'a result' – distinct and separate from the nexus – than 'the resulting good' inherent to the nexus' dynamic. It is not possible to think about our common humanity as separate from our interactions in the nexus. It rather emerges as immanent to these interactions. Our common humanity is enshrined in the functioning of our societies.

*D. Human needs and aspirations.* As we suggested before (Nebel, 2017), we can grasp this common humanity through two lists of goods (List A and List B). The first one describing basic common goods linked to our well-being, while the second depicted basic common goods linked to the good life<sup>12</sup>. We would like now to suggest that the first group is linked to our *human needs*, while the second is linked to our *human aspirations*.

*E. Humanity : list A.* Well-being may be understood as the *common goods needed by a person to gain access to his/her own humanity*. We are certainly born as rational being capable of freedom. But we have access to both rationality and freedom through others that precede us and raise us into freedom and rationality. The family, the schools, the working environment all contribute to this progressive acquisition of our freedom. What is more the family, the education or work are common goods. We therefore need them to have access to our own humanity. Yet they are not mere preconditions to our humanity, but structuring elements that shape – inform to use the old scholastic term – our rationality and freedom. We are born into a culture and this culture moulds our understanding of reality.

The needs we are contemplating are therefore not to be misunderstood with our biological needs. We certainly need food, water or air to survive. But these needs are met through the mediation of the

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<sup>11</sup> The difference between a personal human dignity enshrined in our nature and its fulfilment through my personal freedom is well accounted for. What is less is how this dignity is collectively given in our human condition and how it is then fulfilled in common (Arendt, 1957).

<sup>12</sup> The relationships between wellbeing and the good life being hotly debated, we do not pretend here to resolve the theoretical question, but try to give an account of the two for the sake of a metric of the common good's nexus.

nexus, i.e. through specific interactions shaping the production, the meaning, the distribution and consumption of food, water and even air. There is no such thing as raw food in a human community. We eat as human being, not animal whatever the food is. Survival and moreover well-being is controlled by a set of basic common goods that we have identified as the one making up the list (A).<sup>13</sup>

- Life
- Education
- Family
- Work
- Cultural identity
- Political and associative life
- Health

The very existence of these basic common goods in a society can be taken as a fair proxy for the well-being achieved by this nexus. Their coherence and reciprocal integration tell us about the human quality of the nexus.<sup>14</sup>

*F. Humanity: the list (B).* The list (B) describes basic common goods linked to the good life, linked to our *human aspirations*. Our common humanity is a goal. Something we achieve in common. The list (B) captures the *human values* actualized by the nexus, i.e. through its functioning. Hence these are not abstract social values, but concrete ones, embedded in the common practices building up the humanity of our living together: freedom, responsibility, peace, concord, justice, solidarity, etc. Not just any values, but the ones that we may recognize as making up the human quality of the nexus.

The values we have in mind here are not the common good as such, but happen to mark its consecution in a society, in the same way as happiness marks human flourishing. They are actually immanent to the research of the common good and may be understood as the standard of the ethical quality of the nexus. As social practice, they are signs – real and objective signs – that the nexus is leading toward human flourishing. Hence the idea of a list of social virtues against which we can contrast the ethical quality of the nexus. We suggest the following list of collective habits, loosely inspired by Lorenzetti's painting in Siena (*Il buon governo*).<sup>15</sup>

- Freedom and responsibility
- Justice and solidarity
- Peace and concord
- Prudence and magnanimity
- Perseverance and courage
- Resilience and sustainability

We should not understand the list as being utmost static. Some social virtues may be sensible to the sort of common goods integrated by the nexus; some will be required in certain circumstances more than others (War and peace do not produce in a society the same sort of common practices); some will be more akin to some religion than others, etc. This is why the relative importance of the virtues

<sup>13</sup> The list is loosely inspired from the 1966 Pact on *Social, Cultural and Economic rights*. We suggested that the Pact's collective rights could also be described as common goods (Nebel, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Beyond existence, the crucial question are: How are they structured in the nexus? Which ones are considered the most basic? Which are considered important? Which ones are considered at odd with others? How many are problematic? Which ones come on top as a practical priority in the present context? The point is to see if they build coherently in the nexus or not.

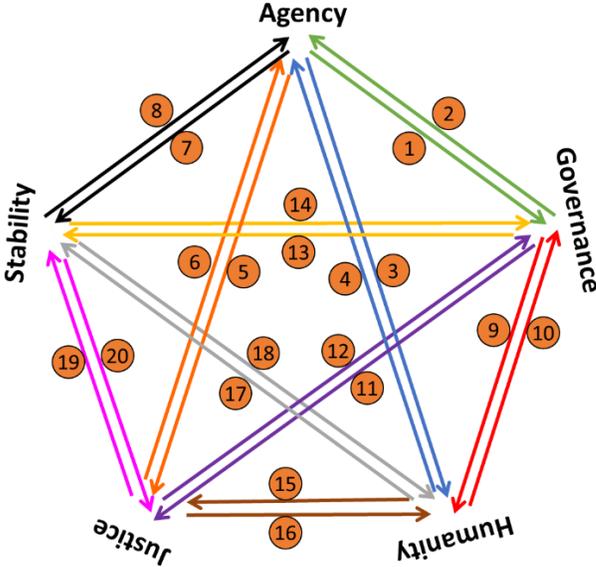
<sup>15</sup> They are widely understood as personal virtues a king or council should have to govern for the common good. But actually these are not so much personal virtues as social ones. Common practice - acquired social habits - stemming precisely from a long and constant search for the common good in a society.

in the list, their hierarchy and arrangement may change over time and history. As the nexus of the common good is dynamic, the values it achieves may also slightly transform. However, we can reasonably expect these values to be widely shared and fairly universal (as expression of our human condition). Henceforth, the two lists should provide a reasonably objective standard, against which we may measure the moral quality achieved by the nexus.

### IV. Reformulation of the matrix

Since the first analytical document (UPAEP seminar 2017), Professor Nebel has bestowed on us a first matrix, which at its core presents, to my liking, the key elements for a comprehensive measurement of the common good in a municipality: the good created (1); the good of order (2) required for the creation of (1) and that, on many occasions, is also a fruit of (1); the shared rationality, which as a shared meaning (3), is also one of the main assets of the common good; and, of course, a detailed analysis of the "nexus" of the common good (4) in its dimension of coherence, stability, values and governance.

Now, when each of these elements is analyzed, it becomes apparent that between them, mutually imply each other in more than one aspect and at more than one moment. The common good brings on an approach of communicating vessels, by way of which medieval tradition called *connexio virtutum*. Thus, a scheme rather close to those presented by Ramon Llull in his *Ars Magna* seems to us more suggestive... In addition, we noticed some analytical advantage afforded by this type of schemes, allowing for the display of each of the interactions among the elements of a system and, at the same time, consider the same relationships as an additional element.



The *Agency*<sup>16</sup> of the common good encloses all of those individual and collective freedoms necessary for the construction of goods; this dimension responds to *those who* build, distribute and receive the common goods.

But the goods, not only material but also cultural and spiritual, have to be managed for their efficient production, proper distribution and just ownership among the people who form the community; hence the fundamental role the dimension of **governance** plays<sup>17</sup>: without it, the agency would be atomized, contradictory or even unfeasible. Governance makes common agency possible by *integrating* the individual capabilities in an effective manner, so that, in addition to being the condition of the assets created, holds within itself the good of order and, therefore, it is a substantive part of the common good.

However, the proper content, goods and specific values (list A and B, i.e. welfare and collective habits) that form the various common goods, constitute the "content" or *Humanity*<sup>18</sup> of the common good, since both the goods relating to the welfare as goods as well as those relating to collective habits are the ones that make a good life, a fully human life, possible. Inasmuch as part of the content is excluded or not sufficiently attended to, the quality of the social bond will decrease (collective agency) and from its very governance becomes mere distributive bureaucracy and not true prospective cohesion.

Of course, the "valuable" and humanizing content is a single coordinate of the common good; it is its vertical consideration which, without neglecting the basic needs, seeks goods of a higher order. The other perspective, the horizontal, is the "extension" of such goods, and that is to make partakers of that humanity to the greatest number of people. If we are all beckoned to a full life, the effort to spread the good (*bonum est diffusivum sui*, states the Neoplatonic axiom) is what we consider as **Justice** here<sup>19</sup>. It is true that the concept here outlined of justice is wider than that of the current literature, because in addition to the *spreading of material goods*, it also contains the *extension of shared meanings* and the *extension of collective habits*. To distributive and commutative justice is associated a hermeneutic horizon of shared values and meanings as well as growth in social virtues. He who generates the established good

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. Arendt, H., "¿Qué es la libertad?", en *Entre el pasado y el futuro. Ocho ejercicios sobre la reflexión política*, Península, Barcelona 1996; Nussbaum, M. y Sen, A. (comp.), *La Calidad de Vida*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México 1998; Dahl, R., *La poliarquía*, Tecnos, Madrid 1989.

<sup>17</sup> The World Bank, List of Governance Surveys: <https://goo.gl/pE4Lbx> (además del reporte de 1992); Pierre, J. y Peters, G., *Governance, Politics and the State*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2000; Stoker, G., "Governance as Theory: Five Propositions", apud: UNESCO 1998; Porrás, F., *Gobernanza: propuestas, límites y perspectivas*, Instituto Mora, México 2016; Porrás, F., "Rethinking Local Governance: Hierarchies and Networks in Mexican Cities", en *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 83/2007, Ámsterdam, pp. 43-59.

<sup>18</sup> Bourdieu, P., *La distinción: criterios y bases sociales del gusto*, Taurus, Madrid 2000; Finnis, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980; Nussbaum, M. y Sen, A., *The Quality of Life*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993; MacIntyre, A., *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, Duckworth, Londres 1994; Stewart, F., "Basic Needs Strategies, Human Rights, and the Right to Development" en *Human Rights Quarterly*, 11/1989, pp. 347-374, OECD, *Better life index*, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/es/>

<sup>19</sup> Hollenbach, D., *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002; Ricoeur, P., *Lo justo*, Caparrós, Madrid 1999; Berlin I., *Cuatro ensayos sobre la libertad*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid 1998; Levinas, E., *Entre nosotros*, Pre-Textos, Valencia 2001; Fricker, M. *Injusticia epistémica*, Herder, Barcelona 2017.

(agency), on many occasions coincides with whom the recipient of the good (justice) is; participation and distribution are involved.

Finally, the *Stability*<sup>20</sup> refers to the temporary horizon or expectation extent of the nexus of the common good. Evidently, this horizon depends on the disposition of the agents in the construction of the common good, as well as on the effectiveness of governance and the highly humanizing contents proposed as the extensive effort of such goods. This durability certainly imbibes on the age of the nexus, but also on the quality of the present social network, which is verified by the possibility of being a resilient community in the face of adversity.

As one can see, each of the five vertices of the pentagon<sup>21</sup> relates to the remaining four. We can speak, for instance, of the relationship between governance and freedom in two ways: as the governance of the agency, and in this sense we understand how governance is a function that encourages, directs, manages, promotes and develops individual and collective agencies for the common good, but also such a relationship one can be understood as freedom of government, that is to say, as the agency itself of governance, the freedom of individuals and groups to organize, aim purposes, elect their representatives, which is absent, for example, in dictatorial regimes while it is more visible in democratic systems. This sort of bidirectionality among the five vertices can make the reading of said relationships between elements more suggestive.

A perspective which can be found today, in both the phenomenological as well as in the analytical tradition, consists in distinguishing our approximation to reality directly (*in rectum*) or indirectly or collaterally (*in obliquo*). While some might prefer to define agency, for example, in itself, and to establish from this normative dimension of the nexus of the common good the indexes that account for their effective fulfilment, we preferred the indirect uptake (*in obliquo*) of these dimensions; that is to say, we have opted for a relational uptake of the normative dimensions, imbibing, to some extent, of the intention of F. Rosenzweig, for whom the most effective way to capture the essence of several different substances, whether separate or independent (at least conceptually), is to do so in their relational dynamics.

In addition, this path offers a conceptual advantage: it opens us to new dimensions which traditional access pathways do not contemplate; for example, the literature on justice usually deals with far too many issues relating to agency and governance, but not necessarily those of temporal stability. Therefore, to relate all normative dimensions implies as well the effort of their resignificance, capturing them more in their organic phenomenicity than in their pure distinction.

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<sup>20</sup> Ricoeur, P., *Caminos del reconocimiento*, FCE, México 2006; Honneth, A., *La lucha por el reconocimiento*, Crítica, Barcelona 1997; Maybery, D. et al, "Resilience and wellbeing of small inland communities: Community assets as key determinants" en *Rural Society*, 19/2009 pp. 326-339.

<sup>21</sup> Although the five normative dimensions of the pentagon could be read without a specific order, it is more understandable if you start with the agency (A), then the governance (G), then humanity (H), then the justice (J) and finally, the stability (S). Why? Because, from a certain perspective, the nexus of the common good could be defined (and in this order is that we have decided to start the analysis of dimensions) as a doing (A), *orderly* (G), that *pursues fundamental and sublime goods* (H), *which are to be shared among all human beings* (J) and *endure in a broad horizon* of time (S).

If we can outline these relations, we will find twenty relationships numbered in the image and which might be classified as follows:

- |                                        |                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. AG - Participation <sup>22</sup>    | <i>Agency:</i> participation, empowerment, welfare, social responsibility, collective habits, capabilities and opportunities, relational quality and resilience of the nexus. |
| 2. GA - Empowerment                    |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3. AH – Welfare                        |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 4. HA - Social responsibility          |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 5. AJ - Collective habits              | <i>Governance:</i> participation, empowerment, integration, cooperation, subsidiarity, Rule of Law, common future and good government.                                        |
| 6. JA - Capabilities and opportunities |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 7. AE - Relational quality             |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 8. EA - Resilience of the nexus        |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 9. GH - Integration                    | <i>Humanity:</i> welfare, social responsibility, integration, cooperation, shared rationality, flourishing, human ecology and culture.                                        |
| 10. HG - Cooperation                   |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 11. GJ - Subsidiarity                  |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 12. JG - Rule of Law                   |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 13. GE - Common future                 | <i>Justice:</i> collective habits, capabilities and opportunities, subsidiarity, Rule of Law, shared rationality and flourishing. social mobility and democracy.              |
| 14. EG - Good government               |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 15. HJ - Shared rationality            |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 16. JH - Flourishing                   |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 17. HE - Human ecology                 | <i>Stability:</i> Relational quality, resilience of the nexus, common future, good government, human ecology, culture, social mobility and democracy.                         |
| 18. EH - Culture                       |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 19. JE - Social mobility               |                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 20. EJ – Democracy                     |                                                                                                                                                                               |

1-2. The agency of the function of government consists in the *participation* whence different institutions and through which individuals and groups sort their relationships and their actions (hence it consisting of a good of order), toward the common good. For its part, governance of the agency consists in the *empowerment* of individuals and groups that, in a subsidiary and coordinated manner, contribute in the generation of the common good.

3-4. The agency or freedom of individuals and groups that builds development environments, where no one lacks what is necessary (List A), may be understood as the conditions for a dignified life, forms the set of created goods (usually material goods) associated with *welfare*. In turn, the humanization of the agency means conceiving freedom adequate for the integral growth of every man, for we are not indifferent to anyone, hence this humanization of freedom is conceived as **social responsibility**.

5-6. The agency of justice could enclose the various *collective habits* (list B) necessary for a peaceful, orderly and participatory coexistence; while the environments of equity and which enable and grow

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<sup>22</sup> Some, with no little reason, might object why this relationship ( $\rightarrow G$ ) is referred to as the "participation", if: a) there are other equally valid ways to verify the agency of governance, such as: trade, education, day-to-day compliance with the law, etc. (all direct or indirect forms of pawning freedom to generate goods of order) and b) by the fact that "participation" seems like a broad concept that can be extended in other relationships as  $A \rightarrow J$  or  $S \rightarrow H$ . We have to answer: this has been a choice where the term expresses that it occurs in an *eminent* way but not in an *exclusive* one in that relationship. We have sought, in the case of various ways of the relationship occurring, whichever is more significant or usual in current literature, and even that which in several cases may be a meta-indicator to which different specific modalities are sub-added.

the individual and collective agency coincide with the approach of *capabilities and opportunities* for development.

7-8. The agency of stability, understood as the individual and collective responsibility so that the nexus of common good endures, encloses the *quality of interpersonal relationships* in a community, the presence (in quantity and quality) of intermediate groups that grant cohesion. In turn, the stability of the agency supposes a *resilience* to environmental, social and political contingencies which make the community overcome the obstacles.

9-10. Humanity's governance of the common good consists in the systemic and organized manner in which individuals and groups, in a logic of *integration*, orient their actions and relationships to form environments where no one lacks what is necessary (List A) and have the opportunity to integrally unfold and grow (list B). In turn, the humanization of governance is the dimension by which all know themselves as *cooperators* in the teleological social function, where authority (from the family level up to the government) is seen in the key of service, closeness and promotion of integral development of the community.

11-12. The governance of justice consists in the alliance of all social actors to live the principle of *subsidiarity*, because hyper-participation or hypo-participation of some social actors in the construction of a just order implies subjugation, fragmented work and lack of social cohesion. A *Rule of Law* where the meaning of the law is shared and put into practice, with effective institutions is equivalent to the just dimension of governance.

13-14. The governance of the stability or duration of the nexus of the common good refers to concrete and effective actions which give *common future* (hope) to the community insofar as that community: they are the series of meanings, shared decisions and actions which allow the community to project itself in a long-term horizon; for its part, the stability of governance involves the virtues that characterize *good government* (cfr. Lorenzetti) as a key guiding agent to the common good.

15-16. The provision of humanizing and dignifying contents of the spaces of coexistence and development opportunities could be considered as the humanity of justice, which requires a common hermeneutic as a main component, a *shared rationality* which allows the sharing of values, virtues as well as aspirations to a good life; in turn, when this core, communally conceived as a proposal of sense, actually reaches all, a true *flourishing* of individuals and groups occurs.

17-18. A *human ecology*, understood in a broad sense, would imply the sustainability of the environments (natural, family, work, etc.) which make the nexus of the common good durable. Because the common good is also in a fragile ecosystem of multiple interconnections which, if not taken care of, undermine the chances of its duration. And the obverse of this reality points out, also in a broad sense, *culture*, since humanizing the environments to give the longevity of the nexus is not enough, but also this humanity must be stabilized, that is, it must be passed on from generation to generation as hypothesis of sense of what a community is. The artistic expressions, language, gastronomy, history... are concrete ways to remain together in time.

19-20. All in a society must participate from a conception and realization of the decent life and their conditions. The peoples, especially the Latin Americans, face the challenge of making justice, in its broadest meaning, be stable and safe for everyone. That is why **social mobility** is necessary as an expansion index of opportunities and access to goods, both basic and spiritual. Finally, giving stability to expansion in itself of the nexus of the common good may well relate to **democracy**, as a way of life where *each and every one* perceives a wide horizon of peaceful coexistence, due to the abatement of unjust gaps, of any kind, between them.

## Conclusions

Still open...

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