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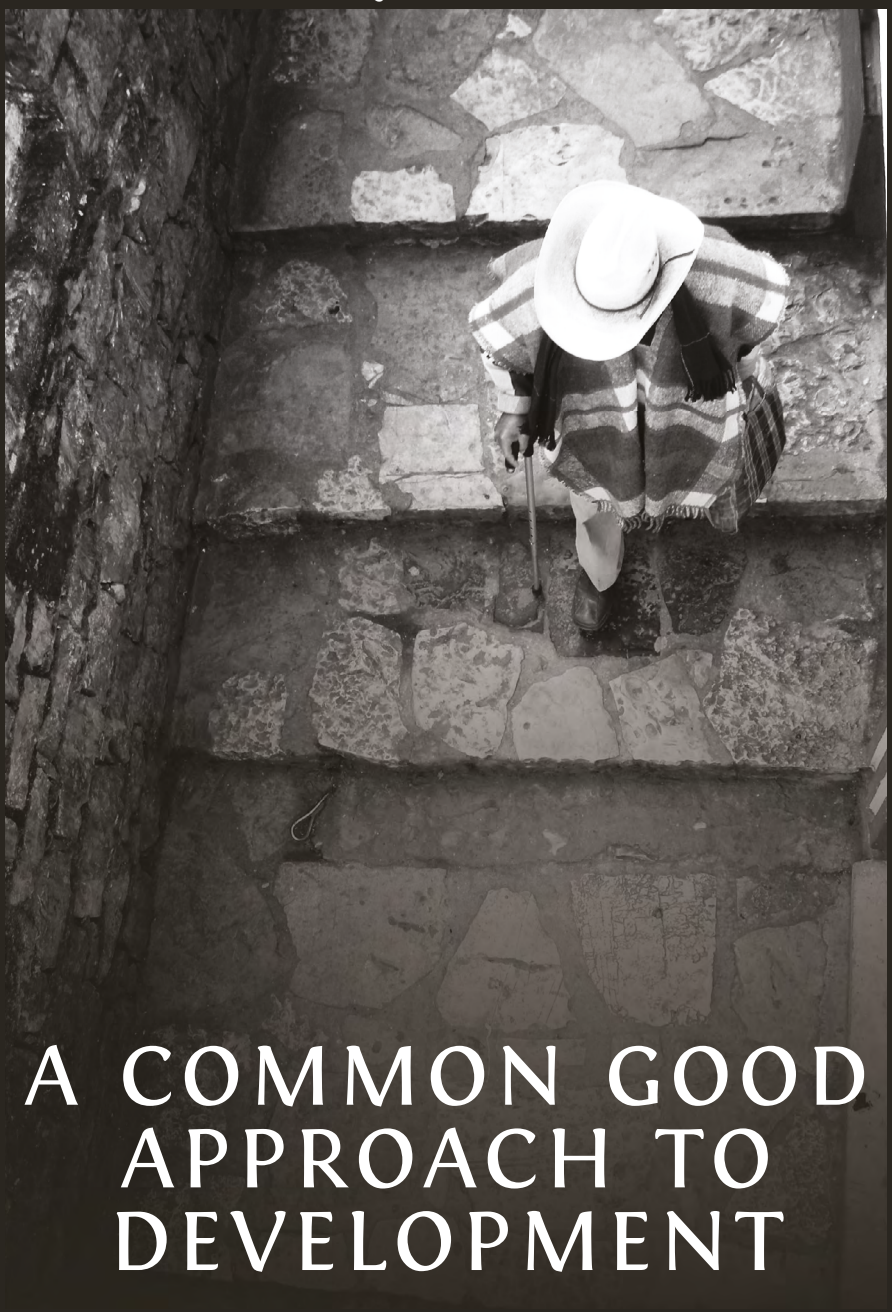

A COMMON GOOD APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Collective Dynamics of Development Processes

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2. From Theory to Practice

A Matrix of Common Good Dynamics

Mathias Nebel and Jorge Medina Delgadillo

The goal of this chapter is to propose a matrix of common good dynamics allowing us to measure the quality of the nexus achieved at the local level.[1] It builds on the previous chapter, which laid out the foundation for this matrix of common good dynamics. Most importantly, we decided to focus on a *metric of the nexus*. Other measures or proxies for specific common goods such as health, education, or associative life already exist, while measures for the universal common good remain elusive. What is lacking is a metric of *how specific common goods build up—along a common good dynamic—into a nexus of common goods*. We are thus interested in processes: the conditions required for a positive dynamic to build up within a nexus of common goods. The descriptive and normative dimensions of this dynamic make up our matrix of the nexus. The metric itself, which will be presented in the next chapter, is intended as a diagnostic tool aimed at assessing local-level development priorities.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first revises the empirical foundations on which the matrix can be built. The second introduces

1 This chapter benefitted from the discussion and exchanges during several sessions of the IPBC research committee and at the second IPBC research seminar in Barcelona (2018). We are grateful for the substantial remarks made by our colleagues in these occasions, many of which are now integrated to the text. We would particularly like to thank Clemens Sedmak, Patrick Riordan, Cécile Renouard, Simona Beretta, Helen Alford, Antonio Sánchez Díaz de Rivera, Valente Tallabs González, Oscar Garza Vázquez, José Luis Ávila Valdez, Ignacio Arbesu, and Viviana Ramírez Ramírez.

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and describes the five *normative dimensions* constitutive of any common good dynamic. We suggest that the density and the quality of the relationships between the five normative elements can be taken to be a measure of the common good achieved at the local level. Only the integration and coherence of the different normative elements within the nexus can give us an accurate account of 'how human' our social interactions actually are.

Part I: The Empirical Foundations of the Matrix

In addition to the theoretical foundations of the matrix outlined in the previous chapter, we need to empirically ground our new matrix of common good dynamics. Fortunately, two large sets of studies are at hand. The first is related to the work done by Elinor Ostrom (1990) and the International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC) which she helped found. Its extensive literature on present-day commons reviews cases from all over the world, reaching back into history as well.[2] With a social science approach to the topic, this literature is heavily dependent on case studies and has formalised a set of stable, empirical features of commons. Ostrom's results have been confirmed by the research done since by the IASC, as we discuss later in this chapter. However empirical research has also highlighted some limits of her approach, shifting the interest to the community engaging in commoning practices. Proper attention was not given by Ostrom to the role of the group or community in the definition of the common as a common. Her attention was instead concerned with the description of the collaboration mechanisms. The second set of empirical studies that we draw on in building the matrix are the so-called Community-Based or Community-Driven Development Programs (CBD and CDD). Over the last thirty years, such programmes have become a major instrument for further development projects, attracting billions of dollars of investments all over the world. This approach emphasises the importance of local participation and the value of being embedded in the community. To be sustainable and efficient, development programmes need to be locally

2 See the IASC 'digital library of the commons' https://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/dlc/ (hundreds of articles) as well as the International Journal for the Commons (https://www.thecommonsjournal.org/).

constructed and managed. The knowledge of development experience gained from both sets of empirical studies was instrumental in the creation of our matrix of common good dynamics.

I. Commons and Commoning

What do we understand by commons? Elinor in her seminal work started the present use of the term. She describes a *common* as a resource system held by a group and managed in such a way that individual 'appropriation' by members does not undermine the system's sustainability. A common could be the high mountain meadows of a Swiss alpine village or irrigation systems in Spain, which are managed in common (Ostrom 1990, pp. 61–70). In both cases there is a *common pool resource*[3]—the mountain meadows, the irrigation system—whose economical rationality is outside the free market or the state management of public goods. A common pool resource implies the capacity of competitors to collaborate so that individual use of the meadow or the irrigation system does not lead to the collapse of the whole resource system. Commons, in Ostrom's understanding, involves the sustainable use of a resource by a group of commoners. We can define commons, as Ostrom does, as 'long-enduring, self-organized, and self-governed' common pool resources (Ostrom 1990, pp. 58).

It is important to understand that Ostrom builds on the classical distinction in economics between 'private' and 'public' goods. In 1954, Samuelson proposed to ground the difference between the two in their respective *competitiveness in consumption*. A private good can be 'parceled out among different individuals' for their private consumption, whereas a public good can be enjoyed in such a way 'that each individual's consumption of such good leads to no action from any other individual's consumption of that good.' (p. 387) For Samuelson, public goods are non-competitive in consumption, while private goods are comptetitive. Soon after, Buchanan (1965, pp. 1–14) added to the 'competitiveness in consumption' a second element of difference: *excludability*. Some goods are—by their very nature or by public decision—non excludable. On this basis, public goods differ from private ones in the sense that it is

3 Ostrom uses the terms 'commons' and 'common pool resources' almost as synonyms.

difficult or even illegitimate to impede anyone's access to a public good. In contrast, private goods—whether by nature, force, law or public decision—can be exclusively possessed or enjoyed. The production and distribution of private and public goods are also different. While the free market produces and distributes private goods, the state provides and regulates access to public goods. The distinction was a hugely successful one in economics, and a critical tool in delineating the boundaries and respective responsibilities of the market and the state in liberal, capitalist societies. It was so elegant: two sorts of goods, two actors, two institutions, two different logics or rationalities.

Ostrom's investigation of common pool resources highlighted the limits of Samuelson's model. First, there were not just private goods on the one hand and public goods on the other, but a third sort of good, namely common goods. It also meant that a third economic actor, namely civil society, composed of groups and communities, would be recognised as important. Finally, it supposed that beyond state management and market mechanisms another sort of economic organisation and activity that allowed for *collaboration in competitiveness* had to be recognised. This theoretical breakthrough won Ostrom the Nobel Prize (2009).

However, her main contribution, perhaps, is to have described in detail the practical mechanisms required to govern commons as commons. On the basis of her empirical studies, she highlighted eight principles specific to the governance of common pool resources:

- Define clear group boundaries;
- Match rules governing the use of common goods to local needs and conditions;
- Ensure that those affected by rules can participate in modifying the rules;
- Make sure the rule-making rights of community members are respected by outside authorities;
- Develop a system, carried out by community members, for monitoring members' behaviours;
- Use graduated sanctions for rule violators;
- Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution;

- Build responsibility for governing the common resource in nested tiers from the lowest level up to the entire interconnected system (Ostrom 1990, pp. 91–102).

The list is built on an analysis of the commons as composed of an *actor* (the group), an *output* (the common pool resource system) and *shared governance mechanisms* (the principles). Good governance requires: 1. a clear definition of *who belongs* to the group; 2. *rules* to structure collaboration so that they match the context and needs of the local community; 3–4. local community authority to revise the rules and to eventually change them; 5–7. a locally embedded monitoring system, capable of implementing sanctions (albeit progressive ones) and resolving conflicts; 8. a mechanism that counters the capture of the commons by elites and enforces the participation of the lower tiers of the group. These empirical principles for the governance of commons led to a flourish of research that verified the presence of these elements in the management of common pool resources (Van Laerhoven and Berge 2011, pp. 1–8). Practitioners quickly and widely adopted the list as a way to induce efficient local governance of commons.

However, it soon became clear that Ostrom's understanding of commons was too limited (Linebaugh 2009, De Angelis and Harvie 2013, pp. 280–294). One early critique was that most of the commons she studied were natural resources, which suppose a subtractability of use. But commons may also be intangible, like knowledge, language, or culture.[4] In these cases, consumption by one individual does not usually limit that of another, but rather will increase the existence of a body of knowledge, a language or a culture along the lines of 'the more we share, the more we have.' These early critiques, however, quickly shifted toward the social and political definitions of commons. Commons 'don't simply exist—they are created,' states Helfrich (2012, pp. 61–67). What a common is or is not ultimately depends not on the good itself, but on the way a society understands this good and acts accordingly. A common depends on what a community defines as being one. The study of the sociological and political process by which commons are defined as such, as well as governed, is absent from Ostrom's detailed analysis of common pool resources.

4 Hence the term 'new commons' to describe them. See Hess 2008, pp. 1–75.

Along with this second group of critiques, it became necessary to give more importance to: (a) the group or community united around the re-production of commons; (b) the interaction underpinning the commons; and (c) the definition of the legitimate use of commons. Let's develop these three points:

First, a commons always implies a community. There is no commons without a community holding it as such, without a community creating the commons and using it. This community is *more* than a mere 'productive unit'; it is a complex social system (Fournier 2013, pp. 433–453; De Angelis and Harvie 2003). How it values and defines the commons is crucial to understanding the collective organisational arrangement created to govern the commons. The public assessment and political definition of commons is thus a key factor in its very existence.

Second, a definition of commons should therefore put more emphasis on the activity itself and less on the output of this activity, the common pool resource system. Linebaugh puts it straightforwardly: 'the commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, an activity, rather than as a noun, a substantive' (2009, p. 279). According to Helfrich (2012b, pp. 35–36), we may better understand commons and their institutional arrangements if we think of them first as *social practices* shaping a society. The *process* by which commons are produced and maintained is not only important for their sustainability. The process shapes the community, or as Euler states using the old scholastic distinction, it 'in-forms' the community (2018, pp. 10–16). We can't correctly understand commons without thinking of the *social practice* underpinning the reproduction of the common (Giddens 1986).

Thirdly, a definition of commons must consider the *diversity of use* of resources (De Angelis and Harvie 2013, Fournier 2013). The social meaning of a common is not fixed and may change according to the evolution of a society. Thus, the *legitimate use* of a certain good will have to be defined. In line with the two previous critiques, a resource's diversity of use underscores the cultural and political nature of commons. Their organisational arrangements may not be driven only by questions of subtractability of use and sustainability, as Ostrom proposed, but also by the meaning given to a common from which the *legitimate use* defined for it by a society derives.

Hence, commons may be better *defined* as an 'institutionalized, legal and infrastructural arrangement for a practice—commoning—in which we collaboratively organize and take responsibility for the use, maintenance and production of diverse resources' (Acksel et al. 2015, p. 135). Commons can be *understood* in terms of the social systems through which communities share resources and define the modalities of use, production and circulation of these resources (De Angelis and Harvie 2013, pp. 289–291). Our matrix of common good dynamics will adopt this definition.

II. Community-Based or Community-Driven Development Programmes

Ostrom's principles were swiftly picked up by the World Bank, which in the 1990s launched a new sort of development project called Community-Based or Community-Driven Development (CBDs and CDDs). The importance of gathering the right political will needed for projects to achieve results was acknowledged (Kaufmann et al. 1999). Equally important and related was the need to embed development practice in local communities whenever possible (World Bank 1996). These CBD and CDD programmes became a growing trend in the following years (Mansuri and Rao 2004, pp. 1–77; 2013).

Why were they so popular? CBDs and CDDs stem from a wide recognition of the failure of a top-down, provider approach to development.[5] To be sustainable and meaningful, a development programme needs to be embedded in the local community, studies have shown. This evidence called for a participatory approach to development. CBDs and CDDs answer that call to embed development practices. They emphasise community control over planning, decision-making, and investment resources. Central to these programmes are three key endeavours: 'Adopting processes that strengthen the capacity of a community to organize and sustain development; Supporting

5 As Narayan wrote in 1995 (pp. 1–2): 'From time immemorial, societies have organized themselves to take care of collective and individual needs. Why then have so many attempts at getting people to participate and take responsibility for community-based development failed in the last fifty years? One reason is that never before in the history of humankind has there been such a massive experiment to induce change through the infusion of external ideas, management, funds and technology, all controlled from places far distant from the site of development.'

community empowerment through user participation in decision-making; Reversing control and accountability from central authorities to community organizations' (Nayaran 1995, p. 5).

It was thought that this sort of radical turn would bring about an increase in the *efficiency, cost effectiveness and sustainability* of development projects, while at the same time increasing the *empowerment of the local population* and changing *behavioural patterns*. These three actions were intuitively tied together; you can't achieve results if you don't get the population to participate in the project, and the project doesn't last long if coherent patterns of behaviour do not sustain the result.[6]

After more than thirty years of practice we can assess the effectiveness of these claims. Results have been varied.[7] The World Bank assessment by Susan Wong (2013, pp. 1–16) of its own CDD programmes shows they have had a positive impact on provision of and access to services and goods. Compared to other modes of service delivery, CDDs achieve a higher cost-effectiveness and rate of return. On the negative side, they have had almost no impact on social capital and behavioural change. The emphasis on the participation mechanisms is also ambiguous, as they have frequently been captured by local elites or have offered new possibilities for rent seeking and corruption (Baldwin et al. 2016, pp. 1–40). A broader study by Mansuri and Rao (2013) on the impact of participatory programmes is much harsher. It analyses the results of over 500 studies covering decades of development projects. Empirical results do not sustain two main assumptions widely held as true: (1) that involving communities in the design and implementation of development will automatically increase adequate delivery of goods and services; and (2) that participatory practice results in higher levels of local cooperation and governance and builds social capital (Mansuri and Rao 2013, pp. 7–8). Mansuri and Rao successfully argue that civil society failures occur just as frequently as government and market failures do (2013, pp. 59–79). Does participation improve development

6 This is basically Ostrom's point: the building of a local irrigation system does not last long if the local population is not involved in its governance and does not behave according to rules that are consistent with the preservation of the irrigation system (1990, p. 157).

7 See Bennet and D'Onofrio (2015, pp. 1–14), Mansuri and Rao (2013), King (2013, pp. 1–55), Wong (2013, pp. 1–16), Baldwin et al. (2016, pp. 1–40), Mansuri and Rao (2004, pp. 17–47).

outcomes? Modestly, and then usually to the advantage of higher tiers of the population. Does participation strengthen civil society? Not really, at least not in the long term (Mansuri and Rao 2013, pp. 221–224, 275–277). Participation *alone* is not sufficient.

Two other key findings of the report are noteworthy. First, participatory interventions work better and last longer when they are embedded in the wider social system and supported by the state (Mansuri and Rao 2013, p. 288). This relationship to the context is of such importance that the authors recommend that projects always be flexible, i.e., that they have built-in mechanisms of learning and adaptability. Second, the authors note the difference between building bridges or roads and seeking social change. The former may be planned, and the results assessed in terms of production costs and access to services, but social change is complex to achieve, and must contemplate the long term. 'Repairing civil society and political failure requires a shift in the social equilibrium that derives from a change in the nature of social interactions and from modifying norms and local culture. *These much more difficult tasks require a fundamentally different approach to development*—one that is flexible, long-term, self-critical and strongly infused with the spirit of learning by doing.' (Mansuri and Rao 2013, pp. 12–13).

Mansuri and Rao's review does not condemn the participatory approach. It denounces some simplistic assumptions made by development planners and pinpoints the need to rethink some of the theoretical tenets of CBDs and CDDs. Among the theoretical elements in need of clarification, Bennet and d'Onofrio (2015, pp. 1–4) highlight two as crucial: (a) there is a fundamental ambiguity about the goal of participatory development. What are we really aiming for when we seek to implement participatory development? And, (b): how do we conceptualise social change interventions? Both remarks point us toward questions of *teleology*. What do we seek development for? Is justice the goal of development? Or is it rather the freedom to live the life we have reason to value? Or is it about a sustainable and harmonious relationship with the environment? Why should we seek participation in development—to impose external goals on a local population or to help people discover their own development priorities?

III. Empirical Elements of the Matrix of Common Good Dynamics

These two sets of empirical studies—the IASC research and the CBDs and CDDs projects—can help us identify the key drivers of common good dynamics.[8]

The first characteristic we notice is the constant insistence on the importance of 'local actors' and on the 'embeddedness' of local development practice for commons to exist. A common implies a community that values and engages in a shared practice. As we have seen, this is one of the latest shifts in commons studies, along with the importance given to the public 'meaning of commons' and the definition of 'legitimate use.' Both Ostrom's list of governance principles and the World Bank development practice show the importance of the participation mechanism. To be real, participation must be organised, supervised, and seek inclusion. Thus, *collective agency*, the capability to freely organise together, seems to be a key driver of common good dynamics. Without collective agency, there is simply no capacity to recognise the meaning and value of the nexus's common goods and neither is there the ability to change them. We therefore select collective agency freedom as the first of our normative dimensions for the nexus. Without collective agency freedom, no long-term systematic dynamic of common goods can be sustained.

Participation in itself is not enough. This much has been made empirically clear by CBD and CDD projects. We thus need to think carefully about local governance. How to discuss the local needs and account for the specificities of a particular context? What about the decision-making process, and how to set priorities? What rules should we set to coordinate our action in an efficient way? Who will supervise

8 However we ought to be cautious when reviewing some of these studies' empirical conclusions. Most of the practical cases analysed by IASC as well as the CBDs and CDDs are at the micro level. They focus on one commoning practice or a common pool resource but do not study the complex equilibrium of commoning practices and common goods in a given society, as we will be doing. The nexus is a *system* of common goods and will have therefore features that may not be identified at the local level. But as the governance of the nexus' equilibrium is itself a kind of commoning practice, we may assume that micro key drivers will still be found to be true at the macro level. However, it is an assumption that we will have to verify through the application of the metric.

compliance with the rules and how? How can we avoid elite capture and include the most vulnerable among us? With no governance, no commoning practice is stable, and no commons pool resource system can be sustained in the long run. The same must hold true for the nexus of common goods. The specific equilibrium of commons in a society requires the existence of some *governance capability* at the level of the nexus. If it failed to exist—if governance of the nexus failed to be efficient and well-organised—then the relationships between the society's common goods would not be driven to evolve and adapt to the circumstances. The connections would not hold together under the strain of time and events and would eventually fall apart, leaving behind the marginalised. One of the key empirical findings of CBDs and CDDs is that the relationship to the wider context, especially higher governance authorities, is crucial to the success of such projects. We will select *governance* as the second normative dimension of common good dynamics.

Justice also appears as an essential feature of commons. The group engaging in a commoning practice assumes some form of equality between its members, an equality of participation that entails at least some claim for a fair share of the common benefits. The empirical study of commons reveals the importance of justice; indeed, the claim of justice is at the root of the commons' perspective. Take, for example, the very idea of common pool resources. These are organised in such a way that each of the group members may have a fair share of resources, from the common pool system. It's a question of complex equality and distributive justice. Take also the insistence on gradual sanctions for rule breakers, inclusion mechanisms, and efficient, local conflict resolution systems. Each of these distinctive features of commons point toward the deep structuring role of justice in commoning practice. Without some sense of justice, the cooperation among members apparently can't sustain itself. We believe that justice must take the same role at the level of the nexus. Why should it be different? The more unjust a nexus is, the less collaborative it will become. *Justice* is the third normative dimension of common good dynamics.

Another key empirical driver emerging from studies of the commons is the importance of *sustainability*. In Ostrom's seminal work, the whole governance process focused on the preservation of the common pool

resource system. Governance must ensure a sustainable use of the common, taking a long-term perspective and making sure that short-term gains do not undermine the very existence of the resource (Ostrom 1994, pp. 1–33). Later studies showed that what was true for the output was also perhaps even more relevant for the community engaged in the commoning practice (Fournier 2013, pp. 433–453). A common concern of a community, and the requirement that it be a stable one, lies at the root of the insistence on the common's sustainable use. In fact, the stability of commoning practices is key to achieve the stability of the community itself. The reciprocity between both elements, community and commons, is therefore of utmost importance. Indeed, it is another key lesson of CBDs and CDDs: good results can't be achieved if the population doesn't participate in the project, and the project doesn't last long if coherent patterns of behaviour in the local community don't develop to sustain the result. Stability, like justice, infuses the very structure of commons because they are all about community, and communities work for the long term, not the short. Social change must contemplate the long term. *Stability*, this capability to think and work for the long term, is the next normative dimension of common good dynamics.

Finally, we ended the previous section by mentioning some important questions about the importance of a clear understanding of development goals. The critical question arises again and again in development practice: what are we seeking development for? Development is about real people, not just ideas. Development must matter for them; it must be meaningful to them. If it can't, then it easily becomes an imperative imposed on a local population by far-away authorities. Worse still, it may become something that the local population rejects as disrupting their own nexus of common goods. To *make sense*, development goals must align with the local context, and even if development practitioners strive to change that context, they must acknowledge it. In addition, the local community must be able to validate the social change proposed in a development programme, not only by querying during a formal approval process, but by weighing the programme to see how it fits into the local nexus. Can we *make sense* of this project within our traditions, history, and community life?

At the same time, development can't be restricted to the wishes and wills of local communities. Systemic injustice, poverty, and exclusion

may be part of the current nexus. Adaptative preferences might then lead to rejection of positive development projects as incompatible with the current appalling socio-political system. The resilience of various mafias in Italy or drug cartels in Mexico proves how difficult it is to further change when criminal organisations co-opt political governance. Development is also about universal ends. Hence, the question of the development goals also involves anthropological and metaphysical strands, such as reason, passion, or freedom, to name a few. Several classical answers frame the present debate. We may argue that development is about justice as fairness, about capabilities and human flourishing, or about democracy and human rights. To leave it open—as academics like to do—is not a real alternative at the level of practice. The theoretical dilemma has to be resolved when deciding this or that specific option on the ground. Not doing so impedes action and becomes a seed of organisational incoherence in the long run. We argued in the previous chapter that the normative horizon of such dynamics is our own common humanity. The goal of development, then, is to further our humanity: a task and a goal we may only achieve together. *Humanity* will therefore make up the last of the normative dimension by which we assess common good dynamics.

Part II: Toward a Matrix of Common Good Dynamics

This second part of the chapter presents a matrix of common good dynamics (CGD) that merges the theoretical approach developed in the previous chapter with the empirical elements we just reviewed. We will argue here that the combination of the five normative dimensions selected for the matrix can provide a fair insight into the quality of CGD. The strength of each dimension, and the coherence and integration of their mutual relationships, will be considered as a proxy for CGD quality.

As we argued earlier, a society can be described as a complex and dynamic equilibrium of common goods. Specific common goods do not just float around in a society, but are organised in a specific way—a nexus of common goods—unique to each society (see Chapter 1, Figure 3). It is crucially important to remember that such an equilibrium is dynamic and must evolve constantly to adapt to internal and external pressures.

We seek to design a matrix that describes the normative drivers that will lead the nexus dynamic toward a deeper and richer humanity. If we now incorporate the conclusions of the earlier section into Figure 1, we get the following matrix of common good dynamics.

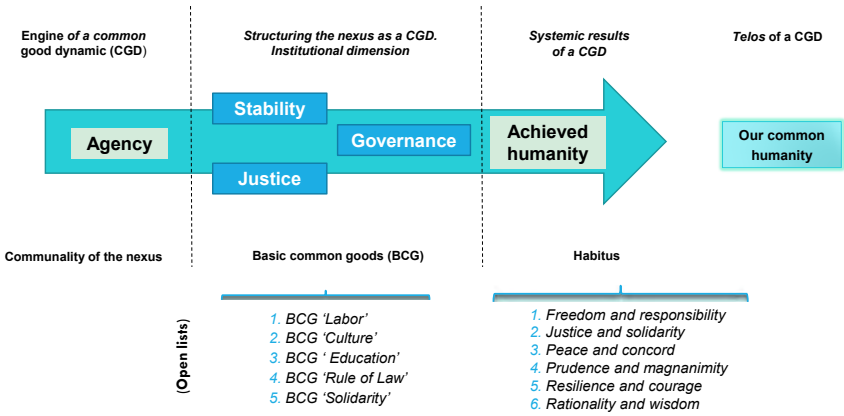

Figure 1. The normative drivers of common good dynamics.

We will describe in the following sections this representation of the matrix in detail, beginning with (1) what it is intended to capture; and (2) what is understood by each of the five normative drivers; then explaining (3) how we intend to measure humanity; and closing with (4) the relational nature of matrix.

I. What Does the Matrix Capture? A Few Preliminary Remarks

First, we intend through the matrix to capture the strength and quality of a *process*, not a mere outcome. The matrix illustrates how a nexus of common goods may change, either for the better or for the worse. This is why the information we are looking for is not the kind that provides us with a static picture of the nexus. We are looking for *key normative drivers* that may help us to identify and record the direction taken and the transformations made by the nexus, or to put it another way, to understand how the nexus moves, and if it moves in the right direction. With the expectation that it will inform the user about the strength and direction of a CGD, the matrix thus gives crucial information that few other indicators provide about the *quality* of a development process.

Second, ethical norms do not obligate in one and the same way, so the normativity of each dimension must be differentiated. Humanity stands for the *telos* or *normative horizon* of development. It functions as the key normative aspect of the nexus, its polar star, indicating the overall direction we should aim for as well as giving us a rough idea of the distance that is still left to travel to reach the port. But it also provides a yardstick with which to gauge the overall systemic outcome of a specific nexus. In contrast to humanity, the other drivers—governance, justice, and stability—are not teleological norms, but deontological ones. These are instrumental norms that inform, structure, and regulate the relationships between specific common goods contained in the nexus in order to lead it toward a more human society, a more complete humanity. Finally, 'agency' functions normatively as the engine of common good dynamics, the normative element required to infuse the nexus with freedom. It is the force that flows through the nexus, transforming it, either for the better or for the worse. That's why agency must be informed by justice, good governance, and stability in order to strive for a more human society.

Our third comment flows naturally from the two earlier ones. The five normative drivers of common good dynamics cannot be considered independent elements. They are relational, by which we mean that the normativity of each one relates to that of all the others. As we've said, agency is not sufficient in itself. It must be concomitant with the deontological requirements of justice, good governance, and stability, exactly as justice won't generate common good dynamics if it does not foster agency, stability, and governance *at the same time*. The following image may help understand the importance of this point.

Let's imagine that a nexus is like a big ship. The rear engine is agency, while several smaller, mobile engines situated at the front (good governance) and the sides (stability and justice) are used to steer the ship. All engines must point in the same direction—toward humanity—for the ship to advance along a straight line. If one of the engines doesn't function well or is not aligned with the other three, the ship will slowly lose its heading. Worse still, if none of the engines works together, then the ship's movement will become chaotic, going in circles or stalling altogether. The appropriate balance of the engines and the ship's speed as the vessel advances toward more humanity is the information provided by the matrix.

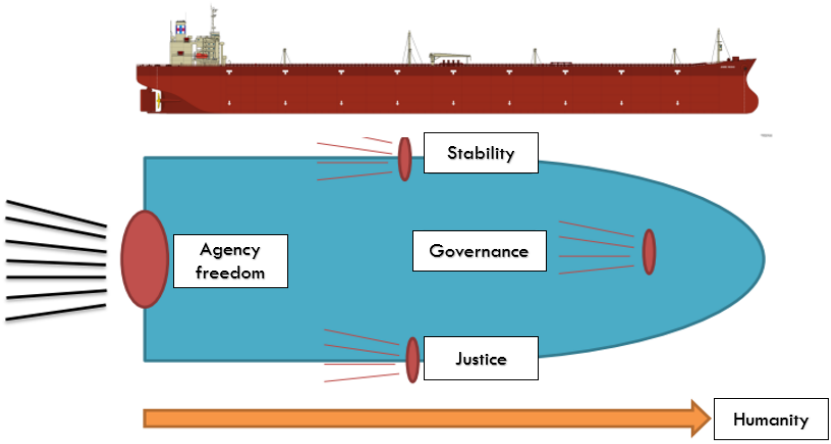

Figure 2. Common good dynamics. The analogy of a boat.

Our ship metaphor brings up a fourth comment. Up until now, we have spoken about the normative dimensions of the matrix as if they were concepts. They obviously are, but they are not only that. We will see below that by 'justice' or 'agency freedom,' we indeed do refer to some abstract universal features essential to identify and recognise as what we call 'justice' or 'agency.' But concepts become concrete by becoming specific. Justice becomes real as it is institutionalised in the practices of a judiciary system. Collective agency freedom becomes real and effective when democratic institutions make political participation possible. The point is that each specific realisation of a concept is radically limited and incomplete. It does not embody the full, universal meaning of the concept. Therefore, when we speak here of normative dimensions commanding common good dynamics, we speak about a universal matrix that allows us to investigate the inherent diversity of reality. But at the same time, it must be clear that what we will be looking for in these normative dimensions are the very concrete institutions and social practices making them real. Ethical principles must be embedded to become effective.

A fifth clarification concerns the purpose of the matrix. The metric, it may be feared, could easily become too rigid, its claim to universality squashing the *inherent diversity* we should expect to find at the local level. The present chapter is highly sensitive to this danger. We think that our focus on processes rather than outcomes allows us to respect the huge

diversity of nexuses existing all over the world. What is important to us is not so much the specific composition of the nexus, but the fact that it is moving in the right direction, that there *is* a common good dynamic furthering its coherence, integration, and humanity. The normative framework only fixes the instrumental conditions (agency, justice, good governance, and stability) for such a dynamic to exist, as well as fixing the normative horizon (humanity) by which we may value the progress of the whole. Under this framework, the diversity of possible nexuses is almost infinite, each village, town, or nation having its own specificities. But whatever the elements making up a nexus, the question will be the same: does the present equilibrium move along a common good dynamic or not, and if so, how quickly?

But what about the telos then? Is humanity not defined and imposed by the matrix? Is it not a fixed concept? Not really. Humanity is a normative horizon, something we are meant to seek and slowly discover in doing so. Our common humanity is a task as well as a quest. We can't renounce the seeking but its meaning is still to be fully discovered. What it means to be 'human together' is a question each generation will have to answer anew and in an incremental way. Nonetheless, we already know that humanity is not without boundaries. Humanity is like a space with borders, circumscribed by the possibility of the nonhuman. The matrix adopts this second form of framing 'humanity' by describing its boundaries through two open, incremental lists: one of *basic common goods* and another of *core habitus*. Lists are necessary. Without becoming specific, humanity is but an empty word. But by allowing for the list to be added to, we escape the trap of an ideological conception of humanity.

Finally, as we said previously, the matrix's normativity is relational. Each normative dimension is assessed through its relationships to all the others and therefore opens the way for *partial orderings.* That means it is possible to have many specific orders of priorities emerging from an application of the matrix. The matrix does not impose one and the same solution onto each situation, but allows for a plurality of solutions within a specific, normative framework. With these preliminary comments set out, we can now turn to the description of the five normative dimensions.

II. The Five Dimensions of the Matrix

The Definition and Systemic Function of Each Dimension

The normative role of each dimension is specific. Agency may be understood as the *systemic precondition* of common good dynamics, i.e., the efficient causality of the nexus. Justice, stability, and governance describe key *systemic social functions* that organise the dynamic and are required to lead the nexus toward the universal common good—social functions, in other words, that are normatively bound up with the achievement of the common good (formal causality). Finally, humanity refers to the *systemic achievement* of common good dynamics (end causality).

'*Collective agency freedom*[9] refers to the overall capacity of the nexus population to *engage with others and act together freely, cooperating to the sequencing of social goods* (Arendt 1958, pp. 82–115). It is the collective capability to act together to solve common problems, a capability embedded in various formal and informal institutions structuring the nexus. Three systemic social functions include the following: (a) *Governance* describes the capacity to lead the nexus toward an ever broader and deeper human integration. It is polycentric and abides by an organic subsidiarity; (b) *Justice* contemplates the fairness of the processes by which people take part in the consecution of the social goods produced by the nexus and take part in their benefits, i.e., the fair generation of different social goods and the just distribution of the common benefits among the people; and (c) *Stability* describes the social institutions preserving and enriching the achieved humanity of the nexus into its long future. These are the institutions that preserve, transmit, and reinvent the nexus's humanity, providing it with resilience and sustainability. Each of these three key social functions are correlated, subsequently checking and correcting the other two. Together, they structure the nexus and bring about a common good dynamic. Finally, *Humanity,* the *systemic achievement* of a common good dynamic, denotes the human quality of our coexistence in the nexus: how we relate and act together as human beings in that particular society. More precisely,

9 On agency and collective capability, see: Ibrahim and Alkire (2007, pp. 379–403), Deneulin (2008, pp. 105–124).

we characterise 'humanity' as the achievement of a set of basic common goods and core habitus.

What Do We Mean by Collective Agency Freedom?

We understand this freedom not in terms of rights, but as the real freedom to engage with others and act together freely, cooperating in the consecution of social goods (see Chapter 4). Basically, collective agency freedom describes how a given population engages in common issues, drafts solutions, and achieves some social good (commoning) (Euler 2018, pp. 10–16). It is first and foremost a positive freedom. How accustomed are people to discussing common issues and solving them together? In other words, the term describes how much agency freedom is embedded in a particular culture. But it also describes a negative freedom. Are people free to take part in such initiatives? Does the legal and administrative framework of the state make it possible for them to organise around common issues? Is there a space left between the market and the state for people to strive toward a commons? The more robust this collective agency freedom is in a given population, the more energy will power the nexus of common goods. The less agency freedom there is, the more violent, unstable, fragmented, and inhuman the nexus will be. Collective agency freedom accounts for the inventiveness and creativity existing in the nexus, and for the collective capability to generate commons in the nexus.

Agency as a positive collective freedom. We consider agency freedom as one of the normative conditions for the existence of common good dynamics in a society. The importance of freedom for the common good is nothing new. The proud defense of freedom by Pericles in Thucydides' work is a precise recognition of our collective agency freedom as a valuable social good (Sherover 1984, pp. 27–52). In Pericles' speech, freedom is either real and effective or it is neither (Thucydides 2010, §2.34–2.46). Consequently, freedom is seen as a *collective achievement and duty*—you are called on by all the others to behave as a free person—not an individual right. We are free together, because we together value that freedom, live and organise our lives according to it, and, if necessary, fight in common to defend it (Palmer 1992, pp. 15–37).

We are no longer accustomed to thinking about freedom in this sense. Indeed, social contract theory postulates that collective agency freedom

will somehow derives from the recognition of equal individual rights. As a social 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 citizen. But how will these rights collaborate with one another? How will they grow to be more than an aggregate of individual freedoms? The question of individual rights versus collective rights has always been a difficult one for liberal democracies. We propose a different approach. We don't start thinking about society's freedom from a formal set of universal rights, 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 actualises his or her own liberty. As such, individual and collective agency freedoms are considered concomitant. Empirically, we are born into social relationships that shape the acquisition of our own personal freedom. It seems consequently relevant to recognise collective agency freedom as a telling indicator of the quality of the engine of the common good dynamic in a society.

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

And What about Governance?

A definition of 'governance.' If agency freedom can be seen as the engine of the nexus, 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 generation. As a complex and dynamic equilibrium, the web of social goods and communities that makes up the nexus is never a given. Its inherent fragility requires constant care. It needs governance *to preserve itself, to adapt and project the nexus toward an*

ever-more-human common future. It is this key social function of the nexus that we call governance.[10] *Good* governance is therefore governance for the common good,[11] i.e., *governance aiming at an ever more universal and human nexus of common goods*.

'Governance goals.' As a systemic social function, governance propels the existing nexus of the common goods toward deeper and broader integration, moving the whole nexus in the right direction, toward the universal common good. Governance does so not only by furthering integration, but by addressing conflicts and imbalances, seeking coherence in the commons, and 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. We may thus distinguish two goals for the governance of the nexus. The first aims to project the nexus's dynamic into the foreseeable future. In this goal, governance is an act of *prevision*, of *reinvention,* and of *transmission* of the nexus. Beginning with the *prudent prevision* of future events or situations that may affect the existing nexus and of how to adapt to them, governance then embraces a *creative reinvention* of the nexus, tackling its many limitations and directing it toward the universal common good. The second goal aims to further the existing nexus of the common good and focuses on the present of the dynamic. According to this second objective, governance aims to promote a deeper integration of the nexus.

A fragmented and polycentric social function. Governance is by no means a single, all-encompassing social function, but rather a fragmented and polycentric one (Van Zeben 2019, pp. 38–49). In addition, governance of the nexus can't be reduced to one formal institution since it is

10 As such, governance can also be thought of as a specific common good, but one arising from the necessity to forge a dynamic of the common good between the existing social goods. It is out of the need to drive the social goods toward an ever-deeper nexus of the common good that governance exists. Without it, the existing system stagnates, becomes rigid, and decays.

11 'Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them'. World Bank Governance Index Definition (2019) (https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/). An early version of the definition of governance held that governance is: 'traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good' (World Bank 2004).

implemented by a wide array of organisations, which can be divided into several groups. The first group of social processes concerns the generation of commons (Ostrom 1994, pp. 1–33; Tosun et al. 2016, pp. 1–12): the many processes that allow questions of the common good to emerge to be answered and implemented. What do we value together? What do we want to achieve in common? How can we achieve it together? Mostly these are associations and interest groups from the civil society. A second group is made of the institutions projecting the nexus into the foreseeable future, anticipating and preparing for social changes, political power plays, technological developments, and economic shifts, for example universities, think-tanks or international organisations (Mayntz 2002, pp. 15–27). Finally, a third group of institutions deals with the management of the public square. But for all the importance and authority of this last group of largely state institutions, they can't possibly cope alone with all facets of the governance of the nexus.[12] Indeed, the all-important tasks covered by the first and second group of institutions are usually rather poorly performed by the administrative bodies of modern states.

Organic subsidiarity. A common good perspective will also insist that governance doesn't trickle down from the top (De Rougemont 1949, pp. 59–72, 95–96). Rather, it grows from the local level up toward the national level. As a complex cooperative game, common good dynamics start with local people and real problems that must be solved in common. Then, when a solution requires taking it to the next level of collaboration (mezzo/macro), power is delegated further up, to a wider level of cooperation and governance. This movement through delegation can be called an *organic subsidiarity* (De Rougemont 1970, p. 124), where final decisions are kept as close as possible to the people they will affect, with decisions transferred to a higher level of governance only when they can't be resolved at the present level. Only respect for this organic subsidiarity engenders both the authority *and* the efficiency of governance. Top-down, centralised forms of governance may well be more efficient in the short term, but in the long term they tend to rely more on coercion than public support. Indeed, the authority of governance is for De Rougemont directly linked to the communality of the common good, i.e., the capacity for people to exercise their

12 See for example Kautay (2016, pp. 47–61), and Weiss (2010, pp. 795–814).

agency freedom through political governance processes (pp. 141–143). Whenever public decisions around public policies are decided elsewhere and without consultation with the people they affect, then the authority of the decision or the policy will decay in the long run. People do not obey a new policy only for the utility it produces or out of a fear of punishment, but because the policy makes sense, generating a common good *they* value (Riordan 2015, pp. 83–96). Hence governance for the common good is federalist in essence. Its ordinary functioning is an organic subsidiarity contemplating the medium and long term.

Justice as a Normative Driver of Common Good Dynamics

A definition of 'justice.' In a common good perspective, justice concerns the fair processes by which people participate in the common goods of the nexus, or, to put it another way, justice is the *fair generation of the different social goods making up the nexus, including a just distribution of its common benefits* (Walzer 1983, pp. 6–10). Justice concerns a complex equality, as we do not start with individuals but with social goods and interactions. Justice then appears as a collective task concerned with the production and distribution of common goods. As we saw in the previous chapter, common goods are 'shared' in many different forms. We may share their *meaning* and their *value* and take part in the *practical rationality* and the *collective habits* needed for their consecution. But we may also have a share in the common *benefit* that common goods create, thus accessing with others a specific service or good (Walzer 1983, pp. 21–25). No distribution of benefits can be thought of without referring to shared consecution and meaning. Our understanding of the complex equality that rules the distribution of common benefits depends largely on the meaning given to a common good (Walzer 1994, pp. 32–36). Moreover, most of the common benefits are non-tangible and do not diminish by having others participate (Hess 2008, pp. 38–40). Focusing on how we share common goods thus significantly widens our conception of justice (Riordan 2015, pp. 159–178), which has to consider (i) shared meaning (communality of the common good), (ii) shared consecution (participation), and (iii) shared benefit (common use).

Justice as a social function of the nexus. A society is composed of the dynamic integration of many common goods. Justice does not arise

here as a given. To the contrary, it 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 a society (Walzer 1983, pp. 31–63). A society's sense of justice builds up slowly through complex social processes that progressively *state what is fair* and implement *just interactions* in the nexus. This dynamic balancing act is what we call the 'social function of justice'.

Indeed, justice, like governance, is a social function, a complex set of processes and institutions required to drive the nexus toward an ever-more-human integration. From a common good perspective, justice has to do with the 'we' of the nexus, with 'our togetherness,' with how people 'hold together' in a differentiated but integrated society (Riordan 2015, p. 179). It illustrates that our existences are deeply interconnected through the many common goods organising our society. In fact, our interactions in the nexus are so tightly intertwined that we can hardly disentangle ourselves from them. Our everyday lives depend on the existence of the nexus, and on the communal life we share within it. Justice from this perspective does not seek societal unity or even a formal equality among the different members of the nexus. Justice focuses on solidarity among the people belonging to the nexus: *a solidarity regarding the generation of social goods and their distribution*. Thus, justice 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 a dynamic will falter and fail, and the nexus will slowly implode along the fault lines of poverty, violence, and exclusion (Lindahl 2013, pp. 1–12).

The tasks of justice. The tasks of the social function of justice are twofold. On the one hand, justice keeps watch over the nexus so it does not *disintegrate*. It fights exclusion, violence, and poverty. It deals with the external limits of this 'we' as well as with its many internal tensions (Lindahl 2013, pp. 39–43, 187–196). On the other hand, justice seeks to *promote a dignified and flourishing life for each and every person in the nexus*. It furthers solidarity through a deeper integration of the nexus (Ibid., pp. 239–248). The first task points to a 'thin understanding of justice,' while the second, to a 'thick conception of justice' (Walzer 1994, pp. 1–19). The tasks are correlated; to look after the excluded, to battle for basic common goods, and to seek human flourishing are part of one and the same process, creating a deeper inclusion in the nexus.

The Dimension of Stability

A definition of 'stability.' While we are familiar with governance and justice as existing social functions, stability is not usually recognised as key to achieving an order conducive to the common good.[13] Stability describes *the preservation and reinvention of the achieved humanity of the nexus and looks to its long future* (Nebel 2013, pp. 131–144; Arendt 1972, pp. 238–251). Providing sustainability and resilience, stability includes the institutions that preserve, transmit, and reinvent the nexus's humanity.

Stability as a social function. Stability is the overall capability of the nexus to ensure the continuity of our humanity. Without such stability, no common good dynamic can be sustained. Stability as a social function describes the capacity to preserve the long human past and to articulate it in the long human future, while maintaining the nexus's dynamic toward the universal common good. Whereas *governance* is responsible for driving the nexus toward the future, and *justice* looks after the nexus's fairness, *stability* is responsible for the long-term 'human sustainability' of the nexus. Stability's currency is time. But not any time: human time, a *duration,* a continuity of time that allows humanity to flourish in the nexus.[14] While governance addresses change, and justice, fairness, stability generates continuity. The social function of stability is responsible for the continuity of our humanity. It is this continuity that gives the nexus its resilience. The length of time coherently encompassed by the nexus—into the past and toward the future—informs us of its human sustainability.[15]

The tasks of stability. We can thus distinguish two tasks of the social function of stability. The first is the transmission of the past,

13 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 to further 'traditional values'? Worse still, does it not empower 'reactionary forces' in society? Modernity was largely crafted around a rejection of the past, and some topics, like stability, are still widely rejected as being opposed to modernity or progress. But stability, understood as the sustainability of the nexus's equilibrium, has little to do with the French Revolution. Stability is a permanent, normative, and empirically well-documented requirement of human flourishing.

14 This is the core of Bergson's analysis of human temporality (1950, pp. 100–128).

15 A society needs a certain depth of time, a certain continuity of time to be able to project itself into it. In times of war, pandemic, or crisis, the future become so uncertain that societies are unable to plan or start projects. In a similar way, poverty can be seen as a lack of capacity to plan for the long future, as future incomes are always uncertain.

the necessity for a people to be rooted in a common history of what it means to be human.[16] 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.[17] This collective memory does not mechanically auto-replicate itself. No memory does. As individuals, we select from our past those events we deem meaningful and then knot them together into narratives of the self, narratives that explain who we are (Ricœur 1992, p. 141). Something similar occurs at the level of the nexus. Past collective experiences are knotted together to amplify a collective memory, a common treasure of intellectual, spiritual, and moral life upon which every member of society relies to develop as a human being. The importance of this collective memory is grasped most fully during times in which it can't be transmitted, either because of war, mass migration, or a conscious decision to forgo this collective memory (cultural genocide) (Ricœur 2000). Education, especially family education and public education, have always been recognised as the most important institutions of this transmission (Arendt 1972, pp. 251–252). Therefore, 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 an end in itself. To transmit a memory of what it means to be human serves the capacity of a people to project themselves into the future as a human community (Sherover 1989, pp. 46–52). Thus the second task may be understood as this social crafting of the long-term future. It is a creative process. To transmit is not to reproduce the past in a sterile manner. To transmit is to reinvent in order to create a future for

16 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 the history of production/distribution.

17 « L'enracinement est peut-être le besoin le plus important et le plus méconnu de l'âme humaine. C'est un des besoins 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. » Weil (1949, p. 61).

all. To transmit is to open up the past to a common future. To transmit is to be open to the newness of otherness. It is to be capable of assimilating what is different and other into our own future identity.

The Humanity Dimension

Humanity as a normative horizon of the nexus. The goal of a society is to be a human society, an ever-more-human society (see Chapters 2 and 4). As a normative horizon, humanity is both a call and a task that can't be renounced without renouncing who and what we are. We are human already, but must still become more fully human; we are human, but are compelled to seek our humanity in order not to lose it. But what does it mean to behave as human beings (see also Chapter 7)? We will assume here that humanity can be approached—yet not enclosed or defined—by a set of *basic common goods* and a core array of *habitus*. By basic *common goods*, we mean the minimal social goods required for a society to be a human society; in other words, these are relational goods, linked to common basic needs[18] like speech, culture, solidarity or work, that are required for us to access our humanity (Nussbaum 2000, p. 84). By *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990, p. 53), we mean the social structures embodied within human practice, and by *core habitus*, what Bourdieu defined as *doxa*.[19] But where Bourdieu sees power plays over conventions and culture without reference to ethics, we see in the progressive identification of certain habitus the cumulative progression of a *prudential wisdom* about which human behaviours are and must be. It is indeed an imperfect wisdom, but nonetheless a wisdom that lays out what is meant by behaving as a human being (Aron 1993, pp. 383–387). These *core habitus* enshrining a wisdom of the human are obviously not free of metaphysical assumptions but their universality is also practical. The relevance of

18 Along the line developed early on by Stewart (1985), and later bridged with the capability approach, again by Stewart (1995, pp. 83–96).

19 Doxa refers to the idea of social self-evidence, what is 'taken for granted' without further questioning by a population. 'The adherence expressed in the *doxic* relation to the social world is the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness, since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy, which arises from competition for legitimacy and hence from conflict between groups claiming to possess it' (Bourdieu 1977, p. 168). For a complete analysis of the concept, see Deer (2008, pp. 119–130).

these *core habitus* as *human behaviours* has been verified experimentally through the centuries all over the globe.[20]

Humanity as a systemic outcome of the nexus. Humanity is not only a normative horizon, but also a systemic outcome of the nexus. Humanity is not first and foremost a concept. It is a communal life, a shared social practice. According to Giddens, social systems enable, as much as they constrain, social practices.[21] Individual behaviours are not limited by social structures but directed by them toward certain goals. Through social structures, the logic of root narratives informs individual intentions (Ricœur 1983, p. 226; Simmons 2020), and with many tensions and incoherencies, ensures a broad observance of a given set of *habitus*. Humanity can therefore be seen as the systemic result of a social system. Each nexus of common goods is consistent with a *certain set of habitus*, favouring some and rejecting others. What is more, humanity increases or decreases in a nexus according to its common good dynamics. While an imploding nexus will see violence, humiliation, and injustice flare within a negative common good dynamic, an integrating nexus will see more human behaviours flourish within a positive common good dynamic.

Framing humanity through a set of basic common goods and core habitus. Aristotle famously identified what was specifically human by reference to the infra-human (animals) and supra-human (gods) (Aristotle 1159[a], pp. 8–12).[22] We were neither speechless and irrational like animals, nor eternal and autonomous like gods. Within these boundaries lay the space of 'the human.' To cross those boundaries was always possible, but at the cost of losing our humanity and becoming either gods or animals. Aristotle saw this human space not so much as a limit than as a possibility for unlimited progression, a space in which to seek the perfection of the art of being human: a space for human flourishing. The space of 'what is human' in Aristotle is thus defined by rationality,

20 See, for example, on world religions the Global Ethic Project (https://www.global-ethic.org/the-global-ethic-project/) or academic approaches like Schwartz's Value Survey or the European Values Study (https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/).

21 I build here on Giddens's understanding of agency as built into social structures that in turn are substantiated by social practice (1986, pp. 5–28). Giddens defines social structures as: 'Rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. Structure exists only as memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and as instantiated in action', *ibid*., p. 377.

22 See also Nussbaum's reinterpretation of the same argument (1995, pp. 86–131).

speech, and collective autonomy while human flourishing is captured as the 'higher deeds of freedom.'

Our approach is inspired by Aristotle's, which frames a space for humanity without limiting any progression in it. The set of basic common goods acts as the lower limit, the minimal threshold below which a nexus is not human anymore. The *core habitus* functions—imperfectly—as a header or upper limit, beyond which behaviours are not human any more (see Figure 3). Within the space thus defined, an unlimited progression of our humanity is not only possible but is our common task.

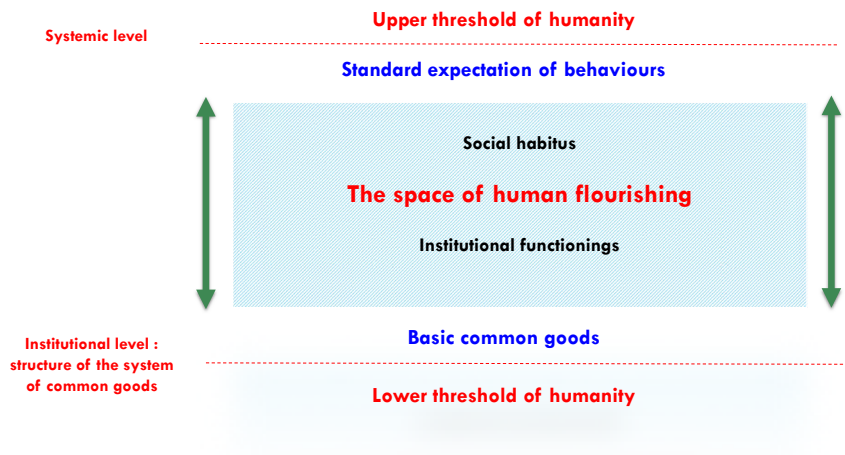

Figure 3. Humanity as a space.

III. A List of Basic Common Goods and Core Habitus

A List of Basic Common Goods

As we noted earlier, by basic common goods we mean the relational goods linked to common basic needs and required for us to access our humanity, like culture, work, education, or solidarity. We should stress that these are not individual or personal basic needs, but *common* basic needs. While individual needs concentrate on what is absolutely required for an individual to survive or access a minimal standard of wellbeing, these common needs focus on what we collectively need to access our humanity.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976) may serve as a guide for building such a list. The covenant describes as collective rights those rights whose subjects are not individuals but a community. These rights, like all other human rights, are deemed universal and inalienable, originating prior to positive law and bestowed upon each and every person due to their common human dignity. But as the goods they protect is social in nature, they have come to be seen as 'state obligations.' Collective rights are widely understood today as the duty of the state to provide specific 'public goods.' More precisely, the duty refers to the creation of institutions and public policies to generate and distribute the social goods protected by these rights. One successful example is primary education. States have over time created universal public-school systems so that each and every child can access at least a primary education. But not all collective human rights may be subsumed under the concept of the public good/state governance framework. Culture and language, for example, exist prior to and independently of state institutions. The notion of a public good—either in its Roman-law origins or in Samuelson's economic definition—does not fully match the actuality of these collective human rights. Nor is the state the only actor involved in the production, protection, and development of these rights. We may argue with Ostrom that the social good protected by collective human rights is better approached as commons, or more precisely, as a basic common good (Deneulin 2007). UNESCO made a similar move regarding education in 2015. Such a move is more than rhetorical, letting us understand the provision and distribution of these rights in a different way. It certainly allows us to understand the rights as embedded in community life as commoning practices rather than formal rights guaranteed and provided only by state institutions.

We selected from the ICESCR the following set of basic common goods. As we said before, this is an inexhaustive list. It does not claim to be comprehensive and is open to further discussion. Our selection was guided by the need to create a metric adapted to measure CGD in municipalities. We thus considered as basic common goods: culture, education, solidarity, work, and rule of law. The very existence of these basic common goods in a society can be taken as a fair proxy for a minimal threshold of humanity. Their coherent integration in the

nexus's functioning tells us something important about its basic human quality.[23]

Education. As a basic common good, education takes into consideration: a) the community that values and defines it as a common good; b) the formal and informal interactions through which education is conveyed from one generation to the next; and c) the common benefit created by these interactions and how it must be used and shared.

a) As a basic common good, education refers to the way a given population appraises and values the knowledge and wisdom accrued by a society over time and to how important it is to the members of that society to convey this knowledge and wisdom to new generations.

b) As a basic common good, education denotes the formal and informal processes by which a person is introduced to, actualises, and reinvents the common knowledge and wisdom accrued by a society over time. Practically, education refers to the institutions and social structures by which a society actualises and conveys this knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next.

c) As a basic common good, education covers general knowledge and wisdom as well as the basic intellectual and practical skills with which everybody in a society should be entrusted. Education therefore covers the basic wisdom, knowledge, and skills needed in order to be understood and to function in a society.

Solidarity. As a basic common good, solidarity must take into consideration: a) the community that values and defines it as a common good; b) the formal and informal interactions keeping individuals safe in time of societal need or distress; and c) the common benefit created by these interactions, the legitimate use of solidarity, and its distribution throughout the population.

23 Beyond existence, the crucial questions are: How are they structured in the nexus? Which ones are considered the most basic? Which are considered important? Which ones are considered at odds with others? How many are problematic? Which ones are a practical priority in the present context? The point is to see if they contribute to the growth of the nexus.

a) As a basic common good, solidarity refers to the determination of a given population to keep individuals safe from the worst forms of human need and distress. Implicit in solidarity is a strong sense of belonging to a human community that will not let one of its members fall behind without helping. Solidarity describes the value given by a community to these basic forms of human security.

b) As a basic common good, solidarity denotes the formal and informal processes by which these basic forms of human security are enacted.

c) As a basic common good, solidarity refers to a safety net of reciprocal help. The rules governing the access and use of this safety net are of crucial importance: they include rules determining the access to the safety net; rules defining distress, need and the conditions of reciprocity under which help will be provided.

Culture. As a basic common good, culture must take into consideration: a) the community that values and defines it as a common good; b) the formal and informal interactions by which their common memory and traditions, language and values are inhabited by a given population; and c) the common benefit created by these interactions.

a) As a basic common good, culture refers to the value given by a specific community to the common memory, traditions, language, and values forming their shared world. A culture is alive as long as people value it.

b) As a basic common good, culture refers to the many and mostly informal interactions by which a community inhabits and actualises its common memory, traditions, language, and values.

c) As a basic common good, culture refers to the shared rationality and understanding created by inhabiting a common world. Culture provides a community with the root narratives by which we understand each other and make sense of our daily lives (Swidler 1986, pp. 273–286). The use and reach of culture

are by definition constrained to the sphere of understanding inhabited by a community.

Work. As a basic common good, work must take into consideration: a) the community that values and defines it as a common good; b) the formal and informal interactions by which work is socialised; and c) the common benefit created by these interactions and its distribution among the population.

a) As a basic common good, work refers to the social meaning and collective value given by a population to the set of activities by which we meet our needs and achieve a certain level of wellbeing.

b) As a basic common good, work also designates the institutions that socialise work by: providing it with a *symbolic exchange value* (money); *organising it in an efficient way* (firms; organisations; market); *redistributing* it (taxes; public policies); and *protecting* it (unemployment insurance).

c) As a basic common good, work refers to the level of wellbeing enjoyed by the population, which involves: specifying legitimate forms of work and what amounts to a fair remuneration for work (decent work; minimum salary); looking to create the economic conditions for full employment; and protecting people against unemployment.

Rule-of-law. As a basic common good, rule of law must take into consideration: a) the community that values and defines it as a common good; b) the formal and informal interactions by which a fair recognition of common dignity and freedoms is enacted in a population, and more specifically how a set of basic rights and freedoms is guaranteed, upheld, and enforced by the state; and c) the common benefit created by these interactions.

a) As a basic common good, the rule of law is the value given by a society to universal respect for the law and its fair application. Built on recognition of a fundamental equality of dignity and freedom, rule of law is concerned with the enforcement of law.

b) As a basic common good, the rule of law refers to the formal interactions by which a fair recognition of our common dignity

and freedoms is enacted in a population, and more specifically, how a set of basic rights and freedoms is guaranteed, upheld, and enforced by the state.

c) As a basic common good, rule of law refers to justice and freedom as the founding rationality of human behaviours and interactions in a society. Consequently, this common benefit should extend to each and every member of the society.

Which Set of Core Habitus?

Our common humanity is a goal, something we achieve in common. *Core habitus* captures the *values* engendered by the functioning of a nexus (systemic outcome). These are not abstract values, but concrete ones, embedded in the common practices contributing to the humanity of our lives together.

These values represent the 'higher deeds of freedom' that the Greeks saw as the content of the good life and expressed as virtues. We do not fully go along with all of the Greek rationale in this instance, however. Where they saw virtues as personal features mediated through the law, we refer here to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. He describes the *permanent internalisation of a given social order in a person*—in our case the nexus—*that does not prescribe any specific actions, but nonetheless orients actors to some specific set of goals.*[24] Habitus are the subjective, internalised representations of a given social order. They are not heteronomous norms to the person, but important features of their own autonomy, and hence they blur the lines of our often-spurious opposition to autonomy and heteronomy. What is key is that habitus, even if they are indeed internalised by individuals, are social in essence: social structures embodied within human practice. Habitus frame individual action just as a nation's narrative frames the specific story of an individual. It is through habitus that a social system normalises and synchronises

24 We use here the word in the specific sense given to it by Bourdieu (1990, p. 53): 'The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.'

individual behaviours; how it produces similar forms of behaviour without pressure on or the restriction of individual freedom. Habitus function through the knowledge and meaning conveyed by social structures (Giddens 1986, pp. 25–27). It is this common, shared meaning that frames the way people understand and project their own specific behaviour, 'naturally' reproducing and reinforcing this narrative each time they act according to it.

But the real force of a habitus lies with the 'standard expectation of behaviour' they create in a society. This is where habitus turns more objective (Bourdieu 1990, pp. 135–142). As root narratives spurned by the nexus and framing individual behaviours (Ricœur 1983, p. 171), habitus also create social expectations of behaviours coherent with them. These are the behaviours that *others expect me to adhere to,* like paying after eating in a restaurant or not jumping on a table in a classroom or not committing murder to solve a conflict with my neighbour. Such behaviours make up the *specific rationality and predictability of the public space*. So habitus, while part of our autonomy, can't be reduced to individual preferences or values.

Now, we are not interested in just any habitus, but in a normative set of social practices with which to compare the habitus created by a specific nexus. The differences will inform us about the humanity achieved by the nexus and complement the information we can receive from our tally of basic common goods. The habitus we have in mind here are not to be confused with the universal common good as such, but mark its progress in a society in the same way that happiness marks the pursuit of human flourishing. Habitus are actually immanent to the research of the common good and may be understood as the moral markers of common good dynamics.

The list of core habitus should not be understood as a static or exhaustive list. Some social virtues may be sensitive to the sort of common goods integrated into the nexus; some will be required in certain circumstances more than others (war and peace do not produce the same sort of common practices); some will be more akin to certain religions than others, etc. This variation is why the relative importance of the virtues on the list, and their positions and arrangement on the list, may change over time and history. As the nexus of the common good is dynamic, the values it achieves may also transform slightly.

However, we can reasonably expect these habitus to be widely shared and to be fairly universal, as expressions of our human condition. The list accounts for values and social practices around which most if not all polities have organised. They reflect a widely shared wisdom of what being human together means in practice.

- *Freedom and responsibility*
- *Justice and solidarity*
- *Peace and concord*
- *Prudence and magnanimity*
- *Resilience and courage*
- *Practical reasoning and wisdom*

The list contemplates six groups of two habitus. The pairing of habitus here is so as to capture two aspects of a single reality through two kinds of behaviour. The polarity arising from the pairing is helpful. First, it serves to narrow the focus of one term by making reference to the other term. Second, it opens a space of flexibility to identify behaviours expressing specific aspects of the pairing.

- The habitus of *freedom and responsibility* frame the capability to act as autonomous persons and to assume responsibility for our own decisions and actions.
- The habitus of *justice and solidarity* frame the capability to respect the dignity and freedom of others and help them in times of need or distress.
- The habitus of *peace and concord* frame the capability to trust others not to use violence to resolve conflicts and to seek cooperation and consensus.
- The habitus of *prudence and magnanimity* frame the capability to seek the truth and foresee the consequences of actions.
- The habitus of *resilience and courage* frame the capability to resist the tribulations of the time and to face difficulties with resolve and determination.
- The habitus of *practical reasoning and wisdom* frame the capability to engage reality through reason and seek to inhabit this reality as human beings.

As noted earlier, this list is not exhaustive and is only very sparingly defined in order to allow for a diversity of interpretations. However, it

provides us with a powerful definition of the higher deeds of freedom, and therefore of humanity.

IV. A Relational Normativity: A Tool to Analyse Realities and Tell the Stories of Common Good Dynamics

Each of the normative dimensions implies all the others. They have to be considered together in what medieval thinkers called a *connexio virtutum*. Recalling Ramon Llull's intuition in his *Ars Magna* (Lulle 1517), the normative elements can be rearranged in a pentagon, so that each of the dimensions can be known through their relationships. The result is shown in Figure 4. The normative pentagon of common good dynamics, as we call it, is an analytical tool for understanding and explaining the complexity of common good dynamics, that helps tell the story of a specific community from a common good perspective (Ricœur 1983, pp. 31–51).

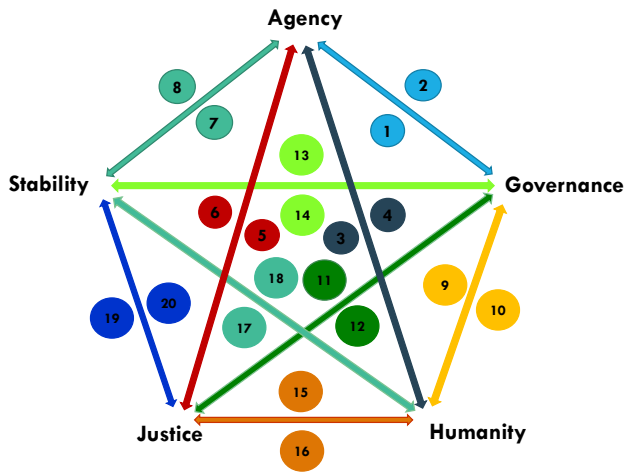

Figure 4. The normative pentagram.

In both the phenomenological and the analytical tradition, there are two ways to approach reality, either directly (*in rectum*) or indirectly (*in obliquo*). We may therefore define agency as we did in the previous section, or account for it through the relationships it builds with the other dimensions. This second approach of studying concepts through

their relational dynamics was considered by Rosenzweig as the most effective way to capture their essence (Rosenweig 2005, pp 93–100). Moving forward, we propose such a relational approach to the matrix, showing the twenty relationships across the five dimensions, and offering a core description for each relationship:

1. AG – Participation 2. GA – Empowerment 3. AH – Welfare 4. HA – Social responsibility	*Agency*: participation, empowerment, welfare, social responsibility, collective habits, capabilities and opportunities, relational quality and resilience of the nexus.
5. AJ – Social practice of justice 6. JA – Just institutions 7. AS – Relational quality 8. SA – Nexus resilience	*Governance*: participation, empowerment, integration, cooperation, subsidiarity, rule of law, common future and good government.
9. GH – Integration 10. HG – Cooperation 11. GJ – Subsidiarity 12. JG – Rule of law	*Humanity*: welfare, social responsibility, integration, cooperation, shared rationality, flourishing, human ecology and culture.
13. GS – Common future 14. SG – Good governance 15. HJ – Public rationality 16. JH – Human flourishing	*Justice*: collective habits, capabilities and opportunities, subsidiarity, rule of law, shared rationality and flourishing, social mobility and democracy.
17. HS – Human ecology 18. SH – Culture 19. JS – Social mobility 20. SJ – Democracy	*Stability*: Relational quality, resilience of the nexus, common future, good government, human ecology, culture, social mobility and democracy.

Each core description shows aspects of the relationship between the two dimensions. It obliges us to think about the importance of agency for governance (participation) or how justice must inform collective agency (just institutions). It is definitively a creative way to apply the matrix to reality, enriching our understanding of the same.

However, the core descriptions are not universal in the same way as the five normative dimensions. They will depend on the sort of reality to which we apply the matrix, and the context of this reality. This is why a family, a parish community, or a city will have to be accounted for in different ways. The governance of agency is not the same in a parish community, in a family, or in a city. Consequently, Chapter 3 translates the matrix into a metric of common good dynamics in municipalities.

The matrix's relational approach can't serve as the basis for a metric, but may serve as an important *analytical tool* for explaining reality from a common good perspective. It may also be seen as a narrative structure for explaining common good dynamics. How does it function? Each of the five vertices of the pentagon relates to the remaining four.[25] We can speak, for instance, of the relationship between *governance* and *freedom* in two ways. We can look at the 'governance of agency,' and in this sense we may ask how governance institutions inspire, guide, manage or promote collective agency. Or we can look at the 'agency of governance,' that is, how collective freedom infuses and informs governance practice—less in dictatorial regimes and more in democratic systems. This sort of bidirectionality among the five vertices can make the reading of the relationships between the elements more evocative. In that way, the pentagon compels a person telling a story of a particular situation to be open to new, often unexpected elements from the 'story of the common good.' To give an example, the 'storytelling of development projects' usually involves speaking of issues of participation and empowerment (agency-governance) and may include the question of just institutions (just agency), but usually does not include aspects related to the stability of humanity. To go through all twenty normative relationships in a specific situation obliges the storyteller to tell the 'full story' of a common good dynamic.

25 Although the five normative dimensions of the pentagon may be read in no specific order, we propose in what follows a narrative of common good dynamics as starting with *doing* (A), in an *orderly* way (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).

Conclusions

As a conclusion to this chapter, it may be useful to summarise the sort of information we expect to obtain through the matrix, which is intended to capture the strength of common good dynamics in a given nexus. We propose to recognise five normative drivers of these dynamics, namely collective agency, justice, stability, governance, and humanity.

The relational nature of the normative drivers gives way to a diversified and complex account of common good dynamics, especially if you add to the drivers a list of basic capabilities and core habitus. But this very complexity is also an obstacle. Once transposed to a metric, will we be able to understand our results? And if we can, will we be able to explain them in a significant way to others? We anticipate here some of these objections.

An M5 matrix (with five key normative drivers) goes beyond our typical three-dimensional notion of reality. It may be difficult, therefore, to grasp the information the matrix will provide once it is applied. We may better understand it if we collapse the three structural dimensions (governance, stability, and justice) into one and then contrast them in an M3 matrix. This gives us Figure 5.

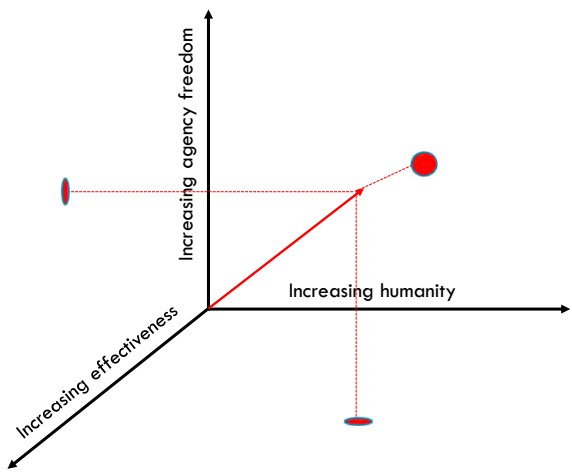

Figure 5. The M3 matrix.

The three axes represent the engine of common good dynamics (agency), the systemic results of the dynamic (humanity), and the

structural functioning of the nexus (governance, justice, and stability). The resulting vector shows how free, human, and efficient a given nexus is, as well as all the possible intersections between the three axes.

Two elements of the vector are especially important: its *direction* and its *magnitude*. The common good dynamic results from the coherent behaviour of each dimension, since to move forward, a vessel needs all engines in synchrony. Thus, the equidistant line between the three axes represents the optimum trajectory of the common good dynamic. Each of the points on this line represents the existence, however weak, of a common good dynamic. Each point *not* on this line represents a deviation from the dynamic, a distortion of the nexus that ultimately may lead, if not corrected, to its implosion if the internal tensions become too big. The *magnitude* of the vector gives us an idea of the strength of the dynamic and thus an idea of how much 'steam' for the common good there is in the nexus.

We may still further reduce the complexity of the matrix and collapse agency, governance, justice, and stability onto one axis and contrast it with just humanity. We would then contemplate only how human a nexus it is and how functional it is, from a common good perspective. Figure 6 gives an idea of such an M2 matrix.

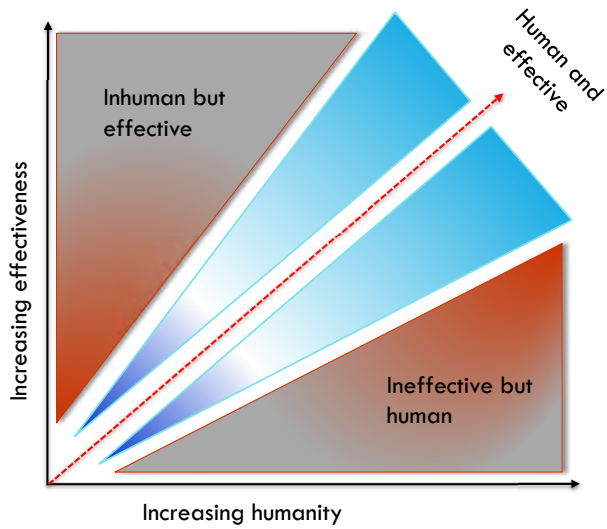

Figure 6. The M2 matrix.

Here, again, we must consider both direction and magnitude as key factors dividing the graph into three quadrants. Each quadrant gives clear and immediate information about the processes at work in the nexus. The dynamic may be human *and* efficient, efficient *but* inhuman, or inefficient *but* human.

However, at this high level of aggregation the finer picture of the dynamic is lost. Much of the important information from the analysis is hidden by the way specific relationships in the M5 matrix are distorted in the M2 matrix, including those specific pieces of information relevant for governance of the nexus, and therefore for development. The metric developed in the next chapters will therefore consider all five elements and attempt to deal with the resulting complexity.

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