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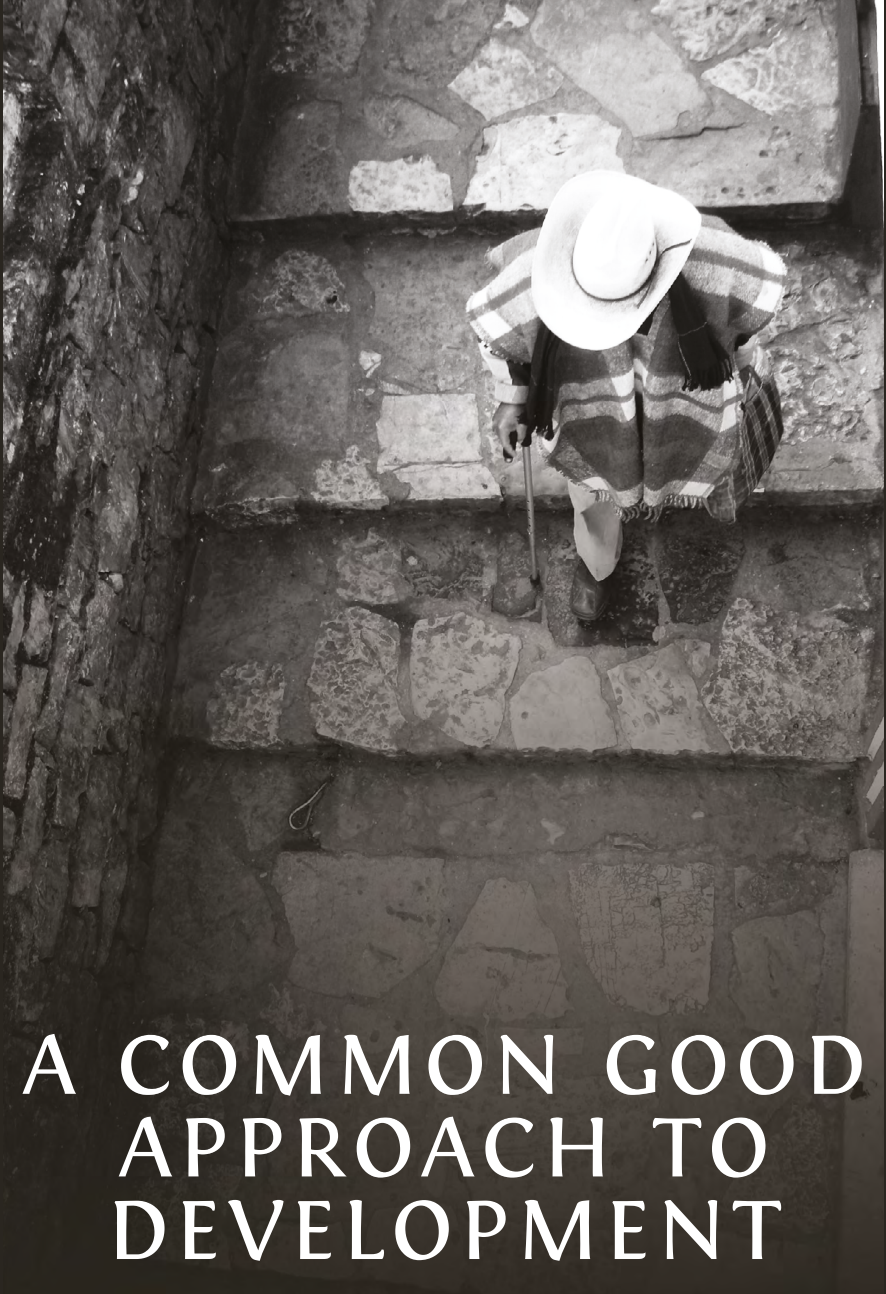

A COMMON GOOD APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Collective Dynamics of Development Processes

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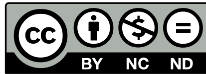

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5. The Systemic Outcome of Common Good Dynamics

Humanity

Clemens Sedmak

1. Being Human Together

We are human together or we are not human at all—this well-known idea, expressed in the influential concept of 'ubuntu', is a vivid illustration of the common good as the flourishing of a community in conversation with the flourishing of each of its members (Mnyaka and Motlhabi 2005, pp. 215–237). 'In conversation' should mean that there is a mutual dependence between the wellbeing of the community and the wellbeing of all the different members. This, then, would presuppose an idea of shared aspects of wellbeing and flourishing, in other words: a shared sense of humanity. It is for good reasons that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and committed to the common good of the country, embraced the concept of 'ubuntu' explicitly in its report as a guiding principle: 'The work of the Commission as a whole [...] underlined the need to restore the dignity of all South Africans. In the process, the sons and daughters of South Africa would begin to feel truly "at home".'[1] This commitment to 'all' and the idea of 'feeling at home' is a particular way to express dimensions of the common good, with its imperative of 'Do not leave anyone behind!'

1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, Volume 1, p. 125 (https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/finalreport/Volume%201.pdf). An entire section of the first volume of the final report is dedicated to the concept of 'ubuntu' (pp. 125–131).

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In this sense, a common good approach with its commitment to 'each person' and the entire community is, in the last analysis, incompatible with selective approaches of a utilitarian kind that are prepared to pursue the greatest good of the greatest number and thereby sacrifice the inclusion, wellbeing or flourishing of certain persons or groups. I do not want to deny that a common good approach is demanding and limited in its implementability, and that, practically speaking, there is a lot of overlap between a common good approach and utilitarian ways of proceeding, but there is a fundamental difference between the idea that each person counts and a more pragmatic outlook. The idea of humanity, expressed in a common good approach, includes the vision that 'it takes all,' the entire human family, to help us understand what it means to be human. There are many accounts of lessons learnt through people who have special needs and special gifts (e.g., Adam 2014, Beck 2011). We do not understand what it means to be human by looking at what Eleonor Rosch, founder of the 'prototype theory,' has called 'good examples,' culturally coded paradigms that we use to introduce a category (Rosch 1978, pp. 27–48). An able-bodied, adult, white male person is not a 'better example' for being human than a newborn diagnosed with Trisomy 18. It takes the entire community to teach us what it means to be human.

The common good can be seen as both the outcome and the condition of the possibility of 'living a fully human life,' a life truly in accordance with human dignity. The dimension of 'humanity' in the common good model explored in this volume is positioned as the result of the other dimensions. The humanity dimension in this model can be described as values of the nexus, specifically social goods, collective habits, and the transition towards the universal common good based on a sense of common humanity (see Chapter 2).

Two key dimensions have been identified in the model, namely 'basic common goods' (common goods needed by a person to gain access to her humanity, namely social goods such as life, family, work, health, education, political and associative life, cultural identity) and 'core habitus' leading towards human flourishing (approximated through the 'collective habits': freedom and responsibility, justice and solidarity, peace and concord, prudence and magnanimity, perseverance and courage, resilience and sustainability).

The fundamental understanding of the dimension of 'humanity' that I propose in this chapter is the ability to live a life in accordance with one's dignity and as a recognised member of the human family. The very idea of human rights expresses this point about 'belonging' to normative contexts beyond both individuals and states. Humanity is the intended 'end point' and ongoing point of reference for commitments to and efforts towards the common good. The realisation of the common good is a healthy, vibrant, and flourishing human community that allows each member to live a life in accordance with her and his human dignity and humanity.

This brings us to the question of what it means to be human. I will explore this question from different angles, reflect on the implications of these reflections for the understanding of (the social practices of) the common good, and provide four main indicators for 'humanity' as a key dimension of the common good-model discussed in this book.

2. On Reflections on Being Human

Before I dive into the exploration of what it means to be human one word about the 'methodology:' What are appropriate ways to reflect on this question of what it means to be human? There is a vast and multi-layered discourse; there are eye-opening debates on what it means to be human and negotiate the differences between human and non-human animals, between humans and machines (Kahn et al. 2007, pp. 363–390).[2] There are many interesting questions one could ask when one connects the discourse on 'being human' with the discourse on 'being a person:' What does it mean to become a person?[3] What do we know when we know a person?[4] How do we know that someone is a person?[5]

2 Peter Kahn and colleagues, for instance, have discussed the question of being human and exploring human-robot interaction by discussing possible benchmarks (autonomy, imitation, intrinsic moral value, moral accountability, privacy, reciprocity, conventionality, creativity, and authenticity of relation); in this way they arrive at relevant reference points for an understanding of humanness.

3 This is a question Carl Rogers (1961, pp. 107–124) asked in his attempt to get behind the mask and facade of the people he worked with and to encourage them to be themselves and discover themselves in and through their experiences.

4 Dan McAdams (1995, pp. 365–396) asked this question in his insightful text and distinguished between three levels: traits, personal concerns, and identity understood as an inner story of the self that integrates the reconstructed past, perceived present, and anticipated future to provide a life with unity, purpose, and meaning.

5 I will explore this question further below in conversation with Eva Feder Kittay.

These are questions that structure the landscape of reflections on what it means to be human. We are not neutral observers in and of this landscape, but participants on non-neutral ground. A philosophical reflection on what it means to be human will use a particular methodology, i.e., the tools of reflection and the reflective processing of experiences, and the tools of conceptual clarifications and distinctions. My contribution is not empirical, or evidence-based with an analysis of the biological foundations of the human species; for the sake of this brief text my text is also not 'reconstructive' by engaging in the vast philosophical literature on personhood and humanity. Rather, I will use a 'phenomenological method' that is based on philosophical reflections which are inevitably the result of a conversation with experiences and encounters. There is an undeniably subjective element in this approach which is presented as 'a conceptual and perceptual offer.' I have decided to first pursue a *via negativa* by learning about humanness and humanity from an extreme example of dehumanisation, and then to engage in a constructive suggestion on crucial elements of what it means to be human.

3. On Being Human

It is amazing and touching, horrifying and dreadful, what human beings are able to do and able to do to and with each other. Primo Levi's account of his experience of concentration camps, *Se questo è un uomo* (1947), talks about what it means to be human. On the evening before the deportation, all took leave, as he describes, from life in the manner which most suited them, praying, drinking, sleeping.

> The mothers stayed up to prepare the food for the journey with tender care, and washed their children and packed the luggage; and at dawn the barbed wire was full of children's washing hung out to dry. Nor did they forget the diapers, the toys, the cushions and the hundred other small things which mothers remember and which children always need. Would you not do the same? If you and your child were going to be killed tomorrow, would you not give him to eat today? (Levi 1959, p. 6)

Primo Levi talks about the systematic erosion of all the human and the humane in the concentration camp. Human beings, persons, people like you and me, are reduced to

> miserable and sordid puppets. We are transformed into [...] phantoms [...] Then for the first time we became aware that our language lacks words to express this offence, the demolition of a man. In a moment, with almost prophetic intuition, the reality was revealed to us: we had reached the bottom. It is not possible to sink lower than this; no human condition is more miserable than this, nor could it conceivably be so. Nothing belongs to us anymore; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair [...] They will even take away our name. (p. 21)[6]

Levi describes the systemic attempt to create conditions that foster hatred among the prisoners, a 'homo homini lupus'-attitude, a loss of the meaning of life and will to live. But he also mentions the heroic attempts to uphold a sense of humanity in the midst of the cruel darkness. He refuses to believe 'in the most obvious and facile deduction: that man is fundamentally brutal, egoistic and stupid in his conduct once every civilized institution is taken away' (p. 100); he mentions the strength and pain drawn from the past and its memories, the hopes to reach the next day and maybe spring. He talks about a fellow human being, Lorenzo, who reminded him of his own humanity by being human:

> I believe that it was really due to Lorenzo that I am alive today; and not so much for his material aid, as for his having constantly reminded me of his presence, by his natural and plain manner of being good, that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror; something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good, but for which it was worth surviving [...] The personages in these pages are not men. Their humanity is buried, or they themselves have buried it [...] Lorenzo was a man; his humanity was pure and uncontaminated, he was outside the world of negation. Thanks to Lorenzo, I managed not to forget that I myself was a man (Levi 1959, p. 142).

There can be light in the midst of utter darkness; but it is terrifying to understand that this darkness was created, inhumaneness human-made.

We can learn a lot from Primo Levi about what it means to be human—*ex negativo*; at the same time, the account of his experience teaches us

6 Levi talks about the 'satanic knowledge of human beings' (p. 102) and the annihilation of a sense of civilisation, citizenship, decency: 'The Kapo comes to us periodically and calls: "*Wer hat noch zu fressen*?" He does not say it from derision or to sneer, but because this way of eating on our feet, furiously, burning our mouths and throats, without time to breathe, really is "*fressen*," the way of eating of animals, and certainly not "*essen*," the human way of eating, seated in front of a table [...] "*Fressen*" is exactly the word and it is used currently among us' (Levi 1959, p. 85).

a lot about 'the common bad,' the opposite of the *bonum commune* we are looking for. We can see (i) how and that terror and unpredictability lead to toxic structures, (ii) how and that systematic disrespect for basic physical needs and elementary bodily functions lead into the destruction of a sense of Self, (iii) how a sense of a common good is undermined in the concentration camp through internal divisions and toxic hierarchies, (iv) how and that an almost complete loss of the possibility for intimacy and friendship can reduce the human person to a commitment-free shell, (v) how and that hell on earth is created to 'the loss of why,' the loss of justification and meaning making in the social world (the mistake of the Jewish person was not something she or he had done, but was on the level of being, an 'ontological defect,' as Vladimir Jankéléitch has named it). We can see that 'the common bad' can be systematically constructed. The concentration camps dehumanised the person by a detailed system of reducing a person to her biology whereby this very biological dimension was trampled upon (Wachsmann 2015).

So what does it mean to be human? If we were to teach a course on being human—what would we teach? If we were to tell aliens what it means to be human—what would we say?

In order to answer these questions, it could be fruitful and important to ask a simple question: reflecting on 'a human life'—which are features that are part of the human condition?

These thoughts are based on a philosophical commitment to the possibility of speaking about 'a human condition' in ways that transcend subjective and contextual differences. Martha Nussbaum's list of essential human capabilities has pursued a similar avenue. She has identified central human capabilities by analysing the human condition: Life, Bodily Health, Bodily Integrity, Senses, Imagination and Thought, Emotion, Practical Reason, Affiliation, Other Species, Play, Control Over One's Environment (Nussbaum 2003). Nussbaum presents this list as a normatively relevant list with an acceptance of universalism that Amartya Sen, co-creator of the capability approach, would not share. I do not intend to engage in a detailed discussion of Nussbaum's helpful list. I would like to offer more descriptive considerations, reflecting on the way human beings live their lives.

My considerations are based on the belief that there are aspects of life that we all share as human beings; I believe that there are certain

characteristics of the human condition that are part of any human existence.

I want to offer a tentative 'list' of aspects that, each in its own way, co-constitute the human condition:

- 'being somewhere and unique': each person has a particularity in history and character, in 'place in time' and 'place in world'; there is uniqueness to a person so that she cannot be 'replaced' as the person she is.
- 'having a vulnerable body': each person has a body and this body is vulnerable, i.e., at risk of damage; the body shapes perspective and 'being-in-the-world.'
- 'depending on external circumstances': each person depends on a physical environment including natural resources, but also structures (to protect from the elements) and enable coexistence.
- 'having a history and a story that can be told': each person has a life with experiences that can be remembered and a life story that can be told as a unique story of a human life.
- 'seeking a "life place"': a life place is the analogy of a work place which is different from work—it is constituted by structures; the human person needs more than survival, she is yearning to have a place characterised (and constituted) by commitments, commitments she was offered, commitments she entered.
- 'living interdependently in special relationships': it is not the case that all relationships are on the same level and it is not the case that any person would be socially self-sufficient: the human person depends on other persons and each person has special relationships with special obligations based on closeness and attachment.
- 'knowing and creating darkness': the human person is able to create evil, to be cruel and destructive beyond description and imagination.

- 'being able to be moved and touched and hurt': the human person has the ability to host another person in her utmost inner, for her own good or for her own bad.
- 'showing an ability for the good': the human person is able to show amazing levels of moral and spiritual sainthood.
- 'having inner inexhaustible depth': the human person has inner complexity, a rich interior life, interiority with memories, beliefs, hopes, dreams...
- 'being finite and mortal and limited': the human life comes to an end, each person is limited by time, but also in terms of capability.
- 'desiring beyond the finiteness and mortality': the human person—in spite of her mortality—can cultivate imagination, desires, and hopes beyond these limits.
- 'learning and growing without losing the "before"': the human person changes, grows—but whatever has been part of her experience remains to be part of her life.
- 'seeking recognition': the human person seeks to have a 'face', seeks 'to be seen', seeks to be accepted as a person among persons.
- 'being open to the intangible': the human person is open to the immaterial and cannot be defined to what can be seen and cannot be reduced to what can be measured.

This is, of course, a tentative list, but it opens up the possibility for asking the kinds of questions that may be helpful to have a clearer idea of the 'humaneness' generated by common good-oriented policies.

This list gives me four main ideas about what it means to be human: (i) uniqueness and complexity; (ii) vulnerability and socialness; (iii) agency and the power to transform. And, with the claim that this list talks about characteristic aspects of the human condition, (iv) equality and existential closeness. We could connect these four elements with Primo Levi's account, which showed how uniqueness and complexity were trampled upon by the reduction and erasure of all personal traits, how vulnerability was exploited to create isolation, how agency was

systematically taken away, and how equality was eroded by divisions and toxic hierarchies.

4. On Human Dignity

The list that I suggested—and the four reference points drawn from the list—may seem a bit arbitrary. Another way to think about 'being human' is a conversation with an influential normative tradition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The first article of this declaration offers reference points for what it means to be human: 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience' (UDHR, Art. 1).

Let me offer seven observations that reflect on implications of these two simple sentences of the first article of the declaration:

Observation 1: Vulnerability—the UDHR is based on the experience and the recognition of vulnerability which is also expressed in the Preamble ('disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind'); I would claim that there can be no discourse on human dignity without the experience of vulnerability.

Observation 2: The primacy of freedom (humans are born free—this can be interpreted to mean: restrictions have to be justified; the burden of proof lies with those restricting human freedoms; certain restrictions are incompatible with these freedoms).

Observation 3: Fundamental equality (the fundamental equality among human beings is so deep that hierarchies or stratifications cannot outweigh it).

Observation 4: 'Right to Reason/s' (reason is connected to dignity—this could mean that there is a 'right to use reason' and a 'right to be treated in a reasonable way').

Observation 5: Uniqueness ('conscience' is a category that expresses a deep personal sense of morality, where a person is to be treated on her own terms).

Observation 6: Respect (if we acknowledge that a person has dignity, we owe respect to this person).

Observation 7: Self-respect (if I acknowledge that I have dignity, I owe respect to myself).

These observations also offer some reference points for 'being human'. These observations can also be connected to the four main ideas about being human above: i) uniqueness and complexity can be connected to Observation 5, which comments on uniqueness, and to Observation 7, which talks about self-respect; (ii) vulnerability and socialness is strengthened by Observation 1 on vulnerability; (iii) agency and the power to transform is linked to the point about freedom in Observation 2, but is also connected to the 'right to reason', as expressed in Observation 4; (iv) equality and existential closeness express a similar concern to Observation 3 on equality, but can also be connected to the idea of respect (see Observation 6).

One could translate these points into the idea that living a life in accordance with one's human dignity means living a life that allows for (i) the expression of uniqueness, self-respect, the pursuit of complexity, (ii) the protection and cultivation of proper vulnerability, the entering of relationships, (iii) the experience of agency, respect for the right to reason and reasoning, the cultivation of the potential to transform the world into a better place, (iv) the experience of equality and respect.

This is rather sketchy, but it points to aspects of a dignified life where each person is on the search for 'her place' and needs the appropriate support structures to carve out the niche in the universe that is 'hers', 'inhabited', and 'owned' by the person.

Two excellent and also tragic example of this search would be Edward Said and Sally Morgan's journeys (Said 1999, Morgan 2012). Both accounts show tragic aspects of this search and exemplify *ex negativo* the need for appropriate support structures and access to sources of identity. Both accounts show that humanity is not only an individual feature, but also a relational good. If we think of humanity as an entelechy in an Aristotelian sense, it is a shared and common entelechy. We are only human together or not human at all. The human person is social by its very nature. We only achieve who we are by our interactions with others; the good of the human person is a relational good. We are only human if we work together to achieve this humanity in the practice that bounds us together as human beings.

Living a life according to one's dignity allows for robust identity, based on recognition. In accordance with Nebel and Medina (see Chapter 2), the 'humanity'-dimension of the common good can benefit

from a translation of these aspects of the human person into social practices and collective habits. One such fundamental social practice is the practice of seeing a person in her uniqueness which is indispensable in pedagogical as well as professional contexts. Let me illustrate this point by making use of the idea of 'job crafting.' 'Job crafting' is the project of changing and creating relationships, shaping interactions, and (re)defining tasks and aspects of one's job (Wrzesniewski and Dutton 2001, pp. 179–201; Wrzesniewski et al. 2013, pp. 281–302). Job crafting is an important aspect of 'inhabiting a role.' A professional role is inhabited if it has been appropriated to fit the person of the job holder; the distinction between 'inhabited' and 'non-inhabited' has been inspired by Aleida Assman's (2011) distinction between 'inhabited memory' and 'non-inhabited memory' (pp. 19–135). The latter points to museums and archives and memory contents that do not stir emotions, that do not lead to conversations, that do not play a role in people's lives; the former ('inhabited memory') refers to cultures of remembering that shape communication and interactions, that show people's emotions. An inhabited role has been personalised and reflects the style and personality of the role's occupant. Honoring the uniqueness of a person allows the person to 'inhabit' her social space. French sociologist Alain Ehrenberg (2010) has shown that non-inhabited roles can lead to mental health challenges and an 'exhausted self', that cannot identify with or shape the role assigned to the individual. In other words, a life in accordance with the dignity of the person allows the person to identify and inhabit a place of her own.

5. A Caveat

I have offered a list of fifteen aspects of the human condition that can be folded into four main ideas which I have strengthened by seven observations on the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, there are limits to lists like these: in her Presidential Address to the American Philosophical Association in 2017, Eva Feder Kittay tackles the question of being human and offers a reflection on the life of her daughter, 'a beautiful woman of forty-seven, with lively brown eyes and a winning smile,' and with 'very significant cognitive

disabilities. She has no measurable IQ and can do nothing for herself by herself. She defies philosophical characterisations of what is human, namely, the possession of certain essential attributes assumed to be definitive of the human. She is often written out of our moral treatises, though human she surely is' (Kittay 2016, p. 24). Kittay is worried about abstract lists of essential attributes that amount to necessary conditions of being human. It is through interactions with her daughter, it is through being in the presence of her daughter, that anyone could sense her being human:

> she spends her weekends with us listening and thrilling to music ranging from Bach to Mahler and from Louis Armstrong to Bob Dylan. When favorite Schubert and Beethoven pieces play, she tries to catch my eye so I will hum along. And engaging her ability to choose between two options, she has indicated to me, as best as I can tell, that she prefers to be regarded as a young woman, not a child. Again, let me be clear, my daughter has no measurable IQ. (Kittay 2016, p. 24)

An approach outlining necessary conditions of humaneness in a list seems morally risky since it may exclude for abstract reasons persons who—in an encounter—will be accepted as 'human' without any doubt. There seem to be more appropriate ways of approaching the question of what it means to be human than through the construction of lists. Lists end each item with a full stop, a period. There is however space for the imagination to rethink the connections between the different items on the list and the imaginary space beyond the period. There is also the point of the limits of language and the phenomenon of touching a dimension that cannot be fully expressed. Humanity's mystery, humanity's life is left in between the different items of any list.

I teach a course on Integral Human Development; we dedicate a session or two to the explicit question of what it means to be human. We work with photographs and poems; we reflect, for example, on the Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs: the famous 1973 picture by Nick Ut capturing a naked nine-year-old girl (Phan Thị Kim Phúc) who is running toward the camera and away from a napalm strike; the terrible 1994 photograph by Kevin Carter for feature photography depicting a girl crawling to a feeding centre as a vulture waits nearby; the passionate 1997 photograph by Annie Wells showing a firefighter rescuing a teenage girl during a raging flood; and many more. We take our time to look at

these 'signs of the times' and ask the question: what does this say about 'being human'? We talk about what a researcher from another planet would deduce about humanity looking at these photographs.

We reflect on poems, for example on poems written by Hilde Domin who had to flee from the Nazis, first to Italy, then to England, and finally to the Dominican Republic. Many of her poems express the 'longing for belonging', and the experience of loss. We reflect on sentences like 'A rose is a rose. But a home is not a home' or 'You eat remembrance with the spoon of forgetting' or 'we collect tears like marbles.' What does this language express that could not be expressed outside of poetry? What do poems say about humanity? What does Hilde Domin teach us about the human condition?

The very fact that due to its complexity the understanding of humanity is also elusive is an important aspect of the complexity and elusiveness of the common good that is never 'here' or 'there', but always in the making or in the breaking.

The fact that lists about humanity and being human are limited says a lot about the human condition. What does 'being human' mean, more practically speaking?

6. Indicators for Humanity

This book develops a specific model of the common good. Humanity has been identified as a central component of the model. Living in accordance with our dignity as human beings and building communities that reflect this understanding of universal dignity of the human person is the very point of the dimension of 'humanity'. The abovementioned list expressed important aspects of this project of a dignified life. I take the aspect of 'humanity' within the pentagram to mean: living a life according to the dignity of the human person; being able to live one's life as a member of the human family.

I have suggested four main ideas about living a human life in accordance with human dignity: uniqueness (and complexity and self-respect); vulnerability (and social dependence); agency (freedom and right to reason), equality (and existential closeness). These four ideas—uniqueness, vulnerability, freedom, and equality—shape the dimension of 'humanity', also with regard to the common good. We need to identify

proper, dignity-sensitive ways to build social frameworks, cultures, communities, and institutions. If these dimensions are to be constitutive aspects of the realised common good, we will have to translate them into stable social practices and collective habits. Let me clarify terms first. I want to characterise social practices as follows:

Social practices are *expressions of coordinated human agency involving a significant number of people who incorporate these expressions of agency into their everyday life as members of a community in such a way that these patterns of agency build tradition and do not require explicit justification*.

Social practices are characteristic of a form of life and reflect a worldview that serves as the framework for further judgements, points we find well developed in Pierre Bourdieu's and Anthony Giddens' work. Social practices shape communal life as 'communal' and the identity of community members as community members. Examples of social practices include established celebrations like the 'Dia de los muertos' in Mexico, the culture of tipping as in the United States, and designs of interactions as ways of greeting another person. Social practices can be translated into collective habits: a habit is an established form of action; it is an acquired behavioural disposition, lives from repetition and is characterised by a certain effortlessness. The latter also makes habits so attractive—they make life easier, because I do not have to design new actions in every situation, but can resort to familiar patterns. This ease can become a pattern that makes it very tiring to act against the habit that, after a certain frequency of execution, is also 'automated', that is, behaviour that the actors do not think about. In 1799, the French Academy of Sciences announced an essay contest on 'Habits'. Pierre Maine de Biran, the subsequent winner, noted how difficult this task was, since habits, as familiar matters of course, are hidden from view. In short, they do not catch our eye. It is a paradox that the establishment of a habit leads to the evanescence of the habit, it loses 'perceptibility'. Some habits are the result of explicit decisions and efforts, other habits 'sneak in'. Some social practices have been intentionally established, others grow organically.

In line with the four aspects of humanity listed above I would like to suggest four indicators for humanity—in response to uniqueness and complexity: *practices of reconciled pluralism*; in response to vulnerability: *practices of deep inclusion*; in response to agency: *habits of well-reasoned integral ecology*; in response to equality: *patterns of permeability*.

(1) *Practices of reconciled pluralism* refer to the ability to deal with 'the different and the new'; the recognition of the uniqueness of the person requires proper respect for pluralism without destroying the idea of the common ground. Mechanisms of standardisation may increase social cohesion, but could undermine respect for the uniqueness of the person. Pluralism is a challenge to the concept of the common good that lends itself to a thicker reading of society (more in the line of 'community'). The litmus test for reconciled pluralism is a community's ability to accommodate newness.[7]

Questions to operationalise this aspect would be questions like: how does a community deal with newness that challenges established social practices? How does a community deal with the uniqueness of persons? How does a community deal with difference? With deviance? In other words: are there 'meta-social practices' that allow for the modification of existing, or establishment of new, social practices? Are there spaces for experiments? Are there provisions for non-standard approaches? How strict are the patterns of standardisation relating to different spheres of life within a community?

(2) *Practices of deep inclusion*: the common good is not a utilitarian approach, but is committed to 'leaving no one behind'. Each life matters and counts. The idea here is that the common good stands, to quote Stefano Zamagni,

> [in] contrast [...] with the notion of the total good. Whereas the latter can be rendered by the metaphor of an addition, in which the items to be added stand for the good of individuals (or the social groups that make up society), the common good is more like a multiplication, whose factors stand for the good of individuals (or groups) [...] Thus, if the goal is to maximize the total good (e.g., national GDP), anyone's good (or welfare) can actually be 'cancelled out' provided someone else's welfare increases by more than the other person loses. In a multiplication, on the other hand, cancelling out just one factor reduces the entire product to zero. In other words, the logic of the common good does not allow trade-offs: one

7 A fascinating case study on conflict culture and the challenge of negotiating pluralism has been provided by Adam Goguen and Catherine Bolten (2017, pp. 429–456) in their analysis of a conflict between two villages in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis, where the villages had to negotiate different conceptions of the common good and the relationship between 'the village good' and 'the national good'; the case study reconstructs a conflict that could not deal with 'reconciled pluralism', partly because of ideas of 'honour' and the limited range of reasons.

> person's good cannot be sacrificed—whatever the person's life situation or social rank—in order to increase someone else's good, for the basic reason that the 'someone else' is still a human being. (Zamagni 2018, p. 86)

I accept this point to underline that my understanding of the dimension of humanity does not allow for 'a single person left behind'. This can be demanding since it may take a lot of effort to make sure that everybody can participate and contribute. Some people need higher levels of accompaniment than others. Some people have higher levels of vulnerability.[8] However, in light of an understanding of the common good as a 'multiplication', I want to propose to understand the 'humanity' dimension of the pentagram by way of the 'no one left behind' aspiration: is every member of the community invited into a life as a contributive agent, into a life in accordance with her dignity? Are there social practices that are committed to ensuring that no one is left behind, including especially those who need intensive and extensive levels of accompaniment? I want to call social practices that are committed to leaving no one behind even under adverse circumstances 'deep inclusion'. Such social practices are connected to 'going the extra mile', 'giving second chances', making a special effort to leave no one behind. like special assistance in schools for children with special needs, like special workplace provisions for people with special needs, like support structures for persons who cannot live a self-determined life. Social patterns of deep inclusion are social practices that resist exclusion.

(3) *Habits of integral ecology*: human agency in times of a fragile planet has to be based on sustainable reasons, i.e., ways of justifying individual and collective behaviour that take future generations and future communities into account. We have reached the point where the sustainable securing of agency cannot be separated from ecologically sensitive habits. I understand that this is a specific aspect of agency. However, the survival of 'humanity' depends on the realisation of 'integral ecology' that connects the ecological with the social and the cultural. Proper sustainability will include the poor. The prize for

8 An important aspect of this question of deep inclusion is the inclusion of children and youths—in discourses and practices of international development the challenge of recognising children and youths as contributing agents is real—see, for instance Fine and Lord (2015).

ecologically irresponsible living has to be paid, at least in the initial stage, by the poor. Hence, a life in accordance with human dignity cannot be separated from a life that respects the ecological aspect of human existence, the fact of non-human life. A third indicator, then, for humanity is the question of proper habits of integral ecology. The humanity dimension of the pentagram could suggest an 'inventory of habits' that contribute to integral ecology, especially insofar as they relate to social relations and ecological relations. This is based on the idea that 'habits' are crucial expressions of the dimension of humanity and that the connection between human dignity and the ecology is fundamental for a reading of the situation in which we find ourselves.

What are the defining habits of a community? How sustainable is the culture of agency in a particular context? What are the patterns of consumption in a particular community, the culture of using resources, the habits that form a lifestyle? A habit-inventory can look into the different areas of life (such as consumption, resource management, lifestyle) systematically.[9] Again, with social scientific sampling methods it is not too difficult to get a sense of where a community stands in terms of its consumption patterns, resource management, and lifestyle-habits. Socially and ecologically toxic habits can be identified and the contributions of policies to these habits can be tested.

(4) *Patterns of permeability*: the dimension of humanity requires the experience of a human dignity-based equality that takes priority over social stratification. That is why I would like to suggest as a fourth indicator for the dimension of humanity the aspect of social permeability: do the structures of public spaces and shared times allow for easy encounters across the social strata where human beings can interact as human beings? Any social structure is characterised by a hierarchy which is important for order and frameworks, but does make it more difficult to get a sense of equality that is crucial for an understanding of human dignity and an understanding of a dignity-based approach to the common good. Permeability is the feature of a social life that allows for transitions across the boundaries of social and cultural spheres, that

9 An illustrative case study was carried out years ago by British journalist Leo Hickman (2005), who systematically experimented with his life in the light of ecological challenges and was confronted with major challenges in four areas: transportation, consumption, waste, and the use of chemicals.

allows for interactions and encounters beyond the restrictions of class membership. Social practices that reveal patterns of permeability and facilitate cross-class encounters can be taken to be an indicator for a form of life shaped by an understanding of dignity.

An example would be widely accessible cultural events like village festivals that bring the entire population together. Religious celebrations or sports events can facilitate permeability, too. The key question is: are there non-stratified spaces and times for universal encounter and shared experiences of all? In other words: are there fora where class membership does not play a defining role, where class membership is not relevant for access conditions? These questions are connected to questions of public space: are there public spaces where encounters between different people can happen easily? Are there 'commons' that allow for permeability?

I have suggested four main ideas for being human: uniqueness, vulnerability, agency, and equality. I have suggested four tentative indicators for these four ideas respectively: practices of reconciled pluralism; practices of deep inclusion; habits of well-reasoned integral ecology; patterns of permeability.

Additionally, I would like to suggest one overarching indicator that is based on the idea of human dignity: in conversation with Avishai Margalit's *The Decent Society* (1998) I suggest non-humiliation as a minimum standard for honouring a person's dignity; this is clearly not 'deep inclusion', but a minimum threshold. This may not be full recognition of a person's uniqueness, but a non-negotiable bottom line. The dimension of humanity within the common good assessment of a community can also be approximated by mapping 'entry points for humiliation', with a special emphasis on institutions. Respect and self-respect have been identified as implications of the recognition of human dignity. I use Margalit's understanding of humiliation as 'any sort of behavior or condition that constitutes a sound reason for a person to consider his or her self-respect injured' (1996, p. 9). Self-respect is the kind of respect I owe myself on the basis of being human. Procedurally, this means accepting a subjective and an inter-subjective element—a community with its institution or an institution is well advised to ask its members whether and when they experience or perceive humiliation (the subjective element) and then enter into a discourse about the rationale

behind this perception (the social element). I have experimented with 'mapping entry points of humiliation' within the institutional settings of a hospital and an educational institution. It has proved to be a worthwhile and feasible exercise. Patients in a hospital have identified bodily shame and nakedness, lack of privacy and loss of personhood in a hospital setting as possible entry points for humiliation; 'humiliation' is an important reference point in institutional and communal settings (Sedmak 2020, pp. 9–17). Humiliation dehumanises a person and undermines what has been identified as the 'humanity' dimension of the common good. Meaningful questions could be: where do communities and institutions create entry points for humiliation? Which entry points for humiliation are identified by individuals? Which are social practices that show a commitment to non-humiliation?

Reconciled pluralism, deep inclusion, integral ecology permeability, and non-humiliation could emerge as indicators for humanity in a community.

Conclusion

The dimension of 'humanity' is never a given, it is always a task and a responsibility. And this responsibility comes with a price tag that cannot be reduced to 'fun' or 'quality of life'. To live in accordance with one's dignity is not the project of having an easy life. The famous Polish pediatrician Janusz Korczak, who ran an orphanage in the Warsaw ghetto and was killed along with the children (whom he could have abandoned), once wrote a prayer: 'Dear God, I do not ask you for an easy life, I ask you for a difficult life, but useful, dignified, and beautiful.' His life was just like that: difficult, useful, dignified, beautiful—and cut short.

The dimension of 'humanity' in the common good or the concept of the common good is not to be reduced to aspects of quality of life; we need something more, a 'Magis', what I would call 'depth of life'. A sense of what counts and matters even at the cost of reduced quality of life. Ultimately, the indicator for humanity is: are we willing to uphold the sense of human dignity, each person's dignity, even under adverse conditions?

In Hilde Domin's beautiful words: 'Longing for a landscape this side of the border of tears doesn't work [...] What works is to ask please [...] that we, out of the flood, out of the lion's den and the fiery furnace will be released renewing ourselves even more wounded and even more healed.'

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