

ETHICS, ECONOMICS AND COMMON GOODS

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Ethics, Economics and Common Goods Journal aims to be a space for debate and discussion on issues of social and economic ethics. Topics and issues range from theory to practical ethical questions affecting our contemporary societies. The journal is especially, but not exclusively, concerned with the relationship between ethics, economics and the different aspects of the common good perspective in social ethics.

Social and economic ethics is a rapidly changing field. The systems of thought and ideologies inherited from the 20th century seem to be exhausted and prove incapable of responding to the challenges posed by, among others, artificial intelligence, the transformation of labor and capital, the financialization of the economy, the stagnation of middle-class wages, and the growing ideological polarization of our societies.

The journal Ethics, Economics and the Common Goods promotes contributions to scientific debates that combine high academic rigor with originality of thought. In the face of the return of ideologies and the rise of moral neopharisaisms in the Anglo-Saxon world, the journal aims to be a space for rational, free, serious and open dialogue. All articles in the journal undergo a process of double anonymous peer review. In addition, it guarantees authors a rapid review of the articles submitted to it. It is an electronic journal that publishes its articles under a creative commons license and is therefore open access.

NATURE OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Research articles, research reports, essays and responses are double-blind refereed. To be published, articles, reports, essays must obtain favorable opinions. Responses, however, may be accepted with a single positive opinion and rejected with a single negative opinion. The journal is biannual and publishes two issues per year, in June and December. At least one of these two issues is thematic. The journal is pleased to publish articles in French, English and Spanish.

Further details regarding this paragraph are given in the Editorial Notes.

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BOOK REVIEW



A Common Good Approach to Development: Collective Dynamics of Development Processes

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Luis Ignacio Arbesú Verduzco*

There is a constant question throughout history: Is harmonious coexistence between human beings possible? In a situation, characterized by division and conflict, the negative answer would seem to be the only possible one. However, at a time when despairing postures abound, a proposal in the opposite direction appears, like a refreshing balm: it is possible to identify and systematize positive trends in a human community.

With the edition of Nebel, Garza-Vázquez and Sedmak, a work is presented around a simple question: “How can we evaluate and measure the dynamics of the common good?” (p. 2). His response includes -in addition to a complete report on research progress- the narration of a trajectory initiated by Nebel's concern and continued under his direction. The results of the search for alternatives for the contents of concepts such as the common good and its practical application for the benefit of human communities are shown.

But is it worth the effort to find positive dynamics in a world where everything points in the opposite direction? During the earthquake in Mexico on September 19, 1985, a significant situation arose. In an 11-story building with public trust offices, staff ran to the stairs and tried to reach the exit. Two young people from FONATUR located on the seventh floor decided to run in the opposite direction: towards the roof of the building. They ran their way against the majority who were desperately trying to get out. Along the way, some joined them. In the end, half of the building collapsed and only a few people on the first floors managed to get out. The others lost their lives except for those at the top. When the majority goes in the wrong direction, it would seem evident that those who go against the current do so in the wrong way. The direction set by Nebel, Garza and Sedmak seems to us, at this moment, the most appropriate.

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Public institution aimed at supporting tourism activities.



The human being is characterized by being gregarious. Given the need to live in relation to their peers, the classical world understood politics as the art of living in community. However, the common life of the Polis has developed between two great tendencies: that of domination and that of service. Most of the works related to the analysis, interpretation and proposal of political and social aspects have been oriented to their study based on the tendencies of domination and social conflict. The group led by Mathias Nebel has decided to focus on the identification of trends in strengthening social ties and the public service of its leaders.

Proposing a change of direction in the majority trend for a scientific analysis implies a series of efforts of all kinds. In the first place, the design of a solid theoretical content and its alternatives and possibilities of practical application is required. After the validation of the proposals by other members of the scientific community in order to deepen the evaluation of the proposal and to be able, where appropriate, to adapt or modify it. Finally, its application and validation in specific cases is required. This research is presented in a work divided precisely into these three aspects mentioned.

The first part of the book consists of three chapters. The first synthesizes the theoretical approach. In it, "based on Foucault, Arendt, Bourdieu, Giddens, Ostrom, Taylor and Riordan, Mathias Nebel proposes to understand the common good from the perspective of the interactions that structure our community life" (p. 16). Speaking of the common good implies referring to one of the oldest political concepts, basic and loaded with varied epistemic content. For this reason, Nebel presents -based on some of the theoretical notions- two elements of an original perspective for the common good linked to community development: on the one hand, he suggests the concept of "shared basic common goods" as necessary for coexistence and, on the other hand, presents the concept of "key normative drivers of the dynamic equilibrium of the commons" (p. 27). The latter turns out to be one of the nodal concepts for the originality, consistency and strength of the proposal by becoming the hinge for the transition to the practical application of the theoretical approach. The genius of this proposal lies, in our opinion, in its dynamic and relational characteristics that go beyond the static and structural nature of public activities.

Nebel's original idea was enriched by Jorge Medina's vision. Together they expose the second stage of the research trajectory with the design of a matrix based on five dimensions of study: agency, governance, structure, justice and humanity. The agency would imply the starting point characterized by the exercise of the freedom of the actors; stability makes it possible to identify the components of the community structure; governance clarifies the functioning of the links between the different actors; justice provides the framework where the meanings of both the criteria and the socially shared values are located and; finally, humanity as the point of arrival. In organizational terms it could be understood as a "value chain". That is to say, it is about the five basic points of the process that generates dynamics tending to the positivity of the common good. The interesting thing about the proposal is that the dynamic is much more. It is a recurring



and varied phenomenon in terms of the possible interrelationships between the five dimensions, which presents an enormous difficulty: systematizing the components by locating qualitative and, above all, quantitative elements for their assessment.

In the following chapter, Oscar Garza-Vázquez and Viviana Ramírez present us with the transformation of the criteria of dynamics into the metric of its dimensions. The key to this significant step lies in the identification, observation, analysis and interpretation of the resulting links between the various encounters of the dimensions of the dynamics in specific communities. If the human being is designed to live in society, the core of his development can be located in the particularities of his links. Between dimensions, organizations, dimensions and above all, between human beings.

The proposal is complemented by the contributions of the following two parts. The second shows the reflections, criticisms, possibilities and contributions of different disciplines for each of the dimensions of the matrix. Garza-Vázquez delves into the concept of agency from the decision-making process of the actors where he presents an interesting relationship between the exercise of freedom and its orientation towards the search for shared benefits. Clemens Sedmak presents the conclusion of the functioning of the dynamics of the common good from the systemic approach. Based on a critical analysis of the utilitarian vision of human relations, it incorporates the idea that the common good requires the inclusion of "all" the members of a community, enriching the understanding of the meaning of the human dimension of dynamics. To do this, it incorporates four trends: reconciled pluralism, deep inclusion, integral ecology and patterns of permeability. Tom de Herdt and Denis Augustin Samnick criticize the liberal and economic conception of the common good to support the civic approach to governance where transparency and accountability are unavoidable instruments. For his part, Rodolfo de la Torre provides criteria and indicators through three basic elements for the dimension of justice: its constant link with the other four dimensions of the matrix, equal opportunities for the generation of goods and equity in their distribution. Flavio Comim questions the way in which the concept of stability has been understood to guide us, paradoxically, to its dynamics. It proposes to leave the limited static vision of results and processes to see the political and normative balance.

Finally, the third part complements the publication with four significant cases to assess the proposal of the line of research. Helen Alford shows the advantages of the common good approach in organizational development and its contribution to the specific work of business leaders. Patrick Riordan with the case of Bangsamoro in the Philippines, shows an alternative to social differences (between Muslims and Christians) for the generation of a shared future. Valente Tallabs and Mathias Nebel present the results of the concrete application of the matrix of the dynamics of the common good in the community of Atlixco, in Mexico, identifying contributions for the decisions of municipal authorities. Finally, Simona Berretta provides the way in which the study of the links of the dynamics of the common good helps to understand the basic components of sociability and to improve micro-social relationships.



“A Common Good Approach to Development” is a blog. It presents the path followed by a group of researchers to respond to a simple shared need: how to provide elements for a harmonious and positive coexistence?

Luis Ignacio Arbesú Verdusco*

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Nebel, Mathias, Oscar Garza-Vázquez & Clemens Sedmak (Eds.) . *A Common Good Approach to Development: Collective Dynamics of Development Processes*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108894444>



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