



Operationalizing the Common Good: A Symposium

University of Notre Dame
October 22–23, 2018

The symposium is a collaboration of the University of Notre Dame Center for Social Concerns and Kellogg Institute for International Studies, the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla (UPAEP), and its Instituto Promotor del Bien Común.



Symposium Background and Topic

The common good enjoys a central place in development ethics as well as in classical and Christian social thought. It is a foundational principle of Catholic Social Teaching. However, there is a challenge with its operationalization; a joint research project on “developing indicators for the common good on the level of municipalities” with the newly founded Instituto Promotor del Bien Común of UPAEP (Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla, a Catholic University), Mexico responds to this problem. In a series of research seminars, an international team of scholars is working on this endeavor to assess and measure the common good achieved and enjoyed by a local community. The project seeks to construct a series of indicators of the common good to measure development at the local level of municipality in cooperation with mayors from more than a hundred cities.

The project is on developing aims to do justice to the complexity of the common good. A common good approach focuses on groups or communities, and on the processes through which they achieve and maintain social goods. It understands these goods as irreducible social goods, i.e. goods ‘built on’ and ‘embedded in’ relationships. As Taylor argues, these are goods that are immanent to the cooperation of people in a community; immanent to collective organization that allows the achievement of a social good; immanent to the shared understanding of their value.

Most development indicators rely on individual data, which leaves out of the picture the structural dimension of development, i.e. how a social environment shapes individual functioning or achievements. Moreover, many development indicators are keen to measure collective functionings through individual data (health, education, etc.). A growing literature argues therefore that we also need to include group or community data in order to grasp and measure ‘collective achievement’ of goods or services that are essentially ‘shared’ or ‘common’. Different approaches to development have advanced in this direction, such as: social capital, public goods, commons, social rights, and collective capabilities. This research symposium will explore indicators for key dimensions of the common good together with colleagues from Mexico and Europe.

Program Operationalizing the Common Good Symposium

Monday | October 22 | Geddes Hall, Coffee House (by invitation)

8:30–8:45 am	Gathering
8:45–9:00 am	Introduction <i>General challenges of Catholic Social Tradition-Principles and “Indicators”</i> (Clemens Sedmak)
9:00–10:30 am	First Working Session <i>Recapturing the Common Good Pentagram</i> (Mathias Nebel) <i>Indicators for Agency</i> (Oscar Garza Vázquez)
10:30–11:00 am	Break
11:00–12:30 pm	Second Working Session <i>Indicators for Humanity</i> (Clemens Sedmak) <i>Indicators for Stability</i> (Flavio Comim)
12:30–1:30 pm	Lunch Break
1:30–3:00 pm	Third Working Session <i>Indicators for Governance</i> (Thomas Mustillo) <i>Indicators for Justice</i> (Rodolfo de la Torre)
3:00–3:30 pm	Break
3:30–5:00 pm	Fourth Working Session <i>Applying the Pentagram to Family Dynamics</i> (Jorge Medina) <i>Some Thoughts About the Pentagram</i> (Patrick Riordan)
5:00–5:30 pm	Break with snacks
5:30–7:00 pm	Fifth Working Session <i>Open Discussion of Indicators</i>
7:30 pm	Dinner at the Morris Inn, Hesburgh Room

Tuesday | October 23 | Geddes Hall, Coffee House (open to all)

8:30–8:45 am **Gathering**

8:45–9:00 am **Introducion**

Introduction to the Project (Mathias Nebel, Clemens Sedmak)

9:00–10:15 am **Working Session**

Mindanao: A Case Study (Patrick Riordan)

Applying the Pentagonam to Higher Education (Gabriela Lechuga)

10:15–10:30 am **Break**

10:30–noon **Final Working Session and Closure**

Applying the Pentagonam to the Municipio of Atlixco, Edo Puebla
(Valente Tallabs)

Applying the Pentagonam to an Institution (Anna Blackman)

Concluding Discussion

At the conclusion of the symposium, attendees are welcome to attend a luncheon and lecture given by Flavio Comim entitled [*The Common Good and Rejection of the Poor \(Aporophobia\)*](#) at 12:30 p.m. in Hesburgh Center, C103.