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**INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF
SEN'S CAPABILITY APPROACH AND THE LIFE OF A FAITH
COMMUNITY AT THE LATIN AMERICAN URBAN MARGINS**

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427

April
2018

paper



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Working Paper #427 – April 2018**

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* I thank the Kellogg Institute's Catholic Social Teaching & Human Development Working Group, the Master of Global Affairs students at Notre Dame, and two anonymous referees for helpful comments on a previous draft. I am immensely grateful to the members of the Argentine faith community for their welcome and sharing, and to Ana Lourdes Suárez for taking the project on board locally. A longer version of the paper will be published in the *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 15 (2) in summer 2018.

ABSTRACT

The concept of integral human development is central to the Catholic social tradition. Yet, it remains under-explored with regard to its integrating components and their implications. What does taking an integral human development perspective mean for social analysis and action? The paper seeks to answer this question on the basis of the four encyclicals in which the idea of integral human development is treated, and in combination with two other sources: 1) the literature on “human development” in the multidisciplinary social science field of international development studies and its conceptual foundations in Amartya Sen’s capability approach; and 2) the life of a faith community in a marginalized Latin American urban neighborhood. Based on a combination of these sources, the paper concludes by proposing an understanding of “integral human development” that it calls a spirituality-extended capability approach to the progress of peoples.

RESUME

El concepto de desarrollo humano integral es central en la tradición social de la Iglesia. Sin embargo, poco se ha escrito acerca de su significado y alcance fuera de encíclicas y comentarios sobre ellas. ¿Qué puede ofrecer el desarrollo humano integral al análisis y la acción social? Este escrito busca responder a esta pregunta a partir de cuatro encíclicas papales en las cuales se desarrolla la idea del desarrollo humano integral, y de dos fuentes complementarias: 1) la literatura sobre el desarrollo humano y el enfoque de las capacidades de Amartya Sen en el campo de las ciencias sociales que estudian procesos de desarrollo; y 2) la vida de una comunidad de fe situada en un barrio urbano marginalizado de América Latina. A partir de este desarrollo, como resultado de la combinación de las fuentes aquí presentadas, se llega a una perspectiva que aquí llamamos ‘una extensión espiritual del enfoque de las capacidades hacia el progreso de las personas’.

INTRODUCTION

Since its first appearance in the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* issued by Pope Paul VI in 1967, integral human development has become central to the Church's understanding of the progress of societies. The term "integral" derives from Jacques Maritain's writings on "integral humanism" (Maritain 1968), a humanism open to the transcendental dimension and for which the realm of human affairs and the spiritual realm are autonomous without being separated, each influencing the other (Catta 2015).¹ It is noteworthy that the English translation of the original does not use the term "integral" but "well rounded": "The development We speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man" (*Populorum Progressio* 14; hereafter PP). The translation refers to Maritain's integral humanism as "full-bodied": "The ultimate goal is a full-bodied humanism.... A narrow humanism, closed in on itself and not open to the values of the spirit and to God who is their source, could achieve apparent success, for man can set about organizing terrestrial realities without God.... A humanism closed off from other realities becomes inhuman" (PP 42).

Despite being the hallmark of how the Catholic Church understands development, the concept of integral human development remains under-explored with regard to its integrating components and its implications beyond commentaries on the encyclicals that refer to it.² The original definition of *Populorum Progressio* paragraph 14 has given rise to a plurality of views regarding its meaning. Different Catholic institutions have come up with their own versions and definitions. The Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, which states integral human development as its mission, offers the following definition:

[a] positive vision of human flourishing articulated in modern Catholic social teaching and shared by several other religious and humanistic traditions. It centers on the idea that the dignity of the human person is expressed in work and economic activity—but also in cultural richness, artistic creativity, religious belonging, and spiritual practice. Most profoundly, human dignity is expressed in our relationships with, and obligations to, family, community, and all of humanity, around the globe.³

¹ For the historical background of *Populorum Progressio* and the influence of French Dominican Joseph-Louis Lebreton in it, see Catta (2015) and Rapela Heidt (2017).

² See Bertina (2013), Catta (2015), Clark (2014), Keleher (2017), and Kraemer (1998).

³ <http://keough.nd.edu/integral-human-development/>.

As of January 1, 2017, there is a Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, which replaces the previous Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. This new department in the Roman Curia understands its mission of promoting integral human development as studying and promoting the social teaching of the Church and cooperating with other institutions and organizations to promote justice and peace.⁴ At a conference launching the dicastery on the fiftieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, Pope Francis highlighted the “integration” component of “integral,” signaling that this implied integration of all people (solidarity), integration of different levels of action (subsidiarity) and spheres of society (multidimensionality), and integration of the individual and community, and body and soul.⁵

The aim of this paper is to contribute to this discussion about the meaning and implications of integral human development by disentangling its main components and to examine how it can be taken beyond the Catholic social tradition from which it originates. The paper is divided into two parts, which present two faces of integral human development in dynamic interaction with each other. Part I analyses integral human development as a perspective for social analysis, as presented in the encyclicals, and combines it with the conceptual roots of the human development framework in international development studies, namely Amartya Sen’s capability approach. Part II analyses integral human development as a way of being and acting through the narrative of a faith community in a marginalized neighborhood of Buenos Aires.

PART I: INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF SEN’S CAPABILITY APPROACH

Like the Catholic social tradition of which it is part, integral human development is not an alternative social theory but seeks to illuminate social realities from the perspective of the Gospel (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 41). This section starts with examining how the concept has been treated in the four encyclicals which make reference to it: *Populorum Progressio* (PP) published by Paul VI in 1967; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (SRS) (Pope John Paul II 1987); *Caritas in Veritate* (CV) (Pope Benedict XVI 2009); and *Laudato Si’* (LS) (Pope Francis 2015). It then

⁴ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco_20160817_statuto-dicastero-servizio-sviluppo-umano-integrale.html.

⁵ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170404_convegno-populorum-progressio.html.

discusses the main characteristics of Amartya Sen’s capability approach, which underpins the concept of “human development” in development studies. The section concludes by exploring how the main components of integral human development can be expressed within Sen’s capability approach and proposes a “spirituality-extended capability approach to the progress of people.”

Integral Human Development in the Encyclicals

Starting from the original definition in *Populorum Progressio*, each subsequent encyclical has expanded the understanding of integral human development in relation to the context to which it seeks to respond. From an analysis of the four encyclicals that refer to it, a core component (IHD) and five associated components (IHD 1–5) can be distinguished.

IHD: Inseparability of the material and spiritual

The inseparability of the material and spiritual dimensions of human life is a main area of integration to which the adjective “integral” refers in the two founding references (PP 14, PP 42).⁶ The human being is a unity of body and soul, and material and spiritual development go hand in hand. Humanism, and actions that show concern for other human beings and seek to improve their lives need to be open to the “values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation,” for “this is what will guarantee [wo]man’s authentic development—his [her] transition from less than human conditions to truly human ones” (PP 20).

Populorum Progressio sees “love and friendship” as places where God’s presence dwells and where one can find glimpses of God’s transcendence. It talks of every human person’s “call” to self-fulfillment as bound up with the “development of human society as a whole” (PP 15, 17). It understands this task of working for the progress of peoples as the “call” God makes to every person to “share God’s life as sons [and daughters] of the living God” (PP 21).

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis restates this universal call in a more Christo-centric way (Catta 2015): “Development which is not only economic must be measured and oriented according to the

⁶ As is the convention in Catholic social teaching, all quotes from the encyclicals are referenced by the initials of the title and the paragraph. For an overview of Catholic social teaching, see Dorr (2012). See also the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* published by the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace in 2005 at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

reality and vocation of [wo]man seen in his [her] totality, namely, according to his [her] interior dimension.... The new goods and resources placed at our disposal and the use we make of them.... we must see them as a gift from God and as a response to the human vocation, which is fully realized in Christ” (SRS 29).

Building on the previous encyclicals, *Caritas in Veritate* describes integral human development as a vocation, as a response to God’s call for humans to become more human, whose full humanity is only revealed in Christ’s life, death and resurrection (CV 18). Without such a “transcendent vision of the person,” without God, “development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to [wo]man, who falls into the trap of thinking [s]he can bring about his[her] own salvation, and ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development” (CV 11).

Laudato Si’ deepens this inseparability by linking the spiritual dimension to openness to the gift of God’s creation (LS 85). It talks of the “mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face” (LS 233), of nature being “filled with words of love” (LS 225). Any person who lives a life open to the wonders of Creation, with a balanced lifestyle that respects God’s gifts, and who works at bringing economic and social processes into harmony with such creation, is involved in integral human development (LS 225). *Laudato Si’* sees God’s presence as dwelling in anybody giving him or herself out of love to help others and protect the environment. Such “social love” is “key to authentic development,” “this too is part of our spirituality,” which “sanctifies us” (LS 231).

IHD 1: Each person as an end, and the cry of the poor and of the earth as the starting point

IHD implies that any change in the material dimension is bound up with the recognition of God’s transcendence revealed in the uniqueness of each human being. In considering each person as the ultimate end of social analysis, the encyclicals underline that the human person is inseparable from the natural environment of which she is part, for the “book of nature is one and indivisible” (CV 51, LS 6). This indivisibility entails that “[o]ur duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others” (CV 51).

This ultimate end of social analysis also determines its starting point. It is the human person, and her indivisibility with the environment, who is the starting consideration and, in

particular, those who are most vulnerable,⁷ what *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* calls “the preferential option for the poor.” It affirms that “[o]ur daily life as well as our decisions in the political and economic fields must be marked by these realities”—that is, “the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care and, above all, those without hope of a better future” (SRS 42).

Given the indivisibility of the book of nature, *Laudato Si'* affirms that “a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach” (LS 49). It urges to “integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*” (LS 49), because “the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet” (LS 48). The encyclical gives some examples of those who “cry”—migrants fleeing poverty or environmental degradation (LS 25), temporary laborers and rural workers (LS 134), those who live in unsanitary slums (LS 152).

IHD 2: Open-ended multidimensionality

If one takes the person as the end, one must consider all the dimensions of her life into account, the economic, social, cultural, political, and spiritual, that is, “the whole person” (PP 14). The opening line of *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* states it too: “The social concern of the Church, directed towards an authentic development of [wo]man and society which would respect and promote all the dimensions of the human person, has always expressed itself in the most varied ways” (SRS 1). *Caritas in Veritate* reaffirms it: “Authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension” (CV 11). This multidimensional perspective implies a multidisciplinary analysis, for “the correlation between its multiple elements [of integral human development] requires a commitment to *foster the interaction of the different levels of human knowledge* in order to promote the authentic development of peoples” (CV 30).

No list of dimensions exhausts human life. One could highlight three inter-related dimensions that the encyclicals discuss and that influence all others, namely the relational, spiritual and freedom dimensions. On the latter, *Populorum Progressio* talks of being an

⁷ This point was already made in the opening sentence of the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*, which stated that “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the [wo]men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.” See http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

“artisan of one’s destiny” (PP 65). *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* emphasizes the freedom one has to collude or not with structures of sin and the decision to embark on a path of conversion and personal transformation (see below). For *Caritas in Veritate*, this freedom is manifested mainly in the welcoming or rejecting of God’s transcendence. *Laudato Si’* develops this further and discusses at length the consequences of the failure to recognize interconnectedness and God’s transcendence in the wonders of creation (LS 177).

IHD 3: Interconnectedness

Laudato Si’ repeats many times that “everything in the world is connected” (LS 16, 91, 117, 240). As it expands: “Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another” (LS 42). An integral human development perspective takes “[i]nterdependence as a moral category” (SRS 38). This awareness of how everything is interdependent is the foundation of solidarity (SRS 38). *Laudato Si’* talks of this interconnectedness as a “splendid universal communion” (LS 220), as an invitation to “develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity” (LS 240).

That everything is interconnected does not mean that the person is subsumed into a whole and loses her individuality. Seeing “each person as an end” implies seeing that person in a web of interconnections. Any individual action takes place in a web of past interconnected actions. When an action fails to recognize this interconnectedness, when it fails to recognize the divine in all that has been created, this has many repercussions, for everything is connected.

IHD 4: Reality of sin at personal and structural levels

Populorum Progressio already made a strong link between the spiritual poverty of some—“those who are crushed under the weight of their own self-love,” “abuse of ownership or the improper exercise of power”—and the material poverty of others. Both forms of poverty are “less than human conditions” (PP 21). *Caritas in Veritate* as well as *Laudato Si’* talk about the relation between “a sort of superdevelopment of a wasteful and consumerist kind which forms an unacceptable contrast with the ongoing situations of dehumanizing deprivation” (CV 22, LS 109).

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis deepens the analysis of wrongdoings and their impact and introduces the theological category of “structural sin,” as the “sum total of the negative factors working against a true awareness of the universal common good” (SRS 36). It singles out especially “the desire for profit and that thirst for power” as “hindering full development” (SRS 38). Even if “structures of sin” are “always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove,” they “grow stronger, spread, and become the source of other sins, and so influence people’s behavior” (SRS 36). Conversely, one could talk of “structures of virtues” as the “sum total of positive factors working towards a true awareness of the universal common good,” such as actions towards “reusing, repairing and recycling” that introduce and consolidate cultures of reuse and repair, as opposed to the culture of waste (LS 16).

Adopting an integral human development perspective in social analysis therefore needs to include an analysis of these “structures of sin” that undermine the conditions for people to flourish as human beings. It also has to consider the degree of freedom a person has not to reproduce these structures through her actions. This is why integral human development does not separate the personal and the structural and why there cannot be a primacy of one over the other. Because the human person is both unique and interconnected, and because she is both body and soul, integral human development involves simultaneously personal and structural transformation (Catta 2015).

IHD 5: Personal and community conversion

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis talks of the need for “conversion,” for “a change of behavior or mentality or mode of existence” (SRS 38). This possibility of conversion, or the possibility that there is always a way for turning away from wrongdoings because of God’s everlasting mercy, the encyclical argues, is a main difference between mere sociopolitical analysis and integral human development (SRS 36). In other words, an integral human development perspective introduces the moral category of hope. The actions of a past generation may create a severe “interference in the process of the development of peoples” (SRS 36), but the inseparability of the material and the spiritual opens up a space for something new. This conversion is never ending, given the inherent ambivalence of human activities (e.g., PP 25–26 talk of

industrialization and work as having a “double edge,” bringing both bad and good consequences for human beings).

The reality of climate change manifests acutely this ambivalence (industrialization led to both social progress and environmental degradation) and how the actions of people beyond their life span are interfering with today’s generation (IPCC 2014). An integral human development perspective can make a distinctive contribution to addressing climate change by emphasizing the inseparability between material and spiritual development and the urgent need for “conversion,” for “a change of heart” and “achieving reconciliation with creation” (LS 218). However, this is not sufficient. As much as an individual can repent from “an unethical consumerism bereft of social or ecological awareness,” the encyclical argues that “social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds.... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion” (LS 219). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes makes a similar diagnosis for both an individual and communal response (IPCC 2014, 29). The similarities between IPCC and LS signal that integral human development is not a self-contained perspective but rests on dialogue and cooperation outside the Catholic tradition.

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis already saw dialogue and collaboration with other religions as central to integral human development (SRS 32), and it nurtured the hope that “fellow human beings, whether or not they are inspired by a religious faith, will become fully aware of the urgent need to change the spiritual attitudes which define each individual’s relationship with self, with neighbor, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself” (SRS 38). The urgency of a global dialogue with everyone is a central message of *Laudato Si’*. The next section aims at starting such dialogue by examining the features of “human development” in international development studies.

Human Development and Sen’s Capability Approach

It was in 1990 that “human development” entered development policy discourses with the publication of the first *Human Development Report* by the United Nations Development

Program (UNDP).⁸ The initiative was largely policy motivated. It was to offer an alternative to neo-liberal policies, in which people, and not income, would come first (Jolly 2003). For the sake of policy advocacy, the human development perspective advanced by the UNDP focused on three dimensions to assess the “richness of human life”, as an alternative to the “richness of the economy”:⁹ health, education and standard of living, measured by a composite index, the Human Development Index. Human life is of course more than these dimensions, and in their analysis, the *Human Development Reports* have dealt with many others, such as culture, political freedom, environmental protection, disability, employment, and gender equality.

For the sake of unpacking the different components of “human development” I focus on its conceptual foundations, namely Amartya Sen’s capability approach.¹⁰ Born out of social choice theory, the capability approach is first and foremost an approach for making comparative judgments about states of affairs, whether one is better than the other (Sen 2017). What it does is expand the informational basis of value judgments from income/utility to capabilities or considerations about freedom (see below). Through this the capability approach offers a different way for understanding “progress” or “development”, and dealing with questions of justice.¹¹ The next paragraphs describe the capability approach in terms of a core feature (CA) and derivative features (CA 1–5).

CA: Taking into account nonmaterial considerations (such as human freedom)

With his capability approach Sen sought “to explore a moral approach that sees persons from two different perspectives: *well-being* and *agency*” (Sen 1985, 169), which he defined as two perspectives on human freedom in dynamic interaction.¹² He used the word “capability” for the first time in his Tanner Lectures of 1979, entitled “Equality of What?” (Sen 1980), as an

⁸ For the literature on human development, see, among others, Alkire (2010), Alkire and Deneulin (2009), Fukuda-Parr and Shiva Kumar (2003, 2009), Nussbaum (2000, 2011), Sen (1999), and the website of the Human Development and Capability Association at www.hd-ca.org.

⁹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev>.

¹⁰ A diagram in UNDP (2016, 2) explains the connections between the capability approach and human development.

¹¹ According to Qizilbash (2016, 89), what Sen calls an “approach” is “a perspective which is distinctive from some dominant views,” such as an “approach” to justice that differs from that of Rawls or an “approach” to social choice that differs from that of utilitarianism.

¹² To refer to this interaction between well-being and agency, Sen uses the generic term “social realizations,” which include “[well-being] outcomes as well as the processes [agency] through which those outcomes come about” (Sen 2017, 364). For a review of Sen’s *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, see Deneulin and Clausen (2018).

evaluative space for assessing states of affairs that is more adequate than income or utility—he had however long argued for taking consideration of freedom into account in social choice theory (Sen 1970). Considerations about incomes and resources may be important, but they are not good representatives of how well a person’s life is going. Sen advances that it is better to judge individual advantage “in terms of what people are able to be or able to do, rather than in terms of the means or resources they possess” (Sen 2017, 357). This is what Sen calls “functionings,” the “beings” and “doings” of people, such as being in good health, participating in the life of the community, being well nourished, making decisions about one’s life, travelling, speaking with others, and so on. A “capability” is the freedom one has to realize these (Sen 1993). An example Sen has often given to illustrate the distinction is that of the starving child and the fasting monk: the latter has the “capability” to be well nourished but chooses not to be; the former does not have such a choice. Even if it is “capability” rather than “functioning” that has been adopted as the name for this novel moral approach in the social sciences, functionings and capabilities belong to the same evaluation space (Sen 1992).

CA 1: Each person as an end, and human diversity

Sen (1988) starts his seminal article on the concept of development by referring to Kant’s categorical imperative and treating humanity as an end and not a means. He argues that the fact that human beings are both the main means and beneficiaries of production processes, “provides a rich ground for confusion of ends and means in planning and policy-making,” which “can—and frequently does—take the form of focusing on production and prosperity as the essence of progress, treating people as the means through which that productive progress is brought about (rather than seeing the lives of people as the ultimate concern and treating production and prosperity merely as means to those lives)” (Sen 1988, 41).

A concern for the types of lives that people live is Sen’s central motivation for introducing non-material considerations into the informational basis of value judgments. But there is also a concern for human diversity. One will need different amounts of resources to achieve the same functioning, according to a person’s individual, social, and environmental characteristics; what is called in the jargon “conversion factors” (Sen 2017, 26). For example, a

person who is visually impaired will need a particular set of resources, such as a guide dog and extra institutional resources such as street signs and maps in braille, to achieve the functioning of travel.

“Each individual person as an end” is known in the capability approach literature as “ethical individualism.” Following Nussbaum (2011), Robeyns (2017) sees ethical individualism as part of treating all human beings as moral equals. Ethical individualism does not mean that information about people’s lives needs to be confined only to what happens to each person; it can include considerations about structures, or “conversion factors,” such as the caste system, political systems, cultural and social norms, and others. However, Robeyns (2017) argues that taking into account the quality of structures in the evaluation of states of affairs and extending the evaluation space beyond what happens to individual persons is not always necessary. For example, one could document the impact of the “increasing sales and shortening lifecycles of electrical and electronic equipment” and its consequent “rising tide of e-waste” on health outcomes in various parts of the world, as does the World Health Organization in a report on children’s health (WHO 2017, 88–91). According to Sen’s capability approach, whether it is sufficient to consider information about children’s health or whether there is also a need for an in-depth analysis of what fuels the “rising tide of e-waste” is a decision to be made according to the purpose of the evaluation exercise.

CA 2: Open-ended multidimensionality

The capability or “functioning approach is intrinsically information-pluralist” (Sen 1985, 200). A person functions in many aspects, and there are many activities she can do and many states in which she can be. Sen does not derive the value of capabilities “from one particular “comprehensive doctrine” demanding one specific way of living” (Sen 1990, 118). This is why he does not define which valuable capabilities should enter the evaluation space. When discussing “poverty as capability deprivation,” which he views as “ultimately a lack of opportunity to lead a minimally acceptable life” (2017, 26), Sen ventures to offer a list of “elementary functionings,” such as “being alive, being well-nourished and in good health,

moving about freely,” and “more complex functionings,” such as “having self-respect and respect for others, taking part in the life of the community” (2017, 357).¹³

This open-ended multidimensionality opens up the possibility of including other non-material considerations, beyond well-being and agency, for assessing how well people are doing, such as procedural fairness or non-domination (Robeyns 2017; Sen 2017). It also makes the approach open to including “being in relation with a higher source of value” (Alkire 2002) as a potential valuable functioning.

CA 3: Interconnectedness

For Sen, to be a human being is to interact with others, and this interaction is constitutive of what a person values being and doing, of who she is. “We are socially interactive creatures,” he writes (Sen 2015, 81), and even what counts as a “valuable” or “basic” doing or being of human beings (i.e., functioning) is the result of an interactive process of public discussion (Sen 2015, 89).

As mentioned above, the relational aspect of human life, or “interconnectedness,” is implicitly taken into account by evaluating the lives of each person. Ethical individualism, or each person as an end, is not incompatible with a relational anthropology. As Sen wrote in his *Idea of Justice*: “Ultimately, it is individual evaluation on which we would have to draw, while recognizing the profound interdependence of the valuation of individuals who interact with each other.... In valuing a person’s ability to take part in the life of society, there is an implicit valuation of the life of the society itself, and that is an important enough aspect of the capability perspective” (Sen 2009, 246).

However, this does not mean that interconnectedness has always to be valued *only* to the extent to which it is manifested in the person’s life. In reference to the example of the impact of e-waste on children’s health, Sen would probably say, to paraphrase the above quote, “in valuing a person’s ability to be healthy, there is an implicit valuation of the culture of waste itself, and that is an important enough aspect of the capability perspective.” This does not

¹³ Nussbaum (2000, 2011) has proposed a list of valuable capabilities as part of her project to construct a (politically liberal) theory of justice based on the capability approach. The discussion of the “list” vs. “non-list” has now been settled, and the consensus is that establishing a list of “valuable” capabilities has to be context dependent and linked to the objective of the exercise (Robeyns 2017). Nussbaum’s aim was to construct a (partial) theory of justice, and her list has to be seen within that context.

preclude taking the capability perspective beyond this implicit evaluation to include a valuation of what *Laudato Si'* calls a “culture of waste” (LS 16).¹⁴

CA 4: Value pluralism

The plurality of values is another central feature of Sen’s capability approach. This is expressed in two ways: in the context-dependence of values and in the plurality of the sources of values. One of the reasons for Sen’s opposition to drawing up a list of “valuable” functionings/capabilities is that what is valuable can be context-dependent. The same “doing” or “being” can be valuable in one context but not in another. Robeyns (2017, 42) gives the example of the functioning of caring for an elderly parent. It can be a valuable capability that employers need to make provision for, so that employees can take flexible leave in order to care if they chose to do so, but it can become non-valuable if only the daughters are expected to care or if the children are forced to take on the duty of care by financial pressure.

The capability approach is also pluralist, or one could say value-agnostic, in that it is open to multiple sources of values, including those coming from religious traditions. For example, if someone considers fasting as an important “doing” because one belongs to a religious tradition that sees that “doing” as valuable, the moral approach Sen introduced in the social sciences can accommodate such values.

In Sen’s capability approach different values do not simply coexist; they interact and change as a result of interaction and public discussion. In his social choice-based approach to justice (Sen 2009, 2017), the formation of certain values through public discussion is central to the diagnosis of injustice. A point that Sen often emphasizes is that what we hold as important needs to be critically examined and scrutinized (Sen 2017, 39, 281). He gives the example of hunger and environmental degradation to illustrate the role of public discussion in value formation and in changing people’s priorities and views about what should be done (Sen 2017, 40).

In that regard the capability approach is inclusive of religious traditions and the values they contain. In an article about why we should preserve the spotted owl, Sen (2004) offers an interesting reflection about the role of religious traditions in shaping what is considered as

¹⁴ The *Human Development Report* 2016 argues for taking “structures of living together” as part of the evaluation space (UNDP 2016, 89–91). See Deneulin (2008) for including “structures of living together,” an expression taken from Paul Ricoeur’s ethics, in the capability approach.

“valuable.” He argues that the spotted owl has no value per se, but only as an outcome of reasoning processes. Some people may value the owl because its very existence gives glory to God (cf. LS 33, which states that “because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us”); some may value the owl because of its place in the ecosystem, or for other reasons. Interestingly, Sen alludes to his own justification for protecting the spotted owl: the Buddha’s point that “since we are enormously more powerful than other species, we have some responsibility towards them that is linked with this asymmetry” (Sen 2004, 11). There is a wide range of reasons for which something may be valuable. This implies that, with reasons interacting, what is valuable is not static or predetermined: it comes as a result of human interaction.

CA 5: Sympathetic public reasoning

For Sen, processes of public reasoning or public discussion are closely linked to not being indifferent to what happens to others, putting oneself in the shoes of another person and seeing the world from his/her perspective. In the case of hunger, Sen makes the point that “[t]here is a particular need in this context to examine value formation that results from public discussion of miserable events [famine], in generating sympathy and commitment on the part of citizens to do something to prevent their occurrence” (Sen 2017, 40). Elsewhere, he makes a similar point that the elimination of famines “depends critically on the power of public reasoning in making non-victims take on the need to eradicate famines their own commitment. Democratic institutions can be effective only if different sections of the population appreciate what is happening to others” (Sen 2015, xxxvi).

Drèze and Sen (2013) detail some of the consequences of lack of openness to the lives of others in the Indian context. They note a relation between the poor not often being a subject of public discussion and India’s policy priorities. Sen’s *Idea of Justice* also underlines the importance of listening to the views of others: “When we try to assess... which kind of societies should be understood to be patently unjust, we have reason to listen and pay some attention to the views and suggestions of others, which might or might not lead us to revise some of our own conclusions” (Sen 2009, 88).

The description of the capability approach in this section does not exhaust what the capability approach is. It is fundamentally open-ended and pluralist. This is why it can be used

for so many different purposes and taken towards so many directions, as a basis on which to frame a theory of justice, as a conceptual frame to develop poverty measures, as a framework within which to rethink higher education pedagogies, as a new way of understanding what counts as progress or development, and many others.

The next section takes the capability approach in a new direction: as a conceptual background for thinking about development when the spiritual is included as a valuable dimension of human life. If we include “being in relation with a Transcendental source of value” as a valuable “being and doing,” what does this imply for the way we understand development or the “progress of peoples”? The next paragraphs seek to answer that question by adding to the main components of Sen’s capability approach (CA and CA 1–5) the features of a conception of development that does not separate the material from the spiritual (IHD and IHD 1–5), what I call a “spirituality-extended capability approach.” It is neither Sen’s account nor the Catholic social tradition account of development, but a new account altogether.¹⁵

A Spirituality-extended Capability Approach to the Progress of Peoples: Part I

The capability approach, as Sen originally proposed it, is limited to drawing attention to non-material considerations, especially considerations of human freedom, when answering the question “What kind of a life is she [a person] leading? What does she succeed in doing and in being?” (Sen 1985, 195). The concept of integral human development went further by drawing attention to spiritual considerations, that is, how a person exercises his or her freedom in his/her relationship with the Creator, and by affirming an inseparability between how this freedom is exercised and the life of other people and of ecosystems. The core feature CA augmented by IHD becomes:

¹⁵ As it puts forward its own version of the capability approach, this paper leaves aside the task of identifying complementarities and points of tensions between Amartya Sen/Martha Nussbaum and the Catholic social tradition, see, e.g., Zampini-Davies (2014) and Schulz (2016). Clemens Sedmak and I are currently editing a volume on the relation between the capability approach and the Catholic social tradition.

CA*: Taking into account nonmaterial considerations, such as human freedom and relationship with the Transcendent

This formulation makes room for a multiple set of non-material considerations to be included when answering the question how people's lives are doing. In addition to well-being and agency, one would also need to pay attention to the spiritual dimension or people's relationship with the Transcendent, that is, what or who they hold as an ultimate source of life and meaning.

CA* 1: Each person as unique and as an end, and the cry of the poor and of the earth as the starting point

Both integral human development and Sen's capability approach take the human person as the ultimate end of moral concern, but the former puts a greater emphasis on the "cry of the poor and of the earth" as the starting point for social analysis and social action. Thus, adding IHD 1 to CA 1 gives us the first derivative feature of a spirituality-extended capability approach: treating each person as unique and as an end (which includes taking into account human diversity) and taking the "cry of the poor and of the earth" as the starting point for social analysis.

CA* 2: Open-ended multidimensionality

Both integral human development and Sen's capability approach have open-ended multidimensionality as a core feature, but the former affirms that the spiritual dimension is an essential component of this multidimensionality, which influences other dimensions. CA* 2 thus simply modifies CA 2 by making the spiritual or transcendental dimension a more explicit component.

CA* 3: Interconnectedness

Interconnectedness is central to integral human development, as it is to Sen's capability approach. A spirituality-extended capability approach makes interconnectedness, and its quality, an additional part of the evaluation of states of affairs, and not only implicit through its impact on the life of each person.

CA* 4: Acknowledgment of harm through sympathetic reasoning

Value pluralism was a fourth feature of Sen's capability approach. It held that the value of something was better determined through public reasoning processes. Integral human

development had as fourth feature the acknowledgment that human freedom can be exercised in a way that causes harm to other people and the environment. The word “sin” may be specific to the Christian tradition, but recognizing the harm done to other people is not specific to religion. Through its value pluralism, Sen’s capability approach can include that acknowledging one’s wrongdoings might be a valuable “doing,” an important “functioning.” And through its emphasis on sympathetic reasoning, the approach gives space for people to become aware, through discussing with others, of the harmful consequences of their actions for the lives of others and the environment. Adding IHD 4 to CA 4–5 gives a fourth feature of a spirituality-extended capability approach: the acknowledgment of harm through sympathetic reasoning.

CA* 5: Personal and policy transformation go hand in hand

As a normative evaluation framework, Sen’s capability approach is not prescriptive. Integral human development is not prescriptive either, in the sense that it does not recommend a specific set of actions. But it does, however, affirm that policy change is connected to personal change. A spirituality-extended capability approach therefore contains the feature that policy, or structural, transformation is in dynamic interaction with personal transformation.

Part I has explored the concept of integral human development as a normative framework for social analysis as it originates in the Catholic social tradition. It has then sought to translate it into the social sciences by using the conceptual apparatus of Sen’s capability approach. But integral human development is not only a normative framework for social analysis; it has another face that is intrinsically connected to the first one. Part II explores integral human development as a specific way of being and acting. It follows the same structure as Part I: it starts with the encyclicals, discusses the being and acting of a faith community, and concludes by seeking to take this second face of integral human development beyond the Catholic tradition.

PART II: INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LENS OF THE LIFE OF A FAITH COMMUNITY AT THE LATIN AMERICAN URBAN MARGINS

Caritas in Veritate is the only encyclical to associate integral human development with the “being and doing” of an ecclesial community. It affirms, referring to *Populorum Progressio* and the Second Vatican Council, that “The whole Church, in all her being and acting—when she

proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity—is engaged in promoting integral human development” (CV 11). The other encyclicals do not make such explicit connection, although one could say that every encyclical, and the whole Catholic social tradition, is connected to the “being and acting” of ecclesial communities and how they attempt to proclaim, celebrate, and serve God in their specific contexts.¹⁶ *Laudato Si’* exemplifies this by quoting a large number of local bishops’ conferences.

The next sections analyze this second face of integral human development through the narrative of an ecclesial community in a marginalized neighborhood in Greater Buenos Aires. The justification for anchoring the conceptual analysis of CV 11 in that community is twofold. First, there is an epistemic or theoretical justification for gaining greater insights into the concept of integral human development from the perspective of people who live in conditions of marginalization.¹⁷ Second, there is a practical justification in that I have been a member of that community at various intervals since December 2013¹⁸ and in that I have started with them in December 2016 a long-term project of reconstruction of the community’s memory and reflection of its presence in the neighborhood. The project is entirely locally led.¹⁹

The narrative below is taken from a subset of interviews collected as part of the aforementioned project. At the time of writing, eighteen interviews have been conducted with members of the ecclesial community, pastoral agents, local neighborhood residents, and nonresidents who work in the services provided from the church premises. The decision of whom to interview is made by the local project leadership team, and with the full consent of the interviewees, who may withdraw at any time. All the interviews were open-ended, conducted in

¹⁶ See Dorr (2012) for an analysis of encyclicals in their socioeconomic contexts, Verstraeten (2005, 2013) and Krier (1998) for the social movement grounding of the Catholic social tradition, and Ivereigh (2010) for the dynamic interaction between the “being and doing” of faith communities and the Catholic social tradition in the London context.

¹⁷ This is what Sedmak (2016) calls the epistemic implication of a “Church of the poor,” which Francis’s papacy has emphasized—the expression dates back to a radio address of John XXIII announcing the Second Vatican Council and has been made in several documents, especially *Gaudium et Spes* and *Ad Gentes*.

¹⁸ I have resided in the community for three weeks in December 2013, each weekend from August–December 2014, and one week in December 2015, May 2016, December 2016, and March 2018.

¹⁹ The project leadership team comprises Buenos Aires–based academic sociologist Ana Lourdes Suárez, the resident priest, two religious, and three members of the ecclesial community who have tertiary education. The team meets whenever necessary to discuss the interviews transcripts and the direction of the project. They then submit a report on project progress to the wider ecclesial community (which meets once month) to get their input.

Spanish by one or two members of the local project team, and transcribed by a local research assistant. Interviews with members of the faith community have the following general structure: questions about personal trajectory and what led them to the neighborhood, how they have experienced it over time, how they saw their involvement in the faith community, and the relationship between the community and the neighborhood. The discussion in the following paragraphs is based on the transcribed interviews with six people who have resided in the neighborhood for between thirty and forty years and have been actively involved in the ecclesial community for more than fifteen years and with three pastoral agents. The narrative of the ecclesial community has been structured according to the features of the spirituality-extended capability approach described in Part I. All names have been changed, and the translation from Spanish is mine.

Brief General Description

Today the ecclesial community has a dedicated chapel and an adjacent hall, a resident priest, the presence of a female religious community, and an average Sunday congregation of a hundred. It has about five hundred people coming through its premises every week to take part in its various activities, which comprise, among others, a mid-afternoon snack (*merienda*), art, dance and sports workshops, a clothes bank, daily school support, and computer classes. This “service” dimension is accompanied by a “proclamation” dimension, with a weekly biblical formation course attended by more than twenty people and catechesis of more than a hundred children and adults and led by a team of more than a dozen adults. The “celebrative” dimension takes place at the Sunday Mass, two weekly masses, and numerous other celebrative activities, such as special feasts, community retreats and excursions.

The neighborhood in which the community is situated covers a geographical area of approximately twelve acres and has an estimated 9,000 residents. It is not an informal settlement, as it has some level of urban planning and connection to basic services, but the quality of life of its residents is worse than that of the rest of the municipality. According to the latest census (2010),²⁰ population density is more than three times higher. There is also a much

²⁰ Censo Nacional de Población, Hogares y Vivienda de 2010 del Instituto Nacional De Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina (INDEC). I thank Ana Lourdes Suárez for compiling the data in this paragraph.

higher percentage of children. There is a large number of families with more than five members, and the percentage of female-headed households is double that of the rest of the municipality. The level of poverty, as measured by the Unmet Basic Needs indicator, is more than three times that of the rest of the municipality, and the unemployment rate is twice as high. Moreover, a large proportion of employment takes place in the informal sector, with many working in construction or domestic service. The percentage of young people aged between 18 and 30 who neither work nor study is near 30 percent, or twice that of the municipality. Only 3 percent of the population have tertiary degrees, 16.1 percent have completed secondary education, 43.9 percent have completed primary education, and 3.8 percent never went to school. Many of the constructions and access to services and infrastructures are deficient. Buildings have not been maintained since they were first put up in the early 1970s. There is no road maintenance, the waste collection is inadequate, and the sewage systems do not function well. There are frequent gas and water leaks. And there are also high levels of violence with criminal networks operating in the neighborhood, especially involved in drug trafficking.

Taking Into Account Nonmaterial Considerations

The neighborhood was created in 1968 as part of the slum eradication plan of the military government. The government provided temporary housing for the displaced slum dwellers of the city of Buenos Aires while thirty-one apartment blocks, with 1,200 apartments, were being built. The building project came to an end in 1973, unfinished, without the planned green and play spaces. The allocation of apartments was highly conflictual, as the demand far exceeded the supply.²¹ Roads were paved and access to water, electricity, sanitation, and other services was provided, but non-material considerations beyond housing and infrastructure were neglected. One important “functioning” that some residents valued but that was not available was the opportunity to express their relation to the Transcendent through celebration in the Catholic tradition. In the words of a Paraguayan immigrant, Teresa, who has resided in an apartment since 1973: “Every day, sects arrived, religions that wanted me to go with them. As there was never anything coming to my door from the Catholic Church, I started kicking doors down.... I asked myself why isn’t my faith here?... All sorts of religions came, but never mine.”

²¹ I thank Ana Lourdes Suárez for providing the information in this paragraph from a search of municipal records.

After knocking on a few doors and receiving negative response from two priests, she eventually found a sympathetic ear via another Paraguayan immigrant who worked at a presbytery: “We met the priest and he told me: ‘Do you know what you will do? Walk through the neighborhood and find a person who is disabled or ill, and we’ll go and celebrate Mass at his or her house.’ This is how the question of masses, of Sunday came up” (Teresa).

A group of a female religious who lived nearby became involved in catechesis, and more than a hundred children soon registered for first communion. In 1977 a male religious congregation also moved its formation house to a few blocks of the neighborhood, and priests from the congregation took charge of the pastoral and sacramental life of the community, but there was still no place to celebrate. A room in a nearby school had to be rented out:

A lot of children came to prepare for first communion, but we had nowhere to go. We had the first communion outside on the playing field.... There, the bishop, no less no more, came to celebrate mass. There were about a hundred children doing their first communion. I remember the bishop saying “Why did nobody tell me there was a new neighborhood here?” From then on, there was mass every Sunday in the classroom of a neighboring school. (Teresa)

The classroom was too small though, and the need arose for a physical space that would be the faith community’s own and that would institutionalize it. According to Teresa, the church was entirely fundraised by the community: “The priest, Jaime, said he could ask help from Germany, but this had to come from ourselves. ‘I won’t ask,’ he said, ‘so that we will value more our church, our sacrifices, our offering to God.’ Then, with the feasts, raffles, gifts, with whatever we could, we built the church.... When the church was built, all the sects left.” Florencia, however, tells another story: “Jaime obtained money from Adveniat,²² and we built a roof, a place in which to gather people.” Another resident, Viviana, mentions having received through the door a card from Jaime, which was delivered to all apartments, asking whether they had some spare bricks they could donate: “I had six bricks lying around and we brought them.” And this is how Viviana became a member of the community. The chapel was also built by the residents themselves, something that helped build a sense of community and ownership. As someone involved in the construction recalls: “We were very united. When one went to do

²² German bishops conference fund for Latin America. It collects money annually from all Catholic parishes in Germany on December 24–25 to respond to pastoral needs in Latin America. See <http://www.adveniat.org>. The community’s archives confirm that funding was received from Adveniat in 1982–1983 towards the construction of a temple.

something, everybody went. And we all went to the task, it is not as if we had to say to someone ‘Hey, will you help me or not?’” (Vicente). “And nobody was paid. Everybody did it *ad honorem*,” his wife, Sofia, added.

Given the expansion of its services to the neighborhood in the 2000s, the church hall became too small, and the question of building annexes was raised. The plan however turned out to be different:

We had the idea of putting some money together to add more rooms to the church hall as the space was getting small. In one community meeting, I proposed this, and those who have been part of the community for a long time said “Well, Father, but to us what we would like, if we can, is to have a proper church, for the church hall was just something provisory. Instead of adding rooms, we could build a church and leave the hall as a hall.” (Rubén)

The new church was inaugurated in 2011, with funding from Adveniat. Having a dedicated space for worship, which is architecturally beautiful, clean, and surrounded by a garden and with modern religious art adorning its walls, has had an important impact on the lives of the residents. In the words of a church member who grew up in the neighborhood, “to have a chapel of greater quality, bigger, it renewed us” (Genoveva). Rubén recalls that during the inauguration ceremony some people told him that they had gone elsewhere to baptize their children, because they did not want to baptize them in a building that did double-duty as both a church and a playground and that was not beautiful. The dedicated chapel, built in the form of a hexagon along the main road, also makes the faith community visible: “The community for the neighborhood is a sign of hope. It is a sign of hope that we continue where we are. The neighborhood is the priority for the community; all what is thought of is for others: the children’s afternoon snack, food, clothes banks” (Genoveva).

Each Person as Unique and as an End, and the Cry of the Poor and of the Earth as the Starting Point

The ecclesial community offers a large range of services led by volunteers, all of whom are local residents except for those providing more specialized services such as school support. One member expressed how this voluntary work is what made the community: “What makes the community is the voluntary work. Doing something for the other person, you don’t have to expect anything more.... To have the spirit to help the other, expecting anything in exchange...only to contribute to a more beautiful and more dignified neighborhood” (Nelly).

But these services are not only oriented towards remedying “capability deprivation” and providing opportunities for children to be more adequately nourished, to do better at school, to be able to play and exercise, and so on. They are also conducted in a way that sees every person in her uniqueness. An important source of inspiration was one priest who worked in the community for most of the 1980s, Jaime. In the words of a member who attended the first mass in the early 1970s and an anecdote reported by two other founding members:

Jaime was caring for the alcoholics, for the poor. There was a 29-year-old man who came from H., and he was hanging around here. And Jaime said to him one day, “Why are you like this? Don’t you have a family?” And he responded that no, because he was an alcoholic his family threw him out. Then Jaime gave him hospitality—Angel he was called—until he died. Jaime did everything, washed his clothes, cut his hair. He lived the Gospel like at the time of Jesus. The more I read the Bible and I learn about what Christians did, the more I am aware that Jaime, he too had done what they did. (Teresa)

This episode also left a strong imprint on a member of the religious order who worked in the neighborhood as a novice in the late 1970s and as a priest in the late 1980s:

Jaime came to the formation house with Angelito to give him a bath.... Jaime told us “there are alcoholics, and families who have to live with it twenty-four hours a day; it is one hour that you have accompany him.” This is the type of thing I was fed during my formation.... When I was ordained, I was aware that he, Angelito, wasn’t baptized. Thus, one Good Friday, Angelito comes forward for the adoration of the Cross. At the time of Communion, he comes forward to receive the host. Me, a priest, recently ordained; he wasn’t baptized, so it is not that you can give him communion.... Four days later I bumped into him in the shop, and he said “Father, I felt like a dog the other day.” This I will never forget. (Tomás)

The current resident priest expresses this “each person as an end” principle in terms of equality:

I believe, from my deepest faith, that the most important value is the person, as she is. Not whether she complies with all what the Church says.... Each person, in her history there is a symbolic system that relates her to the Mystery. When you discover that behind everything there is a symbolic mystery.... I believe that God acts in every person. (Rubén)

Seeing the person as an end beyond ideologies and seeing her beyond appearances is a key feature of the services provided. Sandra has resided in the neighborhood since the early 1980s and came to be involved in the faith community fifteen years ago, following her daughters who were catechists. She now works in the *merienda*. She not only provides a material service to the children but also considers them in all their dimensions. She does not enclose them in their

deeds, however bad these may be, and she is open to the spiritual dimension of love and mercy.

She explains:

There were adolescents who were very bad, one worse than the other...and I told them straight: "It is bad what you are doing." They have never been without respect for me. Now they are adults, and some have children. And they come to show me their children, and this is very emotional for me. Poor ones, everybody wished more or less that they were dead, because they knew they went out and did bad things to people. And me, well I spoke to them. (Sandra)

And speaking more generally of the other children who attend the *merienda*:

I embrace them and they embrace me, but I also set them limits. But here they are more contained, they are quieter. It depends on the situation they have at home, the lack of love of their parents.... Some have the father in jail; others the father or the mother has been killed.... It is very painful to hear people from other neighborhoods say, "You have to set fire to them." Well now, we have to change that story: That they learn not to harm people, but that they are not responsible for their lives, only the parents are.... This is why we have to work with the parents. (Sandra)

Another member, involved in the *merienda* and other services such as food distribution and a clothes bank, expresses her experience of volunteering similarly:

I learned about "my neighbor." I remember when there were children coming who were fighting with the police, I cried with them.... I learned with the clothes bank what it is not to have. One learns this when one experiences it. As I also went through this crisis, I wasn't miserable, I always gave. (Viviana)

Viviana has had a particularly difficult trajectory. She was forced by her mother into an early marriage to a husband who was a womanizer, lost one child after birth and nearly lost another one to malnutrition:

I was always thinking about the same idea: when will I be liberated. The only good thing about A [her husband] was that he didn't beat me. This was the difference from the other women. I was also thinking of when I would go out to work.... At that time, they were selling contraception, but it had to be contraception or bread. I ended up buying bread.... I had to sell the fridge for food.

She eventually managed to separate from her husband and migrate to Buenos Aires where she was allocated an apartment in the neighborhood and became involved in the faith community through donating bricks towards the building of the church. She mentions how being a catechist with difficult adolescents was a healing and transformative process for all:

I had the group of adolescents that nobody wanted. But I loved it. The majority didn't have a father or had one who neglected them. The majority were children of separated

parents or parents in prison or whom the police had killed. They had a lot of hate, and this is why I loved the catechesis with them. I think we understood each other. I loved them a lot. (Viviana)

Open-ended Multidimensionality

When interviewees narrated their lives in the neighborhood and participation in the ecclesial community, few mentioned the material dimension of their lives and their well-being deprivation beyond the initial lack of appropriate housing, the informality of their work and the lack of economic security it involved. Three valuable “functionings”—or “beings and doings” in Sen’s sense of the words—were recurrent in all interviews analyzed: loving, believing, and hoping. The situation of the neighborhood and its levels of violence and social exclusion is not all there is and ever will be.

Vicente recalls a powerful anecdote regarding the centrality of these three dimensions. When the first chapel was being built, the construction was repeatedly destroyed by the neighborhood children. Vicente recalls Jaime responding to his despair at what he had built one day being destroyed the next: “Man of little faith, what they destroy today, tomorrow we are going to build twenty times more, and if they destroy it twenty times, we’ll build forty times more...” This process, of life overcoming destruction, continues to this day. As Genoveva expressed it, “the community is a sign of hope.”

Interconnectedness

Interconnectedness was also a recurrent theme in all interviews: “Sometimes, you start with the bricks, with the Temple, and then with people; here it was the contrary. It was the community who was making the house” (Tomás). “Everything functions as community. I felt that it is the people who support it and that one accompanies people” (Rubén). “I think that my family is the community” (Viviana). “I see the community as a family because we know each other, and sometimes I can tell what’s happening to me and listen to what is happening to another person.... The bible workshop did me a lot of good. I had never opened a Bible, I didn’t know how to search, I didn’t understand. It is also to share with others, my second family” (Alicia). Some interviewees saw the community as part of who they were. They could not think of themselves as individuals apart from community belonging and of living their relationship with God without a faith community:

I always give thanks for being part of a community. I don't imagine life without a community. I cannot think of God without a community. Now, it is a challenge, in the college where I work, to make young people experience their relation to God with a community. I would love that the other person could experience living in a community, surrounded by affection, of the presence of God. (Genoveva)

For me, we have to grow in the spirit of a community that is committed and that can make links with people of the neighborhood from the love of Jesus. I always say "we have to try to be, try, no, we have to be the presence of Jesus in the neighborhood," with all that it implies, and many times it costs a lot. For me, it is a huge challenge to grow in the spirit of a community and be a more open community, where any person can enter without it being odd that she sits there. (Nelly)

An open and welcoming community depends on how open, welcoming—and one could add, merciful—its members are, for human relationships are inherently ambivalent.²³ Instead of "being a sign of hope," the community can also become a place of conflict. How a community functions rests on how its members who participate in its activities relate to each other. Some interviews revealed how managing and living "interconnectedness" is a constant challenge. One member, Gemma, puts it very bluntly: "I believe that the biggest challenge is the communitarian. There is no doubt that this is the most demanding.... I believe that the community forms part of our Christian spirituality. It is not an easy theme, there is a lot to debate on it."

Between 1989 and 2004 there was no appointed leader. The male religious congregation whose formation house was nearby left the house to a female religious congregation. The nuns continued to take care of coordinating catechism and visiting people, but they called on priests who had few links with the faith community to celebrate the sacraments. This episode of lack of leadership, and the ecclesial community largely left to its own devices, was a difficult one. The relationship between the visiting priests and the community was sometimes tense. Florencia recalls a priest who wanted to take away the beautiful altar that had been donated. She confronted him, only to be answered: "I am the priest here, I am the one who commands." She answered back, "Father, it is true that you are the head of the community, but this does not give you the right to take away the gifts that have been given to the community. Or is it that we have no right to have good things?" She reported that he left the incident away angry saying "Right, you go and celebrate mass then." Viviana recalls that another priest accused her of stealing

²³ As *Caritas in Veritate* affirmed, "Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the areas of education, politics, social action and morals" (CV 34).

money from donations, only for it to be discovered later that it was the priest himself who had stolen the money.²⁴ When no priest could be found for the Sunday celebration, members of the community gathered, led by Florencia.

In 2004 a young and recently ordained diocesan priest, Rubén, offered to take care of the faith community and was appointed by the bishop. Florencia recalls this appointment as a pacification process: “It brought peace. Things were pacified, new people came who were appointed, because before nobody was appointed.... It makes me so happy that so many people work in the church and that everyone has his specialty.”

Rubén recounts finding at his arrival a divided and small community, mainly functioning around its service activities and controlled by one self-appointed person. In her words:

I had the keys of the hall. I was the only one in charge. I went every day to open and close it.... As nobody gave me a responsibility and thus as nobody put me in charge, I put myself in charge of everything.... When Rubén came, we were all confronted. There was a division.... Everybody wanted to command, to have priority over the other, control the situation. (Florencia)

What Florencia highlights is that, for a community to function, at least some rules are needed regarding who decides about what is being done and who is doing what. When Rubén arrived, he had many discussions with community members and neighborhood residents. From these came the idea of working around the three axes of word-liturgy-service:

We started to talk about the community, to make it more dynamic in three aspects: all that has to do with the word—catechesis, some exercise of integration.... Before the patronal feasts we went to meet people in houses—the celebrative—where we began to change all that had to do with liturgy. What helped us a lot was regularity [mass every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday] and service—where there was the afternoon snack, the clothes bank, and the food distribution.... These three lines helped to open some space for people to participate. Then, you find people to be in charge, and then things cease to be centralized, and we ended up looking for new people to be in charge.... Afterwards, with time, I realize that in fact when we touch these three lines, we touch something more ancient about community, something about the origins of life in community. It helped a lot that the people who were here at the beginning in the seventies and eighties would take typical experiences of the past and say “uyy, it is like it was then.” (Rubén)

A major element that binds this “interconnectedness” is the celebrative element: “What helped us an awful lot was the feasts. It was impressive. We feasted everything, Christmas, Easter, the

²⁴ These two events have been confirmed by a person who has been a volunteer in the ecclesial community for three decades and lives outside the neighbourhood.

priest's birthday, not for me, but to set up a feast as a community, something that many people came to." (Rubén)

Life in common is not without its crisis and conflicts given the inherent ambivalence of human relationships. The current priest sees his role mainly as that of a conflict-mediator, especially regarding spaces of authority: "For me, communities need to have the presence of a pastor. It is extremely important. There are lots of conflicts at play in that role. A role of leadership.... There is a need for someone who goes to resolve conflicts. People take charge of their space, but they do it in their own way and sometimes this generates conflict." Rubén also highlights the humanizing character of interconnectedness and "being and acting" as a community, from a life that is shared, even if this can make processes slow:

I always wondered whether had the chapel been more charismatic, there would have been many more people. For me, this is a choice, but processes are much slower, though much more humanizing, where there is an awareness of the persons. But I think that in a community everything is much slower than it would have been with Pentecostalism or a charismatic sacerdotal religious figure.

Acknowledgment of Harm through Sympathetic Reasoning

Every person interviewed mentioned the negative consequences for the lives of all of the actions of some residents involved in trading and consuming drugs. The person in charge of the *merienda*, Sandra, tells of episodes of heightened violence that deeply marked her:

I was very sad because one day the children came to *merienda*, and they said tomorrow I'll come, and tomorrow they didn't come, it was a funeral for them [they were dead]. This upset me a lot. I suffered a lot. From the perspective of a mother, I didn't understand.... It's like an impotence, this is always what I say. All of what happens here is because of the parents. For me, there is no other reason.... There was a time that we were having a funeral for an adolescent every week more or less.... Most of the time, this was with the police, outside the neighborhood. Those who didn't get killed outright died in the hospital. And I thought "I have to be strong for this." I prayed so much to God to change that history, that something will reach the mother. If for me it was so painful, how would it be for her?

These deaths have been experienced first-hand by Genoveva as an adolescent. When asked about the important moments of her life, her reply was "the death of my friends. One year four of them died." She escaped from harm with the help of male friends who cared for her:

My adolescence was marked by hard moments, I had friends who died because of drugs, or because they were killed. I went to secondary school where I was top of the class. On the corners of the apartment blocks, they gathered to take drugs. I remember when I was

15, with a friend, a boy invited us to share a joint, and a friend who was afterwards murdered, shouted “Are you mad, how are you going to give this to girls?”... When we met with boys, they had pills, beer, or drugs at whatever time of the day. And when we wanted to help ourselves to a soft drink, we were told we couldn’t because it might have been drugged. There was a care for us girls.

Her sister Nelly recalls how she was struck by these words of a professor when she started her social work degree: “It is not natural that an adolescent from such a neighborhood gets killed at 15.” It was the first time she realized that violence was not natural: “And I thought ‘this is true,’ because for me, living here, it was natural” (Nelly).

The response of the faith community to this violence is person-focused. There is a choice to be present to the people, through love and service, rather than public denunciation of the actions of drug traders in the neighborhood: “If one chooses to be, one chooses to be within a faith perspective. I was very struck that when we gave the space to Sedronar²⁵ to operate in the chapel, the narco-traffickers held the drug sale that very week next to the church hall. Here there are many things underneath that we are not aware off” (Rubén).

For Genoveva, who was deeply affected by this drug-related violence as an adolescent, more police is not the way forward: “We have to think of the children, teenagers, young mothers. Go to those who do not come to us, those who need help but don’t come near. Looking at it as a mother, I see it and feel it... To me, being surrounded by police is not the solution. To see them with weapons walking the streets is not the solution.”

Personal and Policy Transformation Go Hand in Hand

Many members recounted how personal transformation happened through a change of how they saw God. Nelly highlights how her world changed, and “marked her forever,” when the nuns who were in charge of catechism told her that she had to see Jesus not as a father but a friend, “Here [in the neighborhood] better not say that God is a father; I don’t know what image of a father you have.” Genoveva had the same experience: “The nuns changed my image of God. They showed me a God who is near, who walks with us.”

²⁵ Sedronar is the government coordination agency for drug addiction; see <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sedronar>.

From 2017 onwards the faith community is starting a journey of radical structural change. Not only did it become a parish, with all what this entails qua obligations and formal regulations, but a new social policy from the Ministry of Social Development of the Province of Buenos Aires is being entirely channeled through its building premises. The program “Cells of Community and Family Participation” (Núcleos de Participación Familiar y Comunitaria) consists of accompanying children in some targeted neighborhoods from birth to adulthood.²⁶ The program is implemented in partnership with civil society organizations. A criterion for choosing the sites from among the many neighborhoods where families live in situation of vulnerability in the Province was the existence of a strong presence of a civil society organization that has the trust of the majority of the neighborhood population.²⁷ In the case of the faith community discussed here, it was through a chance encounter between Rubén and a municipality worker that conversations began about the ecclesial community being a candidate for this new program. The proposal was submitted to the community as a whole at one of its regular monthly general meeting, and everybody welcomed the program as a good means to serve the neighborhood—although some had problems with the political party in government.

The church premises will house a center to care for children from 45 days to 4 years old and their parents; a center for accompanying children from 5 to 11; and another one for young people aged 12 to 18. The existing church hall is currently being rebuilt—the provincial government has allocated 2.5 million Argentine pesos per project per year (approximately 140,000 USD). Some of the existing services, such as the *merienda*, will be incorporated into the new program, and the early childhood center opened in mid-2017. This development will undoubtedly structurally transform the community and the neighborhood in future years in ways that might be interesting to investigate further.

A Spirituality-extended Capability Approach to the Progress of Peoples: Part II

Part I sought to identify some of the key features of an “integral human development” perspective for social analysis that derived from the inseparability of the material and spiritual

²⁶ For details of the program, see http://www.gba.gob.ar/desarrollosocial/asistencia/casas_de_encuentro.

²⁷ A map of areas in vulnerable situation in the region can be found at <http://relevamiento.techo.org.ar>. According to TECHO, in 2016 the Province de of Buenos Aires and the federal capital city of Buenos Aires had 1,394 informal settlements, where approximately 650,685 families, or about 2,209,000 people, lived, which represents almost 12 percent of the population.

dimension of human life. It sought to untie integral human development from the Catholic social tradition in which it has been framed so far by linking it to Sen's capability approach. It then took the capability approach in a new direction, one that fully includes openness to the spiritual dimension of life. Part II examined a second face of integral human development in the Catholic social tradition, not as a normative framework for social analysis but as what an ecclesial community is involved in when it proclaims, celebrates, and serves. It described the narrative of a community at the Latin American urban margins using the perspective of a spirituality-extended capability approach.

Like the first face of integral human development, so can this second face be brought beyond the Catholic tradition and be translated into the social sciences. From a perspective for social analysis that takes into account non-material considerations such as human freedom and the spiritual dimension, Part II has highlighted that a spirituality-extended capability approach is linked to spaces where people are *formed* in seeing and evaluating the world from that perspective. In his book on social virtues Thomasset (2015) argued that in order for the common good to be promoted, that is, in order to provide the conditions for each person to live a flourishing human life, one needs "to form individuals to the spirit of life in common" (Thomasset 2015, 8) and spaces, or sets of relationships, where people can learn and practice orienting their thoughts and actions towards the good and the good of others, that is, where they can learn and exercise virtues (Thomasset 2015, 11).

A faith community can be the site where such "orientations towards the good of others" can be learned and exercised. The threefold features of an ecclesial community—proclamation of the reign of God (*kerygma*), celebration of that reign through visible signs (*liturgia*), and serving that reign through responding to suffering (*diakonia*)—need not be limited to the Catholic tradition. The "reign of God," understood as right relations among people and between people and their environment, can be proclaimed, celebrated, and served in many ways. What the second face of integral human development highlights is that its first face needs learning communities where the truth is being sought together, where life is being celebrated, and where the wider community is served. Perhaps, before being a normative framework for social analysis and reflection on development processes, integral human development might best be seen first as a way of being and acting in the world, which can afterwards be reflected upon and theorized. Taking the concept of integral human development into the social sciences, which the paper has

done by taking Sen's capability approach in a certain direction, would thus also entail connecting this perspective for social analysis, what I have called a spirituality-extended capability approach to the progress of people, to building communities where people can be formed in that perspective. Whether universities and graduate programs today are such sites of formation remains an open question.

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