

Operationalizing the Common Good:
Theory, Vocabulary, & Measurement
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Abstract

This article builds on the western traditions of the common good (Kempshall 1999; Hibst 1991) and intends to restate the practical, operational dimension of this notion in our times. It begins (Part I) by proposing a re-interpretation of the common good from the perspective of a philosophy of action (Blondel: 1897; Arendt: 1958; Foucault: 2009). It then proposes, on the basis of more recent works (Blum: 2015; Sluga: 2014; Riordan: 2008, 2014; Gorringer: 2014; Münckler & Bluhm: 2001-2004; Hollenbach: 2002) a formal understanding of the common good as a dialectical dynamic between historical common goods (nexus of the common good) toward a universal and eschatological common good (Nebel: 2017, 2018).

The second part seeks to create a matrix of the common, identifying the relevant dimensions that could be used to measure the achieved quality of the nexus of the common good. It highlights 'agency freedom' as the engine of any common good dynamic; 'governance', 'justice' and 'durability' as the three central social functions needed to create a common good dynamic, and finally 'humanity' as the systemic result of such a dynamic.