Human Development and the Catholic Social Tradition

Towards an Integral Ecology

Séverine Deneulin

3 Transformational pathways

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At the core of the concept of development lies the idea of change or transformation and making situations better. Analysing and transforming situations, in order to make them less unjust, have been defining concerns of development research.[1] But in order to transform, one needs a horizon, or some normative goals, to guide action. The SDGs could be candidates, but they are not without criticisms (cf. Introduction). Some goals seem incompatible, while the achievement of others requires systemic transformations that are not highlighted. For example, achieving SDG 3 (good health) entails a reform of health systems to guarantee universal access; or achieving SDG 5 (gender equality) requires cultural change of patriarchal and sexist attitudes and behaviours; or achieving SDG13 (taking action to combat climate change and its impacts) requires structural transformation at all levels of society, including combatting what Pope Francis has called a 'throwaway culture' (LS 16, 22, 43, FT 188).

Sen's approach to development does not specify goals as to what situations are to be transformed into or a blueprint to identify what counts as an injustice to be remedied (cf. Chapter 1). Does, for example, a situation of loneliness and isolation among elderly people count as an injustice in the same way as a situation where children are poisoned by pesticides or toxic residues from mining? Or does a situation of employment through zero-hour contracts count as an injustice in the same way as a situation where people work as day labourers in dangerous work conditions? Sen's capability approach may offer a basis for thinking about questions of justice, but it does not, as such, answer these questions. All it does is propose an interpretative evaluation framework to compare situations, without being prescriptive about what a just situation would look like, or which goals to aim at, beyond implicitly affirming that a desirable goal is to ensure that every person is able to live a 'minimally acceptable life', or live a life she has reason to value. It is even less prescriptive about which transformational pathways to take towards that goal. Rather than condemning a situation where people die of easily preventable diseases, or a situation where

people work in slave labour conditions, as morally wrong, Sen's approach simply argues for assessing situations in the capability space, that is, in terms of what people are able to do and to be, such as the extent to which they are able to avoid a premature death, have decent work, or have meaningful social relationships. It then advocates submitting that information to processes of public reasoning. The idea of 'public reasoning' and 'agency' is central to Sen's approach. How to promote development, how to combat situations of poverty and inequality, in all their forms, and how to combat situations of environmental degradation ultimately rest on public reasoning and on people's agency, which he defines as 'the ability of people to help themselves and to influence the world' (Sen 1999: 18).

This chapter examines some of the favoured remedial actions that Sen has been discussing in his works under the broad term of public action. It highlights the importance of the marginalized organizing themselves politically, public discussion on what affects the lives of the disadvantaged, and the nurturing of a sense of solidarity. It also critically discusses the role of power and some of the concerns that have been raised about Sen's works lacking realism or being too optimistic about the reach of human reason. The chapter then discusses how the Catholic social tradition perceives public action. It underlines similarities, such as a focus on institutional analysis and the central role of human agency to transform institutions. It also draws some differences of emphasis, such as the orientation of public action towards the common good, what the Catholic tradition calls social or political love, a focus on accompaniment of marginalized communities, and the anchoring of public reasoning in a culture of encounter, attentiveness, and self-examination. It concludes by examining how Sen's account of reducing injustice could inform the Catholic Church's own transformational journey towards integral human development.

Transformational pathways in Sen's conception of development

Public action: listening, organizing, and solidarity

Amartya Sen never intended to propose a theory of development or a theory of justice that would offer a comprehensive framework for how development is to be promoted or injustice reduced. One could say that what Sen offers is a public reasoning approach to justice based on his capability approach: that is, that

> it is through public reason that we come to know about justice at all. Whether we want to know . . . about ideally just social relations, or

about thresholds for adequate justice, we have only public reason with which to seek that knowledge.

<div align="right">(Drydyk 2020a: 676)</div>

His *Idea of Justice* (Sen 2009) countered the argument that one needed to answer the questions of 'What is a just society? And what 'just institutions look like, in order to start remedying injustice.[2] Sen's preferred transformational pathway is not achieved by assessing how current institutions fall short of an ideal. For example, he does not assess the extent to which a public health system falls short of giving every person equal access to treatment irrespective of socio-economic status or race. Rather, he offers an evaluative framework to assess how well institutions are doing and how more just or less unjust they are insofar as they facilitate or undermine the conditions for people to live well. We find an example of this in relation to health. Sen (2015) does not discuss transformational pathways to advance greater equity in health globally. What he does instead is compare health attainments across some countries (Rwanda, Thailand, Bangladesh) and some states of India (Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu), and then examine which health policy decisions have been taken in those countries and states, considering their own political and economic contexts. Through this comparison, he concludes that improved health outcomes can be achieved, despite low economic resources, when there is a public commitment to invest in universal primary healthcare and when those without access to private health insurance are politically well represented.

In their works on analysing the situation of India with the capability approach, Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen have discussed many examples which illustrate the crucial role of what they call 'public action' for changing the way institutions function and for orienting them towards providing the conditions for human flourishing (Drèze and Sen 1989, 1995, 2002, 2013, 2020). They broadly define public action as the direct efforts undertaken by the public at large to improve their lives, and these can take many forms. Sen (2019: 356) talks of 'public action' as 'involving not just the government but also the public itself – in all its manifold economic, social, and political activities'. One transformational pathway Drèze and Sen highlight throughout their joint works is the political representation of the marginalized and the presence of organizations with which they can advance their claims. In the case of Kerala (Drèze and Sen 2013), the people of disadvantaged castes have been able to get politically organized, and therefore they have been able to orient public spending towards investment in primary healthcare and demand greater accountability and citizen scrutiny of public spending, leading to less corruption. The successes of the Indian state of Kerala in dealing with Covid-19 and in managing low morbidity

rates, epidemiological control, and low economic and social costs continue to reflect this public commitment combined with high levels of community participation in policy decision-making (Menon et al. 2020).

Another transformational pathway Sen has singled out throughout his works is the importance of public discussion and a free press. Sen's works on the relationship between famines and public discussion are well known. Famines, he argued, are caused not by food shortages as such but by a failure of democracy.[3] The following passage from *Development as Freedom* best summarizes Sen's views on public action and its importance as a transformational pathway:

> The response of a government to the acute suffering of its people often depends on the pressure that is put on it. The exercise of political rights (such as voting, criticizing, protesting, and the like) can make a real difference to the political incentives that operate on a government. I have discussed elsewhere the remarkable fact that, in the terrible history of famines in the world, no substantial famine has ever occurred in any independent and democratic country with a relatively free press. We cannot find exceptions to this rule, no matter where we look.
>
> (Sen 1999: 7)

In a review of Drèze and Sen's works and what kinds of transformational pathways they have identified for making situations less unjust, Alkire (2006) highlights the following: public action and participation, value formation and value change, and the cultivation of bonds of solidarity between those who are more privileged and those who are less. She also highlights the importance of public outcry in the face of human suffering, that is, the capacity of the public to feel outraged at a situation such as the prevalence of malnutrition among India's children and be moved to do something about it.

As Chapter 2 discussed, empathy is a critical feature of the anthropological vision underpinning Sen's conception of development, but it puts equal emphasis on the importance of the marginalized voicing what ails their lives and of others being able to listen to that pain or cry. In Sen's works, people who suffer from capability deprivation, such as the ability to be adequately nourished, are not only patients in need of attention but also agents who can transform society themselves. It is therefore not surprising that he puts equal weight on the expression of suffering as its listening. As the concluding sentences of Drèze and Sen's book *Hunger and Public Action* express it:

> It is essential to see the public not merely as 'the patient' whose well-being commands attention, but also as 'the agent' whose actions can

transform society. Taking note of that dual role is central to understanding the challenge of public action against hunger.

(Drèze and Sen 1989: 279)

In another writing, Sen (2019: 356) reiterates the argument that the 'public is, above all, the agent of change, and not a patient to be looked after and ordered about'.

Throughout her review, Alkire (2006) emphasizes the non-prescriptive nature of Sen and Drèze's transformational pathways, the innumerable ways in which agency could be exercised, and the many forms actions could take given the local context and unjust situation to address. In the case of hunger in India, Drèze and Sen (2002: 336–40) point to the need to change the government's policy of a minimum price for food producers, as it has led to large amounts of grain being stocked, even left to rot, as the government itself had to buy surplus food to maintain prices. They advocate that the government should launch a programme of food distribution from these government-maintained stocks in order to address hunger; and Sen continues to call for such food distribution policy, such as 'drawing on the 60 million tons of rice and wheat that remain unused in the godowns of the Food Corporation of India', to address the loss of livelihoods caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (Sen 2020a). Drèze and Sen also advocate that subsistence farmers organize politically to counteract the policy influence of better-organized large-scale farmers who have been able to lobby the government for this guaranteed food price policy. A 'fair distribution of power', they conclude, 'is a basic – indeed fundamental – requirement of democracy' (Drèze and Sen 2002: 353). This is why they emphasize the types of action that can decrease the power of some (e.g. large-scale farmers and agribusinesses) and increase the power of others (e.g. subsistence farmers and day labourers). They note that a particularly powerful tool to that effect has been, in the case of India, the Right to Information Act,[4] which has led to corruption and power abuses being brought to light. They cite the example of the corporate influence of the Biscuit Manufacturers' Association on the school meal policy. The Act allowed for the wider public to be informed about members of the Indian Parliament being sent letters which described the benefits of manufactured food and urged them to replace with manufactured biscuits the government-financed programme of school meals cooked by local people using locally produced food.

Another pathway Drèze and Sen (2002: 28) highlight, in order to address power inequality and to bring the concerns of the marginalized to the heart of policymaking, is to build a sense of

solidarity with the underprivileged on the part of other members of society, whose interests and commitments are broadly linked, and who

are often better placed to advance the cause of the disadvantaged by virtue of their own privileges (e.g. those with access to formal education, the media, economic resources, and political connections).

However, they warn that a focus on speaking on behalf of the voiceless by well-intentioned people or organizations risks diverting attention from poor people's own voiced concerns and that the solidarity route may not always 'be entirely congruent with the interests of those whom they seek to represent' (Drèze and Sen 2002: 30) – hence the need to enable those who are marginalized to voice their concerns themselves and to organize politically to make their voices heard.

Two recent opinion pieces by Amartya Sen on policy responses to the global pandemic illustrate the transformational dynamic here. In an article published online in *The Indian Express* magazine and originally entitled 'Listening as Governance',[5] Sen (2020a) reiterates his arguments about the role of democratic elections and public discussion in overcoming famines. Again, he emphasizes the crucial role of speaking and listening:

> Even though only a minority may actually face the deprivation of a famine, a listening majority, informed by public discussion and a free press, can make a government responsive. This can happen either through sympathy (when the government cares), or through the antipathy that would be generated by its inaction (when the government remains uncaring).

Taking this argument to the current global pandemic and the loss of employment and income that the poor and the most vulnerable are experiencing more acutely, Sen concludes that 'listening is central in the government's task of preventing social calamity – hearing what the problems are, where exactly they have hit, and how they affect the victims'. In another short opinion piece published in the *Financial Times*, Sen (2020b) draws once more from history, this time from post-war Britain, to illustrate the critical role of public action in transforming a crisis into an opportunity for improved nutrition and healthcare access. He notes that food shortages during the Second World War led to more equitable food sharing through rationing policies, with the result of life expectancy in England and Wales rising by 6.5 years for men and 7 years for women during the 1940s (compared with a 1.2 year and 1.5 year rise, respectively, during the 1930s). The crisis of the Second World War, Sen (2020b) underlines, also led Aneurin Bevan to plan for a National Health Service to make access to healthcare free for all.

Characteristically, Sen is not prescriptive about which actions to take and how best to express concern for the lives of the marginalized, beyond

ensuring that their concerns are not forgotten in public discussions and their voices are heard by those who have the power to make decisions. A basic premise of Sen's arguments is the existence of democratic practice, which requires that the voices of the marginalized and of those who seek to address their concerns are not silenced, whether by violence or intimidation, or dismissed. The question therefore arises of how Sen's arguments about the critical roles of speaking, listening, public discussion, and empathy could play out in a context where those who organize to voice their concerns receive death threats or are killed, such as where people are displaced from their land by extractive industries, agribusinesses, or infrastructure projects.[6]

Public reasoning and power

In his review of Sen's life and works, Hamilton (2019) remains sceptical of the reach of Sen's ideas about reasoning and public discussion as a transformational pathway for reducing injustice amidst unequal political and economic power relations. He argues that Sen 'lays to one side – as economist and philosopher – the trenchant questions of power, and how it is propagated and who wields it. . . . He assumes that the best argument will always win' (Hamilton 2019: 20). He concludes that

> Sen's faith in public reason leaves him blind to the fact that the problem may not be just 'valuational plurality' and associated stubborn conflict, even despite the 'confrontation with reason', but that conflict may have its source in irrevocably partisan interests that undermine the very idea of impartiality that lies at the heart of Sen's account of justice.
>
> (Hamilton 2019: 119–20)

Sen's faith in the reach of public reasoning, or public discussion, for remedying injustice is indeed strong. As Chapter 1 described, when confronted with the decision of which valuable goal to pursue given the plurality of values (valuational plurality) – for example, whether to introduce legislation to protect an endangered animal species such as the spotted owl – he settles the matter through, what he calls, public reasoning. Despite seeing public reasoning as 'central . . . to the pursuit of social justice' (Sen 2009: 44), he has remained reluctant to define it. When asked for a definition, he replied that one did not need a definition of public reasoning to conclude that the American elections in November 2016, which brought Trump as president, and the UK Brexit referendum in June 2016 were not examples of 'good' public reasoning processes.[7]

Sen maintains a strong conviction that better arguments will always win through more and better public reasoning, as he puts it in *The Idea of Justice*:

> The pervasiveness of unreason presents good grounds for scepticism about the practical effectiveness of reasoned discussion of confused social subjects. . . . This particular scepticism of the reach of reasoning does not yield any ground for not using reason to the extent one can, in pursuing the idea of justice. . . . Unreason is mostly not the practice of doing without reasoning altogether, but of relying on a very primitive and very defective reasoning. There is hope in this since bad reasoning can be confronted by better reasoning.
>
> (Sen 2009: xvii–xviii)

When faced with the reality of the Amazon region reaching a tipping point and losing its capacity to be a carbon sink (Lovejoy and Nobre 2018), and Brazilian electors voting for a government that promotes deforestation through supporting infrastructure projects, encouraging mining exploration, or incentivizing agribusinesses (Bebbington et al. 2019), there may not be much ground for hope in 'better reasoning' confronting 'bad reasoning'. Another example which would defy Sen's conviction of the reach of public reasoning in addressing injustice is that of public protests and road closures led by representative organizations of agribusinesses to demand the reversal of a policy that limits pesticide use to protect children's health in Paraguay (Correia 2019: 327). Drèze and Sen have never talked of 'good' versus 'bad' public action. Obviously, some collective action may go against the interests of some but not of others, but it is unlikely that public protests to block a policy that would protect children's health would qualify as 'public action' in their use of the word.

In furthering Sen's conception of public reasoning, Drydyk (2020a, 2020b) argues that a judgement on how power is exercised is central to Sen's understanding of 'public', and that a judgement on how power is held to account and whether policies can be justified (i.e. whether they can be supported by evidence and are concerned with people's lives, especially those most vulnerable and marginalized) is central to Sen's understanding of 'reasoning' (Drydyk 2020b). Drydyk's characterization of public reasoning in Sen's works is helpful, but it does not address the critique of power and how power relations can affect the public reasoning process. As Hamilton highlights, Sen's *Idea of Justice* does not provide tools to analyse power relations and to assess their disruptive effects on decision-making processes (Hamilton 2019: 91). It also 'underplays the importance of institutions in the formation and regulation of behaviour, that is, in the formation of preferences,

choices, and values' (Hamilton 2019: 135) – for example, how social media influences the formation of values.[8] Another critique he raises of Sen's works is that they have dealt much more with how goods are converted by humans into valuable capabilities – for example, how food is converted into the functioning of being healthy – than with the processes through which these goods are produced – for example, whether food has been produced by immigrants working in slave labour conditions (Hamilton 2019: 159). Sen's works have also dealt little with markets as institutional mechanisms for the exchange of goods, particularly financial markets. He has continued to argue that markets and how they function have to be assessed according to their consequences for people's lives. The degree of market regulation depends on how it will improve the lives of the poorest (Sen 1993, 1999). While writing extensively on hunger and malnutrition, Sen has never advanced a position regarding which types of institutional mechanisms, and agricultural and food systems, are better for addressing hunger, beyond affirming the need for both state intervention and well-functioning markets.[9]

On the one hand, Hamilton's critiques are justified, for Sen's works have indeed not dealt much with the configuration of power relations and with how global production systems undermine human dignity and damage eco-systems.[10] Neither have they dealt with the role institutions play in constructing people's values. On the other hand, Sen's works never intended to provide a complete theory of justice, or a theory of development, and the task of going deeper into analysis of power and how institutions shape people's values, for better or for worse, is deliberately left unfinished. This task is for others. There is a growing literature on education which examines how educational institutions affect value formation from the perspective of the capability approach. Vaughan and Walker (2012) have argued for a form of education that makes students aware of their values and that submits them to critical thinking and encounter with others. Walker and Wilson-Strydom (2016) explore the types of pedagogies in higher education that form students as agents of social transformation and how universities could contribute to making societies more socially just.[11] McGrath (2018) examines the role education plays in development more broadly, and he discusses how certain visions of development and understandings of what education is for are linked. Tilky (2020) discusses the role of education in fostering more socially just and sustainable societies. Sen himself is an illustration of how certain types of education foster certain values and how education can be a key transformational pathway for value change and for motivating action for social justice. He has often credited his formative years in Santiniketan, and the influence of Rabindranath Tagore, as instilling in him the importance of freedom, of a humanity that included

everyone, and the danger of ascribing to people a single identity (Khan 2012; Sen 2006, 2020c).

If there is one critique that remains justified, it is that Sen's faith in the reach of human reason is strong. Whether human reason is sufficient to overcome the socio-environmental challenges we are witnessing is an open question. In reviewing Tagore's foundational influence on Sen's thinking, Khan (2012) noted that Tagore conceived the human person as having

> two polarities that must be kept in harmony. At one pole, the strength is 'in the fullness of its community with all things'. . . . At the other, the strength is in self-transcendence in which the self reveals to itself its own meaning.
>
> (Khan 2012: 6)

Khan concluded that Sen had given much more weight to the pole of the self which reveals meaning through its own power than to the pole of the self that is oriented towards communion with others. For Tagore, 'man is a spiritual being' (quoted in Khan 2012: 5) whose meaning also comes from beyond himself through, among other ways, art and poetry.[12] In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis argued that, in order to address complex socio-environmental challenges, 'no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out' (LS 63). This includes not only art and poetry but also languages particular to religion. The next section explores what one such form of wisdom could offer to Sen's understanding of public reason and public action as transformational pathways.

Transformational pathways in the Catholic social tradition

Public action: charity, social love, and accompaniment

Like Amartya Sen, the Catholic social tradition proposes an approach and not a theory of development or justice. Like Sen's perspective, it favours a method of social action that starts with assessing situations and the kinds of lives that people live, which it calls the 'seeing' stage. Like Sen's, it then proceeds to evaluating the institutional arrangements behind these situations, which it calls the 'judging' stage. However, as Chapter 2 discussed, for the Catholic social tradition, it is not only situations which are less, or more, just, in terms of their outcomes but also institutions or structures. In words reminiscent of Sen's, that 'our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist and how they function' (Sen 1999: 142), *Laudato Si'* affirms that 'the health of a society's institutions has consequences for

the environment and the quality of human life' (LS 142). This is why it argues that 'social ecology is necessarily institutional' (LS 142).

Like in Sen's approach, the Catholic social tradition emphasizes the role of human agency in transforming these institutions that regulate human relationships. Already *Populorum Progressio* talked of 'all peoples [becoming] the artisans of their destiny' (PP 65). *Laudato Si'* talks of 'the ability to work together in building our common home' (LS 13). Like Sen's perspective, the Catholic social tradition is not prescriptive about what sort of actions best transform institutions and make them more conducive to the flourishing of people and ecosystems. It affirms in that regard that 'there are no uniform recipes' (LS 180), there is no one solution to the challenges of poverty (FT 65), and that it is not the task of the Church to offer technical solutions (CV 9). *Laudato Si'* mentions the necessity for many ways forward and some examples of kinds of action that can be taken, including 'enforceable international agreements' and 'global regulatory norms' (LS 173), new forms of economic production (LS 112, 129), and 'developing an economy of waste disposal and recycling' (LS 180), new forms of agriculture which 'defend the interests of small producers and preserve local ecosystems from destruction' (LS 180), producing renewable energy at all levels of society (LS 179), avoiding the use of plastic, not running taps unnecessarily, not throwing food away, using public transport, turning off unnecessary lights (LS 211), and restoring a disused garden or public square (LS 232). 'Truly, much can be done!', it concludes (LS180), and it is up to public discussion to discern which remedial actions to take in one's context.

In the context of the Amazon region, the public reasoning process at the October 2019 Synod concluded the following public action:

> We may not be able to modify the destructive model of extractivist development immediately, but we do need to know and make clear where we stand, whose side we are on, what perspective we assume. For this reason: a) we denounce the violation of human rights and extractive destruction; b) we embrace and support campaigns of divestment from extractive companies responsible for the socio-ecological damage of the Amazon . . . c) we call for a radical energy transition and the search for alternatives.[13]

There is however one difference, or rather a difference of emphasis, between Sen's and the Catholic social tradition's account of public action. As mentioned earlier, there is an implicit assumption in Sen's works that public action, as action by the public at large, is not any action but that which has at its centre the concern of those who live in conditions of marginalization

and exclusion. The Catholic social tradition is more forthright about the ends that public action serves, namely the common good, and connects acting with loving:

> To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it. Besides the good of the individual, there is a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of all of us.
>
> (CV 7)

Actions for the good of a concrete individual person (love) cannot be separated from actions for the good of all (social, civil, or political love); they are in dynamic interaction:

> Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones.
>
> (LS 231)

Actions that promote human rights for all are expressions of such political love (FT 22), as are actions aimed at reducing inequality. The two paragraphs quoted here from *Fratelli Tutti* exemplify this dynamic of seeing, judging, and acting (out of love). First, it assesses situations in the kinds of lives that people live – in this case, many people have their human rights denied, or to put it in a capability language, are unable to live a healthy life, to be adequately sheltered and clothed, to be adequately nourished. It then judges the institutions which lie behind such states of affairs – in this case, an economic ideological structure which prioritizes profits at the expense of people:

> [B]y closely observing our contemporary societies, we see numerous contradictions that lead us to wonder whether the equal dignity of all human beings, solemnly proclaimed seventy years ago, is truly recognized, respected, protected and promoted in every situation. In today's world, many forms of injustice persist, fed by reductive anthropological visions and by a profit-based economic model that does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings. While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights discarded or

violated. What does this tell us about the equality of rights grounded in innate human dignity?

(FT 22)

It then proceeds to giving a few examples of expression of such political love, which springs from the virtue of charity at the individual level, to transform the situation:

> It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering. If someone helps an elderly person cross a river, that is a fine act of charity. The politician, on the other hand, builds a bridge, and that too is an act of charity. While one person can help another by providing something to eat, the politician creates a job for that other person, and thus practices a lofty form of charity that ennobles his or her political activity.

(FT 186)

The Catholic social tradition puts here an equal focus on concrete acts of charity – giving shelter to a homeless person, giving food to someone who is hungry, giving clothing to someone in need, giving medication to someone who is ill, transforming a degraded soil into a fertile one, and so forth – and acts that change the structures which have made someone homeless, hungry, ill, or structures which have degraded soils. Both what Benedict XVI calls in *Caritas in Veritate* 'the institutional path' or 'political path of charity' and the 'kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the pólis', are 'no less excellent and effective' (CV 7).[14]

Following Paul Ricoeur (1995, 2000), one could describe love, or charity, as characterizing our relationships with those whom we know personally (say, Fernando, an individual farmer one has encountered in El Salvador who has lost all his maize crops to climate change–induced drought), and justice, or social, or political love, as characterizing our relationships with others who have an anonymous face (all the subsistence farmers globally who have lost their livelihoods due to climate change and whose faces one cannot put a name on).[15] Concrete acts of love, or charity, towards Fernando could involve assisting him to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change on his livelihood, such as through training in new agricultural practices that enable him to face extreme weather events or in new forms of work. Concrete acts of justice, or acts of political love, could involve work towards designing international agreements and changing national legislations to curb carbon emissions and limit global temperature rise. Love and

justice both need each other. Love is the motivation for action for justice, and action for justice enables love to move from the particular, from the concrete face of a person who has a name, to the universal, to the anonymous faces of many. For the Catholic social tradition, action for justice is always based on love and not on ideology, for, as Pope Francis reminds us in *Fratelli Tutti*, 'we do not serve ideas, we serve people' (FT 115). The parable of the Samaritan, which features as a paradigmatic story for both Sen's capability approach (Sen 2009: 171–2) and the Catholic social tradition (FT 56–86), also exemplifies this creative dialectic between love and justice. For Sen, the action of the Samaritan represented not only an act of love towards a concrete person but also an act of justice and expression of global responsibilities. To the question 'Who is my neighbour?', the answer is 'that we ourselves become neighbours to all' (FT 80).

The relationship between love and justice has not always been in creative tension in the modern history of the Catholic Church. At a time when the world was divided between the communist and capitalist economic systems, it was not uncommon for social and political engagement seeking to transform the structural conditions behind hunger, ill health, or lack of housing, for instance, to be perceived as in collusion with communist sympathies. As the Brazilian archbishop Hélder Câmara was known to have said, when working at changing the structural conditions of poverty in Brazil: 'When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.'[16] It is beyond the scope of this book to engage in a critical assessment of the way Latin American theologians dealt with the love–justice dialectic in the 1970s and the 1980s and how they reflected on what love of God and love our neighbour implied in a context marked by authoritarian regimes, large-scale poverty, concentration of wealth and land in the hands of a few, and violent and deadly repression of social protests. Their response in advocating liberation from all forms of oppression and active involvement in political and social struggles for liberation did not always meet sympathetic ears on the part of Church authorities. Cardinal Ratzinger issued two 'Instructions' on liberation theology in the 1980s, condemning its use of Marxism for social and economic analysis, and warning of risks of reducing the universal message of Christ's love to the mere social and political dimension.[17]

As Pope Benedict XVI, in 2009, discussed at length the relation between love (charity) and justice in *Caritas in Veritate*:

> Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is 'mine' to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is 'his', what is due to him by reason of his being

or his acting. I cannot 'give' what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. . . . justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it. . . . On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples. . . . On the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving.

<div align="right">(CV 6)</div>

Thus, the action in the parable of the Samaritan of attending to a wounded stranger on the road is an act of charity that also demands action for justice, for example, by asking why there are people on the road lying injured, which might be because of gangs or other street violence, and then doing something to address violence, or by ensuring that there is always a well-functioning 'inn' (such as a hospital) with appropriate equipment, access to water and electricity, and medication. Charity and justice are inseparable from each other, and a universal healthcare system without charity would be as deficient as charity towards the sick without working at ensuring public health access for all.[18] As Pope Francis comments in *Fratelli Tutti*:

> Even the Good Samaritan . . . needed to have a nearby inn that could provide the help that he was personally unable to offer. Love of neighbour is concrete and squanders none of the resources needed to bring about historical change that can benefit the poor and disadvantaged.

<div align="right">(FT 165)</div>

In talking about such historical and structural change that benefits the poor and disadvantaged, Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze emphasize the capacity of the poor and disadvantaged themselves to mobilize and get politically organized to have their voices heard (cf. supra). As far back as 1891, the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* similarly urged workers to 'form associations among themselves and unite their forces so as to courageously shake off the yoke of such an unrighteous and intolerable oppression' (RN 54). Today, Pope Francis has renewed this emphasis on the poor and disadvantaged organizing themselves in social movements to press for structural change. As he argues in *Fratelli Tutti*:

> Solidarity means much more than engaging in sporadic acts of generosity. . . . It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labour rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire

of money. . . . Solidarity, understood in its most profound meaning, is a way of making history.

(FT 116)

When he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires, the then Jorge Bergoglio had been involved in the lives of the waste pickers and other informal sector workers (Azcuy and Cervantes 2014). Since becoming Pope Francis in March 2013, he has continued to support the organizing of informal sector workers and other marginalized workers, such as subsistence farmers, to change the structures which prevent them from obtaining what Sen calls 'a minimally acceptable life'. In October 2014, he convened in the Vatican a World Meeting of Popular Movements as a global platform for social movements from all continents to come together, exchange their experiences, be stronger in their struggles for justice, and become agents of social change.[19] The meeting took place around three themes: land, housing, and work (which in Spanish are known as the 3 Ts, *Techo, Tierra y Trabajo*, sometimes translated in English as the 3 Ls: Land, Lodging, and Livelihood). They have continued to meet annually since then, with the latest meeting taking place online in October 2020, coordinated by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.[20] In the Pope's address at their second meeting in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, July 2015, he concluded by affirming:

> The future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change. I am with you.[21]

'Accompaniment' is the term that has been used within the work of Catholic organizations, and other faith-based organizations, to describe this 'I am with you', as an expression of solidarity with the lives of the marginalized.[22] There is however no conceptual treatment yet of 'accompaniment' in the Catholic social tradition. Pope (2019) attributes the shift in the Catholic social tradition – from doing something for the marginalized to being with them – to the life and personal experience of Saint Oscar Romero during the civil war in El Salvador. According to Romero, this presence in the lives of the marginalized was not about 'a politicized apostolate, but rather an apostolate that has to guide the consciences of Christians within a politicized environment' (Romero quoted in Pope 2019: 135).[23] On the basis of Pope Francis's writings and discourses, he defines accompaniment as 'forming relationships of mutual trust based on equal dignity' and then 'mov[ing] to a shared commitment to promote

agency' (Pope 2019: 138). The personal experience of Bergoglio, like that of Romero, exemplifies that dynamic of forming relationships of trust with the marginalized residents of Buenos Aires, by simply 'being present to' them by visiting them in their homes, and sharing their commitment to be artisans of their destiny through the organizations that they form. Countless men and women who are not poor have embraced this 'being present to', by forming relationships of mutual trust, and by accompanying those who live in conditions of poverty as agents of structural change, sometimes at the cost of their lives.[24]

The final document of the 2007 meeting of the Latin American bishops' conference in Aparecida, which Bergoglio helped draft, is probably the Church document which comes closest to an account of this 'accompaniment':

> From our faith in Christ, solidarity springs as a permanent attitude of encounter, of brotherhood and service, which finds expressions in visible choices and actions, mainly in the defence of life and the rights of the most vulnerable and excluded, and in the permanent accompaniment of their efforts to be subjects of change and transformation of their situation.
>
> (CELAM 2007, paragraph 394, translation mine)

The document does not however spell out how practically to accompany the vulnerable and excluded in transforming their situation without falling into partisan politics. In his review of various forms of accompaniment, Pope (2019) mentions the work of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Cambodia, which worked both in policy advocacy to introduce an international legislation banning land mines and in supporting the lives of those who have been disabled by land mines. Other examples include the work of religious orders in policy advocacy to end human slavery, in offering assistance to trafficked women globally (Graw Leary 2018), and in changing the cultural norms around female genital mutilation and HIV/AIDS (Clark 2020). Others are the work of churches in community organizing in inner cities in the United States and the United Kingdom (Ivereigh 2010; Ritchie 2019), and the historical work of the Pastoral Land Commission in Brazil, which led to one of the biggest social movements in Latin America, the MST or Landless Rural Workers Movement (Pinto 2015). One could also see the Synod of the Amazon as an initiative of the Church to accompany the people of the Amazon in their defence of life and in defending their rights in the face of land dispossession, human rights abuses, and ecosystem destruction.

Public reasoning: encounter, self-examination, and transformation

This closeness to the lives of the poor and the ability to empathize with what ails their lives as conditions for public reasoning about which remedial action to take were also critical components of Sen's account of public reasoning. Drèze and Sen (2013: 269) called this lack of interest of the privileged in what happens to the lives of the less privileged a 'failure of public reasoning'. The Catholic social tradition does, however, go further by urging that these encounters between the privileged and the less privileged become part of a culture – a way of life:

> To speak of a "culture of encounter" means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life.
>
> (FT 216)

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis deplored the fact that many policy decisions are taken by people who have no close contact with those who are affected by their decisions:

> Many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centers of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems. They live and reason from the comfortable position of a high level of development and a quality of life well beyond the reach of the majority of the world's population. This lack of physical contact and encounter, . . . can lead to a numbing of conscience and to tendentious analyses which neglect parts of reality.
>
> (LS 49)

'Listening as governance', as Amartya Sen (2020a) puts it, needs to form a culture of listening and of attentiveness to what happens to the lives of others and to the lives of ecosystems. For the Catholic social tradition, cultivating these values of encounter and listening with no agenda, simply being present to the other person, becomes an integral part of development work (Grey 2020). In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis talks about listening as a duty of justice (QA 26). Quoting a Latin American poem, he argues, like Drèze and Sen in relation to child malnutrition in India, that the destruction of the lives of indigenous peoples

in the Amazon region is linked to them having no voice in parliament, unlike that of the voices of agribusinesses and timber merchants:

> Many are the trees where torture dwelt, and vast are the forests purchased with a thousand deaths. The timber merchants have members of parliament, while our Amazonia has no one to defend her. . . . They exiled the parrots and the monkeys . . . the chestnut harvests will never be the same.
>
> (QA 9)

For both Sen and the Catholic social tradition, this process of listening, of encounters with the lives of those who have been marginalized, excluded or dispossessed, of enabling their voices to be heard, is transformative for all parties at both the personal and the structural level. Sen talked of the need to bring critical scrutiny to our values and what we hold important in the light of what happens to the lives of others, including distant others (Sen 2002). The Catholic social tradition similarly talks of the need for self-examination, but it also emphasizes the need for acknowledging the harm that has been done to others and ecosystems, through our actions, or lack of actions, and how we could have acted otherwise (LS 218), as a first step towards change. More than Sen's approach to development, which talked in vague terms of the need for value change (from indifference, to attentiveness to the suffering of others, and to solidarity), the Catholic social tradition emphasizes cultural change as a transformational pathway, or what it calls a 'change of heart' (LS 218), a 'bold cultural revolution' (LS 114), a 'profound interior conversion' (LS 217), or an 'ecological conversion' (LS 219) – that is, a change of one's way of relating towards the earth and other people, from domination to care, from indifference to love (LS 217–219).

As Chapter 1 discussed, it also brings to the fore, more than in Sen, the close relationship between transformation of institutions and the transformation of individuals within those institutions, for

> [i]f the laws are to bring about significant, long-lasting effects, the majority of the members of society must be adequately motivated to accept them, and personally transformed to respond. Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment.
>
> (LS 211)[25]

That economic and political institutions continue to operate in environmentally and socially harmful ways signals, on the one hand, that the

people who sustain or support them have not changed their attitudes from lords and masters to carers of nature (QA 56) and, on the other, that the legal structures and macro incentives in which they operate continue to put concerns for short-term economic gains above ecological ones. This is why *Laudato Si'* concludes that what is needed are both 'profound changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption', and profound changes in 'the established structures of power which today govern societies' (LS 5).[26]

The Catholic social tradition neither specifies how to challenge these established structures of power nor presents particular models of production and consumption. Like Sen's, it leaves it to public reasoning processes in each context and situation to discern what course of action to take in given circumstances, emphasizing that the voices of those who are marginalized be heard in decision-making and emphasizing the need for self-critical examination – that is, critical reflection on the way we live, how we vote, how we produce and consume, how we invest money, and how we work (QA 70).

Concluding remarks

One cannot conclude this chapter without looking at the Catholic Church itself and the lives of its members. The credibility of the Catholic Church's social tradition depends on the way its members live and on how the institutions they create function, whether these are parish communities, religious orders, diocesan structures, non-governmental organizations, or others. As John Paul II already foresaw in 1991, 'Today more than ever, the Church is aware that her social message will gain credibility more immediately from the witness of actions than as a result of its internal logic and consistency' (CA57). The sexual abuse of minors, the covering up of perpetrators, the inaction to protect their victims by those in authority, the abuse of women,[27] the lack of horizontal accountability in clergy being accountable to their bishops and not to the people they serve, the lack of external oversight of finances and transparency in the way money is used and decisions are made, and so forth are all shortcomings of the institutions of the Church themselves in embodying that love and justice that it proclaims.

It is not the task of this book to evaluate the Catholic Church and its institutions in the light of its own social tradition. But let us recall the words of the Second Vatican Council (1964) that the 'Church, embracing in its bosom sinners, at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, always follows the way of penance and renewal' (*Lumen Gentium*, 8), and that Pope Francis is attempting to set the Church on a path to renewal, on a journey of conversion – the subtitle of the 2019 October Synod on the

Amazon was 'New Paths for the Church for an Integral Ecology'. It is plain that Sen's account of public reasoning and listening as governance could give some insights in this process of renewal.

A first insight is that the Catholic social tradition itself can be understood as an outcome of public reasoning processes, and of the lives of individuals and communities and how they respond to the realities they encounter in the light of their faith. The first reflection on the theory and practice of development, the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* by Paul VI, published shortly after development became an international project at the end of colonization period, was the result of the experience of development by local communities. This was discussed and conceptualized by a handful of theologians and social scientists, and this in turn led to a rejection of development as economic growth. Fifty years later, a renewed reflection on development took place on the basis of the realities of communities globally and how they were experiencing social and environmental degradation, and on the basis of scientific research on climate change. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* was the outcome of deliberations with scientists and theologians. This public reasoning process underlying the Catholic social tradition continues to lack transparency, however. The consultants involved in the drafting of encyclicals are not named – although some do talk about their involvement in private circles after an encyclical is released. The Amazon Synod was in that sense breaking new ground with the list of participants clearly presented, as well as the names of those in charge of drafting the final document on the basis of the discussions.[28] More public reasoning and vigorous discussions involving different viewpoints and inclusive of many voices, especially the communities which live in conditions of marginalization and poverty, need to take place. This is probably a reason why Pope Francis insists that his post-apostolic exhortation on the synod, *Querida Amazonia*, does not replace the final document and that both have to be read in conjunction (QA 1–3).

A second insight of Sen's account of public reasoning, and of its furthering by Drydyk (2020a, 2020b), is that public reasoning involves a judgement on how power is held to account and whether decisions can be justified on the basis of their impact on the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized. Critical reflection on how authority and power are exercised in the institutions of the Church is however a delicate subject, to say the least.

A third insight is that the under-theorizing of power relations in Sen's public reasoning is an invitation to draw on empirical research on the subject. How economic and social inequality is disrupting the democratic process and silencing the voices of the marginalized has been well documented in the social sciences,[29] and Drèze and Sen have discussed the matter at length in their work on India. It could be a new research area for social

scientists and theologians to explore power relations within the institutions of the Catholic Church and to bring to light decision-making processes and their effects on the lives of the most vulnerable. There is, to date, very little research on the matter. In that regard, the Catholic social tradition could learn from the processes and analysis of the *Human Development Reports*, with which this book concludes.

Notes

1 See the definition of development research by the UK Development Studies Association as interdisciplinary research which 'concerns the global challenge of combatting poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation', at www.devstud.org.uk/about/what-is-development-studies/, accessed 13 January 2021.

2 For critical discussions of Sen's *Idea of Justice*, see, among others, Brown (2010), Gotoh and Dumouchel (2009), Meshelski (2019), Osmani (2010), and Robeyns (2012).

3 For Sen's work on famine and hunger, see, among others, Sen (1981), Devereux (2001), De Waal (2004), Drèze and Sen (1989). All the works on Sen and Drèze on hunger in India have now been published as open access by the World Institute for Development Economics Research (Drèze and Sen 2020).

4 The Act was passed in 2005, and anyone can apply to demand access to government documents and information. The government is legally obliged to give them within 30 days (Drèze and Sen 2013: 100).

5 For a discussion on the critical role of listening in democratic decision-making, see Dobson (2014).

6 In 2019, Global Witness (2020) reported 212 killings worldwide for defending their land and homes, half of them in Colombia and the Philippines.

7 Question-and-answer session, launch of *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*, Magdalen College, Oxford, 17 June 2017.

8 For a critical examination of how social media can undermine democracy and public reasoning, see Tucker et al. (2017), Persily and Tucker (2020), Vaidhyanathan (2018).

9 'A reasoned solution of the problem of hunger in the modern world has to acknowledge the importance of well-functioning markets, without denying other forms of participation – through political and democratic process, through public action and influencing state policies, and through cooperation between individuals and social institutions of different types' (Sen 2019: 354).

10 See, for example, Li (2014, 2017, 2018) on the impact of global capitalism and palm oil cultivation on the lives of small farmers in Indonesia.

11 See also Boni and Walker (2013), Walker (2013, 2020).

12 See also Pope Francis's *Querida Amazonia* on the language of love, contemplation and poetry to address our contemporary socio-ecological challenges.

13 Paragraph 70, Final Document of Amazon Synod, www.synod.va/content/sinodoamazonico/en/documents/final-document-of-the-amazon-synod.html, accessed 13 January 2021.

14 For the relation between love and justice, see also John Paul II's encyclical *Centesimus Annus* issued in 1991: 'Love for others, and in the first place love

for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice' (CA58).

15 See also Van Stichel (2014) for a discussion on the creative tension between love and justice in Paul Ricoeur and its implications for the ethics of care.

16 Pope Francis quoted these words of Dom Helder Camara at the end of his Christmas address to the Roman Curia in December 2020; see a video at www. vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-12/pope-francis-curia-christmas-message-crisis-conflict.html, accessed 13 January 2021. They seem to have been omitted in the written version at www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2020/ december/documents/papa-francesco_20201221_curia-romana.html, accessed 13 January 2021.

17 For an introduction to liberation theology and its contestation, see, among others, Kirwan (2012), Rowland (2007), Townsend (2018). For the relationship between development and liberation, see, among others, Cooper (2007, 2020). For the influence of liberation theology, and the 'theology of the people' on Pope Francis, see Lakeland (2017), Luciani (2016), Scannone (2016), Shadle (2018: chapters 8–9).

18 See, for example, Ramírez (2016) who discusses that, despite public health access in Mexico through conditional cash transfers programmes, poor women continue to suffer discrimination, abuse, and humiliation in their use of health services because of their treatment by front-line health officers.

19 See their website in Spanish (Encuentro Mundial de Movimientos Populares) at https://movpop.org. The wording of 'popular movements' is a translation from the Spanish 'movimientos populares', which in Argentinian Spanish means movements of the people who live in situations of marginalization and exclusion. Grassroots movements would be a better English translation.

20 See the summary of the meeting at https://movpop.org/2020/10/los-movimien tos-populares-profundizan-en-los-caminos-de-fraternidad-y-dignidad-que-permitan-alcanzar-justicia-social-para-todos, accessed 13 January 2021.

21 www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/july/documents/papa-francesco_20150709_bolivia-movimenti-popolari.html, accessed 21 January 2021. For the emphasis on the poor being agents fo their own destiny, see also *Fratelli Tutti* (paragraphs 116 and 169), *Querida Amazonia* (paragraphs 26–27), and Shadle (2018: 288–90). Pope Francis reinforced the importance of agency and accompaniment in his address to young people gathered for the Economy of Francesco event in Assisis in November 2020: '[T]he time has come to take up the challenge of promoting and encouraging models of development, progress and sustainability in which people, especially the excluded (including our sister earth), will no longer be – at most – a merely nominal, technical or functional presence. Instead, they will become protagonists in their own lives and in the entire fabric of society. . . . Let us not think for them, but with them.' See www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-mes sages/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201121_videomessaggio-economy-of-francesco.html, accessed 13 January 2021.

22 See Cooper (2020), Farmer (2011), Kerry et al. (2014), Myers (2011) for further discussions on accompaniment.

23 The original quote comes from Archbishop Romero's pastoral letter 'The Church's mission amid the national crisis', 6th August 1979. See www.romerotrust.org.uk/ sites/default/files/fourth%20pastoral%20letter.pdf, accessed 13 January 2021.

24 For those who have been assassinated for accompanying people who were being dispossessed of their land in Latin America, see https://redamazonica.org/tag/ martires, accessed 13 January 2021.

25 For discussions on the formation of ecological virtues, see, among others, Deane-Drummond (2004, 2008), Northcott (2012), Kureethadam (2016). Kureethadam identifies the following ecological virtues in *Laudato Si'*: praise, gratitude, care, justice, work, sobriety, and humility. For a discussion on ecological virtues within political theory and ecological citizenship, see Dobson (2003).

26 The original quote is from John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, paragraph 58.

27 Reports on the extent of abuse have focused on abuse of minors and have been conducted at a diocesan or national level, such as the investigation in Pennsylvania or the Boston dioceses in the United States. There is no report of the extent of abuse globally. As for adult women, some female religious orders have conducted their own reports; see www.nytimes.com/2019/02/06/world/europe/ pope-francis-sexual-abuse-nuns.html, accessed 13 January 2021.

28 See www.synod.va/content/sinodoamazonico/en/synod-for-the-amazon.html, accessed 13 January 2021.

29 For a discussion on the social, economic, and political consequences of inequality, see Sánchez-Ancochea (2020).

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