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CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT TO DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS TO ACHIEVE A VISION OF FLOURISHING OF CREATION

Stephanie Ann Puen♦

Abstract: Recent developments in Catholic Social (CST) has highlighted the concept of integral ecology, which dovetails with the concept of Doughnut Economics (DE), used by different local government units and organizations to develop their post-COVID-19 economies and societies that are more just, sustainable, and equitable. This intersection of ideas between CST and DE is a fruitful point for dialogue between economics and theology in order to help attain the vision of flourishing of life and prosperity that both disciplines are seeking to achieve, particularly in line with the sustainable development goals on decent work and economic growth and sustainable cities and communities. This paper develops this dialogue, by arguing for three ways that CST can help in strengthening DE further in terms of i.) fleshing out a more robust understanding of human nature, ii.) emphasizing the importance of arts and culture, and iii.) articulating the role of and reform needed in business in achieving the vision of flourishing for the ecosystem, of which human beings are a part of.

Keywords: Chrematistics Economics, Cultural Ecology, Economy of Care, Economy of Enough, Integral Ecology, Theological Anthropology

1. Introduction

Catholic Social Thought (CST) has always sought to bring insights from the Christian faith in dialogue with current socio-economic and political issues. Recent developments have highlighted the concept of integral ecology, which dovetails with the concept of Doughnut

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Economics (DE), an economic framework developed in 2017 by economist Kate Raworth based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 and the nine planetary boundaries set out by Johan Rockström and a team of Earth-system scientists. Raworth identifies certain essentials and needs for all human beings to live prosperous lives based on the SDGs. This forms the social foundation, which is the inner ring of the doughnut, and the 'hole' represents the proportion of human population who are falling short of these social foundations; the crust of the doughnut represents the Earth's ecosystems that support life and therefore should not be overused, otherwise human beings risk destroying the very systems upon which their existence depends.

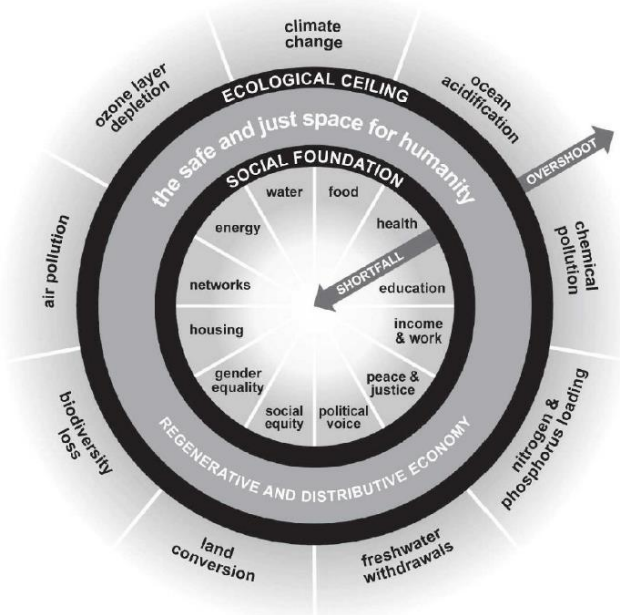


Figure 1: Framework of DE (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 44)

The concept of DE has also recently gained some traction and is now being used by local governments and cities such as Amsterdam, for example, to plan their post-COVID-19 economies (DE Action Lab et. al., *The Amsterdam City Doughnut*, 3). It has also been suggested as a possible way forward to contemporary capitalism and a useful tool to further contextualize the goals and work in the Rio+20 (Raworth, *A Safe and Just Space*, 4-5). The framework has been translated into tools, in particular, to address SDG 11, but the framework itself has implications for all the SDGs (DE Action Lab et. al., *Creating City Portraits*, 5-9).

Both CST and DE seek to achieve sustainability, flourishing, and integral development of creation or what DE defines as "human prosperity in a flourishing web of life" (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 47). Pope Francis articulates the close connection between social issues and environmental issues through the concept of integral ecology:

Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality. . . . We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature (Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 139).

The similarities in goals and understanding of the problems related to sustainability offer a starting point for CST and DE to build on each other to attain the vision of flourishing both disciplines aim for. This paper focuses on what CST can contribute to DE. In particular, this paper argues, through an analysis of CST and the critiques against DE, that CST can help DE further develop by i.) fleshing out a more robust understanding of anthropology in the DE framework by bringing in the concepts of solidarity, economy of care, and economy of enough, ii.) emphasizing the importance of arts and culture in developing sustainable cities and communities using the concept of subsidiarity, and iii.) articulating the changes needed in business in achieving the vision of flourishing for the ecosystem outlined in both CST and DE.

2. Role of Human Nature

The DE framework is enhanced by CST's attention to anthropology, in response to creating sustainable cities and communities and decent work and economic growth. Raworth herself emphasizes the importance of nurturing a different kind of person, beyond simply reducing the person to *homo economicus*. She traces the evolution of how the rational and purely self-interested person became the assumption in economics and how this "portrait we paint of ourselves clearly shapes who we become" (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 88). She therefore emphasizes the importance of painting a new portrait of who the human being is and what it means to be human. While nevertheless acknowledging that self-interest has a role to play in economics and the market, Raworth emphasizes that there is a need to

move from being solely self-interested to socially reciprocating, citing studies that show that as a species, human beings tend to cooperate and engage in reciprocity, motivated by more than just prices and costs (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 90-91, 105; Bowles and Gintis, 196-199). Being able to cooperate entails understanding the human person not as isolated beings, but rather as interdependent beings embedded in a web of relationships with others as well as with the environment (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 94-95).

CST can also help develop this anthropology by further deepening the implications of this anthropology by using the concept of solidarity, as well as emphasizing the importance of the human person being as part of an 'economy of care' and 'economy of enough' to remind human beings of the need to go beyond chrematistic economics.

2.1. Developing an Interdependent Anthropology

The anthropology in CST that emphasizes the interdependent nature of the human person with the environment and other people through the concept of solidarity and fraternity can help elaborate on the kind of person and care for creation Raworth seeks to cultivate in her framework (Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 114-117). The interdependent nature of the human person is a cornerstone of CST: the way society functions in CST assumes that human beings are radically social and are meant to reach fulfillment in cooperation with one another (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 87). Because of our interdependent nature, human beings are to be in solidarity with one another – solidarity understood as “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38). It is a person’s humanity that ties them to others and to the environment, especially with the most marginalized and vulnerable. It is this concern for and solidarity with others that underpins the vision of flourishing for society. Solidarity rests on the foundation of fraternity that both human and non-human are all creatures whose creator, sustainer, and goal is something other than themselves, God; “indeed, the latest encyclicals argue that the principle of fraternity presupposes the existence of a common Creator...and by extension, that [people] should live in reciprocal love and respect” (Mardones and Marinovic 54).

Solidarity with other people and with the community of creation involves a decentering of the human person and instead acknowledging that the human person is embedded within a complex web of interrelationships of other creatures who are also intrinsically valuable, as Francis points out in *Laudato Si'*, and not just valuable for their utility (140). CST's description of solidarity as a mutual commitment to the common good for creation, and a vision of universal fraternity, justice, and peace helps push Raworth's point of interdependence further (Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 5-6, 26, 110). Solidarity of human beings must not just with other people, but also with the other creatures of the ecosystem whose boundaries and limits need to be understood and respected: "this shift in perspective—from pyramid to web, from pinnacle to participant—also invites us to move beyond anthropocentric values and to recognize and respect the intrinsic value of the living world" (Raworth, *DE*, 99).

CST also connects solidarity with development that is integral and holistic. Paul VI highlights that "development cannot be limited to mere economic growth. In order to be authentic . . . it has to promote the good of every [person] and of the whole [person]" (*Populorum Progressio*, sec. 14). Understanding that human beings are in solidarity with others implies certain rights and duties, as well as the need for holistic development. Meghan Clark, a theological ethicist, points out the clear ethical obligations that solidarity requires in development work as a way forward for peace, as seen in the magisterial documents of CST (Clark 21-22). These obligations are described as mutual care for both human and non-human creation and ought to be considered in defining what decent work and economic growth look like, as well as genuinely reducing inequality, especially in the context of the developed countries offering some form of aid to bolster the economies of the developing countries, without, however, devolving into neocolonialism.

This awareness and rejection of anthropocentrism, as well as connection to holistic development is crucial, because often the understanding of economic development "needs anthropocentrism, as within this concept, it is man alone who can give value and, as a consequence, man asserts his authority over nature, women, children, etc." (Gudynas). If DE is to help create more sustainable cities and communities, decent work, and economic growth, it is important to consider how a narrow anthropocentrism can often, consciously or

unconsciously, hinder efforts towards achieving the SDGs. CST's understanding of solidarity fleshes out the kind of interdependent anthropology Raworth identifies in the DE framework.

2.2. Human Beings in “Economy of Care” and “Economy of Enough”

Within the context of the SDG on decent work and economic growth, Raworth's DE raises the question of how growth and care is understood within the fields of economics and business. Raworth argues for the need to be agnostic towards growth, in that the focus should be on “designing an economy that promotes ... prosperity, whether Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is going up, down, or holding steady” (Raworth, *DE*, 209). Therefore, rather than making growth or the GDP the goal and the solution for economic problems, Raworth instead shifts the attention on building well-being and prosperity (Raworth, *DE*, 27-52, 207-243). While Raworth acknowledges this on the ‘macro’ level, more can be said on the ‘meso’ level of organizations and ‘micro’ level of individual consumption. Aspirational consumption, fueled by advertising and marketing practices, can often lead to people simply producing, wanting, and consuming more. John Paul II warns against this, decrying “a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being,’ and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself” (*Centesimus Annus*, sec. 36).

If interdependence and cooperation are to be part of the new economic anthropology, as Raworth argues, then the focus on chrematistics economics needs to be addressed due to their effects on a person's way of being in the world. Chrematistics economics focuses on short term financial gains rather than holistic well-being and prosperity as the primary goal. Such economic outlook leads to people being alienated from their work, with their work being commodified and reduced to their financial worth and abstracted value. This abstraction of value tends to feed into consumerism, which “in the realm of economics understood as chrematistics . . . the experience of abundance is always beyond reach” (Fernandez, loc. 2626). Thus, there is a need to reorient the human person towards an ‘economy of enough’ and ‘economy of care’ and well-being as the paramount considerations of the economy.

The 'economy of enough,' on the one hand, resists consumerism by encouraging companies to look for genuine needs and creating goods and services that meet such needs, rather than creating needs or aspirations that only fuel a consumption of perfection or happiness that does not exist. The 'economy of care,' on the other hand, surfaces the invisible labour of people that often goes uncompensated in fields that require some form of care, such as those in the household or education. As Raworth points out, what happens in the household is often left hidden and relegated as unimportant for the visible labor in business and trade. This also often involves a gendered dimension, wherein domestic housework is seen primarily as the domain of women (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 60). As Raworth and other feminist economists have pointed out, much of the unpaid work of care in the home is what makes the paid economy possible, and as such, the work in the household should be understood as an important core to the economy and its contribution should be valued and justly compensated (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 68-70; Folbre 248-262). Feminist theologians such as Christine Hinze reinforce what Raworth says. They add to it by developing the concept of the human person as *homo solidaritus* and demonstrating how prioritizing *solidaritus* over *homo economicus* can help people realize the value of care work and support equally valuable participation in the waged economies and care economies (Hinze 104-117).

Bringing in solidarity and the 'economy of care' and 'economics of enough' into the DE framework further strengthens the anthropology that describes human beings as interdependent and cooperative with the environment and other people, rather than just rational and self-interested. Instead, CST highlights the need to value the care work necessary for genuine well-being and prosperity found in the SDG of decent work and economic growth. This dialogue resists the anthropocentrism found in traditional understandings of development and highlights the importance of rejecting chrematistic economics that leads to an over fixation on growth as the primary indicator of well-being, alienated labour, and prioritizing short term gains over long term sustainability.

3. The Importance of Culture

CST supplements DE with its extensive view on culture. A critique of the framework of DE is the lack of explicit discussion on culture in the

development goals and social foundations, especially in the context of developing sustainable cities and communities. Culture is understood as “a set of attitudes toward life, beliefs about reality, and assumptions about the universe shared by a human group” (Massingale 15-16). Both Raworth and the United Nations SDGs do not elaborate in detail the ways culture actually can and does contribute to sustainable development in their respective frameworks, as seen in research contributions, for example, by UNESCO (Wiktor-Mach). Culture is especially important to consider when it is understood not merely as the symbolisms, languages, traditions, and heritage of a community, but also as the underlying assumptions and values that underpin the ways the community thinks, talks, and acts. “Sustainability has an intrinsic cultural dimension and therefore the role of culture in sustainability is manifold, i.e., as a driver of meanings and values, mediator, transformative process, among others” (Birkeland et al., 2). They form part of a community’s identity and ideologies, and the way it understands itself and the way of life of its members. Culture also shapes the individual’s part of that community identity, and shapes people, their interactions, and their institutions both consciously and unconsciously. Attempting to implement a development project in line with a particular economic framework without understanding how it fits into the community’s culture runs the risk of being outright rejected or resulting in unintended negative consequences, rather than the intended achievement of the SDGs.

Addressing culture and its role in DE is vital. Understanding the role of the arts and culture of a community can help contribute to or hinder efforts of creating an economy that is more just in its distribution of resources and needs for people without going beyond the earth’s carrying capacity. The concept of ‘cultural ecology’ that Francis discusses in *Laudato Si’* and the concept of subsidiarity addresses these lacunae by reemphasizing the way “historic, artistic, and cultural patrimony” (sec. 143) fits into the doughnut economic framework’s social foundations.

3.1. Cultural Ecology and Subsidiarity

For Francis, “ecology, then, also involves protecting the cultural treasures of humanity . . . more specifically, it calls for greater attention to local cultures when studying environmental problems, favouring a dialogue between scientific-technical language and the

language of the people" (*Laudato 'Si* 143). Culture is not meant to be excluded or erased in the name of standardizing or developing a country to be better; instead, culture ought to be respected, and what progress and development mean to a community should not be imposed from without, but rather should be reflected upon and articulated from within the community's context, which includes their culture. As pointed out by Gudynas, there is a tendency to impose standards coming from the more powerful or developed countries, communities, or organizations onto those in the developing world or those who do not hold as much power, be it in DE or the SDGs (Gudynas). Projects that encroach especially on land and other resources of communities in the name of progress and development can often clash with or erode cultures, hurting the local communities rather than helping them. Foreign aid packages from developed countries to developing countries that come with certain conditions can have similar effects (Hickel).

Those using DE need to be wary of this tendency of simply imposing the ideas and concepts of the powerful onto those who have less power, especially when helping indigenous or poorer populations in the name of developing sustainable cities and communities. The principle of subsidiarity can be helpful here. While acknowledging that there are some things only larger organizations can do because of the resources and aggregate connections that they have, the principle of subsidiarity in CST reminds communities to empower individuals and more local organizations by encouraging participation and inclusion of these smaller units, rather than relying solely on the larger institutions. Subsidiarity warns larger and higher authorities not to supplant the "initiative, freedom, and responsibility" because of the "every person, family and intermediate group has something original to offer to the community. Experience shows that the denial of subsidiarity, or its limitation in the name of an alleged democratization or equality of all members of society, limits and sometimes even destroys the spirit of freedom and initiative" (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace 186-187).

Subsidiarity stresses the importance of grassroots movements, changes in the systems, processes, and power dynamics in the distribution of environmental resources, and work towards attaining the flourishing of creation that both CST and Raworth argue for. Raworth briefly mentions this, when she says that "a thriving society .

. . . is more likely to build strong political engagement . . . democratic governance of society and the economy rests on the right and capacity of citizens to engage in public debate—hence the importance of ‘political voice’ within the Doughnut’s social foundation” (Raworth, *DE*, 67). She also highlights the importance of checking the abuse of power, especially in the “power of the wealthy to reshape the economy’s rules in their favour” (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 77). Subsidiarity helps addressing and illuminating power dynamics by helping reveal whose voices and actions are often *not* included or consulted, and whose voices drown out the rest, purposefully or not.

In line with subsidiarity, developing communities, cities, or countries “must test and reject false values that would tarnish a truly human way of life, while accepting noble and useful values in order to develop them in their own distinctive way, along with their own indigenous heritage” to what more developed or wealthier countries might offer to them (Paul VI, sec. 41). Francis points out that “for [indigenous populations], land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values. When they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best” (Francis, *Laudato ‘Si* 146). As a more concrete example, Francis notes that in response to the problems facing the communitarian way of life of the indigenous people in the Amazonian region, where the person is intimately connected to the community and to the land and where there are efforts to preserve their way of life and to “integrate in new situations without losing [their values and way of life], but instead offering them as their own contribution to the common good” and well-being of all (Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, 20-21). Francis’ thoughts and reflection on the Amazonian region also echoes what economist Elinor Ostrom describes in her work of common pool resources, where smaller local communities are able to preserve their own traditions, take care of their environmental resources, and help the individuals in their community flourish together (Ostrom 58-101). The examples of common pool resources in Ostrom’s book further highlights subsidiarity being used in local communities as a way of ensuring that their traditional way of life continues and that the community’s needs are met.

Employing subsidiarity to practice the concept of cultural ecology the DE framework clarifies the role of culture in the social foundations

of the framework based on the SDGs. Bringing in subsidiarity can help ensure that “the social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and [a community’s] sense of the meaning of life and community” does not disappear in the name of supposed progress or development (Francis, *Laudato ‘Si* 145). Instead, subsidiarity allows for communities, especially indigenous populations and those on the margins, to actively bring in their culture into dialogue with the social part of the DE, in ways that can both enhance but also challenge DE and even the SDGs themselves, particularly since, as mentioned earlier, DE and the SDGs have been critiqued to be too western in its outlook and assumptions.

Subsidiarity pushes the voices of those at the margins – as well as those who are heavily affected yet often considered insignificant – to be included in the conversation. Understanding culture and its role in development illuminates how the social foundation of the DE nuances the well-being and prosperity goals set out in the framework, particularly for indigenous populations or developing countries and communities, as well as helps concretely apply the framework to specific contexts.

4. Need for Reform in Business

CST describes the reform for businesses that the DE framework entails. Such reform entails reviewing the value chain of businesses and aligning the different aspects of the value chain towards the SDGs, while also rethinking the ways in which businesses measure the impact their organizations have on society, aside from using profit or traditional financial indicators.

While subsidiarity can also help in ensuring that those in the margins can voice their concerns and participate, more structural changes are needed, especially with COVID-19 revealing how untenable our current ways of living are, in the ways cities and countries conduct business and structure the economy to provide for people’s needs. While Raworth’s thought focuses more on economic policy and theory, the framework has several implications for structural change in business as well: rather than focusing on growth, Raworth encourages focusing on just distribution and a system of networks as part of the way structures ought to be designed. For a business, this may mean different marketing and pricing strategies, or different product innovations. This also means investing more in the

people when creating business infrastructure such as through employee stock ownership plans or through programs and organization designs that help stakeholder well-being and prosperity, rather than investing in speculative financial instruments or projects or simply “concentrate income in the hands of the wealthy since only they would save enough to kick-start GDP growth,” which seemed to be supported by the Kuznet Curve (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 105-106).

Raworth emphasizes the role of trade, business, and work in the social foundation of the DE framework. “In the face of twenty-first century challenges, firms need a purpose far more inspiring than merely maximizing shareholder value” and they must go beyond simply doing their fair share, but also strive to “do no harm” and to be “generous by creating an enterprise that is regenerative by design, giving back to the living systems of which we are part” (76, 183-185). The way business is done currently – especially in the way its goals are framed and assessed – has tended exclusively towards the financial gain of the shareholders who have the power and resources to fund the business’ activities. When businesses craft value creation process, Raworth challenges them to adopt frameworks that allow them to truly serve people without abusing the environment. One such framework that can be used is found in CST: the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development released and updated a document entitled “Vocation of the Business Leader” (VBL), which reflects on the nature and purpose of business, as well as what that means concretely in the business’ operations (2-3).

4.1. Vocation of the Business Leader

Grounded in the concepts of human dignity – the intrinsic value of each and every human being – and the common good – the conditions that allow for the flourishing of human and non-human creation – the VBL elaborates on principles that businesses can adopt in order to align the business’ operations with the well-being and prosperity of not just the financial shareholders, but also of other stakeholders and the environment, in line with the SDG on decent work and economic growth. Similar to Raworth, the document also warns against being too focused on growth, and also cautions against depending on technological advancement to save humanity from its predicament (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, 10). Rather

than growth and technology, the VBL underscores the need for an ethical purpose and supporting principles to help businesspeople make good ethical judgements in the face of complex and continuously changing situations.

The VBL develops Raworth's discussion on business by identifying the purpose and fleshing out a framework for business that focuses on the well-being and prosperity of all, including the environment, through three principles: good goods, good work, and good wealth (13-18). The VBL gives support for the kinds of projects DE implies for businesses, translating the implications of the DE framework into concrete principles and action points that businesses can reflect on and do.

The VBL, along with Raworth, would also highlight the need for networks and just distribution as part of well-being and prosperity, while also rejecting the idea that income inequality is a necessary evil on the way to prosperity, which Raworth argues was another implication of the development of the Kuznet Curve (Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*, 143-154). Instead, the VBL would emphasize the common good as the underlying principle to help create businesses that are "distributive by design" as Raworth argues (*Doughnut Economics*, 227). The VBL identifies the main purpose of a business as the common good—that is, the conditions needed for creation to flourish, not just as isolated individuals, but together as part of an interrelated community of creation. As part of the common good, first, the business is meant to provide good goods: accessible goods and services for communities that help creation flourish in their freedom, creativity, and capabilities. This purpose requires finding opportunities to serve not just those who can afford their needs, but especially those at the margins who are vulnerable. Second, in connection with the common good, businesses are meant to offer good work that helps people develop their own capabilities and learn, rather than just stagnate as a disposable commodity or cog in the business organizational structure. Businesses are to give opportunities to their employees to practice and develop their skills and contribute to the goals of the business. Third, businesses are meant to produce good wealth in ways that cares for and understands the limits of the environment and is distributed justly among all those who are affected by the business or who contribute to the business. Businesses are meant to be proper stewards of the environment and shift to more

sustainable business practices that respect the intrinsic value of the environment; such practices would include minimizing waste as well as being more judicious in using natural resources.

Because the goal is not just maximizing shareholder value, and instead focuses on well-being and the tools being used to measure whether a business is doing well also need to be developed further. If the economy is to move away from growth as the primary indicator that a community, city, or country is doing well, then new tools are needed to evaluate whether the goals of well-being are being met. Traditional financial formulas and ratios measure whether the shareholder value has increased, but they would not be adequate to measure if a business is genuinely contributing to the common good. Financial and other quantitative tools can help gauge whether customers appreciate the service and are able to use it, but more needs to be done to have a more accurate picture of how the business' goods and services are either helping or hurting people.

While Raworth discusses these goals, more needs to be said and done on how the government, businesses, and organizations intend to assess whether or not the community, city, or country, is on track for its goals, not just as isolated businesses, but as businesses embedded within a network of other businesses and institutions. Alternative ways of assessing businesses and organizations were created and are continuously being developed by organizations such as B Corporations and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards, to help create a more robust analysis of how a business is affecting the environment, its customers, its workers, and the communities, cities, or countries it is doing business in. The New Zealand government, as another example, also calibrated their government budget and strategic priorities to be more aligned with the developmental needs of the country. In late May of 2019, the government of New Zealand designed "its budget around a specific set of measures of national 'well-being'" (Monitor's Editorial Board). Rather than use traditional measures such as productivity or GDP, New Zealand's government focuses on five areas: improving mental health, addressing the needs of and inequalities faced by the indigenous Maori people and other Pacific Islanders, reducing child poverty, flourishing in this age of technology, and shifting to a low-emission, sustainable economy (Peat). The B Corporation and GRI standards also consider the well-being and prosperity of customers and employees as well as the local

community where the business is located and the sustainability practices of the company. B Corporations in particular also creates networks of businesses that collaborate with each other in doing purposeful business, which dovetails with Raworth's emphasis on networking and the emphasis of community in the VBL and the common good.

Using the document of the VBL fleshes out the purpose of business that DE is striving for by illustrating the kind of changes needed for businesses' systems and processes in order that they be more aligned with the prosperity and well-being of people and the environment, as outlined in the SDGs. The VBL also challenges businesses to think not just of realigning business activities but also how to assess whether the business is moving towards or away from their purpose, not just as individual businesses but cooperating through networks.

5. Conclusion

With organizations and cities beginning to adapt the framework of DE as an alternative way to rebuild their economies after the COVID-19 crisis, it is crucial that the framework rebuilds our post-COVID-19 economies in a way that genuinely takes care of human beings and the environment, as seen in the ways of well-being and prosperity articulated through the SDGs. CST can offer some insights into further strengthening the framework of DE, particularly in the anthropology, DE is seeking to cultivate, the elaboration of culture and its role in development work, and the changes needed in business in order to be more in line with the framework. Elaborating on these three areas develops the DE framework to ensure its lasting functionality: to create lasting change in terms of the way humanity does business and runs the economy in a sustainable way.

As mentioned, DE has recently gained attention as it is being used by local governments, as well as by businesses as part of these economies, to plan for their post-COVID-19 economies: the 'new normal' of business and economics that revolves around authentic development, well-being, and prosperity, as well as a respect for the intrinsic value of the environment. As science journalist Ed Yong points out, COVID-19 has shown that many aspects of twenty-first century living made the pandemic possible:

... humanity's relentless expansion into wild spaces; soaring levels of air travel; chronic underfunding of public health; a just-in-time economy that runs on fragile supply chains; health-care systems that yoke medical care to employment; social networks that rapidly spread misinformation; the devaluation of expertise; the marginalization of the elderly; and centuries of structural racism that impoverished the health of minorities and indigenous groups. Thus, a post-COVID-19 world ought to address these different social institutions and ways of living and being with the rest of creation. Developing this framework can help respond to these problems in a holistic way, by illuminating the connections and intricacies among these issues. As Francis points out, these are not separate issues, but are all interconnected in one large, complex socio-economic, political, and environmental issue (*Laudato 'Si* 139). While DE already makes many important contributions in highlighting the different dimensions and their complexities in building an alternative and more life-giving economy, CST can further develop what DE is concretely trying to change within our economic systems.

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