

The Challenge of Humanistic Management

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ABSTRACT. According to the origin of the word “humanism” and the concept of *humanitas* where the former comes from, management could be called humanistic when its outlook emphasizes common human needs and is oriented to the development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent. A first approach to humanistic management, although quite incomplete, was developed mainly in the middle of the 20th century. It was centered on human motivations. A second approach to humanistic management sprang up in the 80’s and centered on organizational culture. This implied a wider approach to the human condition while taking into account the influence of culture on behaviors and decision-making, but it is incomplete, too. There is a third approach to humanistic management, which is still emerging, that considers a business enterprise as a real community of persons. That means promoting unity and favoring the acquisition of human virtues. This humanistic management approach is a real challenge in order to achieve a higher moral quality in man-

agement, human virtues among people and more efficient organizations.

KEY WORDS: Christian social teaching, humanizing business, humanizing culture, humanistic management, organizational culture, organizational virtue ethics

Introduction

It is very well known that management underwent a tremendous development throughout the twentieth century. During the first decades of that century, with Taylor’s scientific organization of work, Fayol’s managerial principles and Henry Ford’s assembly line, management was based on technique and little attention was paid to the human condition of workers, except for making them more efficient in productive operations. Taylor only focused on the self-interest of the worker to get money and the organization of time and activities in order to improve productivity, while Fayol limited his approach to the functions of management and Ford focused on increasing productivity through the assembly line. In all these approaches and in some others after them, the image of the person was quite “mechanistic”. Managers planned the work and gave orders, which had to be obeyed by employees; the reward for that was basically money.

This engineering outlook of management was followed by another that focused on human behavior from the assumptions of experimental psychology and psychoanalysis. This outlook was expanded by one of the most outstanding pioneers of management thought, Abraham Maslow. He introduced a new approach, which

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he himself considered a “humanistic” approach. In his own words, Maslow “attempted to enlarge our conception of the human personality by reaching into the ‘higher’ levels of human nature” (1970, p. ix). He accepted the previous findings coming from experimental psychology and psychoanalysis but he went beyond these disciplines by adopting “a new general philosophy of life” which led him to a deeper knowledge of human needs.¹

Apart from Maslow, some other authors have adopted conceptions of management which could be considered as approaches to humanistic management, at least in a broad sense, since they emphasize several aspects of the human condition. The first purpose of this paper is to explore these historical approaches. So after a short discussion about the meaning of *humanistic management* three approaches to humanistic management will be distinguished. Then it will endeavor to show that the third approach to humanistic management is more complete in considering the human condition and the capacity of everyone to develop better human qualities than the previous ones.

What humanistic management means?

“Humanistic” is related to “humanism”, an old and rich concept. The term “humanism”, although it does not have a univocal sense,² is generally understood as the realization of certain human ideals. More specifically, humanism is usually conceived as an outlook emphasizing common human needs and is concerned with human characteristics. It leads to structuring social life in a way that is appropriate for the human condition. However, this way of understanding humanism is too vague. So it is necessary to start by clarifying what humanism, and humanistic management, will mean in the context of this paper. In fact, the meaning adopted here is very close to the origin of the term “humanism” and its meaning in the Ancient World, although it includes certain conceptual enrichment.

The term “humanism” was introduced by the German scholar F. J. Niethammer as *humanismus*

in 19th century to designate the Renaissance emphasis on studying classical authors and languages (Latin and Greek) in education.³ However, the roots are much older. In 15th century, those who pursued and endorsed these classical studies were called *umanisti*, an Italian word. According to R. Grudin (1989, p. 723), author of the article on “humanism” in the *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, *umanisti* comes from Latin *studia humanitatis*, which was a course of classical studies that included grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy. In fact, in Renaissance, the concept of *humanitas* became a key educational and political ideal. “Renaissance humanism – he affirms – in all its forms defined itself in its straining towards this ideal. No discussion, therefore, of humanism can have validity without an understanding of *humanitas*.” Accordingly, Grudin gives us an explanation of the meaning of *humanitas* in Ancient Greece:

“*Humanitas* meant the development of human virtue, in all its approaches, to its fullest extent. The term thus implied not only such qualities as are associated to the modern word *humanity* – understanding, benevolence, compassion, mercy – but also such more aggressive characteristics as fortitude, judgment, prudence, eloquence, and even love of honor. Consequently the possessor of *humanitas* could not be merely a sedentary and isolated philosopher or man of letters but was of necessity a participant in active life. Just as action without insight was held to be aimless and barbaric, insight without action was rejected as barren and imperfect. *Humanitas* called for a fine balance between action and contemplation, a balance born not of compromise but of complementarity.”

A complementary explanation is provided by Miralles (1975, p. 518) who holds that the word *humanitas* which gives origin to “humanism” is the Latin translation of the Greek word *φιλανθρωπία* (*filantropia*) that means “love to the human condition”. It seems it was employed first by Aeschylus who applied this term to the benevolence of Prometheus towards mankind. In the Hellenistic and Roman era it was a quality desirable in a monarch. St. Paul attributed it to Christ. In Stoic writers or those influenced by

Stoicism, *humanitas* has a sense of something common that maintains humans united to each other beyond race, beliefs, origin and social conditions.

Accepting this meaning of *humanistas*, here *humanistic management* is understood as a management that emphasizes the human condition and is oriented to the development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent.

First set of approaches to humanistic management

In a paper presented in 1925, Mary Parker Follett, who has been called “a prophet of modern management” (Graham, 1994), wrote: “We can never wholly separate the human from the mechanical side . . . But you all see every day the study of human relations in business and the study of operating are bound up together” (1940, p. 124). In her view there were no psychological, ethical or economic problems, but human problems and these cover aspects which could be psychological, ethical, economic and whatever. This outlook was one of the first humanistic approaches to management.

Chester I. Barnard, another outstanding pioneer in management thought, was also concerned with the human and ethical side of management. In his words, organizations last “in proportion to the breadth of the morality by which they are governed” (1968, p. 282). But what is even more remarkable in Barnard is the way in which he pointed out the importance to achieve a correct vision of the human being before dealing with organizations. In his memorable book *The functions of the executive*, first published in 1938, he wrote:

“I have found it impossible to go far in the study of organizations or of behavior of people in relation to them without being confronted with a few questions which can be simply stated. For example: ‘What is an individual?’ ‘What is a person?’ ‘To what extent do people have power of choice or free will?’ The temptation is to avoid such difficult questions, leaving them to philosophers and scientists who still debate them after centuries. It quickly appears, however, that even

if we avoid answering such questions definitely, we cannot avoid them” (1968/1938, p. 8).

A third author, quite different from Follett and Barnard but more than likely with a significant influence on Maslow and other authors who will be mentioned, was Elton Mayo. He introduced an approach based on satisfaction for social conditions of work. From the famous Hawthorne experiments of the Western Electric Company in Chicago (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939), Mayo (1933, 1945) realized that informal organization exists in all organizations and the informal group is an outlet for the aspirations of workers. That means a certain humanistic approach, since it includes human relations in work organizations.

However, the consideration of persons by Mayo was exclusively related to increased productivity. Mayo’s aim is made clear in his own words: “a research study of human behavior and human relations was eminently desirable. Such study, if made without presuppositions other than those justified by biology or the human aspect of clinical medicine, might, we believed, be more productive than a direct attack on labor relations” (1945, p. xi). His findings showed work satisfaction depends to a large extent on the informal pattern of the work group, and satisfaction is related to productivity. Mayo considered that management ought to provide the bases for group affiliation and to foster spontaneous cooperation. But, for this purpose he only proposed a suitable communications system, particularly upwards from workers to management.

From clinical psychological observation, Maslow (1970/1954) stated that humans are motivated by multiple needs and those needs are hierarchical. He identified five general levels of motivating needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and the need for self-actualization. He presented a more comprehensive approach to human beings than the current psychology of his days and rejected the images of man that the latter generated.

Regarding the need of self-actualization, Maslow stated:

“A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man *can* be, he *must* be. He must be true to his human nature. This need we may call self-actualization (. . .) It refers to man’s desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one idiosyncratically is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming” (1970, p. 46). (The italics are the author’s)

It is an interesting approach, but it is more than questionable that “what a man can be, he must be”. A person can become a lot of different things, since each human being has many potentialities, some better than others. He or she can become someone with an excellent character or, on the contrary, someone quite depraved. Here it underlines a crucial ethical aspect.

Maslow could have in mind the self-fulfillment of the idiosyncrasy of each one excluding bad aspects. However, he did not talk about that. In fact, self-fulfillment can have two different meanings: developing personal idiosyncrasy, whatever that can be, and developing the noblest potentialities of each human being. The former has only a psychological sense, while the latter has an ethical sense related to character. Unfortunately, Maslow, as the psychologist he was, only paid attention to the development of the idiosyncrasy of each one, without considering the ethical side of this development.

The need for self-actualization is also very important in the contribution of Douglas McGregor (1960) through his well-known Y Theory. He considered that the satisfaction of the individual’s “self-actualizing needs” is the best way to obtain commitment. He pointed out that the average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but also to seek responsibility, and many more people are able to contribute creatively to the solution of organizational problems that do so. A variant of this approach is that given by Likert (1961, 1967). He maintains that a leader must always adapt his or her behavior to take persons into account, to lead them with their expectations, values and skills. Other scholars, as Argyris (1957) and Herzberg

(1968), focused on the development of the individuals as well. All these authors, like Maslow, avoid talking about the ethical side of human growth.

Concluding, the scholars of this first set of approaches to humanistic management insisted on the necessity of managers being concerned for motivating human needs and considered in different ways the need for self-actualization (or their equivalent: personal growth or development of the individual) but they did not delve too much into the specific contents of these concepts. In fact, they were more interested in knowing how human behavior could be motivated to improve outcomes than in investigating what a human being actually is both as an individual and as a social being.

Second approach to humanistic management

A second set of approaches to humanistic management came from considering organizational culture. Culture within human groups and how the group influences the individual have been studied by cultural anthropology since 19th century. But the study of organizational cultures didn’t become popular until the 1980’s with the works of Peters and Waterman (1982), who related some strong organizational cultures with business excellence, and those of Deal and Kennedy et al. (1982), who studied 200 corporate cultures and their relation to performance. Schein (1985/1992, 1990) and Kilmann et al. (1985) made a significant contribution to the theoretical development of this concept. Afterwards some attempts have been made to link organizational culture and improvement initiatives in organizations (Detert et al., 2000) and now many relate organizational culture with positive organization results (Goffee and Jones, 1998).

Organizational culture has been defined, in very simple but intuitive words, as “the way we do things around here” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p. 4). Pettigrew described it as “an amalgam of beliefs, ideology, language, ritual and myth” (1979, p. 572). Gordon and DiTomaso

state that a corporate culture is “a pattern of shared and stable beliefs and values that are developed within the company across time” (1992, p. 784). From a different perspective, it has been said that “culture is what a group learns over a period of time as that group solves its problems of survival in an external environment and its problems of internal integration. Such learning is simultaneously behavioral, cognitive, and an emotional process” (Schein, 1990, p. 111).

Two levels can be distinguished in an organizational culture: an inner and invisible one and another that is superficial and visible; the latter contains external manifestations of the former (Sathe, 1983; Schein 1985/1992). The inner level, which basically contains *beliefs* (hypothesis, assumptions, and the business model the organization holds to be true) and *values* (principles or qualities considered worthwhile by the organization), seems the most essential for characterizing a certain culture. In Schein’s view, the term *culture* “should be reserved for this deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define, in a basic ‘taken-for-granted’ fashion, an organization’s view of itself and its environment” (1985, p. 6).

The importance of organizational culture in organization performance is a matter of fact. For many years, organizational theory has paid attention to strategy, structure and managerial systems to control an organization. But now there is an increasing conviction that a set of elements less visible and difficult to measure, as shared values and beliefs, have a great influence on human behavior and the decision-making process within the organization (Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Goffee and Jones, 1998, among others). Thus organizational culture cannot be ignored by management any more.

Regarding the role of management on organizational cultures, it has been questioned whether or not their leaders can promote them. Schein, who many consider as one of the most outstanding scholars on organizational culture, does not hesitate to affirm: “Organizational cultures are created by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership may well be the creation, the management, and – if and when

that may become necessary – the destruction of culture” (1985, p. 2). But not everyone agrees with this position. Smircich (1983), e.g., thinks that organizational culture “is” a part of the organization (something inherent to any organization) and it is exclusively the outcome of the interactions between the individual and the organization. So managers have nothing to do with building up an organizational culture. Others give a deeper knowledge of how to do it as a pre-condition for changing cultures. Thus Fitzgerald (1988, p. 9) holds that “although the management of culture has been declared a needed instrument for strengthening organizational control and producing improvements, we can’t talk intelligently about changing cultures until we understand how to change underlying values.”

The debate on the role of management in building up an organizational culture is still going on, but more and more it is accepted that managers have a real influence on organizational culture. In a very pragmatic way, The Price Waterhouse Change Integration Team (1996), after interviewing over 200 senior-level corporate executives in a variety of manufacturing and service organizations, strongly recommends that managers focus directly on culture, but indirectly through some organizational aspects which shape an organization’s culture, such as: leadership actions; vision, purpose, and strategy; performance measures; structure; people practices; and competitive context.

In fact, many managers are aware of the organizational culture in their respective organizations and are trying to promote it. Now, the question is whether or not a management focus on the organizational culture, apart from motivations, is more humanistic than one that only considers motivations.

There is no doubt that human beings live within a culture; they influence culture and develop themselves under a culture. In very precise words, Pope John Paul II has pointed out the need to take culture into account to better understand persons:

“It is not possible to understand man on the basis of economics alone, nor to define him simply on

the basis of class membership. Man is understood in a more complete way when he is situated within the sphere of culture through his language, history, and the position he takes towards the fundamental events of life, such as birth, love, work and death. At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God.” (1991, n. 23)

In conclusion, if culture is part of human life and organizational cultures have such an influence on the behavior of its members, there is no doubt that considering organizational culture is a better way to understand the human condition than considering only human needs. Accordingly, this second approach to humanistic management focused on building up organizational cultures is richer than the first one. However, it is also quite limited.

The goal for many scholars who deal with organizational cultures is to use this concept to better explain the variations in patterns of organizational behavior, stability of a group and its influence on performance. Actually, they have obtained interesting findings by employing methods of organizational psychology, including surveys, interviews, documentation, history, observation of behaviors, etc. Their main interest lies only in how values and other elements of organizational cultures influence behavior and performance from a psychological or sociological perspective.

In a more specific way, other researches have studied the relationship between organizational culture and ethical behavior. At the beginning of the 80's, Fisse and Braithwaite (1983) showed that organizational cultures have an impact on the ethical behavior and moral practices of people in organizations. Afterwards, many other scholars have supported this finding. Trevino et al. (1985) found that when ethical behaviors are reinforced by organizational culture, these behaviors increase, and conversely, when unethical behaviors are reinforced by culture, members tend to exhibit more unethical behavior. In another research, Trevino (1986) established that when a culture is more democratic it is associated with an increase in ethical behavior including a greater willingness to take individual responsibility.

Gagliardi (1990) stated that organizational

culture helps to explain both the incidence of ethical and unethical behavior. In the same way, other authors have pointed out that the pressure to adapt one's behavior to an organizational culture may lead to unethical behavior (Shetia and Von Glinow 1985; Baucus, 1989; Trevino, 1990; Stead et al., 1990; Sims, 1992, 2000; Douglas et al., 2001; Sims and Brinkmann, 2002) or can reinforce ethical decision-making (Chen et al., 1997). Knouse and Giacalone (1992) noted that a possible cause of the behaviors within an organization could be that an organizational culture sends messages of sanctioned or unsanctioned ways of making decisions. More specifically, it has been reported that certain ethical climates—an aspect of organizational cultures, which permit quantitative measurements—can foster crime (Werhane, 1991; Sims, 2000).

However, most of these approaches are bound by the limits of the empirical research and emphasize the influence of organizational cultures on the favoring of unethical behaviors rather than on the fostering of character.

Third approach to humanistic management

There is a third approach to humanistic management centered on building up a community of persons embedded with an organizational culture which fosters character. In this way, it takes into account human needs and motivations, like the first approach, but considers the ethical side of the need for self-actualization. Promoting an organizational culture is also included in this approach, but it adds an appropriate culture for developing people.

This approach takes, as a starting point, the social nature of the persons and their capacity for acquiring virtues that perfect them and, as a consequence, for growing as human beings. Due to their social nature, human individuals have the capacity to form communities with real bonds.

The idea of community comes from the Latin word *communitas* meaning “common” and evokes individuals united for something they have in common. Communities have a certain organization, which gives them support, but what really

makes a community is its unity. That implies that the members of the community have a certain bond between them; sometimes it is a natural bond as in the family with the relationships between parents and children, or a voluntary bond connected with some common goals shared by the members of the community. The latter is the case for business enterprises, as I will try to show later on.

The concept of “community” has been used at length in sociology and philosophy, although not too much in management and organizational theory so far. There is not a unique definition of community, but it generally refers to the social structures of people with specific actions, relations and a sense of unity. In other words, in a community there is not only mutual relations among persons, but these persons appear as a unity and forming a “we” (Stein, 1998, p. 248). In fact, those who belong to a community say “we”, but without lacking their own personal condition.

According to Wojtyła (1979–80), who employs a phenomenological approach, “we” expresses directly a multiplicity of individuals while indirectly refers to persons who belong to this multiplicity. Usually, for community we do not understand only the multiplicity of subjects, but the unity of such a multiplicity; a unity that is a consequence of the relations and bonds established between these subjects. Community includes both relationships and the sum of the relationships. In this way, a community has a supra-personal character but individuals remain with their own personality. “We” are many subjects who exist and act *in common*. The meaning of “in common” is not, however, a multiplicity of actions made together, but a set of individuals doing actions that respond to a common value, that is to say, in a cooperative way for the sake of common goals. This common value deserves to be called “common good”, the common good of a community.

After this short introduction about the concept of community, it is time to ask whether or not a business enterprise is a community. Answering this question requires an analysis of the bonds and the corresponding motives of the people involved in a firm, since the unity of a community as a

firm, which one is free to join, demands certain relations and voluntary bonds. An elemental observation points out that people who constitute a business enterprise can have three kinds of motives to remain united to it:⁴

- There are motives directly related with some external *compensation*: salaries, material rewards or other benefits, training received or for the personal learning associated with the job, power, the position or prestige obtained by being a member of a community with a certain role and doing some activity.
- Other motives are found in some *pleasure* associated with the present situation within the firm, such as having an enjoyable job, being proud of belonging to a firm with a great reputation, working in a certain group or occupying a prestigious post within the firm, liking the quality of human relations and so on.
- Finally, there are motives that lead to attitudes of identification, commitment and loyalty to the mission, values or goals of the firm. This group of motives is derived from discovering that serving or cooperating with the enterprise is something worthy for everybody; it is a common good for the enterprise and even for society at large. So these motives, which could be called *transitive motives*, are related with a sense of service and cooperation.

Individual interests for scarce resources motivate competition, but that does not bring about unity. On the contrary, the perception of common goals fosters cooperation. While competition urges people to dominate others, cooperation is essential for the maintenance of society in general and organizations in particular.

The two former groups of motives mentioned (compensation and pleasure), intrinsically considered, are directly related to the self-interest of the individuals involved in the organization and the unity between an individual and the organization will only be possible if the interests do not compete for some scarce resources. However, there could also be some common interests, like the survival of the firm, which produces a sense

of cooperation which fosters unity. When there are transitive motives for a “common value” and accordingly identification, commitment and loyalty, besides other motives, then the unity becomes stronger.

If business firms were a mere collection of self-interested individuals continuously competing to achieve their personal goals, without any concern for common goals and with an absolute lack of cooperation, they could not survive. In practice, those who form an organization are persons with some degree of identification, commitment and willingness to achieve common goals, even when sometimes achieving these goals could mean sacrificing some personal interests. The history and culture of an enterprise, especially when it has a certain age, contribute to creating unity too. All of that leads to considering enterprises as communities of persons, beyond being an instrument for profits and a sort of organism which tries to adapt itself to the environment.

Furthermore, firms are part of society and interact continuously with it. They cannot be a parasite or a cancer for society but a pillar for social life and therefore the only correct attitude is cooperation between firms and society and concern for the common good. So considering enterprises as communities within society is also an ethical requirement. According to Solomon (1992, p. 148) “the first principle of business ethics is that the corporation is itself a citizen, a member of the larger community, and inconceivable without it.” He reminds us of the Aristotelian view that we are, first of all, members of a community, adding: “corporation becomes one’s immediate community and, for better or worse, the institution that defines the values and the conflicts of values within which one lives much of one’s life” (Solomon, 1992, p. 148).

On the other hand, considering a business enterprise as a human community is not entirely new. Catholic social teaching has already presented business enterprises as communities of people at least since the beginning of the 60’s.⁵ More recently, Pope John Paul II has alluded to the creation of “working communities” by a disciplined work in close collaboration with others (that is what happens within business

enterprises). He adds: “a business cannot be considered only as a ‘society of capital goods’ because it is also a ‘society of persons’” (1991, n. 43 and 32). In addressing businesspersons and executives he has insisted on the importance of considering business corporations as communities of persons (Kennedy et al., 1994; Melé, 1992). But this proposal has not been diffused so much yet.

An important consequence of considering firms as a community of persons is taking into account that its unity and conditions ought to be appropriate for the persons who constituted it. As Aristotle pointed out long ago, a human individual is a free and rational being who continuously changes and, in a dynamic way, acquires habits which increase his or her moral quality (human virtues) or, on the contrary, this quality becomes worse (Sherman, 1989; Mintz, 1996). This is the point where this third approach fits the sense of *humanitas* explained at the beginning of this paper and related to human virtues.

But, what do we understand by human virtues? In fact, that is an old subject, developed in Ancient Greece by Socratic philosophers, mainly by Aristotle. Now, with the current development of virtue ethics it is again a highly topical subject. However, not all kinds of virtues can be considered human virtues. Furthermore, some current virtue ethics theories present a relativistic approach. As Nussbaum (1993) points out; there is a striking divergence between Aristotle and contemporary virtue ethics. She reminds us that Aristotelian virtue creates the right disposition to choose and respond well in the important spheres of shared human experience. She adds that there is no completely non-relative, culturally-independent way of understanding spheres of human experience (e.g. friendship will be expressed through different customs at different times and in different places), but there are virtues such as justice or courage which are required in every sphere of human experience.

On the other hand, MacIntyre (1985) has showed that there are different traditions of understating virtue. One conception is that found in Homer that a virtue is a quality which enables an individual to discharge his or her role,

like courage in the warrior. Another one is that virtue is a quality which has the utility of achieving earthly or heavenly success (having qualities as a strategist, being a good negotiator, or a laborious individual): this is the concept of virtue found in the writing of Benjamin Franklin, among others. The third conception of virtue is found in Aristotle and in the New Testament: here virtue is understood as a quality of the character that enables an individual to move towards achieving his or her fulfillment as a human being. In this conception, virtues are interior strengths that foster a person to act according to the noblest human capacities. That leads to concern for people and to respect and love them with a benevolent rational love, without sentimentalism.⁶

In business each role needs certain habits and indeed certain habits are also required to be successful in achieving an objective. Nevertheless, I think that in a humanistic approach it is better to reserve the term “human virtue” for the third conception (related with human fulfillment). However, the development of these other habits (or “virtues” in a broad sense, if you like) is not excluded from humanistic management, unless they, in a certain case, would become incompatible with genuine “human virtues”.

Conclusion

The concept of humanistic management presented here, which strives to build up a community of persons and foster the development of human virtues, gives a deeper content to previous humanistic approaches to management. Namely, this one which considers human needs and their motivation and the other which endeavors to build up an organizational culture.

As has been discussed, the classic motivation theories only considered the human needs that should be satisfied to achieve good results, while the humanistic management proposed here includes motivating people but taking into account the need for growing as a person through human virtues. On the other hand, the current organizational culture approaches consider the role of values and beliefs on

behavior and decision-making but so far they have not paid too much attention to promoting organizational cultures appropriate for fostering human virtues within the organization. A humanistic management approach should do so.

Humanistic management should build up unity to achieve that the community of persons, which is an enterprise, becomes stronger as a community. In addition, it has to reconsider motivations and organizational culture. Managers have to motivate people around them to acquire virtues and try to discover and promote beliefs and values within the organizational culture that foster human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent. That leads to the need for new research in order to delve into the relationship between these concepts and practical ways to carry out this humanistic management.

Last, but not least, this humanistic management is not a naïve approach nor a lack of realism. On the contrary, there is growing evidence that human virtues and some habits, that some authors called virtues too, are quite relevant for business performance (Horvath, 1995; Solomon, 1999; Walton, 2001).

On the other hand, it is easy to see that human virtues favor cooperation, and cooperation is absolutely necessary for business organizations, as Ch. Barnard (1968/1938) pointed out many years ago, and since then it has been repeated again and again. In the current situation, in which organizations tend to be flattened, a strong sense of cooperation is even more necessary. As Ghosal and Barlett (1995) stress, for today’s managers the purpose-process-people doctrine of management rests on the premise that the organizational task is to shape the behaviors of people and create an environment that enables them to take initiatives, cooperate and learn.

In conclusion, it seems that a humanistic management approach as has been sketched here is a real challenge for achieving a higher ethical quality in management. It is a challenge for academics: it would be useful to clarify, develop and spread some concepts outlined in this paper. On their part, managers have the challenge to strive to build up communities of persons, with all their implications. Adopting this approach

they are fostering both the human growth of people and, as a consequence, their sense of service and cooperation which indubitably are crucial for the long-term outcomes.

Notes

¹ In his own words: “I certainly accepted and built upon the available *data* of experimental psychology and the psychoanalysis. I accept also the empirical and experimental spirit of the one, and the unmasking and depth probing of the other, while yet rejecting the *images* of man which they generate. (. . .) However, what I took then to be an argument within the family of psychologists has in my opinion turned out since then to be rather a local manifestation of a new *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the times), a new general philosophy of life. This new ‘humanistic’ *Weltanschauung* (philosophy of life), seems to be a new and more hopeful and encouraging way of conceiving any and every area of human knowledge” (1970, pp. ix–x) (the italics are the author’s; their translation between brackets is mine).

² That is why an adjective frequently goes together with the word “humanism”. So we talk about pragmatic humanism, religious or secular humanism, naturalistic humanism, integral humanism, etc.

³ In his work *Der Streit des Philantropismus und des Humanismus in der Theorie des Erziehungsunterrichts unserer Zeit*, published in 1808 (Ferrater-Mora, 1984, p. 1566, mentioned A. Campana, “The origin of the word ‘Humanist’”, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, IX (1946), 60–73).

⁴ Meyer and Allen (1991) and Pérez López (1993) present three similar motives.

⁵ Pope John XXIII, in his Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* affirms: “We consider it altogether vital that the numerous intermediary bodies and corporate enterprises – which are, so to say, the main vehicle of this social growth – be really autonomous, and loyally collaborate in pursuit of their own specific interests and those of the common good. For these groups must themselves necessarily *present the form and substance of a true community*, and this will only be the case if they treat their individual members as human persons and encourage them to take an active part in the ordering of their lives (. . .) Every effort must be made to ensure that *the enterprise is indeed a true human community*, concerned about the needs, the activities and the standing of each of its members” (1961, n. 65 and n. 91) (the italics are mine).

⁶ That is, at least, the sense of human fulfilment and the role of virtues in Augustine and Aquinas (see, e.g. Wadell, 1992). Other religious and moral wisdom traditions also understand reciprocity and altruism as a great expression of moral human quality.

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