



## **Notions of Gratuitousness and Self-gift in Leonardo Polo: Implications for Inclusiveness and Cultural Development**

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### **Abstract**

Globalization, technological evolution and forces of change call us out to seek to develop ourselves and our surroundings so that we may respond to the daily challenges associated with living and working in global communities which cross the boundaries of culture, language and nationality. The transcendental anthropology of Spanish philosopher Leonardo Polo proposes four “anthropological transcendentals”, one of which is the human person’s transcendental love (self-gift). Self-giving love refers to the superabundant and effusive love which, thus, gives of itself. Further, Polo believes that culture is a continuation of nature, that is, man’s cultivating the world, thus, producing new things and leading to self-renewal. This cultivation is not merely imitating: it entails concern for, taking care of, fostering, nurturing, growing. This paper weaves together a narrative departing from Polo’s conceptions of gratuitousness and self-gift, and tying them to the requirements of an inclusive mindset as well as to notions of cultural development. It is recommended that an inclusive education and the spirit of gratuitousness further imbue markets and businesses, for the potential that could be unleashed by cultivating gratuitousness and inclusivity. While the concrete applications are limited to pedagogy and management science, the paper aims at a broad conceptual framework that can have implications for other fields as well.

**Keywords:** Culture, Inclusiveness, Gratuitousness, Self-giving Love, Transcendental Anthropology

**JEL Classification:** M0; I0

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### **The Spanish Philosopher Leonardo Polo**

Leonardo Polo developed his philosophical thought in continuous dialogue with important thinkers of the history of philosophy; he engaged with classical and medieval thinkers. Likewise, his philosophical investigations have been quite extensive, ranging from psychology and epistemology, to biology, physics, ethics and neuroscience, to sociology and philosophy of language, all the way to education, political economy and economics. He dedicated a considerable part of his work to dialoguing with modern philosophy, above all in the aspects of the philosophy of man, as he was keen on shedding light on personal human freedom (Múgica, 1996).

In Polo's "transcendental anthropology", focus is trained on the nature of the person as a being possessing the four "anthropological transcendentals", namely: 1) Personal Co-existence, 2) Personal Freedom, 3) Personal Intellect/Knowing, & 4) Transcendental Love (Self-Gift). This is as opposed to the more materialist aspects of man (physical anthropology) or a mere focus on his soul and its faculties (rational or philosophical anthropology). This anthropology seeks out the transcendent in the human person, that is, what is characteristic of his heart or of the intimacy of persons. It is interested more in the person's being than in his having (Sellés, 2006; Racelis, 2014b). The human person's capability of self-giving love forms the foundation of the theoretical framework presented in this paper.

### **Polian Notions of Self-giving Love and Ethical Culture**

In Polo's transcendental anthropology, out of the four anthropological "transcendentals" mentioned above, self-giving love is superior to personal intellection, as well as to co-existence and to transcendental freedom. Polo echoes Max Scheler's assertion that "before he is *ens cogitans* (a knowing being) or *ens volens* (a willing being), man is *ens amans* (a loving being). Transcendental love attracts personal knowledge: this notion has made possible the adage "the supreme kind of knowing is to make out of an enemy a friend". This reality also has an advantage: on loving others, we are enabled to know ourselves, and to know our capacity for self-giving. We aver that man possesses a will (which is a faculty of the human soul) and that the will seeks that which is good. But is he merely human will? Isn't man more than mere will? Love is desiring a good that we lack (i.e., we desire something we do not have full possession of), but loving cannot be reduced to merely wanting, but rather it transcends simply desiring. In effect, one loves not because he lacks something he needs, but rather loving is giving generously. For instance, when a mother loves her child, she does not seek consolations, but rather she gives unreservedly. Now if it does not make sense not to desire, it makes even less sense not to love. Another way of putting it is: "Is there anything worse than there being no love?" (Polo, 1997; Sellés, 2006).

On the other hand, we affirm that personal gift-love goes hand in hand with personal intellection or knowing: love is cognitive, transparent. Human love that is not love at all; conversely, intellection that does not demand or seek loving is not characteristic of the human person either. Now knowing oneself to be capable of loving at the level of person implies being able to accept oneself. Self-acceptance is more than self-knowledge, and likewise exceeds giving of oneself. Thus we say that what is primary in the human person is not giving love but first accepting: that is to say, accepting oneself as capable of love, and accepting that gift. Giving thus appears secondary to accepting and accepting oneself. At the deepest end, it means accepting oneself as the person that he is. If one accepts himself, he accepts himself as a child, as someone to whom someone has given birth. Person and love are equivalent: recognizing oneself as a son or as a daughter necessarily means never wanting personally to cease being a child, never wanting to cease loving. If the gift is perpetual, one ought not to ever want to cease being a child, unless he also wishes to cease being a person (Polo, 1997; Sellés, 2006).

In addition, Polo deals with the notion of culture in his transcendental anthropology. Culture is a human reality and resides in human communities. We observe that the human person is a being of opportunities, of choices or alternatives, a family and social being, a being who invents, a being capable of unrestricted growth in time. We affirm likewise that man is capable of speech and communication: he is a social being because he speaks; he is able to progress, to collaborate and to be ethical because he speaks. And it is a sign of culture to know the meaning of words: human language is something living, something open. Thus, language is said to be *continuatio*

naturae, a continuation of nature. That language is a convention enables man to construct a world with his language, a world of symbols. Thus, man is a symbolic animal, and this is what we mean that culture is *continuatio naturae*. Furthermore, the human being cultivates such a world; on cultivating it, he continues the world, and thus new things emerge. But human existence transcends the cultural ambit: he does not limit himself to merely living, but rather he re-lives, he is renewed. Culture comes from *colere*, a word that is of agricultural origin: cultivation is not merely imitating: it entails concern for, taking care of, fostering, nurturing, growing. Culture, then, is the human world, created by man, a continuation of nature. In addition, culture –as *continuatio naturae*– obeys certain rules. Ethical normativity is found in man’s essence; from this one gleans a certain immortality, that is, his spiritual essence (Polo, 1991). Cultural manifestations ought to be respected insofar as they fit into human nature and its growth (ethics). What is not human does not deserve respect. We must note, however, that man generates culture, not vice versa, therefore man is meant to give sense to culture and not vice versa. The culture of the society in which one lives influences human life, but does not determine it; hence an existing culture can be accepted, modified, or even rejected, since all cultural possibilities depend on human freedom (Sellés, 2006).

### **Notions of Inclusivity and Gratuitousness: Evolution in the Literature**

The origins of the concept of inclusivity are likely traceable to Scandinavia in which the idea of being brought to the mainstream was first discussed, especially of those who were hitherto not included or considered abnormal. Throughout the years, the term’s connotation changed from integration to inclusion and then to its current form of inclusivity. Notwithstanding its evolution throughout the years, the lasting topic has been to generate an environment where differences and similarities are respected and people welcomed, instead of stereotyping, excluding, or marginalizing (Berlach & Chambers, 2011; Derven, Gundling & Leri, 2014).

In organizational studies, diversity and inclusion (D&I) is based on understanding and respecting differences and similarities between people and cultures to create a positive climate in which all employees bring their best efforts to the workplace, enhancing the development of relevant products and services in a changing marketplace. Diversity refers to differences of all kinds, including, but not limited to, gender, age, personal values, educational opportunities, personal history, and physical ability. Inclusion refers to creating a climate where people are attended to, have their voices heard, and have their contributions recognized. Organizations can be diverse, but not inclusive, which often results in lower engagement of underrepresented groups, higher turnover, and increased opportunity costs from failing to leverage all employees’ contributions. Conversely, organizations can be inclusive, but not diverse. To respond effectively to global trends and changing demographics, it is essential to have both diversity and inclusion (Derven et al., 2014).

As for the term *gratuitousness*, it was already being used in the 17th century. In Jeremy Bentham’s Utilitarian philosophy, exchanges or transfers were being classified as either equivalent or without equivalent (that is, *gratuitous*), and the transaction for this latter is termed a gift (Bowring, 1838). Lately, especially as applied to business and economics, the notions of gift and *gratuitousness* have been in vogue because of Pope Benedict’s Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. In the philosophical anthropology of Polo, each man accepts himself as coming from God the Creator; next, he gives himself to fellow human beings and ultimately to the Creator; and then, the human person is himself viewed as a gift. The “logic of gift” can have several meanings, as the Encyclical itself implies. An aspect of the “logic of gift” that relates to trade relationships is the following: We give because we have received, and through gift-giving we develop relationships that have a high ‘bonding value’ (Polo & Llano, 1997; Faldetta, 2011). One thus understands that the “logic of

gift" should imbue markets, transactions, and businesses, for a more successful participation by individuals.

On the other hand, the idea of Diversity in organizations emerged about thirty years ago, in the 1980s, when it began in the United States as a project to generate a more equitable environment in which members of groups that have hitherto been excluded were to be freely welcomed into education and employment. Later on, the advocacy turned into a more complex web of strategies and programs related to human resource (HR) management and development, leadership, and organizational culture. Over time, the initiatives had grown with oversight and input from previously-excluded leaders in communities and the marketplace, leading to learning-centered institutions that value the perspectives and contributions of diverse peoples. Onward to the mid-1990s, this idea of diversity management had caught on even in Europe. Later on, a pan-European recognition was achieved via the Amsterdam Treaty where a diversity policy was created in 1997. An appeal was made, thereafter, to act against discrimination for reasons of ability, age, ethnicity, gender, or religion (Romanenko, 2012; Arno, Casteel, Guajardo, & Mansanares, 2012).

The above notions of self-gift and gratuitousness have clear implications for leadership. Rosanas and Velilla (2003) explain this feature of leadership characterized by self-giving love as one which works on the basis of transcendent motives, which are over and above the usual meaning of "philanthropic", "altruistic", "benevolent" or "contributive". The work of Pérez López (1991) likewise describes such motives as transcending the traditional extrinsic and intrinsic motives in management science: they incorporate rational motivation as well as take into account the effects on the collaborator because the leader feels morally impelled to look after the other person.

In critical pedagogy and education, the concept of global citizenship captures the formation of identity of self that enables the pupil to create, balance, and integrate the complexities of belonging. In past conceptions, citizenship revolved around an element such as a common geography, history, language or nation; however, by its very inclusivity, a postmodern citizenship and its sense of belonging goes much beyond that. Experientially lived in community, identity is formed on the basis of dialogues, narrations, participations and interactions. From this perspective, self takes other as friend and each one creates himself/herself by talking, narrating, doing and interacting. Dialogic and narrative pedagogies are thus central to collective identity formation (Hebert, 1997).

## **Gratuitousness, Inclusivity, Cultural Development: Towards a Conceptual Framework**

### **Gratuitousness**

The meaning of the principle of gratuitousness is far from self-evident. The Papal Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* challenges us and creates a new business model whereby organizations and markets improve the human condition, by drawing its strength from the connected realities of ethics and economics, as well as from the effort to order means toward the end of integral human development (Grassl & Habisch, 2011). The logic of gift does not strictly oblige people in business to hand out their goods and services for free. The word "gift" comes from "giving", and it implies giving a humane meaning to the commercial relationships we engage in. In the philosophical anthropology of Polo, this can be explained thus: in his commercial practice and relationships, man needs to complete in his human essence the donal structure of his personal love. This

redounds to the concept, proposed by Polo, of the human person created with the capability to give of himself and to possess that charity which manifests in the constant interest in the good of one's neighbor (Racelis, 2014b; García, 2008). The main innovation in *Caritas in Veritate* is that the logic of gift and gratuitousness are being brought to the mainstream, i.e., to be applied to the ordinary economy, and not only for the social or non-profit economy. The attention to the logic of gift and to gratuitous action has been highlighted in the development of the concept of "civil economy" which in turn harked back to Italian Renaissance's "civic humanism", the movement which prevailed throughout the 15th and 16th centuries as influenced by Italian philosophy, and in subsequent centuries as shaped by western European philosophy (Faldetta, 2011; Bruni, 2009).

## Culture

We said above that culture ought to be respected insofar as it fits into human nature and its growth (ethics): what is not human does not deserve respect. Looking after the common good—just as the character, values and ethical leadership of the executive—has become indispensable. Organizations have to subject themselves to ethics, and have to focus on how to employ those goods and resources as well as human capabilities in accord with the alternatives available, that is to say, they should constantly seek a possible alternative by which human beings can improve and grow. But ethics does not consist only in some rules invented or formulated out of more or less conventional or relative motives that vary from culture to culture. Sometimes this is proposed as an objection to the firmness of the status of ethics: ethics depends on criteria that are not universal; rather, there are as many ethics as there are ways or formalizations of human life. In a situation as pluralistic as the present one, it is also usually said that ethics is a private matter: it is each one's business to accept an ethics among many different ones or to construct one's own; it is even possible to live without one. Such proposals are foolish, since what is ethical arises from the human being's very corporeality, that is, from his essence as a personal being. In other words, culture should be at the service of the human person, not the other way around: we respect cultural manifestations but only if they in turn respect human nature, essence, growth, and human flourishing (Polo, 1997; Polo, 1991; Racelis, 2014a)

## Inclusivity

In a global business environment with powerful competitors in the developed countries and emerging ones in developing countries in far-flung regions of the world, more inclusive and integrative approaches are needed whereby a holistic perspective of the realities and possibilities is taken. In such inclusive mindset, the social, economic, ethical, technological and environmental conditions and trends on a global basis are considered and managed (Rainey, 2013). Applied to the field of education, an inclusive orientation has been shown to be a most efficacious way in which to counter prejudicial behavior, to build a more inclusive environment and to achieve global education (Ainscow, 2005). With vast demographic changes all around the globe, training professionals need to be aware of and sensitive to the diverse populations for whom they will be designing and delivering learning. Training professionals have long been aware of the need to make learning relevant and address a vast array of learning styles. Inclusivity provides an essential lens to help understand the needs of learners. Not only is it important to design learning that reflects changing demographics in exercises, case studies, and other learning methodologies; training professionals also need to weave the inclusion perspective throughout curriculum design, development, and deployment (Derven et al., 2014).

## Implications for Business, Education, and Leadership

### a. Business and Human Resources Management

As mentioned above, the concept of diversity management in business organizations has become critical and relevant, in that it has generated inclusive organizations characterized as those that value the perspectives and contributions of all people. Such institutions incorporate inclusiveness in policies and practices and have greater awareness and attention to disparities on the part of communities (Romanenko, 2012; Arno, et al., 2012). An inclusive workplace culture enables organizational members to be themselves at work: it values and provides equal opportunity regardless of such differences as race, age, ethnicity, ability, religion, etc. Managers play an important role in setting such a tone; in addition, concrete efforts are recommended to remove or prevent barriers that otherwise create an exclusive environment or culture. It has been shown that such inclusive workplaces have led to successful engagement and retention of human resources. Programs can be designed so as to respond to the new diversity imperative in a way that transcends traditional diversity and inclusion programming (Citkin & Spielman, 2011).

In the literature on social enterprise and inclusive business, there is the question of what business model could be infused into companies, so that they may transcend the barriers that are present in the institutions themselves, examples of which are: perverse incentive schemes, extreme focus on profit maximization, and uncertainty avoidance. Personnel need systematic and intensive training: organizations will have to invest sustainably in continuous and participative staff development (Halme, Lindeman & Linna, 2012; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004). In other inclusive business and social responsibility literature, efforts are being made — both by practitioners and by theorists— to mitigate the negative consequences of organizational and managerial practices based on self-interest. An alternative framework based on the notion of practical has been proposed: in this framework, it is argued that human beings have two major desires: the need for happiness and the desire for meaning. To achieve this to a perfect degree (which is referred to as bliss), people had to overcome their minor wants and desires as well as their vices such as envy, unkindness, pride, greed and hatred. A way to achieve this was through compassion, that is, to leverage on dialogue, understanding, listening, and feeling others' pain. It can be described as a tendency for merciful love which in turn should motivate a life of virtue, including forgiveness, humility, altruism, gratitude, etc. Overall, a truly inclusive person at the helm of business organizations is viewed as somebody possessing such virtues as fairness, compassion, caring, helpfulness, kindness, and honesty (Lips-Wiersma & Nilakant, 2008; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015; Pope Francis, 2013).

Along with such compassion is the notion of the desire for recognition, which is a natural need recognized in sociology, politics, organizational studies, and other areas. Compassion and recognition are related, in that compassion involves understanding suffering as a common fate of humanity; recognizing suffering in others; tolerating and offering up the discomforts and difficulties experienced; sympathizing with the person who is suffering; and being encouraged to help the person. Identity and recognition are known to be inter-related: when a person is accepted, their understanding of who they are— of their essential defining characteristics as human persons—is solidified, (Taylor, Gutmann & Taylor, 1994; Strauss, Lever Taylor, Gu, Kuyken, Baer, Jones & Cavanagh, 2016).

### b. Pedagogy and Human Capital Development

Collaborative inquiries in the field of education have shown specific illustrations of how attempts to develop inclusive practices and policies have been made by leaders and policy-makers alike (Ainscow, 2005). Adopting such pedagogical stances means valuing and accepting

the individual student as a person and as a member of a cultural community; developing self-esteem and actively listening to students; and most importantly, situating identity formation in the dynamics of transformation in interrelating with others. There has been a broad interest in the potential of global citizenship education for the creation of an inclusive mindset. Relevant pedagogical objectives for an activist citizenship education include the development of a commitment to affirmative action to include all individuals and groups; the challenge of inequities; the development of critical thinking skills, cross-cultural skills and problem-solving skills so as to foster participation with others towards a more just and humane world. According to such a perspective, citizens are free and equal before the law, have the ability and opportunity to participate, and enjoy access to material resources. Citizens are committed to broad participation in both public and private spheres of life, are open to multiple understandings of citizenship, are knowledgeable about ways in which institutions privilege some and not others and are skilled at challenging them, are committed to participating in a free and equal discourse open to all with power relatively equally divided (Hebert, 1997).

Inclusive pedagogy refers to a way in which to honor the diverse linguistic, cultural, mental, physical, and cognitive complexities of societies. Such education is believed to make an impact on the formation of social capital that, when personally internalized by leaders and managers at all levels, can lead to the development of theories and practice of inclusive growth where gains and opportunities are shared by all. Social capital is generated when human capital is developed through education: in this environment, students are trained to be interested in conversation and dialogue. With inclusivity in mind, trust is likewise built, which in turn is associated with inclusive networks and provision of collective goods, and can lead to bonding social capital (Dinda, 2014; Landorf & Nevin, 2007).

### c. Leadership

Leadership is about serving people and making them successful. Great leaders have the ability to glean insights from the external business environment, to take advantage of the myriad of opportunities available, and to deal effectively with the numerous challenges. They also have the instinctive ability to connect personally and professionally with people in the organization and to inspire them to accomplish great things. They examine every perspective and ensure that they fully understand all of the implications and ramifications. True leadership involves being open and honest with everyone and being accountable for one's decisions and actions. It also involves being creative and innovative in strategy formulation and implementation. Outstanding leaders share success with others and ensure that everyone gets his or her fair share of the rewards. They do not take rewards when the organization is having difficulties nor do they take disproportional rewards when it enjoys financial success. Effective leaders obtain a diverse set of views and voices so that decisions, strategies, objectives and action plans are inclusive of multiple considerations and responsive to alternate perspectives. They create stability and continuity as they lead change (Rainey, 2013).

Much of the leadership literature has tended to focus on the definition of leadership as the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals, thus focusing on leadership styles and what makes a leader effective. Within this text, transformational leadership has taken center stage, as the transformational leader typically inspires and motivates followers to transcend their self-interests for the sake of the well-being of the organization and its members. In recent years transformational leadership has been beset by a few problems or deficiencies: how does one explain the presence, on the list of transformational leaders, of people who had perpetrated highly unethical acts? Transcendental leadership focuses on service, in addition to

its ethical characteristic, which solves the potential manipulative side of some transformational leaders. The most critical capacity of transcendental leaders is their ability to sacrifice themselves in the service of others: they exercise a self-giving love in their work in organizations and with co-workers. This leader motivation indeed transcends mere intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Cardona, 2000; Racelis, 2017).

This transcendental language was already present in the emerging thought of Polo, whereby the human person, being an “open and free system”, naturally tends towards self-gift, and he grows personally to the extent that he serves and loves in this way. Hence, if the human person were to merely reduce himself to having—instead of being as taking priority— then he becomes a lesser human being, so to speak, and would alienate himself. Polo’s transcendental anthropology, thus, insists on the human person’s essence as being free and donal. The leader—in order to be considered truly inclusive and compassionate—ought to keep always in mind such things as: evaluative learning, rational motivation via transcendent motives (what can be called structural intrinsic motivation), experiential knowledge, interiorization, etc. (Polo, 1997; Pérez López, 1991; Racelis, 2017). All told, one can also show and draw those virtues that accompany the transcendental leader who is characterized by self-gift and service to others. Some of these essential leader virtues are: justice, prudence, courage, self-control, humility, truthfulness, and, above all, charity (Racelis, 2014b).

## A Proposed Conceptual Framework for a Philosophy of Inclusivity and Gratuitousness

Having scratched out above a narrative of inclusivity and gratuitousness for management, organizational cultures, educational systems, and civil society as a whole, this paper presents a proposed theoretical framework for inclusivity and gratuitousness, in Figure 1 below.

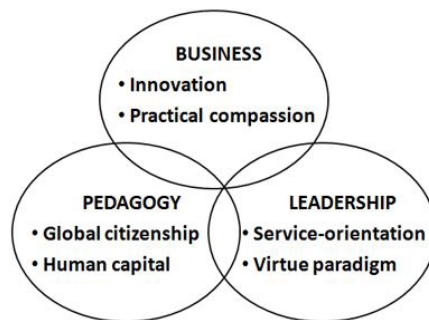


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework for Inclusivity and Gratuitousness

## Business and Management

A primarily inclusive mindset would ensure an organizational culture that encourages respect and a welcoming attitude. Diversity and inclusivity training will have to be designed and implemented that is responsive to the new diversity advocacy that goes beyond traditional inclusion and diversity projects by placing inclusion at center stage. A certain kind of intrapreneurial innovation will have to be at work, in both big and small organizations, in order to arrive at the creative bundling of scarce resources and remove obstacles that have typically hampered serving the needs of the poor and marginalized. Managers might have to consider putting in place a system characterized by practical compassion—the exquisite quality of sympathizing with those who suffer and trying to put a solution to it— so as to go beyond

propensities to unkindness, envy, gluttony, pride, dishonesty and hatred, and thus arrive at the twin objectives of happiness and meaning on the part of individuals.

## **Pedagogy**

It is possible—indeed recommendable—that the fields of global education and special education be combined to come up with pedagogical and curricular proposals for an “inclusive global education”. Such a proposal will include ways in which to honor the diverse linguistic, cultural, mental, physical, and cognitive complexities of peoples, as well as teaching/learning activities that center on solutions to social justice problems. It has been proposed that such citizenship education be interwoven with the following common elements: community, collaboration, communication and consciousness, for this is expected to lead to an awareness of the balance between individual/group rights and responsibilities, as well as greater respect and acceptance of diversity (Hebert, 1997).

## **Leadership**

Leadership for inclusivity creates stability and continuity. Stability involves balancing the needs of present customers, stakeholders, and key contributors, meeting the needs and aspirations of the future, and ensuring outstanding performance over time. Inclusiveness implies that leaders integrate the internal strategic and operating systems with the external entities, partners, allies, supply networks, customers, stakeholders, related industries, infrastructure and other support relationships. It is based on a holistic thinking, in-depth analysis and proper execution of all of the systems and processes involved from the raw materials to the disposal of the residuals and waste streams. Connectedness involves building linkages and solid relationships with people. The more inclusive the perspective, the more likely strategic leaders are to create value, develop beneficial solutions, achieve positive outcomes, and meet/exceed the explicit and implicit needs and expectations of all related entities and parties (Rainey, 2013).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Organizations and civil society are in need of a new vision of diversity and inclusion (D & I) that fits in with the mandate to emphasize inclusion as defined by practice. Some of the elements of such inclusion programs are: to demand that such projects contribute more to profitable performance; leveraging on dialogue, understanding, listening, and feeling others’ pain; to encourage the practice of practical compassion; a propensity for compassionate love which in turn encourages the living out of such virtues as humility, gratitude, forgiveness and altruism; and overall, possessing virtues such as fairness, compassion, caring, honesty, a helpful attitude, and kindness. Thus, the individual is enabled to give over his having to a love for and service to others, keeping always in mind such things as: evaluative learning and a rational motivation via transcendent motives (Polo, 1997; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015; Citkin & Spielman, 2011).

Social capital is generated when human capital is developed through education: in this environment, students are trained to be interested in conversation and dialogue. The logic of gift as well as gratuitousness have to further imbue markets and businesses. The potential for positive consequences can be immeasurable: one can expect a transformation for the better in politics and markets. As has always been argued, charity goes beyond justice; thus, such inclusiveness and gratuitousness can lead to renewal and the establishment of a new social order (McCann, 2011; Dinda, 2014).

There might be a need to revisit the civic humanist interpretation of governance, whereby there is a focus on a virtue-centered mindset and its attendant “culture of character.” In the civic humanist tradition, the measure of success of any government was the extent to which it promoted the civic character of public servants as well as citizens. The civil economy insofar as economics was situated within a tradition of economic and philosophical thought that had its roots in such civil humanism, which could hark back to the thoughts of such great classics as Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, the Franciscan school, etc. The idea of civil economy presumes that people can solve social problems within the market itself. Already competing firms—in both the business and nonprofit sectors—show the potential to set standards for justice and welfare in a system of free markets (Zamagni, 2008). It seems that, for such a system to work, the following civic or social virtues are necessary: truth, trust, acceptance, restraint, and obligation, as well as the two chief moral virtues of magnanimity and justice (Maitland, 1997; Hart, 1989).

Finally, greater attention has to be paid to ethics in the creation of organizational culture and in people’s cultural development. There is preponderance of evidence that the attribution of causes of behavior is significantly affected by cultural norms and values. In other words, ethics is deeply integrated into the structure of managerial and administrative action such that any attempt at arriving at decisions on merely “technical” grounds without regard for what is moral is very likely to fail. Systems governed by leaders who are not only technically competent but also morally competent or virtuous are expected to outperform those firms whose executives’ morality is in question. Put another way, governance of organizations and of society at large can only be achieved through the executives’ education in the virtues, for, without the virtues, neither the goods nor the objectives that an organization seeks could be properly identified, nor the structures, rules and procedures it should follow correctly formulated, implemented and interpreted (Grassl & Habisch, 2011; Sison, 2008). All this has significant implications for organizations, especially for cultural leadership. One can say that the corporate culture is imbued with ethics and moral ascendancy when it enables the leader to make himself have a genuine interest in the development of and in contributing to the good of the organizational members, and thus, necessarily and preferentially seek the human flourishing and virtuousness of the others.

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