

## **PART II**

# Prospects and Perspectives of ME



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## MANAGEMENT EDUCATION AND INTERPERSONAL GROWTH: A HUMANIST TRANSCENDENTAL-PERSONALIST PERSPECTIVE

*Kleio Akrivou, Manuel Joaquín Fernández González, Germán Scalzo, and Ricardo Murcio Rodríguez*

### **Introduction: Why Renew Management Education?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it evident that the ecological, health, and societal challenges we face in the twenty-first century are now, without doubt, a shared global concern. Presenting significant challenges for businesses and management education (ME) alike, this reality offers both the opportunity to renew their sense of purpose toward fomenting the sustained good life for all beyond profitability, i.e., contributing to the common good. And, indeed, all kinds of organizations, including commercial ones, have stepped up to contribute to public health maintenance and improvement. We believe this moment provides the opportunity for future ME, along with management and economics more broadly, to go forward as human activities that intend to facilitate purposive, goal-oriented actions for promoting the common good (Lutz, 2018; Tirole, 2017).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, awareness of the necessity of revisiting the purpose of management education to avoid unethical or amoral management and leadership was aroused by corporate scandals in the United States and elsewhere. Given the key role of ME in shaping leaders' ethical behavior (Conrad, 2018), business schools and ME practices increasingly came under question regarding their role, relevance, and purpose (e.g., Bennis & O'Toole, 2005), being accused of dallying in surface-level social transformation and lauding uninspiring and unfulfilled promises that perpetuate "the triumph of the market" and replicate market managerialism (Khurana, 2010).

Many managers and management educators have taken these critiques to heart. Interest in business ethics and in corporate social responsibility has notably increased among managers (Conrad, 2018; Ghoshal, 2005), giving rise to an

impressive movement that advocates for corporate humanistic responsibility (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014) and in favor of more humanistic, people-oriented approaches to business and management, including global professional networks (e.g., Grassl & Habisch, 2011; Melé, 2016; Rocha & Miles, 2009).

Mirroring managers' concern, some management educators have started to move away from the mechanistic paradigm in which business schools are simply considered a professional training ground that prioritizes the teaching of "useful" content, and have started seeing humanistic ME as the way forward (Amann, Pirson, Dierksmeier, Von Kimakowitz, & Spitzeck, 2011; Gagliardi & Czarniawska, 2006; Fukami et al., this volume; Lepeley, Von Kimakowitz, & Bardy, 2016). As a result, ethics, responsibility, and sustainability (ERS) are being integrated into all aspects of business education, and most of the 16,000 business and management programs worldwide have introduced or significantly re-inforced the provision of business ethics and humanistic concerns in undergraduate and graduate programs and core courses, often as a key compulsory offering in MBA programs. In addition, business school accreditation bodies currently include ERS criteria in accreditation standards and reviews (Cho, Dyllick, Falkenstein, Killian, O'Regan, & Reno, 2014), and humanistic ME has also reached the field of management theory (Pirson, 2019; Hommel et al., this volume; Bryant et al., this volume).

This response is quite impressive in terms of effort and investment. But how efficient is it for eradicating the ethical problems that provoked it? And how sustainably can it foresee and deal with future ethical issues? To address these questions, we must look in more detail at the current approaches involved in humanistic ME.

## **Humanism in ME: Current Approaches and Their Shortcomings**

In the scientific literature, two main approaches to humanist management and ME can be distinguished: the human dignity approach and the sustainability approach. The former focuses on the promotion of human dignity and well-being (Dierksmeier, 2016; Pirson, 2017, 2019). In this view, those values make life worthwhile, and while they cannot be traded on markets they are nonetheless seen as an important tool for protecting dignity and contributing to well-being. This perspective offers a humanistic alternative to more dominant practices that commodify human experience and prioritize profit and productivity and proposes the integration and use of human dignity and human rights governance as a new management education paradigm (Albareda & Aguado, 2015).

Humanistic impulses in ME have largely been embraced with a second approach, i.e., Sustainability in Management Education (SiME). About 15 years ago, the idea of sustainability entered the field of ME and research (Stead & Stead, 2010; Wankel & Stoner, 2009) and, since then, SiME has developed

rapidly, adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDG contain deeply humanistic concerns (Herrmann & Rundshagen, 2020) such as fighting poverty and hunger, and pursuing good health and well-being, quality education and gender parity in education. The relevance of this trend is reflected in the increasing amount of SiME-related scientific publications, including academic books (Kassel & Rimanoczy, 2018), handbooks (Arevalo & Mitchell, 2017), benchmark studies (Wymer & Rundle-Thiele, 2017) and systematic literature reviews (Figueiró & Raufflet, 2015). This trend is also visible among practitioners – currently, there are some 650 management-related higher education institutions that formally adhere to the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME), a UN-supported initiative founded in 2007 that aims to provide future leaders with skills for balancing economic and sustainability goals. The PRME has also been the object of an increasing body of research (for a recent review, see Parkes, Buono, & Howaidy, 2017).

These two approaches (management for human dignity and SiME) are interconnected (Aguado & Albareda, 2016) in that both promote a kind of purposeful management that serves human dignity and the planet; for example, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (DESA UN, 2016) seeks to guarantee that the dignity, equality, and full potential of all human beings can be fulfilled.

Against this backdrop, it would seem reasonable to think that the humanistic movement in ME is enhancing future managers' awareness of what it means to be human, and how to lead a good life that does not damage the earth. However, according to Tourish (2020: 99), “[m]ore management scholars than ever are expressing concern about the state of our field.” The effectiveness of humanistic ME, in its current form, in helping students and professors understand the deeper ethical meaning of the business world, and to foresee future ethical issues, is up for question (Rivera, 2019). It is therefore timely and relevant to look critically at the foundations of current approaches in humanistic ME, and provide a more profoundly humanistic perspective to future ME students, empowering them to work with increased awareness of and a more robust commitment to the good of society and human flourishing.

Humanistic ME is based on a certain understanding of what human beings are or, as Conrad put it, on “the image of humans” (2018: 47) underlying it. Pirson (2017: 26) argued that “one of the critical stepping-stones to better management theory and practice is a better and more accurate understanding of who we are as people.” In this context, a number of voices contend that anthropology should be more relevant in business schools (Rivera, 2019). For example, the SiME approach acknowledges the importance of philosophical and anthropological knowledge in ME regarding sustainability (Vidal & da Silva Martins, 2017) and facilitates the development of a deeper capacity for reflection on the transcendence of management activity.

The need for anthropology in ME is well established, but *what concept of human beings underlies the humanistic discourse in ME today? Should it be challenged?*

When looking at the way anthropology is currently addressed in humanistic ME, two main shortfalls emerge, namely in some cases, the implicit presence of a “mechanistic humanism”; in other cases, an eclectic and partial view of human beings. We address them in more detail below.

Even if, as explained in the introduction, humanistic management in ME is progressively replacing mechanistic management, a relevant trend in humanist management still psychologically articulates the human factor and treats it mechanistically like an engineering component whereby scientific management remains unquestioned. Most dominant theories of responsible management set normative expectations for the role of management, whereby groups or persons are not considered per se priority stakeholders, but rather groups/agents in a synergistic relationship geared mainly toward the organization’s benefit (Phillips, Freeman, & Wicks, 2003). However, according to Derksen (2014), human management is found in the articulation of freedom and responsibility as the essence of the human factor (p. 164). “Mechanistic humanism” is also influential in ME – in many cases, humanistic concern is presented as a means of avoiding future economic crises, rather than a way of prioritizing human beings (Rivera, 2019). Therefore, according to Dierksmeier (2020), we must still transition from mechanistic ME to true humanistic management learning, going “beyond the current conception of the human being as a maximizer of preferences” (Vidal & da Silva Martins, 2017: 151).

Several recent anthropological proposals (unconvincingly) address the shortcomings of the “mechanistic humanism” anthropological approach. For example, Pirson (2017), echoing many other voices, questions the traditional paradigm of the *homo oeconomicus* and its successor, Jensen and Meckling’s (1994) REMM (the Resourceful, Evaluative, Maximizing Model), and sketches a humanistic description of human beings which, among other insights, includes evolutionary biology theory, stressing the biological roots of human sociability, empathy and emotionality, morality and altruism. However, this anthropological proposal seems quite eclectic and incomplete – Pirson’s (2017: 26–57) sketch of human nature is in fact a collection of insights from the natural and social sciences and from the humanities, and fails to provide a unifying picture of human beings. Other (incomplete) proposals are based on ME students’ need to meet social expectations, or on the promotion of personal and societal flourishing (Vidal & da Silva Martins, 2017), but they do not holistically address students’ self identity and sense of purpose.

In short, these alternative anthropological proposals for ME lack a comprehensive and unifying conception of human beings and would benefit from an overarching humanistic philosophical framework that integrates selfhood, morality, action theory and social concern toward a new humanistic sense of economic activity. The case of Jensen is illustrative of the need for a more radical shift regarding ME’s underlying anthropological paradigm. Up to 2002,

Jensen held an extreme mechanistic position that rebuked ME's teaching values, but more recently changed his views (Erhard & Jensen, 2011, 2013), stressing that management studies' main function is found in empowering students to give authentic expression to their personal values in their professional lives. However, "[h]is remaining within a positivistic framework ultimately impedes the kind of progress Michael Jensen envisions for business studies" (Dierksmeier, 2020: 73). We thus argue that current anthropological perspectives in ME should be enlarged with a sounder, more comprehensive understanding of the main economic actor, namely *the human person*. For this task, the transcendental personalist perspective, which is presented in the next section, offers a unified understanding of human beings as persons from which ME curricula could benefit.

## Transcendental Personalism and Features of Personalist Management

This section addresses what it means to be a *manager with a transcendental personalist mindset*. Transcendental personalist anthropology, developed by Leonardo Polo (1998, 2003), is based on realist personalist philosophy (Mounier, 1936; Spaemann, 2006; see Burgos, 2018, for an introduction), which builds on Aristotelian virtue ethics and sees the human being as an end in itself. Polo's most relevant insight for this chapter is his answer to the question "What is the most profound reality (that characterizes us) as human beings?"

According to him (Polo & Corazón, 2005: 10), at least "as far as the West is concerned ... there have been ... three ways of focusing or accentuating the most important thing in human beings," what he called "human radicals," namely the "classical radical" which stresses our common human nature and its perfectibility through the acquisition of virtues, the "modern radical" which highlights human subjectivity as the locus of the autonomous self and of freedom, and the "personal radical" which underlines the person's uniqueness, relationality, and transcendence of her actions.

Among these three radicals (from "radix" or roots), which capture human facets from different philosophical traditions (the Greek, the modernist, and the Christian ones, respectively), Polo identifies the personal radical as the most complete one because it synthesizes and redirects the insights of the other radicals into a higher, personalistic form. In a personalist understanding, the person freely opens her selfhood and intimacy to an interpersonal, caring relationship with others, which is manifested through virtuous actions. Transcendental personalism's understanding of human beings and its implications regarding what it means to be a manager can be condensed into three points: (1) the person's intimacy and the manager's selfhood, (2) the person's transcendence and the manager's interpersonal growth, and (3) the person's manifestative actions and the manager's activity.

### ***Personal Intimacy and Managers' Selfhood***

Each person possesses intimacy, which is the source of her dignity and makes her unique and absolutely original. Therefore, personalist managers are cognizant of others' and their dignity and worth, transcendence and uniqueness; they genuinely care for every human being affected by their managerial activity.

The person's intimate selfhood is a complex whole of emotions, intentions, agency, decisions, and understandings, but each person has a *telos*, i.e., a potentiality and a call to grow as a human being, and this purpose marks her personal path in life. In this regard, personalist managers are called to put the richness of their intimacy into managerial work and to seek to integrate their professional vocation and activity into a more general life purpose. This also requires honest self-inquiry to avoid moral hypocrisy (Batson, Thompson, Seufferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999), i.e., the tendency toward preserving self-esteem by convincing ourselves of our morality and goodness.

Given the strong relational dimension of the managerial vocation, personalist managers' sense of self is close to what has been referred to as the "relational-self-of-virtue" (Fernández González, 2019), understood as a deep disposition toward virtuous growth in communities of virtue. This also entails a sense of personal and professional vocation that aspires to use one's freedom and socio-professional role as a service to the other (Akrivou, Orón, & Scalzo, 2020), rather than for personal profit.

### ***The Person's Transcendence and Managers' Interpersonal Growth***

According to transcendental personalism, the person's moral development is *per se* transcendental, in the sense of transpersonal and interpersonal.<sup>1</sup> Humans are relational beings whose intimacy is open to other intimacies. Every human person is intrinsically called to live and to grow for someone and with someone rather than for herself and by herself, and therefore, moral development is catalyzed in coexistence: expansive two-way interpersonal relations are the locus (context) that witnesses the growth of all persons involved. Therefore, transcendental personalist managers freely engage in genuine, radical care (and not the appearance thereof) for the flourishing of all those who are influenced by their work, directly and indirectly. They are "virtuous leaders" (Havard, 2018) who seek to grow in virtue by focusing on the moral growth of their followers, whose dignity they willingly acknowledge. Furthermore, in the firm, they try to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation and a culture of mutual support and healthy emulation rather than of competitiveness.

Interpersonal relations are not established automatically – they are premised upon each person's transcendental freedom. In transcendental personalism, freedom is conceived of as a "freedom-for-self-giving" to another person.<sup>2</sup>



Accordingly, personalist managers use personal agency (*freedom-for*) to create opportunities for cultivating interpersonal friendship and engaging in effusive two-way self-giving relationships, and they freely orientate their decision-making power toward the enhancement of others' well-being. For example, when figuring out the best place for an employee in the enterprise, they prioritize his/her flourishing as a human being over maximization of benefits for the organization.

Acting in this self-giving way entails a source of motivation that draws from the perception of the intrinsic, transcendent value of every person. Personalist managers freely serve others with the best of themselves, guided by altruistic motives and genuine empathy (Batson & Moran, 1999), not from a "psychological need to serve," as is the case of so-called servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 2010; Van Dierendonck, 2011). This transcendental motivation enables, at the same time, personal and interpersonal growth.

### ***The Person's Manifestative Action and Managers' Activity***

Human actions manifest the person's intimacy and transcendence in a concrete space and time and have the potential to become a self-giving endeavor that perfects the person and allows for interpersonal growth. Therefore, personalist managers see their management activity as a concrete opportunity for manifesting their intimate selfhood (sense of call to moral growth) and transcendence (readiness to interpersonal growth). Their willingness to engage in interpersonal, caring relationships, and their orientation toward others' flourishing and the common good, appears firstly in their concern for social justice and responsibility. Accordingly, in their economic and managerial activity, they are inspired by the logic of the gift (Scalzo, 2017; Schrifft, 2014) and tend to create networks of giving and receiving (Bernacchio, 2018). Personalist managers look at the firm as a resource for human development, instead of seeing others as "human resources" for the firm.

Intentional loving service to others, which characterizes the transcendental personalist view of any truly human activity (be it economic, aesthetic, political, intellectual or of any other kind), also becomes apparent in a personal commitment to the fulfillment of high standards. This quest for quality, which aims at better serving others through work, is the natural arena for the development of virtues, and in particular of practical wisdom. In this regard, in recent years, Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics (MacIntyre, 2007) has emerged the field of business ethics (Moore & Beadle, 2006; Sison, Ferrero, & Guitián, 2018), particularly through the lens of the virtue practical wisdom (Conrad, 2018; Sison & Hühn, 2018). Personalist managers approach their work as an arena for developing the virtues and personal qualities inherent in the management activity, e.g., effort and diligence in displaying high levels of professionalism at work, the prudential ability to make and set goals with the future in mind, and timely, honest,

thoughtful, and good decision-making. They also pay particular attention to the virtues involved in interpersonal relationships (Fontrodona, Sison, & de Bruin, 2013), such as humility and openness when listening to colleagues and subordinates, magnanimity, generosity in serving others, friendliness, etc.

Personalist practical wisdom attributes to the person the integration of the cognitive, affective, decisional, and ethical dimensions involved in a wise course of action. Personalist wisdom is displayed in thoughtfully considering how a situation can be handled or transformed consistently with one's interiority and relationally in order to bolster intimacy and relationality among all persons involved, while serving the common good (Akrivou & Scalzo, 2020). Analytic and modern understandings of practical wisdom are at odds with this understanding. The meaning of this cardinal virtue has been degraded throughout time (Aubenque 1999; Scalzo & Alford, 2016), becoming a merely protective, self-interested, rationality seeking and clever form of action. Cognitivist approaches reduce practical wisdom to an individual cognitive skill unrelated to interpersonal relations. In turn, behaviorists see it as a protective practical skill of individual actors. Recovering an understanding of phronesis consistent with realistic personalism requires an appropriate moral psychology of action and the self.<sup>3</sup>

In the field of management, this means that action related choices ("What should I do?") are inseparable from questions of being ("Who am I?") (Weaver, 2006: 344) and of moral identity ("How does this action affect who I am and who I am becoming?"). This personalist practical wisdom coordinates the different dispositions involved in the network of virtues previously mentioned.

The above has implications for how ME should contribute to the formation of managers across three domains, corresponding to the three dimensions found in transcendental personalism, which we detail in the next section.

## **Educating Future Managers for Interpersonal Growth**

In this section, we explore how our understanding of transcendental personalist managers can be translated into future ME practices. The person's dimensions (intimacy of selfhood, interpersonal transcendence, and manifestation in prudent, self-giving activity) correspond to three personal aptitudes that should be developed in the education of the future managers. They include, as developed within this chapter, self-reflection, interpersonal relationality, and virtuous habits, in particular personalist practical wisdom.

### ***Self-Reflection and the Enrichment of Selfhood***

Transcendental personalist ME focuses on managers as persons, taken holistically in their singularity and complexity, as well as in their unity and self-understanding as interpersonal moral agents. To develop self-awareness and enrich selfhood, we

suggest that management educators and students should engage in reflective practice (Schön, 1987; McLaughlin, 1999; Loughran, 2002). While reflection can take many forms (individual silent reflection, question-guided reflection, journaling, dialogue-based peer discussion etc.), written reflection is most suitable for enriching one's intimacy: reflective logs act as a "mirror of the mind" (Moon, 2010: 4) and help "to find one's own voice," using words that capture one's unique personal "sound" in a language that is "more like the language of thought" (Moon, 2010: 6). In a transcendental personalist framework, this goes beyond traditional focus on reflection regarding practitioners' environment, behavior, competencies and beliefs, and forays into what Korthagen and Vasalos (2005) called "core reflection," that is, a more fundamental form of reflection at the level of identity and mission. Reflective activities allow future managers to embrace their chosen profession as a true vocation and engage with it as a meaningful personal calling. Reflection also helps students and educators to grasp the purpose and meaning of economic activity itself from an interpersonal perspective, and to question the role students will have as managers who engage in interpersonal relations of mutual personal growth.

### ***Interpersonal Relationality***

In our view, the future of ME should be seen as a process that includes both teachers and students' interpersonal growth, as well as emotional, ethical, and cognitive aspects (Orón, Akrivou, & Scalzo, 2019). Rooted in a transcendental personalist understanding of human beings, interpersonal moral growth in ME should be rooted in a view that the person herself is a free moral actor who is endowed with a singular intimacy and who can personally commit to mutual moral growth in interpersonal relations.

One paradigmatic example of a personalist pedagogical approach to interpersonal growth can be found in the "pedagogy of gift" (Martín-García, Gijón-Casares, & Puig-Rovira, 2019), which shifts focus from the '*homo oeconomicus*' to the '*homo donator*' (Godbout, 2000), and could therefore be used to embed transcendental personalism in future ME. Indeed, the logic of gift has emerged as a new alternative for overcoming both individualism and holism in social sciences (Caillé, 2000: 46), based on its potential to integrate the relationship between concrete people and human nature as a common project (Hittinger, 2002). The theory of gift positions the core of personhood and society on 'the gift', defined as a free provision of goods or services made without guarantee of return, and with a view toward creating, nurturing, or recreating the social bond between people (Godbout, 1997). The gift is seen as beyond the logic of the normative social contract, and is found at the origin of conviviality, personality, and community (Caillé, 2003). It is not a specific act, but rather a cycle that is made up of three elements—giving, receiving, and giving back. The pedagogy of gift includes a two-way gift cycle: from teachers to students

and from students to the community. Two different methodological tools can be used in each gift-cycle: (1) personal tutoring and (2) service learning (Martín-García et al., 2019).

Interpersonal growth in ME can be facilitated by using pedagogical methods that feature interpersonal relationships, such as the shared case study and conversational learning. These methods help scaffold both personal and common knowledge, however, paradigmatic case studies should be rewritten with an eye toward enabling interpersonal growth, and the Socratic method (questions and dialogue) should be used to facilitate the sharing of personal narratives and sense-making stories. Personal feeling complements cognition and informs a worldview that integrates personality, community, and interpersonal relationships in a very personal, singular way (Orón Semper, 2018). Other institutional members (facilities and administrative staff, senior management, etc.) should also engage in the experience of creating an institutional culture of interpersonal mutual growth. This “ethos” is of great importance: the practice context in which ME learners are situated will influence them both during learning and while applying what they have learned.

### ***Personalist Practical Wisdom***

The development of *personalist* practical wisdom undergirds future ME toward personal development (Akrivou & Scalzo, 2020). Those who advocate for teaching practical wisdom in ME (Bachmann, Loza Aduai, & Habisch, 2014; Naughton, Habisch, & Lenssen, 2010) argue that new managers “are generally missing ... what Aristotle calls ‘wisdom,’ to be understood as interpersonal capabilities and practical knowledge” (Conrad, 2018: 64). In a transcendental personalist paradigm, future managers learn to grow in interpersonal relationships, and to be practically wise for and with those whose lives are implicated in their actions.

In this line, Bachmann, Habisch, and Dierksmeier (2018) recently suggested that forward-looking management studies and the discipline of business ethics should promote the study, internalization, and realization of practical wisdom as a virtue that is integral to management. They claim that practical wisdom is no longer a forgotten virtue in management, and that it is a valuable resource for management that might counteract contemporary management failures. Their “conciliatory conception” of practical wisdom is close to personalism and includes, among others features, an orientation toward human flourishing, a consideration of human sociality, and self-awareness, humility, and acknowledgment around human vulnerability.

This view of practical wisdom will inspire new visions for future ME in terms of enlarging and expanding how knowledge is approached and how students as future managers learn to know; it involves a shift from “knowing what” and “knowing how” to “knowing why” and, most importantly, “*knowing for whom.*”

Thus, teaching within and across the ME curriculum should not just focus on the transmission of knowledge and technique, but rather on understanding what human beings are and how to build interpersonal relationships that contribute to mutual growth. This also requires transformation in how the “technical” subjects that pertain to ME are taught; rather than being taught as an amoral, technical kind of knowledge, they must also embrace genuine concern for ethics and a pro-social orientation.

## Broader Discussion and Practical Implications for ME

Beyond the practical implications that transcendental personalism has for future managers, a basic question remains, namely why should human beings be seen in a transcendental personalist view? Or more simply, why should the person be at the center of the future of management education?

First of all, the current reductionism found in the modern radical, which stresses human subjectivity as the locus of the autonomous self and of individual freedom, must be overcome. Slowly, scholars and practitioners have started to realize the limitations inherent in this radical, with its focus on external results, including money and power. In that sense, the classical radical has begun to reemerge; therein, human beings are seen as naturally sociable and rational with a common human nature, which can be perfected or improved upon by developing virtues. This position is at the center of communitarian (Etzioni, 1993) or naturalistic-ecological approaches (O’Riordan, 1981; Purser, Park, & Montuori, 1995), and especially of the Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics approach to business (MacPherson, 2015; Sison et al., 2018).

Yet, human beings (as persons) are more complete than what Aristotle had in mind, and less dualistic and fragmentary than what modern anthropologies purport. Neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics fails to capture the deepest notion of the human person because she is neither conceived of in a profound way as a being with a transcendental dimension, nor as an end in herself. This cannot be proven; it is a first principle of practical reason (for Kant, a *faktum*). Although its absence (considering the person as a means) has caused significant social and political problems throughout history, today a common agreement exists regarding human dignity and equality expressed in the form of human rights (Taylor, 1989). The personalist understanding of human beings synthesizes and redirects into a higher form the insights those radicals put forward. In a personalist understanding, it is the person who freely opens her own self and intimacy to an interpersonal caring relation with others, which is manifested through virtuous actions. This personalist understanding stands in marked contrast to much of traditional ME. Approaches to educating and developing managers and leaders that adopt and practice from a person-oriented stance can help address the limitations of both traditional, mechanistic conceptions of ME and management practice, and the more recent, similarly

reductionistic modern alternatives that place excessive value on separateness and thus over-individualize through valuing difference as an end in itself.

According to the logic of gift, personal relationships are the natural condition of personal growth, since they manifest a certain dynamic that is a substantial aspect of the person, namely accepting and offering what has been received in the interpersonal sphere (Polo, 2007). Every act of giving implies a “giving-of-oneself” (*freedom for*); in other words, this giving, which is a giving of ourselves and proper to the gift that we are, transforms us at the same time that it transforms others. Hence, this notion “unifies two things which are so often split apart in modern political and social thought: first, what man claims as his own, and second, what man has to give as a gift of service” (Hittinger, 2002: 391).

Thus, the transcendental personalist approach is the best alternative we have for sustainably addressing contemporary challenges. In this view, the person is not a mere “factor” in the equation of effective management, but rather an end in herself and the basis of all social and organizational institutions; hence, management activity (business, public management, etc.) is oriented *toward the service of the person*. It goes beyond the fact that the person should be considered as an end in herself, *à la Kant* and Humanistic Management Theory, and also argues that her intimacy should be acknowledged in the process of inter-relational growth, which is the ontological foundation of a transcendental (personalist) anthropology.

At this point, some might think, and not without reason, that it will be challenging to teach this understanding to business school students, and even more challenging to transfer it into management practice. To start, this understanding can certainly seem like a distant dream from today’s institutional realities and requirements. ME institutions depend, after all, on market demands, in part because they receive funds and “educational mandates” from the business field. In addition, many business students may sign up for ME to get a degree for their future career, rather than to challenge their identity and the way they relate with others.

The anthropological basis of this ME proposal first requires a profound shift toward an overall person-based approach that aims to develop *managing persons* with purpose to support their flourishing, rather than just impersonal managers. Concrete proposals for facilitating this shift should start by developing a shared concern for personalist interpersonal growth at all levels of the *institution’s culture* by sending consistent messages to the educational community through presentations, board meetings, student assessment practices, and in relationships with alumni, donors and employers. For its practical implementation, it will require a core team of *faculty members and students* who can jointly *identify what is already enhancing* interpersonal growth, what is currently *hindering* it, and initiatives for boosting it at each business school. This work could be done at different levels, including the whole institution, curricular content, examination of the methodology used within a concrete discipline, etc. That concern for personalist

interpersonal growth should be *embedded in different disciplines* by sharing key messages about its importance among management educators, students, and practitioners. Business schools should become places where faculty, students, and alumni co-create and imagine future paths toward interpersonal growth within and outside of the school.

Indeed, teaching this understanding to business school students and transferring these ideas into management practice – taking into account the culture, governance, leadership and pedagogy of business schools, and ME – is not an easy task. Clearly, a personalist virtue ethics approach to the future of ME will require bold transformation of current practices and patient planning. Efforts to shift toward personalist ME may find serious obstacles with ME's current and predominant focus on marketization and commercialization (Khurana, 2010) and the status quo in many ME institutions. Pragmatically, that may mean that both individual management educators and, more importantly, ME institutions and other stakeholders such as accreditation and ranking organizations must start to “educate their market” about the value of transformational ME approaches and practices that invest in the full person. Realistically, it will require considerable investment and effort to create sufficient recognition of the differential value that can arise out of a move toward a more transcendental, personalist approach to ME.

However, and although relatively new to many ME settings, looking more widely, an ontological turn is taking place in higher and professional education (e.g., Dall’Alba, 2009; Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Fellenz, 2016) that supports the underlying approach proposed here. In addition, as we mentioned in the introduction, reason for hope is found in that both management practice and ME are attempting movements away from the mechanistic paradigm toward that of humanistic ME; in addition, the personalist approach to humanistic management has recently become a topic of interest in business ethics (Acevedo, 2012; Melé, 2009), as well as in corporate integrity theory (Chennattu, 2020).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, we have argued that future ME would benefit significantly from a radical shift toward incorporating a humanistic personalist approach. Although a number of approaches already advocate for a humanistic ME, we suggest that they fall short in terms of a deeper and more profound anthropological foundation. Instead, we suggest that ME should be renewed with a profound, more realistic, and comprehensive understanding of the main economic actor, namely *the human person*, which represents the philosophical-anthropological root of our humanistic proposal for future ME centered on transcendental personalism.

To address this task, we relied upon this transcendental personalist understanding to discuss management with an orientation toward persons as ends in themselves as opposed to instrumental resources or “factors” in the quest for

managerial effectiveness. Accordingly, we highlighted implications for a professional ethos *at the service of the person* (all persons who partake in the common good inside and outside the businesses) and offered a view of what managers should be in correspondence with the three dimensions of personhood identified herein. Moreover, we showed how incorporating a transcendental personalist vision can profoundly change management education, offering practical implications for how ME can shift toward educating for interpersonal growth. Enriching the selfhood of future managers, as well as their interpersonal relationality and personalist practical wisdom requires a focus on teaching and learning, and education centered on personalist self-reflection.

We aimed to show that such a shift would facilitate the practice of management as a force for rehumanizing business, society, and work and for promoting the flourishing of all involved, including managers. These paths have the potential to profoundly renew ethical ME beyond traditional “know-what” and “know-how” content, by shifting ME and knowledge toward more profound ethically informed “know-why” and “know-for-whom” types of knowledge that enable practically wise action. Within the broader scholarship that argues for a revival of humanistic management as the future of ME, this contribution highlights the profound notion of personhood and personalist approaches to management and ME. It further emphasizes personal intimacy through the “logic of gift,” which requires cultivating future managers’ disposition for interpersonal ethical growth. This vision gives management and economics the tools to shift their social purpose, fulfilling their ends as spheres that promote the common good and serve all human beings involved in organizational life with a concern for each one as a human person.

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## Notes

- 1 In this chapter, we understand transcendence as a transhuman, horizontal form of transcendence that includes openness to the other, gratitude and humor, vulnerability, compassion, and caring, loving relationships. However, it should be noted that Polo’s transcendental anthropology also includes vertical – spiritual transcendence. According to him, horizontal transcendence is based on each person’s unique, transcendent and vertical relationship with God, which is at the origin of each human person. This vertical transcendence is both the basis of our shared humanity and the uniqueness that characterizes our action. Focusing on horizontal transcendence in this chapter is a methodological choice and does not rule out the possibility of vertical transcendence toward ideal values (Kristjansons, 2016) and toward the divine (MacPherson, 2015; Taylor, 2007).
- 2 *Freedom-for* should be distinguished from what Isaiah Berlin (1966) called “freedom to” or positive freedom as opposed to “freedom from” or negative freedom (absence of coercion,



“freedom-from-that-which-hinders-one’s-development”). Berlin’s “freedom-to” is closely related to Aristotle’s understanding of freedom as “self-mastery,” which is reached through the acquisition of virtues. Transcendental personalist freedom-for assumes the classical understanding of *freedom-to*, but elevates it teleologically toward the establishment of interpersonal self-giving relationships.

- 3 A recent effort in this direction is the “Inter-Processual Self” (IPS) theory (Akrivou, Orón, & Scalzo, 2018), which considers that the person’s selfhood evolves through intentional relations with others (Akrivou, Orón, & Scalzo, 2018; Trowbridge, 2011).

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