

Work as Key to the Social Question

The Great Social and Economic Transformations and the Subjective Dimension of Work



Incidence of *Laborem Exercens* in Organizational Theory

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Abstract

The goal we are seeking in this job has two sides. First, we will try to call attention on the progress suffered along this century in the way of viewing organizational work. Second, we will show the insufficiency of these views and the necessity of a new method for a better comprehension of organizations and of activities carried out by people in organizations. The thread helping us in this analysis will be the distinction between the objective sense and the subjective sense of human work, and the question we make for this analysis is: which ethical spirit do we find in organizations?

Paper

Distinction between the objective sense and the subjective sense of human work is the main axis in Pope John Paul II's letter *Laborem exercens*.

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analysis is: which ethical spirit do we find in organizations?

The reason supporting this question is the following: if the material object of ethical science is human action, it is easily understandable that every ethical proposal must have in its ground a basic model of man and, first of all, of human way of acting and taking decisions. Then, after analyzing human action in the different approaches, we will suggest a new one, whose main property consist on not being restrictive in the way of facing action and, consequently, ethics. In other terms, an organizational model able to answer so many questions which general systems theory—with its great achievements— cannot solve.

For our goal, we will base our job, first, on the scheme proposed by Pérez López (*Fundamentos de la dirección de empresas*, Rialp, Madrid, 1994), that permits us establish an alternative model in organizational theory, better based in the psychical structure of human person. This will make us introduce new variables—Aristotelian ones—in respect to neo-Kantian postulates we can find in the other alternatives we will present, coherent with the distinction which will be for us the main axis: the one between the objective sense and the subjective sense of work. Because of the size of this study, it will not be possible to make a complete justification of these new variables, though they will leave open doors for future researches in this direction.

Second, we will look at the correlation given between these models of organization and the different ways of understanding the *having* in human person. According to Polo's thought (*Sobre la existencia cristiana*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 1996), the having belongs to the subjective sense of work, while what man has is the objective work. In the three levels of human belonging established by Polo, we can set a correlation with the different ways of approaching organization according to the understanding of human person.

We have two possible ways to follow: to overcome current approaches in organizational theory from themselves or, once their insufficiency is shown, to raise alternative questions that open a new direction in the search of a new basic paradigm that rightly interprets the organization and the exigencies of individual in organization.

According to McIntyre (1990; 114), the overcoming of a paradigm cannot be made from within, if you have to leave some basic assumptions of the paradigm. You need, then, “someone who inhabits both alternative conceptual schemes, who knows and is able to utter the idiom of each from within, who has become, so to speak, a native speaker with two first languages”. This is the reason for which we tackle this job from an interdisciplinary perspective. We know that establishing a dialog between sciences permits a better comprehension of studied phenomena (economic, social or organizational ones).

In this sense, the task we try to propose is in the line of what Pérez López (1995) said: the valuable things of current science must be assumed, as a particular case, in the new science. We must not forget that the big error of most methodologies in vogue is its reductionism (the incomplete abstractions that found them), but that all reductionisms are right in what they affirm (that is why they still have a practical validity) and false in what they deny. All we have learnt about empiric phenomena, which is a lot, is looking forward to be correctly

explained”. This is, after all, what we aim with our proposal of the anthropological approach we are trying to carry out.

For facing the analysis, following a parallel scheme to the one developed by Pérez López, we will begin considering the three big groups of theories or models (the three paradigms) that allow an explanation of how organizations work. The first one explains it comparing the organization to a big machine, interpreting it as a big technical system. Those who have understood entrepreneurial behavior in this way will be included in the mechanistic approaches. In second term, we will refer to those for whom organization is like a living organism, in constant movement and continuous interaction with its environment. This will be called the organicist or psycho-sociologic approach, since they include non strictly technical variables. Finally, we will call attention on those approaches according to which organization is more than a technical or psycho-sociologic system. Among these approaches, we will include the theories that understand organization as an institution composed by persons, as a community that shares goals. These are the anthropological approaches [1].

This way of classifying the different interpretations of the organization and of how it works is very useful because of its explanatory power, counting on the evident limitations of every analogy. The scheme permits to gather, in a very simplified way, the basic features underlying in most of the theoretic interpretations. It is evident that there will not be time for analyzing the nuances of the diverse conceptions, but our aim does not go so far. The goal of this job is to suggest a new organizational approach through the reflection about the role that ethics plays in business management (in the behavior of each individual in the organization). An analysis of the ground that supports main organizational approaches will permit us obtain conclusions about the ethical dimension and its place in organizational theories and, therefore, recognize the theory of action that underlies in those approaches.

1. Mechanicist approaches

These theories see organization “as a simple coordination of human actions whose goal is to produce or distribute some objects and/or services” (Pérez López 1994; 22). They are centered in the objective side of business activity, ignoring the subjective one, this is, the effect that this acting has on the subject who does it. Everything is, then, about organizing processes and interchanging products. There is no special interest on considering that the ones involved in those processes are persons; these are just another element in the complex machine. In this sense, “they do not take into account the persons’ motives, nor their necessities, nor the interactions that are not included in the productive-distributive system” (Pérez López 1994; 22).

For those who initially understood organizations in this way, hardness and direction style distinguished businessman. He was supported by his passing over his own feelings and over the other ones, for getting higher benefits (Taylor 1911; Fayol 1949). The really important point is the maximization of the production-consume relation, either optimizing production

(or minimizing resources in order to the production), or maximizing the difference in the proposed relation. The deficiency in this approach must be seen in the partiality with which it studies the work. There is certainly an objective dimension of work that refers to what the person produces and, in that sense, it is right to talk about the job as a factor of production, and it is licit to value this factor according to the laws of the market [2]. But we must not forget the subjective dimension that work includes, derived from the fact that who makes it is a person, remarking that the sources of the dignity of work must not be searched mainly in its objective dimension, but in its subjective one, because the first basis of the value of work is the man himself [3].

Thanks to the abstractions carried out by this model, great advances have been produced in the development of techniques for the improvement of productivity and profitability in companies [4]. The goal of organizations, in the strictly economic sense, has been specified through the so-called strategic planning, that conjugates the system capacities with the situation of the business environment. The goal is, then, to get the best results at the lowest cost.

The model of person with which this approaches work is, in reality, very reduced, since it is constrained to the objective dimension of work. What really matters is not concrete persons, but the roles and functions they play, and the communication relationships produced among them [5]. Informal organization uses to remain out of the field of analysis. The rationality of those who take decisions in the organization, since it reduces its goals to the maximization of the benefit, can be qualified as instrumental rationality: everything is interpreted as a mean or instrument to the achievement of results. The useful goods [6] lose their character of mean and become goals of human action. For understanding properly organization and work in these approaches, it could be appropriated to remember the conclusions which Schumpeter (1971) and Weber (1995) extracted from the analysis of the capitalist spirit in the rationality of the businessman (Rodríguez, 1999a and 1999b).

In this way of thinking, the motivations of individuals are only considered when talking about retributive systems, which are means for the distribution of incentives. Indeed, the motivations of the person are reduced to the search of external rewards (salary increasing, improvement of the status...), which Pérez López (1997; 18) calls extrinsic necessities.

In fact, most of the literature on business administration has been framed within this paradigm. The features we have traced can be seen with a special clarity in the first proposals of the scientific management and in the beginnings of the strategic planning. Every manager is conscious that these approaches can be useful in the technical sense, but it is risky to say that managing decisions are exclusively technical. Many of them often try to make technical changes, and they have to face the resistance of the persons in the organization. Trying to reduce everything to the technical field is, at least, little realistic.

The question arising here, and the one who took us to this analysis, is: which place can ethics occupy in these organizational theories? Does it make sense to talk about ethics within these interpretation parameters of the business reality? [7] As it has been seen, the individual is reduced to a piece of the system; his motivations are exclusively extrinsic; the

values for which he acts are reduced to the economic or instrumental plane; the norms that rule his behavior are given by the function he performs in the organization. An utilitarian ethics (Bentham, 1973; Sen, 1979), based on calculations, exclusively worried about benefit; or a pragmatist ethics [8] that only cares about results; these seem to be the only moral approaches that can be considered in this way of interpreting organizations. We can talk of an individualistic ethics, coincident with the one Weber (1994 & 1995) discovers in capitalism.

MECHANISTIC APPROACHES	
Organizational model	Machine
Having	Goal: Economic
Concept of Person	Practical
	Object
	Rationality: Instrumental
	Motivations: Extrinsic
	Values: Economic
	Norms: Functional
Ethical approach	Unilateral approaches
	Normativism,
	Pragmatism,
	Utilitarianism

The model of an egoist man, looking for his exclusively particular benefit, advocates a way of understanding ethics in organizations whose principles are reduced to the obtaining the highest possible individual utility. In a system in which what is searched is the maximization of benefits, leaving aside the possible personal improvement of the agents, the ethical formulation is hugely limited, groundless and little rigorous. It coincides, in the substance, with the *ethos* expressed by ethic-economic maxims.

2. Psycho-sociological approaches

In contrast to the orientation toward results (work in the objective sense) that economic and business sciences demand in their origins, other models arise from the study of the behavior

of the one who is the subject of production. These approaches seem to perceive the notion of the subjective dimension of work, but they do not get to formulate it. Thus, they do not leave the assumption of the maximization relation-production, but they advocate a bigger attention on the producer; this way it will be possible to get a bigger and better production, while you satisfy some necessities that contribute to optimize the results. The raising of human relations (Mayo, 1946; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939), a new social phenomenon in business, presents now a businessman with less authoritarian features.

The most appropriated analogy to understand this new paradigm is the one of a living organism. Everything said by the former approaches is now assumed by the new one. It incorporates new dimensions and a new way of understanding the relations between the elements of the system. The most characteristic points in this approach are, maybe, its proactive attitude before the environment and the functional character it tries to insert in the company: organizations demand specialists.

Based on the functional character, business organization promotes a turn toward decentralization (McGregor, 1960; Likert, 1961 y 1967; Hax and Majluf, 1984) as a base for a higher optimization of resources available. It introduces a group of concepts that get strength in business world: cooperation, participation... These concepts are necessary and basic in order to decentralize without losing productivity. Decisions are implanted in all the possible levels (March and Simon, 1958; Simon, 1979; Cyert and March, 1963), needing these concepts for not losing sight of the main goal of the company. Since the 60s, participation becomes the *leit motiv* of many business organizations. The study of motivations, which was already object of research (Maslow, 1954; Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman, 1959; McGregor, 1966), occupies a priority place.

In this approach, motivations are not interpreted exclusively in an external way (search of rewards), but it is admitted now that they are much more complex, and offering incentives is not enough. It is accepted that there are other motivations that proceed from the agent himself, satisfactions he gets for doing certain kind of actions, and that do not come from outside. These are the so-called intrinsic motivations. Thus, the decision-maker's own learning, for example, or his personal fulfillment, become key elements to explain behaviors in organizations. This explanation permits to understand "the coordination of actions for the satisfaction of current motivations, this is, of the motivations felt currently by the persons who compose the organization" (Pérez López, 1997; 24). Current motivations refer, in an Aristotelian terminology, to delectable goods, but they do not assure as that they will remit to the honest goods and, therefore, they remain in the plane of the mere sensible satisfaction. The analysis of the motivation is done in the subjective plane of the acting.

The inclusion in this new paradigm of other current satisfaction demands a new way of business action. This approach discovers news aspects that are related to the organization (as much as they are to persons) and that have to be taken into account. Understanding the company as a social organism, the psycho-sociological variables start to play an important role, and the economic dimension loses its exclusivity. Most of the theories that have tried to overcome the classic (mechanistic) model have done it within an organicist conception of

the person and of organizations.

In this new step given by psycho-sociological approaches, the person is not anymore a single piece in the production machinery. His motivations are more than the expectation of rewards or punishments. His rationality is not exclusively instrumental, results-optimizing. We can call it an expressive rationality, which recognizes the individual as having freedom and will. The value judgments begin to be considered in decision making, and the decision maker's goals are not exclusively economic. The values that begin to be considered refer to current satisfactions, not strictly economic. Norms are not given exclusively by position, but they are interpreted in behavioral terms, and are influenced by social and cultural elements. This way of thinking is coherent with the one in which Weber (1994) understands economic science. Certainly, in psycho-sociological approaches, the decisional character of science is emphasized. This can be observed when decision avoids the conflict which can arise between what is and what must be done. The conflict is resolved in the value interpretation given by the subject. This is why valuation (value judgments) is essentially decisional. Final elections are not supported on the results that science can supply: they come from the individual's decision itself, orientated by interests, by social and cultural elements.

PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES	
Organizational model	Social organism Goal: Economic Social
Having	Immanent possession
Concept of Person	Subject – individual Rationality: Expressive Motivations: Extrinsic and intrinsic Values: Current satisfaction Norms: Behavioral and cultural
Ethical approach	Intermediate positions Dialogic Social justice Consequentialism Communitarism

The matter of social responsibility becomes very important in a conception of organization that aims to answer to its environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Lorsch & Allen, 1973; Galbraith, 1973; Chandler, 1962). This concept tries to eliminate the unfair demands of an economy based only in personal interest. In contrast to a conception of individual's actions, in terms of individual choice (whose roots are in Kantian moral theory, translated to business by the methodological individualism), French advocates a business study of what Durkheim calls "social facts". However, as Melé (1997) says, "many directives are convinced that these social responsibilities are a kind of enlightened egoism because, in the long term, they are profitable for those who take them into account". The demands that the companies receive call for a responsibility in their fulfillment. However, the preoccupation for the social responsibility of the company calls another question, not resolved yet, about whether this is a responsibility of the corporation or of the directives. The most remarked interventions on this polemic can be seen in May & Hoffman (1991).

Other works have added different nuances that enrich the basic model of social responsibility. Some of them are the theory of evolution, represented by Nelson & Winter (1982); the ecologist school, represented by Hannan & Freeman (1989); Mintzberg's (1979) organizational configurations; and the works of Miller & Friesen (1984) and Miller (1990). An study on the nature of companies' social responsibility, which deserves an special interest, has been carried out by Robertson & Nicholson (1996).

The arising of social responsibility induces to think that ethics cannot be considered as alien to business, but, on the contrary, companies need directives with a proper ethical education. However, ethics is often reduced to a mean to eliminate the unfair attacks suffered by the individual in the social environment.

Rawls' (1971) ethics of justice has an special place in an approach in which moral is seen as an external restriction to the achievement of economic goals. But in this ethics, as much as in dialogical (Cortina, 1994 & 1995) and consequentialistic (Anscombe, 1958 & 1981) ones, there is a risk of falling in an ethical minimalism that easily leads to mere legality. It is not estrange that, in these situations, businessmen think that ethics is the redaction of a code of conduct in the company, which describes the moral behavior of the persons in the organization.

In contrast to these positions, communitarism (Etzioni, 1997) could be presented as an alternative. This approach criticizes liberalism, remarking that we are not independent individuals who decide to live together establishing political and economic pacts based on interest. However, the solutions supplied don not come from the field of ethics, but it is rather a moral language, with a strong emotive load. This makes this alternative invalid.

Neither the technical nor the organic model, in their different forms, solve the question of the primacy between the individual being or the social being (Koslowsky, 1983). This alternative does not seem to be soluble through technical processes or social systems. Without a study on what the person is and on his role in society and on organizations, it is difficult to find proper answers to the question to the place of ethics. The true solution will

come when we admit that every socio-economic technique has an anthropological doctrine: “to know what to do, we need to know what we are” (Llano, 1991; 44).

3. Anthropological approaches

The study on what the person means in organizations and what organizations mean for persons opens the doors for a new paradigm. When talking of anthropological approaches we mean those which understand organization as an institution which carries out “the coordination of persons’ actions for the satisfaction of real necessities of the members of the organization” (Pérez López, 1994; 28). This is: those necessities which contribute to the improvement of the human being and refer to the honest beings, in Aristotelian terminology. This new approach to organization integrates the other previously described models (the mechanic and the organic ones), but with an essential difference: technique is now understood as a science subordinated to the goal of the person, without losing the importance it has in order to the achievement of objectives. As Polo said (1993; 135), “if human action is imposed over the technical object, it can reach its finality; but if the technical object, because of its dimensions, is imposed over human action, man cannot assume its finality, and remains subordinated to the technical way of being”.

In other words, if business organization is an organization of persons, then the organization must be the path through which the individual reaches his own goal, and not only the satisfaction of some current necessities. The anthropological approach specifies, in contrast with the former ones, the subjective dimension of work, without forgetting the objective one. Thus, the valuable contributions that have been given on organization are integrated in a more complete scheme of human action. In Polo’s (1996; 107, note 5) words, “the superiority of the work in the subjective sense over the work in the objective sense is teleological, which means that the act of working is composed by immanent operations and virtues, to which its productive efficacy is due. More exactly, the act of working is the path for the superior forms to possess and domain the material world. This is why work is not a mechanical process” [9].

The technical approach was centered on «what» is done in organizations. The organic one studied not only what, but also «how». The new proposal that understands the organization as an institution, adds the question of «for what» are things done. It is also preoccupied for giving sense to the actions it coordinates. Thus, the main point in the institution is to consider the values, principles and goals that move it. The centrality of human action, the search of a sense for the actions and the assumption of an unconditional and objective character of values, are in the base of this new approach. The dualism prevailing along the 20th century is now overcome, and the valuable contributions are assumed, eliminating the subjective and autonomic character that supports them. A new concept of necessity, based on the honest good, is developed, and it incorporates objective criteria of satisfaction of real necessities in order to improve the human being. Utility and service are understood in a different way, as the main activity of the company and of the directive, being both of them

guided towards the satisfaction of human necessities (Rodríguez & López de Pedro, 1998).

According to this approach, the company's goals are illuminated by the principles that support the organization. Then, a connection is established between the company's own goal and the one of the person, and both of them need to be harmonized. The characteristic recognized in this new model is integration. The goal of the company must be focused according to the values and principles which support it. In this approach, ethics is present in a natural way, since it's precisely ethics who integrates in itself both finalities: the organizational goal and the personal one. And it makes possible the harmonization of both aspirations, since it is not easy no do good with a lack of resources.

Analyzing the model of person which underlies the new paradigm, new dimensions of reality arise, which had not been previously considered. The concepts of instrumental and expressive rationality are not enough anymore. These ways of understanding rationality forget the consequences of decisions on those who take them. The concept of «decision» itself seems to have led to forget the practical, real effects of every decision on the agent. Acting, the directive not only decides, but also decides about himself: he is involved in the consequences of the judgment he has made. It is now necessary to consider the personal responsibility of every free decision, an eminently ethical element.

Another element incorporated by the new paradigm is the consideration of new motivations, different from the strictly current ones. There are motivations that have not been considered or explained by the analyzed approaches: this is the case of motivations guided to satisfy necessities of persons different to those who do the action. The spirit of service and the uninterested cooperation would be included among these motivations. We have not found any reference to them in writings about business administration.

In this sense, the new approach aims to overcome the individualistic character and the deterministic thesis included in the organicist theories. The anthropological model reminds the classical distinction (not separation) between material and spiritual realities, and the superiority of the latter over the former (without losing the unity of the human being) [10]. This nuance is important to understand that real satisfactions proposed by the anthropological model go further than the sensible tendencies expressed by the delectable goods, and they refer to honest goods. Thus, their "ought" is not imposed by the immediateness which characterizes the inferior human faculties, but by the goals of the superior ones.

The theories of motivation found within the psycho-sociological models place a higher emphasis in the satisfaction of necessities. Maslow (1991; 147) shows a hierarchy of necessities, but considers that while the inferior ones are not satisfied, it is not possible to ascend to the superior ones, which have a "smaller ability to domain, organize and subjugate to their service the automatic reactions of the person". The anthropological model, instead, presents an opposite view. First, it is the superior faculties who have a rector function over the inferior ones. Second, a higher attention is paid to the domain of necessities, instead of their satisfaction: while it is necessary to give a minimum of satisfaction to all of them, the subject can sacrifice the satisfaction of inferior necessities in order to the satisfaction of the

superior ones. This dynamism is unthinkable in Maslow's theory, since it requires a correct comprehension of human faculties and of the role virtues play in human action.

With regard to the values, this approach does not consider only the ones referring to current satisfaction, but also those which contribute to personal development, and those meaning openness to the others [11]. This openness remarks an interesting distinction between two human tendencies: the desire of having and the capacity to share. The former refers to «earn», while the latter refers to «serve». If the stress is placed on the desire of having, and the second capacity is put aside, then it is forgotten that the capacity to share has as much strength as egoism has, and is able to give an unsuspected potentiality to organizations.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES	
Organizational model	Institution
	Goal: Service
Having	Virtue
Concept of Person	Personal Being
	Rationality: Instrumental, expressive and practical
	Motivations: Extrinsic, intrinsic and transcendental
	Values: Personal development and otherness
	Norms: Principles
Ethical approach	Comprehensive (goods, norms and virtues) Realistic

Besides, the anthropological approach does not understand norms as restrictive minimums, with a subjective origin or socially accepted. They acquire now the sense of principles that rule and guide human action, favoring individual's freedom. We must note "the tendency of the manager to establish principles in a similar way as he establishes goals. Goals can be established; instead, principles (true principles) are already naturally established. The director's function is, if any, to discover them, to express them, to make them effective (...). To accept which are those principles is the departing point of every strategy conceived in its most elemental ethical dimensions" (Llano, 1990; 18-24).

The anthropological approach substitutes the satisfaction of necessities with the election in order to the goals, and it remarks therefore the existence of a human condition, a proper «nature», different to that of the being which move only for impulses. To distinguish this human condition, it is necessary to "discover the task the man has to fulfill as a specifically

determined being. Without human nature, only the concept of tendency arises, and the concept of must disappears, being insufficiently substituted by an ambiguous sensation of plenitude, and not by an objective fulfillment” (Llano, 1990; 46). Happiness is not reached in the thing, but in the action, in the well doing. Because it is to do things well which is a goal and, thus, an object of desire for the will. This approach is the characteristic one of a comprehensive ethics, which, besides the goods searched as goals, considers norms and virtues, that help to determine the necessary means to reach the goal.

APPROACH	MECHANISTIC	PSYCHO-SOCIOLOGICAL	ANTHROPOLOGICAL
Organizational model	Machine Economic goal	Social organism Social goal	Institution Service goal
Having	Practical	Immanent possession	Virtue
Concept of person	Object Instrumental rationality Extrinsic motivations Economic values Functional norms	Subject – Individual Expressive rationality Intrinsic motivations Current satisfaction values Behavioral and cultural norms	Personal Being Practical rationality Transcendental motivations Development and otherness values Norms as principles
Ethical approach	Unilateral Normativism, Pragmatism, Utilitarianism,	Intermediate positions Dialogic, justice, Consequentialism, Communitarism	Comprehensive (of norms, goods and virtues) Realistic

The three presented models must not be understood as one excluding each other, but as one integrating and overcoming the former. The psycho-sociological model assumes the mechanistic one; the anthropological model integrates both of them, in a more complete view of the organization and of the person. Each one of them calls a different presence of ethics: from the unilateral approaches in the mechanistic model, to the comprehensive view required by the anthropological model.

4. The having in human person

The *Laborem Exercens* supplies the organizational theory with the distinction between work in the objective sense and work in the subjective sense. This distinction permits to enlarge the current models and get a more complete view of human person in the field of work, according to his dignity.

A concept that has made difficult the comprehension of work and organization is the one of “having”. Certainly, as Polo points out, “having is, rigorously, the characteristic point of the man, since it rejects the ontological loneliness and the subsequent dialectical opposition” (Polo, 1996; 105). And, though he who has is superior to what he has, it is also truth that “to have is a sign of a certain indigence, manifested in the possibility of losing what one has” (Polo, 1996; 105, note 4).

Based on the distinction between subjective and objective work (main axis of this paper), having belongs to the subjective sense of work, while what man has is the objective work.

In the mechanistic approaches, dealing with work in the objective sense, what one has appears as the acting criterion. In the psycho-sociological approaches perceive the having in order to what one has. The anthropological approaches maintain the duality between the having and what one has, while the human person, in his radical dimension, is the acting fundament within the organizational field.

The having and what one has must be understood according to the levels of human belonging. Polo (1996; 106) distinguishes three levels:

1. Man is able to have according to his doing and to his body
2. Man is able to have according to his spirit (and this is, exactly, what is rational in man)
3. Man is able to have in his own nature an acquired perfection. This is what the Greek called virtue or habit.

The mechanistic approaches take the productive dimension of action, emphasizing what one has. The authors we have pointed out design strategies in order to the productive dimension, according to the objective sense of the work.

The psycho-sociologic approaches, with the appearance of the Human Relationships School, perceive the having from a psychological dimension, remaining in the consideration of the self or subject. It is undoubtedly an advance, with regard to the mechanistic models, in considering the subject of the work. However, there is a similitude of both approaches, because they place the objective of action in the production.

The anthropological approaches emphasize, from the personal character of the one who works, that the teleological character of action is not external to the agent. The work is now considered as a mean: the person finds in it a mean of perfection through virtue.

5. Conclusion

The distinction between “work in the objective sense” and “work in the subjective sense” is

fundamental in organizational theory, in order to understand, first, the emergence of the different approaches of organization, and second, the integrative power of the anthropological approach we propose—in accordance to *Laborem exercens*—. Work is essentially, for the person who works, an act of domination. Precisely the character of domination is the newness of the anthropological model when talking about real satisfactions, in contrast to the other models, and the having remarks the role of work as a participation in the Creator's work (cfr. *Laborem exercens*, §§ 4 & 5). Through the domain, man transforms the world around him—he does not stop in a mere adaptation to the environment, as some models suggest—, and makes it serve to the goals he pursues. The having emphasizes that the superiority of work in the subjective sense with regard to the objective work is teleological. Furthermore, the anthropological model remarks man's unlimited capacity to acquire new abilities, positive or negative; this capacity starts an accumulative process by which the domain of nature grows and the perfection that man can get has no limits. So, the “work in the objective sense” does not get independence from the man, but it still depends on him as much as it is objectivated in concrete realizations carried out by the businessman. The man is placed at the beginning and at the end of this work. The anthropological approach we suggest shows, as an overcoming of the dualism of the other two approaches, that “work in the objective sense” is ordered to “work in the subjective sense”, improving the businessman that carries out this work.

However, this order is not carried out immediately. We need to take into account how man understands himself and how he acts. Along this work we have seen that there can be a tension between both terms, and even a rupture. But this situation does not place unsolvable problems; everything will depend on the way man understands himself and his action. In the distinction between objective and subjective work, it can be seen that “technique and ethics are presented as two realities (more exactly, as two dimensions of the same reality), different, but not opposed or heterogeneous. They are rather called to an intimate mutual understanding” (Illanes, 1994; 597).

In the work carried out by the businessman, that unique reality is clearly perceived, as much as the social (organizational) problems are always, at last, his problems. Technique worries about means, while ethics worries about goods and goals; thus, it is ethics who must decide in the last term, avoiding a possible conflict between them. This view is opposed to Weber's (1992) position, according to which, “science does not give an answer to the basic question of what we must do and how we must organize our live; this would be the function of a prophet or of a messiah, not of the scientist, not of the teacher”. The anthropological approach gives a unitary and comprehensive vision of reality. The antithetic (either antecedent or consequent) position in which the modern businessman is placed, is overcome through an anthropological approach. Furthermore, without this approach, the work remains in a mere objective sense, losing its subjective sense and lacking this aspect that dignifies it: to be a mean of perfection for he who carries it out.

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NOTES

[1] The basis for the development of the anthropological approach can be found in *Laborem exercens*, no. 15.

[2] The objective dimension of work is studied in *Laborem exercens*, no. 5.

[3] The incidence of the subjective dimension of work can be seen in *Laborem exercens*, no. 6.

[4] "The development of the industry and of the diverse sectors related to it affects to the very important role played, in the interaction between the subject and the object of the work, precisely by that ally of the work, created by the human body: the technique. Understanding it not as the capacity or aptitude for the work, but as a group of instruments that man uses in his work, technique is undoubtedly an ally of the man" *Laborem exercens*, no. 5d.

[5] This aspect is remarked in *Laborem exercens*, no. 9.

[6] Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 3, 1104b 34ss) proposed a distinction among honest, useful and delectable goods, distinction followed later by Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, II-

II, q. 145, a. 3).

[7] A more exhaustive development of both of these questions, in which a detailed analysis is carried out on the different ways of understanding Ethics (and the raising of Ethics in organizational theory) can be seen in Fontrodona, Guillén & Rodríguez (1998).

[8] In an interesting book, in which a critical view of this approach is given, Le Mouël (1991) remarks the implications of this view in business life.

[9] The teleological dimension mentioned here is remarked, while studying the notion of domain, in *Laborem exercens*, no. 4c.

[10] The elements for an spirituality of the work can be seen in Part V of *Laborem exercens*.

[11] The incidence in the importance of values can be seen in *Laborem exercens* no. 7.