



# HUMAN DIGNITY IN MANAGING EMPLOYEES

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The Opinions expressed in this note commit only the author of the paper  
and not necessarily Uniapac Foundation.



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## ► INTRODUCTION

**A**cademic world – Business society–Church: they used to be three independent worlds for too long. Integration has only been initiated recently: the developed ideas and theories of one segment have started to have strong and acknowledged impact on the other segments, cross-fertilizing each other. More and more conferences are organized with the aim of bringing the representatives and their ideas together, and by sharing them, influencing each other's way of thinking. UNIAPAC plays an eminent role in doing so, and I, as member of its local organization contributed to it, too. My PhD thesis, defended in September 2017 had a similar aim: to summarize how we can derive from theology the kind of philosophical anthropology which can serve as a basis for the management theory together with its implementation, which is based on the Church's Catholic Social Teaching, the related academic disciplines, while providing a useful performative approach for those in business. Having been a Christian leader and business owner for decades with significant academic background and publications, I do hope that my logic and its outcome would have a lasting impact on all the three “worlds” and on their integration, and also on the current management education system, which has to be reoriented. I fully agree with Dierksmeier (2011, p. 9), that:

“It is high time, therefore, to reorient business theory towards the real human being. Instead of describing human behavior, against all empirical evidence, along the *homo economicus* model, determined by a narrow and fixed array of preferences, the

wide scope of human interests and their dynamic change, the moral nature of human freedom, and the profundity of human dignity should be moved (back) into the center of management education.”

In case this short version raises questions and/or interest, please visit [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320347199\\_HUMAN\\_DIGNITY\\_IN\\_MANAGING\\_EMPLOYEES](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320347199_HUMAN_DIGNITY_IN_MANAGING_EMPLOYEES) for the full version of my PhD.

It is not easy to be a good Christian as a person, because of the manifold and not always clear-cut guidelines, rules, requirements and traditions of Jesus and the Church. Due to the increased complexity, it is by far more challenging and demanding to stick to the Catholic Social Teaching in the field of business, as a leader. Thus the challenge is great and success is only assured (as far as anything can be assured for a fallible human being) in case there is knowledge combined with a very strong – intrinsic – commitment.

The knowledge part has to be multidisciplinary, integrating theology and philosophical anthropology in order to understand how the related management theory can be developed and only based on that holistic approach can a well-grounded management practice be realized. For systematic and consistent implementation there is a need of a managerial tool to be able to plan and to measure the CST-driven operation. Only committed persons can keep their resilience on this path.

## ► THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THE EVOLVEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Going one-by-one, the first discipline is theology. Christian theology made it clear, right from the beginning that since all the people are created in the image of God, therefore all of them and unconditionally have human dignity.

“Those in the lineage of Cicero, Hobbes, Locke, and Kant link our specialness to our capacity for reason and morality and thus our unique degree of autonomy (Donnelly 1982b, 1989; Policy Sci (2011) 44: 303 – 319 305 Gaylin 1984; Cancik 2002; Häyry 2004). More ancient and yet persisting, the Judeo-Christian tradition asserts that our specialness arises from being created in the image of God (Gaylin 1984; Freeman 1994; Stetson 1998; Starck 2002; Häyry 2004).” (Mattson and Clark, 2011, p. 305)

While the roots go back to the Old Testament (therefore to the Judeo tradition) we have written documents about the Christian view from the middle Ages. As Anselm of Canterbury – almost 1000 years ago (1033-1109) – explained, while humans are creatures, similarly to animals, but with much more attributes shared with God, and therefore on a higher rank, than animals, thus irrespectively from worldly achievements all humans are bestowed with a form of dignity. In the works of Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), ultimately canonized, this conception became the bedrock for a conception of human dignity that encompassed every person.

According to Christianity it is the relationship of the Holy Trinity, which can and should be aimed and – within limits in time and depth – should be realized among human

beings, as formulated in the Compendium: “in their complementarities and reciprocity they are the image of Trinitarian Love in the created universe” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, para. 36). As a consequence, mutual love of persons in communion can and should be envisioned for companies, too. What it means in doing business and managing employees was gradually developed in the past more than 120 years and is called the Catholic Social Teaching.

**Figure 1 ►** Milestones of the Catholic Social Teaching history (my own selection)

CST has been developed almost continuously by the popes in the past 120 years –with some significant milestones

Year	Title of encyclical letter	Pope
• 1891	• <i>Rerum Novarum</i>	• Leo XIII
• 1931	• <i>Quadragesimo Anno</i>	• Pius XI
• 1961	• <i>Mater et magistra</i>	• John XXIII
• 1966	• <i>Gaudium et spes</i>	• Vatican II
• 1967	• <i>Populorum progressio</i>	• Paul VI
• 1981	• <i>Laborem exercens</i>	• John-Paul II
• 1987	• <i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i>	• John-Paul II
• 1991	• <i>Centesimus annus</i>	• John-Paul II
• 2009	• <i>Caritas in veritate</i>	• Benedict XVI
• 2015	• <i>Laudato si'</i>	• Francis

While the Church always felt responsible for the society, the significant social, economic and political changes of the late 19th century triggered the stream of the above encyclical letters.

*Rerum Novarum* (1891) (“On the New Things”) by Pope Leo XIII, issued in 1891, was the starting point of CST. It was driven by the injustices – especially by the treatment of the over-dependent workers. Their status motivated Leo XIII to act, publicly. It was for the first time, that a pope issued a document as a cry of protest against the exploitation of poor workers. The Pope protested against the prevailing order and

“committed the Catholic Church officially to a rejection of a central thesis of the liberal capitalism of the Western world, namely, that labour is a commodity to be bought at market prices determined by the law of supply and demand rather than by the human needs of the worker.” (Dorr, 1992, p. 14)

The Pope also rejected the socialist idea not to allow personal (individual, private) asset-ownership, just ownership by the states or municipality.

In the 60ties many milestones emerged in the CST, starting with “*Mater et magistra*” (“Mother and Teacher”). Pope John XXIII started to synthesize views and approaches:

- He called for a synthesis between scientific and spiritual values;

- He called for integration among all the people for serving jointly the common good;
- He kept the statement that authority comes from God, but he made it clear, that not the power of the ruler, in case he does not follow intrinsically the authority of God, thus moral order is to be synthesized.

He dissolved the wall between the secular and the spiritual – a revolutionary new approach: “a man should develop and perfect himself through his daily work... is perfectly in keeping with the plan of divine Providence... [the laity] must recognize that they are doing a service to humanity, in intimate union with God through Christ...” (John XXIII, 1961, para. 256). He introduced the

“three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgement on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what in the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act.” (John XXIII., 1961, para. 236).

This method is known as the “see-judge-act” approach and appears even in the latest Vatican documents, like the *Vocation of the Business Leader* (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2012, para. 87): “see the challenges and opportunities in the world of work; judge them according to the social principles of the Church; and act as leaders who serve God.”

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council’s impact on CST was a major breakthrough, because an active dialogue has been initiated by the Church with the sphere of our daily life – which continues more and more actively ever since. Among others regarding business ownership with its complexity, which can be best shown by quoting John Paul II: “The right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone.” (John Paul II, 1981, para.14) He explicitly declares his critics: “the position of “rigid” capitalism continues to remain unacceptable, namely the position that defends the exclusive right to private ownership of the means of production as an untouchable “dogma” of economic life.” (John Paul II, 1981, para.14) On the other hand “it must be stated that, from the same point of view, these many deeply desired reforms cannot be achieved by an a priori elimination of private ownership of the means of production.” (John Paul II, 1981, para.14) A few years later (in 1987) he issued the encyclical letter “*Sollicitudo rei socialis*” (“*On Social Concern*”). The central message of it is, to stress the importance of solidarity, beginning from the clear injustices and evils of our globalized economic and political system. Solidarity is seen here as the counterpoint to those “structures of sin” which are embedded





in the established order (whether that order be liberal capitalism on one side or the then still-functioning state socialism on the other one) and which do vast damage to the interests of the poor and the vulnerable. Awareness was the other, more positive, side of globalization. As a sign of hope: people are increasingly recognizing our fundamental interdependence and its ethical implications.

This is how we arrive at the possibly most remarkable encyclical letter, related to economy, which is “*Caritas in veritate*” (“*Charity in Truth*”), by Pope Benedict XVI. This is the very first encyclical letter not re-acting to a social phenomenon, but being pro-active. It was released in mid-2009, which means, not issued *after* the crisis but *during* the crisis (which started in 2008) – while the preparation for the encyclical letter started *before* the crisis (in 2007). In such a dangerous and delicate situation it was very important, that he did not attempt to shore up anyone’s political agenda. He was rather concerned with morality and the theological foundation of culture. He even avoided the temptation of a simplified approach. As Sirico, the founder and leader of Acton Institute – a top-50 USA think tank, research and educational institution for the study of religion and liberty – publicly formulated in *Wall Street Journal*:

“Benedict rightly attributes the crisis itself to ‘badly managed and largely speculative financial dealing.’ But he resists the current fashion of blaming all existing world problems on the market economy”... “*Caritas in Veritate* is a reminder that we cannot understand ourselves as a human community if we do not understand ourselves as something more than the sum of our material parts; if we do not understand our capacity for sin; and if we do not understand the principle of communion rooted in the gratuitousness of God’s grace. Simply put, to this pope’s mind, there is no just or moral system without just and moral people.” (Sirico, 2009, p. 1349)

This encyclical letter is a kind of summary or even synthesis of all the previous ones plus their further development, focusing on the “integral human development”, of which it states: “integral human development is primarily a vocation” (Benedict XVI, 2009, para. 11). It also defines personal development: “charity in truth... is the principal driving force behind the *authentic development* of every person and of all humanity” (Benedict XVI, 2009, para. 1) and puts it in the light of truth and charity: “On the one hand, charity demands justice... on the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving” (Benedict XVI, 2009, para. 6). It also re-defines and fine-tunes (true) humanity: “What we hold important is man, each man and each group of men, and we even include the whole of humanity.... If it does not involve the whole man and every man, it is not true development” (Benedict XVI, 2009, para. 18), and

“responsibility on the part of everyone with regard to everyone... cannot therefore be merely delegated to the State” (Benedict XVI, 2009, para. 38).

Conscience is the key aspect of the “*Laudato Si*” encyclical letter, too. This one was released by Pope Francis in 2015. Interestingly, but not surprisingly there are important thoughts also related to human dignity and the relation from man to man, since:

“human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin. The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations” (Francis, 2015, para. 66)

Thus by now the evolvement of CST reached a crystallized phase where theory can and should be put into practice more consciously and consistently, especially because the events in the actual mainstream economy and business show their limits and problems. This is why not only the Pope and the bishops, but academic people, and practitioners contributed to it, so the ideas of Catholic Social *Teaching* have been extended, detailed and linked to related theories collectively achieving a comprehensive Catholic Social *Thought* system. And Catholic Social Practice is the daily realization of CST in the management of companies, which can only be done by those who are not just “clever” and educated from a so-called “professional” point of view – which consists of secular knowledge and know-how – but are also wise and are educated in the field of Christian spirituality, and specifically in CST.

Interestingly there are no fixed summaries, which exactly define the key points of CST. Therefore, the different summaries – when listing the principles – show different numbers, with a range from as low as 2 up to even 11, typically however between 4 to 7. Since these principles are highly interdependent and closely linked to each other, no wonder different people or/and organizations try to summarize them for different intentions in different ways.

### SOME EXAMPLES

The Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education. (1989) document speaks about only 2 foundational principles for business, which are:

1. human dignity and
2. the common good

The US-based Jesuit, Kammer (director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute), speaks about 4 core principles of today’s CST:

1. **The Principle of Human Dignity:** A just society can become a reality only when it is based on respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person.
2. **The Principle of the Common Good:** According to its primary and broadly accepted sense, the common good indicates “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, para. 164)
3. **The Principle of Subsidiarity:** The principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups [families, cultural, recreational and professional associations, unions, political bodies, neighborhood groups] to fulfill their duties.

4. **The Principle of Solidarity:** Solidarity highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity.

Even in the case of 7 or 11 principles, the focal point and the first of the lists is always human dignity. Human dignity is based on our brotherhood and though being creatures, but the only ones with God’s shape (“God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them” Genesis, 1:27). All the other principles of CST (whether one more or up to 10) can be viewed as its consequence or result. Thus human dignity is the pillar, as Pope Francis made it clear, too:

“If the human person is not at the centre, then something else gets put there, which the human being then has to serve.”

(Francis, 2014, <http://catholic-thoughts.info/>)

## ► HISTORICAL EVOLVEMENT OF THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND THE DEFINITION I CHOSE

Although the philosophical approach of human dignity has a 2500-year history, there is still no consensus on its definition. The problem is even deeper, in fact for some – like Ruth Macklin (2003) – “Dignity is a Useless Concept” (as a title of her article!). Even the fact, that it has been used, interpreted and discussed for close to 2500 years has not helped to finally agree on its content – and even more on the related consequences. The reason for it is that here we speak about a

“value intrinsic to human life by reflecting about what makes the human being special and through emphasizing how human capabilities differ from those of other life forms.” (Dierksmeier, 2011, p. 12).

Like most philosophy-driven terms and thoughts, this is also one of those, where we should go back to antiquity. Starting with Plato (427-347 BCE) in his theory a man is more capable if he can deeply understand both himself as well as the objects he has to deal with. Thus rationality is the key driver for humanity. Rationality in a broad sense, but as the highest driver for making decisions. Basically humans are the only ones who are able to transcend their natural wishes and desires – even going to the extreme, to put aside the very basic (and in case of animals overwhelming) drive for survival. Thus human beings draw on an intellectual realm of reality, what puts them above animals. This is the origin of some kind of dignity (compared to animals) in his view. Since the level of such “understanding” and intellectual capability differs from person to person,

the level of dignity is not the same, either. One acts the better, consequently, the deeper one understands the nature of both oneself and of the objects one has to deal with (Salkever 2009). Aristotle supported this view, but went further:

“Aristotle (384–322 BCE) supported the idea that human dignity is linked to man, too, however depending on the actual use of their rational capacities, we can and should differ and between lesser and better men. He defined happiness (eudaimonia) as the ultimate objective for life, which can be achieved by leveraging practical wisdom based well-ordered life. “... “Doing so we can establish a relative independence from external influences (autarchia) and to live according to one’s inward orientation (Rosen, 2012, p. 157).

Jumping almost 2000 years maybe the most influential – and still strongly negotiated and challenged – philosopher of modern times is, – also in this respect – is Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). He focused on two problems: 1. Are all men and women entitled for human dignity, or just a subgroup of mankind only? 2. Is it a capability to be praised or is it an attribute? He addressed these problems by discerning between the *relative* value of a given human person according to their moral worthiness and the *absolute* dignity of the human person as such. Kant started by rejecting the common notion that the human being is free first – and then, later, submits (or not) to moral laws. He explains human freedom itself from the ability to realize moral commands,

not *vice versa*. The crucial point of this argumentation is the following: If the human being were only (negatively) *free from* natural impulses but not also (positively) *free to* realize a higher, i.e. the moral law, then human freedom would appear merely as an erratic deviation from an otherwise regular (i.e. naturally determined) behavior. In his own words:

“Every human being has dignity – through being able to be moral – but only those who do, in fact, lead moral lives also deserve the praise of personal ethical value.” (Kant, 1785, para. 4: 431)

He explicitly stated, that humans are “end-in-themselves”, thus we must not objectify human beings:

“that which constitutes the condition under which alone anything can be an end in itself, this has not merely a relative worth, i.e., value, but an intrinsic worth, that is, dignity. Now morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end-in-himself, since by this alone is it possible that he should be a legislating member in the kingdom of ends. Thus morality, and humanity as capable of it, is that which alone has dignity.” (Kant, 1785, para. 4: 433)

He also makes a very interesting separation between those things which can be bought and the ones which cannot be:

“In the kingdom of ends everything has a price or a dignity. What has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; what... is raised above all price and therefore admits of no equivalent has a dignity.... Morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, since only through this is it possible to be a lawgiving member in the kingdom of ends. Hence morality, and humanity insofar as it is capable of morality, is that which alone has dignity.” (Kant, 1785, para. 4: 434-435)

Thus while it seems, as if he extended dignity to all human beings, it should be noted, that Kant limits dignity to humanity “insofar as it is capable of morality”. In more detail:

“the dignity of man consists precisely in his capacity to make universal law, although only on condition of being himself also subject to the laws he makes.” (Kant, 1785, para. 4: 432)

As a summary we can state that Kant sought to derive man’s dignity from autonomy and rationality.

In the recent years a kind of convergence can be seen of the approach of philosophy and theology – with guidelines towards management, too:

“The term, human dignity expresses the idea that every human individual is intrinsically worthy, and therefore each person deserves respect and great

consideration. Thus, a person can never be treated as a thing or a mere resource for gain. Indifference, understood as an absolute lack of recognition of the personhood of an individual or affection for them, is also contrary to the worthiness of each person and inconsistent with the Golden Rule (e.g., Melé 2012, pp. 28 – 29). Respect for human dignity includes consideration for people’s feelings, intimacy, and self-determination. Consequently, an interpersonal relationship should not be seen as a mechanism to seek certain interest, without considering the counterparty as another “I”. Every person deserves recognition and respect, as a being endowed of dignity.” (Melé, 2014, p. 462)

And even non-believers, like Schroeder come to the conclusion:

“If we want to use dignity as the foundation for human rights and accord all human beings human rights, then only the Traditional Catholic understanding of dignity is appropriate.” (Schroeder, 2012, p. 332)

These general statements which earlier appeared in encyclical letters and other Church documents only, or in scientific papers for the academic world, have recently been transformed into documents for business leaders. One of the recent such documents is the “Vocation of the business leader” which clearly defines the term “human dignity”, with care and going into details, even giving some explanations:

**“At the very foundation of the Church’s social tradition stands the conviction that each person, regardless of age, condition, or ability, is an image of God and so endowed with an irreducible dignity, or value. Each person is an end in him or herself, never merely an instrument valued only for its utility — a who, not a what; a someone, not a something. This dignity is possessed simply by virtue of being human. It is never an achievement, nor a gift from any human authority; nor can it be lost, forfeited, or justly taken away. All human beings regardless of individual properties and circumstances therefore enjoy this God-given dignity.” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2012, para. 11).**

As we can see, the text is a kind of useful summary of the complex history and efforts to summarize the theological-philosophical basis. However, since its aim is not a mere knowledge transfer of theory, but a motivation to act, therefore it switches from “knowing” to “doing”. It clearly states, that business owners and business leaders should implement the principles into their operation. This is why I have chosen exactly this definition as my operational definition for the rest of my work.

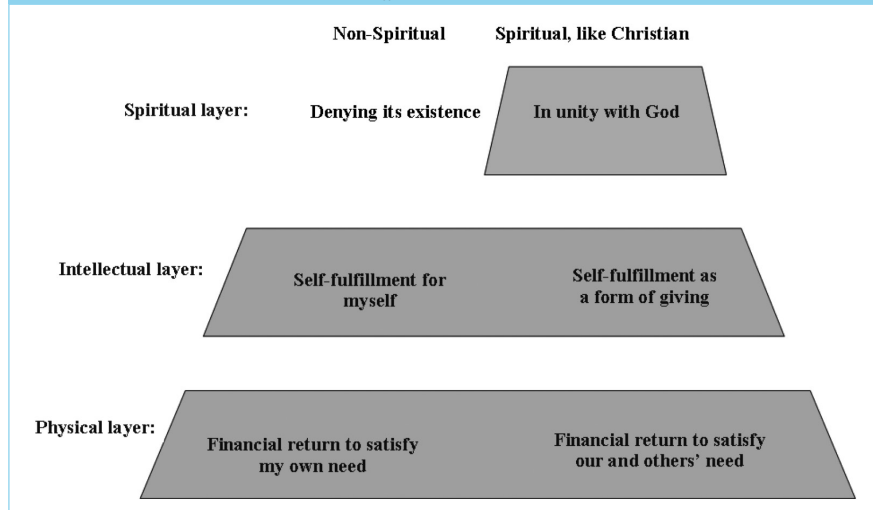


## ► PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY – ARRIVING AT PERSONALISM

In the field of philosophical anthropology and with the help of Pérez López we can and should separate:

1. philosophical anthropology that develops “our understanding about what a human being consists of and how it operates”;
2. philosophical ethics which is concerned with “what happens to that human being when it acts one way or another”;
3. the sociology of organizations addresses “problems relating to interactions between human beings”; (Pérez López, 1989, as cited in Argandoña, 2008, p. 443).

**Figure 2 ►** The three layers of human beings, according to my evaluation (Héjj, 2006, slide 2)



So let us continue with what Pérez López (1989) called philosophical ethics. Here there is major breakthrough, too. It has just recently been “officially” discovered or/and scientifically proved, that humans are not only greedy (as the classical capitalist approach states), but also own a completely separate, even “inverse” approach attribute. Inverse meaning, that instead of aiming to get and to own – what the classical capital is all about – this, so-called “altruistic capital” (Ashraf, 2013), aims to give, which seems to turn the whole classical concept upside-down.

Human beings (with this extra value) can still be viewed in two ways: either as an individual human being or as “person”, which is even more. This is how we arrive at personalism.

“Of particular significance is, accordingly, the classification based on different approaches to what a human being is — a subject, an individual, or a person. Those thinkers who consider human beings as subjects (e.g., René Descartes, Immanuel Kant), or as individuals (e.g., Adam Smith, Friedrich von Hayek, Abraham Maslow), espouse what may be referred to as a nonpersonalistic humanism; those who consider them as persons, a personalistic humanism” (Acevedo, 2012, p. 198)

Personalistic humanism does not deny our individual being: “our whole being is an individual by reason of that in us which derives from matter, and a person by reason of that in us which derives from spirit” (Maritain, 1947, p. 33). “In personalism, the human being is seen as a duality, individual-person, which can provide a way of conceiving both the self-interested and self-giving aspects of human action in an integrated way.” (Naughton et al., 2010) It is essential to evaluate Maritain’s view in more detail,

since he is the one, who founded the “true” personalistic humanism. The adjective “true” or “integral” was given by him. Interestingly, Maritain’s work “Humanisme integral”, published in 1936 and now translated into English as Integral humanism, was first translated as True humanism in 1938. His own argumentation for “integral” and “true” is that it is “integral” because it possesses everything that is essential to render that which is properly human. In this sense it is a “true” humanism; i.e., it is a humanism of the human being viewed as a human person, in the temporal and supratemporal reality and wholeness. Though it also considers individuality and subjectivity, the human person is not reducible to either. This humanism is anchored on a realistic account of essential human nature properly placed in the realm of things and in the “concrete logic of the events of history” (Maritain, 1939, p. 1). Thinking about work and business from a human development, i.e. human dignity point of view (for all the stakeholders), than he is right stating, that

“Reasonable authority, instead of power, and justice and friendship, instead of self-interest, should characterize the management of business relationships (Maritain 1943b/2001, 1951a).” (As cited in Acevedo, 2012, p. 212)

Human beings can have an identity of up to three layers. Being a living creature, we – human beings – have “automatically” a physical/material layer. Being more than that, so-called “homo sapiens” we also have and can leverage an intellectual layer. For many, who deny any other layer this is the highest layer. For those with faith, there is a 3<sup>rd</sup> layer, the spiritual one, in most cases with the strong desire and will to be aligned with God. This is shown below in Figure 2.

According to this concept, the *physical layer* refers to skills and capabilities related to hands, muscles, and to all of the senses. It is measured by the physical output. The person, on this level, is considered as an individual. The physical layer is followed by the *intellectual layer*, linked with the mind, emotions, and will. It is measured as IQ, EQ, and AQ. This level considers the person in relationship with others. As for the third level, the *spiritual layer*, it is based on and linked to the transcendent. Achievements, results, or “expected returns” are level-dependent and are aligned with our faith in spirituality.

- As we can see, if this layer exists and is acknowledged, then it has a significant impact on the two other layers, since spirituality and being oriented toward others goes

hand-in-hand. This is the way to dignify the layers of physical and intellectual layer. And in that way we are back at human dignity...

- Maritain’s “integral” humanism is based on the intrinsic dignity and proper ends of the human person – exactly like a few decades later at the Caritas in veritate encyclical letter (2009) where we find exactly this formulation: the ultimate goal is/should be the person’s “integral human development”, which “is primarily a vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone” (Benedict XVI., 2009, para. 11).
- This is why the theological, philosophical, and related anthropological approaches lead us to a related management theory system, derived in consequence of the above.

## ► THE MANAGEMENT THEORY DERIVED

### ① STAKEHOLDER APPROACH - ② SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

#### ① Stakeholder approach

I have chosen human dignity as the focus of my thesis and the cornerstone of a normative system and its implementation to examine and answer the difficult question: what does it really mean to implement human dignity in management, what makes companies behave Catholic Social Teaching-driven?

One of the key issues is stakeholder approach, which reflects that value creation is not done by the founder (alone). Therefore all who contribute to value creation, should be taken into account.

“Initially located in strategic management, the stakeholder approach focuses on what is the purpose of the firm, who should have an influence on corporate strategy and how can the firm meet the expectations and demands of groups in its environment. Stakeholder theory centres around the idea that firms have to take into account and integrate the needs of all its stakeholders in the way they operate their business to create and distribute value. Stakeholders may be any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the firm (Freeman 1984). Compared to other theories of strategic management, stakeholder theory addresses morals and values as a central feature of managing organizations.” (Schlierer et al., 2012, p. 39)

Here we see how over-simplified Milton Friedman’s business definition was: instead of a one-dimensional (financial) value maximization for the owners, managers have to create different types of values for different segments of the world around them and their challenge is

the ongoing right balance and optimization, which starts with the recognition of the different stakeholders. Over time the most important potential stakeholders got – at least gradually – acknowledged as stakeholders. Both theory and practice proved that only the (almost) full stakeholder-approach can assure true accountability with a balanced responsibility:

- **OWNER.** Founder, ultimate decision maker, who keeps the entity alive
- **MANAGERS.** Responsible for the operation
- **CUSTOMERS.** Paying for the products and services
- **EMPLOYEES.** Delivering added value
- **VENDORS.** To be relied on (quality, time, cost)
- **CREDITORS.** Believing in our future
- **STATE.** Representing the macro environment (tax)
- **MICRO ENVIRONMENT.** Local responsibility
- **NEXT GENERATION.** Environment protection, sustainability, the human environment.

Without spirituality this is the maximum scope for rational stakeholder involvement. In the light of spirituality two more stakeholders can be identified. The all-history question of the poor, the ones in need, become part of the responsibility question. Extending this list with the Christian approach means that even the poor of the society to be supported are considered as stakeholders. According to Pope Francis, we cannot understand the Good News of Jesus Christ – the gospel of dignity and fraternity, of justice and peace – without being aware of real poverty, i.e., by turning our backs on the scandal of exclusion or blindly hoping that it will take care of itself (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, para. 54).

The idea of the poor as stakeholders go hand-in-hand with the other – for some even more provocative – idea of God as a stakeholder.

The idea of God as a stakeholder is not exclusively linked to Catholic academic people, e.g. one of its protagonists, Schwartz, base his logic on his Jewish faith. As he says:

“This paper argues that God both is (i.e., descriptive) and should be (i.e., normative) considered a managerial stakeholder for those businesspeople and business firms that accept that God exists and can affect the world. In other words, for certain individuals, God should not be ‘checked at the office door’, instead, God should be taken into account as a managerial stakeholder when business decisions are made.” (Schwartz, 2006, p. 292)

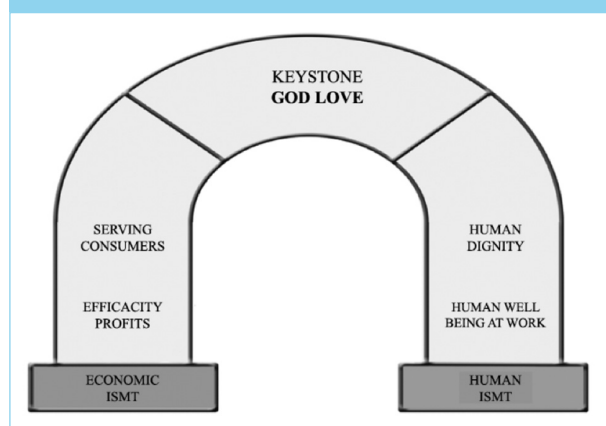
He looked at Mitchell’s (1997) definition on managerial stakeholder definition, which can be summarized in three points:

1. the stakeholder’s power to influence the firm,
2. the legitimacy of the stakeholder’s relationship with the firm, and
3. the urgency of the stakeholder’s claim on the firm.

Based on that definition Schwartz insists that for those having a faith God really is a managerial stakeholder. Fry et al. show management as an arch of two, sometimes conflicting driving forces: one being the economic pillar, the other the human one. They can only be linked, integrated, even harmonized, if there is a keystone with this function, and this keystone is God love. That means, neither the economic, nor the human aspects are in the middle, but God, and all activities have a direct bi-directional relation with God.

Stakeholder theory thus has close links to human dignity in respecting all the members of the business. The common activity at the company is working, with a commonly shared vision of jointly serving the common good, by creating value for all the stakeholders.

**Figure 3 ► God love as keystone**  
(Source: Fry et al, 2010 The keystone and the two columns that link the two ISMAs. — Figure 7)



## 2 Servant-leadership

There is a convergence between the terms of management theory and CST, which continues in many fields and as a result:

“efficiency and solidarity, economy and sociality no more appear as antithetical, but complementary elements that are starting to give shape to the Corporate of the present and will mark, more and more, the Corporate of the future.” (Argiolas, 2014, p. 44)

This important convergence trend is why by now we are “allowed” to openly speak about “love” (a word coming far outside the corporate jargon) in management and leadership. On the deepest level – even when we speak about management – we find the link between human dignity and love for each other. Love includes solidarity = care, and respect = recognition. Care perspectives view individuals as fundamentally relational (Gilligan, 1982), and consider work as holding the potential to humanize and enrich workers, as organizational members attempt to build self-esteem through their work (McAllister and Bigley, 2002). Recognition theory offers an important step in understanding the “human side” of management, correcting traditional views of human capital by arguing that organizations are, first and foremost, social systems inhabited by existentially engaged human beings. This is why Claus Dierksmeier shows the direction of management theory, as follows: “[it] should set sail towards the shores of a humanistic paradigm, centred on the idea of human dignity.” (Dierksmeier, 2011, p. 1)

As a very successful (vice president) ex-investment banker of J.P. Morgan (and due to his earlier life as a Jesuit candidate for seven years...), Lowney summarizes in his book “Heroic leadership”:

“Love-driven leadership is the vision to see each person’s talent, potential and dignity the courage, passion and commitment to unlock that potential the resulting loyalty and mutual support that energize and unite teams” (Lowney, 2005, p. 170)

Such kind of culture, behavior and communication is only possible if it comes from the top of the company. And as always, it is easy to speak about nice things when the bottom line is perfect, but it is much more difficult to do so in hard times, especially to link the lack of alternative value creation to financial unsuccessfulness. Still there are testimonies, as below, from the vice president of the US telecom giant of its time, Motorola:

“People have said that I am ethical to a fault and I don’t mind having that title. As I said before, when I am spiritually fit, the physical, emotional, and intellectual takes care of itself. Right now this company



is really in a hole and we have lost our way. Why is that? Because we have lost our soul. We used to believe in soulful things: the people, dignity, respect for our nation. We didn't live for the shareholders, and as a result the success of the business took care of itself. When we operated in this way people were energised, joyful, excited, intellectual, spirited, and competitive, rather than competitors. They carried us down the field over the line. In losing this soulful-ness, our people have begun to get dull, spiteful, not caring; they're inflexible, cynical, contracted, and fearful. I've watched us go from being a very spiritual community of people who give back and respect hard work and service – to a group of people with an attitude of arrogance who only want the best talent that can perform to their standards.” (Webb, 2006, pp. 11-12)

Instead of the “ruling leader” having power over the bunch of people paid by the company and leveraging this position for the benefit of the company and its owner only, we end up at the “management school” of “servant-leadership”. Since the term is very important from my research point of view, I start with the definition of it, quoting the Center for Servant-leadership:

“Servant-leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world.” (greenleaf.org, n.d.)

The modern notion of servant-leadership was invented by Robert K. Greenleaf, who has been hailed as the “grandfather” of the contemporary empowerment movement in management and business leadership. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, American university campuses were in a state of turmoil. It was an age of anti-authority and antiestablishment, when universities were unmercifully critical of all established leaders. As a consultant to businesses and universities on organizational management, Greenleaf was greatly troubled by crumbling institutions that were unable to heal themselves. As with many writers of this period, Greenleaf feared that rebellious youth would become too absorbed in dissecting wrong and too consumed by their zeal for instant perfection to add anything of lasting value to society. He recognized that students needed to be given hope and proposed that a better world could be created by changing the leadership paradigm. Thus, he yearned for a future when “leaders will bend their efforts to serve with skill, understanding, and spirit, and that followers will be responsive only to able servants who would lead them” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 4). The new servant-leader had to be, a servant first and a leader second. The servant’s motivation was “. . . to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 13).

Servant-leadership is an attitude toward the responsibilities of leadership as much as it is a style of leadership. It is most often presented and understood in juxtaposition to autocratic or hierarchical styles of leadership. Servant-leadership takes into account the fact that traditional forms of leadership are inadequate for motivating today’s people to follow.

“Personalism requires servant-leaders ‘with a transforming vision’”(Whetstone 2002) who affirm their followers’ human dignity. Intellectual and moral virtue, instead of pretense or appearance, is called for from organizational leaders. Maritainian personalism prescribes friendship rather than power plays, justice rather than exploitation, manipulation, undue advantage, breaking promises, bluffing, or deceit. “Civic love or friendship is the very soul or animating form of every political society” (Maritain 1951a, p. 209, as cited in Acevedo, 2012, p. 214)

Servant-leadership has become more and more accepted. When it comes to setting and maintaining the vision for the organization, the pyramid must have the designated leader at the top. Input into the vision, mission, and the organization’s goals and values, however, must be sought from others in the organization, who must come to own them. Once this has been accomplished, the pyramid reverses. As Ken Blanchard has pointed out concerning the leader of the future:

“When you turn the pyramid upside down... the people become responsible, and the job of management is to be responsive to them... If you work for your people, your purpose as a leader is to help them accomplish their goals” (Blanchard, 1996, p. 85)

As a summary I would define the servant-leader as a leader whose primary purpose for leading is to serve others by investing in their development and well-being, thus respecting their human dignity for the benefit of accomplishing tasks and goals for the common good.

### 3 Gratuity and reciprocity

It is common sense to link human rights to the workplace, but gratuity and reciprocity rarely show up in business and management contexts. Let us first elaborate on the unusual triangle of human dignity-business-gratuity. It seems to be nonsense, and in the traditional view of business it really is, since business is about “deals”, both within the company (“you work – I pay”) as well as towards the outside world (suppliers, market). However, in a CST-driven, human dignity-based approach gratuity is not just possible, but an essential part of its fulfillment. Human dignity is not only about being able to care about ourselves, but being able to give, to share, to do something “only” out of love, based exclusively on intrinsic motivation, without any financial reward or any other type of compensation. Therefore:



“An economy that loses contact with gratuitousness does not have a future as an economy, for it will not attract those with high “vocations”; if the enterprise becomes only a business (in the sense of a “machine to make money”), and excludes the passions and moral sentiments, it will only attract persons with a low capacity for human relations, meaning poor managers and workers.” (Zamagni, n.d., p. 13)

Gratuity brings us to another newly discovered phenomenon: reciprocity. Especially, since, “Near the gift, the reciprocity develops” (Argiolas, 2006, p. 10). Reciprocity

enables that the human dignity approach from the CEO towards the employee is not a “one-way street”, all stakeholders can take part in gratuity-intended actions, resulting in a multi-reciprocity net, as Argiolas (2017, pp. 84-85) stresses:

“making space for the other and finding space in the other, in one’s integrality, sharing values, motivations, actions, plans, talents, and intents to the point of experiencing a free co-belonging.”

That is “living in communion”, which leads us to practice dialogue, trust and reciprocity.

## ► MANAGERIAL TOOLS FOR HUMAN DIGNITY BASED MANAGEMENT

### ① General overview of related efforts

In the recent decades the desire for holistic managerial approaches are growing. More and more academic people and practitioners realized that getting lost in small issues is a danger for better performance in all aspects. This is true for management as well. The most relevant, sophisticated and holistic approach is the so-called “St. Gallen management model (SGMM)”. The first version of that management framework was developed in the 1960s at the University St. Gallen and first published by Hans Ulrich and Walter Krieg in 1972. The model supports managers in thinking holistically and in doing a completion check in the field of strategic management. In addition to that, the model allows enough flexibility to implement further

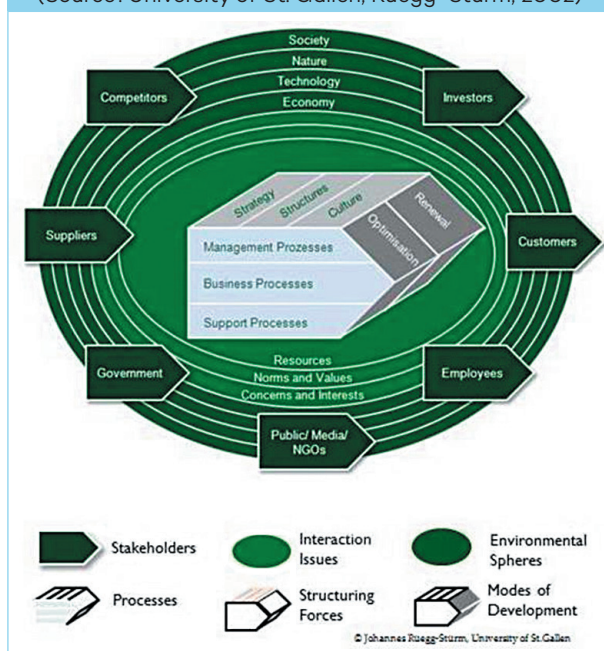
methods and solutions. Revised by Rüeegg-Stürm (2002), the model was published thirty years later by the University Of St. Gallen in 2002 as “The New St. Gallen Management Model”, as it is shown in Fig. 4.

As we can see it really integrates the different best practices of management: in the center there are the processes, impacted by strategy, structures and culture and split according to optimizing existing systems or aiming renewal. This 3D integrated system is embedded into the circles of interaction types and environmental spheres. All the stakeholders are included, thus the picture is really holistic.

However, I still miss something very important: spirituality. The lack of spiritual aspect makes the whole approach very materialistic and as a result non-human. I suppose the authors would either argument, that spirituality is indirectly represented through “values” (among interaction issues), or by saying that spirituality is not part of management. In both cases the importance and impact of spirituality gets downgraded, even neglected.

Instead I think spirituality should be shown as the basis and all the rest (the circles and the central part) have to grow out of this. Anyway, this is already a step away from the current mainstream organizational theory, which is largely informed by economics, drawn substantively from neoclassical theories of human beings (Ghoshal, 2005). Accordingly, humans are materialistic utility maximizers that value individual benefit over group and societal benefit. A ‘homo economicus’ engages with others only in a transactional manner to fulfill his or her stable and predictable interests. He/she is amoral, values short term gratification and often acts opportunistically to further personal gain. Business strategy and organizational design are largely based on these limited and limiting assumptions and, in turn, are blamed for creating negative externalities.

**Figure 4 ► The New St. Gallen Management-Modell**  
(Source: University of St. Gallen, Rüeegg-Stürm, 2002)





"In contrast to economism, however, humanism assumes that human nature is not entirely a given, that it can be refined, through education and learning. In addition, the ethical component remains a cornerstone in humanism in that it attributes unalienable rights to everybody, independent from ethnicity, nationality, social status or gender" (Pirson and Lawrence, 2010, as cited in Pirson, 2013, p. 4)

The efforts to combine at least the financial with the non-financial but intellectual layer type information has just a 25-year history. A major breakthrough in this respect was the idea of the well-known "Triple Bottom Line" (TBL), formulated by John Elkington in 1994. To provide a homogenous and comparable report for all types of business, in 1997 the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES) and the Tellus Institute created a new organization, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), which developed a comprehensive sustainability reporting framework.

Interestingly, while human dignity is such a cornerstone in philosophy, theology, politics, and sociology, and while there are so many different standards, measuring systems and especially checklist-type guidelines in management, "human dignity" is never in the focus, as an exclusive target to measure. No wonder, since, as W. Picard from MIT writes:

"human dignity is a dangerous thing to measure. The worth of humans has been scaled by the color of their skin; elevated according to education, beauty, and notoriety, aggrandized in excessive compensation packages for CEO's, inflated by populist appeal of athletic and acting ability, discounted in the twilight years of adulthood, insulted in slavery, ignored in the Holocaust, and declared irrelevant in abortion. Less worth or desirability is attributed to those who are average or below average, those who occupy positions of unassuming service, those who are infirm or weak, those who have suffered loss of their abilities from a tragic accident, those who are terminally ill, those who are not self-sufficient, and even those who are none of the above, but who are merely unwanted or unappreciated by someone arrogant or powerful." (Picard, 1998, p.1)

This is why another approach puts human rights in the middle of – or sometimes even instead of – human dignity. In my view the cause and effect is vice versa: to respect human rights is a consequence of respecting human dignity, respecting the "other I", as a person.

The dignity of the workplace and the dignity worker have the same roots, namely to see the workers as persons (rather than "resources" and to see the company as a community (rather than a profit-generating machine). This is why Amartya Sen rejects the terminology of human

capital or human resources (Sen 1985), and recommend to reconceptualize business around human relations and human capabilities (Boselie 2010). Human beings must hence never be accounted for as mere cost factors or labor suppliers, i.e., secondary factors in an economy geared to primarily quantitative goals. Rather they need to be regarded as the primary qualitative objective of business. Person = "endowed with self – consciousness and with moral conscience, bearer of values and value in himself" as Sorgi formulated at *Costruire il sociale*, p. 35, as early as 1991.

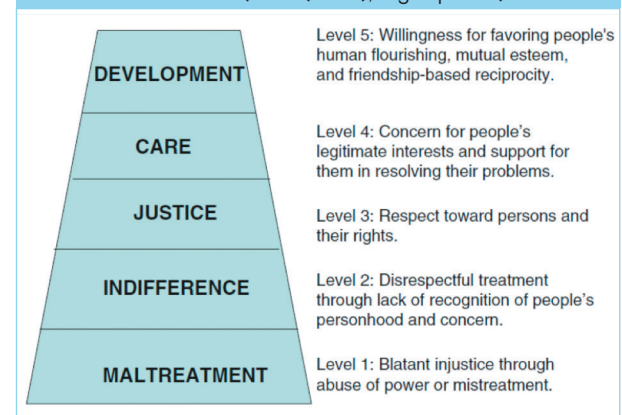
To be able to specify the content of dignity *in* and *at* work, we may use the framework of Bolton, as shown in Fig. 5.

**Figure 5 ► Dimensions of dignity model**  
(Bolton (2010), Figure 5, p. 166)

Dignity in Work	Dignity at Work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy</li> <li>• Job satisfaction</li> <li>• Meaningful work</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Learning &amp; development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellbeing</li> <li>• Just reward</li> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Equal opportunity</li> </ul>

Another useful approach is the "pyramid" of Melé:

**Figure 6 ► Five organizational levels of Human Quality Treatment (Melé (2014), Fig 1. p. 463)**



## 2 Servant-leadership and wellness measures

If servant-leadership is a set of practices, those who follow this philosophy and its implementation should share typical characteristics, which can be evaluated, monitored, even measured. Here it is:

"Batten (1998, p. 39) prepared a list of the characteristics of servant-leaders. His list includes goal-orientation, knowing how to lead a significant life based on "faith, hope, love and gratitude," integrity, team work, enriching the lives of others, understanding and respecting others, having grace and forgiveness for others, and being tough-minded. Batten emphasizes the importance of forgiving and leading with passion." (Page and Wong, 2000, p. 17)

Servant-leaders being tough minded but tenderhearted is similar to the dual emphasis on leading and caring. Bottum and Lenz also list the skills needed for the development of servant-leadership. These skills include “communication skills and empathetic listening, conflict resolution, problem solving, consensus decision making, and community building” (Bottum and Lenz, 1998, p. 164).

Those who commit themselves to CST-driven human dignity based servant-leadership badly need methods and tools to plan and to control whether they really do it and in the right way?! And they need it in a language that managers understand and like. They have to be able to answer the fundamental questions: What is in the focus of their overall approach, what is the basis of the evaluation of the company, led by him, what is his incentive based on, etc? All these are mainly linked and traced back to accounting. This is the level, where implementation can really start and be seen, and controlled. And exactly this is the reason why Leire Alcañiz and José Luis Retolaza (2015) suggest shifting common accounting principles which are mainly focused on annual profit/loss, in order to contribute to shareholders’ interest and pay taxes to public administrations. They therefore argue that accounting models have to be complemented with a new approach that could assess stakeholders about the value that firms are generating while interacting with them:

“The accounting process should be able to quantify not only profits, but also the impacts of firms on suppliers, customers, the environment, local communities, workers’ quality of life, employment and the overall society.” (Aguado, Alcañiz, and Retolaza, 2015, p. 43)

Thus it can be stated, that the traditional way of financially quantifying the value creation does not function, since

“social welfare should be understood as well-being creation rather than wealth creation.” (Pirson and Dierksmeier, 2014, p. 20)

So the new direction is driven by “wellbeing creation”, which consists of a complexity of “wellnesses”:

“Wellness is much more than merely physical health, exercise or nutrition. It is the full integration of states of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. The model used by our campus includes social, emotional, spiritual, environmental, occupational, intellectual and physical wellness. Each of these seven dimensions act and interact in a way that contributes to our own quality of life.” (University of California, [wellness.ucr.edu](http://wellness.ucr.edu), n.d.)

According to the University of California, the full list of wellnesses not only consists of “tangible” aspects, like health, but a holistic complexity of all kinds of wellness aspects, even regarding spiritual aspects and personal relations:

- **“Social Wellness** is the ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world. Our ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers contributes to our Social Wellness.
- **Emotional Wellness** is the ability to understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring. The ability to acknowledge and share feelings of anger, fear, sadness or stress; hope, love, joy and happiness in a productive manner contributes to our Emotional Wellness.
- **Spiritual Wellness** is the ability to establish peace and harmony in our lives. The ability to develop congruency between values and actions and to realize a common purpose that binds creation together contributes to our Spiritual Wellness.
- **Environmental Wellness** is the ability to recognize our own responsibility for the quality of the air, the water and the land that surrounds us. The ability to make a positive impact on the quality of our environment, be it our homes, our communities or our planet contributes to our Environmental Wellness.
- **Occupational Wellness** is the ability to get personal fulfillment from our jobs or our chosen career fields while still maintaining balance in our lives. Our desire to contribute in our careers to make a positive impact on the organizations we work in and to society as a whole leads to Occupational Wellness.
- **Intellectual Wellness** is the ability to open our minds to new ideas and experiences that can be applied to personal decisions, group interaction and community betterment. The desire to learn new concepts, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning contributes to our Intellectual Wellness.
- **Physical Wellness** is the ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows us to get through our daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress. The ability to recognize that our behaviors have a significant impact on our wellness and adopting healthful habits (routine check-ups, a balanced diet, exercise, etc.) while avoiding destructive habits (tobacco, drugs, alcohol, etc.) will lead to optimal Physical Wellness. (University of California, [wellness.ucr.edu](http://wellness.ucr.edu), n.d.)

It can easily be agreed upon, that a company, which establishes a culture aiming to support its employees’ integral human development based on the above “wellness targets” really implements the notion of human dignity.

### 3 “Holistic stakeholder value matrix” as a framework for governance and planning

In order to be able to consistently implement the CST-driven approach based on human dignity as the prime

driving force, leaders need to plan, control and measure. In the previous part we realized why and how we are “forced” to switch from the shareholder – to a holistic stakeholder – approach, which leads us to the real common good. My theory for a framework was developed more than a decade ago, by combining the three layers (physical, intellectual, spiritual) as rows, with the broadest stakeholder approach, as columns, so we end up with the *Holistic Stakeholder Value Matrix*.

**Figure 7** ► Holistic Stakeholder Value Matrix  
(Source: Héjj, 2006, slide 13)

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**By combining the three layers with the broadest stakeholder approach we end up with the *Holistic Stakeholder Value Matrix***

Stakeholders Layers	Shareholder	Employees	Customers	Vendors	Society	Future generations	The poor
Spiritual							
Intellectual							
Material (Financial)							

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Each crossing has a potential for value creation, and jointly they cover every stakeholder’s every “layer”, thus it is really holistic. CST-driven leaders should take care of all the elements of the value creation matrix, thus instead of “maximization” they should “optimize” a set of portfolio goals – this is the real and very responsible challenge!

This theory was developed by me in the first years after the millennium, introduced to the public on the “Good company” conference in 2006 organized by University of St. Thomas, and it got published among others as Chapter 45 of Zsolnai and Bouckaert (2011). The Stakeholder Value Matrixes of the different approaches are different in their targeted fields, as business becomes more than just profit. This is illustrated in the figure 8 below.

The more we want to follow God’s strategy, the more complex and holistic the stakeholder value matrix becomes – this is why I call the fully holistic as “spiritual company”.

So what does this mean in practice? Here and now we would focus on the employees-column. From a company point of view: “the employees might also be the biggest of our liabilities, but people are our biggest opportunity (Drucker P.F.)” (As cited in Argiolas, 2014, p. 44).

#### 4 Managerial tool for human dignity based corporate governance system evaluation

To fulfill the approach of servant-leadership management approach is essential. This focuses on persons and on community, possibly even communion. The aims and “key success results” are not the ones of the mainstream (revenue and profit), but human flourishing. In this view

“the best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to be servants?” (Spears, 1994, p. 156)

These questions are in full overlap with the ones the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace suggests the managers to ask themselves, like:

“Do I believe that taking seriously the dignity of the person in my business decision-making will promote integral human development while making my company more efficient, more agile, and more profitable?”

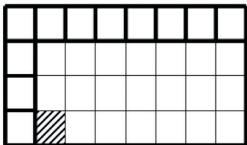
“Am I sensitive to the fact that if corporate decisions are not deeply grounded in the dignity of the human person, they will be prone to instrumentalist and utilitarian constructs which fail to promote integral human development within business?” (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2012, p. 26).

**Figure 8** ► The different Value Matrix arche-types (Source: Héjj, 2006, slide 14)


Stakeholders Layers	Shareholder	Employees	Customers	Vendors	Society	Future generations	The poor
Spiritual							
Intellectual							
Material							


**Neo-liberal company**



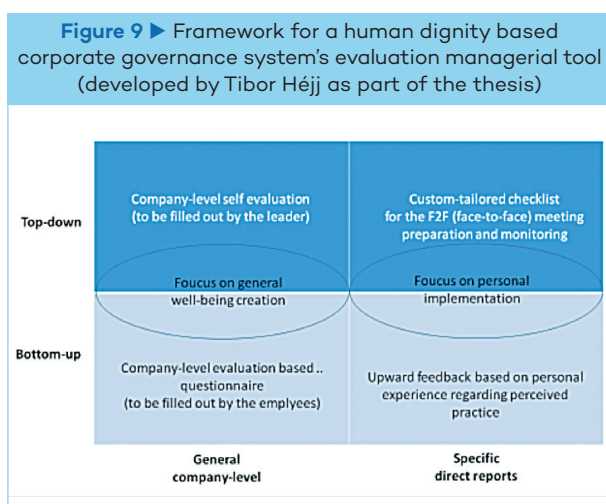
**“Good company”**



**“Spiritual company”**



All these questions are fully justified, however in order to be able to leverage an institutionalized system, which can serve as a professional managerial tool to monitor the existence and consistency of human dignity-based management within a company, first I created a framework. This can be shown as a 2 by 2 matrix. One dimension is about the direction (top-down and bottom-up), the other dimension is about separating the overall company-level (corporate culture) approach from the personal (one-to-one) relationships with the direct reports.



I developed a specific “checklist” and method for evaluation for each of the four segments. The fact that the methodology itself (questionnaire) is not new even helps for its acknowledgment, while the questions themselves are really new in their current, focused form. In each of the four segments of the matrix we have to evaluate the realization level of the aim of integral human development through the complexity of a holistic welfare portfolio and the process, mode, way of governance by implementing personalism and servant-leadership.

The specialty of the upper left segment is, that it evaluates the general corporate-level well-being creation and servant-style leadership – by the leader himself. He can and should do a self-check – which later on becomes confronted with the result of the general and anonymous bottom-up survey (lower left segment), and also through the face-to-face upward feedback of her direct reports (lower right segment). This upper left segment functions also as a basis for the upper right segment, which is the transformation of the general actions for the case of specific persons, the direct reports. Thus the harmony of the (upper and lower) left segments and the overlap of the (upper and lower) right segments provide a useful and necessary mirror, to be able to compare the intended and/or perceived view with the reality. And the eventual differences between the outputs of both columns prove whether the leader himself is consistently committed to human dignity, as a basis for the company culture value.

**Upper-left (“UL”) segment** - The general self-evaluation questionnaire is to be filled out by the leader, before getting informed about the result of the lower left segment:

UL questions for self-evaluation (reflecting the last period to be defined, like the actual calendar year or last 12 months):

### GENERAL

- **IN COMMUNICATION:** Listing policies, instructions, memos, homepage, other communication supporting well-being creation, through the seven aspects of wellnesses
- **IN ACTION:** Listing events, situations, other facts when acting in this manner
- **IN PLANNING:** quotes from business plan, annual report or alike about related plans
- **IN MONITORING:** institutionalized processes, forums, responsibilities for supervising, controlling, checking the above
- Listing lack of fulfillment and action plan for correction.

### SPECIFIC

- *Have we avoided suffering in any form? (Y/N)*
- *What is our company-level safety target and what is the result? (No./No.)*
- *Do we provide meaningful work for our employees? (%)*
- *Appropriate challenges? (%)*
- *Lifelong learning opportunities? (%)*
- *Fair wages and salaries? (%)*
- *Transparent and consistent incentive system? (%)*
- *Responsible career development, no reification? (%)*
- *Do we offer outplacement support? (Y/N)*
- *Human rights, equal opportunity (e.g. for women, ethnic origin, faith, etc.)? (Y/N)*
- *Support for community-building and developing at the company? (Y/N)*
- *Do our employees have institutionalized channels for participation in decision preparation? (Y/N)*
- *How often are their inputs recognized? (%)*
- *Do they recognize the servant-leadership based corporate governance? (%)*
- *Do my employees consider me as an accountable person and steward? (Y/N)*
- *Are our employees (middle management) motivated and convinced about servant-leadership? (%)*
- *Is faith, religion, spirituality respected? Open speech, no expectations, no negative consequences, respect for religious practices (e.g. in case of food, dress code) (%).*



The result of the self-evaluation should be compared with the statistical outcome of the employees, who were asked anonymously about the same topics, in adjusted or/and inverse style and only for the specific questions:

- *Was there any suffering in any form? (Y/N)*
- *Is there a company-level safety target and what is the fact? (No./No.)*
- *Is my job meaningful (Y/N)*
- *Do I have appropriate challenges? (Y/N)*
- *Does the company enable/support learning opportunities? (Y/N)*
- *Do I consider my wage/salary fair? (Y/N)*
- *Do I have a transparent and consistent incentive system? (%)*
- *Do I recognize a responsible career development, without reification? (Y/N)*
- *Is there an outplacement support for those who have to leave? (Y/N)*
- *Are human rights, equal opportunity practiced (e.g. for women, ethnic origin, faith, etc.)? (Y/N)*
- *Does the company support community-building and developing at the company? (Y/N)*
- *Do I see institutionalized channels at the company for participation in decision preparation? (Y/N)*
- *How often was my personal input recognized? (%)*
- *Is the company's governance system based on servant-leadership? (%)*
- *Is the CEO an accountable person and steward? (Y/N)*
- *Do I plan to choose servant-leadership once in management position or if manager do I want to act accordingly? (Y/N)*
- *Have I experienced any negative consequences related to my faith, religion, spirituality? (e.g. in case of open discussions, sharing info on related events, food/drinks, dress code) (Y/N)*

The leader – or her supporting expert – can draw important conclusions on basis of the comparison. The most important question is: how far is the self-view from the view of the employees? Going into details of the deviations, their grouping, their trends in time, all give useful feedback to the leader, about what to change, modify, or communicate. Like all other assessments, this too, can either become a useless homework or a well-appreciated useful tool for improvement. The fact that the methodology itself (questionnaire) is not new even helps its acknowledgment, while the questions themselves are really new in their current, focused form.

While the above part is not just about facts but more about the company as whole, and about the widespread beliefs as well (since many employees do not even have any direct

relationship with the CEO), the right side of the matrix is inevitable about the personal relationship between the CEO and her direct reports, usually 6 to 8 persons. Here face-to-face (F2F) meetings are preferred for better results, giving room for discussions guided by questions, rather than just responding with numbers, percentages or Y/N options. If the leader really believes in servant-leadership, this is a great opportunity to practice active listening, to focus on ministration rather than administration, being humble rather than playing the “Big Boss” – the session itself becomes a test and proof of human dignity oriented culture based on servant-leadership. Since this side (upper right and lower right of the matrix) can and should be even more specific, it is up to the leader which topics he would prefer to assess – and it can vary even in time, depending on lifecycle, challenges, set (or changing) priorities. Below there is a suggested list of questions, which can be adjusted as needed for the main purpose.

The questions below should be answered by the leader for each of the direct reports, before meeting the employees:

- *Do I have a personal integral human development plan for him/her? (Y/N)*
- *What are my prioritized well-being creation targets for him? (List)*
- *Are they adequate, custom-tailored? (Y/N)*
- *Was it agreed with him/her? (Y/N)*
- *What were the examples for personal respect, and caring recently? (List)*
- *Does he have appropriate challenges in his current job? (Y/N)*
- *Do I assure for her lifelong learning opportunities? (Y/N)*
- *Is her incentive system transparent, consistent, and in line with human dignity issues? (Y/N)*
- *Do I care about his social needs? (Y/N)*
- *Do I involve her deeply enough in decision preparation? (Y/N)*
- *How often is her input recognized? (%)*
- *Am I biased due to any political, religious, minority, ethnic origin, or gender based attribute? (Y/N)*

Again, the subordinate should answer the adjusted/inverse version of the questions above in advance from his point of view. Thus a suggested list of questions in line with the above regarding the lower right segment could be as follows:

- *Do I know about a personal integral human development plan for me? (Y/N)*
- *What are my prioritized well-being creation targets? (List)*
- *Do I consider them as fully adequate, custom-tailored? (Y/N)*



- *Does it include all my inputs, desires? (Y/N)*
- *What were examples for personal respect, and caring from my boss, recently? (List)*
- *Am I satisfied with the challenges in my current job? (Y/N)*
- *Do I miss opportunities for learning? (Y/N)*
- *Do I consider my incentive system fully transparent, consistent, and in line with human dignity issues? (Y/N)*
- *Do I feel that my social needs are acknowledged by my boss? (Y/N)*
- *Am I involved deeply enough in his decision preparation? (Y/N)*
- *How often has my input been recognized? (%)*
- *Have I felt I any stress/disadvantage due to political, religious, minority, ethnic origin, or gender based difference? (Y/N)*

While many of the questions are indicated as Yes/No questions, since the meeting is personal, everything can be discussed once the answers do not overlap. It also holds true for the list-type answers: especially those items are interesting to be discussed, where the overlap is not full. If a respectful and supportive team-spirit exists, then the whole session becomes a method for personal development rather than a painful conflict (let me refer to Regular Colloquies and Verification or “The Moment of Truth” by Argiolas (2017)). And they can immediately experience reciprocity, too: both participants “gain” on it, their well-creation increases mutually.

Measuring makes only sense if there was a plan – which can and should be compared with the result of the measurement, as fact. Therefore, the above matrix and its details are envisioned both as a framework for planning as well as for checking/measuring, thus as a management tool for human dignity focused on corporate governance. I have to admit that the idea and its realization is in an embryonic stage, it will need some accumulated experience for fine-tuning and finalization after a test period. Once developed it would become a real tool, a “product” or/and even a professional service. As a “product” it would consist of a software, which guides the users through the process of filling out the questionnaires and the software would make the statistical summarizing and data analyzing,

supporting the cognitive “lessons learned” by the leader and his supporting team (even this part can get some artificial intelligence software support). In case of (full) service access to the questionnaires would be available electronically, the answers would be stored centrally in the cloud, analyzed, and the statistical outcome sent to the leader. In this case even benchmarks can be created based on the data gathered. Technology and automation would serve human dignity, instead of the current trend of human dignity getting victimized due to automation and technology!

What was described above for the top-level of a company can be cascaded on a top-down basis. Thus the deputies of the CEO can and should practice the right side of the matrix with their direct reports, and so on. This would increase the impact and efficiency of the upper management level sessions, and the trickle-down effect would be a trigger for corporate culture change and being committed to this new culture.

One could say that this approach is far from “realistic” – and it is really not usual and typical. However, this is not an argument against it, since the whole personalistic approach, especially if declared to derive from CST is not mainstream and not common. If one believes in the theological fundamentals, accepts the related philosophical anthropology, and wants to implement personalism and base her company-community on human dignity – for sure she needs to implement and practice new ways for corporate (community) governance, boss-subordinate relationship, mutually supporting each other in all types of well-being creation in a holistic sense supporting all participants’ integral human development.

Based on the fact that leaders can (regularly) measure, whether they and their company is “on track” and can even plan with it – the outcome of the measure as “fact” can be compared either to the company-specific plan or to a general benchmark (later on, when there is enough data by others, collected in a databank and comparison is offered as a service). If the idea and method can be institutionalized and spread in the business society, and within just 2-3 years a remarkable databank and “lessons learned” could be accumulated and leveraged for fine-tuning. This would have a significant impact on the way of managing companies and through it also on society in general.

## ► LIMITATIONS ON HUMAN-DIGNITY-BASED MANAGEMENT BECOMING MAINSTREAM

If there is a theological and philosophical basis for human dignity, and there is a theory for this kind of management, and some leaders even practice it, why does it not gain more followers, why has it not become a much more impactful way of doing business, or even the mainstream?

The barriers to implement this new system are in us, investors, owners, and managers, since the current macro-system (defined and maintained by us) possesses limitations, and requires sacrifice on a personal level. There are examples, even sustainable good practices for this new system, in growing number, however they are still special cases, rather than a potentially mainstream trend. I see two – independent, though mutually supporting – reasons, which limit the expansion of this management method to become general.

### 1 It requires consistent self-sacrifice from the leader

We have already known for a long time, that “The managers may have incentives to behave in accordance with their own interests, not those of the owners. This is the “problem of agency” (Jensen and Meckling, 1976, as cited in Argandoña, 2011, p. 83).

If the managers cannot always resist the temptation of following their own interest, instead of the ones of their employers, why should we expect – in great quantities – to see the managers taking an extra load on themselves “just” for a more human, more for-the-other-person oriented approach, without any (immediate) financial return, or reward?

Our thinking however is too strongly oriented on material, tangible returns. Once we are ready to think more holistically, to include intangible rewards in our thinking, we realize that such approach assures reward – though in other dimensions. Like joy due to the Trinitarian relationship with the colleagues and to consciously perceiving to be created in God’s image. Therefore, primarily those, who are strongly and intrinsically committed to certain philosophy or theology, like the CST, are ready to “victimize” themselves for such goals, like:

“associating quality of work with human flourishing and dignity offers a fruitful path for assessing contemporary work, workers and workplaces that fits a vision of a fair, just and mutually constitutive society while at the same time meeting the demands of a highly competitive global environment.” (Bolton, 2010, p. 160)

### 2 Under certain circumstances it is considered, as a “luxury”, and counter-effective method

Typical situation of this problem is when there is either a company-level, or industry-level, or country-level turmoil, full of stress and need of fast decisions and actions.

“Different situations will require a blending of command and servant-leadership. For example, when there is an extreme emergency requiring instant decision-making for the sake of saving lives or winning a war, it may not be in the best interest of followers for their leader to spend a lot of time in consultation and debate” (Page and Wong, 2000, p.4)

Some people say – and it might be justified – that in our accelerated days, we are always under stress, due to the fierce competition companies have an ongoing fight for their existence, and thus they cannot afford to switch to a “slow-motion” mode. This argument is also justified, especially in the short run, however sustainability requires peaceful periods, otherwise both the company as a whole as well as the individual humans get burned out. Thus we end up with a “catch-22” situation: those who only focus on shareholder value maximization, do not care about their human “resources”, since they can employ additional resources for keeping the money-making company alive and neglect human dignity. Those who care, do not want to overload or/and misuse the persons in their (economic) community, thus they face a competitive disadvantage – and this is how the two independent issues add up and support each other, providing negative synergies.

So until there are actors who do not care about others (and such people will always exist), and there are people who cannot afford to choose, but must be happy to find any kind of job (and such people will always exist, too), thus cannot refuse to work at places neglecting human dignity, the temptation and motivation is (too) high to go the “traditional”, un-human (istic) way. And a “mix” is usually not a healthy compromise but a misleading semi-solution:

“In adhering to this notion of human dignity, firms are encouraged to display greater sensitivity and care in their interactions with all stakeholders, including (and especially) those stakeholder groups that include disadvantaged members (Goodpaster, personal communication, 2012). Without this doctrinal grounding, firm actions can



easily become “prey to forms of exploitation; more specifically [they risk] becoming subservient to existing economic and financial systems rather than correcting their dysfunctional aspects” (CiV, No. 45).” (Carrascoso, 2014, p. 312)

I conclude with the – interdependent – statements of Kleinig and Evans (2013, p. 559):

“True, the recognition of dignity does not exhaust the conditions of human flourishing; yet, without its recognition, the ability for humans to flourish tends to be extremely limited.”

“The denial of dignity will impact on welfare, and the denial of welfare will impact on dignity.” (Kleinig and Evans, 2013, p. 564)

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