

# Work in a Human Economy: Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The centrality of work to economic activity is both a reflection and a consequence of the centrality of the person. This centrality of work seems to imply not only that work is given clear recognition and priority treatment in the theories of social sciences, philosophy and theology but also that preferential attention is paid to work in the activity of companies, in public policies and in the media. This is true but only in part because today work is valued but, at the same time, scorned throughout the world. Problems of work, often very serious ones, are causes of concern for people and governments. This article is an introduction to a collective book on work in a human economy. The article explains some of these problems within the framework of an economy that seeks to be more human, based on the motivations of work. It also previews the chapters in the book.

**Keywords:** Economics; Firm; Future of work; Human action; Motivation; Work

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is the introduction to the collective book *Work in a Human Economy*, the fourth volume of a series that will gather the papers presented at the international and interdisciplinary conference *The Heart of Work – The Future of Work and Its Meaning: New Christian Perspectives 500 Years After the Reformation*, which was held at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome on October 19 and 20, 2017. The book will be published by Edusc in Rome in 2018.



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## 1. Introduction

It should not surprise anyone that a series of books bringing together the papers presented at an interdisciplinary international conference called *The Heart of Work – The Future of Work and Its Meaning: New Christian Perspectives 500 Years After the Reformation* should include a volume devoted specifically to the economic approach to work, the firm and the economy.

This is an introduction to that volume. As well as presenting the papers that have been included, it offers a broad view of some of the issues that have been studied intensely by economists and management experts in recent years, in a more or less evident dialogue with Christian social thought. Drawing on news items published by the mass media and comments made by experts, it attempts to give an account of some of the issues that are the subject of discussion in the field of human work: complex and often contradictory issues for which a satisfactory resolution has yet to be found.

Obviously, our purpose here is not to try to explain the causes of these problems or to offer solutions. That task has been undertaken, in one way or another, by the authors of the different chapters. First we will set out the need for more human approaches to economic activity, as this is the framework within which human work is performed (although it is not the only one as it does not include such important activities as housework).<sup>2</sup> We will then turn to the more obviously economic side of human work, with a discussion of motivations. This will be followed by an overview of some of the paradoxes and problems of work in the 21st century. The final part of this introduction will be given over to a brief outline of the contents and approaches of the book's other chapters.

## 2. For a Human Economy

Reflections on economics as a science and practice, and especially business management, have paid particular attention to the first serious financial crisis of the 21st century, whose effects are still being felt in many countries. Although this introduction does not aim to be a study of the crisis, we will dwell a little on it because it has left an imprint on many of the theoretical developments and policy proposals that provide the setting in which human work problems are being defined and resolved.

Even now, a decade after the crisis began, experts continue to discuss its immediate and its more remote causes. The former include the excessively expansionary monetary policies implemented by central banks; overborrowing by companies, households and financial institutions; fiscal imbalances in some countries and growth of their sovereign debt to unsustainable levels in certain cases; the ineffectiveness of regulatory, supervisory and financial control mechanisms; errors in the design of certain projects, such as the European Economic and Monetary Union. Such causes were compounded by further errors in the search for solutions to the crisis and in the application of would-be solutions. In short, these causes are

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. ANN F. BRODEUR, "A Brief History of Housework, 1900 to Present." Home Renaissance Foundation Working Paper No 41, Home Renaissance Foundation, London, 2012, [http://homerenaissancefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/41.-Anne\\_B.pdf](http://homerenaissancefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/41.-Anne_B.pdf); ANA MARTA GONZÁLEZ and CRAIG IFFLAND, eds., *Care Professions and Globalization: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).



technical problems that were not foreseen and for which suitable solutions were not sought while there was still time.<sup>3</sup>

The crisis also had political and social dimensions: loss of confidence in the economic model and the regulatory bodies' management, social conflicts, political crises that have affected the very concept of democracy, etc. And it has had ethical dimensions. On an individual level, there was greed, arrogance, lack of restraint, envy, etc. While it is true that these vices have existed throughout human history, there are periods when they become more widespread and more deeply rooted, perhaps because of a lack of moral judgment or because of the temptation of incentives (the possibility of making a lot of money in a very short time) or because certain sectors of society become platforms that promote immoral conduct (with assertions such as "greed is good").

The ethical crisis was also found within organizations: a decline in professional standards, rash risk management, short-term vision, herd-like behavior, injustices that were ignored (or accepted as an inevitable part of the financial "rules of play"), the obliteration of the sense of responsibility, a lack of transparency, etc.

Lastly, the ethical crisis also manifested itself on the macroeconomic level: a failure to see the big picture of the economic system, a predominance of short-term political decisions, abuse of controlling positions, the abandonment of the idea of the common good in governments' decisions, etc. All these problems were projected onto society in the form of high unemployment, an increasingly unequal distribution of income and wealth, lost opportunities for vulnerable people and for those on low incomes in particular, social unrest, loss of confidence, a search for populist and utopian solutions, etc.

So the crisis was not due solely to technical causes and, therefore, could not be corrected with purely technical remedies. When technical remedies alone were applied, the consequences were a disregard for ethics or, worse still, the use of politics and the law as sources for creating ethical criteria. In other words, instead of providing solutions, they ended up making the problems even worse.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, the causes of the crisis must be sought in the anthropological models of modernity, which view human beings as abstract agents endowed with a purely instrumental rationality, whose preferences are lacking in any moral dimension, who exclude value judgments as irrelevant, who convert human relations into short-term impersonal transactions or relations between things, who understand society as a group of individuals without any common goods to share, and who interact for reasons of immediate usefulness. As a result, firms end up becoming abstract communities consisting of impersonal contracts that only pursue economic efficiency – that is, they maximize profit, decoupled from their human and natural environment. In a word, they are dehumanized.

This vision of the economic sphere is perhaps a little exaggerated. There are many firms that see themselves as communities of people whose purpose is to serve society and its members,

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<sup>3</sup> See ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Three Ethical Dimensions of the Financial Crisis," in *The Global Financial Crisis and Its Aftermath: Hidden Factors in the Meltdown*, ed. A. G. MALLIARIS, LESLIE SHAW and HERSH SHEFRIN (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 413–28.

<sup>4</sup> Leonardo Polo points out that applying purely technical solutions to human problems gives rise to four types of unforeseen consequences: segmentation (due to a narrow view of problems), the emergence of perverse effects in other areas (because it is impossible to guarantee consistency if projects are not coordinated), anomie (the despondency of those who do not find any guides for action but only extrinsic stimuli) and social entropy (when institutions lose their function). All these effects are seen in people's work. See LEONARDO POLO, *Sobre la existencia cristiana* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1996).



governed by principles of justice and solidarity.<sup>5</sup> However, as the crisis showed, there are many other organizations in which the economic dimension dominates, where impersonal capital ends up taking control of decisions, and people become relegated to the function of resources. It is true that academics are making efforts to incorporate ethics and social responsibility into organizations, to propose truly human relations and to help managers understand that the person must be at the heart of the firm. It is true also that good management is that which attains economic, social, environmental and ethical goals. However, a lot of work still needs to be done before there can be any change in the meaning given to human relations within the firm and with its environment.<sup>6</sup>

The chapters in this volume address such change in the theoretical and practical framework of the firm, which includes a reflection on the concept of work itself, given its role as a key factor in production, even in the most economic conceptions of the firm.

### 3. The Motivations for Work

Why do we work? Work is the person's action, and the person acts because she has needs. These needs must be understood in a very broad sense: we need food, clothing and shelter; we need to be satisfied with what we do and how we are treated by others; we need to learn, develop skills, feel that we are in control of our acts, help others, give glory to God, and so on.

When people act, they do so because they hope to obtain a result. These results can be classified into three categories:<sup>7</sup>

1. Extrinsic results, which come to the agent from outside. They may be material, such as salary or career opportunities, or intangible, such as social recognition or professional standing.
2. Intrinsic results, which take place within the agent: for example, satisfaction or dissatisfaction provided by the task performed, knowledge acquisition, skill development or the acquisition of virtues.
3. Transcendent or prosocial results, which are those produced in other people: satisfying family needs, serving the customer, helping a colleague or an awareness of fulfilling God's will.

The existence of three types of result gives rise to three types of motivation in the worker: extrinsic, intrinsic, and transcendent or prosocial. We often pursue several motivations simultaneously in our actions, although there is usually one that predominates – the intention, which is what determines the action's ethical quality, among other factors. These motivations provide a good guide for understanding the action performed by the person who works.

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<sup>5</sup> See DOMÈNEC MELÉ, "The Firm as a 'Community of Persons': A Pillar of Humanistic Business *Ethos*," *Journal of Business Ethics* 106, no. 1 (March 2012): 89–101.

<sup>6</sup> See ERNST VON KIMAKOVITZ, MICHAEL PIRSON, HEIKO SPITZECK, CLAUS DIRKSMEIER and WOLFGANG AMANN, eds., *Humanistic Management in Practice* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> See JUAN ANTONIO PÉREZ LÓPEZ, *Fundamentos de la dirección de empresas* (Madrid: Rialp, 1993); ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Integrating Ethics Into Action Theory and Organizational Theory," *Journal of Business Ethics* 78, no. 3 (March 2008): 435–46; ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Consistencia y ética en la toma de decisiones" ("Consistency in Decision Making in Companies") (IESE Business School Working Paper No. WP-1128, University of Navarra, 2015).

Extrinsic motivation – for example, working to make a living – is a legitimate motivation. Remuneration from work is the outcome of contributing to the production of goods and services that satisfy other people's needs. Earning more may be one way of covering the worker's material needs and those of her family, improving her standard of living and helping others. The utilitarian motivation for work is clear and, almost always, legitimate. It forms part of the logic of the contract, of the exchange between equals, giving to receive, although it does not exclude other more generous forms of giving. However, as we will see further on, the economic dimension of work is also the cause of problems, from inadequacy of income at one extreme to greed and the inordinate pursuit of wealth at the other extreme, to the detriment of other necessary aspects, or envy elicited by comparison between one's own possessions and those of one's peers.

When the agent acts out of intrinsic motivation, her goal is to obtain certain results that she herself generates through her work: satisfaction, the acquisition of skills, attitudes and virtues, and the development of her identity as a worker, which is an important part of her identity as a person. Work as a means of self-realization is a legitimate motivation: it is a form of love for oneself, although it can also give rise to egotistic, narcissistic or presumptuous conduct.

Transcendent or prosocial motivation comes into play when the agent understands that she is taking part in a collective task and takes other people's needs into account: customers, colleagues, associates, and also people she does not know personally or does not know exist. This is usually the sphere of the logic of the gift, although it does not exclude a certain degree of reciprocity: giving so that the other person is also motivated to give. Work is a form of relating with others, which is sometimes direct and immediate and at other times at a distance, such as when a person works alone but is aware that he is contributing to a chain of services that starts before him and will continue after him in space and time. However, this social dimension may break down – for example, due to the lack of a sense of community at the workplace, because the work is done within individualistic organizational systems, because the organization's rules lead to fractured loyalties at work, or because the environment fosters competition instead of cooperation.

As a final point, we would emphasize that transcendent motivations also leave an imprint on the agent herself: the acquisition of social virtues. In this respect, they are related to intrinsic motivations. For example, the employee who tries to act in accordance with his customer's needs is performing an act of love, in that he is seeking another person's good. He is acquiring a stable habit, a virtue.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. The Paradox of Work and the Problems of Work

In human societies, particularly in the more advanced societies, work is highly valued.<sup>9</sup> As a source of income, it offers the possibility of satisfying human needs, releases us from many natural constraints and enables us to control our environment to a much higher degree than animals do. It is also a basic element in building a social life. Today's advanced societies pride

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<sup>8</sup> ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Las virtudes en una teoría de la acción humana," in *La persona al centro del magistero sociale della Chiesa*, ed. PABLO REQUENA and MARTIN SCHLAG (Rome: Edusc, 2011), 49–71; ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Beyond Contracts: Love in Firms," *Journal of Business Ethics* 99, no. 1 (March 2011): 77–85; ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Humility in Management," *Journal of Business Ethics* 132, no. 1 (November 2015): 63–71; ANTONIO ARGANDOÑA, "Humility and Decision Making in Companies" (IESE Business School Working Paper No. 1164-E, University of Navarra, January 2017).

<sup>9</sup> There is an abundant literature on the paradox of work. See, for example, ULRICH BECK, *The Brave New World of Work*, trans. PATRICK CAMILLER (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2000); JERRY BIBERMAN and MICHAEL WHITTY, "A Postmodern Spiritual Future for Work," *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 10, no. 2 (April 1997): 130–38; FRANCIS GREEN, *Demanding Work: The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).



themselves on offering everyone, at least in theory, a decent job that is adequately remunerated and offers the prospects of individual advancement and self-realization.

However, work can also be dehumanizing. The lack of security in many jobs, governed by temporary contracts, with an uncertain duration and badly paid, is associated with significant psychological, social and economic costs. Lack of work causes deep personal and social distress, creates serious difficulties for the person to support himself and his family, destroys hopes of and possibilities for improvement, and often leads the person to withdraw into himself and lose sight of the meaning of existence.

Having a job is very important for anyone, but that job may be subject to degrading conditions: mechanical, repetitive, exhausting tasks that are meaningless or unappreciated; tasks in which it is not possible to show and develop the worker's abilities, with no attainable challenges that encourage the worker to transcend limits; tasks in which there is no room for personal decision making or that force the person to engage in immoral conduct. Work is often viewed as an abstract good, a purely instrumental (and therefore alienating) activity, a production factor that can be replaced by other workers or even by machines. The worker's activity is valued for what it produces, not for what it is.

These paradoxes of work show the ambivalence of modernity, which swings between the glorification of humanity and optimism in the face of progress, on the one hand, and the vilification of the individual and pessimism about his future, on the other hand. Technology is one of the manifestations of that paradox: it is portrayed as having the power to liberate humankind, taking the worker's place in the performance of grueling, repetitive and inhuman tasks, but also as the enemy of the worker, who is put out of a job by a machine that does not just tiring and tedious manual activities but also skilled tasks.

In human societies, work also suffers from other problems for which there is no easy solution. One such problem, perhaps the most important one, is its absence: unemployment, which implies denial of a means of subsistence, of the meaning of work and even of life itself. When unemployed, the individual is unable to put into practice her knowledge and skills and faces difficulties in acquiring new ones. She is denied part of her identity, which, in modern societies, is associated with one's profession and she must bear a social stigma that leads to isolation of the unemployed person and the loss of social relations. Unemployment is perceived as a great social injustice, as it is assumed that there is an implicit social contract whereby the community offers individuals the means to satisfy their needs, improve their condition and participate in the fruits of progress, in exchange for the time devoted to work. When there is a lack of work, all this is taken away and the person is condemned to a state of destitution.

Admittedly, in many countries, being unemployed is not synonymous with financial deprivation, thanks to a more or less generous social security system: a retirement pension, unemployment insurance, subsidized health care, a minimum income, financial assistance for dependency in later life, etc. However, the availability of economic resources is no replacement for human and social self-realization through work. In addition, insecurity, low wages and unemployment jeopardize the sustainability of the welfare state. Welfare benefits are funded from the income generated by the worker. They are a sort of deferred salary. However, when the number and income of workers fall, the whole system can collapse. In addition, social protection for unemployed people may give



rise to a benefit culture that, with the intention of providing assistance, actually harms the worker by negating the role of work in a person's life.<sup>10</sup>

The precariousness of employment – that is, insecure jobs tied to very short-term contracts with no guarantee of continuity – is another problem that is becoming global in scale. In fact, globalization itself and technological progress are direct causes of this precariousness because they destroy jobs and create uncertainty. Technology, which makes human life better and easier in many respects, also becomes perceived as an enemy of humankind.

The relationship between work and other human activities – that is, nonwork – is also undergoing significant change. The demands made by employers, on the one hand, and the increased cost of living and the constant growth in the needs of people, as beings open to an infinite range of possibilities, on the other hand, are pushing many people to devote many hours to work, reducing the time spent with family or devoted to leisure activities and other nonutilitarian uses of time that are a manifestation of human beings' spiritual nature. When taken to extremes, excessive devotion to work may become addictive, with harmful consequences for the worker, his family and society as a whole.

What gives meaning to work? Basically, the consideration in which it is held by the agent and by others. An instrumental, nonexpressive job that does not develop human abilities is unlikely to have any meaning. A functional job will get results but these results are unlikely to include self-realization. A job in which the person works isolated from others may elicit feelings of pride or satisfaction but it is unlikely to give complete fulfillment. The keys to work are to be found in the dignity of the person who works, in work's capacity to express the human condition, its ability to transform the person, the pursuit of other people's good and the common good, and in its fulfillment of God's will.<sup>11</sup>

Another issue of considerable current interest is what has been called the future of work. The possibility of not finding or of losing a job has always been a cause of worry, for reasons that we have explained earlier but, even at the height of economic crises, nobody ever questioned that work would always be necessary and, therefore, there would always be work, albeit more or less skilled and better or worse paid. However, today, this thesis is being seriously challenged, mainly by technological progress, which has replaced or is expected to replace many jobs with machines.<sup>12</sup>

This raises a lot of questions. Which jobs will bear the brunt? Probably, many unskilled jobs that basically require physical effort, because machines can do that better than people. But also more skilled jobs that compete with computers in processing large volumes of information in a short time. The jobs least affected by this change will probably be certain skilled jobs, such as managers and researchers, and those that require the person's physical presence or certain qualities that robots or computers are not (yet?) capable of replicating. In other words, it is likely that the highly paid jobs at the top of the skill range and the low-paid jobs at the bottom will

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<sup>10</sup> See FRANCIS G. CASTLES, *The Future of the Welfare State: Crisis Myths and Crisis Realities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); BERND MARIN, *The Future of Welfare in a Global Europe* (London: Routledge, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> The reader will find some interesting contributions on this subject throughout this book, such as chapter 5 written by Domènec Melé.

<sup>12</sup> There is also abundant literature on this subject. See KEITH GRINT and STEVE WOOLGAR, *The Machine at Work: Technology, Work and Organization* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 1997); JEREMY RIFKIN, *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995); BERNARD STIEGLER, *Automatic Society – Volume 1: The Future of Work*, trans. DANIEL ROSS (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2016); RICHARD SUSSKIND and DANIEL SUSSKIND, *The Future of the Professions: How Technology Will Transform the Work of Human Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); PAUL THOMPSON and CHRIS WARHURST, eds., *Workplaces of the Future* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).



survive, to the detriment of a broad band in the middle. This possibility is worrying experts, politicians and, obviously, the workers themselves, particularly the younger ones.

However, this pessimistic vision of the future of work is not shared by everyone. The technological revolutions of the past, which threatened to destroy many jobs, ended up creating more employment, driven by that same technology. In any case, human societies face very serious problems. How should future generations be educated to prepare them to take on these challenges? How can the standard of living of those who have borne the brunt of these technological changes be maintained, particularly when, as often happens, they have neither the necessary economic resources nor any capacity to respond in the short term? What will the financial, psychological and social costs of adapting to these changes be? And, going beyond the purely economic sphere, what effects will all this have on views about the dignity of work, about the meaning of work, about the vision of companies as communities of people, and about the other dimensions of life?

Obviously, this is not the place to expound all these problems and even less so to try to answer them. However, we cannot conclude these considerations without insisting that a purely economic approach is not and cannot be the only approach or even the most appropriate. The individual must be put in the center of economic activity, of the firm, of the job market and of all human activity. As we explained earlier, people act for very different motives and not just economic motives. Consequently, we need to turn to other social sciences to try to account for the person's action from a global perspective. This is the function of philosophy and theology. The human person's centrality cannot be understood without applying a multidisciplinary approach, supported by a realistic philosophy and by theology grounded on solid principles. This is what the authors of the various chapters in this book try to do, from different viewpoints, as we will see.

## **5. What Will be Found in this Volume**

The chapters in this book comprise 13 papers presented at the interdisciplinary congress *The Heart of Work – The Future of Work and Its Meaning: New Christian Perspectives 500 Years After the Reformation*, organized by the School of Theology and the Markets, Culture and Ethics Research Center of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, in Rome on October 19 and 20, 2017. Grouped in three sections, all of the chapters address issues related to economics, the firm and work, based on a dialogue between social sciences and Christian social thought with a clear interdisciplinary intent.

### ***Work, Human Development and the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church***

In chapter 1, Gennaro Luise analyzes the definitions of work in economics (the pragmatic dimension: the performance of a task), relational sociology (including purposes, material conditions, rules and meanings of work) and philosophical sociology (the dialectics between work as the production of objects and as an introjection, as an unconscious acceptance of the natural world). After discussing the limitations of other partial attempts, he seeks a complete, nonspiritual, psychophysical, relational definition of work as an activity that is geared to attaining the good of the complete unity of the human person.

The traditional conception of economics as a science of rational choices focused on the agent's gratification has been the target of many attempts to move beyond it, proposing broader ends. Happiness is one of these ends and it has been the subject of considerable attention as a



manifestation of the person's development and as something essential for economic activity. In chapter 2, Jovi Dacanay sets out an empirical study of the factors that determine human happiness, concluding that people gauge their lives according to the satisfaction of their needs with regard to health, financial freedom, respect, social relations, and the ability to participate in the community, in accordance with the tenets of Christian-based ethics.

In chapter 3, Ronald R. Rojas wonders whether adversity is only a threat for the worker or whether it is also an opportunity for self-discovery and for maturing as a person through resilience, another manifestation of the worker's human development. He wonders how this response relates to the understanding of work as a vocation, as a spiritual value. Using a survey of 516 business management graduates, Rojas shows that vocation in the workplace generates resilience as a reaction to adversity, irrespective of the direction that may be taken by causality, because coping with adversity is also a means of deepening a commitment to a calling.

In chapter 4, Martin Fero reviews the sociological theories that interpret societal attitudes about work and, in particular, the influence of religious affiliation on these attitudes. Fero uses the information gathered in the European Values Study 2008 to give an account of the different attitudes to work and workers' expectations regarding work, especially among young people, grouping the attitudes by age, generation (especially the baby boomers and Generations X and Y), marital status, and the religion that the person professes.

In chapter 5, Domènec Melé reviews the contributions made by the literature on the firm and organizational studies that address "meaningful work" – that is, work with an objective purpose and meaning perceived by the subject. He compares them objectively with Christian social thought on the "meaning of work." The dialogue between the two conceptions helps enrich and perfect our conception of work and its meaning.

The language used in economics is not neutral. Words have a philosophical substantiation that is not always acknowledged. In chapter 6, Megan Arago reviews Monsignor John A. Ryan's attempt to make the social doctrine of the Catholic Church more accessible to the North American public. Exploring the ontological distinction between state, society and church, Arago points out that the concept of subsidiarity, as used by Ryan, owes more to United States progressivism, expounded by the economist Richard T. Ely, than to Catholic social doctrine. She concludes that Ryan confuses subsidiarity with the rule of utility, leaving workers' associations – which popes Leo XIII and Pius XI had tried to protect – in a vulnerable situation with respect to the state.

### ***Economics, Enterprise and the Common Good***

In chapter 7, Lord Brian Griffiths of Fforestfach, in an edited version of the lecture he gave at the congress, talks about his experiences in the business world, particularly in finance. He critically reviews the firm's purpose, as presented in the neoclassical economic literature, comparing it with the positions of academics and employers who draw on Christian social thought. He then outlines some of the responsibilities that professionals have, such as the balance between work and personal life, the role of the firm's culture in people's conduct and reputational risk, and the practice of whistle-blowing. He develops his ideas based on the concept of work as a vocation. Citing Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Griffiths argues that vocation means responsibility and responsibility must be a total response by all of humankind to all of reality, which precludes reducing a person's responsibility to a narrow definition of professional duties.



Work is a human action that we normally perform with other people within an organization. In chapter 8, Antonio Argandoña develops a theory of action based on the person and his motivations. The time when this action takes place in an organization – that is, in the case of the action being a shared action – is determined by a purpose and certain motivations, which may or may not be shared. The timing requires coordination, which is usually the task of the manager. The main outcome of this is trust.

In chapter 9, Cristina Quaranta and Emiliano Di Carlo inquire into the firm's objectives and whether these objectives include the common good and, more specifically, how it can be ascertained whether a firm that portrays itself as socially responsible bases its conduct on the logic of the common good. The two authors develop what would be a business model based on this objective and how that aim would be reflected in the mission statement and code of ethics. They verify this by analyzing the mission statements of a selection of Italian companies that are acknowledged for their social responsibility and included in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index series.

The right to work is complemented by other rights, such as workers' right to a healthy workplace and society's right to a clean environment. In chapter 10, Ciro De Angelis reflects on these rights and their connection with the dignity of the human person in Catholic social doctrine – particularly in the teachings of Saint John Paul II – and in the Italian constitution. He refers to the pollution caused for many years by the steel plant operated by the company Ilva in Taranto, Italy, denounced by Paul VI and John Paul II on their visits to the city, in 1968 and 1989 respectively.

### ***Technology and the Challenges of Work***

The final section of this book focuses on the future of work and its relations with technology. Chapter 11 provides an introduction to the problems arising from the relationship between technology in the workplace and the worker's dignity. It is an edited version of Martin Schlag's presentation at the congress roundtable discussion "Economics and Work: The Future of Work and the Dignity of the Worker." Schlag recapitulates some optimistic and pessimistic outlooks with respect to the future of work. He reviews the arguments given to defend them, advising caution over any appraisal of these societal changes, which are profound and long-lasting and have a significant impact on human life and the dignity of the person.

In chapter 12, Michael Pacanowsky also discusses the impact of technology on work, coming to an optimistic conclusion based on a case study of the firm W. L. Gore & Associates. Pacanowsky describes two models of work organization: one based on the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain, and another that emphasizes "human flourishing," commitment and the meaning of work. He concludes by predicting that professionals' work will undergo significant changes in the near future.

In chapter 13, like the other authors in this section, Valeria Fratocchi Invernizzi refuses to accept that the future of work will be decided in a deterministic way by technological change. On the contrary, she says, it will be the outcome of decisions made freely and consciously by managers, political leaders and the workers themselves, taking into account the challenges posed by technology in relation to preparing people for work, the quality of work and its impact on people, families and communities. She discusses the so-called 3D (dirty, dangerous and demeaning) jobs; the "golden cages" that imprison workers who are paid to "forget nothing less than their vocational dreams"; the existence of obsolete labor regulations; and an education system that harks back to the past rather than address future challenges.



Taken together, the chapters in this book offer an interesting interdisciplinary view of work, the firm and economic activity. The social doctrine of the Catholic Church rests on faith and on reason – that is, on the social sciences. It approaches human work from different starting points but, nevertheless, these may provide a good foundation for the development of Christian social thought. In these chapters, we have seen how economics, psychology, sociology, political science and the other disciplines are grounded in an often implicit but not always consistent anthropology. The common ground shared by these social sciences, on the one hand, and philosophy and theology, on the other hand, and by faith grounded in scripture and church tradition allows for a balanced development of the centrality of the person, which is essential for any understanding of human work. Ultimately, as this book shows, work takes its value from the supreme value of the human person.