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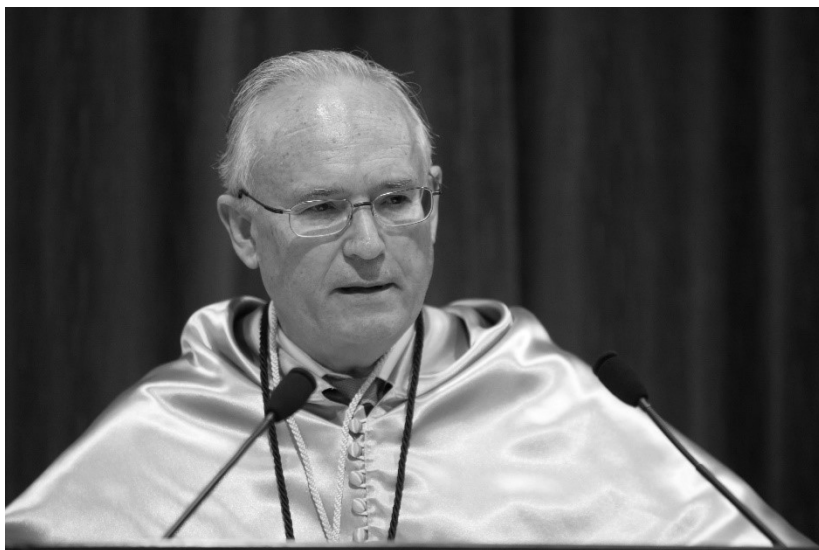
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Angel Luis González, Professor of Metaphysics at the University of Navarra, died suddenly but peacefully this last April 16, 2016. He was one of the principal promoters of the research and publications of Leonardo Polo's thought. Until his passing he was Editor-in-Chief on the Board of the *Complete Works* of Leonardo Polo and of *Studia Poliana*, the philosophical Journal on Polo's thought published yearly since 1999 by the University of Navarra. In a conference after receiving an Honorary Doctorate by the Panamerican University (Mexico), he said that Polo was the "university professor that I principally admired." He dedicated a good part of his life transmitting a passionate spirit for the truth in the university and fostered an unlimited search for truth. This issue is dedicated to his memory. May he rest in peace.

# An Introduction to Polo and Llano's Anthropology of Leading

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**A**nthropology of Leading (*Antropología de la acción directiva*<sup>1</sup>) was written in collaboration with one of Polo's fellow researchers, Carlos Llano –a philosopher, entrepreneur, and university founder (Panamerican University, Mexico). Unfortunately, this book has not yet been translated from Spanish<sup>2</sup>.

Two propositions motivate their book. First, separating management from production gives rise to two separate social groups. Such segregation is an obstacle to improving organizations. Second, the highest form of bonding amongst humans is language –not exchange or money.

The authors' purpose was not to write a book on business ethics but to break the ground upon which such ethics can flourish. They use the systems approach, since analysis, which is valid for experimental science, is insufficient to understand the complexity of human life. Furthermore, such an approach requires being open to new dimensions that are discovered in the course of inquiry.

Leading should be ranked differently than production –not doing so is what gives rise to annulling initiatives, to fear, and eventually, to totalitarian rule. Truth and fortitude are how people face these shortcomings.

Chapter One is about the importance of the systems approach in understanding humankind. The analytical method is acceptable for studying anything mechanical, where one part of the mechanism might not influence the whole. However, this is not true in the case of humans, who are organisms with many interrelated dimensions. What happens to our bodies when we take medication? It may cure the ailment, but with unforeseen consequences. This can happen in an organization when it is viewed analytically. A despotic management that does not allow its workers to complain or give suggestions can destroy any competitive advantage the company might have.

Another example of humans' systemic nature is our hands, the use of which is related to language, which in turn is related to mind, which in turn is related to our condition as bipeds –a condition that allows for our faces to express their interior states, expression in which the

<sup>1</sup>*Antropología de la acción directiva*, Madrid: Unión Editorial, 1997, 200 pages. “*Acción directiva*” is translated as “leading” due to the authors' insistent reference mainly to governing people, whereas “managing” can refer to doing so with people, animals, and things.

<sup>2</sup>See <http://www.leonardopoloinstitute.org/works.html>.



eyes play a fundamental role. Our posture, how we move our hands, the tone of our voice, and the expression in our eyes may reveal in an instant what a dozen pages written about the same moment cannot.

Hands and bodies are potential in humans –they are somehow unfinished. When compared to a claw or hoof, a hand is incomplete. It is our intelligence that gives our hands the possibility to create and use things. Such incompleteness of all human bodies is positive in the sense that it offers intelligence its purpose and mission. This is another example of why only a unified and systemic approach to humankind can provide some sense to its complexity that analysis by itself cannot offer.

Intelligence in humankind establishes a hiatus between intention and action, between what we desire to do and doing it. Animals might find a tool but lack the capacity to plan (design) and elaborate it. Intelligence means detaining any natural inclination and being able to deal with an idea, a plan, and making it real. Humans are not only *homo faber* but *sapiens faber* –two dimensions that many job designers forget.

Language is of a higher order than the signals that animals use to communicate danger and other states and events. Only humans have developed language, doing so in order to refer to reality in a conventional way –to dialogue and to influence each other’s behavior. Such influence fulfills its potentiality when both interlocutors can contribute to the conversation. A despotic treatment of the other annuls the other’s contribution.

The fact that humans build tools with other tools is usually referred to as a second-order technology (language can be thought of as such a technology) and proves our independence from our biological surroundings. This allows us to build a world of our own –a human world– where all things remit to each other by us giving them meaning. This configures a plexus.

To participate in the plexus is to give meaning to its constituent parts. But too, the plexus provides meaning and purpose to our actions –this is why no person should be left out of it. The plexus, the practical world we made, needs our constant care; otherwise, it withers and can even disappear. Such a plexus of things, and its increasing complexity, if not well understood and dealt with, can threaten our existence.

The building of a plexus is tied to a very peculiar social organization: the family. Our vulnerable condition of not being able to survive

biologically and socially until we reach young adulthood requires the family to function as our basic educational institution, which is complemented by schools and universities. These contribute to our ability to not only to live in society but to add to the plexus. A society in which the family is under siege endangers its own survival.

All of these propositions about humankind –a potential body, intelligence, language, a plexus, and the necessity of family to survive–exemplify our complexity and hopefully prove why such complexity can only be understood via the systems approach.

In Chapter Two, Polo and Llano approximate leadership from an event that denied it. They do not use a thought experiment; instead, they use a lived reality: communism and the communist regime in Poland as conceptualized by a handful of philosophers and social critics. *Situation* is the word they use to signify the condition of not knowing when it would be over, of being part of it –that is, not an external condition but an internal state of mind and existence; its despairing nature that had so penetrated each individual that the whole of society became part of it. *Situation* was not a circumstance, even when the Soviets left –many still lived it. It is the essence of totalitarianism.

While a dictatorship is over when it ends, totalitarianism, on the contrary, transforms us –fear and falsehood are incorporated into our existence and actions. We become fearsome: in the beginning, terror might be needed, but once fear extends throughout the population, less frightening actions take place.

Falsehood is also incorporated into our beings. Marxism claims that ideology is a product of the misery of humans and our economical actions. However, communist regimes need to instill such ideology – which they do via propaganda, distorted education, and initial terror. Finally, once a false view of humans becomes the mindset of the population, it becomes a “truth.” But the truth of an anthropological statement is only possible if in essence it does not depend on its acceptance.

*Situation* also affects “leaders” and managers –they grow fearsome and deceptive. Since everyone has a boss in the tight bureaucracy of any communist regime, they fear being deposed and sent to the Gulag. Trust completely withers in such a society. Thus, it is impossible to have leadership, because a fearsome person and a liar does not know what it is to lead (i.e., bringing out the best in those being lead), nor does a fearsome and deceptive population know how to be lead.

By conceptualizing freedom as a necessity, the Polish dictators fostered a desperate condition within the population, since nobody knew how to abandon the *situation*. Saint John Paul II's call when taking office, "Don't be afraid," followed many times by "Only truth will make you free," expressed by one whom had lived and meditated the *situation*, set the course to leave the *situation*: *solidarity* was the social movement that allowed Poles to do so. *Solidarity*, albeit a name taken by a union and a social movement, represented more than that: it signified a word that allowed for an understanding of a moment in history.

*Solidarity* meant abandoning fear and wanting to collaborate with others, to leave my own interest aside and worry about others –being fearless by not measuring the risks that might ensue and being truthful by serving others sincerely. The strike of one union in a town and factory was not intended for its own benefit, but was intended to support another strike in another town and factory. *Solidarity* was the means by which people got rid of *situation* –it did not become a permanent organization, nor did it become institutionalized, but it did contribute to changing the psychological state of Poland's citizens.

Russia, Romania, and other post-Soviet states got rid of *situation* differently. In the case of Russia, it did so via cynicism about its past and scorn toward Marxism and the West. Romania did so by sheer implosion and, what was then common to all, not wanting to blindly follow the West.

Poles are proud of how they left *situation*, but they realize that since *solidarity*, that is, fearlessness and truthfulness in order to live pure generosity, was a transient state, they needed to find their own way – their new social and organizational arrangements. *Normality* is the name given to such a state of affairs. Poles are mature enough to know that this new state needs to take self-interest into consideration, but again, not simply follow the West.

Having lived *situation*, they know they can relapse at any time – they are vulnerable to fear and lying, so *normality* needs to be the most efficient social organization possible, but without forgetting such vulnerability.

The authors conclude Chapter Two by asking what lessons *situation* can teach to leaders wanting to lead in the West. It is a fact that fear and deception are inherent to capitalism. An example is in capital markets: their owners flee as soon as geopolitical conditions threaten

them. Another example is that of Stockholm Syndrome: the abductees eventually believe the lie that their kidnappers told them about why they kidnapped them.

The following questions give rise to Chapter Three: How compatible is entrepreneurship with fear? How should an entrepreneur deal with fear? Is an entrepreneur a capitalist? What is an entrepreneur's relationship to falsehood and communication (since a firm cannot be organized from any other point than communication)?

Chapter Three is about leaders' fears. One feature of the human condition is that of always having to face changing circumstances, some of which are extremely difficult and dangerous. In other words, humans are problem solvers. In particular, leaders, managers, and anyone in a governing role face difficulties that cannot always be dealt with successfully.

Aristotle observed that any human action whose purpose is valuable is faced with difficulties. This explains why fear is always present and has to be dealt with courageously. Not doing so makes one fearful, a trait that is unacceptable for those attempting to lead and govern others. Facing difficulty is necessary in order to develop the character strengths needed to lead.

Although young entrepreneurs, managers, and leaders now require knowledge in economics and sociology, something not required in previous generations, the fact is that this information is insufficient. Organizations are comprised of people grouped together and acting toward common goals; thus, over and above economic, sociological, and political examinations are anthropological (philosophical) considerations. The latter are necessary if the former are to avoid arriving at the wrong solutions.

Those conventional social sciences arrive at debatable solutions when they prescribe that humans are conditioned only by economic or sociological forces, the fact being that it is humans acting freely that gives rise to economic and sociological relations. Of course, we can decide whether or not we will be the product of such relations and whether or not we will fully develop our potentialities. This happens when we do not take ourselves seriously as people. Only when we decide to fully become people do we realize our potentialities. Society exists because we are social beings, and not the other way around: the *a priori* is humankind.

In order to advance a philosophy of leading, the spiritual dimension of the agent needs not only to be considered but to be granted supremacy. Such a dimension is effusive and fortifies itself by acting in society. Such action is truly human if in its constant feedback it perfects the agent and its surroundings.

People are problem solvers because they can face fearsome *situations*; otherwise, they are conditioned by the *situation* and, as illustrated above, become part of the *situation*. In order to avoid this, or to leap from the *situation*, they need to search for higher-order ends, not just surviving or simply being shrewd.

To fear is a human inclination to flee danger. It is not only a feeling of distress, dread, worry, or dismay, but it gives rise to an attitude and behavior: not to face danger, move to one side, or flee. Further, it is an inclination to avoid what is arduous –to avoid doing more than what one is willing to do.

If what is decided is to not escape, or it is believed that one is not conditioned by external forces, then three possible courses of action ensue. First, to attack by using whatever resources are available in order to solve the problem if and only if there is a degree of certainty that these resources are sufficient. Otherwise, one should resist by fleeing if the problem is going to erode one's principles or if it is just a matter of a lack of resources. Third, one should rectify behavior, practices and norms, etc. in order to gain other resources with which to face the situation.

These ideas epitomize Aristotle's observation on why, even if everything is lost, to resist is a gain. In the first place, one gains oneself, since resisting is not a passive attitude –it is not giving or resigning oneself in spite of the menace or the danger not disappearing. If I say no to bribery, I might even end up bankrupt, but I do not “bankrupt” my most inner self, my principles, or my values. On the contrary, I salvage myself. Running away is acceptable when my integrity is at stake. I cannot walk into martyrdom, but if my faith is at stake, I have to lay down my life for it. My body may be ruined, but my personhood is salvaged.

These considerations about leading and fear are related to responsibility. I am responsible for myself, I cannot fall prey to fear; I am responsible for my actions, for what I own. This is the nucleus of responsibility, and leading entails greater responsibilities: the good operation

and management of the organization and the development of its members, who should be treated first and foremost as collaborators rather than employees.

Leaders and managers should never stop at thinking that they have accomplished the right balance of their resources. If leaders can bring out very creative resources from within in the face of difficulty, surely their collaborators can do so too.

Chapter Four is the shortest of the book, but it is probably the most open to debate. It describes three mindsets that are present in economic organizations (not necessarily exclusive of each other): entrepreneur, employee, and owner. These relate to our capacity to react or attack in order to face fear, as described in Chapter Three.

The entrepreneur mindset is that of attacking, so when things become difficult, such a person becomes irresponsible by not facing them. This person's ways of avoiding difficulties include not going to work, fleeing the country, going on a cruise, taking yoga seriously, etc. The most common avoidance method is blaming others. The entrepreneur mindset accepts difficulties and takes risks. Nobody can foresee the future, but such a mindset is alert to correcting the course, and so it is open to failures. It accepts other people's timing and believes in their capacity to improve and face difficulties. It sets the pace in order to accomplish long-term goals.

The employee mentality is troubled by the thought of risk—it is cautious. Its long-term goals are few if not inexistent. What is important for such a mindset is to build a resume and try to limit any risks that could ruin it. Such a mindset can infiltrate the entrepreneur's mindset when difficulties reach a point that extreme measures are needed, like having to close divisions or withdraw from markets, measures that, if not faced, can collapse the whole company.

The owner's mindset is identified with the least important dimension of the human being: possessing external goods. A person can possess intellectual goods (ideas) or spiritual goods (virtues), but material possessions, although indispensable for survival, can be lost easily. Thus, this mindset is the most prone to fear. Owners of equity are evasive: political turmoil terrifies them.

Entrepreneurs need to know the right order of things: being supports doing and doing supports owning—not the other way around. In contrast to owners, entrepreneurs need resources to hire workers in order to produce more. Entrepreneurs are characterized by a certain

sobriety that allows them to be alert to any ensuing resources in order to create. In contrast, owners are worried about maintaining their equity.

We all have a share of these mindsets. And it is in each one's being that determines what one is most prevalent: the employee is a person of *status*, a good manager; the owner is a good parent; while the entrepreneur is a person of action. In an entrepreneur, ownership is subjected to doing, and doing is subjected to principles and values of being. So, the entrepreneur needs to know what he or she stands for and what he or she wants to become first and foremost.

Chapter Five deals with leaders' truthfulness. Humans are social beings, and so to communicate, to talk, and to debate are part of our essence. Before dealing with the four flaws against truthfulness that the classics always alert us to –error, lying, silence, and deception– the authors offer a handful of considerations about contemporary facts that characterize our present culture with respect to truth.

The classics stated that human society was impossible if lying was predominant. What was said above with respect to *situation* in Poland after the Soviet occupation exemplifies a feeble and disintegrated society that was able to restore itself via *solidarity*. There, it seems, silence, secrecy, and general uncommunicativeness were prevalent. All of these attitudes happen nowadays in business, especially when negotiations are taking place. This being the case, the authors inquire as to what is the right course of affairs in order to wisely manage silence.

In spite of democracy being associated with outspokenness and preventing secrecy, the fact is that in many issues concerning the common good, wisdom requires silence. Not all moments are propitious to hand out information –business knows this well, but what is lacking today is a good management of silence in order not to fall into one of the flaws of truthfulness described by the authors.

The best way to combat error is to cultivate objectivity and not to voice unfounded judgments. Against lying, only truthfulness can succeed; against silence, only sincerity and not concealing what is essential can succeed; finally, against deceiving, only integrity, keeping one's word, and being loyal to others and to oneself can bring about truthfulness.

Error happens when information is lacking and one dares speak without knowledge. In the present culture, and especially in the business world, many decisions are made in haste and without sufficient

deliberation. To lead means to overcome the limits of specialization, the foremost approach to knowledge in a world where analysis is predominant. Leaders not only coordinate the work of others but offer a systemic view that goes beyond the partial view present in analysis and offered by experts.

Objectivity is indispensable for combating error, since our emotions should not cloud our thinking. But once a course of action is decided, having considered all of the possible alternatives and exhausted all available information, then emotions and passion (i.e., subjectivity) can be put to the service of the effort needed for carrying out the purpose. And the purpose or ends of the organizational effort are what moves human action in order to add value.

Adding value is related to hope. Hope in the possibility of surmounting restrictions and scarcity –the indispensable attitude of any entrepreneur.

Abundance does not usually foster creativity or the dynamic exercise of freedom. Freedom is measured by the reality it faces: to a feeble reality corresponds freedom scarcely exercised. Human action requires being lead only if it is aimed at the ends that surmount it; otherwise, it is not action in its strict sense, but it is just a remedy for boredom.

Leaders, then, have to be on guard in order to acknowledge error – a fact due to mankind's complexity– learn from mistakes, acquire the most information possible, take time deliberating, hear experts objectively, set personal preferences aside, offer a unified and systemic view of what is at stake, execute with passion, and finally, set ends that increase the freedom of all involved in the organizational effort.

While error is unwitting, lying is voluntary. A lie entails something false and pretends deception in order to gain self-benefit. People lie thinking that it is more convenient than telling the truth –if this is not so, then lying is contradictory. Furthermore, lying is not a natural trait. What muddies today's ideas about lying is consequentialism– an ethical theory that posits the rightness or wrongness of actions in their consequences. Here, the person's intention (will) does not count, so right and wrong depend on chance. But the relation between acts and consequences is neither empirical nor temporal, since it is possible to show that telling the truth or lying conditions consequences from the start. In other words, falsehood threatens the conditions for rightness to be possible.



Falsehood erodes social life and organizations. Lying might benefit the liar temporarily, but the total outcome for the organization is negative, since it affects the added value mentioned above. Lying is then communicated to all members of the organization and so undermines trust –the bond of any organization. Two liars might not fool each other, but they definitely know they cannot trust each other.

A liar cannot lead, and to claim that it is acceptable for a “leader” to lie to the external world but not within the organization is naïve, to say the least. Those who lie become liars and are unable to communicate and establish dialogues amongst their collaborators. If people do talk within such a setting, it is because it is to the individual advantage of each person involved. The weakest unwillingly accepts the power of the strongest, but it is a *situation* where latent rebellion is present.

Leaders are such depending on their capacity to summons. The higher the goals and the truthfulness of the leaders are what summons collaborators with more intense character strengths. Higher goals are usually associated with riskier goals, so lazy collaborators are nuisances because they slow the accomplishment of those goals. Laziness, then, is a form of deception.

Deception is not complying with the word one has given, and until recently, business was performed grounded on the truthfulness of the word it gave. Trust was prevalent, especially in societies like North America. This is no longer true, so written contracts must be established. Such an erosion of trust is due to bad leadership, since it leaders, by the example they set, who coordinate the work of others and must be vigilant of people’s compliance with their obligations: “to walk their talk.”

In Chapter Six, the authors tackle the consequences that human action have on those who exercise such action: on the agents themselves. Management science focuses on what is needed in order to accomplish certain ends. Research on leadership investigates what is needed in terms of skills and conditions in order to attain previously given results.

Scarce thought is given to what happens to the agent. This is the contribution of classical thought. In *Gorgias*’ dialogue, Socrates asks what is worse: to inflict injustice or suffer it? He answers: to inflict it. Yes, suffering injustice can even cost one his or her life, but inflicting injustice turns the agent unjust.

It is the interior transformation of the organization's members that is important and so qualifies leadership. Leaders can lead their followers to better or to worse outcomes –to become better people, better workers, better team members, etc., or the contrary. *Situation* was the negative outcome of communist leadership in Poland.

Polo and Llano are not reducing humans to their actions, which is what Marx claims; instead, they are saying that acting first and foremost affects the agent. Nor do they refer to only one act, but to several consecutive acts that build a habit. Acting unjustly facilitates more unjust acts –the contrary is also true.

Socrates' insight signals humankind's capacity to grow spiritually without restriction, but intellectually, we are limited by our desire to learn. The former refers to our ability to become better by way of practicing virtues (i.e., lived values), which in turn contributes to being able to act better as well as reducing uncertainty toward the future. On the other hand, the latter refers to our desire to learn –a learning that needs to be qualified. There is such a thing as negative learning: the type of learning that harms oneself and others.

Self-control is a must for spiritual growth. Virtue is about self-restraint and reduces the normal uncertainty about the future that all action entails opening courses for the exercise of freedom. Our behavior is then linked to a particular interpretation of time. Time can be "lost" or "gained": good acts better our being, so we "gain time." Wayward behavior worsens us, so we "lose time." This requires viewing time as a dimension of life whose quality depends on our intelligent use of it.

Managing without taking these facts into consideration and reducing it to arranging material resources without looking at the intrinsic qualities of the people under the manager's mandate is setting a course for something as real as *situation*.

This insight is what the authors develop in Chapter Seven. They begin by employing the conventional definition for leading: "to change a person's behavior in order that he or she does what I want." This, of course, can be accomplished in several ways, for example, by exploiting the other person's needs of: making a living, bringing up a family, surviving. Leaders give orders and expect that the recipients will obey because the leaders pay the recipients a salary. This owner's or manager's attitude, successful in Taylor's time, is no longer useful.

Such managing practice is similar to training a cockatoo: you withhold food until it performs a trick, at which point you reward it with food. But not so today: workers expect to be treated like people who think, have initiative, can be creative, and come up with solutions to problems. The Polish *situation* was accomplished using fear, so managing people like slaves was no challenge at all, except for ensuring that they did not “escape.” If leaders treat people like “things,” they must bear the consequences: upheavals, strikes, turnover, abduction.

Autocratic management is usually performed by immature personalities; such people act like teenagers and are incapable of sharing their interests, thinking that only they know what is best and that others are unable to understand what is at issue. From the start, this is a style of management that annuls any possible community of interests.

True leaders have the challenge of communicating their interests and motivations so that such sharing will bring out their workers’ interests and motivation. A higher-order challenge then takes place: to bring out the best in the leaders’ collaborators (workers)—to help them to realize their full potential. Polo and Llano offer their definition for leading: “to change another person’s behavior by causing him or her to want what you want”. Usually, people are willing to follow an order when the reasons for doing so are shared with them and they feel that the action expected from them has been delegated to them due to their ability and skill. Following an order is first and foremost an intellectual act before will comes into play.

Those who give orders need to communicate –to provide information so that different initiatives can find common ground. However, giving orders and following those orders is a two-way street. Aristotle intuited that the person giving orders must also obey them. For example, A orders B to follow X to accomplish O, but B interprets X and accomplishes O’. Independent of whether O’ is better or worse than O, A needs to understand B’s interpretation and correct him or herself so that A improves his or her way of giving orders; thus, A needs to obey B.

Giving an order and the execution following it are preceded by deciding, and in turn, decision is preceded by deliberation. If what is expected by A is an important change in behavior in B, then the information, which is the content of communication, needs to be ample enough to aid deliberation. B must be aware of the reasons and ends to

be accomplished; further, both A and B need to be constantly learning and correcting themselves to find the best way to accomplish O.

Leaders must increase the value of the organization by bettering the professional and human qualities of their collaborators. The authors insist that to accomplish the former, forgetting the latter betrays the purpose of any organization and manifests an autocratic leadership. The authors conclude Chapter Seven by highlighting the learning and self-correction required of both leaders and followers.

Chapter Eight is about the process of leading and the qualities that leaders should embody. First, the authors establish the importance of deliberation preceding action. Autocratic managers usually do away with deliberation and never share their reasons for a decision with their workers.

One of the advances of the systems movement in organizational theory was to criticize the ideal of “optimizing” as a criterion for deciding and to propose “satisficing” in its place. However, Polo and Llano advance the latter by observing that good leadership is never “satisfied.” On the contrary, leaders are always “on the go,” exploring new opportunities and ways to employ resources more efficiently. Leaders accept challenges, face them, and strive to solve difficulties. They understand the organization as a dynamic entity that does not allow for “satisfaction” to prevail.

Enduring is a quality that is indispensable to leadership. True leaders strive to be surrounded by different collaborators, hopefully differing in their stances, thoughts, attitudes, and perspectives. As mentioned above, leaders give orders but also receive orders. Such people bore critics, as they are probably not knowledgeable in all of the technicalities of the processes, but they are the savviest.

Leaders seek formal information –that acquired through the organizational hierarchy– but they also know the importance of “informal” information: serendipity, “elevator talk,” social media, etc. These are characteristics that contribute to the development of intuitions that cannot be influenced by the environment –rather, they influence the environment via wise decisions and actions.

Information is the foundation for good communication that, in turn, offers the moral grounds for the exercise of power within the organization. The aim of this exercise is to coordinate the interests, motivations, and actions of all those involved. The authors put forward

the following recommendations in order to advance dialogue and delegation that improve this coordination. First, to be informed as best as possible; then, to carefully weigh the sources and standpoint from whom and what the information originates; next, “putting oneself in the other’s shoes” (the systems approach); lastly, looking for the greatest array of stances and opinions –of people willing to listen to others’ viewpoints. The latter is very important to keep leaders from falling prey to flattery, which is the most dangerous temptation they have.

Leaders’ must solve problems in conjunction with those under their charge. Presently, a biological model of the firm is prevalent, which means that people –no matter the degree of their specialization– need to be informed of everything that is relevant to the task at hand. Leaders accomplish this coordination of information, inducing their team members to contribute their closest diagnosis of the problem and discover the most diverse alternative solutions.

When alternatives exclude themselves, they usually proceed from an analytical approach of the firm, in other words, by interpreting it with a mechanical model. The advantage of interpreting the organization using the biological model is that alternatives are systemically related, which in turn reduces decision risks.

In order for information to ensure the best operation of the organization, leaders must delegate not only information, but the formulation of purposes and ends. One can measure the effectiveness of an organization by the fact that most of its members agree to its purpose and can say “this is what we want here.”

Such agreement requires creative objectives –ends, goals– that together with leaders’ foresight contribute to developing their followers’ potentialities. In today’s organizations, these potentialities are solely dependent on the sharing and coordination of information. The mechanical model of organizations served its purpose by allowing specialization without much communication amongst workers, units, and divisions; the production line and assembly line arrangements enabled it. This is not so in the biological model, where a systems approach requires knowing the interrelation amongst all of the elements well. Of course, specialization is rampant here too, and special skills and capacities are its underpinning, but the authors insist that the sharing and coordination of information is absolutely imperative.

Chapter Nine delves into the notion of potentialities and their actualization (i.e., realization). Polo and Llano bring to the fore this classical notion of being and offer a novel way of viewing leadership. Leaders, then, are the people in the organization who see opportunities – potentialities– where others do not. Better still, leaders not only “bring them out to the open,” but they motivate others and coordinate their initiatives and work in order to realize such potentialities.

The authors consider several potentialities under the headings of external and internal. In the former category, they include anticipating the market (two decades ago, the growth that on-line sales were going to have); financial resources, where several alternatives complementing the traditional shareholders and banks are considered (furthermore, they believe that this is one of the potentialities in which the majority of innovation will happen); supply tasks, where they foresee the importance of techniques like “just in time”; the restructuring of businesses (they discuss takeovers, mergers, and joint ventures, cautioning the dangers that arise when these erase positive working cultures that can be saved); cooperation amongst firms and businesses in order to offset, thanks to their dynamism, the static and autocratic nature of the state and politics; and finally, care of customers, one of the most important external potentialities.

Before describing internal potentialities, the authors consider “human potentiality.” In one sense, they refer to the overseas hiring that has allowed for developed economies to hire abundant and cheap labor. In another sense, they refer to bringing out the best in all members of the organization.

There is a premise that makes this possible: viewing society’s main function as that of admitting and educating its new members. The family then plays a definite role: that of contributing to our affective integration. Parents must organize the divergent desires of their children. Their coherent behavior with respect to love, practices, attitudes, etc. is what instills trust in children’s minds and hearts and is instrumental to their maturing into trustworthy personalities.

Organizations’ training programs are conducive to improving skills and increasing their members’ knowledge, but they are limited in their ability to correct negative personality traits. This is why the authors call attention to the role of the family. This is especially true in an expanding culture where desires are captivated by the uncontrolled growth of means in the absence of a unifying end.

A further idea about contemporary culture having significant implications for the meaning of work is that of the acceptance or rejection of the filial condition. When it is accepted, work is related to realizing a commitment—when combined with a person’s knowledge of his or her origin and upbringing, it bestows identity. But when rejected, and being a son or daughter is thought of as an unbearable debt, then the stance toward work is that of fulfilling an interior emptiness where the person self-realizes and, furthermore, considers him or herself as only the result of such action. This attitude underpins the present individualism.

Internal potentialities are more commonly mentioned when discussing management issues: cutting costs, increasing knowledge, and restructuring units, divisions, and processes. The authors address all of these briefly.

Polo and Llano’s stance not only in this final chapter but throughout their book is that of viewing potentialities as manifesting the essence of the human world: “Such [a] world is not constraining, on the contrary, it offers a horizon of possibilities. *Homo sapiens* is not an individual in the service of the species, on the contrary, the personal being is of higher ranking than its species. This is why the correlate of the species in the case of humans is our “world,” our “human world” and society. Humans need to find potentialities within our social worlds. This is why a sociology of roles, functions, and status is obsolete—it cannot be accepted today (Parson was wrong, and Luhman’s systemic sociology is paralyzing, since neither considers the invention of potentialities)” (Polo & Llano 1997).

Written almost two decades ago, this book takes to task the unquestioned sole contribution of social sciences like economics, sociology, and psychology to the understanding of management, and especially, of leadership. The authors propose the need for anthropological philosophical knowledge and offer insights that demonstrate the complexity of leading. Furthermore, they anticipate some of the findings now recognized and proven by these social sciences, such as the crucial roles played by trust, truthfulness, cooperation, and communication.