

Economy, business and happiness in post-pandemic times

The company, as a unit of production and work organization separated from the family, became, at the beginning of capitalism, a veritable agency for the reorganization of the entire human psychology. Characterized by the division of specialized tasks, the extraordinary increase in productivity in relation to all previous forms of organization was achieved at the price of an intensive use of the affective forces of the human being reflected in the increase in the amount of time dedicated to work, the acceleration of the vital rhythms and the progressive expulsion of the gratification and the sociability of the work activity.

According to the interpretation that was initially given at the beginning of globalization, the new economy that was being born would represent an essentially new type of organization of business life that would completely change the ways of producing and with it would give possibilities to resolve ethical conflicts. and social in relation to work typical of the old capitalism. The relaxation of pyramidal structures in companies, a new personalized management and the use of new communication technologies would reduce the pressure exerted by the hierarchies on those who occupy lower positions, improving communication and humanizing the rigid organization charts of yesteryear.

A decrease in repression and greater motivation would also result from the mid-level manager who was made to feel that the business he was dealing with was not only the company's but his own project or at least, that of the small business unit and of the team under his charge, which he could organize freely and following his own objectives. Likewise, through working at home, flexible hours or through the resurrection of the small family business associated in a network with many other small companies or workshops, the new economy also promised a company approach to happiness in life. familiar, reversing the path of rupture between the two, initiated by capitalism.

Yet while the new economy seemed to present these possibilities for change, the question of conflict at the labor heart of capitalism persisted, albeit in new and sophisticated forms. According to Juliet Schor, the trend of decreasing working hours that occurred between 1870

and 1970 reversed considerably from the 1980s until well into the 2000s when working hours increased again. On the other hand, the humanist elements of the labor flexibility and reorganization programs did not always reduce the aggressive pressure within the companies. The zest for work that so many HR analysts exalted was seldom a true joy, but rather the result of some internalized or sublimated form of aggressiveness.

As the South Korean thinker Byun Chul Han affirms, in the new capitalism there is no longer any need to receive pressure from outside: "Now each one exploits himself and believes that he is fulfilling himself." The introduction of more informal hours and, after the pandemic, remote work with the reduction in working hours at the physical headquarters of the company, implied in many cases the same or greater pressure than that exerted by the hours running in the office during pre-pandemic times. The idea that the family and the work would return to reconcile in the post-pandemic company became increasingly distant. Working at home in the new conditions of remote work, actually turned out to be the way in which work, in addition to occupying the hours completed in the physical space of the company, would also absorb the rest of life.

The question that follows is then today in the entire world of formal work: can happiness be achieved or, at least, the well-being that employees or managers in companies demand more and more each day, especially the youngest, for through the reconciliation of the goals of personal and family life with those of working life? But this leads to a second question, what does well-being or happiness mean in the context of the current variety of generations and cultures that coexist in the world of work? Do we all conceive work and its relationship with happiness in the same way?

To reflect on some of these questions, we first offer the reader the article *The Wellbeing Analogy* by Ricardo Crespo in which the author introduces us to the idea of well-being (wellbeing) as an analogical notion that allows us to cover a wide spectrum of human experiences, conditioned, according to many thinkers cited by Crespo, by the different contexts in which they develop, including the various current ways in which the world of work is organized today. On the other hand, and to bring the subject to the level of history, we publish the article *Enrique Shaw, Christian humanism made life* by Horacio García Bossio through which the author invites us to access the trajectory of one of the most outstanding personalities of the Argentine business world, which

renewed at the time the human and Christian dimension of working life, taking the well-being of the workers under his direction, to the limit of the apparently impossible.

Thirdly, also within the Articles section, we present the work by Sandra Maceri and Agustín Coll entitled *The unwanted consequences of money from the point of view of psychology and the Economy of Happiness*, in which the authors analyze some negative consequences of the monetary incentives in the intrinsic motivation of the employees, affecting the productivity of the companies and the happiness of the workers.

Finally, and in another order of topics, we also publish the article *Humanity and social friendship: a path towards worldwide peace* by María Eugenia Guzmán Gómez, in which the author reflects on the concept of social friendship in the current conflictive international context, both from the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* of Pope Francis, and from the personalist vision of Karol Wojtyła. And the essay *Logan Roy, businessman and ÜberMensch* by María Marta Preziosa, in which the author gives a Nietzschean reading of one of the main characters in the television series *Succession*.

We trust that reading this issue of *Cultura Económica* will be of interest and benefit to all our readers.

Carlos Hoevel
Director of the journal *Cultura Económica*
carlos_hoevel@uca.edu.ar