

Beyond Self-Interest Revisited*

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ABSTRACT We revisit the self-interest view on human behaviour and its critique, and propose a framework, called self-love view, that integrates self-interest and unselfishness and provides different explanations of the relationship between preferences, behaviour, and outcomes. Proponents of self-interest as the only valid behavioural assumption argue for simplified assumptions and clear models in order to propose precise prescriptions, while critics to this self-interest view argue for realistic assumptions and rich descriptions in order to reach better explanations. This debate inhibits theoretical development because it faces the problem of incommensurability of standards for choosing among paradigms. We propose the concept of self-love, or the inclination of human beings to strive for their own good and perfection, to remove the assumption *self-interest vs. unselfishness*. Self-love distinguishes between the object and the subject of motivation and therefore creates a bi-dimensional motivational space. This framework replaces the unidimensional continuum *self-interest–unselfishness*, specifies eight interrelated motives, and provides different expected relationships between preferences, behaviour, and outcomes. We show that a better understanding of motivational assumptions, their embodiment in theories, and their influence on the very behaviours these theories assume provides managers and policymakers more alternatives for the designing of motivational contexts than in the case of assuming either self-interest or a permanent conflict between self-interest and unselfishness.

INTRODUCTION

Is it worth complicating the models in mainstream economics and management by assuming motives other than self-interest? This is a key question implicit in the current debate on the behavioural assumption of self-interest (Etzioni, 1988; Mansbridge, 1990a).

On the one hand, those who define self-interest as the only behavioural assumption (Friedman, 1953; Mueller, 1986) argue that what matters most is predictive accuracy. Alternatives to self-interest could be considered only if they show a better

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predictive power than that of assuming individuals behaving as if they were self-interested.

This tenet is central in mainstream economics (Mueller, 1986; Sen, 1987, 1990a, 2002; Winship and Rosen, 1988). It is also prominent in those disciplines that take economics as a reference, such as strategy and management (Rumelt et al., 1994, p. 24).^[1] In the strategy field, for example, many mainstream theories such as agency theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976), transaction costs economics (Williamson, 1975), industrial organization economics (Porter, 1980), and Burt's version of the structural approach to social networks (Burt, 1982) take self-interest as a key assumption upon which they build their models and propose their prescriptions. For example, transaction costs economics (TCE) combines the assumptions of self-interest and cost-benefit analysis of opportunistic behaviour and concludes that organizations are better than markets in controlling potential opportunism (Williamson, 1975). Similarly, agency theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976), based on the assumptions of self-interest and principal-agent conflict (Eisenhardt, 1989) concludes that outcome-based contracts are effective in curbing potential agent opportunism.^[2]

On the other hand, those who propose going beyond self-interest as the only valid behavioural assumption (Etzioni, 1988; Mansbridge, 1990a, 1998) argue that what matters even more than prescription is explanation based on realistic assumptions. They argue for assuming motives other than self-interest based on the increasing number of counter-examples such as people walking away from profitable transactions whose terms they believe to be unfair or people helping others without expecting reciprocity (Elster, 1990; Frank, 1987; Kahneman et al., 1986; Rabin, 1993).

This view, which we will call the self-interest critique, comes from sociology (Etzioni, 1988) and political science (Mansbridge, 1990a), although it started from within economics itself (Sen, 1987, 1990a). In particular, this view is being analysed within specific frameworks such as ultimatum games (Guth et al., 1982) and social relations (Fiske, 1992; Granovetter, 1985, 2002), and has been empirically supported by economists (Rabin, 1993), cognitive psychologists (cf. Kahneman, 2003), and social psychologists (McClintock and Liebrand, 1988). The self-interest critique recognizes that self-interest plays a role in individual decisions, but their lines of enquiry conflict with the generalization of self-interest as the only human motivation. As Etzioni points out, '[the] line of conflict . . . is between moral values and other sources of valuation, especially pleasure. (These two . . . are not necessarily in opposition, but in effect often do pull in divergent directions)' (Etzioni, 1988, p. 12; cf. also p. 253).^[3]

Although further developments have widened the scope of the self-interest view beyond selfishness and the exclusive search for pleasure and income maximization (cf. Becker, 1976, 1996; Jensen and Meckling, 1994; Sen, 2002), the central tenet that all motivations can be reduced to self-interest still holds (cf. Sen, 2002, p. 24).

In effect, it is argued that self-interest could include altruistic behaviour (cf. Jensen, 1994, p. 4) because individuals care about everything and are willing to substitute some amount of a good for some amounts of other goods (Jensen and Meckling, 1994). Deviations from self-interest are considered non-rational (Jensen, 1994, p. 4) and new models are proposed to account for non-rational behaviour and increase the predictive power of the analytical apparatus (Jensen, 1994, p. 8). Therefore, self-interest maximization and trade-offs are not only considered positive descriptions of human behaviour but also important elements of a normative model that states 'how humans should behave' (Jensen, 1994, p. 7; cf. also Miller, 1999).

Clearly the debate on self-interest shows that behavioural assumptions have economic implications. However, it creates a bipolar (i.e. either/or) type of thinking (Bobko, 1985) and falls under the incommensurability of standards for choosing among theories (cf. Kuhn, 1977), which hinders theoretical progress.

Both an epistemological and a behavioural assumption create the incommensurability problem that underlies the self-interest debate. As for the epistemological assumption, the debate is framed in terms of 'theory as prescription or a priori explanation' vs. 'description as the way towards explanation' (cf. Smelser and Swedberg, 1994). On the one hand, the self-interest view implicitly assumes that the aim of theory is prescription and that a key feature of a good theory is simplicity or parsimony, which explains why mainstream economics uses mathematical models as its main method of inquiry. This approach is usually criticized for becoming an end in itself, leading to either prescriptions without explanation or data without theory (cf. Leontief, 1971; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Sen, 1997, 2002; Solow, 2000). On the other hand, the self-interest critique assumes that the aims of theory are description and explanation, which is often criticized as description without theory, description without prescription, or explanation of things after the fact – i.e. placing the 'bet after the race is over' (Singleton and Straits, 1999, p. 25; cf. Coase, 1983; Etzioni, 1988, p. 12).

As for behavioural assumptions, the debate is framed in terms of the unidimensional continuum *self-interest vs. unselfishness*, or, for those who identify self-interest with rational behaviour (cf. Jensen, 1994, p. 4), in terms of self-interest vs. non-rational behaviour. On the one hand, the self-interest critique identifies self-interest with selfishness, which implicitly places diverse motives such as sentiments and duty at the opposite end of the continuum. On the other hand, the self-interest view identifies self-interest with rational behaviour, focusing on maximizing either own welfare or, more generally, whatever preference the individual has decided to pursue. In both cases, the specificity of different preferences is not adequately considered, either because they are grouped under the category of unselfish behaviour or because they are placed under the umbrella of self-interested behaviour. However, diverse motives such as pleasure, sentiments, duty, and excellence have different underlying explanations and implications about others' interests. For

example, alternative responses to why people buy fair trade products could be: price for value (pleasure in a broad sense, including having more wealth), compassion for the poor producers (sentiments), fair trade is the right thing to do (duty), or it promotes human dignity (excellence). The framing self-interest – unselfishness leads to the analysis of these different motives using objective functions, indifference curves, and ratios (cf. Etzioni, 1988; Jensen, 2002; Mansbridge, 1990a), assuming that people always trade these motives off as if they were commodities (cf. Jensen and Meckling, 1994). This line of reasoning is worth exploring in understanding human behaviour, but it would be an altogether different matter to claim that all human beings apply only instrumental reasoning to guide their behaviour (cf. Sen, 2002, p. 25).

Towards an Integration

We argue that removing the two implicit epistemological and behavioural assumptions that underlie the self-interest debate is the first step towards the integration of the self-interest view and its critique. As for the epistemological assumption, explanation and prediction are inter-dependent theoretical goals aiming at knowledge or understanding (cf. Aristotle, 1984a; McMullin, 1988; Singleton and Straits, 1999). Assumptions or the *Why* component of a theoretical contribution are key for understanding (cf. Sutton and Staw, 1995; Whetten, 1989), which is confined neither to models (Sutton and Staw, 1995) nor to challenges to the current mainstream approach. Typologies and integration of seemingly opposite assumptions are also valid forms of theory building (cf. Stinchcombe, 1968; Doty and Glick, 1994) even when these research strategies go against parsimony, which is only an instrumental – i.e. a means to an end – epistemic value rather than a goal of the scientific enterprise in itself (McMullin, 1993).^[4]

As for the behavioural assumption, and based on the insight that two contraries can be integrated because they belong to the same category (Aristotle, 1984a), we use the concept of self-love in order to integrate self-interest and unselfishness.

Eschewing the discussion of the goals of science and the appropriate modes of explanation for the moment, we propose a motivational bi-dimensional framework based on the concept of self-love, defined as the inclination of human beings to strive for their own good and perfection (Aristotle, 1984b; Aquinas, 1963, Book I, 60, 3).^[5] We argue that every motivation has two dimensions: the objective dimension is *what* we consider good for ourselves – i.e. pleasure, sentiments, duty, or excellence – while the subjective dimension refers to *whose* interest, whatever it might be, is taken into account – self-interest, others' interests, self-interest as end and others' interests only as means, or both self-interest and others' interests as ends. Therefore, the unidimensional continuum *self-interest – unselfishness* is transformed into a bi-dimensional object – subject motivational space. The resulting matrix allows the specification of eight qualitatively different motives and

Object – what is good?	Subject – whose interests?				View
	Only self	Only others'	Self as end and others' only as means	Both self and others' as ends	
Pleasure	1 Narrow self-interest	N/A	2 Instrumental or Enlightened self-interest	N/A	Self-interest as only motive (cells 1, 2, and 4) Self-interest as opposed to unselfishness (all cells except cell 8) Self-love as the basic human motive integrating self-interest and unselfishness (all cells)
Sentiments	N/A	3 Unselfishness (sentiment-driven altruism)	4 Instrumental or Enlightened self-interest	5 Sentimental love	
Duty	N/A	6 Unselfishness (Duty-driven altruism)	N/A	7 Duty	
Excellence	N/A	N/A	N/A	8 Excellence	

Figure 1. Breaking down the bipolarity self-interest–unselfishness

improves the richness of potential analysis (Figure 1). Human nature has the potential to develop different motivations aided by self-scrutiny and freedom, which allow human beings to step back from, evaluate, and choose among preferences, including others’ preferences as well as their own (Hirschman, 1984; Sen, 2002). Acknowledging that individuals do make trade-offs (Jensen and Meckling, 1994, p. 5) aided by a means-end or instrumental rationality logic, we argue that this is not the most important feature of human nature; seeking good and perfection, evaluating intrinsically non-substitutable goods aided by self-scrutiny and freedom is.

Our contribution lies in advancing a complementary articulation (Smelser and Swedberg, 1994) or a scholarship of integration (Boyer, 1990) approach to theory building, based on the generic motive of self-love and the epistemic value of understanding. This integrative approach contributes to a better understanding of the human potential to develop motives other than self-interest, which are neither anomalies nor intrinsically conflictive, but part of an integrated motivational system that guided by self-scrutiny and freedom drives different behaviours and outcomes. In addition, our contribution is not limited to a richer description of assumptions on human behaviour. In effect, given that assumptions are embodied in theories and have the potential to change the very behaviour they assume (cf. Ferraro et al., 2005; Ghoshal and Moran, 1996), we argue that a more realistic and integrated vision of behavioural assumptions leads to different theories and practices that condition the development of human motives.

Two considerations limit the scope of this paper. Firstly, the concept of self-interest is associated with that of instrumental rationality in most economic and management models. These models define rationality as internal consistency of

choice, self-interest maximization, or maximization in general (Sen, 2002), and consider as non-rational any departure from self-interest (cf. Jensen, 1994). Non-rational behaviour is defined as ‘any dysfunctional or counterproductive behavior that systematically harms the individual’ (Jensen, 1994, p. 7), and this happens when the individual does not act in her own self-interest (Jensen, 1994, p. 6). This identification of self-interest with rationality begs the question of what is considered productive or, more generally, good, for the individual. Our argument that people search for good and perfection, aided by self-scrutiny and freedom, directly relates to the issue of what are the different goods that motivate individuals. Therefore, our focus is on understanding different motives and their connection rather than on rationality. However, given the current association between self-interest and rationality, this latter concept is analysed when revisiting the current debate on self-interest.

Secondly, there is a vast literature on human motives (cf. Frey, 1997; Herzberg et al., 1959; Maslow, 1954; McGregor, 1957), social motives (MacCrimmon and Messick, 1976; McClintock, 1972), and social relations (Fiske, 1992; Granovetter, 1985, 2002) in general and on specific motives such as commitment (Etzioni, 1988; Frank, 1987) and fairness (Rabin, 1993) in particular. This vast literature starts with different research questions and, thus, deals with self-interest and alternative motives from different angles. For example, Granovetter’s approach to economic sociology focuses on how social relationships affect behaviour and institutions (Granovetter, 1985, p. 481) and highlights that specific network types and their resulting impact on, for example, trust and power, drive a wedge between interests and action (Granovetter, 2002). We will consider the insights provided by these different literatures in our exposition of the self-interest critique and in the argumentation of our proposed self-love view. However, given that our focus is on the self-interest debate and on how to overcome the current incommensurability problem it faces, we take the economists’ (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998) and social-psychologists’ (MacCrimmon and Messick, 1976; McClintock, 1972) classification of preferences as self-regarding and others – regarding as the starting point to build our motivational framework.^[6] We limit our exposition of motives to the mapping of the main categories used in the self-interest debate, adding excellence as an alternative generic motive.^[7]

We structure this paper around the proposed bi-dimensional motivational space (Figure 1) and its impact on the relationship between preferences, behaviour, and outcomes. Firstly, we analyse the intellectual roots and assumptions of the self-interest view, its associated motives of narrow and enlightened self-interest (Figure 1, cells 1, 2, and 4), and its implications for the relationship between preferences, behaviour, and outcomes. Secondly, we do the same with the self-interest critique, which includes self-interest (Figure 1, cells 1, 2, and 4) and advances sentimental love and duty as alternative motives (Figure 1, cells 3, 5, 6, and 7). Thirdly, we propose the self-love view, which integrates the different

motives of the other two views within a bi-dimensional motivational space (Figure 1, cells 1–7) and includes excellence as an additional motive (Figure 1, cell 8). Finally, we frame the implications in terms of the *What*, *How*, and *Why* criteria for making theoretical contributions (Whetten, 1989) and the *What For* criterion for practical implications (Singleton and Straits, 1999).

SELF-INTEREST AS THE ONLY HUMAN MOTIVE

Definition

The self-interest view states that the ultimate goal of human action is to pursue self-interest. Expressions such as ‘the only assumption essential to a descriptive and predictive science of human behaviour is egoism’ (Mueller, 1986) exemplify this view. The argument is that individuals seek to maximize their own utility, rationally choosing the best means to serve their goals.

There are two versions of the self-interest view and they differ according to whether interests other than one’s own are taken into account. We call the first version the absolutist conception of self-interest, because people are assumed to pursue only their own interests with no regard for others’ interests. We call the second version the instrumental conception of self-interest because others’ interests are viewed only as means to achieve a personal end.

Self-interest – absolutist conception. According to this conception, the only human motive is the pursuing of self-interest, which is defined as the individuals’ motivation to do whatever it takes to satisfy their individual desires, being indifferent about how their actions affect others (Adams and Maine, 1998). The object of motivation is pleasure in general, defined as a state that results from *having* health, material goods, honours, status, power, or any bodily pleasures (Aristotle, 1984b).^[8] Both the lack of regard for the interests of others and the focus on pleasure in general define a specific motivation, which the literature calls narrow self-interest (Mansbridge, 1990a) (Figure 1, motive 1).

The absolutist conception is related to what the social-psychology literature calls own gain maximization, or self-interest social motive (MacCrimmon and Messick, 1976; McClintock, 1972), defined as the basic orientation to increase ‘one’s own outcomes independent of the outcomes afforded others who are affected by one’s choices’ (McClintock, 1972, p. 447). In the same vein, the economics literature identifies self-interest with self-regarding preferences, which ‘concern the individual’s own consumption and other outcomes’ (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998, p. 7). Self-regarding preferences are the essence of the standard definition of economic man (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998, p. 20; McClintock, 1972), a person who is entirely selfish and entirely rational, with complete and consistent preferences over time. Some researchers argue that economic man has

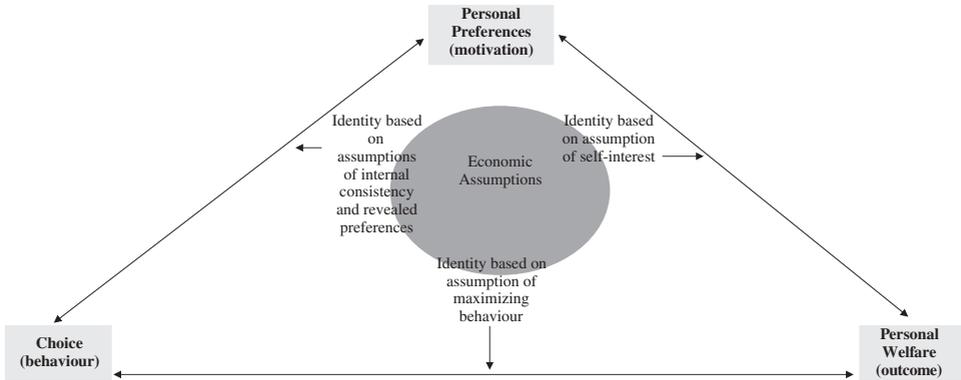


Figure 2. Economic assumptions

an additional feature, which is having only one want: money income (Jensen and Meckling, 1994, p. 10).

The absolutist version of self-interest, together with the assumptions of stable preferences and maximizing behaviour, leads to a deterministic relationship among preferences, choice, and welfare (Figure 2), which we call triple identity because these terms could be used almost interchangeably. In effect, others' interests are not considered because either the pursuing of self-interest automatically benefits others or self-interest is identified with selfishness. Therefore, personal preferences are always directed towards personal welfare. In addition, choice is defined as 'any attempt to select an alternative that will enhance one's welfare' (Mansbridge, 1998, p. 156) based on the assumption of maximizing behaviour, a core element of the economic approach (Becker, 1976, p. 5). Thus, given that any action people choose advances their own welfare, choice leads to personal welfare. Finally, individuals have unambiguous and stable preferences (Becker, 1976, p. 4), an assumption that is called unitary self (Etzioni, 1988, p. 11) or internal consistency (Sen, 1990a). The rationale of this assumption is 'based on the idea that the only way of understanding a person's real preference is to examine his actual choices' (Sen, 1990a, p. 29), which means that personal preferences are observable through personal choices. Summing-up, we get a triple identity or full circle: self-interest is the only generic preference, which in turn is revealed through choice, and given that any choice advances individuals' welfare, personal welfare is the result of pursuing self-interest. This triple identity is a type of the 'definitional fix' problem that Sen identifies in the analysis of preference and choice in rational choice theory (Sen, 2002, p. 6), which is unable to differentiate between distinct concepts, which in our case are preferences, choices, and outcomes.

Self-interest – instrumental conception. This conception shares with the absolutist version the fact that the ultimate motivation of individuals is self-interest. However,

the instrumental view includes others' interests as means and motives other than pleasure (Jensen and Meckling, 1994). Therefore, any supposed motive seeking the wellbeing of others can be reduced to self-interest, giving rise to what is called enlightened self-interest (Figure 1, motives 2 and 4).^[9] Some argue that self-interest includes altruistic behaviour (cf. Jensen, 1994) because individuals are willing to substitute some amount of a good for some amounts of other goods (Jensen and Meckling, 1994). This assertion assumes that any preference is an exchangeable means. Jensen and Meckling go as far as to include morality as an exchangeable commodity,^[10] but this assertion contradicts the very concept of duty. In effect, duty is the definitional concept of deontology (i.e. deon = binding duty), a school of ethics that takes others always as ends and judges the morality of an act according to the duty it discharges rather than by the consequences it produces (cf. Etzioni, 1988, p. 13; Sen, 1990a, p. 33). For this reason, we do not include self-interest in those cells of Figure 1 where duty and excellence are the object of motivation and where others' interests are considered as ends.

The instrumental conception of self-interest can be traced back to Mandeville, who considered that whatever praiseworthy action is done to others arises from vanity – i.e. the desire to be praised – because individuals are naturally much more interested in their own happiness than in that of others (Smith, 1976, p. 309). A second explanation for instrumental behaviour is that individuals seek the positive feeling of doing good and therefore are psychologically dependent on someone else's welfare (Sen, 1990a, p. 33). Given that the individual needs the welfare of the beneficiaries to feel good, this behaviour is basically egoistic. A third explanation is that of rational choice theorists (Coleman, 1990), who include the expectation of reciprocity as the reason for considering others' interests. Finally, instrumental self-interest is present when a joint action is necessary to increase personal welfare.

Considering others' interests as means does not change the basic structure of the triple-identity between preferences, behaviour, and welfare created by the absolutist conception, because self-interest is still the ultimate goal. In fact, it reinforces the 'definitional fix' problem replacing the concept of welfare with that of utility, which is defined as '*a way to describe preferences*' (Varian, 1999, p. 54; emphasis in original) or as an index of preference satisfaction. In fact, welfare is identified with the satisfaction of actual preferences (Hausman and McPherson, 1993). Therefore, preferences are not only revealed through choices but also described by utilities. As a consequence, maximizing behaviour is equated to maximization of utilities, and this latter to maximization of preferences (cf. Sen, 2002, p. 32), because utilities are simple descriptions of preferences. This definitional twist has led some researchers to distinguish between economic man and the rational (cf. Mansbridge, 1990b, p. 355) or resourceful, evaluative, maximizer model (REMM) of man (Jensen and Meckling, 1994). In effect, while economic man is only a money maximizer and therefore 'not very interesting as a model of human behaviour'

(Jensen and Meckling, 1994, p. 10), REMM considers any interest, including others' (1994, p. 5). Jensen and Meckling argue that non-economists often use economic man 'as a foil to discredit economics' (Jensen and Meckling, 1994, p. 10). REMM shares with economic man the assumption that 'people are resourceful, self-interested maximizers, but rejects the notion that they are interested only in money income or wealth' (Jensen and Meckling, 1994, p. 18).

Assumptions

Both the absolutist and instrumental conceptions assume that self-interest is the only motive, a tenet that is based on a specific conception of both human beings and human relations. The self-interest view sees human beings as autonomous individuals, whose interests focus on pleasure in general. Human beings are basically individual rather than social beings, which explains why they are self-sufficient and autonomous. In effect, each individual has all the potentialities to develop his or her own nature. Social bounds and supra-individual laws have no justification in themselves unless the same individuals create them through the exercise of their free will in the pursuit of their own interests. As Jensen and Meckling point out, 'individuals stand in relation to organizations as the atom is to mass. From small groups to entire societies, organizations are composed of individuals' (1994, p. 7).

This conception of human beings as self-sufficient, autonomous, and self-interested is associated with a specific conception of human relations – i.e. a mechanistic and atomistic one, which stresses the priority of free individuals over societies and governments. In effect, society is an interaction mechanism of self-sufficient individuals, which are responsible only before themselves and their own interests. The Hobbessian idea of social contract, the rational choice argument that macro or system behaviours are abstractions (Coleman, 1990, p. 12), and the idea of firms as nexus of contracts (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972; Jensen and Meckling, 1976) are just three expressions of the self-interest view on human relations. What is real is the autonomous individual; societies, intermediate systems or firms are either abstractions or legal fictions.

The assumption is that the free concurrence of self-interested individuals will produce automatically the necessary economic, social, and organizational outcomes. For example, the free concurrence in the market place will yield both the maximum efficiency and wellbeing through the market mechanism alone. The underlying assumption is that of the spontaneous harmony of interests or that the interest of the community is simply the sum of the interests of its members, assumption that can be traced back to both Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham.^[11] Any friction between individuals is actively avoided through either the market mechanism or the removing of the conditions that prevent the working of the market. One kind of such undesirable friction is the case of exter-

nalities, which happen whenever the ‘activities of one economic agent affect the activities of another agent in ways that are not reflected in market transactions’ (Nicholson, 1995, p. 802). Externalities are considered market imperfections because they interfere with the allocational efficiency of competitive markets. Another undesirable friction is forming economically significant social ties in the marketplace (Biggart and Delbridge, 2004). Social relations are considered harmful because they could result in deviations such as nepotism and insider trading, which threaten the three coordination tasks of markets – i.e. how to use resources efficiently, what to produce, and to whom to distribute the products and services (Baumol and Blinder, 1998, p. 60).^[12]

Intellectual Roots^[13]

The self-interest conception of human beings and the associated conception of human relations can be traced back to liberal individualism, which exalts the individual and her freedom. Individuals are not social by nature; social ties are the result of agreements to preserve one’s own freedom and the pursuit of self-interest.

Four philosophical streams have contributed to form liberal individualism: the nominalism of Ockham, the rationalism of Descartes, the utilitarianism of Bentham, and the social contract proposal of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau (Messner, 1976). Ockham asserts that the only reality is the individual; supra-individual and universal constructions are only labels without entity, which explains the name of nominalism given to this philosophical stream. Therefore, any society lacks reality beyond the will of its individual components and their interests. Nominalism helps to explain the autonomy and asocial features of human beings of the self-interest view, and the idea that organizations are pure fiction, legally recognized only for practical purposes.

Secondly, Descartes argues that reality has a rational structure that can be discovered through human reason, which is self-sufficient and the source of all knowledge. Thus, he laid the foundation for the rationalistic approach that attaches to human reason the ability to discover the complete reality, an important assumption to understanding the rational way self-interested individuals choose the best means to achieve their goals.

Thirdly, the utilitarianism of Bentham reinforces the conception of human beings and human relations that underlie the self-interest view. In effect, as to human beings, Bentham argues that individuals seek their own happiness, which consists in seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. This hedonistic conception of happiness has been now extended to preference satisfaction by current utilitarian theorists (cf. Hausman and McPherson, 1993; Varian, 1999). As to human relations, Bentham reinforces the individualistic and atomistic conception of society when he asserts that the community is a fictitious body.

Finally, the fourth philosophical root of liberal individualism is the social contract proposal of Hobbes. He denies that human beings are naturally social; on the contrary, the selfish pursuit of their own interests creates a condition of constant war. This is the original state of nature, which is deduced from the passions of man. To change this situation, rational and self-interested individuals agree a social contract to ensure their own preservation (Messner, 1976; Strauss and Cropsey, 1987).^[14] Therefore, rationality is identified with self-interest and agreement with the mutual advantage that results as the outcome of bargaining (Hausman and McPherson, 1993).

Theoretical Manifestations

The self-interest view and its assumptions underlie most economic theories (Winship and Rosen, 1988). The neoclassical paradigm is the best example, because it advances an undersocialized conception of human beings (Granovetter, 1985, p. 483) given that 'individuals are assumed to be the effective actors, able to act independently and to be psychologically complete unto themselves' (Etzioni, 1988, p. 6).

Both the absolutist and instrumental conceptions of self-interest underlie different theories. The absolutist conception is implicit in economics, agency theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976) and Williamson's version of transaction costs economics (Williamson, 1975). As for the instrumental conception, it lays the foundations for economics, game theory (Axelrod, 1984, p. 6), rational choice theory (Coleman, 1990, p. 14), Burt's version of the structural embeddedness perspective in social network theory (Burt, 1982), and industrial organization economics (Porter, 1980).

The self-interest view applies not only to individuals in their quest for utility maximization but also to firms in their quest for profit maximization. In effect, the goal of the firm is profit maximization (Friedman, 1962; Grant, 1998) and the central issue of strategy is to develop valuable and difficult to imitate resources (Barney, 1986) and to place the firm in a superior market position (Porter, 1980, 1985). The purpose of the firm is therefore given either by the intrinsic nature of firms (Friedman, 1962) or by instrumental analytical purposes (Grant, 1998, p. 33). As a result, the central focus of strategic management is on selecting the means to achieve the assumed profit maximization goal. The origin of the firm is explained as a response to market imperfections such as the presence of transaction costs (Coase, 1937; Williamson, 1975). Firms are second-best and, even within the boundaries of the firm, market mechanisms such as competitive incentives and outsourcing are proposed to run firms as market-like as possible (Ghoshal and Moran, 1996). Firms are not considered as cooperative systems (Barnard, 1938) or institutions (Selznick, 1957), but as either nexus of individual contracts (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972) or instruments for reducing opportunism (Williamson, 1975).

SELF-INTEREST AS OPPOSED TO UNSELFISHNESS

The self-interest view contributed to build both a unified theory of human behaviour and a strong methodological approach to model it. However, many empirical studies from across the disciplines are questioning the self-interest assumption since the late 1970s. Using different empirical methods, researchers have found many counter-examples even for the case of instrumental self-interest, such as forms of helping behaviour not reciprocated or done anonymously (Frank, 1987; Kahneman et al., 1986).

Based on these empirical results, the self-interest critique (Etzioni, 1988; Mansbridge, 1990a) puts forward three main arguments. Firstly, self-interest is not the universal human motivation. Despite the fact that self-interest plays a role in individual decisions, other motivations such as duty (Kant, 1993 [1785]) and sentimental love (Smith, 1976, p. 25 [1790]) are also important. Secondly, these alternative human motives drive non-stable preferences given the inner conflict between motives (Etzioni, 1988, p. 12), the role of experience (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998), and the type of network structure and context in which people operate (Granovetter, 2002). Thirdly, multiple motives and others' interests considered as ends make individuals seek a balance between multiple motives rather than maximize their self-interest.

The breaking down of the self-interest concept into the continuum self-interest – unselfishness, the acknowledgement of alternative motives to self-interest, and the quest for balance as opposed to maximizing behaviour eliminate the triple identity *preferences–choice–welfare* (cf. Figure 2), as we explain below.

Self-interest – Unselfishness

An important shortcoming of the self-interest view is that it assumes an identity between preferences and welfare. This reductionism goes against the reality of alternative human motivations such as sentimental love and duty, which are supported philosophically (Kant, 1993; Smith, 1976), theoretically (Etzioni, 1988; Mansbridge, 1998), and empirically across different disciplines (cf. Kahneman, 2003; Kollock, 1998; Liebrand et al., 1986; Mansbridge 1990b, for a review).

Acknowledging motives other than self-interest and their categorization as unselfishness implies the breaking down of the monolithic concept of self-interest into the bipolar continuum self-interest – unselfishness (Jencks, 1990, p. 53; Mansbridge, 1998, p. 156). This has four important outcomes. Firstly, it restores the meaningful distinction selfish–unselfish, which is important for moral praise and blame. Secondly, it provides a better lens to understanding the reality of human motivations than the self-interest view. Alternative motives such as commitment and rules of fairness, which cannot be derived from self-interest (Mansbridge, 1998; Sen, 1990a), are alternative explanations for deviations from self-interest (Kollock, 1998). Thirdly, it makes human motivation variable. Reducing human motivation

to only one motive does not allow discrimination between different categories and, therefore, it loses its theoretical and empirical relevance. In effect, 'once the satisfaction of one's own needs, and self-sacrifice, as well as service to others and to the community – once *all* these become 'satisfaction', the explanatory hypothesis of the concept is diluted to the point where it becomes quite meaningless' (Etzioni, 1988, p. 28). Finally, it gives room to two historical moral systems that, together with utilitarianism, explain human motivation: sentimentalism (Hutchenson; cf. Smith, 1976); and deontology (Kant, 1993). These two philosophical systems provide two additional motives – i.e. sentiments and duty – which consider others' interests as ends (Figure 1, motives 3, 5, 6, and 7).

Sentimentalism claims that sentiments, especially those that are altruistic or disinterested, constitute the main rule of behaviour (Jolivet, 1976). Expressions such as 'to feel much for others . . . to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature' (Smith, 1976, p. 25) exemplify this philosophy, which contrary to the instrumental conception of self-interest takes others' interests as ends rather than means (Figure 1, motives 3 and 5). The sentimentalist philosophy is at the root of the altruist man, a person 'acting with the intention to advance the interests of others at the expense of his own interests' (Sesardic, 1995, p. 129) and underlies the motivational categories of others' gain maximization (MacCrimmon and Messick, 1976; McClintock, 1972) in psycho-sociology and other-regarding preferences (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998, p. 7) in economics.

Affection, empathy, or sentimental love can be defined as the human capacity to make another's good one's own (Mansbridge, 1998, p. 155), which means that both others' interests and self-interest are considered as ends (Figure 1, cell 5). This is the basic difference between sentimental love and enlightened self-interest, because the latter considers others' interests as means. However, independent of the arguments given to discredit the enlightened self-interest conception (Elster, 1990, p. 44; Smith, 1976, p. 317) that difference can only be discovered empirically, observing whether the individual continues to perform the same action independently of the other person's response.

The second philosophical approach – i.e. deontology – argues that duty is a key motive for individual action (Jolivet, 1976). 'Deontology uses as the criterion for judging the morality of an act, not the ends it aspires to achieve, nor the consequences, but the moral duty it discharges . . . Hence, treat others as you seek to be treated – as an end, and not as a means' (Etzioni, 1988, p. 13). Contrary to sentimentalism, deontologists argue that duty is the only non-egoistic motive because it involves the possibility of counter-preferential choice – i.e. choices that go against the individual's own welfare and sentiments (Sen, 1990a). This means that committed behaviour cannot be credited to enlightened self-interest, because commitment excludes treating others as means. Therefore, deontology identifies good with duty and takes others as ends rather than means (Figure 1, cells 6 and 7).^[15]

Non-Stable Preferences and Inconsistent Behaviour

Another important shortcoming of the self-interest view is that it assumes an identity between preferences and choice, which goes against the reality of non-stable preferences and inconsistent behaviour.

In effect, 'choice may reflect a compromise among a variety of considerations of which personal welfare may be just one' (Sen, 1990a, p. 30). Another source of inconsistencies is individuals' accumulated experience, which leads them to make different choices even when the situation and options are the same (Ben-Ner and Putterman, 1998, p. 25). Finally, given the role of social relations in affecting human behaviour, the specific network type and context in which people operate also influence the relationship between preferences and choice (cf. Granovetter, 2002). For example, pre-existing networks such as horizontal and vertical relationships may involve trust and power, respectively, which drive a wedge between interests and action (Granovetter, 2002). The interplay between heterogeneous motivational structures and specific social contexts contribute to explaining why people have non-stable preferences in real-life situations.

Thus, internal inconsistencies prevent the revealed-preference theorist from assigning a preference ordering to the individual and, therefore, restrain the possibility of stamping a utility function on him (Sen, 1990a), which breaks down the identity *preferences–choice*.^[16]

Balancing Rather Than Maximizing

The self-interest view states that the only human motive is self-interest, which means that the problem of evaluating different competing ends is nonsensical. When deviations from this assumption are found in reality, many ingenious ways are used to extend the self-interest model to interpret the dissonances between the standard economic model and actual behaviour (cf. Becker, 1976, 1996). Maximizing behaviour creates the identity *choice–welfare* because choice is a matter of applying instrumental rationality for choosing the best means to achieve the assumed end.

However, self-interest cannot eliminate the breadth of qualitatively different motivations such as sentiments and duty (Sen, 2002). People who behave in an apparently selfless way could in fact be guided by self-interest, but this possibility does not indicate that all apparently non-selfish behaviour is best explained as enlightened self-interest (Sen, 2002, p. 24).

The reality of alternative motives to self-interest and the existence of counter-preferential choices based on commitment (Sen, 1990a) imply that individuals either choose one motive at a time to maximize it or balance multiple ends. The self-interest critique supports the latter alternative, arguing that people balance several goals rather than maximize only one (Etzioni, 1988, p. 84). This latter alternative breaks-down the identity *choice–welfare*, because counter-preferential

choices run against the welfare of the individual. If utility instead of welfare is taken into account (cf. Becker, 1976, 1996), the identity *choice–utility* is broken by the existence of qualitatively different motives. The reason is that despite the fact that some individuals do trade-off these motives, they are, by their own nature, not exchangeable commodities. In other words, the very existence of multiple motives requires a balancing rather than a maximizing approach.

To sum up, the main contribution of the self-interest critique is the breaking down of the triple identity *preferences–choice–welfare*. The existence of alternative motives to self-interest breaks down the identity *preferences–welfare*; at the same time, non-stable motives create potential inconsistencies, breaking down the identity *preferences–choice*; finally, the presence of multiple ends and counter-preferential choices breaks down the identity *welfare–choice*.

SELF-LOVE AS THE BASIC HUMAN MOTIVE INTEGRATING SELF-INTEREST AND UNSELFISHNESS

Despite its contribution in breaking down the triple identity *preferences–welfare–choice*, the self-interest critique faces four interrelated problems. First, it maintains the identity between self-interest and selfishness. Many authors use the qualification narrow self-interest to refer to selfishness (Elster, 1990; Jencks, 1990, p. 53; Mansbridge, 1998, p. 156), but this leaves self-interest undefined. In other words, they define the species – i.e. narrow self-interest or selfishness – but not the genus – i.e. self-interest.

Equating self-interest with selfishness creates a second problem: a bipolar (i.e. either/or) way of thinking (Bobko, 1985). In effect, the continuum self-interest – unselfishness rules out the possibility of some integration between these extremes, which creates paradoxical situations and the consequent impulsive reaction of the mind to focus on only one aspect of the reality and deny the other. There is nothing wrong with bipolar thinking (Bobko, 1985, p. 107), but it limits our capacity to either realistically integrate opposites or explain important constructs hidden within the continuum.

Bipolar thinking and emphasis on conflicting interests lead to a third problem: the lack of comprehensive theoretical explanations including the alternatives to self-interest. Keeping the unidimensional continuum *self-interest–unselfishness* makes it difficult to theoretically explain qualitatively different motives such as duty, love, and excellence along that continuum. Despite the quest for balance between conflicting motives, a contingency approach to human motivation is preferred when it comes to explaining how the different motives operate in practice (Etzioni, 1988, p. 12; Mansbridge, 1990b, p. 254). This approach takes single motives in different contexts and prevents the explanation of how multiple ends operate at the same time.

A contingency approach for modelling heterogeneous motivational structures leads to a fourth problem: the use of instrumental rationality logic such as maxi-

mization procedures to solve practical rationality problems – i.e. the dealing with multiple ends. Using indifference curves and ratios for modelling multiple ends is a method-driven rather than theory-driven strategy, because it assumes that different motives could be treated as commodities. This strategy could explain why the motivational approach to social dilemmas is purely descriptive (Kollock, 1998, p. 192).

Assuming that two contraries can be integrated because they belong to the same category (Aristotle, 1984a), we use the concept of self-love to go beyond the bipolarity self-interest – unselfishness, and solve the problems it creates. What follows is the definition of self-love and its application to the problems created by that bipolarity.

Definition

Self-love is the inclination of human beings to strive for their own good and perfection (Aristotle, 1984b; Aquinas, 1963, Book I, 60, 3).^[17] As shown in Figure 1, self-love is the genus that includes not only the contraries selfishness and unselfishness but also other motives such as sentimental love, duty, and excellence.

Self-love has been conceptualized since the times of Hume (cf. Holmes, 1990) as selfishness and, therefore, as something morally bad. This lack of distinction between self-love and selfishness is one of the reasons why the concept of self-love has not received much attention in the literature on human and social motives. However, identifying self-love with selfishness is a partial definition of the concept of self-love, because selfishness is a special kind of self-love, that referring ‘to people who assign to themselves the greater share of wealth, honours, and bodily pleasures’ (Aristotle, 1984b, Book IX, p. 8).

According to Aristotle, the basic human tendency is toward good (1984b, Book I, p. 1). Good can be understood in different ways: pleasure, wealth, honour, or excellence (1984b, Book I, p. 4). However, he argues that the greatest of all the goods is excellence (1984b, Book I, p. 5) because it helps to develop to their full potential what is specifically human. Happiness occurs when the human being develops his excellences (1984b, Book, I, p. 13; Book X, 6–7) (Figure 1, motive 8).^[18]

Excellence, which results from intelligent and voluntary efforts rather than nature (1984b, Book II, p. 1), is a habit that fosters the development of human potentialities. In other words, an excellence is formed by voluntary acts rather than determined by genes and reinforces or empowers the basic human capabilities to achieve their potential or tendency to their specific goods. Compared with animals and plants, human beings have specific faculties – i.e. intelligence and will – that allow for intellectual life. Human beings also have inferior faculties they share with animals and plants, allowing for sensitive and vegetative life, respectively (Aquinas, 1963). Excellence guides human potentialities toward their fulfilment, empowering human

capabilities according to what is specifically human: intelligence and will. Good is related to what is according to nature: that which is good expands human capabilities.

The self-love view makes three important contributions to the self-interest debate. Firstly, it breaks down the bipolarity self-interest – unselfishness distinguishing two motivational dimensions: object and subject. Secondly, it integrates the specific human motivations highlighted by the previous two views of self-interest adding a new motivation – i.e. excellence. Thirdly, it specifies the type of rationality necessary to address the reality of multiple ends. These contributions address each one of the problems created by the unidimensional continuum *self-interest–unselfishness*, as we explain below.

Distinguishing Self-Interest from Selfishness

The origin of reducing human motivation to self-interest and the consequent identity *self-interest–selfishness* is credited to Adam Smith (cf. James and Rassekh (2000) for a review). For example, Blaug argues that ‘the central theme that inspires the Wealth of Nations is the notion that selfishness, however morally reprehensible, may nevertheless provide a powerful fuel to a commercial society’ (Blaug, 1997, p. 60).

However, Smith refuses the reduction of human motivations to self-interest: ‘the whole account of human nature . . . which deduces all sentiments and affections from self-love . . . seems to me to have arisen from some confused misapprehension of the system of sympathy’ (Smith, 1976, p. 317). For Smith, the pursuit of self-interest is bound by sources of control such as rules of justice (James and Rassekh, 2000; Sen, 1987).

Thus, the identity *self-interest–selfishness* is based on a misinterpretation of Smith’s work (Sen, 1987; Solomon, 1992). The deepest root of the concept of self-interest is found in the idea of self-love, which has to be traced back to Aristotle and Aquinas to understand its proper meaning – i.e. the inclination of human beings to strive for their own good and perfection.

Beyond the Contingency Approach to Human Motivation

Some authors propose a contingency approach to human motivation, which consists in explaining single motives in different contexts (Mansbridge, 1990b, p. 254).^[19] An extreme case, close to the instrumental conception of self-interest, would be that self-interest is the norm in economic transactions and unselfish behaviour the norm in non-economic transactions. This proposition echoes Samuelson’s proposal for the division of labour in academia, separating ‘economics from sociology upon the basis of rational or irrational behaviour’ (Samuelson, 1947, p. 90). In this context, rational behaviour is defined as the pursuit of self-interest (Jensen, 1994; Sen, 1990a, p. 42).

Despite its plausibility, this contingency approach to human motivation is flawed from a philosophical, theoretical, and empirical standpoint. From a philosophical standpoint, the dualist motivational approach resembles Buckle's interpretation of Adam Smith's works. Buckle concluded that in *Moral Sentiments* Smith ascribes human actions to sympathy while in *Wealth of Nations* he ascribes them to selfishness (Raphael and Macfie, 1976, p. 21). However, as noted above, Smith does not regard self-interest as the only motive guiding market exchanges, but self-interest moderated by an inner sense of justice. In fact, something inherent to a being cannot be completely eliminated; it can only diminish by an increase in contrary dispositions. The readiness can occasionally be diminished but not completely eliminated since it is rooted in the substance of the subject (Aquinas, 1963, Book I–II). Thus, if non self-interested motivation is an alternative motivation, even the strongest structures fostering self-interest would not be able to eradicate human potential for non-self interested behaviour. Making personal motivation contingent to the incentive structure is a kind of determinism because it negates human freedom, which allows a creative space between the stimulus of the environment and the specific individual behaviour.

Secondly, from the theoretical standpoint, the wide range of disciplines supporting alternative motives to self-interest shows that unselfishness is not only present in familial, social, or philanthropic settings but also in the most typical economic ones such as markets and inter-firm relations. Especially relevant is the renewed effort of economists and sociologists to integrate economic and social topics after their sharp separation a century ago.^[20] In effect, a key message of the economic sociology approach is that economic action is socially situated, which is expressed in the concept of embeddedness of economic action coined by Polanyi (Polanyi, 1957) and popularized by Granovetter (Granovetter, 1985). There is an intrinsic connection between any economic action and the social environment in which the action takes place, and therefore any separation among them is artificial.

Finally, the sharp division self-interest-for-economic settings and unselfishness-for-non-economic settings, is not supported empirically. In fact, empirical studies show degrees of self-interest rather than a complete presence of it, even in the most favourable conditions for pursuing self-interest such as the offering of large pay-offs for defection. For example, Rabin has shown that not only material pay-offs but also fairness enter the individual utility function, and 'even if material incentives in a situation are so large as to dominate behaviour, fairness still matters' (Rabin, 1993, p. 1283). In other words, even in economic settings with strong incentives for pure self-interest behaviour, motivational heterogeneity still exists.

Especially relevant are experiments in extreme situations favouring self-interest, such as ultimatum games and dictatorship games, characterized by conditions of complete control over monetary resources, anonymity, and no possibility of group punishment (Murnighan et al., 2001). Results have shown that 25–50 per cent of the participants refuse to take self-interested actions (Murnighan et al., 2001). Even

more revealing than experiments are real-life situations, such as those experienced by Frankl, not only in concentration camps but also in his experience as a doctor and observer of thousands of people in extreme psychological situations (Frankl, 1984).^[21] Frankl's experiments in natural settings show that people can transcend the imperatives of passion and self-interest when they discover a meaning for what they do, which implies that the context, be it economic or social, does not determine the motivation for action.

The self-love view goes beyond a contingency approach because excellence is not a mutually exclusive fourth motivational category competing with pleasure, sentiments and duty; it is simultaneously present with them. In effect, from the object standpoint, those motives are interdependent. For example, more excellence may end achieving more wealth, but it is also possible for excellences to go up while achievement of wealth goes down (Sen, 1990, p. 35); the search for excellence is also accompanied by good sentiments and pleasure, but it is not identified with them (Aristotle, 1984b, Book II, p. 5) as in the case of smiling to a customer by the impulse of excellence when the feelings go in the opposite direction; finally, excellence, although different from duty, is intrinsically united to it, because one of the chief excellences is justice (1984b, Book V) or the constant will of giving to others what is due. From the subject standpoint, excellence is specific to human beings and given their individual and social nature (1984b, Book 7), excellence is beneficial to both the individuals who possess it and those who relate to them.

Harmonizing Instead of Pseudo-Balancing

The critique to self-interest proposes balancing several goals rather than maximizing an assumed end, but ends up proposing a contingency approach that models single motives in specific contexts. In effect, the self-interest critique points out at people's quest for balance, but when it comes to conceptual and methodological definitions it embraces the idea of instrumental rationality, which assumes that goals are given (cf. Etzioni, 1988, pp. 135, 151). We argue that modelling single motives instead of considering the simultaneous presence of different ends prioritizes methodological needs over theoretical relevance, because this approach applies instrumental rationality logic to practical rationality problems – i.e. those that deal with multiple ends operating at the same time.

The nature of the phenomenon and the theory behind it drive the proper methods for studying it. The contingency approach to human motivation goes the other way round: the need for simplicity makes this approach more attractive than alternative ones because it allows the application of maximization techniques. This approach does not consider that econometric models do not explain anything by themselves, only theories underlying the variables used in the models to test propositions do (Bacharach, 1989; Sutton and Staw, 1995).

Modelling two motives using indifference curves also reduces everything to a common denominator: utility – or a meta-utility including several utilities (cf. García Sánchez, 2004, p. 9), because the very idea of substitution is at the heart of instrumental rationality (Jensen and Meckling, 1994). Different ends are dealt as substitutable means that could be traded-off against each other as if they were commodities rather than as necessary parts of a whole. Variability is analysed in only one dimension (i.e. self-interest–unselfishness) instead of in four or more dimensions (i.e. self-interest, sentiments, duty, excellence, or any combination of them), because the underlying logic is that of maximization techniques, for which it is ‘logically impossible to maximize in more than one dimension at the same time’ (cf. Jensen, 2002, p. 238). This resulting loss of qualitative information on motivations could explain, for example, the lack of theoretical development on motivational solutions to social dilemmas. In effect, ‘different social value orientations are theoretically possible, but most work has concentrated on various linear combinations of individuals’ concern for the outcomes for themselves and their partners’ (Kollock, 1998, p. 192; cf. also McClintock, 1972, p. 448).

The nature of human motivation is marked by the existence of simultaneous ends. The existence of multiple ends is the result of not only having different qualitatively internal motivations – i.e. pleasure, sentiments, duty, or excellence – but also considering others’ interests, as Figure 1 shows. Intuition and the natural and laboratory experiments described above shows that pleasure, sentiments, duty, and excellence are not exchangeable commodities by their own nature as it is the case of cars, bananas, or cinemas. The existence of qualitatively different ends implies that instrumental or means–end logic has to be replaced with part–whole logic or practical rationality approach.

Practical rationality can be traced back to the Aristotelian concept of practical wisdom (Aristotle, 1984b, Book II, p. 1; Book VI, p. 5; cf. García Sánchez, 2004), which stresses the idea of holism (Solomon, 1992) or part–whole relation. In effect, practical rationality focuses on different ends while instrumental rationality aims at connecting an action with an external end (Aristotle, 1984b, Book VI, p. 5). Contrary to instrumental rationality, which allows the separation between given ends and the means to achieve them, practical rationality requires that each part be present to get the whole (García Sánchez, 2004). Multiple ends are evaluated rather than selected; the issue is how different ends are connected and evaluated rather than how to select the best means to maximize an assumed end. Its reference to ends makes practical rationality be related to the concept of substantive rationality (Weber, 1968), which is defined as the ‘degree to which the provisioning of given groups of persons . . . with goods is shaped by economically oriented social action under some criterion . . . of ultimate values, regardless of the nature of these ends’ (Weber, 1968, p. 85). However, while practical rationality is concerned with how different ends are interconnected and evaluated, substantive rationality stresses the idea that behaviour is oriented toward values,

‘whether they be ethical, political, utilitarian . . . or whatever’ (Weber, 1968, p. 85).

The existence of multiple motives subject to harmonization rather than maximization suggests that experimental and simulation rather than optimization techniques are more appropriate to analyse and test the interaction among human motives and the relation between motives, behaviours, and outcomes. In particular, simulations provide different scenarios for different assumptions. They are ‘playback of assumptions’ that tell what is already known, show the consequences of assumptions, and reveal hidden pitfalls (Morecroft, 1999; Simon, 1996). Simulation techniques also allow the inclusion of contextual factors to analyse how different conditions restrain or foster different motivational sets. For example, cooperative incentive structures such as an Assurance Game or institutional arrangements such as local regulation of common property (Kollock, 1998) could fuel human potential to follow an excellence driven process, while monetary incentives could foster temporary cooperation that would disappear if those external incentives were eliminated.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current debate on behavioural assumptions is framed in terms of self-interest–unselfishness because self-interest is identified with selfishness and associated to instrumental rationality. However, it creates an incommensurability problem (Kuhn, 1977) because it assumes that self-interest and unselfishness cannot be integrated, either because self-interest is the only motive or because self-interest and other motives are inherently conflictive.

In this paper, we have revisited the self-interest debate analysing both the self-interest view and its critique, and proposed an integrated framework, called self-love view, to solve the incommensurability problem. Assuming understanding as a valid epistemic value, we transform the unidimensional continuum *self-interest–unselfishness* into a bi-dimensional motivational space based on the concept of self-love or the inclination of human beings to strive for their own good and perfection. We distinguish between the motivational object, or *what* we consider good for ourselves – i.e. pleasure, sentiments, duty, or excellence – and the motivational subject, or *whose* interest, whatever it might be, is taken into account – self-interest, others’ interests, self-interest as end and others’ interests only as means, or both self-interest and others’ interests as ends – which determines eight motivational types (Figure 1).

Our integrated framework, in turn, widens the assumptions on the relation between human motivations, behaviour, and outcomes. For example, some individuals choose a self-interest driven process where personal preferences are based on self-interest, choice on pleasure and calculative reason, and welfare on the attainment of pleasure – i.e. a state that results from having health, material goods,

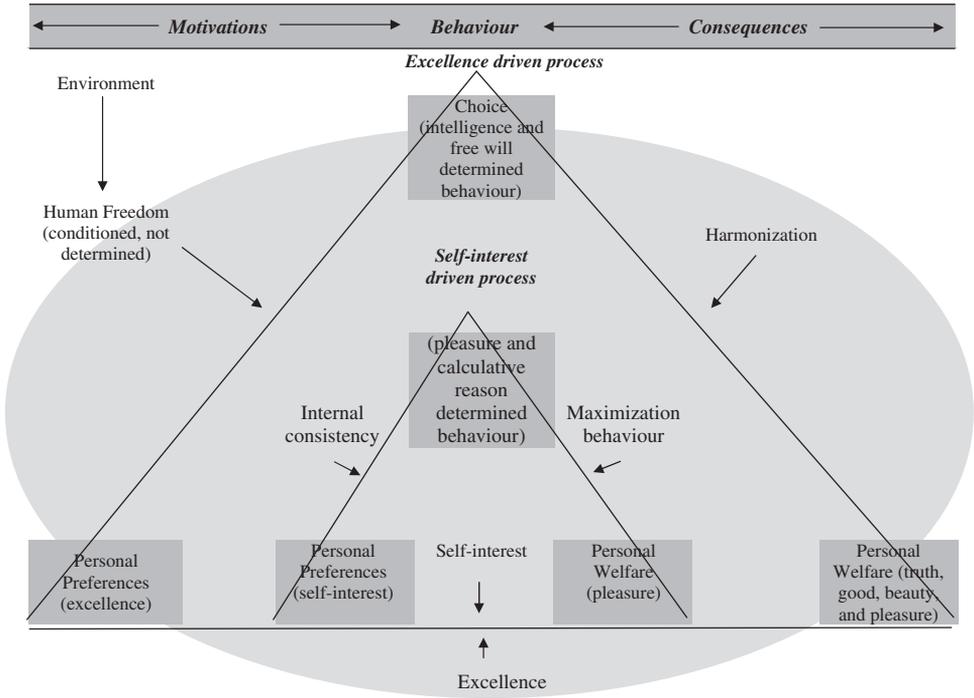


Figure 3. Economic assumptions and human reality – self-interest and excellence explanations

honours, status, power, or any bodily pleasure. However, this is only part of the reality, given that other individuals could choose an excellence driven process where personal preferences are based on excellence, choice on intelligence and free will, and welfare on a progressively attainment of a virtuous life. The real existence of both types of individuals show that human potentialities allow for a variety of motivations, behaviours, and outcomes that go beyond self-interest (Figure 3).

The self-love view provides an integrated paradigm aimed at solving the incommensurability problem of the self-interest debate. In effect, the self-interest critique breaks down the triple identity *preferences–choice–welfare* that underlies the self-interest paradigm. However, the self-interest critique identifies self-interest with selfishness, which results in bipolar thinking, a contingency approach to human motivation, and the application of instrumental logic to problems of practical rationality. The self-love view breaks down the identity *self-interest–selfishness* and provides a framework to analyse the interaction of different motives and the required rationality to harmonize them. Figure 4 extends Figure 1, summarizing the main constructs underlying the three conceptions of human motivation.

The contributions of this paper are twofold. Firstly, based on the epistemological goal of understanding, it embraces a complementary articulation (Smelser and Swedberg, 1994) or a scholarship of integration (Boyer, 1990) approach to theory building. We aim at integrating the insights of the current two views on self-interest

Object – what is good?	Subject – whose interests?				Main human endeavour	Human capabilities involved	Philosophical system	Identity preferences/choice/welfare	Methodological approach
	Only self	Only others	Self as end others as only means	Both self and others as ends					
Pleasure	Narrow self-interest	N/A	Instrumental or Enlightened self-interest	N/A	Seek pleasure and avoid pain/Satisfy preferences	Passions Calculative reason	Utilitarianism (Bentham/neo-utilitarians)	Yes	Maximization (relation means–ends)
Sentiments	N/A	Unselfishness (sentiment-driven altruism)	Instrumental or Enlightened self-interest	Sentimental love	Follow sentiments	Sentiments	Sentimentalism (Hutchenson; Smith)	No	Maximization (relation means–ends)
Duty	N/A	Unselfishness (duty-driven altruism)	N/A	Duty	Obey the categorical imperatives	Will Intelligence	Deontology (Kant)	No	Absolute reason
Excellence	N/A	N/A	N/A	Excellence	Live a virtuous life	Intelligence Will Passions	Aristotelian (Aristotle; Aquinas)	No	Harmonization of several ends (relation part–whole)

Figure 4. Beyond the bipolarity self-interest–unselfishness – summary

and resolving their apparent inherent conflict instead of enlarging the current list of human preferences. In other words, our contribution does not lie in presenting an alternative competing paradigm but in integrating what seem to be incommensurable views on human motivation.

Secondly, this integration is not limited to a richer description of assumptions on human behaviour. Given that assumptions are embodied in theories and have the potential to change the very behaviour they assume (cf. Ferraro et al., 2005; Ghoshal and Moran, 1996), we argue that a more realistic and integrated vision of behavioural assumptions provides better explanations and offer more responsible prescriptions. A richer vision of behavioural assumptions leads to understanding deviations from self-interest as neither anomalies (self-interest view) nor opposite extremes to self-interest (critique to the self-interest view) but as manifestations of potential human motives. Different assumptions, in turn, lead to different theories and practices that condition the development of those motives. For example, a theory prescribing outcome-based contracts could promote human potential to behave in a self-interested way while a theory prescribing purpose-based incentives might foster human potential to behave in an excellence-based way. As another example, Rabin (1993) shows that people’s concern for fairness is reduced when monetary pay-offs dominate behaviour. This finding can be interpreted in at least two different ways: first, all rational people have their price and are willing to trade-off everything (self-interest dominates behaviour; Jensen and Mecking, 1994). In this case, no concern for fairness would be expected if the pay-off is high enough. Alternatively, people’s concern for fairness is crowded-out by external incentives, but no-price, regardless how high, could completely extinguish the concern for fairness of at least some people. In this case, a result opposite to that shown by Rabin may be expected when an incentive structure targeting fairness is put in place (cf. Frey and Jegen, 2001;

Kollock, 1998). In short, business and public policies based on different behavioural assumptions are likely to foster the very behaviour that those policies assume.

These contributions confirm that assumptions are the starting point of research programmes and illuminate the adequate methods to be used, as acknowledged by not only management scholars (Argyris, 1973; Herzberg et al., 1959; McGregor, 1957) but also Nobel-laureates (Sen, 1990a; Simon, 1985; Hayek, 1974). Assumptions embodied in theories, in turn, influence practice through the process of double hermeneutic (Giddens, 1984). Therefore, given that the way we see (assumptions) drives what we do (theories and management policies), and, what we do in turn impacts on what we get (results), our holistic motivational framework has implications at both the theoretical and practical levels. We conclude with implications for theory building, theory testing, and practice.

Implications for Theory Building

Theory building relates to concepts (the *What*), the relation among them (the *How*), the assumptions and rationale behind the concepts and their relationship (the *Why*), and the conditions under which those relationships hold (the *Who*, *Where*, and *When*) (Whetten, 1989). Our framework has implications for each one of these four elements of theory development.

The What. Defining the concepts that are the building blocks of a theory is a first step in theory building. This is especially relevant when a concept such as self-interest is central to a theory. The paper shows that a misinterpretation of Smith's work has led to equating self-interest with selfishness. The qualification 'narrow' self-interest shows that self-interest is different from selfishness, but leaves the former undefined. To this end, some authors propose a rehabilitation of the concept of self-love (Holmes, 1990, p. 281). However, this suggestion is based on a misreading of Aristotle and Aquinas, because self-love was originally understood as the human tendency towards own good and perfection rather than as selfishness.

This paper also shows that understanding the very nature of each motive widens assumptions such as that of treating duty and excellence as exchangeable means, and fosters theory building. Our bi-dimensional motivational space allows defining preferences and their relationships with behaviours and outcomes in an integrative way, thus contributing to theory through a better understanding of human motivation.

The How. This paper shows how the interaction between the object – i.e. what is considered as good – and the subject – i.e. whose interests – of motivation defines a bi-dimensional motivational space that integrates eight potential human

motivations. This framework breaks down the unidimensional continuum *self-interest–unselfishness* and allows discovering the internal relation between different types of motives. In particular, we show that excellence is not a mutually exclusive category competing with pleasure, sentiments, and duty. These are interdependent and not necessarily conflicting motivations.

The richer vision of human preferences leads to the break down of the triple-identity between preferences, behaviours, and outcomes. Given the interconnection between these phenomena (Figure 3), our framework also yields different relations between preferences, behaviours, and outcomes and different explanations on why these relations occur.

The Why. The *Why* of a theory is the rationale underlying the selection of concepts and the proposed causal mechanisms among them, which constitutes the theory's assumptions (Whetten, 1989, p. 491).

Given the powerful role of assumptions as rationale justifying theoretical arguments, theories, especially those that are normative (Ghoshal and Moran, 1996), should make explicit the set of assumptions on which they are based (Bacharach, 1989; Whetten, 1989) to allow their critical scrutiny and public discussion (Sen, 1997). This paper shows that the self-interest view and its critique are rooted in some philosophical systems that provide a specific view on human nature and human relations. Making explicit these intellectual roots contributes to a richer vision of reality, more unbiased judgement, and more comprehensive theories.

It could be argued that the goal of scientific enterprise is prediction (Friedman, 1962) and therefore assumptions on human nature are irrelevant; the only requisite is that an assumption such as self-interest should allow the building of a model for making accurate predictions. Although not discussed in our paper, we have argued that this argument should be evaluated using the proper perspective – i.e. that of philosophy of science or epistemology. There are plenty of debates among philosophers of science, but at least one thing is clear to them: the basic goal of scientific inquiry is the search for explanation – i.e. '[The] success of a theory is measured, in part, by its capacity to explain known events' (Rothbart, 1998, p. 117). Disagreements exist on what the constitutive elements of a genuine explanation in science are, not on whether explanation is one of the defining missions of science. Even more, proposals have been made which imply a return to the original goal of knowledge or understanding (Artigas, 2000; McMullin, 1988), integrating the interdependent goals of explaining and prescribing.

The *What*, *How*, and *Why* provide the essential elements of a theory (Whetten, 1989). Our framework provides different content for each one of these questions and opens the horizon for new theories and propositions. For example, the interaction of self-interest, stable preferences, and maximization behaviour justifies propositions such as 'outcome-based contracts curb agent opportunism'. However, the interac-

tion of self-love, human freedom, and harmonization behaviour could yield different propositions. For example, from an excellence standpoint, the alternative proposition 'purpose-based incentives develop the full potential of excellence-motivated agents' makes as much sense as a proposition based on self-interest.

The Who, Where, When. We integrate the basic human motivations and show that they are human potentialities waiting to be fully explored and developed. A particular motive or combination of motives would be the result of the interaction of the human potential for self-scrutiny and freedom, personal history, and contextual conditions such as culture, accountability, institutional arrangements (Ferraro et al., 2005), systems of exchange (Biggart and Delbridge, 2004), embeddedness in structures of social relations (Granovetter, 1985), and horizontal and vertical relationships (Granovetter, 2002).

Given that the alternative motives are rooted in human nature, we argue that contextual factors only moderate human motivation, given that even the most powerful external incentives are not able to eradicate the reality of individuals' heterogeneous motivations. Therefore, identifying conditions that restrain or foster different motivational sets is a main avenue to test propositions derived from our motivational framework.

Implications for Theory Testing

The immediate reason for the widespread diffusion of the self-interest assumption is the egoism attached to human nature. However, a more fundamental reason is that of the pretence of knowledge (Hayek, 1974) and its consequent requirement of simple models for explaining much with little. Assuming self-interest eliminates the problem of heterogeneous motivational structures and, thus, allows for tractable models, a key constraint in economic analysis (Kahneman, 2003).

The self-interest critique seems to apply a similar logic when it comes to theory testing. In effect, its proposed contingency approach implies applying instrumental rationality with its maximization logic to practical rationality problems. In other words, in a phenomenon like heterogeneous motivational structures, each motive is a part rather than a means and therefore it cannot be separated from the whole.

Multiple ends pose a problem to maximization techniques, because it is not possible to maximize in more than one dimension (Jensen, 2002). Some could argue that multi-objective or multi-criteria optimization techniques (Eschenauer et al., 1986) would solve the problem, providing a set of possible answers rather than one optimal solution. However, optimization methods implicitly assume substitution and therefore different ends are dealt as substitutable means rather necessary parts of a whole. In addition, motivational heterogeneity coupled with human freedom and experience challenge the assumption of internal consistency, restating the problem of creating a utility function for an individual.

We have argued that the nature of the phenomenon should drive the appropriate method of investigation. Given that human motivation is intrinsically heterogeneous, this suggests that multiple motives should be subjected to harmonization rather than maximization techniques. We have suggested that experimental and simulation techniques rather than optimization techniques are more appropriate for analysing and testing the interaction among human motives and the relation between motives, behaviours, and outcomes. In effect, these relationships and interactions make analytical approaches infeasible, given not only the number of parameters to be estimated (Kahneman, 2003) but also the feedback loops that results from experience (Ben-Ner and Puterman, 1998), choices (Larrick, 1993), and the impact of context (cf. Kollock, 1998). Therefore, the self-love view we propose is another interesting avenue for empirical research using new methodological developments in experimental and behavioural economics (cf. Kahneman, 2003; Smith, 1992), and system dynamics (cf. Lane, 2000; Morecroft, 1999).

Implications for Practice

Positive theories in social science are also normative theories (Ghoshal and Moran, 1996) because they give prescriptions to change behaviour. This process of double hermeneutic in social sciences relates to the scientific goal of control or change (Whetten, 1989, p. 494).

How assumptions embodied in theories influence management practice has been forcefully shown by Ghoshal and Moran (1996) in their critique to TCE. More recently, Ferraro et al. have generalized this idea, arguing that a self-fulfilling prophecy process shows 'how the behavioral assumptions and language that characterize economics influence theories and expectations about human behaviour' (2005, p. 3).

The limitations of this paper are given by its scope and, therefore, constitute lines for future research. A first important limitation is that our framework includes only the main generic motives according to the literature, without analysing in more detail its connections with the literature on extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in general (cf. Frey, 1997; McGregor, 1966; Perez Lopez, 1993) and the literature on rules of fairness (Rabin, 1993) in particular. A second important limitation is that our focus on integrating assumptions has precluded a more detailed analysis of both potential interactions between motives, and potential relationships between motives, behaviour, and outcomes (cf. Figure 4). Finally, both our focus on motives rather than on rationality, and our analysis of instrumental and practical rationality have led us to conclude that non self-interested behaviour is not necessarily irrational behaviour. However, this paper does not analyse what constitutes rational behaviour per se. Given that the economic literature equates self-interest to rational action (cf. Jensen, 1994), more research on the relationship between different motives and rationality is needed.

This paper shows that both the self-interest view and its critique are based on specific philosophical systems that describe partial aspects of human potential. By proposing the self-love view, which integrates rather than dissociates different motives, and by making explicit the intellectual roots of each motivation, we provide the conditions for a richer vision of reality and more informed managers and policymakers. Richer knowledge, in turn, results in more freedom to design organizational and societal contexts than those resulting from assuming either self-interest as the only human motive or a permanent conflict between self-interest and unselfishness. We hope that knowing this motivational potential and the role of theory in modifying concrete behaviours will encourage dialogue among academics to develop richer theoretical frameworks and prescriptions. This cooperative effort would aid managers and policy makers in their judgements to create better organizations and societies.

NOTES

*A previous version of this paper was presented at the All Academy Symposium 'Making Organizational Knowledge Actionable: New Organizational Designs for Knowledge Driven Innovation', Academy of Management Conference, New Orleans, 6–11 August 2004. This paper was work in progress when Sumantra Ghoshal passed away on 3 March 2004. At that time a detailed outline of the Conclusion section of the paper had been agreed between the authors but completed by the first author only after March 2004. The original title was shortened and the Introduction was substantially re-framed in response to the excellent critiques, comments, and suggestions of many scholars who read the initial draft. The core of the paper has been left intact, except for editing and clarifications, acknowledging that there is room for improvement. This decision has been made in order to contribute to the effort of other scholars in motivating future work on the new management agenda Sumantra Ghoshal was developing at the time of his death. The first author is especially grateful to Ananda Ghoshal and his family for their consent to publish this paper. He also thanks Peter Moran for his sharp critiques, key questions, time, and encouragement. The first author also thanks Editor Julian Birkinshaw for his many reviews of the manuscript and encouragement for finishing it. Michael Jensen, Fabrizio Ferraro, Martin Kilduff, Lynda Gratton, Raymond Miles, Javier García Sánchez, Ricardo Crespo, Janine Nahapiet, Miguel Alfonso Martínez-Echevarria, Martin Kunc, and anonymous reviewers at the *Journal of Management Studies* have also provided very helpful comments and an example of excellent scholarship. Financial support from the Society for the Advancement of Management Studies – Geoff Lockett and Tom Lupton Doctoral Scholarship, and IAE – Management and Business School, is gratefully acknowledged. The usual disclaimers apply.

- [1] Other examples are rational choice theory in political science (Downs, 1957) and sociology (Coleman, 1990); adversary democracy (Schumpeter, 1950; cf. Mansbridge, 1990a, p. 8), game theory (Axelrod, 1984, p. 6), and public choice theory in political science; and the theory of economic law (Posner, 1986) in Law.
- [2] These two examples are based on a specific case of self-interest, that of potential seeking of self-interest with guile or opportunism. For a discussion in the context of TCE, see Ghoshal and Moran (1996).
- [3] Similarly, Mansbridge states that '(the) essays in this book constitute a manifesto. They reject the increasingly prevalent notion that human behaviour is based on self-interest, narrowly conceived' (Mansbridge, 1990a, p. ix). We articulate the self-interest critique around the contributions of Etzioni and Mansbridge given that their research questions and focus have targeted the self-interest assumption in itself instead of taking it as part of a research programme with a more specific theoretical and empirical focus. However, we also draw on scholars from psychology, economics, social-psychology, and economic-sociology not only for our exposition of the self-interest critique but also for our elaboration of the self-love view.

- [4] As Sen has pointed out, 'Even when precisely capturing an ambiguity proves to be a difficult exercise, that is not an argument for forgetting the complex nature of the concept and seeking a spuriously narrow exactness. In social investigation and measurement, it is undoubtedly more important to be vaguely right than to be precisely wrong' (Sen, 1990b, p. 45).
- [5] As it will be analysed in the following sections, self-love is a natural tendency shared by all human beings. Self-love has to be distinguished from selfishness, which is a special kind of self-love, and narcissism, which is a pathological pathology.
- [6] Many connections between our framework and the current motivational literature can be made. For example, self-interest can be associated to extrinsic motivation – i.e. motivation based on external factors – while sentiments, duty, and virtue can be categorized as different types of intrinsic motivations – i.e. motivation based on internal factors – and transcendental or transitive motivations – i.e. motivation based on internal factors and the impact of the actions on others (cf. Frey, 1997; Llano, 1997; McGregor, 1966; Perez Lopez, 1993). Due to space limitations, these and other connections will not be analysed further in this paper, acknowledging that they are avenues for further research.
- [7] In addition, we place every generic motive within Figure 1 according to the literature and the nature of each motive. For example, Jensen and Meckling (1994) argue that individuals always make trade-offs and substitutions, even of preferences such as morality, which opens the door for the inclusion of altruism within the definition of self-interest (Jensen, 1994, p. 5). However, this assertion contradicts the very nature of duty, which takes others always as ends. For this reason, enlightened self-interest is not included in the cells where duty is involved. As an additional example, the so-called reciprocal altruism is not included as altruism but as enlightened self-interest, because altruism implies the intention of the actor to genuinely sacrifice his own interests (Sesardic, 1995, p. 130). In the previous examples and in the explanations that follow, we limit our exposition to psychological altruism, keeping biological altruism (cf. Sesardic, 1995) out of the scope of the paper due to space limitations.
- [8] Note that this definition of pleasure is broader than the hedonistic definition provided by the old utilitarians. For a discussion, see Hausman and McPherson (1993).
- [9] When a person is moved by her own pleasure, altruism is not possible, because it reduces rather than increases the welfare of the doer of the action. When the action is done for the praise of others, therefore others' interest is considered as means, which results in enlightened self-interest (cell 2).
- [10] In effect, they assert that '[like] it or not, individuals are willing to sacrifice a little of almost anything we care to name, even reputation or morality, for a sufficiently large quantity of other desired things, and these things do not have to be money or even material goods' (1994, p. 7). Note that this assertion relates to human nature. In effect, it attempts to be descriptive of human behaviour in general, although Jensen corrects his views in a companion article, arguing that his model is more prescriptive than descriptive (Jensen, 1994, p. 7). The Jensen and Meckling quote also relates to the interaction of different motives rather than to the way individuals advance a given motive. For example, if an individual is concerned with the well being of her daughters, she will consider the associated cost in deciding how much of her resources she will devote to make them better off. The motive is given and informs the whole decision process; then, it is a matter of evaluating how much of those resources she will invest to advance that motive, which is related to instrumental rationality or the relationship between means and a given end. A different issue is to evaluate which end should be given priority: the well being of her daughters or a higher personal consumption. This latter issue is at the heart of Jensen and Meckling's assertion, given that different ends (i.e. the duty of looking after the well being of a daughter and the pleasure derived of a higher consumption of goods) are evaluated as if they were substitutable commodities.
- [11] In effect, the former asserts 'every individual . . . intends only his own gain, and he is . . . led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. . . . By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it' (Smith, 1999, Book IV, p. ii.9). Following the same intuition, Bentham asserts that 'the interest of the community . . . is the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it' (Bentham, 1982, p. 12, cited in Strauss and Cropsey, 1987, p. 719).
- [12] As Adam Smith pointed out, 'People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices' (1999, Book I, p. x.2).

- [13] Our focus is on the intellectual roots of the self-interest conception; due to space limitations, this section is deliberately short. For detailed analysis of the intellectual roots of general assumptions in economics, see Hausman and McPherson (1993), Hausman (1994), and Blaug (1992, 1997). For a discussion on reasons for the dominance of economic ideology, see Dumont (1977).
- [14] Rousseau shares the idea of the autonomous and free individual as the only important reality, but contrary to Hobbes, he assumes that human beings are naturally good. Through a social contract individuals obey to themselves when they obey the sovereign (Messner, 1976).
- [15] Note that in the case of unselfishness, the personal interests that are negatively affected are welfare in the case of sentiment-driven altruism (cell 3), and welfare and sentiments in the case of duty-driven altruism (cell 6). Sentiments in the former case and duty in the latter case are the interests that drive human behaviour, and therefore they are not negatively affected.
- [16] These theoretical arguments have been further developed by many researchers (see, for example, the works of Sen (1990a), Elster (1986), Frank (1987), and Etzioni (1988)). For an extensive list of articles criticizing the internal consistency assumption, see Sen (1990a).
- [17] See especially Aristotle (1984b, Book IX, 4, 1166a–b; 8, 1168–9) and Aquinas (1963, Book I, 60, 5; I–II, 27, 3; 28, 3; II–II, 25, 4).
- [18] Nygren proposes Agape as a specific additional motivation, which would be placed in the cell that is at the intersection of Excellence and Only Others' interests. We have not included this motivation in our framework given that the arguments for its inclusion are theological, which go beyond the scope of the paper. For a textual exposition of Nygren standpoint and a critique of it, see Pieper (1986).
- [19] In effect, based on the need for relative simplicity in formal modelling, Mansbridge argues that 'we can accommodate motives other than self-interest in three ways: by extending the range of *single* motives we model, by modelling the relations between two or more motives in new ways, and *most importantly*, by trying out models based on different *single* motives in different contexts' (Mansbridge, 1990b, p. 254; emphasis added).
- [20] See Winship and Rosen (1988), Martinelli and Smelser (1990), and Hausman (1994) for a review.
- [21] Viktor Frankl is the founder of the third Viennese School of Psychotherapy (after Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology). Especially revealing is his contrasting of experiences in the living laboratory of concentration camps with the theoretical position of Freud regarding individual differences. '... Freud once asserted, "Let one attempt to expose a number of the most diverse people uniformly to hunger. With the increase of the imperative urge of hunger all individual differences will blur, and in their stead will appear the uniform expression of the one unstilled urge". Thank heaven, ... Freud was spared knowing the concentration camps from the inside. His subjects lay on a couch designed in the plush style of Victorian culture, not in the filth of Auschwitz. *There*, the "individual differences" did not "blur" but, on the contrary, people became more different; people unmasked themselves, both the swine and the saints' (Frankl, 1984, p. 178).

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