

A “Hugoist” Social and Economic Model

Key Features of the Children’s Hospital Public Economy Model (CHPEM)

Rob Rennebohm, MD

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There are 12 key features of the CHPEM:

1. It is based on a positive, nuanced, pro-human understanding of Human Nature.
2. It recognizes that the social milieu can greatly affect which aspects of our human nature are most expressed---e.g., our kind, altruistic aspects vs. our less kind, non-altruistic aspects.
3. It has confidence in Human Goodness.
4. It encourages selection of natural altruistic leaders.
5. It can be successfully applied to a general economy.
6. It emphasizes creation of vast fields of public activity.
7. It recognizes that there is no need to prohibit private capitalist enterprises in a CHPEM-inspired general economy—because it is anticipated that the public enterprises, with their positive social philosophy, kind behaviors, and exemplary competence, will prove to be so appreciated by the general public and such a source of pride for the general public that private enterprise counterparts will gradually become less utilized and will increasingly struggle to stay in business.
8. When the CHPEM is applied to a general economy of a nation, it is a democratic, needs-based public economy model, based on and inspired by the social philosophy and behaviors that have been successfully practiced for decades in public children’s hospitals throughout the world.
9. The CHPEM believes that in the general economy citizens should have a choice between for-profit private enterprises and a full array of not-for-profit counterparts in the public sector.
10. The CHPEM provides abundant opportunity for “a most precious freedom.”
11. The CHPEM is a “Hugoist” social and economic model.
12. The CHPEM exposes the Achilles’ heel of capitalism.

What follows is an expanded explanation of each feature, including how corporate capitalism differs from the CHPEM regarding each feature:

1--Human Nature:

The CHPEM is foundationally based on a specific set of positive, upbeat social understandings about Human Nature, Leadership, Incentive, Competition, and Freedom. The first two are particularly important and are emphasized in this article. All five of these understandings are discussed in detail in the book ***Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty: The Untold Story of the Children's Hospital Public Economy Model (CHPEM)***, which is posted on the following website, where it may be downloaded and read for free: www.notesfromthesocialclinic.org

The most important of the above five social understandings is a positive understanding of Human Nature. The CHPEM acknowledges that each human being has capacities for both unkind, non-altruistic behaviors and kind, altruistic behaviors. None of us is without faults. Very few of us are predominantly evil. We all have capacities for both kind and unkind behaviors, and there is a spectrum regarding the extent to which individuals possess given behavioral capacities. Some people may have much greater capacity to behave kindly and altruistically than do others. Some people may have much greater capacity for unkind, non-altruistic behaviors than do others.

But it is not just a matter of capacity; it is also a matter of expression of one's capacities. That is, it is also a matter of the extent to which individuals are interested in expressing a given capacity, and the extent to which individuals are easily able to upregulate (or downregulate) the expression of a given capacity. Some people are more interested in expressing (or more inclined to express) their capacities for self-interest oriented behaviors; others are more interested in expressing (or more inclined to express) their capacities for other-directed (altruistic) behaviors. Some people find it very easy to upregulate the expression of a particular capacity; others find it more difficult to upregulate a particular capacity.

2--The Effect of the Social Milieu on What Aspects of Our Human Nature are Most Expressed:

But it is more than just a matter of capacity, interest (in expressing a particular capacity), and ease with which an individual is able to upregulate or downregulate the expression of a given capacity. It is also about the extent to which the social milieu (the social culture) encourages and facilitates expression of this or that behavioral capacity. For example, a culture that promotes self-interest seeking, wealth accumulation, cut-throat competition, and seeking advantage over others, will tend to upregulate the expression of the non-altruistic capacities of our human nature. In contrast, a social milieu that encourages, models, and facilitates altruistic behaviors will tend to upregulate expression of our altruistic capacities and downregulate our capacities for non-altruistic behaviors.

In contrast to the above positive, nuanced, pro-human understanding of our complex Human Nature, corporate capitalism is based on a negative, simplistic, incomplete, anti-human understanding of human nature---an understanding that strongly emphasizes the negative aspects of our human nature and largely ignores (or at least discourages confidence in) the positive aspects of our human nature. Corporate capitalism claims that capitalism is the most realistic and, thereby, best economic model because it is based on the “reality” that human beings, by nature, are primarily selfish and rather hopelessly so. This represents a rather gaslighting, anti-human viewpoint, as opposed to the healthier and more accurate pro-human viewpoint of the CHPEM.

3--Confidence in Human Goodness:

While acknowledging that there are both negative (e.g., unkind, non-altruistic) and positive (e.g., kind, altruistic) aspects to our human nature, the CHPEM emphasizes the latter and, accordingly, encourages confidence in Human Goodness and belief that Human Goodness can prevail, especially if societies are organized in a way that upregulates expression of our kindest, most altruistic capacities. As demonstrated in public children’s hospitals, the CHPEM enables Human Goodness to flourish and prevail.

Corporate capitalism, on the other hand, inherently upregulates expression of the less kind, non-altruistic capacities of our human nature and downregulates expression of our kind, altruistic capacities---thereby, undermining and discouraging confidence in Human Goodness.

4--Natural Altruistic Leaders:

The CHPEM emphasizes the importance of selecting natural altruistic leaders, whose kindness, gentleness, competence, and incorruptibility are exemplary and serve to inspire and elevate expression of the kindest capacities of our human nature.

Corporate capitalism inherently fills positions of leadership with people who are most likely to improve the corporation’s bottom line---i.e., generate the most revenue and profit. Such corporate leaders tend to be people who enthusiastically embrace and practice the foundational social beliefs of capitalism, including cut-throat competition and little faith in Human Goodness. Natural altruistic leaders do not ascend to positions of leadership in capitalist corporations, nor do such positions appeal to them.

As discussed in ***Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty***, the set of social understandings upon which the CHPEM is based leads to Kind Social Arrangements and Social Beauty, while the set of flawed

social understandings upon which corporate capitalism is based tends to create Mean Social Arrangements and Social Atrocity.

5--Application of the CHPEM to a General Economy:

Those who have personally participated in the activities and behaviors of a public children's hospital and appreciate the social understandings upon which the CHPEM is based, can understand why it would be possible for the CHPEM to be applied to a general economy, and why that application could result in abundant Social Beauty.

Those who have not personally participated in the activities and behaviors of an institution like a children's hospital, and those who have accepted the set of flawed social understandings upon which capitalism is based, may have greater difficulty understanding how the CHPEM could be applied to a general economy and may fear the mere thought of such application.

6--Creation of Vast fields of Public Activity:

When applied to a general economy, a key feature of the CHPEM is its emphasis on creation of "vast fields of public activity," a phrase used by Victor Hugo in his 1862 novel, *Les Miserables*. Public children's hospitals represent splendid examples of public activity, as do public libraries, public transport, and public universities and medical schools.

Corporate capitalism encourages "small government" and privatization of as much social and economic activity as possible. Corporate capitalism prefers that its private enterprises not have public counterparts. For example, a private for-profit construction company (that builds roads, bridges, or buildings, e.g.) would prefer not to compete with a public (non-profit) construction company. Corporate capitalism argues against creation of vast fields of public activity.

7--Application of the CHPEM to a General Economy Does Not Preclude Private Capitalist Enterprise:

Application of the CHPEM to a general economy does not mean that "all of the means of production must be owned by the government" and does not mean that there would be no opportunity for private capitalist enterprise. On the contrary, existing private capitalist enterprises would be welcome to continue, and citizens would be welcome to start new capitalist enterprises, if they wished. But the leaders of CHPEM-inspired public activities (public enterprises, if you will) have confidence that public enterprises will eventually become increasingly preferred and preferentially supported by the general public, while private

capitalistic enterprise counterparts will increasingly become less preferred and less supported by the general public. That is, the public enterprises, because of their social philosophy, kind behaviors, and exemplary competence, will prove to be so attractive to and so appreciated by the general public that the more expensive private profiteering enterprises will increasingly become less preferred and struggle to stay in business.

Whereas the corporate capitalist system is fearful of public activity that competes with its private enterprises, the CHPEM is not afraid of private sector “competition.”

Given the above confidence and patience, proponents of a CHPEM-inspired general economy see no place (on their part) for overzealousness, coercion, repression, shaming, force, or violence. CHPEM’s tools are education, sharing of understandings, and dialogue—particularly exposure of the set of flawed social understandings upon which capitalism is based (capitalism’s Achilles’ heel), compared to the wiser set of social understandings upon which the CHPEM is based.

8--The CHPEM is a Democratic, Needs-Based Public Economy model:

When applied to the general economy of a nation (or nations), the CHPEM is a democratic, needs-based public economy model, inspired by the social philosophy and behaviors that have been successfully practiced for decades in public children’s hospitals throughout the world. As with public children’s hospitals, the question for the general economy is: “What do people need, and how can we best meet those needs?”

The CHPEM is democratic in the sense that, after thorough education about the CHPEM, the citizens vote on whether to implement the CHPEM within the general economy; and, if so, they democratically determine the priorities and nature of public activities created.

In contrast, corporate capitalism is not a democratic economic model, nor is its top priority to meet needs. Its top priority is profit-making. If it is not profitable to meet a given need, corporate capitalists have little or no interest in meeting that need, no matter how great that need might be. Corporate leaders dictatorially make all of the major decisions, including workers’ wages, salaries, and working conditions, which are often unjust.

9--Freedom of Choice:

When the CHPEM is applied to a general economy, one purpose is to provide citizens with a free choice between private sector capitalist enterprises and counterparts in the public sector. Many

citizens may want access to more than just private sector enterprises; they may also want access to a full array of counterparts in the public sector. It is easy to imagine, for example, that if only private for-profit libraries were available (which, fortunately, is not the case), most citizens would insist that public libraries be available as an alternative choice.

Citizens deserve to have the choice to patronize public not-for-profit companies, instead of (or in addition to) private for-profit companies. For example, citizens deserve a public pharmaceutical company, as an alternative to a profiteering private pharmaceutical industry (BigPharma). Citizens deserve opportunity to seek help from a public not-for-profit plumbing company, instead of only an expensive private for-profit plumbing company. Likewise, city councils (and thereby their constituents) deserve a choice to hire public non-profit construction companies to build their community's schools, other buildings, and roads, instead of having the choice of only private for-profit construction companies. Another example: if parents would like their children to learn to play a musical instrument, they deserve to have excellent not-for-profit publicly-funded musicians to teach them at a public music school---in addition to having the choice of a private for-profit music teacher.

When “vast fields of public activity” are created in a CHPÉM-inspired economy, citizens have a true choice between private sector for-profit capitalist enterprises and a full array of counterparts in the public sector. In current corporate capitalist economies, most private sector enterprises do not have a counterpart in the public sector.

10—A “Most Precious Freedom:”

One of the most precious freedoms is the freedom to work and live in a society and economy in which expression of the kind, altruistic capacities of our human nature is upregulated, collectively and individually. Pediatricians, nurses, hospital workers, and patients in public children's hospitals have had the opportunity to experience this most precious freedom within their hospitals—at least until the “Social Beauty Era” was undemocratically supplanted by the “Corporate Era.” During the Corporate Era this freedom was significantly compromised. In a corporate capitalist economy and society, where self-interest oriented behaviors are encouraged and rewarded, this “most precious freedom” is, inherently, scarcely available---unavailable for many people. It is the contention of the CHPÉM that this “most precious freedom” should be abundantly available to all.

11-- A “Hugoist” Social and Economic Model:

When the CHPÉM is applied to a general economy, it could be viewed as a “Hugoist” social and

economic model. For, it has characteristics that are consistent with the social, economic, political, moral, and spiritual philosophy shared by Victor Hugo in his 1862 novel *Les Misérables*. Jean Valjean, the main character of the novel, evolves from an embittered prisoner, to a wealthy business owner, to an increasingly altruistic community leader who embodied Victor Hugo's social and moral philosophy. Had he lived longer, Jean Valjean would likely have encouraged creation of vast fields of public activity, including conversion of his private enterprise into a public enterprise.

If a succinct label is desired, the CHPEM could be called "Hugoist," and proponents of the CHPEM could be called "Hugoists." In addition to capitalists, socialists, Marxists, communists, libertarians, anarcho-syndicalists, et al, there are "Hugoists." Hugoists are inspired by the social philosophy expressed by Victor Hugo and by the social philosophy practiced in public children's hospitals during the "Social Beauty Era."

12—The CHPEM Exposes the Achilles' Heel of Capitalism:

As explained in *Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty*, the corporate capitalist economic model is fundamentally based on a set of highly flawed social understandings regarding Human Nature, Leadership, Incentive, Competition, and Freedom. In contrast, the CHPEM is based on a set of wiser social understandings. Capitalism's set of highly flawed social understandings represents its Achilles' heel—where it is most vulnerable. Exposure of capitalism's Achilles' heel is a key way to help people to understand why capitalism is a harmful model and needs to be replaced with a healthier model. The CHPEM exposes capitalism's Achilles' heel and provides a healthy alternative model. Once capitalism's Achilles' heel is exposed, and once the beauty of CHPEM is appreciated by the majority of the public, capitalism will lose public support—conquered by education, knowledge, dialogue, and collective upregulation of the kindest aspects of our Human Nature.

FURTHER READING:

The above 12 features of the CHPEM are further discussed in a book entitled, *Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty: The Untold Story of the Children's Hospital Public Economy Model (CHPEM)*. The full manuscript of this book is posted on the following website, where the book may be downloaded and read for free: www.notesfromthesocialclinic.org

The following Chapters of *Sowing Seeds of Social Beauty* might be helpful:

- Chapter 1: Create Vast Fields of Public Activity—Excerpts From *Les Miserables*
- Chapter 12: The Social Beauty of Children’s Hospitals
- Chapter 13: The Children’s Hospital Public Economy Model (CHPEM)
- Chapter 14: The Foundational Pillars of the CHPEM
- Chapter 15: Human Nature
- Chapter 16: Up-Regulation and Down-Regulation of Human Behavioral Capacities
- Chapter 22: Altruistic Natural Leaders
- Chapter 23: A Key Problem: Under Corporate Capitalism, Leadership Positions are Populated with People Who Are Inclined to Express Non-altruistic Capacities of our Human Nature
- Chapter 24: Capitalistic Leaders by Default
- Chapter 21: Application of the CHPEM to the General Economy
- Chapter 28: Public education, Dialogue, and Informed Consent Prior to Application of the CHPEM to the General Economy
- Chapter 29: Addressing Concerns about the CHPEM.
- Chapter 35: Small Business Opportunities within a CHPEM-Inspired Public Economy
- Chapter 17: A Most Precious Freedom
- Chapter 37: The Achilles’ Heel of Corporate Capitalism