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Socio-Political Implications of Job Reform Les conséquences socio-politiques de la réforme du régime de travail

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Résumé de l'article

La réforme démocratique du régime du travail dans l'entreprise est remplie d'embûches et on ne doit s'y aventurer qu'à titre expérimental.

En effet, dans une société fondée sur le marché du travail, cette réforme devient presque inévitablement l'objet de négociations entre différents groupes de pression qui lorgnent vers leurs propres avantages aux dépens d'autrui. La politique, dont on s'inspire, consiste surtout à se gagner des alliés et à isoler les adversaires du changement. L'exclusion de tout groupe doté de pouvoir (par exemple, les employeurs et les spécialistes) de la participation ôte toute possibilité d'agir normalement.

Par ailleurs, l'instauration d'un régime de participation qui ne ferait pas appel aux intérêts réels des personnes intéressées perd sa raison d'être. Aussi, une participation efficace devrait-elle se fonder sur au moins quelques objectifs communs aux partenaires du milieu de travail, sans quoi il serait difficile d'établir une communication valable.

On s'attend généralement à ce que l'avènement de la participation amène un changement dans la balance du pouvoir. Cependant, dans les faits, il existe toujours une forte opposition à tout changement marqué dans cette balance du pouvoir. Il est significatif que, ni les communistes russes, ni les capitalistes de l'Ouest ne se soient engagés dans un type de participation qui serait de nature à altérer les rapports de forces en présence. Dans les entreprises d'État socialistes, l'autorité centrale fixe les paramètres généraux des buts à atteindre qu'on présente ensuite aux instances inférieures, les budgets passant du sommet à la base ou vice-versa dans un mouvement incessant. Les programmes mis au point au sommet sont endossés par les échelons inférieurs de la hiérarchie après consultation, mais le dernier mot revient toujours au sommet. Sous ce rapport, il y a des points de ressemblance entre ce qui se passe à l'Est et ce qui se produit à l'Ouest.

Même dans le cas de l'expérience yougoslave, on peut douter que le type de participation qu'on y a établi soit réellement de nature à changer les rapports de forces. La prétention de certains critiques occidentaux selon laquelle, en Yougoslavie, le contrôle de l'entreprise par les travailleurs se dissout dans la hiérarchie de l'entreprise tel qu'on la connaît ordinairement, est peut-être poussée un peu loin, mais il est quand même vrai que les travailleurs y sont coincés entre la structure technocratique du milieu de travail et la structure bureaucratique de la société globale.

On peut et on doit instaurer la participation démocratique des travailleurs dans les entreprises fonctionnant dans une société de marché libre sans nécessairement se référer au socialisme d'État. La participation de la direction ne peut remplir une fonction d'unification qu'en tant qu'elle sert d'instrument pour réformer en profondeur la structure des emplois aussi bien que l'organisation du travail en général. Pour humaniser l'entreprise, plus spécifiquement le milieu de travail, il faut d'abord que tous soient conscients des facteurs qui, en outre de la rémunération, influencent le bien-être ordinaire des gens. L'idée d'une organisation modèle doit être mise graduellement en oeuvre selon une approche à l'estime pour qu'un comportement responsable et durable devienne le résultat naturel de tous ces efforts.

Cela signifie-t-il que le mouvement en matière de réforme du travail soit neutre dans le sens politique du terme? L'auteur ne préconise pas la neutralité mais avant tout l'autonomie et la liberté de ce mouvement en vue de poursuivre ses propres objectifs humains et non pas nécessairement des buts politiques. Toute dépendance aveugle envers d'autres mouvements dont les fins ne coïncident pas nécessairement avec l'humanisation du travail ne peut en dernier ressort qu'être dangereuse pour l'implantation d'un véritable régime de réforme du travail.

La réforme démocratique du régime du travail (groupes autonomes, ombudsmen, participation des employés à différents niveaux, intéressement) n'a de sens qu'en tant qu'elle entraîne une modification de la structure du pouvoir. D'autre part, en certaines circonstances, ces mouvements peuvent aller jusqu'à miner l'efficacité économique des institutions existantes. Sous ce rapport, toute transformation trop rapide peut devenir fort dangereuse, mais il est aussi mauvais de trop attendre avant de passer à l'action. Il faut se demander si dans la société post-industrielle qui est la nôtre, il y aura assez de gens raisonnables, honnêtes et engagés qui soient capables d'appuyer d'autres systèmes d'organisation du travail et le voudraient, tout en rejetant en même temps les mesures trop radicales. Dans la société de marché, les gens sont tout juste habitués à suivre les modes changeantes et à passer d'un spectacle à l'autre. La société de masse est exposée à être manipulée et peut évoluer vers un totalitarisme de gauche comme de droite.

Les techniques sociales de participation, pour être efficaces doivent être comprises dans un sens large de manière à s'étendre à tout l'ensemble des facteurs qui influencent le comportement des gens au travail. Il faut prendre en considération tout ce qui stimule, oriente et soutient ce comportement. Pour devenir motivés au travail, les intéressés devront d'abord être persuadés que l'effort donnera un résultat, qu'une rétribution adéquate s'ensuivra et qu'il vaudra la peine de se tourmenter pour l'obtenir. Les gens sont enclins à comparer les avantages qu'ils touchent avec ceux que les autres reçoivent, et ils établissent ainsi leurs propres aspirations. Sous ce rapport, l'amour-propre joue un rôle important et les différences de salaire peuvent être la source d'une motivation faible. Les mesures de participation doivent être établies en relation étroite avec l'organisation du travail. La publication des profils de poste, le style de direction, les stimulants financiers ou autres, l'efficacité administrative et même l'ambiance extérieure sont de grande importance pour assurer le succès de la participation.

Dans cet article, la réforme du régime de travail est considérée comme un mouvement pacifique et dynamique capable de conduire à des formes de coopération au travail plus réfléchies, à la participation active des employés et à l'établissement d'une direction plus éclairée. La force politique de ce mouvement dérive principalement de sa fonction éducative et expansive et non de la recherche du pouvoir.

Une réforme du régime de travail ainsi comprise ne satisfera pas ceux qui s'intéressent d'abord à l'utilisation du contrôle ouvrier en tant qu'une arme pour en arriver à une transformation draconienne des rapports de forces dans la société. Ce qui importe vraiment à long terme, c'est la transformation fondamentale des relations existantes, transformation fondée sur l'expérience contrôlée et non pas sur des changements d'étiquette politique qui ne touchent même pas au contenu. Dans les économies d'État socialistes, l'organisation hiérarchique demeure intacte, même si la structure politique est totalement différente. En conséquence, il y a lieu d'espérer qu'une participation véritable à la direction pourra se développer d'une façon plus efficace dans les démocraties de l'Ouest que sous les systèmes politiques à parti unique.

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Socio-Political Implications of Job Reform

Alexander J. Matejko

The author examines the job reform movements developing in various parts of the world, but particularly in the democratic developed societies, may have in the long any substantial socio-political impact.

Any substantial reshuffle of social roles which leads to the reallocation of power will have sooner or later some political implications.¹ The question is how much the job reform movements developing in various parts of the world, but particularly in the democratic developed societies, may have in the long any substantial socio-political impact. In order to answer this question it is advisable first of all to locate it in the broader social framework.

As we know, the progressing occupational role differentiation in societies gives rise to the inequalities in power, privilege and prestige. D. J. Treiman claims that «power and privilege are everywhere highly valued, and hence powerful and privileged occupations are highly regarded in all societies» (Treiman, 1977:5). He has found a high (.79) intercorrelation of prestige ratings across pairs of countries (standard deviation of .14), a high consensus of these ratings in various countries, similarity of the occupational hierarchies not only in prestige but also in education and in income, a positive correlation between the similarity in level of industrialization and the similarity in prestige rankings (Treiman 1977:2-4). On the other hand, his data show that such variations in social organization which create differences in power and

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¹ Another question is if there really is such a reshuffle in a given society (we may be easily confused by some manifest changes which do not have any deeper impact). On the other hand, the political transformations may happen only on the surface of society and really do not count very much, or count, but in different sense than expected by us. We should not become too much confused by some clichés (capitalism, socialism, elitism, egalitarianism, etc) without looking first what do they mean in social reality.

privilege among the occupational groups tend also to create corresponding differences in prestige.² For example, under the Soviet communism certain strategically located groups gain prestige as an addition to their power and privilege. This seems to be in conflict with the assumed by Treiman and other functionalists basic similarity in the specific «functional imperatives» faced by all societies.³

Some difference may exist between what people think out to be and what really is. Occupations which exercise unusually great power, i.e. the secret police agents, or are exceptionally well rewarded, i.e. the black marketeer, are not necessarily particularly highly regarded in societies, but this can not be proved by data utilized by Treiman. For example, the occupational evaluations typical for the communist countries or for the places far removed from the modern nation states based on the market economy differ from the rest quite significantly (Treiman 1977:178). Physicians have not much income and power in the USSR but the social prestige is close to that enjoyed by the US doctors (Treiman 1977:194).

Treiman assumes that there is a basic consensus in the societies regarding what is reasonable and socially useful. Such an assumption seems to be dubious especially in these societies which are internally split and in which there is a deep internal crisis. The consensus regarding usefulness of various occupational groups

² According to Duncan in the U.S. over four-fifths of the variance in the prestige of individual occupations can be attributed to the combination of income and education (Duncan 1961).

³ D. J. Treiman on the basis of a comparative analysis of occupational hierarchies in over 60 societies comes to the conclusion that the occupational hierarchies being deeply rooted in the division of labour are fundamentally the same in all complex societies. Differences in power and privilege appear as more important than the cultural variations. «Prestige evaluations are affected by variations in generic aspects of social structure related to industrialization and (...) the evaluation of blue collar jobs is particularly sensitive to such variations (...). More highly industrialized countries tend to be more similar to the United States than less industrialized places: and among pairs of countries the greater the similarity in industrialization the greater the similarity in prestige rankings. These patterns tend to be stronger with respect to the evaluation of manual occupations than of non-manual occupations, probably reflecting the fact that the process of industrialization creates greater differences in the organization of manual than of non-manual work» (Treiman 1977:139).

It is really so that the division of labour creates everywhere similar differences in the power, privilege and prestige associated with various occupational roles?

Power differences appear not so much among occupations as among various subcategories of occupational groups depending on their strategic location. Therefore, the conclusion done by Treiman that «power differences among occupations are similar in all societies» (1977:223) and that «Hierarchies of privilege and hence of prestige will also be similar in all societies» (1977:224) does not seem to be adequately substantiated. The assessment done by him deals only with the location of a given occupation versus other occupations.

seems to be very often quite low and this does not necessarily appear in the survey data.

The progressing division of labour has contributed very substantially to the social inequalities but we are now much less inclined than E. Durkheim (1947) and his followers to treat this division as something 'objective' and unavoidable. It is widely accepted now that within the framework of a given technology it is possible to choose various alternatives of social organization even at the level directly related to work. At the higher organizational levels dependence on technology is even much lower or just non-existent. For example, on the auto assembly line the work cycle usually ranges from 30 to 90 seconds, but Swedes on the basis of their job enrichment experiments have come to the conclusion that the optimum work cycles in manufacturing should be 20 to 25 minutes for light assembly and 45 to 60 minutes for heavy assembly (Job Reform in Sweden 1975:55). What more, they return in some cases to the man-paced assembly lines as much less sensitive to disruption (the changes in production do not have to be rebalanced).

The division of labour develops not only under the impact of technological progress but also under the pressure of organized occupational groups, mainly the professional, who by their joint effort try to secure for themselves some attractive privileges. According to G. Ritzer, «Absolute authority over clients is a myth perpetrated by professionals to enhance their ability to control clients imbuing in them the idea that they are supposed to be passive consumers of professional services» (Ritzer 1977:54). The power of occupational groups originates from their skill in gaining control over the areas of indeterminacy and/or uncertainty. This control is afterwards utilized for financial gains, high status, political influence and public relations.

Also the organizational structures are not so much function of technology as of the basic control systems related to planning, control of risks and execution of orders (Woodward 1970). Size of the organization and the type of technology go together, but industrial relations and even the level of bureaucratization seem to be only slightly influenced by those both factors. For example, the increase of organizational scale occurs along with increase of the proportion of necessary administrators only if this growth of scale goes closely together with increase of differentiation (Blau 1970, 1972). The existence of fairly predictable labour markets is necessary for a more advanced division of labour and specialization (March and Simon 1958; Burns and Stalker 1961).

Of course, this does not mean that the level of technology⁴ is of no importance. Technology determines both the opportunities for the exercise of discretion by the worker and the level and content of technical expertise. For example, the direct intervention in the production process by semi-skilled workers diminishes as the level of automation increases. As degree of complexity increases, this is reflected in greater specialization and the necessity of more training, which both contribute to the higher demand of participation (Self-management tends to work better in more technologically developed circumstances and among more educated workers, but on the other hand the degree to which participation is likely to be useful is inversely related to the specialized nature of the subject — Tiefenthal 1975). As environments become more complex and dynamic, more democratic forms must be and are created (Gustavsén 1972). It is only under conditions of high development and high differentiation that systemic participation and self-regulation become possible, as extremely high interdependence politicizes formerly nonpolitical, nonparticipative structures (Mlinar and Teune 1972).

Democracy has developed historically as a set of the decision making devices suitable either for the pre-market societies (but only for the tiny minority of free and well-to-do citizens) or for the industrializing societies internally divided into the uneducated and passive mass and the elitist leadership (economic, cultural, political). In the post-industrial societies conditions have become entirely different and the basic concepts of democracy should be reworked in order to become again directly applicable to the immediate reality of masses in work and leisure (Matejko 1978a). Rivalry between various autonomous pressure groups undermines the cohesiveness of the modern society. On the other hand, this cohesiveness is badly needed as the primary condition of maintaining the delicate internal and external balance of the sophisticated modern apparatus of the present day modern society (Matejko 1978b).

The market society is anticollectivistic in its true nature. Individuals are constantly agitated by the mass media that their own pleasure and wellbeing is of utmost importance. At the same time, the decline of religion takes away from the society such myths which so far have

⁴ This level may be measured, among others, by the level of capital invested per one employee. For example, in Canada it is per production worker \$313,200 (\$203,500 per employee in general) in petroleum extraction, refining and pipeline transportation, but only \$41,000 (\$28,000 per employee in general) in food and kindred products (The Conference Board of Canada 1976. Road Map No. 1784).

provided a basis for its culture and social life. According to several prominent social thinkers and scientists, e.g. Toynbee, totalitarianism of a mass society becomes just unavoidable. Others think that is possible to avoid this tragic alternative by development of a direct democracy which at the same time would fit well into the needs and necessities of a postindustrial society.

The democratic job reform (autonomous groups, ombudsmen, participation of employees in decision making at various levels,⁵ profit sharing etc) makes sense only when it leads to the changes of power structure. On the other hand these changes in some cases may go so far that they would undermine the economic effectiveness of the existing institutions. In this respect any rapid transformations may become particularly dangerous, but waiting too long is also bad. The question is if in the post-industrial society there will be enough reasonable, honest and committed people who would be able and willing to support the alternative systems but who at the same time would reject the radical measures. In the market society people are accustomed just to follow changing fashions and to jump from one band wagon to another. The 'mass' society is very vulnerable to manipulation and may involve in the direction of a leftist or a rightist totalitarianism.

THE POWER SETTING OF PARTICIPATION

The democratic job reform is full of pitfalls and should be developed on an experimental basis. However, this reform in the market society becomes almost unavoidably the object of bargaining between various pressure groups which look primarily for their own benefits at expense of everybody else. Politics of job reform consists mainly in gaining allies and isolating enemies of change. There is very often a great difficulty to mobilize people behind the participating scheme. The exclusion of any party with power (for example, management or specia-

⁵ It is necessary to distinguish between two different types of participation which lead to participatory schemes very much apart one from the other. *Co-operation* includes such issues as right of information, right to protest, right to suggestion, and right to consultation. All of them are based on the principle of 'keeping the channels open' but without necessarily changing the power relations. On the other hand, *co-determination* may include right to veto (temporary or permanent), right to co-decision, and right to decision. Co-determination is much more farreaching than co-operation if all parties with power are really participating (Thiefenthal 1975), and if the degree of participation is balanced with the desire that exists for it (Thiefenthal 1975).

In the interest group model of participation all who are affected participate in the decision-making of the enterprise (Roosevelt 1970; Deckard and Sherman 1972; Rhenman 1964; Dahl 1970; Ellerman 1973).

lists) from participation undermines its ability to function properly. On the other hand, the promotion of participation without appealing to real interests of people who are involved also misses the vital point. An effective participation should be based on sharing at least some common goals among involved parties (Tiefenthal 1975) because without it, it would be difficult even to communicate.

The change of the power balance is commonly expected as the outcome of participation. According to Poole «The more workers participate in decision-making processes, the greater will be their chances of understanding the nature of social class relations and of developing distinct orientations in work» (Poole 1975:93) «An effective democratic strategy must genuinely change the balance of power in favour of employees and not merely give a democratic facade to an otherwise authoritarian structure» we read in Fabian Tract 431 (1974:7). However in reality there is a strong opposition to any substantial change in the power balance. It is significant that both Soviet communists as the Western capitalists are committed to the planned organizational development in ways which do not alter fundamental power relationships. In the state socialist enterprises central authority sets general parameters to be presented to lower levels for goal setting, with the budget going through one or more iteration of upward or downward movement. Plans formulated at an elite level are legitimated by lower echelons of the hierarchy through consultative procedures, but the final say belongs to the elite. There are some striking similarities in this respect between the East and the West (Hofstede 1972).

Even in the case of the Yugoslavian management participation model there are doubts how much does it really contribute to changing power relations. The claim of Meister (1964, 1971) that within Yugoslavia the workers' control is collapsing into the standard hierarchic enterprise form may go too far, but it is true that workers there become squeezed between the technostructure at the workplace (managers, specialists) and the bureaustructure outside of it (state officials) (Bucar 1972). According to Obradovic, participation in the Yugoslav workers' councils is dominated «by a small of top managers and professional staff employees, who also tend to be better educated and to be members of the League of Communists» (Obradovic 1975:43). Rus says that in Yugoslavia the management and administrative staff have power without responsibility and the workers' council has responsibility without power (Rus 1970:151).

In the West the implementation of participation so far is paradoxically much more common among management than among unions. In

the 1940s and early 1950s, nearly three quarters of the joint consultation schemes in Great Britain had been set by management alone (Joint Consultation in British Industry 1952) «Managements have only sought to institute broader programmes when the power of workers has been sufficiently strong, or when they have internalized certain general ideologies (...) chief among these being humanist, religious or an overriding commitment to industrial efficiency» (Poole 1975:56). On the other hand, the union staff members have vested interest to integrate participatory schemes into the existing union structure.

Unions are afraid that participation will be utilized by management in order to bypass union channels (Garson 1974). The worse the state of industrial relations the more vehemently does the union reject the idea of management participation. When union officers believe that union influence stems from frustrations among members, «Anything which is presented as likely to alleviate this dissatisfaction is then perceived as a long-term threat for the union» (Delamotte and Walker 1975:8).

The level of union democracy has also something to do with the union policy versus management participation. In Great Britain «union officials who were at the forefront in debates on industrial democracy were also those who were relatively more responsive to democratic pressures within their own organizations» (Poole 1975:124).⁶

Another question is how much the participatory schemes are so far concerned with matters of real interest to the workers. In Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Holland etc. the role of worker-directors is quite substantial. However, at the same time there is an evident apathy of the working masses. They are not interested in participation except in so far as it provides them with some immediate rewards.⁷ In West Germany very few workers have any detailed knowledge of the functioning of co-determination. In the British nationalized mines only 7 per cent

⁶ Attendance at the union branch meetings in Great Britain is 3 to 15 per cent (Roberts 1956) and in the elections only 29 per cent of union stewards are opposed (Governmental Social Survey 1968).

⁷ The worker-directors who represent workers' interest at the supervisory boards of corporations cannot draw up policies of their own but only modify and question the proposals of other directors (Jenkins 1975). According to the 1976 law in West German companies with over 2,000 employees, the labour representatives have a half of the twelve seats on supervisory boards. The 1976 proposals of the European Commission suggest the election of employee representatives by employee themselves (but with an appropriate protection of the union rights), and the full equality on the supervisory board of employee representatives with other directors.

of the workforce had ever asked a representative to the consultative committee to take up a problem of any kind, and only 28 per cent of those few who asked gained any satisfaction. Very many among the interviewed workers knew nothing about consultative committees (Poole 1975: 143-144). Even the Swedish experiments in teamwork and participation may look differently when seen from the perspective of another work culture.

American workers who at the end of 1974 spend on the experimental basis four weeks in jobs at the Saab-Scania car engine assembly plant found the work conditions in general better than in their Detroit automobile plant, but the cultural differences far overshadowed the differences in the way the workplace was organized. «The American workers's rights, their sense of «being their own person» (...), their freedom to object to what they don't like and to press their needs without the fear of the consequences seemed far more important to them than how their task is organized, or how changes relieve boredom or make for a better feeling at work, or whether they are represented on a council or committee» (Work Experiment 1976: 40). The high degree of concentration and effort demanded of the Swedish female teams assemblers⁸ was definitely objected to by the American male workers who preferred to work steadily but at slower pace. For Americans there was in Sweden too much social organization and pressure related to it. The trade unions were too far from the daily existence of workers.

Commitment to participation depends very much on the educational level and organizational location of workers. The lower the job, the less likely the incumbent is to express positive attitudes towards the concept of participation. Those with less schooling are more likely to see participation only in terms of profit sharing and are more likely to be in favour of a general assembly of workers as the decision-making body⁹ (Talb and Goldfarb 1970). Skilled workers are likely to be more interested in participation than their less skilled colleagues. The well qualified and responsible categories of the personnel show more interest in participation than others. The higher one goes in the hierarchy the greater the proportion of people who want to participate (Tiefenthal 1975).

⁸ They constituted only a tiny minority of all factory workers who mostly worker on the traditional basis.

⁹ According to Garson, «Not only it is physically impossible to make numerous decisions in some sort of mass-meeting or plebiscite formant, but managers and employees alike will ordinarily not wish to trade time for participation in unnecessary meetings-unnecessary in the sense that the preferred decision would occur without the need for participation by the individual involved» (Garson 1975: 32).

Workers tend to resist any attempts to impose unfamiliar and hence unpredictable changes from which they are not certain that they will benefit (Guest and Fatchett 1974). It is necessary to gradually gain their trust by showing piece by piece what may be gained by them when accepting participation. The unskilled or semi-skilled workers have a short term orientation and a concern with immediate gratification. They prefer the profits to be distributed instead of them to be reinvested¹⁰ (Kolaja 1965). The blue collar worker in developed societies is in general primarily concerned with maximizing satisfaction as a consumer, and it would be naive to expect from him a continued and active interest in indirect participation.

Those not interested in participation are often young women, less qualified employees, workers who have been a relatively short time with the firm (Holter 1965). In Yugoslavia the working-class youth are more favourable than their elders to the idea of self-management, but at the same time they view the system as marginal to their personal concerns (Vrcan 1973, Suvar 1973). In Great Britain young workers do not want to participate in management (Guest and Fatchett 1974). Like other workers they are primarily interested in advancing and defending their pay, security and social relations.

On the other hand once workers have had some positive experience in participation they tend to want it more. Low real participation reinforces low desire to participate, but high real participation reinforces the desire for it (Rus 1972, Kavcic 1972, Hampden-Turner 1973). Participation works best when people are used to it (Tiefenthal 1975). There is a dynamic relationship between the practice of participation and the opinion about it among employees. Work systems and value systems tend to constitute self-reinforcing cycles (Kavcic 1972, Crozier 1964). It is worth to mention that the switch to a cooperative arrangement in some small British enterprises has led to taking by workers a variety of responsibilities, this means something completely opposite to the traditional insistence among them to do only what is in a given job description (Carnoy and Levin 1976). So far either participation definitely contributes to better social climate of workplace and to higher productivity, or at least there is not empirical evidence that employee participation correlates with low efficiency, low profits and inadequate investment.

¹⁰ It may be claimed that in the labour-managed enterprises (Vanek 1975) «Policies that increase the wealth of the firm over some stretch of time, but do not improve the appropriable real incomes of the decision makers during this same period, are not likely to be considered desirable, and will tend to be rejected» (Furubotn 1976: 122).

STRATEGIES OF PARTICIPATION

According to Herbst (1976) there are various possible strategies of transforming the traditional hierarchical organization into a 'participatory' organization. All of them obviously have some advantages but also some disadvantages. The *top-down approach* is based on a process of downward cascading motivational policy commitment inspired and promoted starting from the top and gradually infiltrating the bottom. The question remains how much of the bottom of the hierarchy becomes really involved in order to transform the spirit of the whole organization. The *center-down approach* starts from the middle management and makes of it the major change agent. Here the major obstacle is the inconsistency between the traditional management prerogatives and the goal to make workers collectively involved. Activisation of the rank-and-file initiative has to go together with the entirely new profile of middle management role and therefore its present occupants are not necessarily best suitable to be the chief innovators.

The *horizontal project groups approach* allows to establish ad hoc task teams of a temporary nature whose existence is totally dependent on the changing nature of problems encountered. This solution allows a high flexibility and adaptability but has to go together with management by objectives, this means with the high autonomy and accountability of teams. The horizontal project groups allow to make the best use of various specialists who supplement each other.

The *participant design approach* makes the employees from various levels of the hierarchy directly involved from the beginning in both the design and the implementation of the 'participatory' organization. It is simultaneously an educational as well as practical project which needs some elementary consensus among all involved partners, but also some skill. Quite often only during the implementation period it becomes evident that partners differ very much in their expectations and understanding what participation is really about.

In the *center-out approach* the locus of change is on the center of the organization and spreads out according to the progressing consequences of this what happens in the transformed center. The middle managers instead of trying to organize their subordinates into autonomous task groups may themselves establish and join such a managerial group and this way to create the new situation to which the rest of the organization has to adapt itself.

The '*do it yourself*' approach is one of the main strategic directives which arise of the Scandinavian experiments in job reform. People

should become actively involved in the re-design of their own workplaces and the role of experts and consultants becomes limited. A self-sustained learning process from the experience gained by people thanks to the re-design projects should be rewarding and fully meaningful (an adequate inducement). People should be trusted. The more the individuals are enabled to exercise control over their tasks, and to relate their efforts to those of the fellows, the more likely they are willing to accept a positive commitment to do a good job (Emery and Thorsrud 1976: 11; Fox 1974).

Another learning from the Scandinavian experience is the necessity to base the job reform on some basic mutual consent of all involved partners. The promoters of the job reform projects pay a lot of effort and attention to the accommodation of them to the power balance of a given social setting and to its culture. The projects are focused on such workplaces in which there is the best promise to secure and project everyone's vital interests. Experimentation directly oriented against one of the partners or against profitability, productivity, work discipline and employment security does not much promise to succeed.

The Scandinavian promoters of the job reform projects usually agree that in order to start and succeed they have to be backed jointly by experts, organized labour and management. The mutual relationship between the content and scope of these experiments on the one side and the collective agreements on the other side has to be clarified well in advance. An active role in these experiments for the union stewards as well as for the lower rank management is worth to be considered; at least their vested interests should not be harmed right from the beginning. Evaluation of the experimental results should be treated as a joint business.

Mutual trust between all partners involved in the job reform experimentation and their willingness to try new organizational forms is very often treated now in Scandinavia as more important than any formally established general conditions of experimentation. The first thing is to provide room for exercise in trust and freedom of initiative because the workers must gain enough occasion to learn, try new things and grow individually as well as collectively (Fox 1974).

THE NEW POWER BALANCE AS PRODUCT OF PARTICIPATION

According to Emery and Thorsrud (1976), the successful experiments should be treated as models for shop floor democracy to be simulated by other organizational units. The traditional management and

union philosophy should be exposed to the challenge of new facts and new experiences gained from the experiments above mentioned. The tight control systems on the management side and the restrictive work practices on the side of organized labour should be shown as obsolete and socially harmful from the new perspective offered by the experiments. A new philosophy of management as well as of labour, emphasizing the group commitment at all levels from the bottom to the top, should be widely promoted.

The control of the tasks within bureaucracies is jealously guarded by the supervisory ranks and this leads to tensions between the rank-on-file initiative and the vested interests located at various levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Centralization of power and authority at the top and hesitancy to delegate them to lower levels prevents the rank-and-file to commit themselves.

There is a vicious circle of tightening up the control in any centrally run organizations when they face any crisis. This practice unavoidably leads to the development of informal practices and informal groups which act as defense mechanisms. The job reform projects should — according to Emery and Thorsrud — eliminate this vicious circle by being so designed that each organizational unit would be an autonomous task group simultaneously in the administrative as well as the social sense. Both social system and the technical-administrative system should be so designed that they would support one another. «Neither system can make its maximum contribution to the performance of the overall system unless each is optimized with respect to each other» (Emery and Thorsrud 1976:19).

The autonomy of each organizational unit has to be limited by the more general circumstances (community, enterprise, society) but this does not necessarily justify the authoritarian rule from above. The diffusion of innovations usually is much more effective when it happens on a voluntary basis through simulation and incentives.

The task team should be «enriched» as a human group by giving its members the joint opportunity to share jobs and responsibilities, organizing their mutual support, gaining together from the results achieved through a collective effort. The team should have in general not less than three or four people and not more than eight people; larger groups are more prone to the crowd emotionalism and elitism. However, larger teams can be also very effective if they share a deep-rooted culture and if the parts of the group task are highly interdependent (Emery & Thorsrud 1976:163). Members of the team «must know that they can aim at targets that are explicit, realistic and challenging to them; and they must have a feedback of group performance» (Ibid. p. 164). There

is always a problem how to establish the optimal length and variety of tasks, how to integrate them in meaningful units, (inclusion of auxiliary and preparatory tasks), how to determine the standards of performance and secure a feedback, how to make the job socially identifiable and respectful. In any job reform experimentation is necessary to remember about such obvious conditions of making jobs attractive as making them challenging and promotional (learning), offering people recognition and reward for their efforts, opening some broader chances and leaving at least some decision to the discretion of the individual.

Within the work teams the cooperation among their members will be very much strengthened by providing of interlocking tasks, job rotation, mutual contact and mutual help, collective decision making in the fields vital to members, delegation of power to the whole team, limitation or even total withdrawal of the direct interference by the supervisors (management by objectives), application of the collective incentives for good performance (departmental bonus), integration of the formal structure into the broader social organization of the team as a human group.

«The establishment of semi-autonomous groups is strongly dependent on the ability of management to shift its primary attention from internal coordination and control to the regulation of the company's boundaries» (Emery and Thorsrud 1976:136). Within the changing environment the main task of management is to keep in touch with the world outside and to innovate the necessary modifications, to take care of the co-ordination between various organizational units. Internal affairs may be left to autonomous groups of employees looking collectively after their own joint affairs. This kind of a division of labour fits the best the modern conditions of dynamic markets, relatively sophisticated employees and specialized managers who do not necessarily have to practice the power plays all the time (about the historically changing role of power and authority see Martin 1977). «Authority is becoming a question of influence through competence, through information and through an ability to motivate people to pull together» (Emery and Thorsrud 1976:138). Emphasis in the sphere of values and norms is now on freedom and justice, not as before on diligence, obedience and frugality.

There is a necessity to reevaluate the role and status of management in the perspective of a far reaching job reform oriented toward the activation of the whole personnel within various forms of participation. According to Emery and Thorsrud,

The enterprise is interdependent with its environment and should strive for a steady state by maintaining a tolerable rate of progress towards its objectives and constancy of direction. In order to achieve its leadership, commitment of members, flexibility, sense of commitment to a mission, distinctive competence, and self regulation of component parts all are needed. The primary task of management is not to coordinate internal variances but to match the potential and actual capacities of the enterprise to the actual and potential requirements of the environment. Autonomy of members and their selective interdependence allows the enterprise to motivate the rank-and-file as well as to allocate much more effectively the managerial effort (Emery and Thorsrud 1976:4-5).

There are no universal recipes for participation which would be valid for all circumstances. The social organization of workplaces is too much influenced by the local circumstances in order to fit into one general scheme. Participation should be differentiated in its forms, applications and strategies according to the scope and depth of its attraction for various categories of workers and employees. One universal scheme is not enough in this respect if the broad social appeal of participation is concerned. The legal forms of participation have this important disadvantage that quite often instead of opening room for experimentation they regulate in detail what and how should be done; they do not leave enough opportunity to invent schemes which would fit needs of the specific socio-economic realities.

THE «MATRIX» AS A «MATURE» FORM¹¹

The traditional hierarchical organization is exposed to the growing extent to the external and internal contradictions which undermine its reliability and efficiency. This organization took its main strength from the permanent distinction between routine tasks and «responsible» tasks, and such a distinction has become obsolete in the modern world. The performance conditions are changing now too fast in order to justify the stable division of labour based on the smallest possible bits of work which lose their human significance. The vertical control becomes too much isolated from the external reality with which the organization deals all the time. There is too much probability that the hierarchical organizations will be preoccupied mainly with their own vested interests and in the long run they will become maladapted, inefficient, even obsolete.

¹¹ This subchapter is a part of A. Matejko, «The Structural Criteria of Social System Maturity» paper for the Fourth International Congress of Cybernetics and Systems. Social System Section, Amsterdam August 21-25, 1978.

There is more and more need for organizations based on much higher interdependence of tasks and roles rather than on keeping them apart; communication and co-operation between various parts of the organization has to become much easier and more natural; the steering of events within organizations has to be much more dispersed instead of being centralized at the top; demarcation of internal and external boundaries has to become somewhat flexible and temporary instead of remaining rigid and prespecified.

The rigid division of labour, and of the entrenched vested interests behind it, becomes obsolete in the modern changing world. There is a growing need of flexibility within which tasks and people rotate in accordance with shifting organization priorities. Task teams are established ad hoc in order to fulfill certain functions and to dissolve afterwards. The power and authority considerations must give room to the efficiency considerations and therefore also to the rejection of any ossified organizational forms serving as the nests of group vested interests. The responsibility and authority still must follow one another but this basic principle may be much easier implemented within the nonbureaucratic organization because only there the authority may become decentralized and allocated exactly in the places where responsibility really is.

The concept of a «matrix» organization developed by F. E. Emery, E. Thorsrud, Ph. G. Herbst and others mainly on the basis of their Norwegian organizational experience, rejects the reductionist nature of bureaucracy and hierarchy. Instead of a rigid and very specified division of labour a variety and flexibility are expected to dominate. There is a strong emphasis on interdependence, team work and cooperation. In a «matrix» organization each member has its own specialized role but each has an overlapping competence with some other members (Herbst 1976:33). A variety of structures substituting one another or appearing simultaneously is used as a framework for the overlapping competences exercised by members.

The new organizational forms of a «matrix» organization can not be imposed from outside by the experts but have to develop spontaneously from within the traditional hierarchical organization. «Autonomy, freedom and responsibility can not be imposed» (Herbst 1976:11). The most successful cases of a «matrix organization» are products of employees' groups who have been willing to take risk and responsibility in the conditions of a relative freedom from external interference (Herbst 1976:12). The alternative types of organization very often meet a very strong resistance in the still predominant hierarchical

types because the existing social organization supports the latter. There are several individuals and groups who unavoidably must lose power and privilege under the «matrix» organization.

The growth of a «matrix» organization has to be based on several new normative assumptions, and the models of «mature» social systems may be particularly helpful in the formulation of the theoretical principles for research and practical development of new organizational forms. The above mentioned attempts to measure the level of systemic «maturity» were promoted with this in mind.

SOCIOTECHNICS OF PARTICIPATION

Implementation of participatory schemes¹² may gain a lot from sociotechnics, this means the set of directives of an effective action based on the empirically verified knowledge of social sciences (Podgorecki 1975). There are in general many obstacles in making social practice, for example, the practice of participation, much more effective. The customary ways of problem-solving may be too much influenced by local vested interests. The planned and spontaneous processes may penetrate one another to such extent that any rational improvement of the existing arrangement becomes very difficult, if not impossible at all. Formal organizations develop sometimes off the limits of penetrability and understanding.

It is up to the sociotechnics to establish the most effective ways of overcoming such obstacles. The regularities ascertained by social scientists in the result of their insight and research should become translated into the teleological directives how to achieve certain goals in the most effective manner. Persuasion, coercion, manipulation and facilitation may be practiced in a whole variety of ways.

In order to act in a sociotechnical manner it is necessary first of all to clarify the value orientations and commitments of all parties involved in a given case: secondly to analyse the case and its circumstances; thirdly to review the existing scientific knowledge in terms of its applicability to a given case; fourthly to translate the regularities involved in this knowledge into the set of practical directives; fifthly to confront the eventual gains with the eventual social costs in order to be

¹² This subchapter is a part of A. Matejko «Contradictions of the Service — Oriented Society and Their Sociotechnical Implications» paper for the Fourth International Conference of the Research Committee in Sociotechnics (International Sociological Association), Rotterdam, November 28 th — December 1st., 1977.

sure that it would be really worth to apply the given sociotechnical devices.

Take for example the observation that the greater the perceived conflict of interests between the subordinate and the organization the more likely the decision is to be made autocratically by the superior (Dufty 1975), and in addition another observation that in the case of an authoritarian management the more trivial the decision the more likely it is to be delegated (Dufty 1975). Both these observations seem to suggest that in order to provide an adequate basis for participation it would be necessary to: 1) eliminate as much as possible the sources of conflict between supervisors and subordinates, 2) promote common awareness that the peaceful problem-solving is in interest of all involved parties, 3) avoid the dominance of agenda by trivial issues which are not of importance for the participating bodies.

Take another observation that where a leader and a subordinate have wide differentials in competence and expertise, participation tends to increase the power of the leader (Mulder 1973), and also on the other hand that the access to vital information is a very important source of power in organizations. The practical conclusion is that in establishing the participatory units it would be necessary to make them as homogenous as possible in competence, expertise and information of members because only then the basic conditions are fulfilled for the relative equality of power and privilege. Such a social organization which tolerates the great imbalance of power between its member is very vulnerable to internal conflict and imbalance. Another question is how inequality and performance are related to each other. Hierarchical or authoritarian leadership may lead to as good (or possibly better) performance¹³ than democratic or participative leadership, although these latter styles of leadership would seem to lead to greater job satisfaction.¹⁴ Some ingredient of inequality may be necessary in working units when the competitive spirit is at stake.

¹³ Performance appears to be a function of motivational levels, abilities and traits, role perception, but of course also organizational constraints (all those elements or features of an organization which impinge on employees to decide or limit the behavioural content of their work — Woodward 1970) and, of course, also technology.

¹⁴ There is no convincing evidence that participation is strongly and causally related to job satisfaction in work situations. However, employees' attitudes towards middle management improve through increased involvement in decision-making (Lischeron and Wall 1975). Immediate supervisors by controlling rewards and structuring work influence the ability and freedom of employees to pursue own goals and to gain satisfaction. The peer-group influences can significantly shape an employee's effort (Roethlisberger and Dickson 1939) and therefore it is up to the enlightened management to gain the approval by the peer-groups.

The sociotechnical approach may be particularly useful when dealing with some difficult problems of participation. For example, there is a common fear among managers that participation will lead to chaos. On the other hand the social research seems to suggest that the democratic control structures may even increase the total organizational control levels, and this higher total control seems to be positively associated with higher organizational performance (Tannenbaum 1968, 1974, Kavcic et al 1971). Through participation subordinates are able to display an upward exertion of control (Guest and Fatchett 1974), and the more employees influence the decision-making structure of the workplace or alternatively perceive that they influence it, the more they wish to participate in the workplace's affairs (Hespe and Little 1971). It is a sociotechnical question how to reconcile participation with organizational order, democracy with responsible leadership, satisfaction with performance.¹⁵ In each of these cases the alternatives do not necessarily exclude one another, but a satisfactory organizational solution must be found by the careful examination of the existing experience.

Sociotechnics of participation in order to be effective has to be very comprehensive in order to cover the whole spectrum of factors which influence the behaviour of people at work.¹⁶ Everything that energizes, directs and sustains this behaviour must be taken into consideration. In order to become positively motivated to work, people first of all must believe that the effort will lead to the accomplishment, that the adequate rewards will follow, and that it is worth to bother about these rewards (Porter and Lawler 1968). People compare their rewards with the rewards received by others and they adequately establish their own expectancies. The self-esteem is playing in this respect an important role and the pay differentials may be the source of low motiva-

¹⁵ The job satisfaction does not necessarily influence the level of performance (Vroom found the correlation between them only .14 in twenty various studies-Vroom 1964) but there is a very strong evidence that an overall job satisfaction represents an important force in the decision of the individual to stay with the given employer, as well as to appear regularly at work (Porter and Steers 1973; Steers and Porter, eds. 1975). Job satisfaction as the sum total of an individual's met expectations on the job becomes particularly desirable when people grow in education and in the level of their expectations. Then they desire and gain satisfaction from an increased involvement in the matters of direct relevance to their work activities.

¹⁶ People in general differ in their capability of growing with the job (Reif and Schoderbek 1966) as well as of organizing themselves in the work situations. Skilled workers tend to have better shop floor organization than unskilled workers (Poole 1975:112). The climate of social relations at work may become very much improved thanks to participation even if there is not a clear-cut relationship between introduction of direct participation per se and increased efficiency.

tion.¹⁷ The participatory schemes should be designed in close relationship to the work organization. Issues of the work role profiles,¹⁸ leadership style,¹⁹ material and non-material incentives, administrative efficiency and even of the external environment²⁰ are of great importance for the success of participation.

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Job reform has been treated above as a peaceful and incremental movement towards more 'mature' forms of work co-operation, employee participation and enlightened management. The political power of this movement comes mainly from its educational and demonstrative function and not from the power struggle.

Such a job reform will not satisfy people who are mainly interested in utilization of the worker control as a weapon to achieve the drastic transformation of the power relations in the society. However, what really counts in the long run is the basic transformation of the existing relations based on the verified experience and not the change of political labels without even touching the content. In the state socialist eco-

¹⁷ It should be here mentioned that workers generally tend to overestimate the earnings of others (Lawler 1968, 1971). The pay differentials vary in various countries; they are higher in developing countries than in developed countries, lower in state socialist countries than in capitalist countries.

¹⁸ The social dimensions of work roles exercise influence on performance and motivation of people. The highly prescribed, low discretion (Jacques 1956, 1967) work roles are characterized by mutual distrust between the subordinated people and their supervisors, close supervision, impersonal rules and procedures, close coordination of the occupant's activities with those of others, penalty for failures or inadequacies of performance, and handling of conflicts through group bargaining (Fox 1974:2628). All these characteristics may easily lead to low performance and low motivation. On the other hand, the multiple or even only the dual compliance of employees in the work situations (staff organization instead of a line organization) may be the source of instability, resistance against any change, and inefficiency (Dunn 1972).

¹⁹ The appropriate leadership style is a function of the nature of the task upon which the group is engaged, the power position of the leader within the organization, and the leadership relation between the leader and his subordinates (Fiedler 1967).

²⁰ In the present day developed societies there is almost everywhere a serious problem of work motivation. Inflation undermines the value of financial rewards; the growth of educational level and of aspirations makes many more ambitious people deeply dissatisfied with their repetitive work tasks; economic aspirations grow at a pace with wage increases and the middle class living standard is commonly expected but often not achieved; the intrinsic satisfaction from work is expected by the large number of skilled workers and employees, but there has been still only limited effort to create organizational conditions which would favour this satisfaction.

nomies the hierarchical organization remains intact even if the political structure is totally different (Matejko 1974, Berliner 1976).

The enthusiasts of industrial democracy quite often are of a socialist persuasion and treat management participation as a vital part of a rule exercised by the masses liberated from capitalism. They are particularly impressed by the Yugoslav experience and they would like to apply it to their own countries. It seems useful to discuss here this question in detail.

A lot may be said in defence of free market and the autonomy of producers as well as of consumers. So for the free market economies are much more open to the job reform initiatives than the centrally planned economies. The omnipotent state is extremely slow in giving its employees the participatory rights that would limit the discretionary power of bureaucrats. It is significant that now nobody defends the free market with more vigor than the oppositionists from Eastern Europe. For example, according to R. Selucky «If the market is abolished, the autonomy of economic units disappears. If the market is abolished, horizontal relationship (i.e. exchange) among economic units also disappears. If the market is abolished, the information coming from the consumers (demand) is either fully cut or at least quite irrelevant for producers. Then, the central plan is the only source supplying producers with relevant information for decision-making» (Selucky 1975: 57).

The demand of civil rights and the demand of self management has appeared in the Soviet bloc countries together with the demand of producers' autonomy. The wastage of human material and the poor management lead from time to time to the outbreak of the resistance against bureaucracy, as in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in Poland in 1956, 1970 and 1976. It is also significant that Communist China has been reluctant to introduce a decentralized control of the enterprises by their workers and to give them genuine powers in this respect in the nationalized economy. Only in the early days after the seizure of power and some kind of workers' councils did function effectively in the private enterprises as the means of coercing capitalists (Harper 1971: 138).

After several transformations the Yugoslav system is now based on relatively small economic units within the enterprises. These units are expected to practice collective decision making on all sorts of matters. Within them function the basic cells of the ruling Party, trade unionism, youth organization and the women league. All these organizations participate in the mechanism of the Workers' Control which is expected to be a powerful weapon against any abuse of the self-management principles by the particularistic interest groups or indivi-

duals. The economic units which are officially called the Basic Units of Associated Labour, enjoy guaranteed rights to make business outside the enterprise or even to withdraw from it if they are dissatisfied. In practice, however, they do not take advantage of these formal rights.

The Yugoslav experts themselves admit that the implementation of self-governing socialism is in Yugoslavia full of contradictions. The state bureaucracy follows its own vested interests and limits the scope of self-management treated by M. Markovic as «the dialectical relation of so-called state socialism with its inherent tendencies towards bureaucratization» (Horvat et al. 1975:425). «The existence of the state in general, especially so strong a state, automatically generates — says Markovic — bureaucratic tendencies which are by their nature, tendencies to preserve it in its present embryonic and limited forms» (Horvat et al. 1975:433). There are in addition contradictions between self-management and the authority and discipline which the central plan forces,²¹ between self-management and the local bureaucratic elites, and between self-management and the market relations.

The Yugoslav present-day model shows several tensions which are unavoidable in the case of an attempt to reconcile such divergent factors as the powerful state, one party rule,²² central planning, free market economy, and self-management at the local level. There is still

²¹ According to B. Horvat «the first principle in the organization of a self-managed enterprise will be the creation of sufficiently small and sufficiently homogeneous work groups, which allow direct participation of all the members in making decisions and where decisions are sufficiently transparent. Homogeneity reduced the possibility of forming a majority on the basis of minority interests, and participation and transparency reduced the possibility of manipulation and the imposition of opinions» (Horvat et al. 1975:322). According to this author members of the collective decision making bodies must bear responsibility for their collective decisions, and the execution of decisions must be a matter of expertise and not democracy. He is very much for «separation of the value, interest sphere from the sphere of expertise; of political authority from professional authority; and of decisions about policy from the field of administration» (Horvat et al. 1975:323).

²² From the Soviet point of view the Yugoslav model undermines the strength and unity of the socialist nation-state by fragmentation of it into competing parochial work collectives. The ruling party must remain the only governess of the whole society and any spontaneous activity of the segments of society should be limited if not totally excluded. «In the view of Soviet critics, the Yugoslav experiment has overstepped the boundaries of the desirable efforts to enlist local initiative, material incentives, and economic accountability, by abandoning the organizational principle of centralized control exercised by the state...» (Sharp 1971:173).

an asymmetrical distribution of power at various level which undermines the effectiveness of self management.²³

According to Zupanov, the Western collective bargaining system is superior to the Yugoslav self-management system in effectively dealing with industrial conflicts. The bargaining partners are not supposed to eliminate or subdue one another. The true interests of workers are represented. Participation, even if limited, is at least effective. The managerial power is not commonly abused in an informal way. «Yugoslav executives are insecure about their power, which is very great in actuality but modest in its institutional definition. Thus, need of their power is illegitimate and makes them extremely vulnerable in case of a strike» (Zupanov 1973:219-220). The Party functionaries play a power game between managers and workers. Zupanov says that «strong and autonomous labour unions vigorously representing the interests and viewpoints of various sections of employees seem to be an indispensable part of structural arrangements for effective participation» (Horvat et al. 1975:84 vol. 2).

In the Soviet bloc countries the workers' councils have appeared in the middle of 1960s as a weapon against the upper bureaucrats taken by the groups located at the enterprise level. For example, in Poland in 1956 the workers' councils were introduced in order to improve the management of state enterprises run by the incompetent and narrow minded servants of the ruling party (Matejko 1974:130). The brockerrage function played by workers' councils is specific not only for the state socialism in Eastern Europe,²⁴ but is not directly applicable to the free market economies where unions are independent and they have the well established communication channels with management and the state.

Participatory democracy may and should be gradually introduced into the free market enterprises without necessarily referring to state

²³ It is necessary to mention that the problems faced in Yugoslavia are only partly related to the social ownership of the production means and the one party rule. There are several vital questions related to the general issue of the relationship between participatory democracy and management, or between self-management units and the free market economy. In both these respects there is plenty to learn from the Yugoslav experience.

²⁴ In Italy since the early 1970's the specialized workers councils (e.g. in Fiat work-environment council, piece-works and rhythms-of-work council, job categories council) and worker-delegates play a role within the power relations between the management and the unions. It is still an open question how much they are able to represent the interests of the rank-and-file, and on the other hand how much they just become instruments of the union or management bureaucracies (Ramirez 1973:626).

socialism. Management participation may play an integrative role only as long as it is a vehicle to reform profoundly the jobs as well as the work organization in general. In order to humanize the workplaces it is necessary first of all to become aware of factors which influence the common welfare of working people, in addition to remuneration. The idea of a «matrix» organization should be gradually implemented on the basis of the trial and error approach. The more responsible and reliable citizenship will be the natural product of all these efforts.

Does it mean that the job reform movement has to be necessarily neutral in political sense? I am arguing not for neutrality but primarily for the autonomy and freedom of this movement to pursue its own humanistic, and not necessarily political goals. Any blind dependence on other movements, whose goals not necessarily coincide with the work humanization, must be harmful in the long run for the subject of a genuine job reform.

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Les conséquences socio-politiques de la réforme du régime de travail

La réforme démocratique du régime du travail dans l'entreprise est remplie d'embûches et on ne doit s'y aventurer qu'à titre expérimental.

En effet, dans une société fondée sur le marché du travail, cette réforme devient presque inévitablement l'objet de négociations entre différents groupes de pression qui lorgnent vers leurs propres avantages aux dépens d'autrui. La politique, dont on s'inspire, consiste surtout à se gagner des alliés et à isoler les adversaires du changement. L'exclusion de tout groupe doté de pouvoir (par exemple, les employeurs et les spécialistes) de la participation ôte toute possibilité d'agir normalement.

Par ailleurs, l'instauration d'un régime de participation qui ne ferait pas appel aux intérêts réels des personnes intéressées perd sa raison d'être. Aussi, une participation efficace devrait-elle se fonder sur au moins quelques objectifs communs aux partenaires du milieu de travail, sans quoi il serait difficile d'établir une communication valable.

On s'attend généralement à ce que l'avènement de la participation amène un changement dans la balance du pouvoir. Cependant, dans les faits, il existe toujours une forte opposition à tout changement marqué dans cette balance du pouvoir. Il est significatif que, ni les communistes russes, ni les capitalistes de l'Ouest ne se soient engagés dans un type de participation qui serait de nature à altérer les rapports de forces en présence. Dans les entreprises d'État socialistes, l'autorité centrale fixe les paramètres généraux des buts à atteindre qu'on présente ensuite aux instances inférieures, les budgets passant du sommet à la base ou vice-versa dans un mouvement incessant. Les programmes mis au point au sommet sont endossés par les échelons inférieurs de la hiérarchie après consultation, mais le dernier mot revient toujours au sommet. Sous ce rapport, il y a des points de ressemblance entre ce qui se passe à l'Est et ce qui se produit à l'Ouest.

Même dans le cas de l'expérience yougoslave, on peut douter que le type de participation qu'on y a établi soit réellement de nature à changer les rapports de forces. La prétention de certains critiques occidentaux selon laquelle, en Yougoslavie, le contrôle de l'entreprise par les travailleurs se dissout dans la hiérarchie de l'entreprise tel qu'on la connaît ordinairement, est peut-être poussée un peu loin, mais il est quand même vrai que les travailleurs y sont coincés entre la structure technocratique du milieu de travail et la structure bureaucratique de la société globale.

On peut et on doit instaurer la participation démocratique des travailleurs dans les entreprises fonctionnant dans une société de marché libre sans nécessairement se référer au socialisme d'État. La participation de la direction ne peut remplir une fonction d'unification qu'en autant qu'elle sert d'instrument pour réformer en profondeur la structure des emplois aussi bien que l'organisation du travail en général. Pour humaniser l'entreprise, plus spécifiquement le milieu de travail, il faut d'abord que tous soient conscients des facteurs qui, en outre de la rémunération, influencent le bien-être ordinaire des gens. L'idée d'une organisation modèle doit être mise graduellement en œuvre selon une

approche à l'estime pour qu'un comportement responsable et durable devienne le résultat naturel de tous ces efforts.

Cela signifie-t-il que le mouvement en matière de réforme du travail soit neutre dans le sens politique du terme? L'auteur ne préconise pas la neutralité mais avant tout l'autonomie et la liberté de ce mouvement en vue de poursuivre ses propres objectifs humains et non pas nécessairement des buts politiques. Toute dépendance aveugle envers d'autres mouvements dont les fins ne coïncident pas nécessairement avec l'humanisation du travail ne peut en dernier ressort qu'être dangereuse pour l'implantation d'un véritable régime de réforme du travail.

La réforme démocratique du régime du travail (groupes autonomes, ombudsmen, participation des employés à différents niveaux, intéressement) n'a de sens qu'en autant qu'elle entraîne une modification de la structure du pouvoir. D'autre part, en certaines circonstances, ces mouvements peuvent aller jusqu'à miner l'efficacité économique des institutions existantes. Sous ce rapport, toute transformation trop rapide peut devenir fort dangereuse, mais il est aussi mauvais de trop attendre avant de passer à l'action. Il faut se demander si dans la société post-industrielle qui est la nôtre, il y aura assez de gens raisonnables, honnêtes et engagés qui soient capables d'appuyer d'autres systèmes d'organisation du travail et le voudraient, tout en rejetant en même temps les mesures trop radicales. Dans la société de marché, les gens sont tout juste habitués à suivre les modes changeantes et à passer d'un spectacle à l'autre. La société de masse est exposée à être manipulée et peut évoluer vers un totalitarisme de gauche comme de droite.

Les techniques sociales de participation, pour être efficaces doivent être comprises dans un sens large de manière à s'étendre à tout l'ensemble des facteurs qui influencent le comportement des gens au travail. Il faut prendre en considération tout ce qui stimule, oriente et soutient ce comportement. Pour devenir motivés au travail, les intéressés devront d'abord être persuadés que l'effort donnera un résultat, qu'une rétribution adéquate s'ensuivra et qu'il vaudra la peine de se tourmenter pour l'obtenir. Les gens sont enclins à comparer les avantages qu'ils touchent avec ceux que les autres reçoivent, et ils établissent ainsi leurs propres aspirations. Sous ce rapport, l'amour-propre joue un rôle important et les différences de salaire peuvent être la source d'une motivation faible. Les mesures de participation doivent être établies en relation étroite avec l'organisation du travail. La publication des profils de poste, le style de direction, les stimulants financiers ou autres, l'efficacité administrative et même l'ambiance extérieure sont de grande importance pour assurer le succès de la participation.

Dans cet article, la réforme du régime de travail est considérée comme un mouvement pacifique et dynamique capable de conduire à des formes de coopération au travail plus réfléchies, à la participation active des employés et à l'établissement d'une direction plus éclairée. La force politique de ce mouvement dérive principalement de sa fonction éducative et expansive et non de la recherche du pouvoir.

Une réforme du régime de travail ainsi comprise ne satisfera pas ceux qui s'intéressent d'abord à l'utilisation du contrôle ouvrier en tant qu'une arme pour en arriver à une transformation draconienne des rapports de forces dans

la société. Ce qui importe vraiment à long terme, c'est la transformation fondamentale des relations existantes, transformation fondée sur l'expérience contrôlée et non pas sur des changements d'étiquette politique qui ne touchent même pas au contenu. Dans les économies d'État socialistes, l'organisation hiérarchique demeure intacte, même si la structure politique est totalement différente. En conséquence, il y a lieu d'espérer qu'une participation véritable à la direction pourra se développer d'une façon plus efficace dans les démocraties de l'Ouest que sous les systèmes politiques à parti unique.

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