"Theoretical Currents in Organizational Development and their Relevance to Participative Management/Employee Involvement in the U.S."

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Abstract


Der vorliegende Aufsatz befaßt sich mit den Theorien und Ansätzen, die die Grundlage für den gegenwärtigen Veränderungsschub hin zu Participative Management und Employee Involvement bilden.

Die Literaturstudie steht im Kontext des Automobilprojektes über "Risiken und Chancen der gegenwärtigen Umstrukturierung in der Automobilindustrie für die Beschäftigten."

Ulrich Jürgens
Theoretical Currents in Organizational Development and their Relevance to Participative Management/Employee Involvement in the U.S.

Beginnings

Innovations, or at least discussions about them, in organizational forms that lead to greater workplace participation are quite widespread in the U.S. at present. Many of the discussions aren't new, but perhaps the urgency that motivates them is.

This paper is about the major ideas on organizational forms that have developed along with the large-scale manufacturing that made organizational planning a field in its own right. These ideas all contributed to a definition of what organizations should look like that, implicitly, either obstructed or encouraged some form of workplace participation.

Organizations are difficult things to define. For the purposes of this paper, organizations can be called structures that exist to facilitate the achievement of certain goals. By this, it is not meant that these structures arise from nowhere, or that they form automatically in response to or as a result of their function. In fact, it is less important here to understand exactly how they become as they are, as to understand what people think they should look like to achieve their expressed goals. In this case, we are specifically concerned with organizations that produce something in order to earn a profit. As with most writing that deals with production oriented organizations, this begins with Frederick Winslow Taylor.

Taylor's scientific management scheme became the most well-known of the industrial engineering experiments of the late teens and early 20's. Taylor believed his time and motions studies to be a scientifically objective process. Thus, if these studies were carried out correctly, the results would necessarily be the most efficient to achieve the
organization's productive capacity. Taylor's logic extended to the opinion that this system would benefit everyone in the firm because of the higher profits obtained. In any case, scientific management's validity could not be questioned because of its scientifically based nature.

Taylor's system probably had more effect on business administration schools and students than it did on actually operating industries in the teens and 20's. The image of a class of experts mediating social conflicts through the application of knowledge obtained from science appealed to academies and reformers because it fit in well with Durkheimian conceptions of the time such that social scientists could utilize that great discovery - science - to improve all social life. Taylorism was attractive because it espoused that decisions about the production process should be based on scientific laws of organization, and not on traditional biases or customs.

In terms of its impact on organizational theory, scientific management encompassed two, what came to be influential perspectives, on organizations. The first is that organizations can be totally rational entities; that is, that decisions can be made following specific rules and guidelines that lead to predictable outcomes. The other is that technical personnel are the keystone in the organizational hierarchy; they provide the link to communication between workers and management and generate the knowledge that makes the organization run at its most efficient level.

There are many levels at which Taylor's implicit theory of the organization was challenged by his contemporaries and others, up to the present. Workers, employers and even Taylor's followers in the Taylor society realized that scientific management incorporated many nonobjective aspects. Workers resisted the implementation of scientific management because they perceived it as a means for the company to exercise greater control, extract more work for the same money, and take away any decision-making power they may have enjoyed. Managers and owners questioned the effectiveness of scientific management, did not want to spend the money and effort to conduct time and motion studies, and probably resisted giving up any of their power to technical specialists. The
progressive intellectuals adopted Taylor's principles but modified them considerably to coincide with their visions of science bettering human existence. In fact, the Progressives, along with one of Taylor's proteges and an important member of the Taylor Society, Morris L. Cooke, supported joint union-management coordination in carrying out time and motion studies. Thus workers, managers and technical experts who questioned Taylor's methods, all recognized that control over the implementation of time and motion studies carried with it a certain amount of power.

Taylorism and Workplace Participation Efforts

Taylor's scientific management is not usually identified with any form of worker participation. In fact, Taylorism is often used as the embodiment of an anti-union, anti-worker mentality; all other theories begin with a departure from the evils of scientific management. And Taylor was not apparently concerned with the quality of work life that would result from decomposing tasks and determining the correct number of movements necessary for the most efficient production. Yet it was one of Taylor's followers, Morris Cooke, who helped coordinate some of the earliest joint union-management cooperation efforts that took place in the late teen's through the 1920's. Cooke, along with Progressive intellectuals and reformers, supported union efforts to have a say in the design and implementation of time and motion studies.

On the union side, the AFL called for cooperation efforts as well as an end to waste, an introduction of technological advances and the linkage of wages to productivity. Essentially, the AFL was attempting to promise owners increases in productivity and labor responsibility in return for the right to unionize, or in already unionized industries, more of a partnership in decision-making. At the same time the AFL's overtures could serve to undermine the more radical elements of union organizers who opposed cooperation efforts as an organizing method. In any event, the partnership of unions and the Taylor society reformers
resulted in several union-management cooperation efforts in which workers were able to participate in implementing time and motion studies.

Most of the earliest union-management collaboration efforts took place in the clothing industry, although one experiment occurred in the B&O Railroad. Jacoby posits that union-management cooperation programs came about in these particular types of industries because they were either (1) high risk industries where slight changes in labor costs could affect the firm's ability to compete or (2) maturing industries with slowing rates of growth (Jacoby, 1983). The first description fits the textile industry then and now, although textile industries are not the most likely industries to initiate union-management collaboration at present. In fact, it is often the textile industries' competitiveness which is used to explain why they have lower rates of unionization. The second description reflects conditions in the railroad sector in the 20's, and many industries including steel, autos, and other heavy manufacturing industries at present.

Currently, when there is so much discussion about union-management cooperation efforts in implementing workplace innovations, we have to ask ourselves what we have learned from our past. Since the 20's, there have been numerous developments in the perception of the way organizations should be structured or run. This has involved more or less emphasis on the people, the technology, and the goals in the organization. Where have these trends in organizational theory taken us since Taylor, and since Taylor's followers defined workplace democracy as worker input in the implementation of time and motion studies? The workplace participation experiments started in the 20's disappeared with the economic crisis in the 30's. Even at the time of their initiation, they took place in industries that had no alternatives, that had no other means at their disposal (such as trade protectionism) to prevent making peace with the union. Has 60 years of organizational theory and practice changed the prospects for innovations in workplace participation and democracy?
Organizational theory itself has certainly developed a great deal since Taylor's system of scientific management, even if in heavy manufacturing in the U.S., Taylor's basic precepts prevail. Much literature has been generated on various aspects of organizations such as: 1) how decisions get made in an organization, 2) the relationship between the inside of the organization and the environment, 3) the human needs of organizational participants, 4) how organizations can increase quality and productivity, 5) how various actors fit into the organizational structure and what their roles should be. The list could go on and on. However, the five issues mentioned all are relevant to the intersection point between workers participation and organizational theory which concerns us here.

The following sections survey some of the most important and influential organizational theories and movements up to the present. Finally, some remarks are given concerning recent workplace participation experiments in the light of the history of organizational development, and thus their prospects for success.

Organizations as Cultures

We have seen that, even at a time when scientific management was the newest innovation in organizational theory, worker involvement in decision-making was recognized as an issue.

The major contributors to organizational theory in the 1930's who continue to be important influences up to the present, Chester Barnard and Elton Mayo, brought some ideas to organizations that made people within the organization very important, but made workers' participation irrelevant.

According to some American organizational and industrial sociologists, Chester Barnard probably had the largest influence on organizational theory from the late 30's to the present. Barnard was the chairman of AT&T and wrote on the relationship of the organization to society and the role of the executive in the organization. With regard to em-
ployees, Barnard argued they had to feel they were participating in a common goal, and this goal or purpose had to have a moral basis. However, Barnard was not simply an idealist; he also believed that if moral purposes did not exist, they should be manufactured, and employees indoctrinated therein. And the creator of moral values was the leader of the organization; Barnard's basic organizational model moved from the top down. Although in his view organizations must have purposes and values, Barnard also believed that organizations proceeded on rational principles. And the only entities capable of rational thinking were formal organizations; informal organizations, or more precisely, associations of workers and worker groups, could not be rational because they corresponded to the unconscious or non-intellectual actions and habits of individuals (Perrow 1972, p.88). Although not expressed directly, the suggestion that employees were incapable of the type of thinking needed to be rational, and thus incapable of being decision-makers lingered in the background of Bardard's theoretical perspective.

Job Enrichment

Before discussing the influence of Barnard's contemporary Elton Mayo, the "father" of human relations research, it is worth going into a research tradition that had its origins in World War II and continued throughout the 50's and 60's, but was overshadowed by human relations research: job redesign and enrichment programs. Unlike human relations research which concentrated on attitudes, job enrichment research attacked Taylorist production principles, both in terms of efficiency and their effects on human beings. Peter Drucker, an influential critic of mass production, pointed out the following drawbacks with regard to both physical and mental health:
1) the physical fatigue caused by performing a single repetitive movement;
2) being chained to the pace of work of the slowest man on the line and therefore not being able to work according to personal rhythm;
3) the psychological frustration of never seeing a task to its completion (in Friedmann, 1961).

Experiments on the production line during World War II provided much of the documentation for arguments that job enrichment could be more efficient than Taylorist production arrangements. Increased production schedules, decreased manpower, and make-shift factories made possible some interesting production arrangements and demanded that industrial engineers, in some cases, rethink the production process.

One such example was observed by Drucker who in 1943 studied factory organization and its effect on workers. Two plants, referred to as A and B, manufactured the same product. B had brand new facilities and equipment, a production process designed by engineers in which workers only had to follow detailed charts and do repetitive operations. Plant A, however, was put together very quickly and technical management had time only to design the general layout. The details of execution, for example, work distribution, were left up to the foremen and their teams who together introduced work rotation and job enlargement. The result was a higher rate of productivity, and product quality, and lower absenteeism and accident rates compared with plant B (Friedmann 1961).

IBM was also held up as an example by job enlargement proponents in the 50's as a firm which introduced innovative production arrangements in the war years and found them successful. Preparatory work, maintenance of the line area where the assembler works, checking for product quality, and knowledge of the entire line function were combined into semi-skilled worker classifications eliminating the need for many "set-up" men and inspectors. It should be pointed out that, unlike the firms described by Jacoby in the 70's which experimented with worker participation, IBM was neither a dying industry nor one in which a slight change in labor cost could mean its survival or destruction. IBM
was already a huge corporation and one that was growing when it introduced these work innovations. In fact, it seems likely that IBM's success with job enlargement derived from its ability to compensate workers for their increased productivity and reallocate skilled workers whose jobs were being eliminated to other sectors.

The industrial psychologists and sociologists who advocated job enlargement attacked the heart of Taylorism because they questioned its premises of what makes an organization run at its most efficient level. The attention to the variable of human relations to work had ramifications for traditional perceptions about productivity and efficiency. Yet, like Taylor and scientific management, job enlargement specialists felt their findings were based on concrete scientific evidence from empirical research. Besides the obvious concerns about the effects of work on the health, this research also provided scientific evidence that it was good for productivity to enlarge and enrich work and implement autonomous work groups, rather than strive for ever more deskillling.

On the more purely psychological side of job enrichment research there were people such as McGregor who introduced Theory Y as an alternative to Theory X, the traditional view of workers. Theory X assumed a lazy, unmotivated worker who had to be constantly controlled and prodded to produce. Theory Y suggested that workers had creative talents that should be given the opportunity to be released through the shouldering of responsibility. In McGregor's view, commitment to objectives was a function of rewards associated with achievement.

Human Relations

The bulk of human relations research is quite different from job enrichment/enlargement studies even though their arenas of concern are quite similar. Job enlargement recommends alterations in the way work is performed because of its effect on human performance and attitude. Human relations is just the opposite; Mayo's conclusions in the Hawthorne experiments were that it is attention to the employees themselves, and not
to working conditions, that makes a difference in productivity. Thus came the era in organizational theory which centered on the "human side of the enterprise".

Barnard's contribution regarding the importance of values and the role of leadership in the organization and Mayo's demonstration of the fluctuations possible in productivity levels through attention to workers led to a new era in the study of industrial organization: a great deal of money was expended to investigate the ways to affect productivity through manipulation of social factors. Barnard's and Mayo's influence was seen in the fact that most of the literature was devoted to the relationship between morale and productivity and good leadership on productivity (see Perrow, pp. 88-92).

It should be recognized that it was a major change to make human needs a variable in the determination of organizational performance, especially to the extent that studies such as these were funded and carried out. Why did human relations research take-off as it did? Obviously part of the reason was a desire to find a way to cut absenteeism and improve productivity. But part probably fit in with the post World War II image that America had of itself. There was a sense that in a democracy, the attempt should be made to make work at least appear less authoritarian within the factory. Also, in a nation of affluence it was recognized that work might have to be more fulfilling and control less based on domination to appeal to man's intrinsic needs. Also, the areas of conflict between unions and companies were rather different in the 50's from the past. The radicalism of the 20's on the part of workers was gone and the patriotic surge of the post war era seemed to assure agreed upon values. Conflicts still existed between labor and management and strikes were still a weapon, but the demands did not go outside of agreed upon limits; limits that did not allow the questioning of management authority or the system within which it operated. In this atmosphere, the government paid industrial psychologists large sums of

1) Research on different types of need fulfillment became popular in the 50's and 60's. See for example Maslow, 1959.
money to study, essentially, how to make workers happier. What they studied and what they concluded also stayed within certain, perhaps unspoken, guidelines that did not include questioning too much the basic authority or decision-making structure.

Human Relations research made organizations the subject of psychologists who proceeded to discover some revolutionary things about the people in organizations. For instance, they found that the proper manipulation of attitudes can be a powerful tool. Also, psychology introduced the language of society and culture into organizations, another element of the human component, wrestling organizations away from efficiency and rationality. So suddenly organizations had cultures, values, and charismatic leaders, things Weber had said the bureaucratic organization lacked, the source perhaps, of its greatest weakness. Industrial psychology gave these things back to the organization. Not only, they said, did values and charisma belong in a rational, bureaucratic organization, furthermore, they made it work better and more efficiently.

The power of psychology and the manipulation of attitudes took center stage in American organizational theory rather than a change in production methods or labor allocation. Thus, Walker and Guest's famous study of an automobile assembly plant examined various aspects of work-life both actual and attitudinal. They pointed out the lack of mobility, the fact that technology prevented the formation of work groups, the problems of achieving quality when the pace of work was too fast. Yet, their general conclusion was, "we suggest that the sense of becoming de-personalized, of becoming anonymous as against remaining one's self, is for those who feel it a psychologically more disturbing result of the work environment than either the boredom or tension that arise from repetitive and mechanically paced work (Walker and Guest, 1952, p. 161).

In terms of group formation, an important theme in job enlargement research, there was a thread of human relations theory which discussed the importance of small groups for the smooth functioning of the organization. Psychologists concerned with morale, keyed into the problem of lack of integration. They pointed to anomie as a real problem
contributing to low worker satisfaction and motivation and recommended informal group formation. This had been one of Mayo’s messages from the Hawthorne experiments and it retained a central place in recommendations of industry studies for some time. Thus the superiority of the group over processes of individual cognition became one common theme in human relations theory. The beneficial effect of groups was seen as being two-fold: Not only did people think more effectively in a group, the existence of the group itself helped relieve the anomie tendencies of the production line, which to human relations theorists, meant there would be improved productivity.

Here we see how psychological variables, like anomie, took on great importance relative to mere physical health or democratic-humanistic considerations. And whether or not it was purposeful, this led to rather conservative interpretations of what was happening and what was needed in the organization.

Another interesting impact of human relations research on organizational theory was the change in the expectations of managers and thus on their training. The manager ideal developed from hard working and rational to enthusiastic, intelligent, able to accept criticism, communicative and supportive. These desired skills led to the popularity of a rather unusual training technique for managers developed by psychologists: the T-group. The T-group, popularized in the 60’s, was a Gestalt psychology method which encouraged people to be confrontative and expressive in encounter groups.

Behavioral Theory of Organization

At the same time that the human relations school was flourishing, another stream of organizational theory, also heavily influenced by Barnard, was being pursued. This was the decision-making or behavioral theory of organizations developed by March and Simon. Instead of concentrating on individual decision making or the problem of the individual in the organization, March and Simon offered a structural analysis of
organizations and the premises of decision making that exist in organizations. March and Simon presented the alternative to believing that either organizations are guided by complete rationality or simply value judgements. In their view, man attempts to be rational, but he is limited by both his and the organization's inability to be completely rational. What do people in organizations do when they must make a decision? They develop a simplified model of the situation built out of past experience and selective views of the present inputs. Then they search for solutions, generally travelling along a known path of routine or standard options, until a satisfactory one comes along. Thus the term "satisfice" coined by Simon and March, meaning the search for the first satisfactory solution rather than the optimum one.

One important factor in the search for "satisficing" answers is that the individuals making the decisions "adapt their decisions to the organization's objectives"; thus, organizations through the division of labor, standard practices, the authority system, channels of communication and training and indoctrination, control individual behavior.

In general, this theory tells us that organizations try to be as rational as possible, and determine choices largely through past experience and routine practices. The organization is not static, but change does not come easily or suddenly; some of the evolution is unpredictable, hit or miss, partial and directly related to the well trodden paths that preceeded it.

According to Perrow, March and Simon's theory makes the prospects for participative management dim because they become reduced to "minor innovations within a complex network of established premises for action" (Perrow 1972, p. 157). This is the case because cooperation cannot be spontaneous in this system; it is engineered as part of the subtle controls of communication channels and organizational vocabulary that make up part of the organization's necessary control structure over individual behavior.
Another trend in organizational theory which overlapped in timing with human relations and behavioral theories of organizations research was a concentration on organizational structure. Here the emphasis was on understanding the rationalistic system underlying organizational strategy and goals. This stream of organizational theory can also be linked to Barnard's influence in its identification with organizational rationality. However, a stronger theoretical influence came from Weber whose work was not well known in the U.S. until the 50's; it was not even translated into English until after the second World War.

In the 60's, Weberian variables such as division of labor, authority, hierarchy, rules, and routinization became important and were used to counter the hegemony of human relations theory and its call for non-bureaucratization. The literature in the "bureaucracy is good" school, to a large extent, strove to demonstrate the need for these Weberian structures in the organization. A central theme was how organizational character facilitates or hinders the development of bureaucratic structures which enable the organization to operate at its most efficient level. For example, when we describe organizations that have a large amount of disposable funds, and are service rather than profit oriented, or that have a central authority who prefers to hold on to discretion power, we would conclude that these organizations would not develop rational bureaucratic structures and would function with little routinization.

One of the best known works in this stream of organizational theory reflects the importance of function and consequent structures. This is Strategy and Structure by Chandler, the title of which describes the message: form follows function in organizational planning. Thus, the organization must know what its function is, meaning it should know what its strategic plan is, and the organizational structure needed to carry
out that plan will be obvious. Although Chandler's arguments were presented in a sophisticated way, and touched upon some new concepts, they were essentially remindful of the classic management theory approach: management by objective.

Another well-known example of this research on organizational structures was conducted by Etzioni. Etzioni attempted to explain differences in the structures that organizations displayed by seeing if organizations of the same type had similar structures. The method Etzioni used was to match an organization's goals with the type of power they used to achieve this goals.

The types of goals were coercive (prisons), economic (factories) and normative (public service) and the three respective means of compliance were coercive, remunerative and normative. If the goals and means of compliance were not in alignment, the organization would not function properly. Etzioni's formulation made the Weberian variables power and authority extremely salient to the organization's success.

The search for structural imperatives naturally led outside of the organization and this is when environment entered the picture. Previous attempts to explain structure tended to use existing structure or goals or strategies within the organization. Eventually it was decided that in order to explain structure it was necessary to adapt something independent of it.

Environment, of course, is a rather enormous concept. It can mean politics, competition, market, prices, business cycles, and so on. Eventually, all of these variables did get used to understand how outside pressures on the organization forced it to react or change. However, in the literature dealing with structure, environment often meant technology or the changing state of the art in how something is produced. So what was offered to organizational theory was the position that technological types (mass production, continuous process, production, batch) or technological change or economies of scale vs. specialized production
affect organizational structure more than human effort and the variations in that effort allowed by morale building.

In contrast to the human relations school, the "bureaucracy is good" tradition emphasized a rationalistic, pre-determined system of achieving organizational goals. Another important theme to come out of the research was a concern with the environment or external forces acting upon the organization. This research trend remained popular through the 70's.

Although borrowing from Weberian theory, this school of organizational theory lost much of Weber's richness when it got translated into a plan for organizational development. People and their relationships took second place to organizations as entities with lives of their own. It was only necessary to know what the organizational goals were or what the organization needed and the best bureaucratic methods for their accomplishment would arise. As can be surmised, this made job enrichment and employee participation a relatively unimportant concern.

Remarks on Organizational Theory in Practice

After Taylorism, the discussions of human relations or bureaucratic type models of organizational research occurred mostly in academic circles by industrial and organizational psychologists and sociologists. Of course, the various theoretical principles did influence business schools which trained managers and consultants of industry and some programs were introduced to effect organizational operations. Generally, however, it has to be observed that organizations are surprisingly inertial and change very slowly. Certainly in bad economic times, organizations look for ways to improve productivity. And some companies, high tech industries for example, which have an unusual workforce because of its high level of education or skill, or industries which produce in uncharted
territory, may seek ways to be innovative. Nevertheless, amidst all of the theory generation, in practice some ideas gain popularity while others lose it, and parts of some theories are taken to heart and added on to programs designed from other theories. Mainly, the ideas of organizations that are adopted are the ones that can be included without fundamentally changing the organizational structure. Some examples are problem solving groups and quality circles. These techniques and a discussion of organizational theory underlying them stormed into American business circles in the 80's in a rather roundabout manner. After the economic crisis in American heavy industry, many old theories reappeared through the study of the "Japanese success story". The Japanese methods, of course, were based on American organizational theories which the Japanese studied after World War II and then proceeded to mold for their own purposes and conditions.

**Japan's Influence on Organizational Development**

Japanese management techniques continue to be praised for their effectiveness in raising worker productivity and commitment. Exactly where these techniques came from and their appropriateness for U.S. companies are issues that are still debated. It seems clear that Japanese business organization personnel studied American and European management studies thoroughly. Cole writes that "Japanese elites have struggled to avoid western labor problems through studying western experiences and adopting solutions to these problems that fit the Japanese context." (Cole, p. 127) In fact a generally accepted explanation of paternalistic practices adopted in the 20's in Japanese firms is that it was an effort to avoid the labor unrest and rise in labor unions that characterized western economies in the late teens and 20's.

From the late 50's on, American management techniques, such as those published by Likert and McGregor, were studied in Japanese business administration spheres. These studies encouraged the adoption of humanistic management practices and leadership in which managers solicit
the opinions of their workers and make decisions through open discus-
sion. On the subject of job redesign, the writings of Maslow (1954) and
Herzberg (1966) have been widely discussed in Japan. Both writers are
industrial psychologists and discuss the motivational components of
engaging in job redesign, rather than proposing specific formulas. Mas-
low asserts that the needs of human beings are hierarchal so that after
their basic material or extrinsic needs are fulfilled, people will seek
to fulfill intrinsic needs such as self actualization. Herzberg's ex-
periments led him to the conclusion that the causes of satisfaction and
dissatisfaction are independent of one another. Job tasks, when they al-
low advancement challenge and responsibility, are an important source of
satisfaction. Peter Drucker, a proponent of job enrichment and partici-
pative management, has also been popular among the Japanese.

Whether the Japanese simply copied American ideas or whether the
techniques arose spontaneously, seem silly arenas for discussion. Obvi-
ously, the Japanese were influenced by American studies, and selected
techniques and philosophies to transfer from among the vast number gen-
erated in American academic circles. After they were adopted, the tech-
niques and ideas probably changed in the face of practical, cultural and
structural conditions.

What exactly are we talking about when we use the terms "Japanese
Management Techniques"? In concrete terms, we can point to the wide use
of quality circles in which workers and supervisors meet, outside of
work hours, to discuss problems and devise solutions. Workers are also
responsible for attempting to achieve zero defect (ZD) whereby they
adopt practices that will reduce accidents, absences, wasted time and
attain high performance levels. Workers inspect their own work for qual-
ity problems. Finally, Japanese workers receive on-the-job training and
continual training to raise their skill level and familiarization with
different jobs in the plant. It should be emphasized, however, that
these characteristics of employment apply only to male workers in large
companies who have been selected as permanent workers. There are workers
even in large companies, who are temporary or seasonal. Another charac-
teristic is the organization of workers in work groups or teams in which
workers decide task decisions and scheduling with more autonomy than in U.S. plants and in which workers practice job rotation. Japanese companies also have a more personal supervision style than in the U.S. Japanese supervisors make much more of an effort to solicit opinions from workers and to discuss personal issues with them. Middle level managers in Japan have much more decision making responsibility and importance in the role of a communications channel person than their counterparts in the U.S. (Jürgens and Strömel 1986). Remuneration systems also work differently; workers are paid on a job based system which is supposed to place greater emphasis on abilities. There is also a grading system which allows for mobility in terms of job responsibility and, of course, remuneration.

What do these techniques add up to in the development of a Japanese style of management or management philosophy? James Hall and Joel Ludecker compared U.S. participative management models with the Japanese-style and came up with the following typology for the latter:

1) Bottom-up Process
2) Senior Manager-Facilitator
3) Middle Manager-Molder
4) Openness
5) Consensual decision making
6) Wholistic orientation
7) Management by walking around

The first point refers to the flow of information from bottom to top whereby those closest to a problem should be the ones who provide the initiative for how to solve it. Point two refers to the teaching function of senior managers rather than order giving. Middle managers have the responsibility of coordinating information from subordinates for presentation to superiors and communication with other departments. Openness refers to the atmosphere of honesty and criticism that is supposed to prevail and consensual decision making, while not unanimity,
suggests that all points of view were heard and the final decision is acceptable to all participants. The sixth point means that all aspects of the employee are concerns of the managers including the importance of shaping and influencing employee attitudes toward the job. Finally, the last point is fairly self-explanatory.

The well-known theory Z by Ouchi characterizes Japanese style management by pointing out (1) the trust companies have for their employees, (2) the tying of the employee to the firm through lifetime employment programs (which also hinders change to comparable jobs in other companies), (3) payment through bonuses which are tied to firm performance, (4) extensive training so that employees are more company oriented rather than occupationally or skilled oriented, (5) and the great importance of the personnel department.

Theory Z, according to Ouchi, is a culture which has a distinct set of values, installed into employees by managers and passed down to succeeding generations of workers, (p. 165) among them long-term employment, trust and close personal relationships. Thus, Theory Z calls for a redirection of attention to human relations as opposed to technology in trying to transfer some Japanese concepts to American industry in order for the latter to survive.

We have already seen that the original ideas with which the Japanese have "humanized" work and which should be adopted in American workplaces, came from America. What happened to them in Japan that made them successful and able to be implemented, which except in limited form and in particular types of industries, they were not in the U.S.? Robert Cole provides an interesting history of quality circles which helps answer this question. After the war, the American occupation brought American statisticians to Japan to teach quality control methods. In 1954 Dr. J. Tureau, a quality control expert, gave a series of lectures in Japan teaching that quality control, "must be an integral part of the management function and practiced throughout the firm." (p. 136) He meant that all of middle management should be taught. However, in the
Japanese reinterpretation, all employees, including rank and file workers, were taught quality control techniques and participated in study groups.

In general, the Japanese seemed readier to accept the behavioral sciences model of management practice than Americans who favored the scientific management model. Americans always associated productivity with scientific management, while the Japanese were more open to other approaches, and early on in the 20's, had allowed a familistic paternalism to co-exist with scientific management (Cole, p. 132). So one explanation for Japanese ability to integrate various human relations, behavioral, and job enlargement theories in their management practice is that historically their philosophy of managing included behavioral elements. They have, since the early years of their industrializing process, considered human motivation as an important force in production, whereas the power of the scientific management model in the U.S. erased the human component from management theory.

Another explanation for Japanese management style comes from a more structural level: The labor market characteristics Japan confronted during rapid industrialization. Japan had a labor shortage, a workforce whose educational levels were increasing rapidly, rising technological levels, etc. In order to recruit the type of workers desired, the major companies purposefully implemented programs to tie wages to ability, make jobs seem interesting, make workers feel they were participating, etc.

There should be one final consideration made in discussing Japanese management styles. We know Japanese workers are extremely productive, we know that not all of this can be explained by technology or productive organization (such as Kan-ban). However, much of the praise of Japanese management style with regard to making a more autonomous, participatory and humanistic work environment is myth building. Japanese workers are highly supervised, they are required to participate in order to advance, sensitive topics are not permitted to be worked on in quality circles, and a difficult worker is subject to intense pressure, even
though it might be from peers. In the final analysis it is unclear just how human Japanese humanistic management is (see Jürgens, Dohse, Malsch, 1985, and Thomas 1984).

In Search of Innovation, Adaptation, and Organizational Change

Humanistic management, job enlargement, organizational value building - these are topics that have a long history in American management theory. Union/management cooperation for worker participation occurred in the 20's, Mayo and Bernard wrote in the 30's, the war brought several job enrichment experiments to the workplace, human relations theory took off in the 50's and 60's, GM set up a joint Quality of Work-life committee with the UAW in the 70's. But after the oil crisis of the late 70's and the economic recession of the early 80's, discussions and studies of "new" management methods and "new" theories of organizational development virtually exploded.

One constant concern is the need for change; if one thing is agreed upon it is that adaptation to new conditions is mandatory for the survival of American Business. And what new conditions must Americans adapt to? Basically, increased competition from abroad, and a workforce with a higher educational level. Various authors exhort us to learn from the Japanese (Ouchi, 1981), or tell us that we don't need to learn from the Japanese because change is occurring indigenously (Peters and Waterman 1982).

Actually, in providing prescriptions for how to bring about change, there are not so many differing solutions as there are differing presentations about what these solutions are. These range from things that purport to be offering, at least the groundwork for, a new theory of organizational change (Peters and Waterman, 1982), to "how-to" guides for implementing quality circles or employee involvement programs. (Robson 1984, Guest 1979, Lawler and Drexler 1978).

One place to begin discussing the literature of the 80's is to choose a book that leans in the more encompassing direction of theory
creation rather than case study and which has received much attention in management circles. In Search of Excellence describes the successes of several American companies in achieving high quality products and high customer satisfaction. Observations on these cases and a survey of a great deal of past organizational literature, provide the groundwork for a new theory of how to manage organizations to be more innovative and thus more adaptable. Here are the observations of excellent companies made by the authors:

1) Actions and behaviors shape attitudes and beliefs, not vice versa. Therefore, if you get people acting the way you want, they will come to believe in it. (It should be pointed out that this is a vigorously debated area of social psychology and has been the subject of several experiments (see Schumann and Johnson, 1976; Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977, 1980; DeFleur and Westie, 1963).

2) Companies have their own cultures and the cultures of excellent companies are distinctive. This point reflects the idea that companies should communicate values and norms and give their employees something to identify with.

3) Successful companies emerge through purposeful, but specifically, unpredictable evolution.

4) Finally, using arguments from existing organizational theory and social psychology research, the authors conclude that people in an organization have basic needs for:
   a) meaning
   b) a modicum of control, and
   c) positive reinforcement.

If you trace back these ideas to their sources, you end up with quite an eclectic mix of research traditions in organizational theory. Human Relations research is represented in attention to fulfillment of higher order needs (Maslow), and in using psychology to manipulate feelings; the institutionalization school is represented in the view of the leadership role as the charismatic director of values (Selznich); the behavioral model is represented in the deemphasis on meticulous planning, control, and big staffs and in the unpredictable elements of
decision-making and change (March & Simon); in fact, Peters and Waterman go one step beyond the behavioral theory even as expressed by March or Weick. They say if you make things more chaotic, such as by spurring internal competition, getting people to talk to each other more, and getting rid of rule books, the organization will become more innovative. Barnard, the originator of it all, is represented in the emphasis on the need for organizational values and culture to give employees the feeling they are part of a great cause.

In Search of Excellence is not a book that deals very much with organizational structure; in fact, it tries to get away from that. Instead it concentrates on people, values, leadership and culture.

Another popular book of the 80's has been one in which leadership is very important, as can be deduced from the title, Change Masters (Kanter 1983), but which at the same time is very concerned with organizational structures.

Kanter begins by enumerating why recent developments outside of the organization (competition, education) are requiring that organization's change. In response to this need for change, organizations are developing new organizational structures. These structures include: 1) The matrix in which different managers might supervise the functional and production aspect of a unit of the organization and in which a worker consequently may have two or more bosses, 2) Parallel organizations which are short term organizations existing alongside the main organization. One example is problem solving groups which are temporary, rotating task forces that arise to solve a particular problem. Participants are chosen according to their skill in solving that problem. Project teams are another. They simply meet to work on a specific project and might be composed of people from different departments in an organization, 3) Self-managed work teams which usually refer to manufacturing employees setting production goals and pace.

Kanter's innovation in organizational studies is that, although she encourages the development of new organizational structures, she mainly argues that making these structures work requires adopting new organizational styles. She believes that if you want structural innova-
tions to work, you have to make changes in the overall organizational structure and value system. This new style essentially means being less traditionally authoritarian and using indirect rather than direct forms of control over middle level managers down to the rank and file. Kanter also challenges organizations to be more flexible (or tactical) and less strategic. In this way, she moves away from the bureaucratic school and its stress on long term goal setting and instead uses March and Simon's ideas about how decision-making actually works in organizations. In this regard, she advises managers to "move beyond received wisdom, combine ideas from unconnected sources, embrace change as an opportunity to test limits." (p. 354)

Kanter's work, unlike some of the research on organizational change in the 80's, preaches that some changes must occur, but does not see them as the beginning of a new industrial era. She cautions against believing that structures such as quality circles signal a fundamental change in company organization or policy; they are, rather, simply a means to tap employee knowledge and that in itself is useful and necessary. Kanter also believes that different companies (i.e. those with different organizational functions) have varying needs with regard to participation.

In the end, Change Masters is a book that encourages the implementation of humanistic workplace relations and job enrichment because, Kanter argues, this is the best environment for innovation. However, it should be pointed out that both Change Masters and In Search of Excellence are directed to an audience of managerial, and perhaps, technical personnel. It could even be argued that they are also geared more to conditions in high-tech, or at least not traditional heavy manufacturing, industries.

After discussing two of the most influential books on managerial roles in organizational change, we can turn to another popular notion of organizational change in the 80's: stage theories. The general notion in this evolutionary view of organizational change is that the last stage of organizational development institutionalizes a structure that encourages innovation and thus change. The concept of institutionalization
comes from Selznick, another follower of Barnard, and simply means that specific organizational structures become institutionalized. Only once, or if, this happens can the organization expect value attachments which bring commitment from its members. Implicitly, stage theories discuss how organizations go about reaching this stage. The introduction of various organizational techniques such as quality circles represent steps toward participative management, for example, or another structure that can be truly innovative.

In the stage theory formulated by Wheelwright and Hayes, the progression to higher stages is dependent upon the existence of earlier stages. Stage I is characterized by the formation of problem solving groups which tackle specific well-defined problems and offer solutions that do not meddle too much with the firms' organizational structure.

Stage II usually involves a more encompassing quality of work life program which may be viewed as important for organizational development but is still not totally linked to strategic planning. The last stage is one of organizational redesign which is supposed to go along with a strategic planning process.

In Landen's and Carlsen's version of organizational development, the final stage comes from an interaction of diffusion, i.e. the spread of small changes through an organization because they work well, and institutionalization which "produce organizational energy that thrusts the organization forward from one stage of development to another." (1982, p. 334)

As mentioned earlier, most of the literature on organizational change written after the 80's crisis involves how to implement various organizational innovations such as quality circles or what problems exist when these innovations are put into place and how to cope with the problems. One author provides us with a list of the issues potentially addressed by workplace innovations:
1) how rewards are distributed
2) how workers interrelate with one another and with management
3) ways training is provided and career paths are conceived
4) the way information is channelled through the hierarchy
5) how much responsibility is allocated for task accomplishment

(Schlesinger, 1982, p. 3)

Unfortunately, much of literature that gets generated to deal with these issues, that is the literature on how to initiate quality circles and reports on their progress, is so vague that it makes a potentially rich research area rather trivial. For example, conclusions sound like: 1) Build a top management team, 2) create a strategic vision and communicate it effectively, 3) build strong personnel support systems ... that reinforce the beliefs in people ..., 4) create a participative organizational structure to facilitate problem solving and consensus building (Joines, 1985, p. 57).

The meat of building organizational structures for change is potentially a rich area of research because the problems are plentiful and complicated. For example, much work is directed at middle level managers, and not only because they hold a pivotal position in the firm. Under the old rules of organizational design, middle level managers controlled increasingly decentralized departments and had to compete with other departments within the same organization for recognition and reward. Then it was discovered that this technique had its strengths, but also put roadblocks in the way of solving organization-wide problems. Now the big message is: lateral communication, management teams, between department communication to counteract protective guarding of individual information in a particular department. However, it has obviously proven difficult to overcome the tradition of protectionism, especially since organizations are still very internally competitive. Middle level managers also become a target because they realize participative management has implications for their authority, and perhaps, their jobs. Thus they
jealously guard their knowledge and inhibit implementation of employee involvement programs on the shop floor. This has led to the formation of middle management teams to try to open managers up to the idea of participative management. However, they, like the rank and file, are usually not permitted to discuss fundamental policy issues, i.e. salaries or production process changes. Therefore, as is often the case with rank and file workers' groups, their groups often get reduced to rallies for generating enthusiasm. This is a subject that requires more research which is linked to larger organizational change issues.

Another potential problem with change and innovation at the workplace is the role of unions. Theoretically, unions support quality of worklife programs because they are mandated to improve working conditions for workers (Bluestone 1977). However, it is easy for unions to see participative management techniques as a way to undermine union authority on the shop floor, to use worker's knowledge without paying for it, to make jobs obsolete through increased productivity or increasing individual worker responsibility leading to lay-offs. After all, even given the protest that quality of worklife is indigenously American, much of the past 80's literature "learns from Japan" where unions have no autonomy. Thus the role of the unions in the implementation of innovative job enrichment techniques in the manufacturing sector is extremely important, but sadly, as of yet, marginally investigated. The whole issue addresses something very central to this area of research: Is change possible?

Markets and Hierarchies

This trend in organizational theory comes in its own section because it is also gaining popularity in the 80's, in fact increasingly so, but it departs from most of the other 80's literature. Unlike the trend which recommends less planning (Peters and Waterman 1982), less strategic in favor of more flexible planning (Kanter 1983), or strategic planning at a stage of organizational structure in which participative
management is institutionalized (Wheelwright and Hayes 1984), markets and hierarchies research (Williamson 1975; 1981) is very influenced by the bureaucracy school, especially the work of Chandler (1966). Markets and hierarchies research tries to explain how organizations end up with a particular structure. Its expressed aim is to join economics to other social sciences which more commonly are utilized in organizational theory.

In this perspective, the basic assumption about human agents in organizations is that they exhibit both bounded rationality and opportunism; the latter being extreme self interest and bounded rationality referring to March & Simon's ideas about "satisficing" (see section on Behavioral Theory above). Because human actors are like this, it is necessary to have an organizational design that facilitates their interaction. Another part of the theory says that ways of organizing have to be matched to transaction characteristics. The possible organizing modes are 1) markets, 2) internal organization and 3) obligational market contracting. The first means a competitive, pre-agent type of organizational structure, the second exhibits a hierarchial structure, a more monopolistic (in economic terms) design, and the third mode is a mixture of 1 and 2. According to Williamson and Ouchi, (1981), hierarchies, vertical integration and big conglomerate forms of organizational design will come about when there is recurrent exchange, uncertainty and the need for "durable transaction-specific investments to realize least cost supply" (p. 352). Presumably, the last point refers to the need for big corporations to own or have a lot of control over their suppliers.

Another interesting observation in this theory, is that once big corporations (or as the authors call it, divisional, as opposed to functional, structure) develop, there is still a question of management style. The choices are bureaucratic versus clan-type management. Clan-type (or soft-contracting) management needs more informal governance apparatus than bureaucratic types. This can make clan-type management more costly. The institutional infrastructure also affects the viability of a particular style (meaning it is easier to implement soft-contracting in Japan, for instance, than the U.S.). On the other hand, hard-con-
tracting, based on legal and economic contracts, is more rigid and therefore can hinder the process of adaptation required in today's companies.

The bottom line with regard to participative management in markets and hierarchies theory is that 1) hierarchical organizational structures are the most efficient and they therefore are here to stay, and 2) Japanese style management cannot be transferred to the west but bureaucratic relationships have to become somewhat less rigid.

The Sociotechnical Argument

The theories discussed in the preceding section, although several take the environment, i.e. market pressures, interest groups, labor supply, etc., into account, basically look within the organization to pinpoint problems and offer solutions. There is also a type of research which is interested in linking what goes on in the organization, particularly with the production process, to larger societal structures and trends. Since this research is influencing a lot of work in sociology and economics, and since some of it is rather innovative, it is worth mentioning briefly here.

Davis and Trist are adherents of a theory they call sociotechnical theory. They describe the main precepts of sociotechnical theory in the following two points:

1. the desired output of a purposive organization is achieved through actions of a social as well as a technical system.
2. Every sociotechnic system is embedded in an environment that is influenced by a culture, it's values, and a set of generally acceptable practices (Davis and Trist, in O'Toole, p. 27)

These two points do not reflect a revolution in organizational theory; the basic concepts have appeared in human relations literature and the work of Barnard. However, in discussing various cases to exemplify the operation of a sociotechnical approach, the authors point out
something quite interesting. In one case management allowed workers to set their own production quotas and pace. This resulted in dramatic increases in productivity. However, the threat of too great an increase in productivity in this particular section created a lot of complaints in other parts of the plant, as other workers feared pressure to produce more and a general disruption of existing industrial relations in the plant. Thus, the workers were forced to return to the old methods which they found boring and which were objectively less productive (p. 276). The lesson for Davis and Trist was not that workers try to obstruct change, but rather that new methods in the production process are difficult to implement in conditions where old relations of production exist.

Hirschhorn, too, writes about sociotechnical systems. In Beyond Mechanization (1983) he describes various types of technological systems: the assembly line, the vacuum tube and feedback system, flexible manufacturing, and the technical foundation of control systems. After describing past forms of productive systems and the social relations of production that went with those systems, Hirschhorn argues that new technologies require a different type of work and attitude towards work. For Hirschhorn the developed, industrialized world is entering a new industrial age which has technologies, or the capacity for technologies, that cannot be operated with old systems of productive relations appropriate for archaic productive processes. High level technological processes, cybernetic settings, require that workers control the controls. This means that workers must understand the entire production process, not just their small piece. In sum, the new type of productive system requires that the unskilled, skilled, maintenance and quality control workers are all the same workers. Hirschhorn recommends a sociotechnical design that locates initiative in teams and a "governance system that factory members use to monitor the team system and its relationship to the factory's environment" (p. 151).

Piore and Sabel (1984) go even further in bringing organizational theory to sociology. They believe that there are periods in history called industrial divides. These periods are a crossroads when choices about adoption of productive technologies and productive processes are
made. One of these industrial divides occurred in the U.S. in the early part of the 20th century. At that time a choice was made to embrace assembly line production, and not because it was dictated by technological needs. In fact, productive systems of organization are fundamental, not technology. After the adoption of mass production techniques, American institutions were "reshaped to provide a nationally specific solution to the problems of any economy that is based on mass production." (p. 15). Piore and Sabel say that America is entering a new industrial divide now and whether to decide in favor of mass production, flexible manufacturing, or really innovative forms of productive organization that will enable workers to participate in managing, is a choice that will be made. It will not be dictated by technological needs or organizational styles, or organizational function; these things follow from the choice of productive process that is made which involves class and power relationships in the society at large.

Conclusion

From Taylor to the present, organizational theory has been concerned with how to make productive organizations productive. This was done by looking at the external organizational structure, such as its goal setting techniques; organizational functions were often seen to determine organizational structure. Then an interest arose in the organization's relationship to its environment and technological types and resources came in as explanations for organizational structure. Sociotechnical theory told us technology and organizational structure vary together. Political economists told us that organizational structure is determined by issues of power, control and class relations and that in turn work organization has far reaching effects on the way society is organized.

Some of the research, especially today, was employed to introduce mechanisms at a practical level that could spur the organization to change so it could be more efficient, more human, more adaptable, and
thus, more able to survive an increasingly competitive world. In trying
to convince company owners, managers, business school professors or
other psychologists and sociologists of how to organize most effec-
tively, organizational theorists offered time and motion studies, value
generation, charismatic leadership, humanistic treatment of workers,
strategic planning, tactical planning, job enrichment, lateral commun-
ication, the development of an organizational culture, perhaps even a
little chaos and probably some others. The prevailing lesson in most of
today's literature is that, aside from time and motion studies, all of
the others in varying quantities (i.e. more job enrichment and value
generation rather than strategic planning), have some validity.

Given all of the literature on organizations that has blossomed
for more than 60 years, how much emphasis has there actually been on
workplace participation? What are the obstacles to change? The two time
periods that have received the most publicity on organized efforts to
implement some form of workplace participation were during World War II
and immediately following (1943-1953) and the present (1977 to present).
The techniques recommended in both periods sound quite similar. For team
building, workers are grouped into teams within which they decide their
own production schedules, solve problems that arise in production,
monitor quality, and rotate jobs. Other methods include quality circles
in which workers meet on a regular basis, identify problems in the plant
and discuss solutions leading to improved product quality and improved
working conditions. Other recommendations include redesigning worker's
individual jobs, or the general line set-up, to make the work less mono-
tonous. Also worker training to gain familiarity with a larger portion
of the production process, in the worker's section or the plant in gen-
eral, goes under the heading of workplace participation. These tech-
niques have been implemented in certain plants. High-tech computer
companies, such as IBM and some in Silicone Valley, practice job rota-
tion and job enrichment, at least among some workers in some plants.
Auto companies in the U.S. have implemented a variety of experiments
with team building, quality circles, and problem solving groups. (For
example, Quality of Working Life at GM, Employe Involvement at Ford.) The reports on the success of these programs range from very positive (Guest, 1979) to cynical (Thomas 1984).

None of the workplace participation methods involve a change in the basic authority structure or an increase in participation on fundamental decisions. And the literature on organization does not lobby for this. What the relevant organizations literature from the post war years and the 80's asks for is a way to institutionalize input from workers on their jobs and working conditions. Indeed, although various workplace participation experiments have taken place in the U.S., on and off, since the 70's, they do not endure as an integral part of the organizational structure. Rather, they come and go with crisis and prosperity, with slump and growth. In recent reports on reactions at the workplace, management accepts the idea of worker participation for the most part, when the methods involve small organizational changes, such as quality circles. But even with quality circles, and certainly with more encompassing changes, there is fear of losing control, at letting workers realize how much they know, fear of changing traditions of standard practices.

Unions also have problems accepting the changes that go under the names workplace participation or employee involvement. Any organization that really wants to implement new organizational structural changes in manufacturing industries in western industrialized countries, has to face the issue of unions. Although unions have cooperated with industry a good deal in their history, and rarely questioned the basic system under which companies operated, still their main power base, especially in the U.S., rests on arrangements that the organizational innovations are threatening to undermine. These include the grievance procedure, job classification systems, and job descriptions. No one has figured out how unions, national protective legislation and workplace innovations fit together. Unions realize, with justification, that their very existence is called into question under cooperative work arrangements. Perhaps unions have to change the definition of what they protect in order to survive, but there is no question that they have yet to find their role in these new organizational structures.
So whether the new wave of organizational theory that encourages worker participation will have more success than the union-management cooperation projects of the 20's, or the human resources outcomes in the 50's and 60's is still open to question. There is a lot that is new affecting the organizational environment: high tech, world competition, world markets, a highly educated workforce, high unemployment levels. There are challenges at the workplace for supporters of worker participation from both the management and the union. Perhaps the wave of organizations literature finding its way to the business journals in the late 80's will give us a hint of the future of workplace participation/employee involvement programs in the U.S.
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