Control in industrial relations: regulation and decision-making in a Singapore enterprise

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CONTROL IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Regulation and Decision-Making in a Singapore Enterprise

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To Mum and Dad,

This work is about the power of tradition, the complexities of the present and the challenges of the future.

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A B S T R A C T

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This thesis approaches the study of industrial relations from a very basic feature of social and organisational behaviour. Because the various activities, relationships and phenomena in industrial relations are essentially manifestations of control, the concept of control, it is argued, has tremendous potential for substantive theorising.

At a theoretical level, the research has developed a definition of the field of industrial relations and proposes the integration and balance of the 'action' and 'environmental' schools of thought, via the notion of the 'industrial relations setting'. The concept of control developed in the thesis brings together various ideas and theories developed in industrial relations and the other behavioural areas of the social sciences. The method proposed for research, investigation and practice is situational, i.e. using concepts as they apply to the situation being considered.

The primary purpose of the exercise, however, was to investigate a practical issue. The practical investigation focuses on the nature of control in the Singapore situation, in particular, the issues relating to job control in Singapore's shipbuilding and repairing industry. The study scans the environmental factors and closes in on the local factors - objectives, perceptions, motivation, power and influence, held by the various actors: State, management, union and the workers.

While at the macro-level the study shows a picture of peace and stability between the powerful entities - State, management and union, the research also uncovers the not-so-healthy implications of problems on the shopfloor. The thesis concludes with suggestions and points to the challenges of the future.

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CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

I A NEW APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

II THE GROWING CONCERN FOR CONTROL

III INVESTIGATING CONTROL DEVELOPMENTS IN SINGAPORE

IV THE CAPITAL OR WEALTH-PURSUING ETHOS

V THE CASE STUDY AND METHOD

CHAPTER ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

I. A NEW APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

This research is based upon an important observation. The activity, behaviour and phenomena that make up the substance of industrial relations, we find, can be studied in terms of a basic feature of social behaviour. We looked at social behaviour in general and the activities that make up the field of industrial relations, and were able to observe that the wide variety of activities are ultimately manifestations of control. Let us consider the range of activities that are commonly referred to in the study of industrial relations.

Because collective bargaining has played a major role in the industrialised societies of the West, there has been a tendency to study industrial relations as if it was essentially collective bargaining. Although collective bargaining does play a significant part in these societies, it has become clear that industrial relations today, in the West and elsewhere, is a much wider field of activity. This wide variety of activities includes such important phenomena as State intervention, legislation, arbitration, industrial democracy, peace, conflict, employer sanctions on workers and vice versa.

Other writers have seen the field of industrial relations as a 'network of rules' or as 'institutions of job regulation'[1]. And yet others have extended the 'rules' discussion to add informal

rules (e.g. customs and practice) to the formal institutions.[2] Although this extension has attempted to widen the 'rules' approach to theory, it clearly cannot embrace the widening variety of informal interactions and sanctions which, while not creating a rule, can have profound effects on plant industrial relations. Besides, the rules approach has other weaknesses. Because of its preoccuption with institutions and regulation (as a goal in itself), the various objectives of the parties involved, their attitudes and perceptions, the power and influence relationships, problems and instabilities tend not to receive due attention. It misses out on those vital matters, a good picture of which is necessary in order to understand any kind of social behaviour. Its emphasis on regulation and stability concentrates as Hyman noted on 'how existing patterns of social relations are stabilised, rather than the significance in their own right of challenges to the prevailing social structure'.[3]

To say that industrial relations is collective bargaining or a 'system of rules' is therefore unnecessarily restrictive. What is important, and interesting, is that each and every one of the phenomena in the field has a common feature, and a crucial one too.

First of all, each phenomena involves the interaction or participation of human or social actors. Secondly, whether it is collective bargaining, regulative institutions or informal discussion, we are able to recognise that people are primarily interacting or, made to participate, in order to achieve compliance with some objective or objectives.

Thus each activity essentially involves social interaction and control - a term used to refer to strategies, manoevres and regulative mechanisms directed at fulfilling certain objectives. Looking carefully at the whole range of activities and phenomena which make up the field of industrial relations, we are convinced that all these activities (including 'collective bargaining and job regulation') are essentially manifestations of control between and amongst the social entities or participants involved. Hyman aptly pointed out that 'regulation - control by rule' was 'merely one of the many forms of control in industry'.[4] If we perceived industrial relations as a multi-faced prism, we may say control is at the core and the faces representing the various activities/ phenomena illustrate its multi-faceted manifestations. In order to understand and analyse the different manifestations we should discover the core.

Apart from being a crucial commonality in a field of wide variety, the notion of control, we argue in our theoretical exposition (Chapter Two), also provides the important links which have been found missing in the various other theoretical approaches. It is really no wonder that control is such an important concept to social scientists, like the sociologists, who study social behaviour.

Having identified the key for understanding and analysis, we can approach the study of any given industrial relations situation quite systematically. Without having to see the situation in such restrictive terms as collective bargaining or job regulating institutions, we may set out to identify the various activities and

phenomena as they exist in the situation. Here we are constrained only by what we define as activities that can be considered to be in the field of industrial relations. For this purpose, we must define the field of industrial relations. It is the field of social behaviour circumscribed by the formal and informal decisions, activities and relationships which are significantly concerned with the human performance or non-performance of work in industry, both private and public. This definition, which we shall discuss in greater detail in the next chapter, clearly allows one to identify a whole range of possibilities, both formal and informal, collective and individual.

Having identified the industrial relations activities - strategies and mechanisms operating in the given situation, we are interested in the social entities or participants involved. We are concerned about their goals and objectives, the power-play, the bases of power and influence, motivational forces, the sources of consensus (or stability) and conflict, and environmental influences - both from (other factors) inside the situation and from the outside. Most of these factors are exposed in a control framework, since talking in terms of control means raising all these questions.

The concept of control that we develop in the next chapter contains a reservoir of ideas and theories. In order to understand and analyse a given situation, we propose that these ideas and theories may be selectively (or situationally) applied to the situation and its phenomena under study.

The concept of control is also given methodological rigour. Here we give a social action dimension to the well-accepted 'environmental' systems approach. In this way, we are able to give due consideration to the actors' perceptions, attitudes and motivational needs, as well as the environmental pressures. This methodological pattern is introduced in the situational approach that we propose for research in industrial relations.

II. THE GROWING CONCERN FOR CONTROL

Control is today a critical factor of industrial relations analysis in Western European countries like Britain, France, and West Germany. It manifests in a wide spectrum of industrial relations issues e.g. collective bargaining, shopfloor union organisation, arbitration, labour legislation, the philosophy of participation and corporate ownership - both private and public.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in North America, workers and unions have traditionally been less socialistic than their European counterparts. They have been socialised to accept more givens: in terms of individual/private ownership of capital and property, in terms of freedom for private enterprise, and thereby in terms of the prerogatives (or rights of control) that accrue to the owners and managers of such enterprise. These attributes are essentially manifestations of a distinctively capitalistic or 'capital-pursuing' ethos prevailing over the people, including workers and unions, of North America. Nevertheless, although these workers were traditionally socialised in a system which did not promote desires

in the working masses for more control over work, major studies conducted by Chamberlain[5] and Derber[6] reveal that American workers did develop a growing interest in the issues of control, especially after the Second World War. This was a reflection of labour's reluctance to abandon its gains made during the war efforts. Another American industrial relations scientist, Richard Herding, however, has unveiled more recent evidence of a growing concern for control in the American system.[7]

The more recent signs of desire for control could indeed directly be related to increasing affluence. As workers, in general, reach a stage where they feel confident that economic rewards are more than adequate to satisfy their materialistic and recreational wants, they tend to look around for a greater say in the running of the enterprise. Technological development in industry and the education of workers it engenders is another factor that opens workers' minds to issues relating to the organisation and allocation of work. The American system of industrial relations is indeed a good example of a situation where, in spite of their traditional capitalistic ethos, workers have come to exhibit a growing awareness and interest in job control.

III. INVESTIGATING CONTROL DEVELOPMENTS IN SINGAPORE

In the present study we wanted to take a look at the some important control developments in Singapore, where like in the United States, the people have traditionally been socialised in 'capital-pursuing' concepts like private ownership of capital and property, free enterprise and the 'managerial prerogative'.

Singapore has achieved tremendous economic advance in the last twelve to fifteen years. Rapid industrialisation over the last decade has brought about technological developments too. Similar factors, we saw earlier, had aroused the American workers' awareness and interest for a greater scope of control over work. An initial speculation would therefore be that a similar trend should follow in Singapore. The aim of this study is to test this speculation: were there any indications of a desire on the part of the workers for more job control? We hoped to uncover the primary interests of workers, unions, management, government and the public, and how control was being allocated, and perceived to be allocated, between the relevant parties. We also wanted to study the influences and motivations governing their relationships.

It must be noted, however, that there are a number of environmental conditions and circumstances peculiar to Singapore which thereby make for an interesting analysis. Firstly, Singapore is a very small, urbanised city-state, unlike the large capital-pursuing societies of America and Japan. Secondly, her economic advancement has been achieved in the context of pressures for survival, both political survival - against the threat of external communist intervention, and economic survival - with the lack of natural resources for development. Thirdly and probably most crucially, Singapore is a multi-cultural complex of communities, whose traditional backgrounds not only have facilitated peaceful co-existence but have socialised the people to accept regulative socio-cultural traditions and institutions. These conditions have together produced in the people a strong dependence on centralised control, by the State.

While Singapore's macro political structure is based on the one-man one-vote democratic model, there has, at the same time, developed a high degree of centralisation in the exercise of control by the Government. The influence of the State permeates and pervades all social, economic and political institutions in the society. The State thereby holds the key to the balance of control between employers and employees and their respective collectivities. In order, therefore, to test our speculation as to whether there were any desires on the part of workers in Singapore, as in the United States, for more job control, the investigation has to be set in the context of the prevailing centralised State control.

It is interesting at this point to note that while capitalist traditions in the U.S.A. are supported by the society's strong idealism in democracy, freedom and thereby decentralisation, capital-pursuing traditions continue to thrive in Singapore's system of centralised direction and control, with the limitations they may impose. We shall next identify some of the more prominent features of the capital or wealth-pursuing ethos that prevails in Singapore, in relation to the more widely-discussed American capitalist ethos.

IV. THE CAPITAL OR WEALTH-PURSUING ETHOS

We use the phrase capital or wealth-pursuing to signify the strong emphasis in the culture that is given to the pursuit of money and material wealth. Because of the preoccupation with business, the most conspicuous achievements have been those centred in business enterprise.

Money and wealth are valued not only for themselves and the goods they will buy, but as symbolic evidence of success, and thereby of personal worth. They are seen as a measure of social achievement and are obvious signs of one's place in the hierarchy. This indeed is the crux of Singapore's wealth-pursuing ethos, i.e. the central concern, in the culture, for money and other extrinsic rewards from work, that serve as a symbol and measure of social achievement. This is indeed very much an important feature of the American capitalist ethos. While in some societies, like Great Britain, wealth has traditionally been measured in terms of heriditary fixed estates and status, such symbols have had only a rudimentary development in both Singapore and America - hence the tendency in these societies to emphasise money as a symbol of wealth and success.

Next we shall see how the wealth-pursuing ethos supports a system of work roles, derived from industrial capitalism practiced in the West. The stability of the roles assumed by workers, owners, employers and middlemen that have thus far persisted in Western capitalist communities has its basis in the Puritan work ethic. In a system where the value of work was stressed for the 'grace of God' the occupational position and wealth accumulation achieved by a man, through harder work, was supposed to be indicative of the amount of grace he attained. The powerful Puritan work ethic indeed justified the traditional hierarchy of work roles which have persisted to a large extent in Western capitalist industry despite social pressure against it.

This hierarchy of roles continues to persist in 'Western capitalist' communities to this day with the added justification, however, that comes from the popular pursuit in these communities, of social achievement as a goal in itself. In Singapore, the legitimacy for the prevailing system of work roles, often derived from Western capitalist societies, lies more in the 'social-achievement' goal. Each man, whether worker, owner, employer or middleman, strives for occupational/business success and material wealth as these are obvious signs of one's place in the social ladder. Thus we see how the wealth-pursuing ethos socialises Singaporeans to accept role systems traditionally found in capitalist business enterprise.

It is interesting to note that there are mechanisms in Oriental traditions that also legitimise the Western-capitalistic type hierarchy of work roles. It comes from the people's socio-cultural background, and, for our purpose, may be seen as a historical 'work ethic' found in Oriental traditions. Both the Chinese and Indian traditions that have met in Singapore sanctify the paternalistic and diffuse master-servant relationship. The worker's traditional socio-economic and psychological dependence on the employer indeed legitimised the employer's unilateral control over the running of business enterprise. This has provided an ideal base to sustain the Western capitalistic hierarchy of work roles in an Oriental setting. The notion, for instance, that the employer should be held in great esteem for the livelihood he provides workers is one symbol that is used in Singapore even today to legitimise, as a principle, the allegiance that the worker should have for the employer in their mutually-benefitting wealth-pursuing endeavour.

These legitimations that comprise what we call an 'Oriental (wealth-pursuing) work ethic' do indeed support the Western-originated capitalist enterprise system.

A final aspect of the wealth-pursuing ethos concerns its operation simultaneously both at the individual and collective levels. Although pursuing wealth at the individual level emphasises the self-interest (economic and social achievement) notion, the high degree of State intervention in Singapore's industrial, political and community life has evolved in the people a considerable dependence on the State for decisions as to how national wealth is to be created and distributed - thereby stressing concern for social or group interests as well. As Galbraith recently noted: 'The Singapore Government makes pragmatic use of all ideas and refuses to be captive of any one idea', and while 'self-interest serves pretty well as a motivation ..... it is recognised in Singapore that it does not serve all purposes, and that it serves best within a framework of careful overall planning'.[8]

V. THE CASE STUDY AND METHOD

For the purpose of this study, we set out to investigate the balance of control in Singapore's shipbuilding and repairing yards at JURONG. The primary interests of management have been clearly capitalistic, with the maximisation of profit as the goal and stimulus of enterprise.

We wanted to study whether control was becoming a critical or contentious issue in the management's relations with local workers and the unions.

Our hypothesising would lead us to expect in JURONG what, in the European context, would have been termed 'paternalism'. This would derive largely from strong cultural influences promoting the unitary ideology and its industrial relations implications would be a high degree of unilateral control by management and thus little labour influence on job control.

We wanted to explore if there were any signs of pressure in the system for increasing labour influence in workplace decision making. Apart from the traditional contest for higher economic rewards, increasing affluence and higher levels of technology, could, as we saw in the American system, lead towards increasing awareness and interest, in workers and unions, for greater control in enterprise decision-making.

In order to test these ideas we set out to conduct our field study at JURONG. Apart from extensive repairs on crude oil carriers, JURONG also does a good deal of shipbuilding. The field work was undertaken, as arranged, during the autumn of 1976. Two approaches that were explored were proposed to the shipyard contacts. The questionnaire and structured interview approach to investigation was thought inappropriate at that time as wide ranging organisational changes were taking place - it was thought to be rather cumbersome to arrange specific interview appointments with yard supervisors

and union representatives. The shipyard contacts were more receptive, however, to the participant-observation approach. They were quite happy to allow a native researcher mingle with the people - both management, unionised and non-unionised, to learn about the balance of control in the enterprise.

Questionnaire-surveys would certainly have allowed quantitative investigation which may have provided positive corroboration of the researcher's qualitative findings, or which may have suggested correlations which had not previously occurred to the investigator. Participant-observation, however, facilitated first hand knowledge and experience which may not have resulted from questionnaires or structured interviews, for these can only tell the enquirer what people think happens, or should happen, or perhaps only what they wish him to think happens.

The researcher received whatever possible assistance in the short time available, this included access to some documents and records. He had generally to be around while the system's actors got on with their jobs. The personal contact with the various actors provided the enquirer useful insights into the workings of the system. This made it possible for him to make his own observations. The researcher's own previous working experience indeed facilitated investigation and understanding.

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CHAPTER TWO

CONTROL IN THE THEORY OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

I RECOGNISING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTROL

II THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: A DEFINITION

III THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SETTING

IV THE BASIC PROPERTIES OF CONTROL

V CONTROL AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

VI PERCEPTIONS ABOUT JOB CONTROL

VII METHODOLOGY IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS:
THE CONTROL-SITUATIONAL APPROACH

CHAPTER TWO

CONTROL IN THE THEORY OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Introduction

Theorising in industrial relations has two aspects. One concerns theorising about the substance - the activities, relationships and processes that makes up industrial relations, and the second aspect concerns the method of pursuing analysis in this subject. The major part of this chapter deals with substantive theory and we conclude with a discussion on methodology.

Our survey of behaviour in society and the industrial organisation clearly illustrates the pervasiveness of control. It is not only universal in character, but is seen to be an essential and crucial element of the various activities and situations that make up the field. This then becomes the springboard for our thesis, that in order to understand or analyse effectively any social activity or situation we must uncover its control content.

In order to develop substantive theory in industrial relations, we first outline or attempt to map the limits of the field - a definition is evolved. Following the definition, we identify the 'local' and 'environmental' features that describe the features about the field which are considered important to describe any given situation in the field. Together they make up what we call the industrial

relations setting. The features are:

(a) Local Factors:
- (i) Social Entities
- (ii) Objectives, values, attitudes & motivation
- (iii) Power and Influence

(i) All industrial relations activities involve social entities - individual/collective, each holding some goals.

(ii) All activities involve striving, with varying intensity, to fulfill their objectives.

(iii) Achieving compliance with objectives implies the use of power and influence - all these being characteristics local to the situation.

(b) Contextual or Environmental Influences: Organisational and External Factors

All activities/processes in a given situation are determined by and in turn, affect the environmental factors.

We also discuss the consensual and conflict perspectives of change to illustrate that reality contains both dynamic equilibrium and inherent conflict. These are generally resolved not by 'revolution' but through the evolutionary change.

The purpose of substantive theory we suggest is to be expository, explanatory, predictive and, where relevant, prescriptive. It is with the convition that the concept of control holds considerable promise as a basis for substantive theory in industrial relations that we embark on developing it.

Control manifests those same features that we said described the industrial relations setting - social entities, goals, objectives, perceptions, motivation, power and influence. In developing the various aspects we introduce a wide range of concepts that have been discussed in the social sciences.

Because of the complexity introduced by diverse environmental effects and local interactions, students and practitioners of industrial relations have much to benefit by borrowing relevant and useful theories already developed in the other social science concerns, viz sociology, social anthropology, psychology, law, politics, economics and organisation studies etc. Each theory might help describe or explain a particular aspect of control inherent in the given situation. This inter-discipline borrowing has significant implications for methodology.

We propose a situational approach tc the study of industrial relations. For us, this simply means applying ideas and concepts as they relate to the situation under study. This may call for theories concerning 'action' (objectives, motivation/perception) and other local factors (power-influence). It may also call for concepts relating to environmental (both organisational/external) effects. While we reject an exclusive reliance either on the 'action' or 'environmental' approach, we ask for a balance between the two. In order to discover control we need to employ not only paradigms perceived by industrial relations specialists, but would benefit from relevant studies in social and organisational behaviour drawn from other disciplines. The control-situational approach to industrial relations we propose is essentially inter-disciplinary.

I. RECOGNISING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONTROL

Control has traditionally been of crucial concern to the sociologist as a 'solution' to the 'problem of order'. Order or stability was thought to be the key to survival - a meta goal held by social systems and its members. Today, however, survival is seen not only to require stability, but more and more the ability to cope with change. Their concern for control is also motivated, to varying extent, by their quest to understand and, if possible, influence processes of social regulation and relationships between powerful entities aiming to achieve compliance from one another.

Control has always been of immense concern to the powerful members or entities of any social system. They are directly involved in the practical game of instituting devices of social regulation and are continuously having to comply and achieve compliance. Apart from wanting to satisfy their egotistical needs for power and influence, parliamentarians, clergymen, businessmen and trade union leaders are all crucially concerned about control because their successful performance depends largely on their ability to achieve compliance from others. These powerful members or entities of any social system do indeed have real stake in a sound theory and practice of control.

It was against this background that we recognised the importance of control as a concept for understanding social organisation. A deeper look at the activities, processes and relationships operating in society in general, and industry in particular, revealed its unique quality. We found that the various processes and relationships in

operation were esentially manifestations of control. Indeed, control pervades social and industrial behaviour.

It would be appropriate, therefore, for us to illustrate the pervasiveness of control in social system. The definition of the term control itself points to this quality.

The term 'control', Tannenbaum noted, is now used in a broader sense synonymously with the notion of power and influence.[1] Nevertheless, it is not only power and influence per se. Goldhamer and Shils have pointed out that a person may be said to have power to the extent that he influences behaviour of others in accordance with his own intentions.[2] Control therefore refers to strategies, manoevres or mechanisms directed at fulfilling certain objectives. It is indeed an imperative for the accomplishment of objectives.

About objectives, Edwin Locke once wrote:

> "A cardinal tribute of the behaviour of living organisms is goal-directedness. It may be observed at all levels of life; in the assimilation of food by an amoeba, in the root growth of a tree or plant, in the stalking of prey by a wild animal, and in the activities of a scientist in a laboratory."3

Given the multifarious existence of objectives (reflecting the diversity of human values) in a given social system and the continuous tendency that the system and its members have for working to achieve compliance or accomplish their objectives (thus involving control), one can expect to see the pervasiveness in the system of social processes bearing the manifestations of control. Peter Berger's observations

about the cruciality and pervasiveness of control in reality as we shall see, are rather illuminating.

THE PERVASIVENESS OF CONTROL: A SURVEY OF BEHAVIOUR IN SOCIETY AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION

The cruciality of control in social behaviour could not have been better emphasised when, in his 'Invitation to Sociology', Berger wrote: 'No society can exist without social control'.[4] He describes the pervasiveness of control by perceiving oneself as standing at the centre (that is, at the point of maximum pressure) of a set of concentric circles, each representing a system of social control.[5] Berger goes on to suggest that the legal and political system as the 'outer circle of control' - 'the system that, quite against one's will, will tax one, draft one into the military, make one obey its innumerable rules and regulations, if need be put one in prison, and in the last resort will kill one.....'[6]

The social and cultural system of morality, customs and mannerisms, also exerts control on the solitary figure in the centre - to ensure conformance to prevailing social and cultural norms.

In addition to these broad control systems, there are other less expansive circles of control imposing themselves on the individual. His choice of occupation (or, more accurately, the occupation in which he happens to end up) inevitably subordinates the individual to a variety of controls. Formal controls operate in the form of licensing boards, professional organisations and trade unions, in addition to the formal standards set by his particular employers. Equally

powerful is the informal control exerted by colleagues and co-workers. The control of the occupational system one belongs to is indeed 'so important because the job decides what one may do in most of the rest of one's life - which voluntary associations one will be allowed to join, who will be one's friends, where one will be able to live .....[7] etc.

Finally we come to the circle most immediately circumscribing the individual, that is the circle of one's family and personal friends which also constitutes a control system. As Berger illustrated, it may be 'economically disastrous if one's boss finally concludes that one is a worthless nobody, but the psychological effect of such a judgement is incomparably more devastating if one discovers that one's wife has arrived at the same conclusion'.[8] The impact of control on social behaviour at this level, like at the more extensive concentric circles, can be quite considerable.

Berger's portrait of social control clearly highlights its pervasiveness in society, and he also emphasises its cruciality in each situation. These qualities of social control also show up in specific fields of social behaviour - here we are concerned about social behaviour in industrial organisations.

Social control pervades industrial organisations in the form of rules. Industrial relations, we have noted, has been conceptualised as a 'network of rules'. Examples of formal rules are company policy and regulations, departmental and work rules, disciplinary codes, grievance procedure and the collective agreement. Just as important

are the informal rules or customs and practices that operate on the shop floor. All these rules crucially affect the behaviour of the social entities (management, supervisors, workers, union) involved.

Rules are essentially mechanisms of system regulation. All rules are aimed at certain objectives - either legitimised by the system itself (as in the case of social conventions, customs, and to some extent, legislation) or held by certain authorities in the system e.g. trade union leadership and managers. In the same way, rules are applied either with the legitimacy of the system's members, or enforced by authorities from positions of power. Thus rules are essentially a manifestation of control. Job regulation, Hyman noted, was just one form of control - 'control by rule'.[9]

Sanctions are another manifestation of control. As Alan Fox noted:

> "Financial rewards, promotion aspects, praise and approval, transfer to more desired work, and any other form of gratification are positive, but also have a negative aspect in that they embody a conditional clause threatening their withdrawal or withholding if the required behaviour is not forthcoming. Conversely, negative sanctions such as reprimands, fines, suspension, dismissal, demotion or any other form of deprivation all have a positive aspect embodied in a conditional guarantee that they will be lifted or not imposed if the desired behaviour is followed". 10

The operation of sanctions, both positive and negative, actually form the basis of control in many other processes of organisational regulation. They make budgetary, production, quality and other management control processes work, besides obviously being involved

in the manager's issuing of commands and ensuring compliance, and in the administration of rules and regulations throughout the organisation. Although in most instances sanctions are aimed at individual response from a subordinate, the presence of closely-knit work groups and strong unions in an organisation can bring collective pressures to bear on such situations. Whilst the negative union sanctions can be in the form of denying cooperation to the employer or to call for a strike, the employer may resort to the threat of a lock out. Trade unions and employers could also use positive sanctions, by giving cooperation and confidence, in order to enjoy benefits which satisfy long-term intentions and objectives. A study of the frequency and variety of sanctions used by management, unions and workgroups can be quite illustrative of the pervasiveness of control in the industrial organisation.

Apart from checking the quality of work people just in terms of performance, the processes of hiring and firing are safety valves against the employment of people who do not conform in some way to the company's objectives. The type of technology employed by the management also exerts control. Although production-line technology may be dysfunctional to the humanisation of work, it has been highly functional to the improvement of efficiency and productivity - these are objectives of management.

The selective disclosure of information is yet another control process. Managements continue to stress the importance of confidentiality not only as a safeguard against competition, but as a means to 'condition' the behaviour of the organisation's members.

It would be appropriate, however, to point out here that since there are many actors like management, government agencies, unions and groups of workers who participate in the decisions and activities of the organisation, we recognise that control processes can and will be initiated by and for the fulfilment of objectives belonging to the various parties. If we, therefore, wished to describe a control process initiated by management (as most of these described above), we shall refer to it as management control, and similarly trade unions: union control, workers: workers' control and government agencies: state control.

The most striking element about union control is reflected in the solidarity it derives from union membership and association with other fraternal groups. Indeed, sympathetic strike action illustrates this feature with utmost vigour. Union control is also felt in other areas - it is exerted through the negotiating and consultative channels. Examples of workers' control are easily found in Europe:- self-management in Eastern Europe; and various forms of worker participation schemes in Western Europe are cases in point. State control comes in the form of legislation, incomes policies, arbitration committees, and a host of other labour/employment ministry's agencies attending to matters ranging from workmen's compensation to equality of the sexes.

This outline of concrete phenomena clearly illustrates that the various situations in social and organisational behaviour are essentially manifestations of control. As Tannenbaum has noted, 'characterising organisations in terms of its

pattern of control is to describe an essential and universal aspect of organisation'.[11] Arriving at this observation is important for it establishes the basis for a new approach to the study of industrial relations. Unlike the collective bargaining and 'rules' approaches which we pointed out in Chapter One cover limited ground in the wide area of industrial relations, control is a universal aspect. It is a common element in the whole range of activities (formal and informal, individual and collective) that make up the field. Apart from the universality, control is also an essential aspect. Because the whole range of activities primarily involve striving to fulfil some objective(s) (thereby involving control), control is an essential and crucial element. In order therefore, to understand or analyse effectively any given activity or situation in industrial relations, it makes sense to uncover its control content. We do clearly have a good case for a control-exposing theory in industrial relations.

II. THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: A DEFINITION

Having expounded the relevance of developing a control theory for substantive industrial relations, it would be appropriate for us now to examine the nature of activities and processes that operate in the field. We must first define the field of industrial relations more specifically than seeing it simply as a system of social behaviour. Without any qualification, however, this conception is far less specific than any of the conventional definitions of the subject, whether it is 'institutions of job regulation' or even

'social relations in industry'.

In order to tighten our definition we need to make two important qualifications. The first criterion that distinguishes industrial relations from the various other areas of social behaviour is whether the activity/phenomenon being considered is significantly concerned with the human performance or non-performance of work in industry, both private and public. While this test automatically eliminates situations where work is performed outside industry such as in rendering voluntary services for charity organisations, it also stresses that the phenomenon must be <u>significantly</u> relevant to the work situation. The essential question behind the significance test is: how far does the activity or phenomenon influence or derive from the performance or non-performance of work? As Hyman noted, routine interrelationships like conversation or horseplay during tea breaks cannot be considered significant.[12] On the other hand, although activities like opening or closing a workplace, determining levels of production and the introduction of new forms of organisation have conventionally been taken to lie outside the industrial relations field, we must recognise that they are steadily becoming significant. They do now determine much of the character of the actions and relationships which make up the work situation.

The second qualification we need to make is that social behaviour, decisions, activities and relationships in industrial relations can be distinguished between the formal and informal. The Donovan Commission's Report in 1968 made this notable distinction in

arguing that:

> "Britain has two systems of industrial relations. The one is the formal system embodied in the official institutions. The other is the informal system created by the actual behaviour of trade unions and employers' associations, of managers, shop stewards and workers". 13

The distinction was made to highlight that the informal, personal and unstructured behaviour and relationships on the shopfloor tended to qualify, supplement or even contradict the decisions taken within the official framework at the national level. The formal system, as Cooper and Bartlett noted, 'presents a tidy, coherent picture':

> "Collective representatives decide terms and conditions. Procedural agreements indicate the manner in which these substantive agreements are to be amended, interpreted or applied. Disputes procedures may be included in the same agreements, providing for the orderly and peaceful resolution of grievances, or they may be in separate documents. This model of precision, unfortunately, is marred by an awkward reality viz, the informal system".[14]

Based on the British experience, writing about the informal system has generally emphasised the problematic gap between national/industry wide agreements and the decisions taken at plant level. The term 'wage-drift' is used to refer to the difference between national/industry minimum rates and the actual earnings. The increasing number of unofficial and unconstitutional strikes sometimes showed up the contradiction between worker decisions at shopfloor level and the efforts of the national union leadership. The growth of shopfloor bargaining between shop stewards and managers to cover the numerous situations which are impossible to deal at industry level (such as administration or work study, incentive schemes, work arrangements, rules and discipline)

has often lead to modification, and sometimes even contradiction of principles decided at the higher level.

Apart from the contradictory aspects, Hyman noted that the informal system was in part complementary to the formal institutions.[15] Although decisions at the lower levels could controvert higher level agreements, a substantial part of the time spent by managers and shop stewards goes on implementing industry-wide agreements.

By using the term 'systems' for the formal and informal aspects of industrial relations, the impression created, as Hyman noted, was the 'existence of two detached sets of processes and areas of activity'.[16] Behrend, however, has conceptualised reality:

> "It is doubtful ..... whether the different types of relations can easily be separated from each other, for interpersonal human relations take place against the background of group and collective relations and the borderline between formal and informal, collective and personal, relations is not clear cut - there is a constant interaction between them." 17

Apart from this interaction between formal and informal aspects, another important point remains to be made.

Much writing in the field has tended to dichotomise formal and informal behaviour between the industrial/national and plant levels. Certainly, it is true to say, that much of the behaviour at shopfloor level is uncodified, unstructured and therefore informal. But to say, as Flanders did, that all industrial relations at the higher level are formal or institutional, ignores all those inter-personal, often

private, discussions, initiatives and relationships (cordial or otherwise), that go to make up formal agreement or conflict. Although these processes may be uncodified and unstructured, often they are crucial.

In reality therefore, the line between formal and informal behaviour is not so much horizontal (i.e. distinguishing between the industry and plant level(s)) as it is vertical. This is to say that we could have both formal and informal behaviour at all levels. Just as there are personal and unstructured processes at the higher levels, some activities (e.g. recorded workplace agreements, agreed disciplinary procedures, and institutionalised customs and practices) at shop floor can be formal. Only, as Behrend noted, the 'dividing line' is not clear cut.

If we consolidated the various points we have discussed so far, we should be able to conceptualise at a given time, albeit very roughly, the field of industrial relations divided into formal and informal processes. The picture that emerges might look something like figure I on the following page. We have a 'vertical dividing line' between formal and informal activities running from the national to the shop floor level. At a higher level we might expect formal collective negotiations between employee unions and employer associations, coming on the formal side. At a corresponding level on the informal side we might expect private meetings and discussions between union officials and employer representatives. It is not difficult to imagine the kind of impact that this informal activity could have on the formal negotiations. We have also shown in the diagram the formal and

FORMAL AND INFORMAL PROCESSES IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

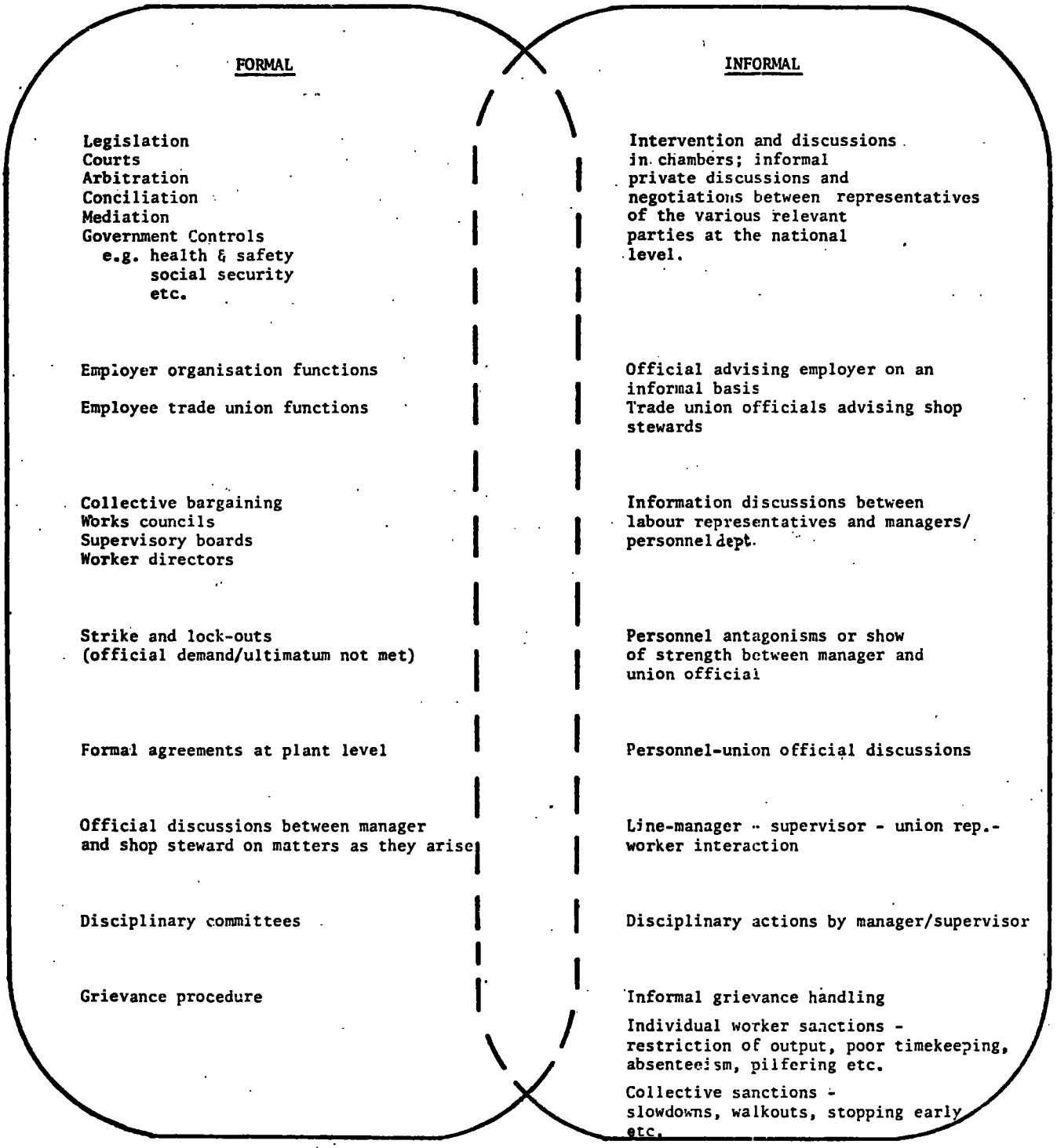

FIGURE 1
SOURCE: AUTHOR

informal possibilities about official industrial action.

At the bottom end of the scale, i.e. at shop floor, we have shown more activity on the informal side. More and more attention is now being focused at this end. Not only are people concerned about obvious shop floor activity that contradicts institutions and decisions at higher levels, sociologists and behavioural scientists are looking for the less obvious manifestations of shop floor discontent and conflict. High absenteeism, turnover, sick leaves, and deliberate restriction of output are some examples of informal, yet important, processes on the shop floor.

Our picture of industrial relations clearly represent a wide range of activities and processes. While the significance of formal institutions is generally recognised, more attention needs to be given to the obvious and less obvious informal processes as well.

Having made the two broad qualifications, we may summarise our conception of the field of industrial relations: it is the field of social behaviour circumscribed by the formal and informal decisions, activities and relationships which are significantly concerned with the human performance or non-performance of work in industry.

The perceptive reader would have notices that, so far, our discussion has constantly referred to activities, processes, relationships etc. No specific mention has really been made about the many issues that have emerged and continue to emerge, in the field of industrial relations. These issues, as we know, are wide-ranging: wage claims, claims for improved working conditions,

improvements in health and safety measures, some supervisor's handling of a subordinate, or conversely, some insubordination, some clause for a collective agreement, a decision about the wage rate or policy or even about the call for industrial democracy etc. It is pertinent that we recognise the distinction between activity and issue, and, explain it here.

To take a simple example, negotiating a wage claim can be differentiated - the activity being the negotiation, and the issue, the wage claim. 'Industrial democracy', however, may not be so clear cut. As an institution in operation it is a term used to describe the activity, but as an ideology or proposal, it becomes an issue. Looking carefully at the distinction, we are able to perceive that issues emerge or arise from goals and objectives held by social entities. The activities, whether they involve persons, groups or organisations, as we pointed out earlier, are the processes used by the entities striving to achieve their goals and objectives. So, just as the activities are essentially processes of control, industrial relations issues are primarily issues of control.

When we talk about the substance of industrial relations, seen as a field of social behaviour, we naturally think in terms of activities, processes and relationships. But, when we study the field we must recognise the importance of the issues, as they reflect the objectives.

III. THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SETTING

Having conceptualised the field of industrial relations, our

next step towards a substantive theory is to identify those key characteristics that describe the nature of any given activity, process or situation in the field. These characteristics make up what we call the industrial relations setting. It may be perceived at two levels: factors local to or directly impinging upon the situation and the contextual or environmental influences affecting it. Let us consider the local factors first.

LOCAL FACTORS: SOCIAL ENTITIES, OBJECTIVES & PERCEPTIONS AND POWER AND INFLUENCE

First of all we must recognise the presence of the social entities active in the situations. Initially this may seem uncontroversial, but with the prevailing institutional focus, we are faced with what Bain and Clegg saw as 'reification'. Although in some situations, organisations may be seen as bodies representing specific interests, we must be able to recognise that sometimes, as Hyman notes, 'the situations of union leaders differ significantly from those of the members they represent; and this leads in turn to differences in attitudes, interests, objectives, and conceptions of what is good for the members as for 'the union''.[18] Reification, as he pointed out, is 'treating an impersonal abstraction as a social agent, when it is really only people who act'.[19] The treatment of organisational entities, therefore, needs careful attention.

Earlier we pointed to the significance of informal and unstructured relationships at the higher levels. We must, in our efforts to identify social entities active in a given situation, not just confine ourselves

to organisational entities but also seek out individuals/groups who significantly affect the direction and regulation of organisational activity. Such influential personalities could come from the union, management or even some outside third party (e.g. conciliator, arbitrator, government official, etc.)

Objectives and Perceptions and the 'Action' Approach

Because goals are the most immediate regulators of human or social action, we must look out for the various objectives held by the different entities in a given situation.

Beneath the objectives, we have to see the values, needs, perceptions and motivational forces. These factors not only determine the emergence of particular goals but, as Goldthorpe et al noted, also make up the 'participants' own definitions of the situations in which they are engaged. They may be taken as an initial basis for the explanation for their social behaviour and relationships.[20] Because values, attitudes and perceptions vary from person to person, there is a 'variety of meanings' held by the various participants in the situation. These behavioural influences are given prime importance by writers taking the 'social action' approach. Work done by Goldthorpe et al on the 'orientations to work' is a well known example.[21] Silverman's 'action approach' stresses the way in which man influences the social structure and 'makes society'.[22] These perspectives have, however, been criticised for their restrictive outlook.

Angela Bowey, for instance, has aptly captured Brown's views on

the 'orientations to work'. These orientations cannot be treated as 'independent of the workplace' and Brown has indeed made the point that 'socialisation at work can affect orientations'.[23] As Bowey goes on to say, 'orientations to work should be viewed as both a determinant of, and determined by, behaviour and experiences at work'.[24]

While recognising the deficiencies, Brown notes that action approach need not be abandoned, in fact he recommends its development. Recognition, however, must be given to external constraints:

> "Whatever the directions taken, it is hoped that research will not lose sight of the distributions of resources of power and authority, and of the physical and technological conditions in industry, which form some of the more interactable 'conditions of action' for those pursuing their individual or shared objectives in work."[25]

Banks has suggested that the reciprocal nature of the relationship between social action and structure may be seen in a 'step-by-step'[26] approach of how an individual's action influences and is influenced by his social and physical environment. Although his approach need not be assumed in its absolute form, since societal change need not be step-by-step, it does illustrate the interaction between action and structure.

Seen in terms of its interaction with the structural constraints the action approach has performed the useful role of highlighting the importance of the actors' objectives and expectations. Generally, the action approach is associated with the multiplicity of aspirations of industrial employees. We must recognise, however, the significance of the values and beliefs held by the key decision-makers in the

situation, often they affect the behaviour of very many people.

Power and Influence

Quite apart from the power structure and wider political influences, power and influence are crucial elements at the local level of action. Hyman for instance, saw the 'unceasing power struggle' as a 'central feature of industrial relations'.[27] For Cooper and Bartlett, there not only were differences of power at national level but saw that the power game had moved to the shopfloor.[28] Wherever there is interaction between social entities, be they individuals or associations striving to achieve compliance with their goals, there is bound to be the use of power and influence. They are just as important as objectives and motivations in determining the processes operating in any given situation.

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH

Having considered the key local forces that operate in any given industrial relations situation, we must also recognise the contextual influences in order to get a complete picture of the setting. The emphasis on contextual influences was heralded into industrial relations research about twenty years ago, by John Dunlop, who appropriately came to be known as an 'environmentalist'. The environmental forces that he perceived as significant at the time were: technology, market or budgetary constraints, the locus of power and status in larger society and the 'ideology'.[29]

The influences of the environment upon industrial relations in any given situation is far more complex than it was twenty years ago. The number of identifiable contextual factors has multiplied, and they can be perceived to operate at different levels. Here we shall identify the major variables, and make no claim that other factors would not become important in future.

At the organisational level we see such organisation attributes as size, structure and demands from the production-technology, stocks and inventory, marketing and finance functions. The demands made by production levels, methods and technology are known to have tremendous impact on shopfloor industrial relations.

Apart from the abovementioned structural factors, there are social constraints too. If the situation being considered involves an individual or some particular group within a large organisation, there are definitely going to be values and perceptions held by other actors elsewhere in the organisation which can affect the behaviour within the case-situation. Here we are actually talking about reference norms within the organisation and they must be recognised as an important contextual influence.

It is interesting to note here that while rules, customs and practices do emerge as a product of social interaction, they are also a contextual influence. Considering that rules in general are meant to influence human activity and behaviour, it is not difficult to see organisational rules and customs as a contextual factor in industrial relations.

Above the organisational level, we come to the 'external' or wider environments. This can range from the industrial-level influences to international pressures. As the number of factors are too many to list here, we shall just indicate the major headings under which the various variables might be classified.

The cultural and historical legacies are important elements of the wider environment. They not only explain unity but also diversity in values, in society and particular industries. Economic constraints, for example, factors like the multinational enterprises labour market, inflation, resource availability and allocation, etc., also make their impact on industrial relations. Changes in technology and knowledge too affect and create patterns of work and relationships at workplace.

Legislative controls make an important impact at all levels of social interaction and are particularly influential in some industrial relations systems e.g. U.S.A., Australia, South Africa and Singapore. The political system, the locus and distribution of power at industry level and in wider society, have their effects too.

While Dunlop's environmental approach has been very influential in research because it pointed to a range of variables, his neglect of 'human relations' or 'action' variables has been criticised. As Bain and Clegg commented: 'If the purpose is to give a full explanation of industrial relations behaviour, as Dunlop suggests it is, then there are several reasons why behavioural variables and unstructured relationships cannot be omitted .....'[30] An open supporter

of Dunlop's approach, Kenneth Walker, recently conceded that 'it is also necessary to add some explicit provision for the goals and motivation of the actors ..... on which Dunlop is silent'.[31]

These criticisms levelled at a purely environmental and, as earlier, on a purely action approach have been recorded to emphasise the balance and interaction between the two. Although contextual forces are often treated as independent, it is important to recognise that social entities within the situation can affect the environment. Lobbying and pressure-group activities in the political system are typical examples. Militant action by workers in the essential services have also led to change of governments. So, just as the local factors that have been discussed earlier should not be approached the way some action sociologists have done, the contextual factors we enumerate should not be treated with the narrowness of Dunlop's approach. The balance between the local and environmental factors needs be achieved through a situational approach, which we discuss later.

There is yet another important point about analysis in industrial relations. When we talk about local and environmental factors, we must recognise that these change over time. Although it is usual to see scientists studying the effects of environmental (e.g. technological changes in a particular situation, the local factors, (objectives, expectations, etc.), if they are taken into consideration, tend to be assumed to remain constant - that they do not change with time. What we would like to emphasise here is that just as change is recognised in the contextual forces, students must recognise change in the entities local attributes over time, - i.e. considering the past, present

and possible variations in the future. Motivational theories used in the study of existing local factors would definitely be helpful in tracing the progression in objectives and expectations over time.

CHANGE: EQUILIBRIUM AND CONFLICT

Following from the above point about change, it would be useful to clarify our position with regard to what Allen has termed as a 'status-quo' approach,[32] and the other, the 'structural change' approach. Generally speaking the 'status-quo' analysis is associated with the 'conservative' assumption of normative consensus and equilibrium. Because change, challenge or conflict is assumed to be temporary, that which can be contained within the prevailing equilibrium, the social system is assumed to have self-correcting attributes - institutionalisation and socialisation, whereby it is able to sustain its prevailing structure and institutions. The 'structural change' concept, on the other hand, bases its premise on the existence of fundamental conflict, that which is capable of disrupting, causing permanent disunity and thereby resulting in the social system undergoing revolutionary structural change. Because both these approaches have chosen to emphasise the very divergent realities of social life, they are often seen as contending schools of thought viz. the equilibrium and conflict models. In actual fact, if we looked at the basic elements of both these 'change' models, we would be able to see their compatibility, since in reality, society contains all the categories - general consensus, continuity, temporary disturbances and fundamental conflict. Many writers have already described the various forms of regulation and/or

conflict in industrial relations. While we do agree with Hyman that both stability and instability must have equal significance as 'system outcomes'[33] or products of the system, the differences, as we have pointed out above, lies in their treatment.

For the Marxists, because the conflict between the capitalist and labour classes is so fundamental in existing social systems, they contend that when the 'capitalist integument' is broken, revolutionary change would follow. In the ultimate socialist society, argues Hyman,

> "Industrial conflict would not be rooted in an antagonistic social structure: it would not stem from the exercise of control in the interests of a minority class of capitalists, or by an authorian bureaucracy. Industry conflict would, therefore, be less irreconcilable, less pervasive". 34

In our view however, although the Marxist argument has highlighted an important source of conflict, it is limited in the sense that it has left unattended the various other sources of conflict which are just as fundamental or even potentially devastating. Apart from class conflict, society is fraught with sources of racial conflict, religious conflict, international scrambling for natural resources, leadership competition and, in some cases, even signs of military competition.

Paul Blumberg's book on Industrial Democracy contains some interesting evidence about Israel's trade union enterprises. Here we see that organisations owned and managed by trade unions in Israel's Histradut, like most industrial organisations, experienced internal conflict. According to him, however, the conflict (white collar workers clamouring for greater income differentials between themselves and the working class) arose not out of the Histradut's role as employer

(or capitalist). What is significant is that he has listed various other reasons for conflict which we feel are just as crucial as class-conflict that is perceived in a capitalist system. His comments are self-evincing:

> "My own view is that this conflict arises not out of the Histradut's role as employer, but out of other qualities and values of the organisation, namely; (a) that as a Socialist organisation, Histradut has historically pursued an egalitarian wage policy and has resisted the widening of income differentials; (b) this Socialist egalitarianism was reinforced by the unique 'religion of (manual) labour' that inspired the early Zionist settlers in Palestine; (c) finally, the Histradut has traditionally been, not only a class organisation but a nationalist (Zionist) organisation as well, and has always taken special responsibility for the stability of the national economy and opposed inflationary pressures to which the country is constantly exposed. In these factors, then, and not in its role as entrepreneur, lies the recurring conflict of the Histradut with its white collar membership". 35

In fact, wherever there is competition for opportunity and power, there is fundamental conflict, whether it is in a capitalist system or a perfect socialist society.

The interesting point about Marxist theory is the explanation it has for the absence of revolutionary change in many societies. Here we come to the notion of consciousness. As Mills wrote:

> "Thus for class consciousness, there must be (1) a rational awareness and identification with one's own class interests, (2) an awareness and rejection of other class interests as illegitimate; and (3) an awareness of a readiness to use collective political means to the collective political end of realising one's interests". 36

The absence of revolutionary hope is generally attributed to the lack of or being indifferent to this conciousness or even being absorbed by a 'false consciousness'. 'Yet such indifference', Mills laments, 'is the major sign of ..... the collapse of socialist hopes. It is also at the heart of the political malaise of our time'.[37]

Our explanation for this absence of (or false) consciousness is that there are moderating and mediating forces in society moving the consciousness out of focus of the aggrieved class or group. All that the Marxist argument stresses is that by taking the consciousness out of focus, society has not removed the cause of fundamental conflict. This position, we feel, can be accommodated within an equilibrium framework. Since removing the cause of fundamental conflicts is not possible and sometimes not even desired, powerful entities (individuals or groups) in any social system (capitalist or ideally socialist) wishing to maintain stability would always be endeavouring to create social norms and institutions that help take consciousness about contentious issues out of focus. This is a reality of life. It is precisely because consciousness about such issues can and are being kept out of focus, through its rewards, sanctions, institutionalisation and socialisation systems, that societies are able to claim some kind of equilibrium. This equilibrium, unlike the conservative notion however, must acknowledge fundamental conflict, but strives to keep it out of focus. As Brannen and colleagues noted:

> "This process of institutionalisation serves not merely to recognise the existence of conflict and strain but also to legitimate it. By developing procedures through which compromise parties can be reached, the conflict itself tends

> be modified, and in the short term limited. These forms of conflict regulation within the industrial sphere take the form of collective bargaining, conciliation, mediation and arbitration. But another important means is a modification of the industrial authority structure itself, or the establishment of systems of workers' participation. In this way, changes in the means of production foster a change in the relationships of production, in an attempt to come to terms with changes in the balance of power and an awareness of a conflict of interest". 38

Keeping the fundamental conflict out of focus, however, does not mean the analyst or practitioner could ignore them. They do still play a part in the existing framework. Although most societies may not experience revolutionary change, they are in a state of continuous evolutionary change - moving from one level of dynamic equilibrium to another. It is within this framework that conflicts both, temporary and fundamental, articulate themselves.

Although the dynamic equilibrium model which involves evolutionary changes, is conventionally seen as maintaining the existing structure, reality has shown possibilities for structural change. The movement from laissez-faire structures to state intervention in most societies is clearly sufficient evidence. Structural changes can be caused by the environment and they can also be caused by the shift in values. Just as resources become scarce and the environment more difficult to cope with, human values tend to move away from the classical to the unconventional and, sometimes, imaginative. This is all part of the ongoing dialectic process showing a shift in values from the classical to the radical. Scott,[39] for instance, illustrated value shifts in

this way:-

Classical		Radical
Growth	⟷	Stability or decay
Abundance	⟷	Scarcity
Consensus	⟷	Conflict

We may add:

Individual enterprise	⟷	Cooperatives or state control
Oligarchic control	⟷	Democratic participation

So what we see in society is a shifting dynamic equilibrium, evolving from the classical positions towards radical choices and positions. In industry, for instance, we have seen the traditional oligarchic, hierarchical control structures moving towards democratic participative organisations. This change over the years is definitely not a sudden revolution. It is evolutionary, nevertheless permitting radical change. The causes for the change, however, need not be confined to fundamental conflict, although they may have played their part. Radical changes like temporary disturbances, can be brought about by a host of factors - both environmental (e.g. technological, economic political, cultural) and local (psychological, situational relationships etc.).

In concluding our discussion about the industrial relations setting we would like to summarise the main features in the diagram (figure II) that appears on the next page.

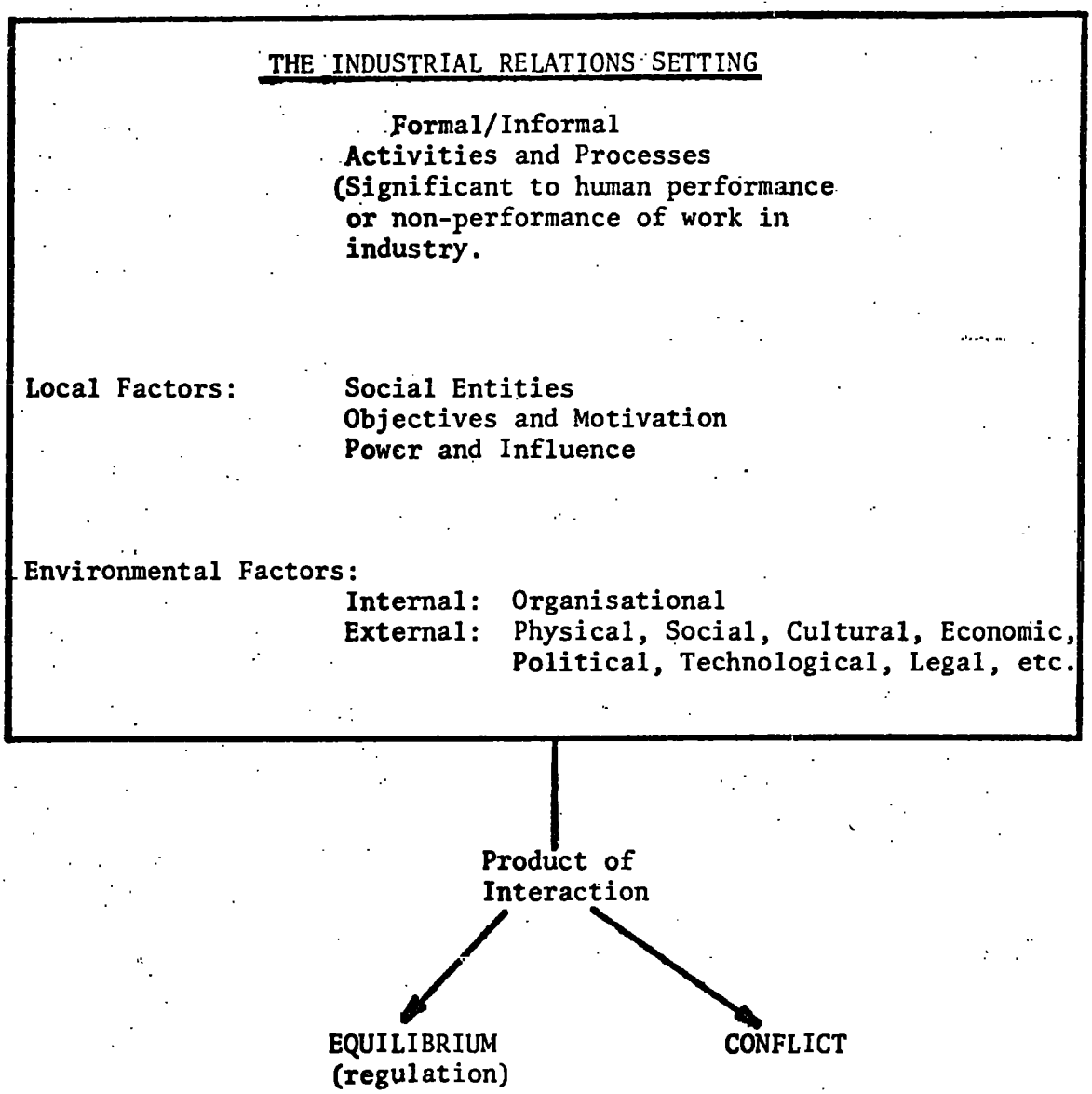

FIGURE II. SOURCE : AUTHOR

This framework should serve as a useful basis for analysis in industrial relations. The purpose of substantive theory, in our view, is to be expository, explanatory, predictive and, where relevant, prescriptive as well. Since the concept of control offers tremendous scope for understanding and analysing industrial relations situations, we now move on to outline it.

IV. THE BASIC PROPERTIES OF CONTROL

In our earlier reference to the definition of control by Tannenbaum, Goldhamer and Shils we did introduce its basic features: power, influence, objectives, etc. Looking at Goldhamer's definition, the process of control has been described from the standpoint of the controller influencing the controlled. From the same definition, however, we could also perceive the other side of the coin. The process of control can be conceptualised as beginning with the controller's expectations, on the one hand, and , depending on objectives, attitudes and motivations governing the controlled on the other. Clearly, the objectives, attitudes, expectations and motivations held by the various social entities in a given situation describe a basic aspect of the control process.

Quite apart from the objectives and motivations, the motive force that energises control (or makes it possible in the first place) is influence or power. Indeed Hyman defined power as 'the ability of the individual or group to control his (their) physical and social environment ..... the ability to influence the decisions which are and are not taken by others'.[40] In addition to the action or motivational characteristics, therefore, power and influence are also an important aspect of the control process.

It is pertinent to note, as this point, that these are precisely the features that are being sought in the industrial relations setting - features required to understand and analyse the local aspects of any given situation. By seeking out the control properties, therefore,

one would be able to expose or analyse the situation.

If one looks carefully, these properties - objectives and motivation, power and influence have been studied in the various social sciences primarily because of their role in the various control processes in industry and society. Numerous ideas, concepts and theories have been evolved around these control properties, and so here we see them essentially as concepts or theories of control. As these ideas and concepts are necessary to uncover the control properties, we shall move on to outline them, first about objectives and motivation, then about power and influence.

CONCEPTS ABOUT OBJECTIVES AND MOTIVATION

In order to study about objectives and motivation the social scientist has access to various studies in psychology, sociology and organisation theory. Berelson and Steiner have in fact related objectives and motivation in the following definition: 'A motive is an inner state that energises, activates or moves (hence motivation), and that directs or channels behaviour towards goals'.[41]

Efforts have been made to develop various theories of motivation. While the dominant theories highlight the content of motivation, (i.e. what motivates people), there are also theories that explain the process (i.e. how people are motivated). Let us take a look at the process theories first. The motivation process has been perceived in two distinct ways. One is the drive theory and the other is expectancy theory.

The drive theory originated from Thorndike's 'law of effect'.[42] According to this law, responses which are accompanied or closely followed by satisfaction will more likely recur than those that are followed by discomfort. It emphasises the connection between previous behaviour and rewards. Present behaviour is determined by past associations. However, because experiments used by many drive theorists were based on animals, they have been largely concerned with physiolocial needs. This clearly was not adequate for explaining human motivation. Nevertheless, the basic ideas are still useful and, in fact, are reflected in the development of expectancy theory which focuses on human behaviour.

Victor Vroom formulated the expectancy theory of motivation about human behaviour in organisations.[43] Such behaviour was, first of all, assumed to be voluntary, i.e. that people had alternative behaviours to choose from. This theory based on valences and expectancies, has been well received because it highlights a process of cognitive variables that reflects individual differences in motivation. Recognition is given to the fact that each person could have a different combination of valences and expectancies. But Vroom's approach lacks description about what actually motivates people. For the content of motivation we shall soon discuss Maslow's and Herzberg's contributions. Nevertheless, as Porter and others have noted:

> "the expectancy model is just that: a model and no more. People rarely actually sit down and list their expected outcomes for a completed behaviour, estimated expectancies and valences, multiply, and add up the total, unless, of course, they are asked to do so by a researcher. Yet people do consider the likely outcomes of their outcomes of their actions, do weight and evaluate the attractiveness

of various alternatives, and do use these estimates in coming to a decision about what they will do". 44

It is significant to note at this point that Stagner and Rosen have developed a theory of psychological expectancy in industrial relations.[45] 'The expectancy theory formulation of the actor's motivation in an industrial relations system is particularly useful, as Walker noted, because it directs attention at the actor's calculation of the relative benefits and costs of action by one path rather than another towards the same goal, and of the probability of reaching the goal. Thus for example, it might be applied to the question of which goals workers will seek to achieve through union action and which through other types of action'.[46]

Now, coming to concepts about what (i.e. the content) motivates people, we have Maslow who identified five levels of needs which he arranged in a hierarchical order: the psychological, safety, social, ego and self-actualisation or developmental needs.[47] Taking the cue from Maslow, Herzberg developed his own two-factor theory of motivation.[48] He identified two sets of needs. The 'hygiene factors' were concerned with conditions for which an acceptable standard was necessary to prevent dissatisfaction, or, maintain a good environment for work. These included supervision, working conditions, salary and company policy and administration. By themselves however they did not lead to psychological growth and positive motivation work. The second set of needs were the growth or 'motivation or growth factors'. These were needs for achievement, responsibility, challenge, advancement and recognition. Work therefore had to be designed to boost these factors.

It is relevant for us to note here that although we have identified the Maslow and Herzberg theories to discuss the sources of interests and objectives, they are not without deficiency - in fact there are wide ranging controversies on this subject. While their conclusions about the way needs operate and are satisfied may be questioned, their basic contribution, nevertheless, remains significant. Needs they found could be differentiated, and also saw that different needs tend to be satisfied by different rewards or responses.

In addition to his (apart from Brown's) criticisms about Goldthorpe's 'orientations to work', Daniels also criticised the Maslovian (assumed by McGregor and others) and Herzberg claims to universality of man's self-actualising aspirations.[49] He observed that while 'at the one end there may well be workers who attach exclusive importance to extrinsic rewards and at the other to intrinsic rewards ... what our findings demonstrate is that there are workers in the middle of the spectrum. They seek both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from work, with one becoming salient in one context and the other in another.'[50] The contexts he was referring to were the work and collective bargaining (power) contexts.

While Daniel's observation is useful since it emphasises the situational rather than a general or fixed set of priorities (assumed by Goldthorpe and the need theorists) he has not, as Bowey notes, taken into account 'the possibility that objectives and priorities may be changed as a result of experience',[51] (as highlighted by Brown). The need-fullfilment theories we feel must recognise that orientation,

as Bowey points out:

> "cannot be treated as a homogeneous whole which is one of a number of alternative states, it must be broken down into its constituents, since the various interests and objectives are likely to be affected in different ways by his experience and to be changing at different rates". 52

Notable among the variables influencing orientations, is the problem of 'power and sources of power which any party can use in a situation'[63] and it is to the concepts of power and influence that we shall in a moment focus our attention. Before that we shall note some recent developments in motivation theory.

This comes from 'attribution theory'[54] and its follow-up, 'locus of control'. Unlike the earlier theories, attribution theory relates perceptions and interpersonal behaviour. Since most causes or attributes are not directly observable, the person depends on cognitions, particularly perceptions. It is the perceived, not the actual determinants, that influence behaviour. This idea has important connotations for behaviour of a workforce.

Work behaviour is thought to be crucially determined by the employees' belief or perception of whether their outcomes are controlled internally (i.e. with their own ability, skills or effort) or externally (i.e. external forces - people or technology or circumstances). Workers who perceive internal control get the feeling they personally can influence their behaviour at work through their ability, skills, efforts, etc. Workers who perceive external control feel that results at work are externally determined and so tend not to perceive the possibilities

for internal control. Mitchell and others have tested this locus of internal/external control with 900 public utility employees and found that employees perceiving internal control were satisfied with their jobs and with a participatory management style than were people who perceived external control.[55]

Development of ideas along these lines is bound to make a significant contribution to the theory of motivation, especially for workplaces.

CONCEPTS ABOUT POWER AND INFLUENCE

Influence is a process where one party (known as the agent) attempts to affect the behaviour of another party (known as the target). Although the term power is generally used synonymously with influence, it may be conceptualised as the capacity to influence or affect others behaviour. It accrues to the agent because of his resources - strength roles or identity etc. The most significant point about power and influence is that the capacity to influence (power) is not absolute, it is relative - depending on the relationship between agent and target. The greater the agents' resources (bases of power) relative to the target, the more his ability to influence the target. Similarly, the greater the target's dependency relative to the agent, the more is he influenceable. These resources which enable an agent to influence the target can be classified by various bases of power. French and Raven have developed a well-known typology of the main power bases: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power and expert power.[56]

The various bases of power we must stress, however, are not independent of each other, in fact they are interrelated. While the use of reward or legitimate power can increase referent power, the use of coercive power can reduce it. Expert power appears most directly to affect legitimate power, and referent power probably increases most of the other bases. It is also important to recognise that the same agent may resort to different bases of power under different circumstances, depending on the target and the situation.

Although it is generally though that the use of expert and referent power in organisations is more effective, than relying on the traditional legitimate and coercive power, such generalisations can be questioned in given specific situations. So a situational model of power for organisations will be needed. In our view what is required is a balance of the various power bases to fit the demands of the situation.

Another writer about power and influence is Gamson, who distinguished between two perspectives of power:

> "One view takes the vantage point of potential partisans and emphasises the process by which such groups attempt to influence the choices of authorities or the structure within which decisions occur. The second view takes the vantage point of authorities and emphasises the process by which they attempt to achieve collective goals and to maintain legitimacy and compliance with their decisions in a situation in which significant numbers of potential partisans are not being fully satisfied."[57]

While he confines the use of the term influence to when he sees the partisans as agents, and control when the authorities are agents,

he has offered a good classification of the means of influence and social control which operate in industry.

In his discussion on power in industrial relations, Poole has identified three forms of what he calls 'manifest power':

(a) Power that is reflected in differences in economic strength - due to the distribution of income and wealth.

(b) Power that is identified with elite groups - higher civil service, industry and commerce, military, etc.

(c) Power that manifest itself in formal pattern of control within societies, communities and organisations. In this category, he differentiates between power accruing to positions in the community or organisation, power related to scope and range of issues and finally power related to success in a given power conflict. 58

Poole also extends his discussion into the bases of power (latent power) and the question of values and ideologies.

For a discussion about power influence and control in industrial relations one would also have much to benefit from Goodrich's 'The Frontier of Control'.[59] For a Marxist analysis using the concepts of power and influence we could turn to Hyman's recent work discussing the dialectics of conflict and regulation.[60]

Another useful contribution comes from Somers[61] who has related bargaining power to the theory of exchange. In some ways it draws a link between the concepts of power and of motivational expectancies in an exchange relationship.

V. CONTROL AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Having seen the relevance of uncovering the nature of control in a given situation, one might ask: what about the impact of environmental forces? We have not said anything about how, for example,

economic, political or technological forces might affect control, and we do have a good reason for this. Because control, unlike 'collective bargaining' or 'regulation', manifests in the whole range of situations in industrial relations, it is almost impossible to postulate the effects of the various environments on all the situations. The environmental effects have to be examined as they pertain to the particular situation under consideration.

It would be significant, however, to say that ideas and theories about environmental effects on particular situations are already available in numerous works - some of these are referred to as 'partial theories'. Examples of subjects (not titles) are: political forces on trade unionism, bargaining and industrial democracy, social structure and industrial conflict, economics and wage determination, technology and organisation control. A good number of these contributions contain ideas and concepts as well as empirical evidence. With the help of relevant ideas and proof, one has to investigate the environmental forces actually operating on the situation under study. Only then can the actual impact of the environment on control (and vice versa) be determined.

In order to conclude our discussion about substantive theory in industrial relations, it would be appropriate for us to take a closer look at the focal issue that this project attempts to investigate. This brings us to the perceptions about job control, covering both the employer and employee positions.

VI. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT JOB CONTROL

The term job control has a broad meaning. It refers to the influences that workers have on the decisions about their jobs and the conditions at the workplace. As Herding and Kohler have noted:

> "We do not use the concept of job control in a narrow sense only as access to the job, or to related issues of security, but include any control over the content and operation of the work process ..... Further the concept is used in a relative sense to signify the degree of power workpeople have to influence or direct work". 62

The subject of job control may be viewed from various persepctvies: the traditional management perspectives, the Marxist perspective, alienation technology and the motivation perspectives.

The Traditional Perspectives - Consensual and Manipulative

This perspective simply reinforces the traditional formal organisation where unilateral decision-making by managers was not to be questioned. The hierarchical administrative structure and standardised operating procedures are obvious characteristics of this situation.

Within this framework, management could be perceived either to assume that workers shared its goals (for the efficient functioning of the enterprise) so that all will share in the rewards or, from the anti-union standpoint, it simply asserted its prerogative in decision-making and control. Such ideas as the management had the 'rights of management' and that 'there will always be masters and men' remain a

significant source of power - against opposition and to inhibit the questioning of the status-quo. Whether it was by stressing common goals or by actively inhibiting labour challenge, management in this system would see transgressors as aberrants. Discontent about the system and working conditions could not have any legitimacy.

Under the consensual frame of mind, such conflict was often attributed to the failure on the part of the worker to understand the management's intentions or it was due to poor supervision or communications. In the anti-union frame, any challenge to management decisions was generally attributed to some 'bad-hats', usually someone who had union contacts.

All in all, the traditional or classic al forms of unilateral control see no room for legitimate worker interest in job control.

The Marxist Perspective

The Marxist perceptive takes the diametrically opposite view of the classical capitalist. Marx saw the transfer of power or control moving from the capitalist to the hands of labour. He portrayed this change as follows:

> "One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this exproporiation of many capitalists by few, develop on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative forms of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodological cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production

> of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all people in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime". 63

He emphasised the contradiction between capitalist theory and practice; that while in theory it stressed individual enterprise the practice involved mutual cooperation in the production process. This 'antagonism,' as Avineri noted of Marx's thoughts,'between capitalist theory and practice ultimately causes the mode of production to fetter its own development'.[64]

This conflict perspective approaches the philosophy which Brannen and colleagues describe as resting upon the view that 'industry is dominated by a conflict between the interests of capital and labour ..... it attempts to shift dramatically the balance of power, and ultimately to change the structure of industry and society more generally'.[65]

The ultimate aim of restructuring industry is not a negotiated settlement with the capitalists for joint regulation or participation but control of a different kind. Coates and Topham describe this pressure for workers' control aiming to undo the capitalist system:

> "The will to rule, to exercise 'workers' control', becomes, in its twentieth century form a demand, ... for a reversal of roles within the existing class structure. This can only lead into an overall social reconstruction, challenging all previous norms of property and control". 66

Brannen and others, for instance, see in the British situation, a trend leading towards worker directors and participation at board level.

The socialist ideology has also evolved institutional participation in other industrialised nations, e.g. West Germany (codetermination), France (tripartite government, employees, public administration of national enterprises) and in Israel (the histradut or the trade union structure).

The Alienation Perspectives

In connection with the class-conflict theory, Marx also discussed the problem of alienation. Marx's view could be seen in his own words:

> "In his work ..... (the worker) does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker ..... is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to ti. Its alien character emerges clearly in the face that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labor is shunned like the plague." 67

This concept arises from the notion that under Capitalism, labour is bought and used by the capitalist to serve his own needs rather than the aspirations of the worker. Marx perceived the division of labour as promoting capitalist domination and restricting the freedom of the worker. The factory system to him was the most calculative method of domination, enabling the control in great detail, of workers activity. Together with the class conflict perspective, this argument also encourages the Marxists to advocate the restructuring (or even the overthrow) of traditional private enterprise.

In a more recent work, Mills has also discussed alienation. To him;

> "Current managerial attempts (the then 'human relations' interventions) to create job enthusiasm, to paraphrase Marx's comment on Proudhon, are attempts to conquer work alienation within the bounds of work alienation. In the meantime, whatever satisfaction alienated men (whom he sees as 'cheerful robots') gain from work occurs within the framework of alienation". 68

In contradistinction to Marx, Durkheim saw the division of labour in a different light. While accepting that the coordinated division of tasks had benefits for society, alienation to him was the result of certain 'abnormal' forms of division of labour. Workers in these abnormal arrangements he felt were not able to relate their tasks to the function of the total productive system. He also perceived the growth of unregulated aspirations and expectations within this framework. Brannen and colleagues see this Durkheimian perspective as providing justification for 'participatory schemes which emphasise communication and job satisfaction'.[69] From the job control point of view, all the alienation perspectives have one thing in common - all of them support giving workers more control over their work.

Technology and Job Control

Taking the discussion about alienation further, Blauner has linked job freedom with specific types of technology. Blauner saw alienation as the 'fragmentation in man's existence and consciousness which impedes the wholeness of experience and activity.[70] He

contrasted four dimensions of this fragmentation as follows:

Alienated State		Non-Alienated State
Powerlessness	vs	Control
Meaninglessness	vs	Purpose
Isolation	vs	Social integration
Self-estrangement	vs	Self/actualisation

Studying the alienating effects of different types of technology he observed that craft technology represented a high level of freedom for the worker, a freedom which decreased sharply in machine tending and line production but which rose again significantly through process technology. Process technology was seen to give the worker significant control over the process and thus encouraged better integration with the system.

Because Blauner saw alienation as a deprivation of human need rather than as a structural conflict, he saw hope in the development of technologies which recognised motivational principles promoting job enrichment. This would tend toward the older 'craft ethic', thus giving the worker a significant degree of control over their assignments.

When talking about technology and the division of labour, studies by Trist and others[71] come to mind. They traced the changes in the mining industry to illustrate 'the interaction of technological and socio-psychological factors in industrial production systems'.[72] Changes were traced from the traditional group activity (single-place working) to the conventional longwall system and then to composite longwall technology. From the job control point of view, in the

traditional system:

> "the miner possesses the necessary range of skills to undertake all facework tasks in a self-contained workplace. His role is that of a multi-skilled, self-supervising workman towards whom the deputy stands in a service rather than a supervisory relation. ..... Since all members do all jobs, either on the same or different shifts, they share equally in the paynote". 73

"Such a pattern of work organisation', Trist found was, 'well adapted to the technological conditions of single place working and to the general hazards of the underground environment.'[74]

In sharp contrast to this tradition, the conventional longwall system brought in highly socialised tasks with its division of labour. Each group had its own customs and practices and also received separate paynotes. The researchers also noted that 'since the groups do not spontaneously work together, coordination and control have to be provided entirely from the outside - (by management)'.[75] This system resulted in a number of problems - worker isolation, conflict, supervisory problems and low productivity.

Finally, in the composite longwall system 'the different organisational pattern removes the difficulties from over-specialised work roles, segregated task groups and lack of cohesion in the face team as a whole'.[76] It allowed for interchangeable tasks, and for a certain amount of self-regulation and continuity which prevailed in single-place working. Workers perceived more internal control rather than external control which predominated in the conventional longwall. This perception encouraged the work groups to aim for higher production targets. Within the same longwall technology, Trist saw that

'composite organisation was found to possess characteristics more conducive to productive effectiveness, low cost, work satisfaction, good relations and social health'.[77]

The main lesson learned from this experience is that the technical requirements (in this case to introduce mechanised longwall technology) had to be matched with the socio-psychological factors of the situation - in this case the miners had been socialised in a more or less self-regulating job control system. The studies thus clearly illustrate the possibilities and advantages of taking the socio-technical system approach - balancing the options available in technology with the needs of the human system.

This relationship between technology and behaviour is more complex than it may appear. As Reeves, Turner and Woodward have noted, apart from technology, the worker is also 'limited by requirements of the administration, (covering wide aspects of social system in the organisation) by the demands of his colleagues and by other factors'.[78] While it is generally assumed that the interaction between the individual and his technological surroundings is one way, they have observed the opposite possibility that 'often he may be able to bring about changes in his immediate technical situation, over and above the changes he is expected to carry out as part of his job'.[79] Pressures for job control can thus initiated by the worker.

Motivation and Job Control

Most motivational schemes are primarily aimed at improving

productivity, and thereby greater control over worker performance. Unlike the times of Taylor's scientific management which depended on financial sanctions to control worker behaviour, motivation has since been found to involve other factors. Of significance are the theories of Maslow and Herzberg which drew attention to man's higher level needs such as esteem, self-actualisation and development. These theories laid the basis for many well-known contributions from behavioural scientists like McGregor, Likert, Haire and Miles.[80] Even Chris Argris' concept of personality spoke of a basic incongruence between the needs of a mature personality and the nature of the formal organisation.[81]

From the job control point of view it is interesting to note that the neo-human relations contributors recommended that job commitment and self-sustaining motivation could be evoked primarily by lessening the constraints upon the worker - to give him wider discretion and responsibility over his job. This in fact posed a problem for the traditional managers, since motivational schemes were expected to increase productivity - i.e. increase control over worker performance, they could not see themselves giving workers greater discretion and influence. Because the motivational theories were logical, the schemes were 'adapted' to their situations, with the result that the traditional hierarchy and multiple controls over workers did not change The workers seldom saw the opportunity of influencing their superiors over anything, work process or individual grievances. As a consequence of their reluctance to enlarge and share influence with the workers, these traditional managers could not achieve their productivity goal. Tannenbaum captured this inability on the part of traditional managers

in his criticism of the 'fixed-pie' or 'zero-sum' assumptions about control. 'The assumption, he says ..... of a fixed amount of control may lead to attempts by some members to restrict the power of others, thus limiting the amount of control within the system'.[82] For managers who saw control as a zero-sum concept, enlarging the share at the lower levels could only be seen as a loss in the management's own level of influence and control. Thus we are able to see the job control paradox inherent in the motivational schemes used by managers of the classical tradition.

With the advent of Tannenbaum's pioneering efforts to demonstrate the variability of control and the comparison of actual and desired perceptions of control across organisation members, however, a new normative approach has been evolved. (The professionalisation of new managers to be more achievement than status oriented has definitely helped this process.) Control is no more perceived to be zero-sum, or fixed-pie, but that it can often be enhanced. In fact, Tannenbaum cites the contributions of various behavioural scientists as means to expand control in the organisation.[83] To him these same motivational schemes facilitated expansion in control for all: workers, supervisors and management. Enhancing control and communication would not only enhance worker attachment to the organisation but would facilitate compliance with major organisational goals.

Unlike the earlier human relations interventions, additive-control participation means workers and management alike would actually experience increased opportunity to influence one another in the fulfillment of similar and divergent needs. Because these motivational schemes

were 'adapted' by managers who saw control only in zero-sum terms, the earlier human relations interventions did not achive the desired results.

VII. METHODOLOGY IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: THE CONTROL-SITUATIONAL APPROACH

Besides explaining the basic processes involved, our notion of control holds a bank of ideas, concepts and theories relating to the key properties of the control. As we pointed out earlier, these properties are also the factors that describe the local aspects of any industrial relations situation. Uncovering the control content in the situation thereby exposes the basic elements of the situation. As the reader would have seen, we have presented a wide range of ideas and theories for each of the properties - goals, expectations, perception, motivation, power and influence. This is to emphasise that the analysis of any given situation should be situational, requiring one to apply the appropriate concepts. The ideas in the bank are by no means comprehensive, they may be expanded, refined and made more operational.

We have already in our discussion about the action and environmental perspectives pointed to the significance of the interaction between the two. The situational approach, asks for a balance between the actor's interests and attitudes and the objective structural influences.

When one enters into a discussion about theorising in industrial relations, one is inevitably drawn into the debate about partial and

interdisciplinary theorising. Writers like Flanders,[84] Bain and Clegg[85] and, more recently, Walker[86] have explicitly rejected the usefulness of partial, often discipline-specific, theories. Flanders has generally been cited as authority, for these comments:

> 'The drawback of relying on the theory of any one of the several disciplines that have impinged on industrial relations is that it was never intended to offer an integrated view of the whole complex of institutions in this field. Theoretically speaking, these disciplines tear the subject apart by concentrating attention on some of its aspects to the exclusion or comparative neglect of others. And a partial view of anything, accurate as it may be within its limits, must of necessity be a distorted one'. 87

In our view partial theories are partial theories, but they have a positive role. The knowledge and methodological rigour from the traditional disciplines can only enhance, not reduce their contribution. As Somers has noted, a certain amount of integration is possible by a blending of partial theories. 'By combining economic theories of product and labour markets with theories of motivation, satisfaction, personnel psychology and organisational behaviour, we can approach a comprehensive model explaining a wide range of industrial relations behaviour'.[88]

Although we support scientific contributions from the specialists in sociology, social-anthropology, psychology, politics, economics, law, history, etc., we are not saying that industrial relations must be studied only by blending partial theories. All we say is that relevant ideas and concept can be usefully drawn from them, for application in industrial relations analysis.

Industrial relations theorising needs integration and it is towards this end that our concept of control is aimed. In order to uncover the control content (involving various local and environmental factors) in a given industrial relations situation, the scholar or practitioner needs an interdisciplinary approach which is receptive to the concepts available in industrial relations as well as the various other disciplines, and, at the same time, selective about the appropriateness of variables and concepts. This we call the control-situational approach.

The analysis that follows, of the Singapore situation, begins with the scanning of the external environment. We analyse socio-cultural traditions, economic development, industrialisation, the locus of power and trade union influences that operate in the environment. All these factors are seen to have a significant impact on job control.

We then proceed to analyse the institutions operating at company level and close in on our findings about job control perceptions at the various levels of the firm. An analysis of the JURONG situation is followed by suggestions to enhance control for all the parties involved. Based on the circumstances facing Singapore and her industry, we raise a few questions, in our conclusion, about the future - these are questions that must be faced by her strategic planners and decision-makers today.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CULTURAL BASIS OF STATE CONTROL

I SOCIO-CULTURAL EVOLUTION IN SINGAPORE: AN INTRODUCTION

II THE TRADITIONAL SOCIO-CULTURAL BASE

III IMMIGRATION AND COLONIZATION

IV INDUSTRIALISATION AND MODERNISATION

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CULTURAL BASIS OF STATE CONTROL

I. SOCIO-CULTURAL EVOLUTION IN SINGAPORE: AN INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of social control in Singapore: its evolution from the Oriental normative regulation to centralised State control.

Singapore's strategic location in South-east Asia has, since the early days, earned her the reputation of being a natural trading port- an entrepreneurial gathering point. The British who foresaw this in the early days set up office in Singapore at the beginning of the 19th century. It was colonization that brought to Singapore the various communities who are resident on the island today. A society of immigrants, her main communities are the Chinese, Indians and Malays. Although a young nation with little indigeneous culture as such, she has from the early Chinese and Indians clearly inherited their well-developed Oriental traditions. It is against this traditional background that, in this analysis, we examine the impact of the following phases in Singapore's development:

(a) Immigration and colonization

(b) Industrialisation and modernisation and the concomitant State intervention.

Industrialisation, modernisation and State intervention are the more recent processes which have taken place since Singapore earned self-government and independence. She has, since the early sixties,

undergone rapid economic and social change. Not only does she on the one hand suffer from a severe lack of natural resources (other than human); there have been strong pressures on the other hand for socio-economic progress and modernisation. In a society where values like educational qualifications, skills and social status play an important part, the wealth-pursuing ethos has indeed became a key feature of the Singapore people today. In this chapter we trace how this ethos has developed over time and today works hand in hand with a new feature - centralised State control. The impact of a 'migrant' ethos and colonization have also given more colour to the Singaporean's cultural experience. It would also be interesting for us to observe the place of Oriental traditions in the more recent developments. While industrialisation and modernisation tended to erode cultural traits on the one hand, the Government on the other hand quite effectively employed the peoples' traditional social and psychological dependence on normative regulation within the family and community to reinforce the legitimacy of centralised State control.

II. THE TRADITIONAL SOCIO-CULTURAL BASE

A discussion on Singapore's traditional socio-cultural institutions must be concerned with the background of each of her main ethnic groups, namely, the Chinese, Indians and Malays. Whereas China and India are well known ancient civilisations, traditional Malay customs and practices are known to bear a significant resemblance to Hindu ways. This is known to be the result of continued dominance by Hindu Kingdoms over the Malay archipelago for about

fifteen centuries until 1400 AD. Although there are ideological differences between Hinduism and Islam, which came to South-east Asia later from India, traditional Malay custom continues to be strongly coloured with Hindu symbols. Apart from the dominant Chinese traditions, the remaining components of Singapore's traditional culture can indeed be traced to the Hindu way of life. We shall first study the following three institutions of Chinese and Indian traditions, making a comparative analysis of the key features involved:

(a) The traditional family institution

(b) The team and extended grouping, outside the family

(c) Traditional employment institutions

The Family

The Confucian family organisation that evolved with the Chinese was very patriarchal and patrilocal.[1] On the Indian side, we see the joint family system which emphasised an 'authoritarian group-oriented caste dominated pattern which discounts individuality, initiative and free enquiry.'[2] Both cultures stressed reverence for elders and the importance of family unity and cohesiveness. A table (No. 1) is given below to show the traits that appear on each side.

TABLE NO. 1

TRADITIONAL FAMILY TRAITS

Chinese	Indian
Confucian family organisation: patriarchal and patrilocal.	Joint family system with authoritarian leadership.
Reverence for ancestors.[3]	Obedience to elders in the joint family system. 4
Family ties - keystone of Chinese culture. 5	'Family cohesiveness' stressed. 6

While not suggesting that all traits exhibited by both cultures are identical, we can, nevertheless, see a similarity in their nature. Both systems have well-defined authority structures, and also exhibit a strong social and psychological dependence on family ties. These in turn stress respect for age and seniority which makes their traditional form of social control highly normative and regulative.

The Team and Extended Grouping

The relationships in social groups also exhibit a certain compatibility between the two Oriental traditions. The 'group spirit'[7] with the Chinese encouraged strong inter-personal dependence amongst community members. On the Indian side we see the caste system which reflects the holistic nature of teamwork and organisation. The constituents were considered as mutually indispensable holons. As Lannoy noted,' rules have been imposed on every minority group ... that it should exist at peace with the corporate encircling framework'.[8]

Both the Chinese and Indians had well-developed extended groupings. While the Chinese had dialect and religious groups, secret societies and clans, the Indians were organised through the caste system. Both cultures emphasised obedience to authority in social organisation. The table (No. 2) that follows illustrates the compatibility in their traits.

TABLE NO. 2

THE TEAM & EXTENDED GROUPING

Chinese	Indian
The 'group spirit' and inter-personal dependence.	Caste system and holistic nature of organisation.
Well-developed extended groupings: dialect/ religious and secret societies.	Extended organisations: e.g. 'village communities of crafts and markets'. 9
Obedience to authority; a Confucian teaching.	Hierarchical authority, and power not questioned.

Both the Chinese and Indian groupings exhibit a strong dependence on team relations for survival. Given the firmly established structures of leadership and authority, we may again deduce the strong element of normative regulation in both these Oriental cultures.

Employment

The table (No. 3) that follows shows that in both the Chinese and Indian traditional employment situations workers have exhibited a very strong dependence on their employers, for work and for a living. The autocratic and paternalistic nature of the employers clearly illustrates their position as being sole regulators of the organisation and execution of all available work.

The traditional authority and leadership patterns in family and group organisation, that we examined earlier, have clearly created an ideal background for the persistence of this master-servant relationship. This master-servant ideology has, as we saw in the introductory chapter, indeed provided sanction for the wealth-pursuing ethos. The notion for instance, that the employer should be held in great esteem for the livelihood he provides workers is even today used as a symbol to sanction workers' cooperation with the employer in the wealth-pursuing endeavour.

TABLE NO. 3

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS

Chinese	Indian
'Principle of division of labour and obedience to superiors .... was the accepted form'. 10	The classes of masters and servants defined in the caste-hierarchical system.
Employment governed by the 'traditional ideology of paternalism'. 11	Paternalistic leadership: employer was 'father' to his large family of workers.

Summary of the Traditional Socio-Cultural Base

Whilst the foregoing discussion illustrates the common nature between these Oriental cultures, we must also acknowledge that there can be differences in religious ideology, rituals and practices prescribed by the two systems. It is interesting to note, however, that despite differences, both these systems have been able to co-exist in a relatively harmonious fashion. This may be attributed to the great measure of tolerance[12] in both cultural traditions.

The most significant features about these Oriental traditions that stem from the foregoing analysis may now be summarised as follows: both systems prescribed a high degree of dependence on normative regulation and control. We have also seen how the master-servant tradition at employment has contributed to the evolution of the wealth-pursuing ethos.

III. IMMIGRATION AND COLONIZATION

Most of the immigrants who came to Singapore after the British set up office on the island had arrived in forced circumstances. While most of the Chinese who came were 'pushed' out from their homelands by conditions of economic adversity,[13] the Indians generally came as 'coolies' indentured by the British. There were, however, the relatively few Chinese who came as traders and businessmen, and the fewer Indians who were attracted by opportunities offered by the British in some white-collar jobs. Indeed, the majority of these early immigrants constituted a growing community of 'forced' labour. They

were bound to their employers often for their whole lifetime, and were expected to be loyal and obedient to their masters. Indeed the British capitalists utilised these features of Oriental tradition to their advantage. These hard-working workers continued to be socialised towards creating wealth for their masters in return for betterment. Given the circumstances in which these immigrants were 'pushed' out of their homelands, their strong concern for economic achievement was to be expected. The better-placed communities of Chinese businessmen and Indian clerks indeed legitimised the laissez-faire economy in their own self-interest.

Riaz Hassan, a Singapore sociologist, has suggested that migration into Singapore was mainly the 'innovative type'.[14] In achieving the new, 'the migrant ethos had the effect of weakening the hold of the respective cultures over the migrants'.[15] As some of the older values were put aside, new values such as the emphasis on achievement, adaptation and social mobility emerged.

One interesting development of the 'migrant' values is that they sowed the seeds of Singapore's wealth-pursuing ethos. Although in the beginning, the drive for economic achievement may have primarily been instrumental, as time wore on, economic betterment was sought not only for the more comfortable life it earned but was also seen as a measure of social achievement. Having traditionally been socialised in what were highly stratified communities, and then exposed through migration to social and economic achievement motivations and relative social mobility, the new basis of social stratification became

economic achievement. As jobs and vocations were no longer 'closed-shops', so to speak, people strived for occupations that gave the best economic rewards. These and other extrinsic attributes of living (e.g. car, property, special facilities) soon became means of measuring social achievement - the goal that today dominates the wealth-pursuing ethos. Indeed, the beginnings of Singapore's wealth-pursuing ethos may thus be traced to the migrant ethos.

Although the new attributes of adaptation and social mobility encouraged deviance from traditional rituals and practices, the immigrants' behaviour continued to be strongly influenced by community norms and regulations. Nevertheless, these new attributes, as we shall see later, helped to encourage industrialisation and economic growth - the latter impacts in Singapore's socio-cultural evolution.

Next, we shall examine the effects and manifestations of two other features of colonization: the English system of education, and, the 'social hierarchy with the white men at the top'. The English system of education was introduced primarily to train manpower for the local civil service and business. One striking effect of this education was the promoting, amongst its recipients, of the logical and scientific questioning of traditional institutions. This initiated the breaking down of the people's traditional justification for community regulation. Also during colonial rule, the rulers, as Guy Hunter described 'created a social hierarchy with the white man at the top',[16] who exercised firm authority. For the constituents of the various communities, ultimate authority, which previously lay with community chiefs, was now assumed by the British chiefs.

Being largely impartial, the colonial Government facilitated smoother coordination of the 'separate' communities.

In addition to the new hierarchical system, the introduction of English-type legislation also had profound effects on the immigrant communities. Although many of the English legal institutions were at variance with traditional customs and legal sense, the strict and impartial enforcement soon facilitated their acceptance by the immigrants. These modern laws which became a code for the regulation of wider society slowly overshadowed the various community codes, and in the Confucian tradition, became accepted as the 'established order'.

We had noted that colonial education promoted the liberal questioning of traditional institutions, thus eroding the legitimacy of community codes. More important, however, was the powerful dominance of the English hierarchy and legislation over the various communities. Except that the new state legislation was based on rational legalistic-political authority and was applied on a wider scale, it continued to provide a sense of regulation that the Oriental immigrant had culturally become so dependent upon. Indeed, colonization initiated the evolution of state bureaucracy in Singapore.

IV. INDUSTRIALISATION AND MODERNISATION

In order to study the impact of industrialisation and modernisation on Singapore's socio-cultural evolution, our efforts

must centrally be concerned with their key features:

(a) Economic growth

(b) Urbanisation

(c) Modernisation

Economic Growth

Peter Chen, a Singapore social scientist, recently wrote that 'Singapore has made every effort to introduce modern technology and to stimulate industrialisation with the aim of achieving a higher growth rate in the economy'.[17] Her gross domestic product has grown at an average rate above 25% since 1968 when her industrialisation programme was actively launched.

The socio-cultural effects of economic growth through industrialisation may be distinguished into two types - the preconditions and the consequences of economic growth. Industrialisation and economic growth, in the first instance, require (as a precondition) the re-orientation of certain traditional practices towards 'economically relevant behaviour' - behaviour related to the production and distribution of goods and services.[18] Personal ties between master and servant, for instanc had to give way to the more impersonal methods of 'scientific management'. While a number of traditional practices faded, the pressure for economically relevant behaviour had the support of migrant ethos, which stressed values like achievement, adaptability and social mobility, and the economic-social achievement motivation of the wealth-pursuing ethos. 'The talents of three races - Chinese, Indians and Malays are blended here', summarised Galbraith 'and they work

here without the fettering traditions to which they would very often be subject to in their home countries. Migrant and their descendants always work better than people who have been too long at home'.[19]

A major socio-cultural consequence of economic growth has been the Singaporean's increased propensity for materialistic-consumption. While it is indeed a threat to his traditional norm of frugality, his desire for materialistic-consumption participates amicably in the stress for wealth and social achievement.

We have just seen that both the precondition and consequence of economic growth have contributed, in somewhat contradictory ways, to the erosion of traditional practices. But they both reinforced the wealth-pursuing ethos.

Urbanisation

Urbanisation is sometimes said to be the biggest single feature of industrialisation. Although an urban centre before her industrialisation began, Singapore's massive urban organisation and renewal belong to more recent times. About 50% of her population are presently living in public high-rise housing estates. It is believed that 'public housing is probably the most visible and demonstrative project in the Republic'.[20] Besides, 'public housing has not only accelerated urban development and redevelopment, ... but with an ever-increasing proportion of the population drawn into its ambit, has become a social barometer of the nation as well'.[21] According to Hassan, demographic, ecological and sociological

conditions which characterise Singapore as a highly urbanised area tend to facilitate the emergence and institutionalisation of behaviour patterns which are characterised by rationality, expediency, efficiency, flexibility and to some extent impersonality.[22] These behavioural attributes are indeed clear evidence of the contribution urbanisation has made towards supporing the 'social-achievement' goal of the wealth-pursuing ethos. They have also 'considerably facilitated the governmental programmes of modernisation and development'.[23]

However, the ill-effects of high-density housing on the traditional family community institutions are multifarious.

From an extended/joint family system, the younger generations are moving towards consumerism and greater individualism. As a result of economic growth, the autonomy offered by nuclear family units becomes very attractive. Although social alienation and isolation are not yet pervasive in this country, there is a fear 'it may become an accepted norm in the future'.[24] According to some local research findings, the disorganisation of family relationships is reflected in the increasing delinquency and divorce rates.[25]

Secondly, while, on the one hand, a dense environment narrowed the physical distance between modern flat dwellers, it has, on the other hand, widened their social distance. This has been confirmed by research surveys[26] conducted into community ties in dense housing estates.

Despite the disruptive effects these consequences of urbanisation have had on Singaporean traditions they had to be contended with,

in consideration of the benefits that urbanisation otherwise brought for modernisation and economic growth. Nevertheless, although urbanisation, as we saw earlier, pushed for change towards rationalistic and more efficient ways, their psychological need to depend on traditionally regulative institutions did not suddenly disappear. Government intervention to ease the problems of urbanisation however, as we shall see later, facilitated and encouraged the people's growing dependence on the State structure.

Modernisation

The process of modernisation in developing countries usually involves importing technological, socio-organisational and ideological systems from advanced nations. Therefore, Chen continues, 'for many newcomers of developing countries, modernisation in effect means Westernisation'.[27]

We may perceive two distinguishable types of effects here:

Firstly, the influx of knowledge, techniques and systems which are considered beneficial to the State. These are generally expected to enhance the social, economic and technological level of the nation. This indeed provides a rather favourable background for the wealth-pursuing ethos.

Secondly, the influx of foreign systems, values and life styles which are thought to be detrimental to economically relevant behaviour. These include certain behavioural aspects of Western civilisation that are likely to promote a liberal questioning of regulation and

control, whether of traditional community, or modern State codes. They are clearly undesired by the ruling leadership and, if allowed, would be thought to constitute a heavy cost to the society.

Summary of the Impacts of Industrialisation and Modernisation

(a) All three features, viz economic growth, urbanisation and modernisation, reinforced the legitimacy of the wealth-pursuing ethos.

(b) On the other hand, they contributed, to differing extents, to the erosion of traditional community codes.

(c) Some consequences of this erosion have been thought to be beneficial for modernisation and economic growth, and have thereby been encouraged by the State. Others have been considered as costs to be contended with, in consideration of the benefits obtained in the processes of urbanisation and modernisation.

(d) Certain undesired consequences of urbanisation and modernisation have become areas that the Government would prefer restrained and actively discouraged. This then brings us to the issue of State intervention.

V. STATE INTERVENTION

The term intervention is used in the present context to refer to the actions taken by the State either to promote or suppress the socio-cultural effects of industrialisation and modernisation towards desired ends. We shall now study how the evolving State framework

asserts itself over the effects of economic growth, urbanisation and modernisation that we examined earlier.

State Intervention on the Preconditions and Consequences of Economic Growth

The State's involvement in enhancing the preconditions for economically relevant behaviour has taken three main forms:

Firstly, the Government encouraged attributes of the migrant ethos such as achievement, orientation, adaptability and social mobility (which have found their way into the wealth-pursuing ethos). While young people were drilled to recognise that 'achievement was concomitant with social and economic wellbeing, ... the meritocratic-capitalist emphasis underlying the institutional structure has indeed motivated achievement in every sphere of life in Singapore'.[28] The Government has also effectively utilised the adaptation aspect of the migrant ethos to promote secularism (whereas tradition emphasised spirituality and morality).

Secondly, the Government has taken steps to encourage and direct the country's human resources towards the acquisition of technical skills and know-how necessary for industrialisation. Towards this end, the authorities have expanded technical and vocational facilities in schools, colleges and universities.

Thirdly, the Government has also adopted measures to regulate and control workers towards economically relevant behaviour. Amendments made to employment law[29] in the 1960's exemplify the stricter control

over workers and, in some ways, over employers.

While all the three above forms of government action illustrate an evolving pattern of centralised State control, they also support the wealth-pursuing ethos.

The State, on the other hand, takes steps to discourage the growth consequence of materialistic consumerism. The need to generate investment capital through domestic savings has promoted the Government to discourage excessive private consumption. Aggressive policies and attractive propositions made by the Government through the National Savings Bank and other financial institutions have clearly been aimed at stimulating domestic savings which, in turn, boosted capital formation. State intervention has thus redirected some propensity for private consumption into a factor of economic production. The effects of voluntary and compulsory savings through State institutions also reinforce the people's dependence on State regulation.

State Intervention and Urbanisation

On an island of about 230 square miles holding two million people, land is a vital resource for urban development. The constraint of land scarcity seems to justify the Government's continued construction of high-density (high rise) housing estates.

Earlier we saw that some desired aspects of traditional family-community relationships forfeited in the process of urbanisation were likely to become areas for Government intervention.

As social alienation and isolation develop when people tend towards nuclear families, we are likely to find 'inward looking dwellings' and a strong feeling of insecurity. While high density in these housing estates cannot be avoided, the Government makes an effort to constantly monitor the various special and psychological ill-effects that could develop as a result. Medical and social services are being improved to meet these demands. Where previously family problems would have found solutions within the extended family or community relationships, they now become very much a state responsibility. An extensive Government network tends to enhance the people's dependence on the state structure.

In addition, the Government has also set up community centres in all these housing estates. Although mass participation at these recreational centres remains limited however, they effectively constitute 'a mechanism of political socialisation and control'[30] for the Government.

Given the constraints of land scarcity and the need, at the same time, to stimulate urbanisation to achieve higher levels of industrialisation, the methods used to ameliorate the costs of urban housing have indeed strengthened the people's dependence on the State structure.

State Intervention and Modernisation

We had in our earlier analysis distinguished between the influx of socio-cultural effects that either contributed to economic and technological progress or otherwise were detrimental to economically

relevant behaviour.

Convening Parliament on February 8th, 1977, the President of Singapore acknowledged that the nation 'must learn and acquire (Western) science and technology, their management skills and marketing know-how'.[31] Indeed, a good number of the Government's initiatives, from the elitist Junior College to urban housing, are all designs that have been borrowed from the Western nations. 'Our policies were not novel, innovative or path-breaking'[32] wrote the nation's Deputy Prime Minister recently. Being a 'late developer', the State continues to adopt a number of features of Western development in order to achieve a modernised environment in Singapore. As traditional values and affiliations are caused to wear away in the process, modernisation creates a common environment for the various ethnic groups which make up the population. In socio-cultural terms, therefore, an environment which transcends traditional connections tends to facilitate consensus in the various groups as to the desired ends. This is crucial for centralised State coordination.

In contrast, however, effects that are likely to be detrimental to economically relevant behaviour are actively discouraged and even prohibited by the Government. While the newspapers do not generally support news unfavourable to the Government, the radio and television networks are State-operated. The cinema films which are another channel for foreign values and fashions are subject to strict censorship. There are also rules and regulations governing personal behaviour, especially to keep out 'unhealthy' practices and pastimes thought to be fashionable among contemporary Western youth.

It is interesting to note that in order to combat these undesired effects, the State has resorted to promoting certain traditional rituals and practices. While not contradicting economic progress, these symbolic practices act to counter those features of Western civilisation that are deemed inconducive to economically relevant behaviour. Singapore's youth 'are therefore exhorted to be faithful to the moral precepts of the (Oriental) culture'.[33] In so doing, any tendency to question or challenge authority which are believed to be attributes originating from Western civilisation tends to be suppressed by the normative and regulative influence of traditional symbols. The State has thus even utilised tradition to reinforce its own system of regulation and control.

VI. TOWARDS STATE CONTROL

Singapore's socio-cultural development is best summarised in a schematic diagram, which follows as figure III on the next page.

Beginning with a traditional base, we show the stages through which the socio-cultural system moves following the three-phase impacts: migrant ethos and colonisation, industrialisation and modernisation and State intervention. We have distinguished State intervention from industrialisation and modernisation for reasons of clarity, although all these processes have taken place concomitantly. The effects and manifestations of each impact phase are also indicated so as to enable a better understanding of the developments that have taken place in the system.

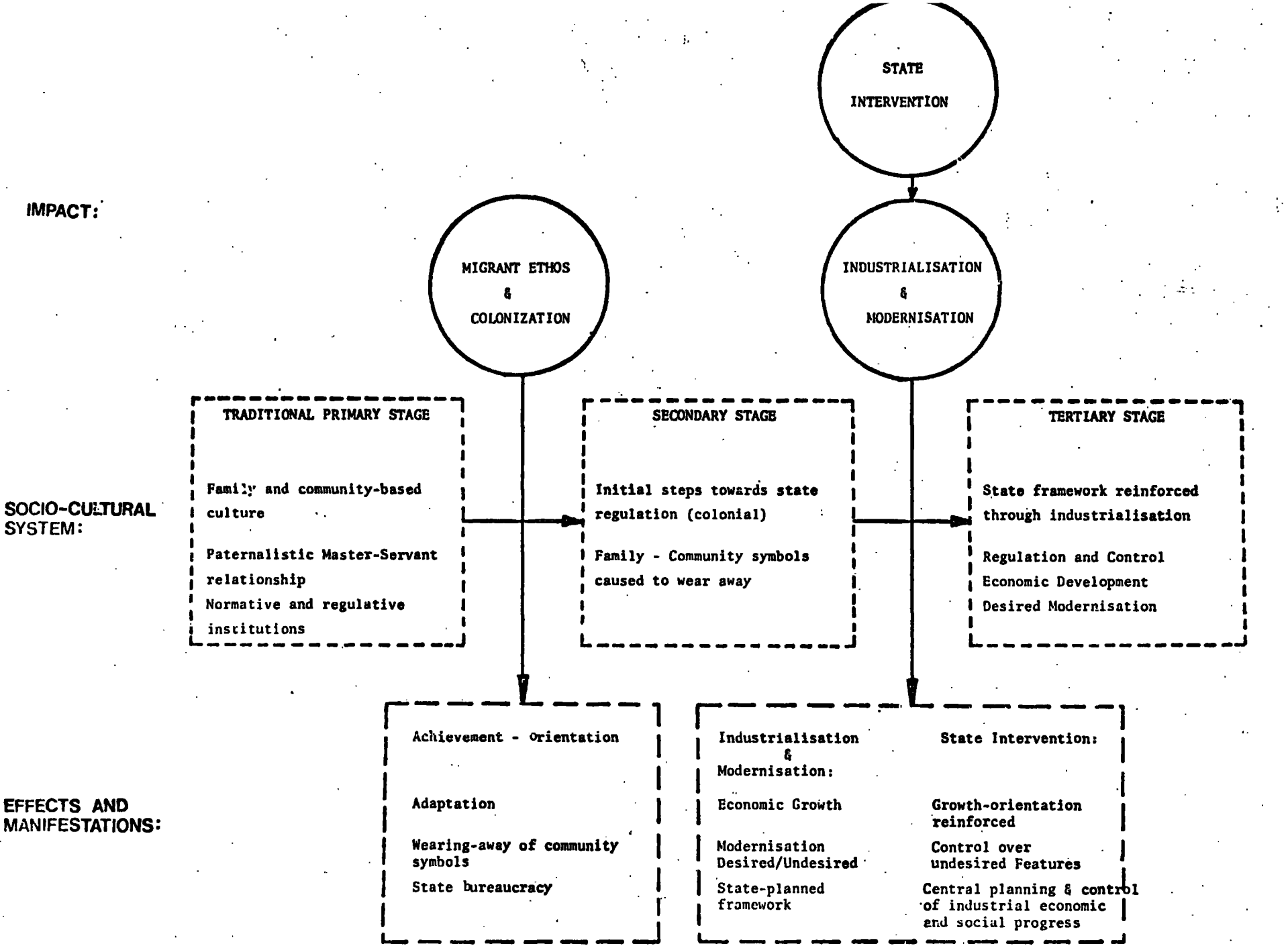

FIGURE: III

SOCIO-CULTURAL EVOLUTION IN SINGAPORE

SOURCE: AUTHOR

The early stage begins with traditional Oriental norms which stress a high degree of dependence on family and community-based normative regulation and control. At this point we see the significance of the paternalistic master-servant relationship constituting an important ingredient of Singapore's wealth-pursuing ethos.

The primary impact on the traditional base sets in as a result of migration and colonization. The impact naturally caused a certain amount of wearing away of traditional norms. Nevertheless, here we see the attributes of the migrant ethos such as achievement orientation, adaptability and social mobility laying the foundations of the wealth-pursuing ethos. At the same time, because of the strict and impartial administration that the British rulers set up, the Oriental communities were drawn into a state bureaucracy. Although traditional norms were overshadowed, the colonial government and legislative framework gave the immigrants a sense of regulation they had culturally become so dependent on.

The secondary impact of industrialisation and modernisation also caused a certain amount of erosion of traditional community codes. Socio-culturally this impact has also reinforced the wealth-pursuing ethos, since both industrialisation and modernisation provided opportunities for wealth, social achievement and mobility. As the industrialisation and modernisation programme in Singapore was largely directed by the Government, this impact phase reinforced the State-framework.

State intervention, however, can be considered the most significant impact. The picture of Government intervention we saw earlier clearly points to the evolution of a powerful centralised State structure. In a number of respects, this framework has taken over the regulation earlier maintained by traditional community codes. We can also see that, while this centralisation of control could have undermined the capitalistic (self-interest) aspect of the wealth-pursuing ethos, the Government has, through the need for economic progress and modernisation, given it a firm place in society. To remind ourselves again of Galbraith's comments: 'self-interest serves pretty well as a motivation ..... it is recognised that it does not serve all purposes, and that it serves best within a framework of careful overall planning'.[34] Today this ethos persists harmoniously in a society firmly committed to centralised State control.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BASIS OF STATE CONTROL

I THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF INDEPENDENT SINGAPORE

II THE ELEMENT OF SINGAPORE's 'POLITICS OF SURVIVAL'

III SINGAPORE's SURVIVAL APPROACH TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS

IV WORKER ORGANISATION AND STATE CONTROL

V THE ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

VI THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BASIS OF STATE CONTROL

I. THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC & POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF INDEPENDENT SINGAPORE

Independent from Malaysia on 9th August, 1965, the Government of Singapore has had since then to demonstrate that, despite the lack of natural resources, the city-state could survive without the traditional patronage of the Malayan hinterland. · With the escalation of war in Vietnam and the Malaysian-Indonesian confrontation in the background, the political setting in the region was far from stable. The economic and political implications of the British announcement to withdraw their military commitments East of Suez beginning in the late sixties made the task even more urgent. Realising the difficult options available, the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) embarked on the 'politics of survival'. Briefly, it meant that the sole objective of the new enterprise was urgent social and economic progress to which everything else was to be subservient.

Meanwhile the 'Barisan Socialis' (the communist-inclined opposition to the ruling Party) decided to boycott Parliament towards the end of 1965. This action was seen as a threat to continue their anti-Government struggle from the underground. While the internal security network kept communist activists under careful surveillance, the Government pursued social and economic strategies aimed at denying them any ground in the masses. The PAP was keen to make sure that the communist-supporting section of the population was kept to a small minority. Only seven seats were contested by the Barisan in the 1968 general election.

Without any open fight from the Barisan the PAP walked over all 58 seats, with 86.7% of the votes cast in the contested constituences. A similar feat was performed in the subsequent (1972) election where this time 57 of the 65 constituencies were contested. In spite of the presence of the Barisan Socialis in this contest, however, the PAP took all the seats with 69% of the total votes cast. This feat was repeated in the latest general elections in December 1976. Even if we exclude from consideration the 1968 result, since only seven constituences were contested, the results of 1972 and 1976 confirm the peoples' support for the ruling party. As H.C. Chan put it, the present Government's 'legitimacy as rulers ... strengthened with time'.[1] While not discounting the 'charisma' of the ruling leadership (resulting from participating in the anti-colonial struggle, and the continued leadership since 1959), the 'politics of survival' to achieve socio-economic progress has been the 'rational' basis for the Government's legitimacy.

II. THE ELEMENTS OF SINGAPORE'S 'POLITICS OF SURVIVAL'

'Multiracialism'

Government policy in Singapore continues to stress that the nation's political stability and economic viability is crucially dependent on the peaceful existence of her multiracial communities. In a country of at least four important ethnic communities, the ruling leadership has repeatedly stressed equal status for the various cultures and ethnic identities.

The Government's emphasis on the Malay language while she was part of Malaysia (1963-65) was later changed to multi-lingualism, where all school children now have to learn at least two languages at school. On this G. Benjamin has said:

> "In Singapore this ideology has functioned for the past decade as a powerful force against ethnic discrimination, and its success is evident in the ease and unselfconsciousness with which Singaporeans of different ethnic backgrounds interact publicly ... Much of the credit for (a place where different ethnic groups live together without strife) must go to the Singapore Government's positive espousal of a morality based on multiracialism". 2

Socialisation Towards State Objectives

Another survival scheme adopted by the PAP was mobilisation of the masses towards State objectives. The community centres and the citizen consultative committees which were initiated in 1961 have since been developed into machines of political socialisation and mobilisation. In a recent study on community centres in Singapore, C.M. Seah had this to say, 'The centres ... could be viewed as forming a mechanism of political socialisation and control'.[3] In addition to community centres, it is true, as Chan claimed, 'Socialisation through the mass media and schools has successfully convinced the bulk of the population that there are no alternative methods or policies workable for Singapore's economic survival'.[4]

Political Climate Discouraging Confrontation Against the Government

Apart from socialising the masses towards State objectives Singapore has also shown the development of a political climate which discourages

confrontation against the Government. The Government's internal security machinery and the restrictive labour legislation are distinct examples of the State institutionalising this climate of control. As Chan concludes, it 'discourages conflict, confrontation and bargaining, emphasises stability, low-risk and petition'.[5] This has indeed strengthened the people's dependence on the ruling leadership and their State institutions.

Modernisation and Economic Expansion

Modernisation is a third survival commitment, and its emphasis on science and technology has been justified by the Government thus:

> "Societies which modernise rapidly and smoothly are those which accept change as an inevitable, necessary and normal part of existence - not as unpleasant deviations from the norm to be fought off for as long as we can. Change as a way of life is particularly for developing countries the only rational approach to the world modern technology and science are creating".

It was also argued that:

> "If we persist in our task of rapid modernisation and if we are not overawed by the difficulties and challenges that will confront us then the future will be more assured and brighter for us ..." 6.

The other aspects of modernisation that continue to receive constant attention are public housing, employment and improvement in the standards of living. K.S. Goh recently wrote: 'it is clear that all these three objectives could be achieved only through continuous and rapid economic growth.'7

Thus, concomitant to modernisation, the most important social goal of survival for Singapore has continued to be 'continuous and rapid economic growth'. Her growth strategy works along two lines.

While the first concerns human resource development, the second hinges upon accelerating the expansion of the manufacturing industry. Goh has summarised the State's economic policies as follows:

> "Taking an overall view of Singapore's economic policy, we can see how radically it differed from the laissezfaire policies of the colonial era .... We had to try a more activist and interventionist approach. Democratic socialist economic policies ranged from direct participation in industry to the supply of infrastructure facilities by statutory authorities, and to laying down clear guidelines to the private sector as to what they could and should do. The successful implementation of these policies depended on their acceptance by the people, generally, and on the active co-operation of organised labour in particular. All these conditions were fulfilled". 8

Legislation to restrict labour enacted in 1968 have been very instrumental in the promotion of investment and thereby industrialisation. Mass rallies, demonstrations, strikes and open labour-management conflict were systematically brought under control. Though itself a pro-labour party in the 1950's, the PAP included the labour-restrictive sections in the 1968 Employment and Industrial Relations (Amendment) Acts to meet the 'economic dictates of survival'. The Acts were passed after the 1968 elections without a dissenting vote in the one-party Parliament and neither was there much agitation outside. This may be explained by the fact that most of the workers were either unorganised or were members of a trade union federation that supported the Government. Control by the State has thus taken the form of limiting labour's original freedoms of action, and has been a prominent ingredient of Singapore's economic growth strategy.

Meritocracy

At the opening of Parliament in February 1977, the President of Singapore reiterated the importance of another survival platform; he stressed the relevance for Singapore of an Asian precept espousing meritocracy: 'From each his best, to each his worth'. Economic distribution, according to him, had to be based on consistency in high performance for better rewards.[9]

Ideologically this confirms a major shift of the PAP from being 'a junior partner of a communist united front (against colonialism) which was 'distinctly Marxist in flavour',[10] in the mid-fifties - to a post-independence position that emphasised the wealth-pursuing ethos and meritocracy. The stress on meritocracy indeed became evident in political speeches and Government policies soon after independence. The nation's Prime Minister told a Socialist International gathering in 1967 that:

> "The meaning of a socialist democracy ... is not just a simple process of taking from the haves and giving to the have-nots so that the majority of the population who are have-nots will have something more without doing more to get it" 11.

A like-minded Power Elite and Centralisation of Authority

The last survival strategy we shall discuss here is the development of the power elite in Singapore. During the period of internal self-government, the power elite consisted of various interest and powerful pressure groups. Apart from the powerful opposition within Parliament, lobbies representing the various interests of business,

labour and the ethnic communities were also quite influential. The survival of the system as that time depended, to a considerable extent, on the stability guaranteed by the legislative and administrative institutions inherited from the Colonial Raj. Today, after more than two successful one-party Parliaments, the power structure is quite different. According to Chan:

> "Authority is now enjoyed in the same way (as the Colonial authorities) by the PAP Government admitting, when it wants, the advice of business industrialists, bankers and local community leaders if it so wishes". 12

Perceived this way, the change represents a cycle; thus reverting to the monopolistic nature of authority exercised by the British during the colonial period.

From a more pluralist power structure during self-government, the dominant Party framework today represents an ideologically homogeneous and cohesive elite working with, and under, a strong leadership. Apart from the development of this form of elite organisation, the survival of the present system has also depended on the strategic distribution of the members of the Party elite over a wide range of State institutions and functions. This guarantees the survival of the Party, its policies and thereby the system in its current form. It is worth noting here that the Secretary-General of the National Trade Union Congress is a very important Party man and that a number of his trade union colleagues are members of the single-party Parliament. While the strategic distribution of the members belonging to the elite group has encouraged the spread of unitary ideology, the persistence of a one-party Parliament has effected a high degree of centralisation of authority.

The Politics of Survival and Social Control

The ideology of survival and the policies and measures taken by the Government towards this end have, as we have seen, proved to be a powerful means of social control. By drawing the people's attention to the peculiar conditions facing Singapore - scarcity of land, the need for multi-racial co-existence and also for modernisation and economic growth etc., the ideology of survival has indeed helped to sustain their obeisance, and amenability to direction.

III. SINGAPORE'S SURVIVAL APPROACH TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS

The formative years of self-governing Singapore were marked by a power elite made up of diverse interest groups. The ruling group was at that time openly challenged by a formidable communist organisation. This was changed into a unitary structure after independence. The Government's survival policies have indeed played an important part in this process. The anti-Government and communist threats today are perceived more from forces outside the island. Within its borders, the vacuum created in the communist leadership by the internal security mechanism has been filled by the new style of survival management. Given the sensitive nature of the power balance in the region after the communist victories in Indo-China, and the high degree of sensitivity to external fluctuations that the country's economy experiences, the Singapore Government continues to depend on her survival policies for socio-economic progress.

While the administrative and legislative system left behind by the Colonial Raj played a significant role in ensuring stability for the takeover government, the system has since been further reinforced.

This has been achieved through:

(a) a unitary ideology of survival ;

(b) the centralisation of authority; and

(c) regulative State legislation and machinery.

The Government's policies and schemes of survival have played a vital role in achieving for Singapore social and economic standards which are well known to be amongst the highest in Asia. As results from her industrialisation programme have yielded concrete economic progress and modernisation, the people continue to legitimise the highly centralised political structure, and thereby, its regulative institutions and methods.

Next, we turn our attention to the important question of State control as it affects workers' organisations. Singapore's national trade union movement, we shall see, is a crucial agent of State control. Being so in a country which operates on democratic institutions (inherited from the former British rulers) must indeed provide for an interesting analysis. We shall examine the movement's highly centralised nature, and the basis of its role in centralised State control.

IV. WORKER ORGANISATION AND STATE CONTROL

There are today 89 employee trade unions in Singapore with membership totalling more than 200,000 (approx. 30% of the total labour force). This membership falls into two main categories, namely the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) - affiliated and the non-affiliated.

Since more than 90% of the unionised workers are affiliated to the NTUC, non-affiliated membership has become insignificant. A discussion on current worker organisation in Singapore must, therefore, centre around the NTUC.

Workers in Singapore have been encouraged to join NTUC-affiliated unions through a variety of means. Being strongly socialised in the wealth-pursuing ethos, these workers have tended to respond most effectively to money rewards. In order to attract workers into the State-supporting NTUC, the government has generated economic benefits and facilities that are directed to workers through this body. One important channel for these benefits is the chain of state-financed trade union co-operatives which deal in a wide range of activities. Some of the better known ones deal in insurance, supermarkets, taxi and bus services, school books, dental care and travel. By creating opportunities and economic benefits, these operations have indeed made the NTUC a significant social institution, beyond just being a bargaining agent.

The Government also channels advantages to NTUC-affiliated workers through discretionary judgements made by its agencies. Reflecting the close party teamwork E. Chalmers wrote:
'The party and government aid the unions ... in discretionary judgements exercised by government officials on a wide range of problems for which they are responsible under various ordinances'.[13] This has tended to enhance NTUC's status viz-a-viz the working population. At the practical level, the assistance that government agencies give the NTUC has important implications both for aggrieved employees

seeking justice, and for employers who may be over-exploitative. Workers are thus encouraged to rely on the NTUC for support in grievances, disputes and general labour problems, both within and without the factory.

In addition, the NTUC participates in national-level committees (e.g. the National Industrial Relations Committee and the National Wages Council) with a power status much enhanced by active support from the Government leadership. Workers are thereby made to feel that their interests would be adequately voiced at the highest level. Being part of a politically 'like-minded' power-elite, however, the NTUC-leadership has been assigned a national role to mobilise and direct organised labour towards State objectives. These generally surpass the common sectional interests of labour. Nevertheless, NTUC's growing importance in the national context makes it the primary medium of State communication with workers, and a valuable channel for the petitioning of Government authority.

Both the discretionary judgements on its behalf and the national status assigned to it may be viewed as facilities aimed at encouraging workers to rely upon the NTUC. Besides, as we shall see at the end of this chapter, the economic benefits and facilities we have just discussed have been directed to the workers as a reward for their mobilisation and direction under centralised State control. The NTUC may essentially be viewed as being a crucial agent of this control.

V. THE ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT

In this section we shall investigate an important feature of NTUC's organisation and structure that has facilitated the significant intervention by the State into the movement. This feature is the high degree of centralisation of authority in the movement. It is effected through a National Centre run by key members of the ruling Party's elite. Apart from modest participation in electing immediate leaders, the involvement in the movement of the rank and file is limited to being mobilised for specific union or larger State objectives. While policies are designed at the top and executed by the middle-rung district union officers, the rank and file is quite far removed from the decision-making process.

'House' Unions and their Affiliation to the NTUC

The typical union affiliated to the National TUC is either an independent enterprise union or a branch of a district federation. While examples of enterprise unions are found in the Keppel shipyard and the Port Authority, branch unions, being the more common form, are found in the various places of employment. The Singapore Industrial Labour Organisation (SILO), the Pioneer Industries Employees' Union (PIEU), and the Amalgamated Union of Public Employees (AUPE) are the National Centre's main district federations, to one of which each branch is attached. Since these enterprise and branch unions are generally organised on a 'house' basis few employers are confronted with craft or multi-union situations. Thus, the National TUC is also free from difficulties which otherwise could arise from inter-union

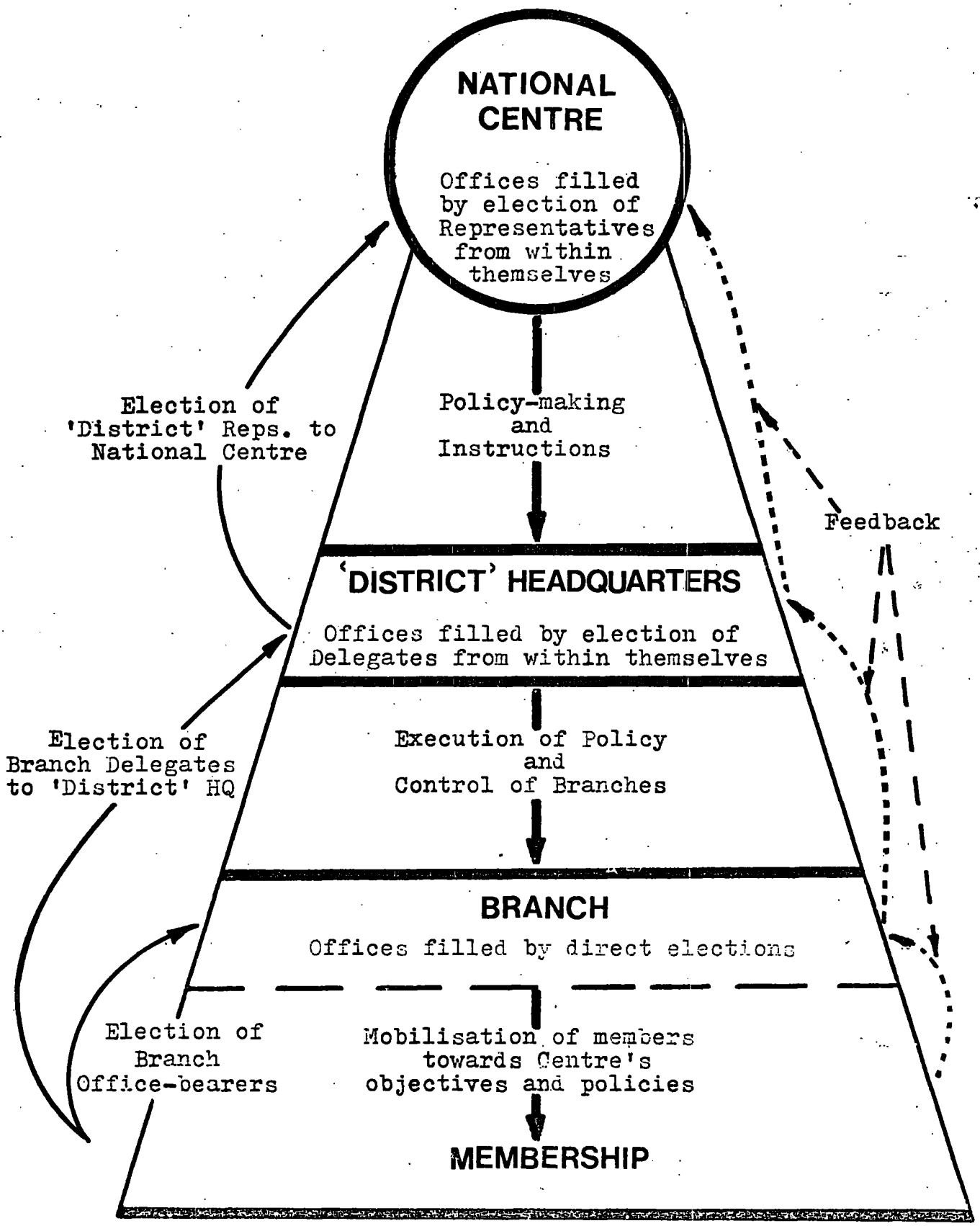
competition within the enterprise. This has resulted in easier control for the National Trade Union leadership - precisely what is not possible in a context such as found in Britain.

Lines of Control Within the Movement

A pictorial representation of control within the labour movement is given in figure IV on the next page.

Authority in the first instance is derived from the membership which elects the branch or enterprise union committee, and delegates to the district confederation (in the case of the branch type). Office holders at the district headquarters are then elected by these delegates who also appoint representatives to the National Centre. These representatives finally decide among themselves the Centre's executive line-up. Thus we see that the direct participation of the rank and file at the lowest level remains occasional and modest. As we proceed up the ladder, we notice leaders electing leaders, right up to the National Centre. From this we may see that the 'upward flow of authority' or legitimation takes place more through 'delegation and representation rather than direct participation'[14] of the rank and file.

The downward flow of authority, on the other hand, begins at the National Centre. Apart from its role in the national environment working together with Party and Government, it lays the broad framework for all policy and action within the movement. The National Centre holds responsibility for all affairs in the movement and often makes decisions on the running of branch and enterprise union organisations.



THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT: LINES OF CONTROL

FIGURE: IV
SOURCE: AUTHOR

Sanction for all major action at the district or branch levels is usually obtained from the top. The Centre usually employs district officials to maintain close vigilance over local industrial relations. How this is done we shall see a little later. The National Union leaders are very particular about the coordination and successful operation of all the worker cooperatives. These cooperatives, as we saw earlier, are an important service to the membership and workers in general. Another key responsibility for the National leaders remain - to ensure mobilisation of workers for Party direction and State regulation. It is in this area we shall soon see how the branch representatives play their part.

The National Centre continues to be run by a group of trusted Party stalwarts who are expected to give the Government, in Goh's words, 'the active cooperation of organised labour'.[15]

Writing more than a decade ago Chalmers had identified the movement's 'first control point, not at the branch level, but above the branch'[16] at the level of the district headquarters. The district officials are responsible for the union's handling of grievances. They engage in negotiations with employers normally to ensure that members received State-prescribed rewards, and also represent the branch side at arbitration hearings. The district headquarters follows up on the expanding union membership and sometimes masterminds entry into un-unionised workplaces. Through the branch representatives, district officials often organise political action - generally to support Government and Party programmes. These people also select suitable local unionists for participation at the National Centre.

Indeed, the various district headquarters are essentially executors of policies and decisions designed at the National Centre. They constitute a crucial control mechanism.

Activities at the branch are generally performed under the direction and guidance of the district headquarters, which then communicates results and findings to the National Centre. It is not unusual for the union side to enterprise-level negotiations to include a headquarters appointee, who normally leads the team of branch officials. The handling of disputes and grievances by branch officials, in most cases, is also done in close consultation with headquarters executives. The branch men, however, play an important role in mobilising their members for political action. As the branch officials are generally loyal supporters of the Centre's leadership, themselves Party stalwarts, they tend to participate quite actively in Party and Government community development programmes. One political event that demonstrates clearly the extent of their party involvement is the parliamentary election, when they are known to get deeply involved organising campaigns to elect members of the ruling Party. Being the first-line link with the working masses, branch officials are a crucial instrument in influencing worker opinion towards endorsing the ruling Party's programmes. They are made responsible, for instance, to convince members that the economic circumstances facing Singapore call for restraint and control in the labour movement. Indeed, the NTUC played a crucial role in mobilising its members to accept the Employment and Industrial Relations (Amendment) Acts of 1968 which placed stringent limits on labour's bargaining position.

Workers are also continuously socialised and regulated to support the employers' optimisation of resources to a considerable extent, giving them unilateral control within the enterprise. Thus, participation at the branch and membership levels is concerned mainly with mass mobilisation for ends prescribed by the Centre.

Based on our analysis we may summarise the movement's structure of participation as follows:-

(a) National Centre: Decision-making

(b) Federation headquarters: Execution

(c) Branch and rank and file: Mobilisation

Our diagram (Figure IV) illustrates the NTUC to be what Chalmers thought was 'the reality of a highly centralised union movement'.[17]

VI. THE NATIONAL TRADE UNION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

We have thus seen how authority has become centralised in the National Centre, run by members of the State's like-minded elite. This centralisation of authority has, as Chalmers put it, developed a movement where 'in some significant degree party and government are able to influence union leadership choices and union policies'.[18] The NTUC has thus continued to perform as an important agent of State control.

While the highly centralised nature of the movement does reflect the unitary nature of Singapore's movement, the situation is not

governed solely by some unitary ideology such as may be seen in a country like the Soviet Union. A crucial basis for workers and their leaders in Singapore to legitimise centralised State control lies in an important exchange. Being strongly socialised in the wealth-pursuing ethos, Singapore workers legitimise their mobilisation and regulation under State control in exchange for minimum guarantees in economic rewards and labour conditions. Economic incentives and facilities generated by the State and directed to workers through the NTUC not only serve to encourage NTUC-affiliated membership, they have also become part of that important exchange package. Although there are some important parts of Singapore's labour legislation that favour the employers, certain minimum guarantees for workers have been written into other parts of the legislation. These guarantees are realised by the State through its intervention in wage policies and regulation through agencies like the Labour Ministry and the Arbitration Court. Some key aspects of worker-supportive legislation, regulation and intervention by the State and its agencies are to be discussed in the JURONG analysis later.

Beyond money rewards, one may trace this acceptance of centralised State control by workers to the traditional dependence by the people (including workers) on normative and regulative socio-cultural institutions. The impacts of colonization, industrialisation and State intervention have all reinforced this dependence on regulation and control.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONTROL IN THE SINGAPORE ENTERPRISE

INTRODUCTION

I SOCIAL CONTROL IN THE SYSTEM

II WHITHER INDUSTRIAL PEACE? A DIAGNOSIS OF THE PROBLEMS AT JURONG

III MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES: TOWARDS MORE STABILITY & CONTROL OF PERFORMANCE ON THE SHOPFLOOR

IV TOWARDS MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTROL IN THE SINGAPORE ENTERPRISE

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part is about the nature and impact of social control in JURONG's industrial relations system. Here we discuss the interactions between the different parties and the degree and extent of influence that each exerts in the situation. While the Government exerts strong influence over industrial relations even at plant level, the company's management and union also have a role in what we may call 'downward' control over the workforce - with the main entities telling the employees what to do and what is good for them. There appears to be little evidence of workers having any influence over the parties above them or over the rewards, conditions or environment of the work they do. The reasons for the amenability of the worker to this downward control may be explained in terms of the environmental (socio-cultural, economic and political) factors that we have already discussed in the earlier chapters.

The picture that one gets from the first part gives the impression of peace and that all is well in the industrial relations system. It would indeed be reasonable to say that JURONG enjoys a reasonable amount of stability - judged by the usual criteria such as the relationship between the major parties, presence of overt conflict or militancy on the shopfloor or a visible threat from outside the system. One could also reasonably expect that the

existing pattern of control would be able to maintain itself for some time to come - there is definitely no evidence of a trend that the workers are working towards an uprising to challenge the downward control. In spite of this 'stable' status-quo, however, one cannot go on to conclude that there are no problems or potential sources of instability, or that the prevailing pattern is working towards eliminating such threats to its stability. These problems are discussed in the second part.

Following the diagnosis in the second part, the third part proposes some motivational approaches to promote stability and higher labour productivity.

In the final part we stress the need to balance industrial relations responsibility between line and personnel management. The existing system concentrates all shopfloor industrial relations responsibility in the personnel department. We recommend passing back substantial responsibility to line managers for more effective control over their operations. Here we also discuss the long-term implications for JURONG of the 'job-enrichment', 'worker participation', 'industrial democracy' movements which are growing rapidly in the developed economies. We recommend adopting the job-involvement scheme as part of a productivity improvement programme, which would lead to an overall increase in influence and control in the organisation. Although management may sacrifice control over some workplace decisions, it would in comparison, be able to gain much more control over the workplace situation and worker performance.

I. Part A SOCIAL CONTROL IN THE SYSTEM

The first step in our investigation of the nature of social control in JURONG was to identify the key people who participated in industrial relations decisions. The main actors in the system were: labour, management and the personnel department.

The permanent employees at JURONG number approximately two thousand, of whom about ninety percent are union members. One important method of recruitment into the union takes place through primary groups or friendship cliques. Organised on a 'house' basis they form a branch of the Pioneer Industries Employees' Union which is affiliated to Singapore's National TUC. The branch committee, elected by direct elections every two years,is composed of three key officials (Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary) who are relieved of much of their work in the yard to enable them perform union duties. The branch Secretary concurrently holds the position of Industrial Relations Officer of the Pioneer Industries Union headquarters. Being a direct or full-time representative of the district headquarters, he wields considerable influence over the branch committee members including the Chairman. He is therefore the main actor on the union side. Apart from leading the branch committee at the collective bargaining table and other important discussions with the management he is also responsible for ensuring regular feedback to the district headquarters. This feedback role is also supplemented by the Branch Chairman and Assistant Secretary.

On the management side it is pertinent to note that the company's Managing Director is well regarded within the ruling Party and labour circles. This special influence has indeed helped to evoke substantial compliance from the branch union leaders.

Very much involved in the administration of regulations, procedures and agreements, JURONG's personnel department is mainly responsible for laying the groundwork for collective bargaining. Following an invitation to negotiate on industrial matters for collective agreement, the Personnel executives and the branch union committee, normally hold initial rounds of official talks and unofficial discussions in order to conclude on issues that hold reasonable chance of consensus. Issues that remain outstanding are usually taken back to their respective bosses for clarification, or for renewed mandate, as the case may be. There are, however, sometimes difficult issues. In such situations, which are infrequent, the personnel department tends to rely on the influence of the Managing Director over the union officials. Such issues are usually settled between district official and the Managing Director. The personnel department appears quite happy with this mechanism as it sometimes removes teething problems from their offices. While such difficult situations are not common, the personnel department has, over the years, successfully developed an interesting rapport with the unionists and the workers, remaining essentially as representatives of the management. We shall later see how, with the co-operation of the officials, the personnel department has contributed to the management's unilateral control within the enterprise.

THE SYSTEM'S UNITARY IDEOLOGY

In our investigation at JURONG Shipyard, we wished to inquire into the nature and basis of control exerted by the management, union and State over enterprise industrial relations. We also wished to study the general disposition that the JURONG workers had to the various forms of social control.

The most significant characteristic of JURONG that strikes the outside observer is the unitary ideology that pervades industrial relations institutions. Indeed, Singapore's industrial peace and stability in much of the last decade and a half can be attributed to the general consensus about the 'rules (both formal and informal) of the game'. There are two main elements to this unitary ideology.

The first concerns the nature of control within the enterprise. There is a general commitment to the employer's unilateral control over the organisation of resources and structure within the enterprise. This may be attributed to the wealth-pursuing ethos and its widespread acceptance in Singapore. There is little opposition to this ethos from the labour organisation and therefore one may say that they do not challenge management's unilateral control over organisation structure and resources in principle.

The second concerns the nature of control from outside the enterprise, by the operations of the State. Workers accept socialisation by the State's leadership (which includes the trade union elite) to co-operate with the employer's optimisation of resources,

in return for increasing money rewards. The State determines planned increases - to improve the workers' lot, at the same time controlling the cost to employers of such rewards.

For the State leadership, the self-evident record of economic performance achieved by its Government, with the help of the National Union, has been an effective way of gaining the workers' confidence. This sustained record has indeed enabled the Government to underwrite a guarantee to increase money rewards for the workers from whom, in return, is expected an enthusiastic response to the leadership's call for co-operation with management. This socialisation by the State leadership takes place not only through trade union programmes and the mass media, but has also entered the curriculum of young high school students. The workers' desire for increasing money rewards may be seen as an essential part of the wealth-pursuing ethos. Their acceptance of State intervention is influenced in important respects by pressures of economic and political circumstances.

Further, workers have been socialised to develop a dependence on a unitary labour movement, under the auspices of the Government. Workers thus organised are more directly controlled by the State. Their enthusiastic response at election campaigns supporting the ruling Party is indeed clear evidence of the role played by the local branches of the NTUC in mobilising them for Government-backed political programmes.

Workers have been motivated to join a highly centralised labour movement through incentives and facilities provided by the State.

While on a national scale the NTUC is fast expanding in membership (currently holding about 30% of the total labour force), its affiliate at JURONG holds approximately 90% of 2,000 eligible workers. The National Union thereby becomes an important agent of State control: socialising and regulating workers, on the one hand, to safeguard management's unilateral control within the enterprise, and ensuring at the work place, on the other hand, that workers actually receive State-prescribed rewards and conditions from their employers.

Local unions and employers accept the role of the State in maintaining a balance between the interests of workers, owners and the public. Both sides accept State control maintained through legislation, its regulative agencies like the Labour Ministry and institutions such as the National Wages Council, and the Industrial Arbitration Court.

Legislation concedes unilateral control of the enterprise structure and resources to the employer, while it also stipulates minimum labour conditions for workers. In addition to legislation, State agencies and institutions further assume substantial regulative responsibility for industry. Apart from determining the quantum of extrinsic rewards for workers, they also prescribe procedural rules for negotiation, grievances and arbitration. By so doing, they decide who may control what.

The analysis that follows will trace the operational significance of each of these ideological constraints as they determine the pattern of industrial relations at JURONG. We begin therefore

with the first element of the unitary ideology - the management's unilateral control within the enterprise.

SUPPORT FOR MANAGEMENT CONTROL

In a recent study[1] on Singapore's shipyard workers, it was found that they considered four issues more important than others. These were earnings, promotion, training and the kind of mates in a working group. Whilst the first three can be attributed to the wealth-pursuing ethos prevalent in Singapore, the fourth issue concerning workmates has much to do with technology. The technology of shipbuilding and repairing requires group-work, so the workers perceived the kind of workmates as crucial, but for cultural and historical reasons the workers have never experienced the sectional interests which give British shipbuilding industrial relations their classic pattern of conflict.

While issues like earnings, promotion, training and 'workmates' were important to the JURONG workers, they seemed to perceive that they had little or no role in the industrial relations decision-making process - even over these issues. In fact, in the informal discussions (usually after work) with a number of shopfloor workers, responses were sought for a wide range of issues:

(a) Pay and bonuses
(b) Promotion procedure
(c) Transfer of workers
(d) Training programmes
(e) Safety matters
(f) Discipline
(g) Fixing work standards and pace of work
(h) Recruitment of new workers

(i) Financial policy matters
(j) Access to 'confidential' information

The general view expressed by the workers was that all these issues were for the 'upper levels' to decide. 'Upper levels' to them were the management, union officials, the NTUC and State agencies like the National Wages Council. The workers were aware that questions about wages and wage increases were decided by the National Wages Council (NWC). Some of the employees who felt the company could afford to give wage increases in excess of the NWC recommendations felt their union officials would not support such an idea. The union officials would discourage asking for better pay terms on the ground that it would disturb the norm that the national leaders (of Government, unions and management) were trying to create. Such action, they were told, was not in the long-term interest of industrial progress. Besides the NWC recommendations were decided with the participation of the top NTUC leaders whose decisions they felt should be followed; they knew what was best in the interests of Singapore's workers.

Workers were continually socialised and educated by the system that better economic rewards could be earned only by supporting management in generating better profits. The State and the NTUC have been important agents in socialising workers towards higher productivity. Recently, the JURONG employees were exhorted both by management (especially the personnel department) and union to give away their customary tea breaks in what the company said was an effort to improve efficiency. The employees were each given a tea-flask so

that they could consume the drink at the workplace. This was to save labour time on mass work stoppages that used to be incurred at each tea/coffee break. While some of the interviewees felt resentment at this move, all of them felt compelled to accept the decision supported by the leaders and 'upper levels'. There was definitely no open reaction to the decision which was announced by the personnel department in a circular to the employees.

It is interesting to note that, in the process of mobilising employees towards supporting NTUC's guidelines to co-operate with management's optimisation of resources, the local branch officials also assisted management in discouraging concern amongst shopfloor workers over questions relating to sharing control. The JURONG employees were aware that Management had legal sanction to solely handle most of the issues cited to them - financial information and policy, work standards and schedules, recruitment, training, promotion, transfer and discipline. When asked whether they had or would wish to have influence over matters like recruitment, work schedules, starting and finishing times, rest periods, introduction of new equipment or technology, the content of work and job security, the general reply was that they perceived no role in these matters. These were purely for the 'upper levels'. Following this negative response to the question concerning control over the job, the researcher pressed on to seek a response on the issues which they themselves felt more directly concerned about - promotion, training and the kind of workmates. Although these factors were important to them, they saw neither the opportunity nor the legitimacy to

to raise questions about these issues with their superiors or the personnel officer. While management exercised their prerogative in these issues matters without allowing any intervention, union officials were often said to emphasise to the workers that the law enshrining the employer's rights over these areas was essential to encourage investment - pertinent for the workers' and the nation's survival. As far as the employees were concerned, they were not supposed to question the law or the authority of the 'upper levels'.

This could be attributed to the amenability of Singapore workers to control within and without the enterprise. Regulation often determined their life and work styles. While this trait may be attributed to the pressures of economic and political circumstances facing the people, it has, in important ways, also evolved from the peoples' traditional dependence on regulative socio-cultural institutions. Workers at JURONG, whether as individuals or even as work groups, general exerted little influence over the making or administration of rules and procedures in the enterprise.

Although workers were socialised to support management, and wielded little influence over its decisions, they were not without grievances. Where a grievance was minor the workers had been advised to consult their union representatives, group supervisors and the personnel department. Grievances, however, were generally settled with the direct involvement of a personnel officer. The more difficult grievances were also communicated by union representatives to the full-time union official. If the grievances

were thought to be serious the full-time official then took it up with the personnel department. On most occassions the union was able to convince personnel that a particular department had been grossly unfair in its treatment of a certain worker or group. Action was then taken to ensure that the error, often attributed to a foreman or supervisor, was quickly pointed out and a caution issued. The union official, in return, promises efficient regulation of the workforce. The following example illustrates the point.

In the fourteen years of existence, there has only been one major dispute in the company: a company-wide overtime boycott that lasted eight days. A diary of this dispute is presented in Appendix No. 1. A foreman was eventually found guilty of provoking discontent by allocating overtime work to subcontract workers, whilst his own men were available for assignment. Following discussions between the full-time union official and personnel, the company apologised on behalf of the foreman for his 'unfairness and lack of sophistication'. The foreman was suspended for three days and the union called off the boycott. Work then returned to normal.

Workers in JURONG generally enjoy a reasonably good working relationship with their personnel officers. Observation showed that on a number of occasions workers went straight to Personnel, even bypassing their union representatives. While this may be explained by the general lack of education and experience in shopstewardship on the part of union representatives, it does seem that workers have more confidence in the judgement of personnel

officers. This close relationship has been further enhanced by the personnel department's 'open-door' policy. Indeed the personnel function is an important mediating and accommodative mechanism. It has helped to stifle the possibility of any challenge to management's authority. The full-time union official, together with his loyal branch representatives, helps management regulate workers in the more difficult circumstances.

Thus we see how workers at JURONG are socialised and regulated to support the management's unilateral control over the organisation's structure and resources. This socialisation, both by Personnel and the union has reinforced the employer-revering aspect of the wealth-pursuing ethos.

We now turn to some formal rules and procedures, governing the enterprise's union-management relations. We shall soon see that these are, to a large extent, determined by the effects of State control. This is our second element of the system's unitary ideology.

STATE CONTROL IN ENTERPRISE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The collective agreement[2] at JURONG, as in other companies in Singapore, is a formal document that legally binds the management and Union. As in most firms, JURONG's union side is composed of officials from the branch, district and national centres. The influence deriving from the enhanced position of the national centre is thus brought to bear upon negotiations with the JURONG executive.

The collective agreement covers earnings and the conditions of

service. The agreement formalises the payment of wages, allowances, bonuses and increments. It also stipulates general conditions of service like times of work, shift schedules, and some special work situations like sea-trials for repaired ships, and repairing vessels anchored out at sea, etc.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

It is interesting to note that all decision areas in the agreement are subjects of State legislation and regulation. The tripartite National Wages Council (NWC), a government-dominated organisation, makes annual wage-increment and bonus recommendations which have statutory-like authority. However, an employer is compelled to consider the recommendation only if he is confronted by a union representing his employees. Thus it becomes a matter for 'negotiation'. The agreements reached at JURONG on wages and bonuses have so far reflected the NWC's recommendations. Thus, while the NWC regulates the quantum of earnings, the NTUC ensures that workers get the recommended amounts.

The minimum conditions of service, on the other hand, are clearly recorded in the Employment,[3] Central Provident Fund and Workmen's Compensation Acts. These cover issues like the contract of service, rest days, hours of work, leave, retrenchment benefits and social security provisions. Since the JURONG management is not one of those young employers (who thereby enjoy legislative protection), the union is legally free to negotiate for better terms. These are

then confirmed in the collective agreement. However, just as the NWC regulates the quantum of earnings, the State, through NTUC - control, regulates the workforce to accept a level of terms and conditions which does not become 'too expensive' for the employer. Nevertheless, while employers are expected to meet a 'reasonable' level ,'high' levels are not normally encouraged because of the anomalous expectations they could create in both the private and public sectors of the economy.

We have seen in our analysis the special role of the National Union within and without the enterprise. The highly centralised national trade union movement is clear evidence of workers being socialised and regulated in unitary style. This unitary nature of worker organisation in Singapore is indeed an important feature of State control. Workers have been motivated to join the NTUC by economic benefits that are generated through State-financed trade union co-operatives. These benefits for workers are generated outside the workplace. The State also gives the NTUC special advantages through discretionary judgements made by its agencies. In addition, the NTUC is encouraged to take on a national role with a power status much enhanced by the active support of the Government leadership. It does, indeed, have many characteristics of a State institution and plays an important part in State control. By organising the JURONG workers into an NTUC-affiliate the Government ensures that they are socialised and regulated to accept the management's unilateral control over enterprise structure and resources. At the same time it is through the NTUC that the Government checks that workers receive

State-prescribed rewards and conditions.

Whilst earlier we saw that JURONG's workers exerted little influence over much of the decision-making within the enterprise, we have also noted that matters of formal agreement between management and union are restricted to the more extrinsic rewards for work. It is interesting to note that the law forbids negotiation or even arbitration on any issue concerning the employer's organisation of work or resources. While in the rare instance of 'unfair dismissal', the case may technically be brought before the Minister, this mechanism has never been necessary with most companies, including JURONG. Issues relating to intrinsic rewards reflected in training, promction, transfer or allocation of work are also defined as matters of management prerogative. In JURONG, procedural and substantive rules covering most of these matters are stipulated in a highly confidential management policy manual.[5] It continues to be a book of rules unilaterally determined by the management.

The ideology of management's unilateral control within the enterprise has indeed been enshrined in Singapore's legislation. Although informal discussions between union and the management of JURONG may continue on matters relating to promotion, transfer and the allocation of work, the final decisions always rest with management.

Whilst conceding unilateral control within the enterprise to management, state legislation, on the other hand, stipulates minimum working conditions for workers. This is in addition to the

extrinsic rewards for workers arranged by the State. The minimum conditions of work stipulated in the Employment and Factories Acts covers issues like employment of children, health, accommodation and safety. The most crucial of these with respect to JURONG is safety.

Having experienced two major accidents in JURONG over the last five years, the Government has pushed for elaborate safety organisation and procedures in the yard. The management is responsible for a Safety Council through which workers' first hand observations on safety are to be given due consideration. Safety precautions are then administered in the workplaces through a mandatory team of safety officers and technicians. More important in this context, however, is the role of the State. The Government's Labour Inspectorate conducts periodic checks to ensure that conditions of work in the yard comply with established standards. The State has further arranged, through the NTUC, for the deployment of the union's safety inspectors. Together with the Labour Inspectorate they constitute an important arm of State control over safety procedures in the enterprise.

The State also determines key procedures governing enterprise industrial relations. These procedural rules cover negotiations, grievances, conciliation and arbitration, and are enumerated in the Industrial Relations Act.[6]

PROCEDURES AND THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT

Both the management and union entities in JURONG adhere closely

to the negotiation procedure contained in the Act. It begins with an invitation to negotiate by one party, and is followed, within a specified period, by an acceptance of the invitation by the other. Non-acceptance of an invitation can lead to a dispute, which then becomes subject to conciliation and/or arbitration. This has, however, not been a problem at JURONG. Once an invitation is accepted, a series of meetings are then held between the entities' representatives. It is possible that because issues considered at negotiations are restricted to extrinsic rewards for workers and the NTUC-union believes in moderate demands, the bargaining process does not usually take very long. It is interesting to note that the union and management in JURONG have shown their commitment to co-operation further by writing into their agreement the terms of such a relationship. The agreement's co-operation clause appears in Appendix No. 5. Both parties are agreed on mutual consultation and negotiation on matters relating to the terms of the agreement (i.e. issues relating only to extrinsic rewards and conditions). These consultations are carried on both in a formal and informal basis. Consultations, if any, on matters like promotion, transfer, allocation of work and dismissal are usually informal.

An important part of the negotiation procedure, however, lies at its conclusion. A memorandum of the terms of any collective agreement has to be submitted for examination and legal endorsement by the Industrial Arbitration Court. Besides assessing the parties' decisions concerning rewards, the Court ensures that their collective agreement makes provision for a procedure to settle disputes. This is the enterprise -level grievance procedure. (See Appendix No. 6).

The aim of this procedure is to enable the company and union to dispose of any grievance or complaint from employees at the lowest possible level. The procedure contains the steps of grievance handling: the lowest beginning at the group level and progressively moving towards discussions between personnel department and the district union. Based on the researcher's observations and evidence documented in earlier studies, this procedure was seldom adhered to. In minor grievances, workers often bypassed their union representatives for more effective treatment from Personnel. Major grievances, are often brought up to Personnel - district union level.

The role of JURONG's personnel department in conjunction with the district union has created what appears to be a convenient mechanism to regulate workers' routine grievances. This has dulled the operational significance of the 'legal' grievance procedure.

However, on one occasion, when the company's workers went on the overtime boycott, the Government's conciliators came into the picture. Although sometimes they may not take an active role in the details of a dispute, as in the JURONG case, their very presence in the situation urges the parties to speedier settlement. The legislated conciliation procedure becomes important where major grievances are likely to develop into disputes. The law ensures that the State's conciliation agency has control over all such situations.

Another important device used by the State to control disputes, especially those which behold a threat of severe industrial action, is compulsory arbitration. Where the parties, for some reason or

other, do not jointly submit their dispute to arbitration, the law provides that the Minister or State's President may, if necessary, refer the dispute for compulsory arbitration. The legal provision that forbids industrial action when the Court has congnisance of such a dispute then blunts the threat of any severe action. Peaceful arbitration thereby replaces industrial action as the 'last resort' in any trade dispute. The pressures of compulsory arbitration, however, have not been pertinent in the JURONG case, since the parties have so far not been confronted with the need to go to court (except to register their collective agreements). Nevertheless, compulsory arbitration illustrates the potential of state control for the stability of their relationship.

In comparison with the United States of America, another capital-pursuing society, in Singapore the State takes on a very substantial regulative responsibility for industry. Through legislation, Government agencies (Labour Ministry) and institutions (NWC, IAC, NTUC) the State decides who may control what. Three factors strike us as having facilitated this high degree of State control. The first is the country's relatively small size. Secondly, the legal position of collective agreements, minimum labour standards and industrial relations procedures. And thirdly, the role assigned to national bodies like the NWC and NTUC by the industrial relations system.

SUMMARY

To summarise, in this part of the chapter we have seen unilateral

control by management over personnel affairs (subject to State provisions). There is a degree of joint management-union control on substantive issues. There is also shared control between State and the enterprise on the decisions of management itself. At this level of interaction, we see in Singapore a substantial measure of co-operation between the major entities and the relative absence of overt conflict points to the stability in their relationship. But, for historical and cultural reasons we see a very different, almost opposite, picture in the British shipbuilding-repairing industry. The Commission of Industrial Relations reporting in 1971 aptly describes the British situation:

> "The extent of independent control probably appears less from inside the industry than from without. Management would assert that it is managing the work of the yard and the workforce in it. Yet, as we have shown, many decisions about recruitment, demarcation, manning, the hours actually worked, overtime and so on are actually made independently by the union or the work groups ..... At the same time management takes decisions independently on matters which it believes comes entirely within its own competence. But when these decisions affect their employees, as in for example, a rearrangement of work or a disciplinary action, they cannot prevent their employees showing their displeasure and perhaps facing a change of decision".7

Below the level of institutional interaction between the authorities, we have been interested in the disposition of the workers towards the issues of job control. Our investigation clearly showed that the JURONG workers had little influence on job

control issues, indeed they exhibited none of the control consciousness that is found prevalent in the working communities of industrialised societies in the Western hemisphere. With the socio-economic and political mechanisms at their disposal, the Singapore authorities - management, the State and NTUC, have actively worked towards inhibiting consciousness in job control.

The JURONG case clearly illustrates the unitary ideology that pervades the industrial relations system. The amenability of workers to control by the authorites - management, State and union may be attributed to factors we discussed in our earlier chapters:

(a) process of State intervention and the highly centralised labour movement;

(b) pressures of economic and political circumstances facing the people; and

(c) the people's traditional dependence on socio-cultural institutions.

II Part B WHITHER INDUSTRIAL PEACE? A DIAGNOSIS OF THE PROBLEMS AT JURONG

Based on the discussion of the findings reported in the first part of this chapter, one would easily form the opinion that the Singapore system of industrial relations enjoys a high degree of peace. Going by the conventional yardsticks we may say that it does, since it enjoys an absence of overt conflict and shopfloor militancy that is hard to find in most parts of the industrial world.

Peace in industrial relations means a number of things to the industrial organisation. First of all it implies that industrial relations can be taken to be under control and predictable in its financial policy and investment planning. Secondly, it means the organisation could safely accept feasible contracts and expect to fulfill them with reward. Thirdly, industrial peace implies that the organisation would be able to respond to changes, say in the marketing or technological requirements, without the undue risk of work stoppages. Peaceful industrial relations also suggests a climate that one would associate with high productivity, and finally, one would expect a high degree of stability in the organisation's labour force.

It is interesting to the outside observer to discover at JURONG that while peace in the Singapore system provided most of the conditions essential for the company to make profit, there were certain conditions at the yard one would not associate with a high degree of peace. We were struck in two areas - one was labour

productivity and the other was the stability of the workforce. From the industrial relations point of view, these two areas are primarily related to shopfloor attitudes and relations, and operational management. So we asked ourselves if there was some other side to the broad scenario of industrial peace that emerged in the Singapore case.

Looking carefully at the Singapore system we were able to perceive that interaction between the major entities at the institutional level was quite distinct from the processes at the operational and shopfloor levels. Clearly, as the findings reported in the earlier part of the chapter show, it was at the level of institutional interaction where we saw cooperation and stability, which has created a position that gives the overall appearance of a high degree of peace and harmony.

In this part of the chapter we would like to look more closely at the nature of industrial relations at the shopfloor and operational levels. In the earlier part we said that the JURONG workpeople had none of the kind of job control that their counterparts in the Western industrial societies were enjoying. We also said that consciousness in job control was inhibited by the major entities in the system, and the workers were generally made to feel that it was not right for them to question authority. The success reflected in the absence of shopfloor militancy clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the mechanisms - social, economic, political and cultural, used to control the behaviour of the workers. The question that remains is: how effective was that control? While the mechanisms have been effective in inhibiting job control consciousness for the time being, the findings to be revealed in the rest of this part point to

ineffectiveness in the areas of labour productivity and stability of the workforce. Both these factors are crucial objectives for long-term survival of the organisation. Let us now proceed to uncover the problems and the implications at the shopfloor and operational levels of the enterprise. This we may say is the less stable side of the Singapore system.

PROBLEMS ON THE SHOPFLOOR

The most conspicuous source of unrest in JURONG's industrial relations system emerges from the shopfloor - in the relationship between first line supervisors and their subordinates.

While there was definitely no threat of an uprising on the shopfloor, we did speak of overt employee grievances in Part A. These were the grievances that were processed by the personnel department which were generally attributed to the foremen's inadequacy or 'lack of sophistication.' The shipyard's foremen, the organisation's first-line supervisors did frequently have problems with their subordinates. Workers saw the foremen simply as 'pushers' who continuously 'pushed' them around at work without any regard for their welfare or well-being. As leaders, they felt, the foremen should show some concern about their problems and difficulties. Often problems arose because of the foremen's ignorance about some benefit (e.g. special leaves, allowances for special work) accruable to their subordinates, which were contained in the collective agreement. There were just as many problems arising from the way a foreman issued instructions or challenged the work

quality of a qualified craftsman. Sometimes he was also perceived as showing favouritism to some individual, especially some new member of the group. Generally, the foreman-subordinate relationship was low in understanding, trust and integrity. It has been quite antagonistic.

These problems have a number of implications. The supervisors were not equipped to fill the leadership role. They also lacked orientation in the handling of shopfloor industrial relations as they showed ignorance of the standards evolved between management and union. These factors have resulted in a shopfloor situation which cannot be described as completely stable. Besides, they have also contributed to ineffectiveness in the foreman's production control function. Often workers had to be persuaded by company executives (technical officers) to complete schedules. As a result of lacking a social or industrial relations perspective, these supervisors have had their technical or production-oriented functions impeded as well.

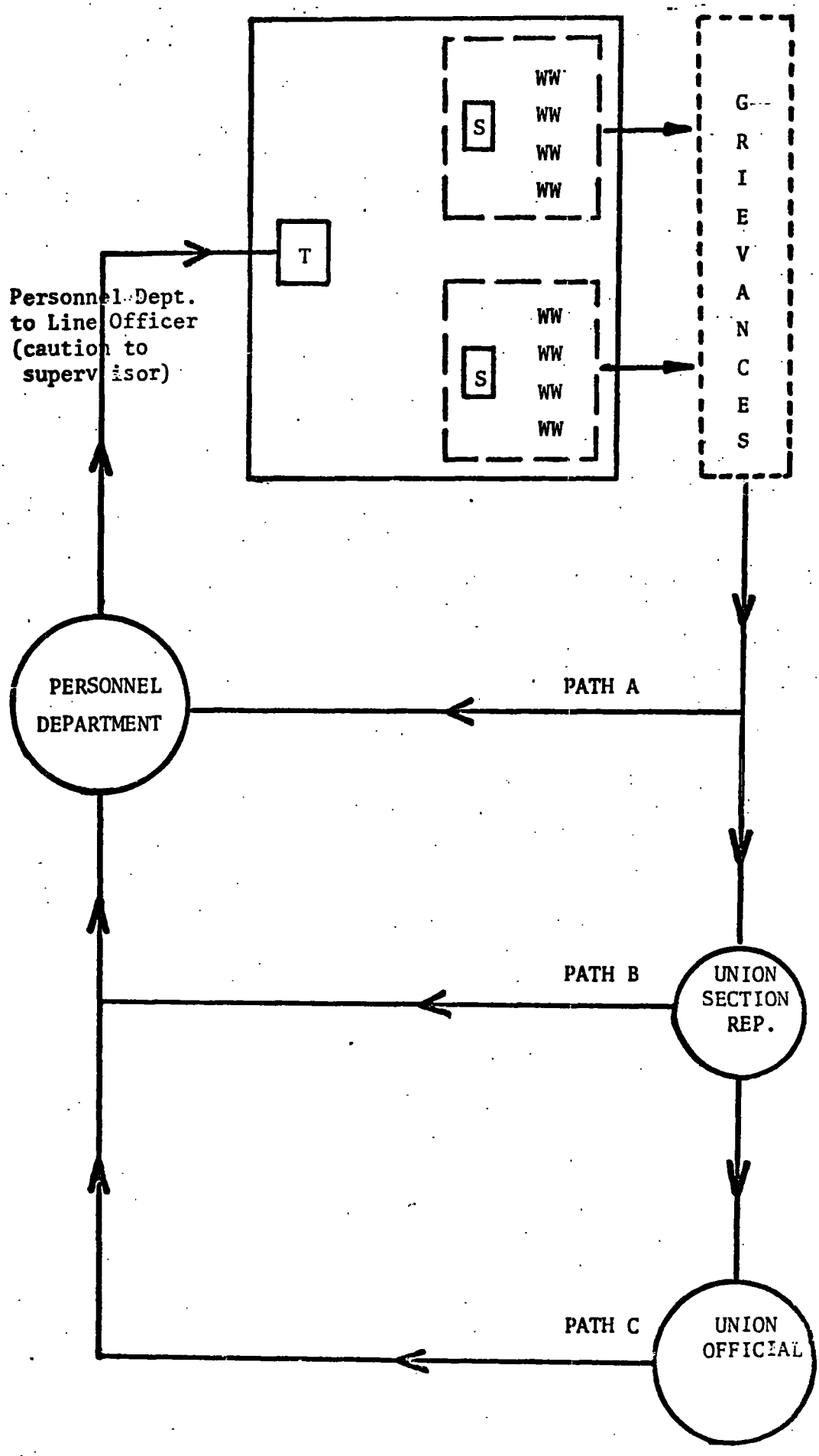
Another major problem on the shopfloor was work-restrictive practices. A number of workers admitted and defended restrictive practices like slowing down in the night shift, not paying too much attention to quality and, when opportunities were available (like when the foreman was attending to some other job), they played cards and some even took turns to sleep. Other popular tricks were to report 'sick' or give some excuse to be away from the workplace. Apart from being 'fed-up' with their foremen, these workers defended their actions on the ground that hard and good work was seldom recognised or appreciated.

It is not possible at this stage, however, to conclude that these revelations are representative of a majority or even a substantial proportion of employees. While not a major trend, these tendencies do indicate strongly unproductive attitudes. What is important here is that little action seemed to have been taken to check these practices or the attitudes. Left unattended, such practices have good ground to grow, and in the place of productive activity unproductive practices could grow to become the norm.

THE EXISTING CONTROL PATTERN

Let us now take a look at the management's response to the problems. All that we saw was a system that dealt only with overt grievances. The existing control system may more appropriately be called a grievance handling system. But shopfloor industrial relations at JURONG, as we have seen, is much more than overt grievances. Given on the next page is a pictorial representation (figure V) of the existing grievance handling system.

Having identified the essential weakness of the existing control system - that it is confined only to dealing with overt grievances, let us see how these were handled. As is obvious from the diagram there was heavy reliance on the personnel department to deal with all grievances, both big and small. Although the management believed, as noted from statements in the collective agreement's 'grievance procedure' in settling problems at the lowest possible levels (between supervisor and subordinate), little seemed to have been done or achieved in this direction. The easiest solution, it appeared, was



KEY

T: Technical (line) Officer
S: Supervisor (foreman)
W: Worker

TITLE: JURONG'S GRIEVANCE HANDLING SYSTEM

FIGURE: V

SOURCE: AUTHOR

simply to bypass the supervisors, allowing the deficiencies of their supervisory function to persist. Allowing the foreman-subordinate antagonism to flourish, however, could only lead to more determined orchestration by the workers of their frustration, resulting in more deliberate restriction of output.

There are other features about the existing control system which deserve attention. As a consequence of not upgrading the social perspectives of the foremen, their disposition towards subordinates was not conducive to encourage any constructive dialogue about the problems and needs the parties had. Indeed our discussions with the foremen and workers confirmed this point. The foreman was little in a position to appreciate, or do anything, about the aspirations held by his workgroup. In this sense the foreman could not act as a feeler of shopfloor attitudes. But this is not to say they were totally ignorant about what went on on the shopfloor. A number of them were aware about what they called 'malpractices'. When asked why they did not report these practices to the superiors, one simply said 'we don't want the boys to create more grievances and more trouble. It is better to close one eye to these things so long as we can meet the schedule - that is our target'. Vital information that could have helped to correct restrictive practices thereby did not get communicated above. Thus in the above ways, the existing supervisory role was deprived of the 'feeling' or feedback functions.

The second feature we take up is about whether the management had alternative measures for obtaining feedback from the shopfloor

apart from the overt grievances reported by workers. As we pointed earlier, most of these complaints concerned foreman-subordinate quarrels. Workers did not (or would not) report about the goings on in the yard and the personnel officers seemed only too keen to dispose of grievances and to get the workers back to their workplace as soon as possible.

One might suggest that since the union officials were very much in a cooperative stance with management, they could supply the information (on their members' activities) that management could not obtain by itself. In our view, however, the union officials would not risk their re-election by taking on the management-informer image.

Although we have said that management received little information through the usual feedback channels, we cannot say that technical officers and the personnel officers were totally unaware of the unproductive tendencies on the shopfloor. Rumours always got around. But it was virtually impossible for the technical or personnel officers to take action when they got no official evidence - either from the foreman, union representative or the workers themselves. The action that a number of the line officers had in mind were the negative sanctions - the disciplinary code of conduct listed severe punishments such as suspension and termination for people caught napping or playing cards while on duty.

Following from this negative approach, the observer noted a defeatist attitude. Not being able to solve the problem, the production executives comforted themselves with the notion that despite

the restrictive practices, schedules were met and profits remained good. But they acknowledged that schedules were being kept because additional labour (sometimes with the help of contractors) was deployed during the day shifts. They also appreciated that 'good profits' remained possible because of the comparatively low cost of labour available in Singapore. When posed questions about the need to control and improve worker performance to compensate for inflation in wages and cost of materials, especially with the stiff competition in the shipbuilding industry, the production people responded rather feebly. Generally they showed little enthusiasm about the long-term future. Some said 'we'll think about it when the time really comes' - meaning when things get critical.

The Personnel people acknowledged a 'vague' knowledge about employees neglecting work. Although they had some knowledge, through rumours and private discussions, about what went on in the production area, they lacked concrete or official evidence to initiate any kind of action, whether it was in the form of negative sanctions or even to bring up questions about motivational or productivity schemes with the top Management. Nobody whether technical officer, foreman, worker or union representative, appeared prepared to lodge a specific complaint about the malpractices. In the absence of such a complaint, the personnel officer saw little ground to interfere with activities which were more directly the concern of the production and technical managers.

SHOPFLOOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LINE MANAGEMENT

Having so far discussed the problems on the shopfloor let us take a look at the attitudes of line officers and managers towards industrial relations and decision-making in this area. A typical response was that staff and industrial relations matters were solely for the personnel department to handle. Production executives who were generally hired for their technical competence perceived their role confined to organising jobs, detailing foremen and their teams to specific areas, controlling production and ensuring completion dates. Departmental managers were primarily concerned about contract dates, production, repair, costs and the profits of his department. The general attitude was if an employee felt sick he was sent to the doctor, if he had a question about benefits or had a grievance, he was sent to the personnel department. Technical officers were only interested in the technical instructions and orders they gave out and would eagerly respond to technical problems that might crop up at the workplace. But they seldom wished to get involved in what they termed were strictly 'personnel' matters. Generally production and technical executives showed little interest in industrial relations and perceived their role to be far removed from decisions and problems in this area. One reason given for this pattern is historical. During the early days of the company's operations, the technical people were said to be too busy with development and expansion plans to be able to deal with personnel matters. All such matters were quickly referred to the Personnel department and this practice simply stuck. Because Personnel was able to handle all the shopfloor personnel and industrial

relations matters, the yard officers and managers saw little need for them to straighten out their foreman-subordinate problems. While most officers appreciated that their sectional performance would improve with better supervisor-subordinate communication and control, they felt that training, development and improving staff relationships and attitudes were the responsibility of the personnel function.

As we go higher up the hierarchy it was interesting, however, to see a keener interest in staff and the industrial relations climate. Controller-level managers and senior coordinators stressed the importance of a good industrial relations climate for high levels of performance and productivity. Most of the top people were aware about the supervisory problems because everyone spoke of this as the only or major problem for the plant's industrial relations. One senior management executive was asked what he thought was the biggest problem for JURONG, as far as the workers and industrial relations were concerned. He said that the shipyard operations required much higher worker productivity in order to remain competitive with other shipbuilding and repairing nations. The reason for low labour productivity at JURONG he felt was probably due to the ineffective foreman-subordinate relationship. He acknowledged that the existing role for the foreman lacked a social or industrial relations perspective, and that developments in this area would be necessary. When asked about the role and responsibilities of the technical officers and line managers viz-a-viz personnel matters in their own areas, he said the personnel department was looking into the whole matter.

A NEED FOR POLICY AND A POSITIVE APPROACH

In his investigations, the researcher also sought to see the company's 'policy manual'. The highly secret document was seen to concentrate on specific conditions of service relating to staff who were not eligible to join trade unions. Procedures and rules were also set down for recruitment, promotion and transfers. As most of the contractual conditions for unionised staff was laid down in the collective agreement, little was mentioned about them in the company's policy manual. Although the company officials called it a 'policy manual', it was hardly a statement of philosophy, intentions or the broad guidelines necessary for the consistent practice of industrial relations.

Having seen the 'policy manual' the researcher tried to find out if there was any other document - in the form of a statement or even a memorandum which might have reflected the company's broad philosophy or strategy. Apparently there was none. This, of course is not to suggest that the JURONG management did not have its own approach to labour and industrial relations. By and large there was a commitment to the unitary ideology also involving state control and cooperation with the union. There was also the 'open-door' policy of the personnel department, and commitment to the dictum: a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.

Although JURONG's top management appreciated the importance of a stable industrial relations climate and labour force for its operational performance, they appeared to relegate much of their concern for these

matters to the personnel department. Because at the operating levels production control decisions, material availability and getting contractors to help finish a job were more important than the needs and aspirations of workers, the personnel department acting alone could not bring about an effective industrial relations control system. In our view, the top management has final responsibility for ensuring that the personnel and industrial relations function is given proper importance at all levels both in its own right and because of the way it interacts with company operations generally. It is for the top level to take a positive stand to ensure that industrial relations objectives are integrated and reconciled with the other major plans and targets of the company.

One may argue that because extensive legislation and institutional control in Singapore determine the rules for the major aspects of industrial relations policy, such as collective bargaining, trade union recognition, negotiating machinery, grievance procedures etc. etc., there was no need for the company to maintain a manual which sets out what is already well known. A comprehensive manual policy, however, would include many aspects outside the 'formal' area. In the JURONG case we have seen problems for productivity and stability developing in the 'informal' area. While institutional relationships may be peaceful enough to be taken for granted in planning for the commercial and operational objectives, the company would do well to integrate in its strategic planning, policies to achieve sound industrial relations practice in the shopfloor and operational areas. Since much of this area is still within management's control and it

enjoys considerable cooperation from the union, the company, we feel, does have tremendous opportunity to achieve control in those problem areas, which appear to lack regulation and direction.

We may now suggest a major industrial relations objective for the JURONG management. It may read as follows:
In order to achieve high productivity and long-term stability of operations, the enterprise will need to develop sound industrial relations practice at the shopfloor and operational management level to substantiate the peace it beholds at the institutional level. In order to do this the top management will need to be aware of the real needs of the existing situation. Here it could use the personnel department or outside consultants to investigate and report on the problems and needs. We shall summarise our findings here:

(a) there is antagonism in the foreman-subordinate relationship;

(b) there is an absence of motivational strategies to improve relationships, worker performance and a commitment to work and the workplace;

(c) there is no effective feedback in the industrial relations system, and

(d) the ineffectiveness of control over shopfloor industrial relations points to a need for line management to share (with the personnel department) responsibility in this area.

Based on the above-mentioned outline the company will need motivational strategies to improve workplace relationships, performance and worker commitment to the workplace. It will also need to give existing control system an industrial relations dimension in order to improve its effectiveness.

The personnel department is seen as having an important role in

the planning and execution of the project. It will, of course, require support of top management and the cooperation and participation of line managers and union officials. In the next (third) part of this chapter we propose relevant motivational strategies. In the fourth and final part we recommend a system to improve the effectiveness of control, as it pertains to the JURONG situation.

III. Part C MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES: TOWARDS MORE STABILITY AND CONTROL OF PERFORMANCE ON THE SHOPFLOOR

More than one organisational variable influences worker productivity. They may be classified as technical, operational, or behavioural. While we do appreciate the primary significance of technical and operational variables, here we are mainly concerned with behavioural variables that enhance worker effort. Apart from enhancing productivity, behavioural variables could also contribute to a more stable workforce, with better commitment both to work and the workplace. In this part of the chapter we propose some ideas which the JURONG management could develop in order to achieve a more stable workforce and higher productivity.

Among the behavioural variables there are quite a number of aspects that contribute to improvement. The following is a list of some important variables pertinent to JURONG:

(a) Training of workmen
(b) Union recognition/organisation & facilities
(c) Reorganisation of work systems
(d) Group relations
(e) Leadership
(f) Job-design: attachment to job and workplace

There is already, at JURONG, substantial activity in some areas e.g. training of workmen in the various trades, facilities for union representatives and periodic reorganisation of responsibilities at management level. There is, however, a more urgent need in one or two areas, and it is in these areas we feel that a positive change would make a significant impact. Leadership and motivating worker attachment towards their jobs and workplace are crucial factors. A positive

change in supervisory behaviour and the shopfloor working arrangements, we feel, would establish a basis for workforce stability and productivity improvement.

What remains important, however, is the conflict in perceptions held by the line and personnel officers about the handling of change in these areas. It would be naive for the line officers to think that they have little or no responsibility for developing a supervisory control system which is sensitive both to the needs of the organisation and the employees. Any change in supervisory behaviour or the work control system has to be implemented both by the line and personnel officers concerned. In fact, it is the line officers who would be in a position to monitor and follow-up on the changes implemented. The personnel department could coordinate and control the change on a company-wide basis, giving specialist assistance whenever necessary. It is ultimately the responsibility of top management to ensure that the desired change is achieved.

Whilst we must acknowledge that organisational scientists and practitioners have developed a large repertoire of mechanisms and techniques (selection, appraisal, training, T-groups etc.) to improve leadership effectiveness and job design, here we shall outline the key motivational variables that need attention. First we discuss the various aspects of supervisory behaviour and go on to suggest that worker attachment can be improved through job and team involvement.

SUPERVISORY BEHAVIOUR

The first line supervisor is the most direct and continuous

link between management and employee. He has substantial responsibility to see that his subordinates understand and respond positively towards their roles. His behaviour is important in order to shape worker attitudes and to build cooperative work-groups with high performance goals.

There is a definite need to look at the role of the JURONG foremen who got to their positions primarily through the seniority line. They were good as craftsmen and were loyal employees. What they lacked was either the aptitude , or otherwise, the adjustment to perform their new role. In implementing the new role, those who fail or are unable to adjust their ways (and probably quite a few will have this problem because of their age) will have to be reassigned to more suitable roles.

Going by need-satisfying theory the supervisor should possess need-satisfying power and ability, to dispense rewards and recommendations for promotion and training (which are much sought after by the workers) on the basis of performance. The output decisions of subordinates tend to be influenced if they desire recognition and support from the supervisor, as well as rewards which are controlled by him. The supervisor is thus able to maintain effective control over the subordinates when they perceive that recognition (for promotion, training, etc.) and rewards (e.g. special increments) are contingent upon their own performance. If the subordinates perceive that the supervisor does not (or cannot) make those need-satisfying responses contingent upon their performance, he cannot be expected to have much influence. By the same thinking, the supervisor would be unlikely to

have influence if the variables within his control are of little need-satisfying value to the subordinates.

Much as the job of the first-line supervisor contains conflicting roles, the foremen at JURONG lack the support of management and are at the same time unable to identify with their workgroups. The 'new' foremen will not only require to be sensitive to the needs and grievances of his subordinates, but has also to be aware of the type of behaviour he may use in the varying situations that will be supported by his supervisors. In order to give him a sense of leadership and responsibility, the foremen needs to be given some discretion. The limits of such discretion may be determined by certain norms, formal or informal, which the management needs to be explicit about.

Supervisory behaviour is very situational. Appropriate behaviour and response is related to his personality, the subordinates and their needs, expectations and interrelationships. It is important, therefore, that he is able to diagnose situational requirements and act in a way that takes into account all appropriate factors.

To a considerable extent, the success or failure of a supervisor depends on his style. Although it may be necessary for him to be firm at times, the foreman at JURONG needs to be communicative and approachable. Tannenbaum's description of this supervisor-subordinate relationship is very relevant for JURONG. He writes:

> "Some of the control-enhancing features of the participative approach can be seen with respect to the supervisors-subordinate relationship. One can easily picture the laissez-faire leader who exercises little control over his subordinates

> and who at the same time may be indifferent to their wishes. He neither influences nor is influenced by his men. A second, more participative supervisor interacts and communicates often, welcomes opinions, and elicits influence attempts. Suggestions that subordinates offer make a difference to him and his subordinates are responsive, in turn, to his requests. To the extent that the organisational hierarchy from top to bottom is characterised in this way we have a highly integrated, tightly knit social system. We have, in the terms of Likert (1961), a more substantial interaction influence system - and a greater total amount of control".8

Next, we look at job-involvement as an effective way of enhancing and sustaining worker attachment to their jobs.

JOB INVOLVEMENT

Job involvement contributes directly towards improvement of tasks, methods, control of wastage and costs. Generally if intrinsic satisfaction can be derived from high levels of job accomplishment, these levels tend to be self sustaining. A major problem for JURONG has been low job involvement. Having seen the pattern operating at JURONG, not only did the shopfloor workers have little influence over their jobs or workplace decisions, the supervisors and management also experienced a certain lack of control over performance.

Based on the author's working experience with a few American manufacturing companies using large local workforces, he believes that Singaporean workers do find job involvement initiatives innovative and interesting. Employees above a certain level of education (trade

certificates/secondary education) find the opportunity for individual expression in their jobs very rewarding and satisfying. Since job involvement enhances attachment and thereby helps to sustain high goals and performance, we must recommend it to the JURONG authorities.

Job involvement, however, need not be seen purely in terms of Herzberg's principles of job enrichment,or,in terms of models used by Scott Meyers or Robert Ford who applied the principles in large American corporations.[9] What we do say is that in order to evoke greater interest in their jobs, generally, work-groups must experience a certain amount of internal control - that their contribution is a significant element of the task or final product. Involvement in these terms means creating opportunities for workers to realise their own capabilities (creative and industry). Not only do the workers get to feel more attached and stable in jobs, it also enables management to maximise human resources. Raymond Miles' human resource approach has in fact said that:

(a) The managers' basic task is to make use of his 'untapped' human resources.

(b) He should create an environment in which employees may contribute to the limits of their ability.

(c) He should encourage participation on important matters allowing employees to broaden their self-direction and control.. 10

The consequences which Miles noted are also significant:

(a) Enhancing or expanding subordinate influence, self-direction and control will lead to direct improvement in operating efficiency.

(b) Work satisfaction, could also improve as a consequence of subordinates making full-use of their resources. 11

Although we cite Miles' human resource approach we do not suggest that it can be applied at JURONG in its absolute form. In fact, considering the fact that the local workforce is culturally and politically attuned to substantial external control, attempting to enhance internal control needs care. Certainly not all workers (especially those who perform menial tasks and have not had any form of formal education) will respond favourably or be able to handle challenge and responsibility effectively. Enhancing internal control has to be carefully implemented with due regard for the level of education, age, structure of jobs and group relationships. The design of jobs and work-groups to enhance job involvement, therefore, needs careful planning and expert consultation.

What is significant in the Singapore situation is that the system - management, union and State control has not created an environment which would facilitate or promote job involvement. In some ways job involvement might have posed a fear for the authorities in that it could lead to aspirations for autonomy at workplaces. This could then have grave consequences for the status-quo of 'downward' control . In this, the Singapore authorities may therefore have perceived a dilemma. A decision has, however, to be made in the near future. Management could either take the initiative towards job involvement in an overall productivity program, or by ignoring the long-term effects of low job involvement, allow the operation to slide to an uncompetitive level of productivity.

We do see that management might have to grant autonomy over a certain workplace decisions to the work-groups. But there is one major advantage of stimulating job involvement in an overall productivity improvement programme. A certain loss of control over workplace decisions would be more than compensated for by more efficient and effective control of the workers' performance. Higher productivity leads to more predictable costs and better opportunities for profitability. These, after all, are important objectives for the enterprise. In the process of achieving improved labour productivity, the intrinsic satisfaction that involvement develops helps to create in the worker a commitment to the job and the workplace. This helps in creating stability in the workforce which has long-term implications for investment and development.

IV. Part D TOWARDS MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROL

Having outlined the motivational strategies open to the JURONG management, we shall now examine some fundamental issues that concern the effectiveness of the roles and functions of the line managers, officers, and supervisors. The existing roles of these people in the shipyard appears to be lacking in industrial relations perspective and responsibility. Line managers did not perceive any responsibility for any staff or industrial relations matters in his own area, this was all for the personnel department. Had they perceived the tremendous significance that controlling and maintaining sound industrial relations practice would have for stability and a climate for high labour performance, they might have taken greater interest. Apparently, however, they did not.

At the top level, nevertheless, JURONG's management did recognise the value of good industrial relations practice for long-term stability (necessary for growth and expansion) and improving worker productivity. Our argument here, therefore, is that since the management of industrial relations has a substantial and direct consequence for the line manager's operational performance, it is sensible for him to take an interest in ensuring sound industrial relations practice in his area. The personnel department did deserve credit for settling grievances since this helped to contain conflict, but it seemed to have failed to clarify roles and encourage line managers to assume some responsibility for line industrial relations. The personnel department could maintain central accountability for factory-wide decisions and agreements made with the union.

Once the line manager accepts primary responsibility for his production line's industrial relations, then he has to decide how best he can manage and control this aspect, and what resources are available to him within the organisation to help him to do so. In our view he has the resources and opportunities right within hiw own department or section. By virtue of the direct and continuous contact the first-line supervisors have with the workforce, they are in an ideal position to perform a major role in this area. He also has assistants who would also be expected to acquire an industrial relations perspective in order to help him control this aspect of his business - keeping an eye over the supervisors and the shopfloor activities.

THE SUPERVISORY CONTROL SYSTEM

At the first-line supervisor's level, the JURONG manager would have some problems which we have already discussed. He would have to arrange, possibly with the help of Personnel, for the foremen to be given training to function more effectively as supervisors. Those who failed to respond to a fresh approach, with the necessary training and counselling, would have to be considered for reclassification to other specialist tasks. This is bound to create problems with some foremen who, having lost their 'supervisor status' would experience humiliation. But line managers would have to think about the long-term benefits to be derived, both for control in his organisation and the foreman himself - being fitted in more suitable roles.

It is our contention that future selection and training of

foremen should emphasise not only the technical aspects but the social and industrial relations aspect as well. The first-line supervisors role should have the following major dimensions, as shown in Table 4 below:

TABLE 4

SOCIAL AND TECHNICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE FIRST-LINE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

Technical	Social (Industrial Relations)
Performance improvement	Ensuring motivation through need-satisfaction
Facilitating operations - planning coordination and problem solving	Promoting cooperative work relations
Influencing worker performance	Ensuring adherence to organisational rules
	Handling grievances, with advice from senior officers and personnel
	Ensuring two-way communications

We have included grievance handling as this would aim towards the management's expressed hope to settle grievances closest to the point of origin. With an effective supervisory control system most of the grievances could be settled at that level.

In order for the supervisor to ensure compliance to organisational rules, he has to be conversant with them. These include terms of the collective agreement which joint decisions with the union, periodic decisions made by management and departmental regulations. Often

workers look to their supervisor for explanation and clarification of rules. He has to communicate with his superiors and personnel officers to get across the intended message.

The first-line supervisor is a vital communication link in the line manager's control system. In the JURONG situation there was little or no feedback about aspirations and tendencies on the shopfloor. Giving the foreman an industrial relations perspective should help create a climate of trust which would allow his subordinates express their feelings or frustrations. This information could then be transmitted to the manager and personnel department who could then decide whether an earlier decision needed adaptation to particular circumstances or a fresh decision was required. The foreman could also report deviant behaviour which requires the attention of higher authority. The feedback action of the first-line supervisor is thus vital for the operation to adapt to shopfloor reaction to work situations and organisational rules. It can also account for motivational change amongst workers. An operation which has the facility to adapt, accommodate and, where necessary, initiate changes on the shopfloor is generally able to cope with such change. It is thus able to obtain better performance from the workers, which is an important objective for any line manager.

When feedback information from the operating area is significant enough to reach the higher levels of management they could be discussed between line, personnel and general managers to see if old rules needed amendment or new decisions were required. Had the foremen at JURONG

been equipped with the capacity to feel or be sensitive to their subordinate's needs, specific information could have been compiled about workers' dissatisfactions for articulation at the top level. Whether or not the decisions that ensue are immediately favourable to the workers is quite a different matter but it is important for senior management to be kept aware of what is going on - this is crucial for long-term survival.

THE TECHNICAL OFFICERS

At the executive (technical) officer level, a reorientation programme which clarifies the new industrial relations role and responsibilities will be necessary. The officer will need to be conversant with the organisational rules, able to support and communicate with their foremen and also counsel workers, allowing them to air whatever views and problems they might have. Just like achieving targets in production, the officer will have to see that his foremen are achieving compliance with the rules. Deviations have to be investigated and appropriate corrective action taken. New rules or decisions that come from the line manager or personnel department need to be transmitted for compliance at the shopfloor.

At the executive level, there is a certain amount of planning and organising activity. The acquired industrial relations perspective should also demonstrate itself in these activities. In planning a new repair project, the officer may need certain skills (e.g. arc welding) which are in short supply. But he is aware that there are some workers under his foremen who, although categorised as gas welders, have arc

welding certificates. In the current situation he might simply go up to the workers concerned and coerce them to perform the job. Although the workers might comply, they would do it rather unhappily. First, they would feel that they have been made to do a higher paying job with no adjustment in classification or wage scale. Second, their colleagues might chide them for being fooled by the officer. Thirdly, the union officials would not hear of such a thing, for the wide implications it would have on the question of skill classification and differentials. Fourthly, in the event of an accident, because the worker performed a job for which he was not employed, he might lose out in a compensation claim! So it is under great stress that these workers comply.

In the new situation, however, the officer would be expected to perceive the social and industrial relations implications. The new approach should encourage him to seek advice from Personnel on alternative sources of labour or, if necessary, arrange to recategorise those particular workers since they had the requisite qualifications. Thus, not only are the workers' feelings taken into account, a sound practice is also created.

Just as the officers consulted colleagues from the materials department, schedules or cost control section, in their day-to-day organisation of work, the reorientation program should help them identify situations when they might call for staff or industrial relations advice.

Technical officers also have an important feedback function. They are expected to make regular reports on the status of production,

expenditure, materials required, wastage etc. In the new role they could be expected to help compile and explain trends in inconsistent or bad timekeeping, absenteeism, light duties, medical leaves, etc. This data would also be transmitted to the personnel department for further analysis and investigation. If for some reason there was suddenly an increasing incidence of absenteeism, the line and personnel officers could get together to discuss possible implications - it might well be a manifestation of some grievance or conflict, that would obviously hamper production.

Technical or the line officers are in a unique position. He is the first management executive in the production line hierarchy with whom the workers have direct contact. Because of his executive position, he is perceived to have considerable influence on management decisions. From the management's point of view, the line officer is often the only executive in the production hierarchy who has a substantial measure of direct contact with the lines workforce. His assessment and opinion about shopfloor problems would be valued by management. Based on this two-way perception,the technical officer at JURONG has a key and challenging role. He has got to be seen by the workers as someone who would be able to persuade management to see their problems and make some concessions in return for compliance to rules and changes that management may wish to introduce.

THE LINE MANAGER

Above the technical officer,the line manager is also a

communicator of organisational rules and decisions. He is already dealing with feedback from his line hierarchy about production, costs, wastage, delays, etc. In the new role he would keep a tab on matters like absenteeism, turnover, and looking more deeply into causes of delay that may be resulting from worker behaviour.

In his present job, the line manager is involved in a great deal of joint decision-making at inter-departmental meetings which are held for a variety of reasons. It may be for dividing contracts between production lines, for implementing a particularly difficult job or the regular fortnightly review of line operations. The new system should encourage more active participation of personnel and industrial relations specialists at inter-departmental meetings. Decisions that emerge from such meetings would, as a result, generally recognise industrial relations rules and constraints. In the existing situation, often new tools and equipment have been introduced, without Personnel having any knowledge. This has resulted in inadequate follow-up on training which has implications for performance and accidents as well. Also important here is the question of skill classification for the handling of the new equipment. Dissatisfaction may be avoided by getting the personnel department involved in planning for changes in technology and equipment.

Personnel participation at these planning and review meetings provides an ideal feedback mechanism which could result in adaptation of standards or creation of new rules.

Having discussed the roles in the line management hierarchy let

us see what role the personnel department has in the new system. Personnel would have to concentrate on integration and directivity towards overall company objectives.

CONTROL AND THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

The personnel department has responsibility to obtain feedback from the operating areas and to investigate and analyse information in order to enable longer-term decisions. They would be involved in negotiation and consultation with union officials to review earlier decisions or create new rules. Generally these discussions have company-wide application and so agreements made at this level form a macro-framework for the company's industrial relations.

Creating an industrial relations control system at JURONG is not going to be without problems or difficulties. The reorientation of line supervisors, officers and managers has to be a continuous process of discussion and clarification about roles, extent of authority and the means of developing sound industrial relations practice. Workers and union officials have to be convinced that the new system is primarily meant to promote stable shopfloor relations, improved worker satisfaction and effectiveness of line operations. Based on the positive understanding at all levels of the JURONG management towards the need for more effectiveness in shopfloor industrial relations control, we would expect them to see the usefulness of assigning substantial industrial relations responsibility to line management, within a macro-framework monitored and integrated by the personnel department.

THE CHALLENGE FOR TOP MANAGEMENT

There are however very important decisions to be made at the top. This is the policy-making level where major organisational decisions will have to be made. Apart from the decisions that are usefully made based on feedback information from the internal environment, this strategic planning level is exposed to information from outside the organisation. Modern managers would seldom ignore the effect of the external environment, they would prefer to prepare for such effects.

There is an interesting example of feedforward (information from outside) that must be brought to the attention of the policy-makers and strategic planners. The team-involvement, 'worker participation' and 'industrial democracy' movements that are growing rapidly in the industrialised world would, in our opinion, not take long to reach Singapore. One of the major industrial relations decisions for the JURONG management, therefore, still remains. This question is fundamental because job-involvement bears scent of workplace autonomy which is something the authorities in the Singapore system - state, union and management, will find difficult to accept. It runs opposite to the current system of downward control.

Being an open economy and exposed to foreign influences, sealing off specific trends from the people is virtually impossible. Totally ignoring the effects can result in suddenly having to face demands for radical change. The remaining alternative is progressive change whereby management initiates and carries out programmed development in the job-involvement area. Earlier we proposed job-involvement as an

approach to improve worker motivation. Adopting it as part of a programme to improve labour productivity may thus have the added advantage of preparing for environmental challenges of the future. As Somers' noted:

> "Management may have to give up autonomy - an element of prestige - to gain efficiency, profits and thereby other elements of prestige." 12

It is significant to note that with the proposed changes the total amount of influence, at all levels, is increased. While workers enjoy new-found influence over their jobs and workplace conditions, supervisors, officers and managers have also opportunity to increase control. With this positive-sum or expanded-control framework, management is able to achieve more stable workforce, better control over their performance and also more effective control over its operations in the long term.

REFERENCES - CHAPTER 5

1. See HEYZER, N., 'The Formation of an Industrial Workforce', unpublished M. Soc. Thesis, University of Singapore, (1973).

2. See Appendix No. 2.

3. See Appendix No. 3.

4. No collective agreement in an industrial (and certain other) undertaking which has commenced or commences operation in Singapore on or after 1st January, 1968 is permitted (subject to miniserial intervention) to contain provisions (for at least five years) with regard to terms and conditions of service that are more favourable to employees than those contained in Part IV of the Employment Act. Singapore's Industrial Relations Act, Chapter 124, Section 25. This Section does not, protect the JURONG management, as the shipyard commenced operation before 1968.

5. See Appendix No. 4.

6. See Appendix No. 3, Part II.

7. Commission of Industrial Relations, Report No. 22, 'Shipbuilding and Shiprepairing', Commenced 4756 (1971).

8. TANNENBAUM, Arnold, S., 'Control in Organisation' (McGraw Hill, New York, 1968), p. 20.

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10. MILES, Raymond, 'Theories of Management' (McGraw Hill, New York, 1975) p. 35.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

I CONTROL IN THE SINGAPORE SITUATION: A REVIEW OF THE CASE ANALYSIS

II JOB CONTROL IN SINGAPORE: THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

III THE CONTROL-SITUATIONAL APPROACH: A USEFUL APPROACH FOR THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

CHAPTER SIX

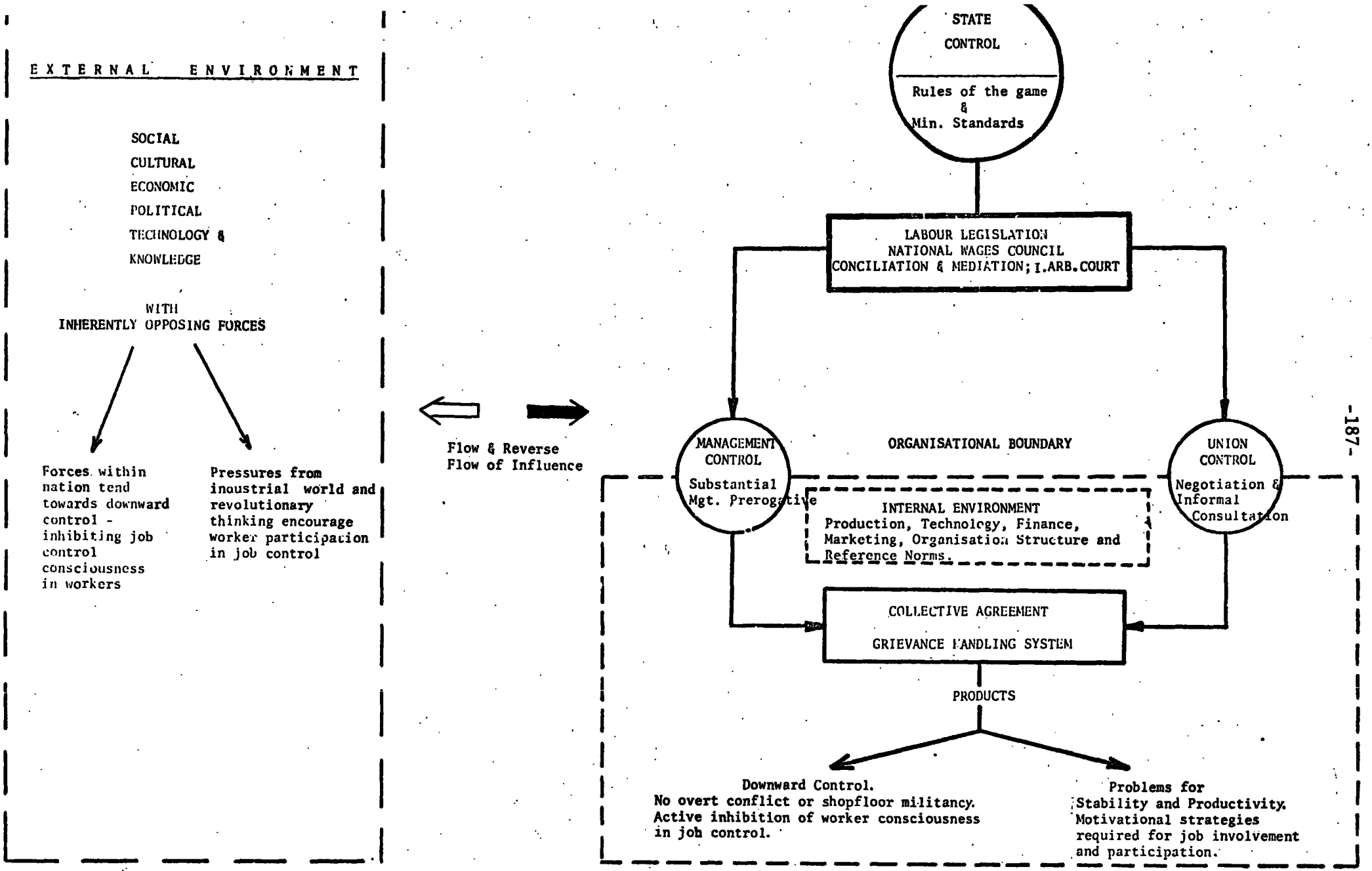
C O N C L U S I O N

"Let us look carefully and try to understand. And to do so let us probe beneath the surface and try to decipher the particular form of mind which is coming to birth in the womb of the earth today. Beneath a change of age lies a change of thought".

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

I CONTROL IN THE SINGAPORE SITUATION: A REVIEW OF THE CASE ANALYSIS

The primary purpose of this research project was to explore the major manifestations of control and how they were being expressed in the Singapore situation. The illustration in figure VI (on following page) outlines the main features viz management, State and union control. Our exploration at JURONG revealed that control over decisions within the enterprise remained quite firmly with the management. What is more interesting in the Singapore case, however, is the balance to management control provided by the State from outside the enterprise. Being the most powerful actor in the system, the Government guarantees minimum labour conditions and rewards for the workers, controlling, on the other side, the costs involved for the employers. At the same time, in order to 'please' employers and to facilitate high organisational productivity, the State supports management's unilateral control within the enterprise - a substantial managerial prerogative has even been enshrined in labour legislation. We have also seen how the NTUC performs for the State a crucial part of this dual role - of socialising and regulating workers, on the one hand, to support



CONTROL IN THE SINGAPORE SITUATION

FIGURE: VI

SOURCE: AUTHOR

management's unilateral control within the enterprise and, on the other hand, ensuring for the workers that they receive from their employers State-prescribed rewards and working conditions.

There was clearly no evidence in the case study of job control by the workers. They had no influence in decision-making even about issues directly related to their jobs, while consciousness in job control appeared to be actively inhibited by the authorities. While economic, political and administrative strategies employed by the authorities helped to condition the behaviour of the workers, their amenability to control can to a considerable degree be attributed to the pressures of the environment and tradition. Centralised State control has definitely been facilitated by the peoples' strong 'survival' response to the pressures of the socio-economic and political circumstances facing the nation. The systems' unitary ideology is also supported by the people's traditional dependence on authority for social control.

In our investigation we found that the final product of the system had two sides. The dominant side portrays cooperation amongst the authorities and their ability to sustain 'downward' control over the workers -inhibiting job control consciousness and participation in workplace decisions. This side shows little overt conflict and an absence of shopfloor militancy. This stable or peaceful side has indeed created an industrial relations climate which has permitted the enterprise growth and expansion in investment, production and profits. Behind this macro view, however, there is another side.

Our enquiries exposed problems in shopfloor relations especially between foremen and their subordinates. This had direct consequences for stability in the workforce and for labour productivity too. There were also signs of employees losing commitment to their jobs. To cap it all, the approach of line management to shopfloor industrial relations was not at all conducive to sound practice. The only mechanism that the organisation had to deal with shopfloor industrial relations appeared to be the 'expedient' centralised grievance handling system. Clearly, this was not adequate.

Although we have not seen evidence that these problems at the production area are threatening to disturb the system, in the near future they must remain a potential source of instability. One has only to look at the pattern of conflict in industrial societies to recognise that a good majority of industrial actions resulted from instabilities at the informal level. While some effort has been made in the area of training and education, important steps to tackle the problems have been refrained from. We have outlined some remedial programmes which to the Singapore employer would appear quite radical, since they suggest strategies which are distinct from the prevailing norms. The job-involvement scheme is a case in point. Because the norms in Singapore society are to a considerable extent shaped by the State, there appears to be a lack of initiative at the organisational level. Under the existing system it appears therefore, the organisational authorities (management and union) would rather wait for the State to initiate responses and solutions to the problems and instabilities at the shopfloor level just as it has created norms and institutions for stable interaction at the institutional

level). This, in our view, is quite an unreasonable expectation. Management has the responsibility (and the advantages too) to solve its own human problems just like it deals with the challenges in materials procurement, production, technology and marketing. Even if it must be that State sanction is necessary, ultimately, it is for management to detect, identify and diagnose problems and instabilities within its enterprise and propose strategies for discussion and consultation.

At a time when organisations are subject to rapid evolution and change from the outside and inside (operational, financial, marketing, production, materials, etc., and human motivational and value expectations) environments, effective organisational control is more likely to be achieved by continuous self-examination and change. The fundamental need at JURONG is for the enterprise to initiate self-examination and change. Change strategies could be reactive (as suggested in the prescription to the problems), or they could be pro-active in anticipation of future challenges.

II JOB CONTROL IN SINGAPORE: THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Singapore's per-capita income is well-known to be amongst the highest in the whole of Asia, indeed second only to Japan. Although not an indigeneous developer like England or France, she is, from the social and technological points of view, easily the most modern state in geographical South-east Asia. Being a late developer much of her modernisation has taken place through social, political and economic inputs from the industrial democracies of the West. Just as increasing affluence and higher levels of technology have created a

greater desire for control, these factors must remain pressures in the Singapore system for increasing labour influence over management decisions. The general shortage of labour in Singapore, especially of skilled workers, is yet another pressure in the system. Indeed, as a leading American unionist I. Bluestone recently put it:

> "Through their unions the (American) workers have already drastically reduced the traditional, autocratic type of managerial control over the worker and the workplace. The concept of workers' rights in the decision-making process has taken root. It will flower". 1.

Earlier we saw the position of the Singapore worker viz a viz management, union and State control and the status of job-control consciousness. Although Singapore society like America is wealth-pursuing and growing in affluence and technological content, Singaporean workers have not responded to the questions of control in an identical fashion. For a moment, one could have wondered if the lack of expression by the workers with the enterprise was because they had adequate opportunity to express themselves in the wider political system that finally took the form of State control. This we have seen is not the case. Firstly, the National Union is not only a centralised body but has also been assigned the role of mobilising its members to the Government's larger political objectives. Secondly, we also know that Singapore has a highly centralised political structure, with massive power and influence vested in the office of the ruling Party.

The difference between the Singapore and American developments, however, is not without good explanation. One may attribute it to the time-scale for development - giving Singaporean workers more time

to reach a point where their affluence will surpass their material wants, would increase their awareness of control. On the other side of the scale, having experienced near full-employment and a rising standard of living over the past decade, a turn in the economic tide leading to high unemployment, substantial decrease in living standards, and pressure for more productivity could forcefully push workers (American, German or Singaporean) to challenge any institutional arrangement: 'countervailing power', codetermination, cooperation between management and union. Job control issues would then surface in the 'mutiny'.

As things are, however, there is one major difference between America and Singapore. This is in the government of the State. American democracy, as Bluestone put it, has given her citizens 'broad rights of decision' outside the factory - so that they participate in innumerable decisions affecting the life and wellbeing of themselves, their families, their fellow citizens and neighbours.[2] Given this contrast of rights available within and without the enterprise, the political awareness generated in the worker outside the factory has led to demands for control within. Being a small urbanised city-state subject to pressures from local economic and political circumstances, the people in Singapore, have on the other hand, for the last 20 years, been successfully socialised in a system of centralised State control. This has provided no control-conscious experience for the workers as such. Also we must not forget the Singaporeans cultural dependence on authority for social control.

Having earlier said that Singapore workers may need more time for comparable achievements in affluence and technology, we should also recognise the significance of the inflow, overtime, of values (such as 'industrial democracy' 'workers participation' disclosure of information, etc.) from the world of free labour. It remains possible, therefore, that these ideas from the external environment may stimulate Singapore workers towards active participation in enterprise decision-making at some future date. Another possible motivator, however, may be management itself.

Recent developments in management thought seem to show a marked preference for participative management. While the obvious and objective purpose seems to be improvement in labour productivity and job commitment, there is yet another interesting aspect. This is the rising concern for a normative approach - that quite apart from 'objective' possibilities, management should, in the organisations long term interest, be concerned with human choice and values. Besides, there is also a recognition that control in organisations is an expandable commodity and not a fixed pie notion as traditionally believed. Participative management is thus seen as an effective way of expanding control at all levels of the organisation - both for management and the workers. By subscribing to the belief that a viable future cannot be achieved merely by reacting and adapting to present environmental circumstances, the modern approach recognises the need for what may appear to be a radical strategy to accommodate the choices and changing values of organisation members. In this sense, the participative approach may be considered as futuristic too.

Some giant multinational corporations (especially of American origin) stationed in Singapore have already initiated modest worker participation in shopfloor decisions. This, in turn, can lead to a spread of awareness in the issues of control.

The ultimate in the American cycle is aptly described by Bluestone:

> "In the United States the thrust to improve the quality of working life will manifest itself in direct participation by workers in managing their jobs. Perhaps, in later years, it will spread to participation in managing the enterprise. The incontrovertible fact is that the democratic values of society - based on participation in the decision-making process will be extended to the place of work. Democratising work is an idea whose time has come". 3

The present study, however, does not substantiate nor dispel our initial speculation regarding the development in Singapore of the American trend. There is certainly no evidence that there is a desire for job control in the Singapore case. A situation of this nature is best followed over a period of time and therefore needs testing every few years. We do hope that in some point in the future somebody will pick up the work and get additional data to test our speculations and assumptions.

Nevertheless, if we are right about multinational corporations and our general analysis of the hierarchy of expectations from work, the test for Singapore in the years to come will be whether the Government can relinquish some of its central control for more decentralisation in the decision-making processes. If one looks at a number of states, however, the track record has not been too good -

most governments are not prepared to share decision-making. Although, on the one hand, this has advantages, the problems, on the other hand, are also quite obvious.

Managements and unions have a test too. Not only have they a responsibility to maintain peaceful institutional relationships and structures, they will need to back these up with stability and control in the informal area. And this is a global problem, even in institutionally stable systems like Germany. Conclusions drawn by Herding and Kohler about job control in Germany's system of 'codetermination' are indeed very pertinent:

> "This cooperative character of trade unions also manifested itself in their policies with respect to job control issues. If once can say that control over items such as production standards, noise levels and plant discipline was for a long time of no particular importance in the demands of the rank and file, then this was even more true of trade unions and labour representatives in the plant: effective job control from the workers' point of view implies shifting the focus of decision-making not only from the national or regional organisation, but also from works councils themselves. It means stressing the role of the work group and the shopfloor union representatives, and is bound to involve opening up some avenues for their pressure tactics: developments that one can see in Britain and America which are plaguing their industrial relations systems..... With deepending problems of economic instability, with unemployment ..... and the development of trade union opposition, the traditional cooperative codetermination practice is increasingly being challenged. Changes in practice of both the works councils and trade unions towards a greater importance of job-control issues are responses to this challenge." 4

Within the broad context of decentralisation that we have proposed, managements and unions in Singapore could be expected to exercise greater initiative. If industry is to have a viable future they will have to initiate and control change. For this, as we pointed out earlier, they will need to develop strategies which are not only reactive to both the external and internal environments, but also which are anticipatory.

III THE CONTROL-SITUATIONAL APPROACH: A USEFUL APPROACH FOR THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

In asserting the value of the concept of control for the study of industrial relations it would be appropriate for us to remind ourselves of its unique quality in the field of social behaviour.

Milton Derber has outlined the field of industrial relations thus:

> "Industrial relations - the interplay among owners, managers, employees, union and employer association officials, government personnel, and others concerned with the functioning of productive labour for pay - may be studied and interpreted in numerous ways. To cite a few examples: Attention may be directed primarily to its economic aspects - how economic investments in human resources are allocated and compensated ..... as a system of rule making, with emphasis on rule makers and the web of rules ..... as a struggle for power, among either classes or interest groups ..... in terms of motivations, needs, desires, and perceptions of the people involved and their abilities to satisfy them. It may be seen as a process of administration or management in which diverse interests at various levels of organisation must be coordinated." [5]

Derber's outline can be added with a list of specific activities e.g.

peace, conflict, industrial democracy, workers participation, disclosure of information, productivity bargaining etc: etc.

Because control is a basic and crucial element of each of the various situations, it is able to articulate as a powerful conceptual tool.

In our study, the concept of control has been very useful in directing attention to the key aspects of the situation - the people and entities involved, their goals and objectives, the bases of power, questions of legitimacy, solidarity and motivation. It has also helped to uncover the major mechanisms of influence and the relevant manifestations of control that make up industrial relations in the situation - management, union and State control, legislation, regulative agencies, collective agreement, grievance handling arrangements and status of job control.

The situational approach directed attention to pertinent aspects in the external and internal environments and stressed the application of ideas and concepts relevant to the situation. In our approach we have not restricted ourselves to reactive strategies and have injected a creative element too.

As far as the specific objectives of this research project are concerned, we are satisfied that the control-situational approach has been very useful for our understanding, analysing and forecasting of developments. It has also helped us in our attempt at some prescription for the authorities - to anticipate, initiate and control change, and thereby, the future course of industrial relations in Singapore.

REFERENCES - CHAPTER 6

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4. HERDING, R., and KOHLER, C., 'Codetermination and Control', in J. Purcell and R. Smith (eds) 'The Control of Work', (The Macmillan Press, 1979), p. 59.

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APPENDIX NO. 1

DIARY OF EVENTS LEADING TO AND CULMINATING IN THE OVERTIME BOYCOTT BY JURONG SHIPYARD'S WORKERS BETWEEN 22ND OCTOBER and 1ST NOVEMBER, 1974

20th October, 1974. SUNDAY

Fifteen workers of the Hull Prefabrication Section who reported for work during the day were not asked to stay for the financially attractive overnight overtime, while the 'opportunity' was instead granted by their foremen to some subcontract workers (who were supposed to be taken on a given job only when 'regular' labour was not sufficient).

22nd October, 1974. TUESDAY

In the morning, the Union approached the Personnel Division, and informed Personnel of the complaint and reminded that such practice was contrary to the understanding with the Union, as well as contrary to the Company's policy that where there was overtime/overnight work to be done, Jurong's regular workers should be given first preference. Personnel informed the Union that the grievance procedure should be followed and that the matter should be dealt with at Sectional level first. Union asked Personnel to convey the complaint to the Section Chief and to let them know the outcome of the matter.

23rd October, 1974. WEDNESDAY

The "STOP AT 5.00 P.M." affair spread to other sections in the Yard. Personnel had tried to contact the Union on this matter but was unable to as phone calls to the Union office were not received and the Union office was locked. At about 4.30 p.m., the Personnel Officer (PO) went to the Union Office and managed to see some officers. They again denied knowing anything of the spreading boycott and replied that if Management wanted the Union's co-operation to get the workers to work overtime, it could be arranged provided it was "worthwhile". The PO informed the Union that since the matter is affecting other sections too, a meeting should be arranged. It was arranged for 2.00 p.m. the next day.

24th October, 1974. THURSDAY

During the Meeting, the Union made the following allegations:-

1. That our workers were deprived of additional earnings when they were not given preference to do overnight work.

2. That the Management had breached the agreement with the Union to give preference of working overnight to our workers.

3. That the Foreman's attitude towards and relations with his subordinates was unbecoming of a supervisor.

The Union said that the matter cannot be resolved unless the following conditions were fulfilled:

1. Foreman to apologise to Branch Union.

2. The Chief of Hull Prefabrication to personally give the Union an assurance that the policy on overtime allocation be adhered to.

3. Management must reprimand anyone breaching this policy in future.

4. To compensate those workers who were affected on Sunday, 20.10.74.

The Meeting was adjourned, when Management replied that these conditions could not be fulfilled. Management replied that an assurance could however be given to the Union that the policy will be upheld.

25th October, 1974. FRIDAY

In the morning, at 8.10 a.m., the Chief of the Electrical Fitting Section called Personnel to inform that all his workers had gone to the Union house for a meeting. The Chief and Foreman were both not informed by the Union Branch Officials of any such meeting. When Personnel enquired, the Union Officials denied calling a meeting, but explained that the workers were unhappy and went to consult the Union on their own. The workers reported back to their workplaces 40 minutes later.

Later, at 12.00 noon, on the same day, while a docking operation was on in Dock No. 1, 7 workers who were performing the operation stopped work for lunch despite the senior dock officer's request to carry on. The Company's Collective Agreement provides for staggered lunch depending on work exigencies, while the work stoppage was considered as gross negligence of duty, it was also a strong indication of the worker's feelings on the overtime allocation problem.

The majority of workers in the yard stopped work at 5.00 p.m., thus confirming a boycott of the overtime scheduled for them. A small number, however, stayed to work overtime.

26th October, 1974. SATURDAY

A letter was received from the Union, served under Section 17 of the Industrial Relations Act inviting Management to negotiate on industrial matters. Earlier, a notice was received from the Union informing an emergency meeting at the Canteen at 5.00 p.m. on 29th October, 1974.

27th October, 1974. SUNDAY

Branch Union Officials were seen at the time clock centre in the morning talking to the workers who reported for work. It is understood from some workers that the Union was discouraging the workers from coming to work, it being Sunday overtime.

28th October, 1974. MONDAY

Following private negotiations between the full-time Union Official and Personnel, the Union was prepared to compromise a little on the conditions laid down earlier. The Union resuggested the following:-

1. The Foreman should apologise to the Branch Union and the workers involved on 20th October, 1974.

2. Management should assure the Union that the policy will be followed and that anyone breaching the policy will be reprimanded.

29th October, 1974. TUESDAY

The Union held their Emergency General Meeting at 5.00 p.m. in the Canteen and the agenda according to the notices put up by the Union included:-

1. Address by the Full-time Union Official

2. Address by Branch leaders

3. Ballot to empower the Union to take action on any outstanding grievances

It is understood from informed sources that during the meeting, the Union brought up the following points:-

1. Management had committed a breach of understanding and agreement reached with the Union on the practice of granting overtime.

2. That Hull Prefabrication Foreman had adopted a very arrogant and ungentlemanly attitude towards his subordinates.

The Union's stand now was:

1. The Company should punish the Foreman for the way he conducted himself with his subordinates.

2. The Company must honour the understanding and agreements reached with the Union.

A ballot was then held to empower the Executive Committee to take any action, including industrial action to effect a fair and just settlement of the dispute.

Approximately 1090 votes were cast; 10 against, 30 spoilt, and thereby a clear majority for the Union.

Meanwhile the situation on shopfloor remained unchanged except that a number of workers expressed that though they would like to do overtime work they were afraid of repurcussions from the Union. They regretted, however, that their take home income would be drastically reduced if they continued to boycott overtime work.

30th October, 1974. WEDNESDAY

The Union's letter served under Section 17 of the Industrial Relations Act was replied and handed to the full-time Union Official and the district representative of the Ministry of Labour. The date of negotiations was fixed for the next day. It was later confirmed with the Union that the time of the meeting would be 2.00 p.m.

31st October, 1974. THURSDAY

A meeting was called by the Labour Ministry Conciliation Officer at his office at Taman Jurong. After much discussion, the following was finally agreed upon:-

1. Management would apologise to the Union for the occurrence of the incident.

2. Management would reprimand anyone who breached the understanding in future subject to exigencies, continuity, etc.

3. Management will ensure that all Foremen and Engineers will be briefed of this agreement to prevent similar future occurrences.

The Management also took this opportunity to punish the foreman for his ungentlemanly and sometimes 'bullying' behaviour towards his subordinates which had made him a notorious foreman even before the overtime incident. It was, however, generally seen as a punishment for provoking discontent amongst the workers. While the workers' trust in Personnel was restored, the Union called off the boycott.

The Union thus promised that they would try their best to get the workers to work overtime now that the issue was settled.

1st November, 1974. FRIDAY

At lunch time, some workers in the yard continued to refuse to work, and when the Union was called, they said they would see to the matter. It appeared that the message had not got around the whole yard yet. However in the evening the response to doing overtime work increased.

On 2nd November, 1974, the workers resumed overtime work as per normal.

APPENDIX NO. 2

MATTERS COVERED IN THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

1. Introduction

Title
Scope of Agreement
Entitlement of Benefits
Duration
Co-operation

2. Earnings

Salary/Wage Rates
Salary/Wage Incermental Date
Pay Day
Rates of Payment for Extra Work
Chargehand Allowance
Incentives (e.g. Attendance Bonus
Suggestion Rewards)

3. Conditions of Service

Probation
Hours of Work
Shift Work
Rest Day
Paid Public Holidays
Outstation Work
Sea Trails/Anchorage Jobs/Test Runs
Retirement
Annual Leave
Sick Leave
Maternity Leave
Authorised Absence
Workmen's Compensation
Annual Bonus
Medical Facilities
Hospitalisation
Tuberculosis Insurance
Tuberculosis Leave
Paid Compassionate Leave
Uniforms and Shoes

4. Miscellaneous

Grievance Procedure
Referee
Safety Council
Productivity Council
Notice Board
Retroactive Claims

APPENDIX NO. 3

MATTERS COVERED BY LABOUR LEGISLATION

I. THE EMPLOYMENT ACT

Contracts of Service

Illegal terms of contract of service
Termination of contracts
Notice of termination of contract
Termination of contract without notice
Contractual age
When contract deemed to be broken by employer and employee
Misconduct of the employee
Termination by employee threatened by danger
Liability of breach of contract
Contract of service not to restrict rights of employees to join, participate in or organise trade unions
Change of employer
Offence

Payment of Salary

Fixation of salary period
Time of payment
Payment on dismissal or termination by employer
Payment on termination by employee
Income tax clearance
Payment to be made during working hours
No unauthorised deductions to be made
Authorised deductions
Deductions for absence
Deductions for damages or loss
Deductions for accommodation
Recovery of advances and loans
Deductions not to exceed fifty per cent of salary
Priority of salary to other debts
Offence

Rest Days, Hours of Work, Holidays and Other Conditions of Service

Application of Part IV
Rest day
Work on rest day
Hours of work
Task work
Shift work
Holidays
Annual leave
Sick leave

Rest Days etc. (Cont'd)

Payment of retrenchment benefit
Retirement benefit
Priority of retirement benefits, etc.
Payment of annual wage supplement, bonus or annual wage increases
Variation of collective agreement or reward
Interpretation
Restrictions on night work
Hours of work of children and young persons
Children and young persons not to be employed on rest days
Power to suspend application of Part IV
Offences

The Truck System

Agreements to pay salary otherwise than in legal tender
Agreement as to place and manner, etc., of spending salary
Salary to be paid entirely in legal tender
Recovery of salary not paid in legal tender
Interest on advances forbidden
Remuneration other than salary
Shops and canteens
Penalties
Proceedings may be taken against actual offender
Payment of salary through bank
Limitations on application of this part

Contractors and Contracting

Liability of principals, contractors and subcontractors for salary of workmen
Registration of contractors and subcontractors

Domestic Servants

Minister may apply Act to domestic servants

Employment of Children and Young Persons

Employment on completion of twelfth year
Employment in industrial undertaking
Conditions of employment
Employment in industrial undertaking
Employment on machinery
Employment on electrical apparatus
Employment underground
Minimum rates of salary may be prescribed
Approved employment
Regulations regulating employment
Offences
Power of Juvenile Court in respect of children or young persons requiring care or protection

Registration of Young Persons Employed in Industrial Undertakings

Certificate of registration
Application for certificate
Enquiries by Commissioner
Issue of certificate
Medical examination
Validity of certificates
Calculation of age
Cancellation and alteration of certificate
Certificate of age
Offences
Employer to keep certificate of registration
Employer to give token to young person
Penalty for failure to keep certificate
Certificate to be returned to young person leaving employment
Commissioner to keep register
Fees.

Employment of Women

Length of benefit period
Payments to include rest days
When payment is made
Payment of benefit on death of female employee before confinement
Notice of confinement
Dismissal during absence prohibited
Employment after confinement
Forfeiture of payment
Right to benefit unaffected by notice of dismissal in specified circumstances
Claim from one employer only
Contracting out
Offences
Employment underground

Employment Exchange

Employment exchange
Only citizens to be registered
Penalty
Control of employment

Health, Accommodation and Medical Care

Duty to provide proper quarters and sanitary arrangements
Buildings to conform with requirements of law
Insanitary quarters
Water supply
Weekly inspection of quarters
First aid equipment
Employer to maintain clinic or dispensary
Offences

Registers, Returns and other Documentary Requirements

Register of employees
Record of workmen
Display of notice board showing designation of employer
Display of notice of working hours and days
Returns
Commissioner may call for further returns
Power to call for returns, books, etc.
Service of requisitions
Penalties
Compounding of offences
Returns not to be published or disclosed

Inspection

Inspections by the State
Notice to employer of presence of inspecting officer
Powers of inspecting officer
Inspection report book
Inspecting officer not to reveal secrets
Offences

General

Wrongful detention of employee
Employee not answerable for debt, default or miscarriage of another
Obstruction of employee by employer
Seats for employees engaged in retail trade or business
Punishment for obstruction
Penalties
Penalty for fraudulently inducing employee to emigrate
Power to compound offences

Claims, Complaints and Investigations into Offences

Commissioner's power to inquire into complaints
Prohibiting order by Commissioner to third party
Right of appeal
Fees and enforcement of orders
Procedure for making and hearing claims
Representation before Commissioner
Joining of claims
Jurisdiction of courts not affected
Employee's remedy when employer about to abscond
Investigations of complaints and offences
Procedure after inquiry
Costs of proceedings

Procedure and Regulations

Officers to be public servants
Place of employment deemed to be a public place
Jurisdiction of Magistrates' and District Courts
Right to hearing
Onus of proof
Civil proceedings not barred
Power to deal with evidence taken down by another officer
Application of fines
Imprisonment to be in discharge of fine, compensation, etc.
Recovery of money as fines
Service of summons
Power to make reciprocal provisions between Singapore and Malaysia for the service, execution and enforcement of summonses, warrants and orders
Power of Minister to make regulations

II THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT

An Act to provide for the regulation of the relations of employers and employees and the prevention and settlement of trade disputes by collective bargaining and conciliation and arbitration.

Industrial Arbitration Courts

Courts
President and Deputy President
Acting President
Panels
Eligibility for membership of panels
Duration of appointment
Removal from panels
Vacancies in panels
Constitution of Courts
Continuation of hearing
Protection and immunity of members of Courts
Allowances
Registrar and officers of the Courts

Collective Bargaining

Recognition of trade union of employees
Invitation to negotiate
Acceptance of invitation to negotiate
Conciliation
Notification of trade disputes
Compulsory conferences
Procedure as to notifications
Collective agreements
Restrictions on collective agreements in certain new undertakings
Collective agreement deemed to be an award
Representation in negotiations
Conciliation officers
Interpretation
Negotiations otherwise than under this Part

Arbitration

Court to have cognizance of trade disputes
Court to arbitrate
Dispute as to employment in Government service
Court to have regard to certain matters
Power to make awards

Awards

Form of awards
Operation of award
Commencement and continuance of awards
On whom awards binding
Minister may extend operation of award
Contents of awards

Awards (Cont'd)

Award to provide for referee
Interpretation of awards
Setting aside and variation of awards
Variation of agreement to conform with award
Award to be final
Awards to be available at office of Registrar
Evidence of awards
Exhibition of awards
Contracts contrary to awards
Penalties for breach of awards
Recovery of wages under awards
Commissioner's power to inquire into complaints
Inspection
Powers of the Courts
Contempt of court
Suspension or cancellation of award
Exercise of jurisdiction under certain sections

Procedure and Powers of the Courts

Procedure of the Courts
Particular powers of the Courts
Exclusion of evidence as to certain matters
Intervention
Representation before the Courts
Questions of Law
Orders to take evidence
Powers of inspection
Decisions of the Courts
Offences in relation to the Courts
Contempt of Penal Code
Trade secrets, etc. tendered in evidence
Inspection of books, etc.

Boards of Inquiry

Appointment of boards of inquiry
Constitution of board of inquiry
Procedure and powers of boards
Reports

Miscellaneous

Penalties imposed upon persons observing awards
Inducing persons not to join trade unions
Employers not to discriminate against members of trade unions
Leave on trade union business
Injuring employee on account of industrial action
Onus of proof and prosecution
Penalties for offences for which no express penalty provided
Power of Minister to make regulations

APPENDIX NO. 4

SOME MATTERS GOVERNED BY THE JURONG SHIPYARD'S MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Structure and Organisation of the Company
   The grading of jobs
   The standards of job appointment

2. Description of jobs, functions and powers
   General description and requirements for workers
   Job description
   Regulation of foremen functions and powers

3. Employment
   Rules and Regulations for recruitment
   Reinstatement following National Service

4. Training and Development
   Training and development in general for:
   Managers, supervisors and yard workers

5. Appraisal
   Managerial Personnel Appraisal
   Employee Personnel Appraisal
   Merit increments
   Incentive Schemes

6. Transfers and Promotion

7. Wage rates and allowances for non-bargainable employees
   (including managerial, confidential and security officers)

8. Conditions of service and work
   Normal working hours
   Leaves for managerial and confidential staff
   Safety helmet design
   Car loan scheme
   Vehicles for top management staff
   Hospitalisation benefits
   Retirement gratuity and other service benefits for non-bargainable employees

APPENDIX NO. 5

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSE ON CO-OPERATION

The Company and the Union hereby undertake to fully co-operate in maintaining harmonious relations and in providing circumstances that are conducive for effective work towards the advancement of the Company's image and business which are in the interest of all employees; and in this spirit;

a) the Company recognises the Union as the sole Collective negotiating body relative to terms and conditions of employment for its members who are employees of the Company;

b) the Company undertake to advise and consult the Union before effecting changes in the general terms and conditions of employment as contained herein; and

c) the Union undertakes to advise the Company before it takes action on behalf of its members .

APPENDIX NO. 6

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSE ON THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

a) Recognising the value and the importance of full discussions in clearing up misunderstandings and preserving harmonious relations, every possible effort shall be made by both the Company and the Union to dispose of any grievance or complaint from employees at the lowest possible level and as expeditiously as possible.

b) Any employee having a grievance and/or complaint shall under normal circumstances first refer the matter within three working days of its arising to the attention of his immediate superior who shall give his decision on the matter within one working day from the date of notification to him.

c) If the employee concerned feels aggrieved by the decision given at (b) above, he may within two working days of the date of the decision given, refer the matter to his Branch Union which shall appoint representatives who may approach the Chief of Section or his representatives for further discussions on the matter.

d) If the employee is still aggrieved by the decision given at (c), he may within three working days of the date of the decision given, refer the matter to the Branch Union who may approach the Personnel Manager or his representative for further discussions on the matter.

e) If the matter cannot be amicably resolved after discussions at (d) above have taken place, the matter shall be dealt with at the Management and Union (HQ) level.

f) Failing a settlement under (e) above the matter shall be referred to a referee under the clause below.

Referee

Any dispute between the parties in this Agreement while it is in force and arising out of the operation thereof shall be referred by both parties to the President of the Industrial Arbitration Court who may select a referee appointed in accordance with Section 42 of the Industrial Relations Act to determine such dispute .

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Abbreviations used: BJIR - British Journal of Industrial Relations,
IILS - International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva,
ILR - International Labour Review, Geneva,
ILRR - Industrial and Labour Relations Review, Cornell Univ. Ithaca, New York.

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