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### *Participation for whom?: a critical study of worker participation in theory and practice*

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"THE QUESTION OF 'FOR WHOM' IS FUNDAMENTAL; IT IS  
A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE"

MAO TSE-TUNG

23 May 1942, concluding speech to Yen-an Forum on  
Literature and Art.

(in 'Selected Works, Vol III' :78, Peking: Foreign  
Language Press, 1967)

PARTICIPATION FOR WHOM?

A CRITICAL STUDY OF WORKER PARTICIPATION IN THEORY  
AND PRACTICE

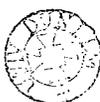
VOL. 1.

HARVIE E. RAMSAY

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A thesis submitted to the University of Durham in  
fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 1981



17 MAY 1984

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## PREFACE

This thesis is the culmination of some eight years of work and thought ( a separation of dubious political credentials!). Apart from my own sheer stubbornness, it owes a great deal to a vast number of influences. Some are too obscure to mention (or remember). Others would seem like ritual and almost insulting pats on the head, however genuine I tried to say they were. So I shall make none of these explicit. One ritual I shall not forgo, though, is to acknowledge the tireless patience of Richard Brown, who had to read and comment on this monstrous tome in far less legible forms. Just to shun orthodoxy one more time, and so as not to deny participation to him, let me say that he even has to share a few granules of blame for what follows. Not that he ever had any real say in what happened.

In order to maximise convenience of reading and reference I have used a footnote system at the end of each chapter to deal with detailed additional comments or items of information to those in the text, and a reference system which makes use of a bibliography at the end of the thesis. In the bibliography, references are listed alphabetically, and chronologically for each author. Where more than one publication occurs in a given year for a given author, the first item is given just the year, the second has an 'a' appended to the year, and so forth.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis opens with a quotation from Mao Tse-tung. That quotation neatly fits the title of the thesis, yet it may seem a flourish of little relevance, for Mao was talking about the revolutionary role of art and literature. Nonetheless, the argument it embodies is thoroughly germane to that developed below on the topic of worker participation. For Mao, the key question was the class stand of a piece of writing or a painting - whether it expressed the ideas and interests of the working class or the bourgeoisie. Nor is this always straightforwardly judged. An essay may declare itself committed to workers' interests, and yet foster relations and attitudes which sharpen the division of labour or otherwise promote bourgeois rule.

So it is with worker participation. Clarion calls for the need to improve the position of the worker in the industrial authority structure may be taken at face value, or seen as siren songs designed to lure the producers of value into the intensification of their own exploitation. To pass judgement, it is necessary to undertake an empirical investigation of the political economy of participation informed by a critical appreciation of concepts like 'participation' (and 'industrial democracy') themselves.

The task of this introduction is to set the scene for an investigation of this sort. When the project was begun in 1971, it seemed eminently manageable, but the subject has grown underfoot and so in consequence has the thesis itself. That very intensification of the interest in worker participation is, and must be, part of that which is to be examined and explained. At the

time, all spokesmen seemed to be agreed that worker participation would have to come - in one prominent politician's words:

It is no longer a question of whether workers should play a greater part in their day-to-day factory life, but how this is to be done. (Harold Wilson, quoted Daily Mirror 25.6.73).

There was less consensus, however, on the 'how', or indeed on the meaning of 'a greater part'. Was this to be a change of power relations and so of the very criteria by which decisions were to be made in industry? Or merely a matter of motivation of the worker to get her or him to do more and supposedly feel happy about it? Was it to be achieved by worker directors, works councils, profit-sharing or what? Nor have the issues been much clarified in the intervening years of countless strident pronouncements. What is noticeable as I write is a marked decline in volume of and attention to the debate of late, particularly since the electoral defeat for Labour in May 1979.

Stepping away from the public arena to that of academic discussion might be hoped to yield a greater clarity. In practice, however, this has not been the case. As I shall seek to show in the course of the chapters which follow, the analysis of participation has been predominantly superficial, oversimplistic (from the left as well as the right) and heavily imbued with ideological prior assumptions, most of which are not made explicit.

The identification and criticism of the presuppositions investing most of the literature is one of the aims of this thesis, and particularly of Parts 1 and 2. A

second aim is intimately entangled with this: to clarify the way in which certain key terms are used, and the way in which they change their meaning according to the theoretical context in which they are used. In particular, the concepts of 'democracy', 'industrial democracy' and 'participation' will be scrutinised in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 respectively. In addition, the analysis of 'power' and 'ideology' will be examined in Chapter 6 (following a preliminary discussion of power and participation in different accounts in Chapter 5).

These two aims, though important, are in some ways only preparatory to the main tasks of the thesis. These involve the construction of an adequate analytical framework, and an attempt to identify and explain the main empirical phenomena of worker participation in operation using this framework. To this end I shall make use of the resources which I would argue are available within Marxism. Some aspects of Marxist analysis will be called upon without a full and critical examination of their own basis, while others will be more closely scrutinised. I shall say a little more on this in a moment, in an attempt to make clear my own starting point (and, perhaps, inherent bias, since I put so much emphasis elsewhere on the unspoken assumptions of others).

Firstly, however, I shall preface the critical treatment of existing theories of worker participation with a comment on the minimum requirements of a theory of participation.

1. A clear theoretical basis in the form of a theory of industrial relations and society in general is

mandatory if one is to proceed beyond ad hoc lists of categories into which to organise data. In practice, a theory of some sort is inevitably embedded in any such approach, and equally inevitably, it colours the analysis. Confusion, misapprehension and ideological claims of political neutrality follow from the implicit, and often unrecognised, presence and nature of this permeative theory. It thus becomes important both to recognise and make explicit the theoretical underpinning of one's discussion; at the same time, this exposes the approach to criticism both of the theory and of the consistent application of that theory to the subject under review. Hence the need to prise open other, 'pluralist' and 'unitary', accounts as below before a properly critical scrutiny can even commence.

2. Any discussion of participation must be concerned with how it operates in the real world. This is not to exclude ideals, but it is to subject them at the same time to the test of whether they can be taken at face value, or whether they rather serve as ideological protection, consciously or unconsciously, for certain interests. It may seem almost facile to say that we are concerned with reality (even when that reality includes supposedly 'detached' discussions of participation), yet this proves to be a powerful reason for criticising existing analyses of the subject qua analyses. Moreover, even such accounts of practical 'experiments' on participation as we have prove to be for the most part highly unreliable in their almost unstinting praise (or perhaps self-praise would be better, since most such accounts come from managers or their consultants, and have a strong flavour of public relations exercises).

The general approach adopted here is that which Keat &

Urry refer to as the 'realist' conception of the purpose of theory:

....to give causal explanations of observable phenomena, and of the regular relations that exist between them. Further, such explanations must make reference to the underlying structures and mechanisms which are involved in the causal processes. It is these structures and mechanisms which it is the task of theories to describe. Thus, the central feature of a scientific theory is its description of these items, and of the way in which they operate to generate the various phenomena that we wish to explain. (1975: 32)

The 'basic structures and mechanisms' here focus around class and the social relations of production as they operate at the point of production. The phenomena which must be explained - and must therefore also be charted, given the poverty of factual description currently available in many cases - are the careers of participation schemes and, we shall see, of historical waves of such schemes. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to examine as far as possible not just the externally observable content and context of participation, but also the interests and relative power of those involved, together with their perceptions of and attitudes towards the idea of worker participation in general and in its particular local form. By and large, examinations of the subject have not done this; on the few occasions when an adequate sociological investigation has been undertaken, the theoretical understanding of such notions as power has tended to be informed by ineffectual pluralist conceptions (see Chapter 6).

3. The possibility of differing interpretations of participation by conflicting theories raises the problem of adjudicating between competing accounts. Broadly it can be said that a theory must primarily stand by its

explanatory power - by how plausibly and comprehensively it makes sense of the available evidence, which plausibility requires also an internal consistency in explanations. However, a further element has already been mentioned, namely the attempt to account also for the existence and nature of competing accounts. In the words of one discussant of power:

....rational theorizing would be that which accounted both for itself, and those accounts it accounted. (S. Clegg, 1976: 82).

The attempt to comprehend alternative analyses as part of its subject-matter is a feature which largely marks out Marxism from its competitors. Marx also accounts for himself in terms of the conditions which make possible a radical, scientific analysis of social formations, though it would be fair to say that this reflexivity remains too little attended to even by Marxists. On the other hand, the recent trend to reflexive sociology has been largely tooled, if in a rather piecemeal fashion, from Marxism. At the same time, self-examination is practically non-existent in the study of 'worker participation' or 'industrial democracy'.

4. Certain heuristic categories may be adopted and be an aid to the analysis, provided that they are not treated as theories in their own right (which, as Chapter 4 will exemplify, is all too often how they are treated). The usefulness of such categories is proscribed by the theory, implicit or explicit, in the context of which they are applied. Thus categories may take on a rather different significance in the context of the approach adopted here from that which they had in their original useage; they must always be closely attended, and abandoned if they seem liable to hamper

rather than aid the analysis.

Finally, some initial mention of the requirements for assessing participation schemes in operation is also in order. It is the sad truth that most studies cannot really be counted as adequate; as indicated, they consist chiefly of taking the self-presentation by management of 'their' schemes as objective data. Once this method is recognised as problematic, a series of approaches seem to be open to the sociologist in order to make some assessment. They can be usefully summarised as follows:

a) Observation:- this entails a largely descriptive approach, charting the formal structure of the scheme, the scope of issues it can deal with, and the limits placed on these in order to get at the content of the scheme, as distinct from its official functions and capacities. In terms of the categories generated in the discussion of Walker in Chapter 4 below, this involves formal and actual participation, except that the last notion is still problematic (see (c) below).

b) Perceptions:- where the previous approach was fairly typical of the standard pluralist method (as revealed in, for instance, the community power research by Dahl and others<sup>1</sup>), this next approach can be crudely tagged 'social action'. The key here is to examine perceived participation<sup>2</sup> on the part of the social actors involved in the scheme.

c) Structural context:- it is hard to think of an adequate heading for this approach, but essentially it involves an attempt to place the operation of a participation scheme in a wider context of the general dynamic of decisions achieved through it and the objective interests they represent. This clearly entails

bringing certain conceptual criteria to the data (but so do (a) and (b) by ignoring this approach and by their general closures - see S. Clegg, 1975) in order to examine the operation of a structure of power and ideology, and even of a systemic 'rationality',<sup>3</sup> which cannot be straightforwardly derived from the phenomenal operation of a participation scheme, and which, by its nature, renders the perceptions of actors unreliable as self-explanatory research material. As Chapter 6 will argue, this involves employing the kind of perspective Lukes (1974) refers to as a 'three-dimensional' conception of power, but not in the rather static manner in which Lukes presents the idea.

#### A MARXIST APPROACH

I have already suggested that any analysis of worker participation schemes carries along theoretical baggage concerning the context in which the schemes arise and operate. Often this theoretical account is not made explicit - indeed it may be so taken-for-granted as not even to be a conscious adoption of the writer concerned.

As we shall see, almost all attempts to account for participation operate either from a harmonistic image of social reality, or from a pluralistic one of conflict underlaid by a fundamental consensus. On both accounts, any desirable reform of the basis of labour-management relations is possible, and may be inevitable. However, these presuppositions concerning the nature of social relations (and even specifically industrial relations) are rarely made explicit.

This thesis seeks to counter such perceptions with an analysis of worker participation schemes founded on a Marxist view of the nature of the societies - in particular Britain - to be discussed. As I have argued, part of this task entails rendering manifest the social theories embedded in existing orthodoxy on worker participation. However, in order that the alternative view proposed here can be appreciated, it is also necessary to indicate rudiments of the competing theory adopted in this thesis.

Having said this, it must be added that even to summarise 'Marxism' is to venture on an enormous task. Here I can do no more than indicate the basic precepts which inform the arguments to come, and to point also to their distinctiveness from the accounts of more conventional approaches discussed in this introduction and in succeeding chapters. At the same time it is intended that any inbuilt bias in the analysis should be detected. It is apparent that a Marxist will start from a sceptical position on pronouncements of the reform of capitalism from within, and certainly such a scepticism has informed my research (though it has not prevented my views from being modified, sometimes quite markedly, by my observations of concrete reality).

There is still another reason for some elaboration here. Marxism is a resource which is subject to a multiplicity of interpretations. Certain common threads may be found in almost all versions, but it remains necessary to further specify one's position. Where concepts of direct relevance to the argument are concerned, they are explored more fully in the text - as with 'power', 'ideology' and discussions of worker consciousness in

Part 3. However, there has been neither the space nor the stamina to encompass all the relevant debates on concepts of importance, and to indicate their manifestations in these pages. While other work in which I have been involved<sup>4</sup> has made possible exploration of some of these theories, often the context has been very different and therefore the relevant conclusions for the current project not readily apparent.

Where an issue is particularly controversial, I shall do no more than indicate this below, and try briefly to clarify my own view. It is from these premises that I shall derive many of my criticisms of other accounts of participation and the basis for an alternative analysis.

The starting point for anyone intending to use Marx's work is the identification of the conditions of production under capitalism. Marx's critique of bourgeois political economy yielded, as a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production, the exploitation of labour to sustain the profit accruing to capital and so the accumulation of capital. There are areas of controversy even here, concerning for instance the validity of the labour theory of value,<sup>5</sup> and so the nature of the relationship of exploitation between capital and labour. My own position includes an adherence to the labour theory of value, though I shall not venture to elaborate on the reasoning behind this. It would seem, however, that abandonment of the concept is associated with an undermining also of Marxist analysis of politics and ideology.<sup>6</sup>

From the contradiction between capital and labour, which Marx argues to be factually the core social

relationship, follows the analysis of classes and class conflict in capitalist society. Classes are thus taken here as structural categories;<sup>7</sup> they are production relations. I stress this against a common tendency among Marxists as well as pluralists, to define classes in phenomenal terms, as strata or groups associated by their market position taken in isolation. Such an approach as this latter yields, indeed, a plurality of 'classes' which can only be marshalled into 'workers' and 'bosses' by arbitrary assertions about interests. In my view this constitutes an impoverishment of the concept of class, reducing it to an (analytically and politically) impotent a priorism.<sup>8</sup>

If Capital is read as the exposition of the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production and also as, at one and the same time, the expression of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie (as the agents of capital) and the 'collective worker', then it can be seen that class becomes an empirical category which retains a coherence even when the account is extended to allow for the contradictory role of many real-world agents. Thus the delineation of the uncertain position of lower-level management (or, perhaps, plant-level management in a company such as the British Steel Corporation or GEC, whose top decision-makers move to close the plant to protect the return to capital) can be consistent with the overall fissure between labour and capital. Such contradictory positions can be expected to affect the way in which the world is experienced by managers (or by workers) and so their attitudes. These and other related points emerge in the analysis of Chapters 6-8.

In addition, the concept of class must retain its

historical dimension. A common tendency associated with the Weberian pluralist analysis of class in market terms is its static nature. I would endorse Poulantzas' view that:

....social classes do not firstly exist as such, and only then enter into a class struggle. Social classes coincide with class practices, i.e. the class struggle, and are only defined in their mutual opposition. (1974: 14).

I would take this statement in the way implied by Edward Thompson's discussion of the topic, in what for me represents a singularly illuminating passage on the notion of class:

Sociologists who have stopped the time-machine and, with a good deal of conceptual huffing and puffing, have gone down to the engine-room to look, tell us that nowhere at all have they been able to locate and classify a class... Of course, they are right, since class is not this or that part of the machine, but the way the machine works once it is set in motion - not this interest and that interest, but the friction of interests - the movement itself, the heat, the thundering noise. Class is a social and cultural formation...which cannot be defined abstractly, or in isolation, but only in terms of relationship with other classes. (1965: 357).

This Marxist analysis of class has very different implications for relations in industry from a pluralist approach which analyses conflict and 'stratification' on the basis of exchange relations (and other supposedly distinct relations such as status). This is self-evident, since the nature of class conflict in a Marxist account is such that it cannot be alleviated unless the division between capital and labour is destroyed. Many proposals, including profit-sharing or worker participation in decision-making, purport to eradicate the basis of any such division. But for most Marxists these in no way alter the fundamental contradiction and its manifestation

in the division of labour, the fight by capital to intensify the output of each employee, through the labour process, and at minimum cost to the employer (though not necessarily to the worker in boredom, loss of health etc). Indeed, participation proposals and the like can be comprehended in Marxist terms, it follows, as aspects of these very struggles that they pretend to transform. This will be a central argument of this thesis, though it will undergo a great deal of elaboration and some qualification en route.

Thus the Marxist analysis which I am taking as given for this thesis generates a negative attitude to participation schemes. It is my intention to compare the specific predictions about participation schemes which follow from this analysis with those arising from other 'orthodox' (pluralistic or harmonistic) analyses. Following this I shall seek to empirically validate and give detail to Marxist predictions as against those of competing accounts.

One pair of terms which I have occasionally made use of in the ensuing pages is 'political economy of the working class/labour' and 'political economy of the middle class/capital'. These notions derive from the structural conception of class sketched above. The two are thus opposed, and refer to the class interest advanced by a particular action, event or process, conceived as an aspect of the class struggle. The terms are to be found in Marx's own work, as in the well-known Inaugural Address to the International Working Men's Association (Marx, 1864, where he describes the victory of the 10 Hours' Bill and of the co-operative movement as victories for the political economy of labour over that of capital).

I argued earlier that this extended section of the introduction was necessary to make explicit the political and theoretical premises on which this thesis was based. I also suggested that all accounts of participation contain some theory, openly or not. It should be noted that one of the strengths of Marxism is its sensitivity to the wider connections and implications of a position on a particular topic, due to the emphasis on capitalism as a system of production. Thus a Marxist analysis is predisposed to trace the roots of any phenomenon beyond the narrow confines represented by the physical walls of the factory or the theoretical walls of a specialist bourgeois discipline. In general this explains the inclination to provide a 'political economy' (i.e. not just a 'neo-classical economy', or 'industrial sociology' etc) of any subject, including worker participation. There is more to it than just this, however, and it leads me to an area of controversy within Marxism on which I should make my position clear. I shall start by discussing the concept of the State.

The orthodox pluralist account of industrial relations eliminated 'political' considerations by representing the State as a body outwith employer-employee relations, or as a neutral arbiter and provider of certain supports and official rules to guide the conduct of those relations. For the Marxist, in contrast, the State is a key aspect of capitalism, devoted to its survival and progress, and so firmly on the side of capital (though not necessarily of the individual capitalist).<sup>9</sup> However, the determination of State activity and the nature of its actions do not follow as straightforwardly from this as it might seem.

Firstly, there is the question of how to interpret State services which appear as benefits for labour, e.g. the health service, free education, social security benefits etc. One possible interpretation is that these are concessions made by the State (on behalf of capital) to the political economy of labour - as with Marx's view of the 10 Hours' Bill. Alternatively, it may be felt that the State is partially autonomous from the employing class, and can be 'captured' by pro-labour politicians, or at least brought to see the need for such benefits.<sup>10</sup> Finally, such State actions may be seen as oriented precisely to the maintenance and the insurance of a fit (in body and mental preparation) labour force for which the individual capitalist does not have to bear the cost or responsibility. Broadly, this last is my own view.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, however, this is an empirical question, to assess whether a policy advances the political economy of capital or of labour. Thus, for example, the policy of the Labour Government during its last period of office to consider the legislated appointment of worker directors should not be prejudged by assertion that it conforms to one or another of the above interpretations. Rather the operation of worker director schemes and the specific nature and implications of the proposals, must be examined. As we shall see, this remains true regardless of public or private aspirations for and opinions of Bullock-type proposals by representatives of capital or labour.

Secondly, there remains the question of the nature of the State's position within the capitalist system - in one terminology its 'articulation' with other aspects of the mode of production. The same question arises for 'ideological' or 'cultural' production.

The same question arises for 'ideological' or 'cultural' relations as arises for 'political' ones, and in Chapter 6 more extensive arguments on the analysis of ideology will parallel those merely referred to here on the State. Marxism is conventionally read through a particular interpretation of Marx's famous Preface to a Critique of Political Economy, in which Marx talks of an economic 'base' and a political, ideological 'superstructure'. I have argued below

that this distinction is untenable, and seriously obstructs a workable and helpful analysis of ideology. Similarly for the State, my own position is that it is not 'superstructural' or secondary to production relations - it is itself a relation of production and an arena of the same class struggle as that found in the factory.<sup>12</sup> It will be apparent that a view of the State as internal to production relations is associated with the view of State actions as production-/capital-maintaining discussed above.

A couple of more points remain to be made. I have not made use of the concept of 'alienation' to any significant extent in the thesis because I feel it to be too problematical and beyond my capacity to clarify sufficiently here. Broadly, however, I would adopt an understanding of the concept along the lines suggested by Mandel (1971). Thus I would not commence from an absolute (and unverifiable) conception of man such as is entailed in the analysis of the 1844 Manuscripts, but would adhere to a concept of alienation as a state generated by the fact of the division of labour and class struggle. To have any validity, the notion must be demonstrable in terms of what can be empirically demonstrated to be the constraint on people's productive activity. This does not entail a reduction of alienation

to an empiricist account of job satisfaction such as produced in the work of Blauner (where 'ownership powerlessness' is, moreover, explicitly dismissed as an irremediable universal - 1964:17). This point does have relevance to my discussions of job-level participation schemes (though these are not the main focus of this study) and of Blumberg's discussion of industrial democracy. I shall not develop the arguments here, however.

A further important question on which I shall not expand directly is that of the identification of the mode of production as capitalism. That this is a controversial matter within Marxism can be seen by noting the ferocity of the debate about whether societies such as the USSR are a form of capitalism or not. It also arises, however, in a form already noted concerning the identification of countries such as the USA or Britain today as capitalist or 'post-capitalist'. This argument has relevance for participation proposals, in that the possibilities of achieving a real modification in worker-management relations would be transformed, even in a Marxist account, if the structure of production relations has itself altered. Some Marxists, and many pluralists, would accept this interpretation, and so would see present-day concern with participation as a qualitative break with the past. The view taken in this thesis is, however, that capitalism is still the mode of production defining these societies, whatever the specific phenomenal changes in the social formation. Again, this is an empirical question, though not one that can be resolved within the confines of this thesis. Some of the general issues which relate directly to the interpretation of the current wave of interest in participation will, however, be discussed in Chapter 9.

This assertion about the continuance of capitalism is important for the thesis in two ways. Firstly, it is essential for the elements of Marx's analysis of capitalism discussed above to be applicable. It should be noted once more, however, that the theoretical account of participation constructed from this basis is to be empirically supported and not merely 'applied' in the abstract. Secondly, this thesis is concerned specifically with worker participation in capitalist societies - and it will be argued that to produce some 'continuum' of degrees of participation which treats the topic in isolation from the set of production relations in which that participation is situated is an ideological and invalid procedure. It is, nonetheless, a common pluralist approach.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE THESIS

In this thesis I am taking on a large number of opponents. The attack on harmonistic or unitary views of the employment relationship, which reduce the 'problem' to misunderstanding and poor communication of management rationals to workers, has already been undertaken by several critics.<sup>14</sup> The attack on pluralistic accounts of several variants will thus receive more attention. As I have already made clear in the previous section, however, there will also be a need at several junctures to distinguish my own views from those of other writers who have employed Marxism as a tool for analysing (or more commonly for bludgeoning) participation.

When I embarked on the work for this thesis, my preconceptions were rather in line with some of these views; participation could be fully comprehended as a

shrewdly designed flypaper to capture and eliminate worker aspirations to real power in industry. I have not substantially changed my view concerning the vision of participation as an attempt to sustain rather than transform the status quo. I have, however - and I am oddly reassured to be able to say it - modified considerably my understanding of how participation schemes come about and what consequences they have in the course of my collection and consideration of empirical material. One result has been to complicate and so markedly lengthen what would in any case have been a sizeable tome.

I hope and believe that the justification for the length of this work will be found in the reading. A great deal of analytical groundwork, and of criticisms of the orthodoxies on the subject of worker participation, were necessary before the empirical material could be meaningfully organised and interpreted. I do not claim that there are not sentences or asides which could be trimmed, since blindness to such self-indulgence must be a vice of anyone who has immersed themselves in a subject. I would, however, argue that the chapters and sections of the thesis all contribute to the discussions in a way that would leave it debilitated by their exclusion. Indeed, there are other avenues which I might have profitably explored. I have sought to strike a fair balance between exclusion and inclusion to the best of my ability.

However, the time has come to draw this extended introduction towards its close by indicating the path to be trodden in the five parts and 16 chapters that follow.

Part One prises open the subject by examining treatments of three concepts. The first, 'democracy' lays the groundwork for the second, 'industrial democracy', and in each case not only is the pluralist perspective identified as predominant, but conflicting perspectives within pluralism are discovered. The contrasts between these and a Marxist perspective are indicated. The third chapter deals with 'participation' indicating the common ground between 'worker participation' and 'industrial democracy' in its various usages, but also stressing the confusion created when the two are conflated, particularly within a harmonistic (unitary) framework. Chapter 3 also introduces real-world actors in the form of management and trade union spokesmen. A pattern is identified in their pronouncements, despite the surface confusions. That pattern also implies a rejection of any tendency to treat unions as management appendages in their statements, since the two sides are found to use differing and significantly opposed criteria for approving or rejecting participation proposals.

Part Two turns its attention directly to attempts to build a theoretical framework for the analysis of worker participation. Chapter 4 offers a critical resume of selected, influential pluralist treatments of the subject from which a more general assessment of the flaws in such approaches is developed. Chapter 5 extends this, and proceeds to lay down an alternative approach drawing on the resources of Marxism, and making use of certain heuristic categories gleaned from earlier discussion.

Part Three extends and deepens particular aspects of the arguments developed in Parts One and Two and also

introduces the first major set of empirical material from my own and other studies. Chapter 6 remains at an abstract level, exploring the concept of power, crucial to any notion of worker participation as power-sharing. Once again, the chapter proceeds from a critical examination of pluralist orthodoxy to a Marxist alternative which opens up a far wider area for relevant consideration. At this juncture, it is also necessary to be critical of many Marxist discussions of power, and of the directly related question of ideology, and to develop a distinctive analysis drawn from Marx's own work. Chapters 7 and 8 then explore empirically some of the questions about the nature of attitudes and consciousness raised and shown to be important by that discussion of ideology. Chapter 7 deals with aspects of working class consciousness and seeks to chart the extent and limits of legitimacy of the existing social order in society generally, and in industry in particular. Chapter 8 does the same for practising managers, but also looks at the formation and nature of management thought, which constitutes a major part of what may be called the 'dominant ideology'.

Part Four employs the heuristic categories and analytical framework developed in the preceding sections of the thesis in an attempt to account for the results of participation schemes. In fact, the predictions yielded by the earlier analysis suggest that participation is on the one hand primarily an incorporative device oriented to managerial purposes of control and preservation of capital's interests. On the other hand, and in contrast to most other discussions of the topic (including Marxist ones), it is predicted on the basis of earlier arguments that

participation schemes will not be as 'successful' as is commonly supposed. The empirical material of Chapters 9-11 seeks to investigate this claim. It will be argued that it provides an encouraging substantiation of the overall perspective and reveals the factual inadequacies of orthodox discussions of participation.

In particular, Chapter 9 adopts an historical perspective, arguing against the notion that industrial democracy is progressively evolving into a participative form in Britain. Cycles of interest in participation are identified, corresponding to periods in which management policy-makers feel their position to be under pressure. Worker involvement is advanced as a concession to labour simultaneously seeking to create a commitment to the interests of capital. The argument that the present period constitutes a qualitative break with the past is subjected to critical scrutiny. Chapter 10 focuses on contemporary or near-contemporary case studies to discover in more detail the processes at work in the operation of participation schemes, and to evaluate further the predicted pattern of outcomes. In Chapter 11 this examination is extended to a review of evidence on a selected group of other countries, to see whether the results of participation in Britain presented in Chapters 9 and 10 are reproduced in different (but still capitalist) societies.

Part Five, finally, employs material from my own survey in three organisations in North-East England to further test the validity of earlier arguments, and to lend further depth to the preceding analysis of attitudes and processes of labour-management relations with particular reference to participation. Thus Chapter

12 examines worker attitudes to the general idea of participation and explores the specific issues and forms in which greater influence is sought. Chapter 13 looks at management attitudes to worker participation, and compares these to worker views. Both of these chapters take their departure from the results of this and other surveys on wider political and industrial attitudes presented in Chapters 7 and 8. Chapters 14 to 16 look in some detail at the participation arrangements, and views from both managers and workers on their operation, in the three employing organisations where my survey was conducted. In particular, this makes it possible to further reinforce and extend the observations reported in Chapter 10.

This thesis has been written over a considerable span of time and inevitably this means that, despite updating during revision, later chapters are more focussed on recent material than earlier ones. Fortunately, the empirical chapters of Part Four would have had most to lose from becoming antiquated.

I have also trodden the ever-uncomfortable path between a drive to be comprehensive in coverage ( a compulsion at its strongest in one's thesis) and the greater concentration of analysis that comes from selection. The bibliography is extensive, but in the end deliberately not encyclopaedic. The discussions in Chapters 4 and 6 are examples of much slimmed-down versions of compendious literature reviews.

The subject matter of the thesis, too, has been defined and fenced in in a way that might seem less problematical were it not for the emphasis in my stated

analytical position on the need for avoiding a priorism and recognising the social interconnectedness of phenomena. In a sense, my starting-point for research had an arbitrariness that is reflected in what emerges here. I set out to look at what seemed a straightforwardly discrete area, worker participation schemes, and narrowed this to a focus chiefly on representative, company-level arrangements. One thing which emerges from the research, however, is the untrustworthiness of appearances, and to an extent this is true of the topic of study itself. There is an element of artificiality involved in isolating the schemes studied from say, employer welfarism, trade union recognition etc. That said, the 'common sense' ease with which identification of the topic takes place in existing literature suggests (in the light of the methodology discussed in Chapter 6) a phenomenon which has some significance. The coherence which has proved possible in discussing the subject lends support to this view. So what is offered is a sociology, or political economy, of that phenomenon, worker participation. If the identification of the topic affects its analysis, it is my belief that the effect is not severely detrimental.

Finally, I am oddly contented that this attempt to probe the phenomenon of worker participation has not simply resolved certain issues (to my mind at least) but has also left many questions vaguely answered or not answered at all, including fresh ones stirred up by the study itself. Social scientists are always relieved, a cynic might observe, when their labours upturn the promise of further tasks to be done to justify their own continued existence.

## INTRODUCTION: NOTES

1. See Dahl, 1957, 1958, 1961, 1967; Rose, 1967; Hunter, 1953; Polsby, 1959, 1963 for various important contributions; they are countered in varying degrees by Bachrach & Baratz, 1962, 1963, 1970; Mills, 1956; Domhoff, 1967, 1970. For reviews of the debate see Walton, 1966; Lukes, 1974; S. Clegg, 1975, 1976 and briefly in Chapter 6 below.
2. See Chapter 4 below (the section on Walker) for the derivation of the term 'perceived participation'. Briefly, it is the extent to which employees perceive themselves to be participating, which need not, of course, conform to reality.
3. One thinks here of the example of the worker co-operative or the 'self-managed' firm attempting to generate socialist relations of production in a market environment, be it in Britain or Yugoslavia. (C.f. Batstone, 1976:19, 41 for recognition in part at least of the problem; and Poole, 1975:101). In each case it can be argued that the context of their operation imposes certain limits of action (and often perception), and so relations, corresponding to the logic of 'economic rationality'. For further discussion, including the specifically capitalist status of this economic rationality, see Ramsay, 1974a,b.
4. See particularly Corrigan, Ramsay, Sayer, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980.
5. See the discussions in Rabin, 1928; Cutler et al, 1977; Elson (ed), 1979 for some of the competing Marxist views on the labour theory of value.
6. As in the work of Hindness, Hirst and their associates - see e.g. Cutler et al, 1977; Hirst, 1977; Hindness, 1977, 1978; and the critical review of their work by Corrigan & Sayer, 1978.
7. Since the term 'structural' tends to provoke certain conditioned responses, it should be stressed that I do not mean thereby that class exists other than through the relations between real people. At the same time it cannot be analysed in purely static phenomenal terms, as I think the quotation from Thompson below in the text helps to clarify, and as the explication of ideology in Chapter 6 should further demonstrate.
8. A priorism is equally rife in 'structuralist'

analyses of class, such as those found in the varied work of Althusser, Poulantzas, Carchedi or Hirst & Hindess. It has an equally crippling impact on the efficacy of the analysis here - hence my provisos in the previous footnote.

9. The exceptions here are those who employ what they see as Marxist concepts or analytical tools to reach the conclusion that the growth of monolithic corporations and/or State ownership and other interventions constitute a shift in mode of production and so away from the laws of motion of capitalism. Whether the basic conflict of labour and capital is seen as dissolved or as displaced by a new one, e.g. between a bureaucratic/technocratic elite and the 'masses', varies from one such analysis to another. In my view this approach to the State and the methodology adopted, reflect an untenable departure from the analysis actually employed by Marx. My own view of the State is outlined below in the text.

10. Such a perspective is inherent in reformist or revisionist Marxism - viz. 'Eurocommunist' arguments.

11. For an elaboration of arguments along these lines see e.g. Novak & Jones, 1976; P.R.D. Corrigan, 1977.

12. As elaborated in Corrigan, Ramsay, Sayer, 1977, 1980. Note that this rejection of the conventional usage of the 'base/superstructure' metaphor is in contrast to that of the Hirst/Hindess school. Whereas their approach is to divorce the State from any necessary relationship (determined or otherwise) with the sphere of the 'economic', I would argue for the internality of the State to production.

13. As Chapter 4 will seek to demonstrate, and elaborate on the consequences of.

14. See e.g. Fox, 1966a, 1973, 1974a; Anthony, 1977 especially Chapter 11; Strauss, 1968; Strauss & Rosenstein, 1970; Daniel & McIntosh, 1972.

PART ONE: WORDS AND MEANINGS

## INTRODUCTION

It has become a commonplace to commence discussion of 'worker participation' by pronouncing sagely on the multiple meanings attached to the term. As a rule, there then follows an argument that the term is too vague in its usage to have any utility. Such observations are all too often used as an excuse for the substitution of some more favoured restrictive term as a proxy for 'participation', or for some other means of arbitrarily specifying a narrow definition of the term (to conveniently match the author's predilections). This in turn, it will be argued, removes from consideration a crucial part of the phenomenon requiring study, and thus delivers a severe blow to effective study.

This semantic stew is thickened by the intermixture of another important phrase with the first. The term is 'industrial democracy', in recent times all too often conflated with 'participation' as if the two were synonymous. It is, nonetheless, clear that the concept of democracy is a crucial contributory element in the various meanings attached to 'participation'. It is necessary, in order to appreciate the competing proposals for reform of the worker's place in industry, to trace the conceptions of what needs to be done and why, which are embedded in terms such as 'worker participation' and 'industrial democracy'. This entails starting with a scrutiny of the notions of participation and democracy in general, and then looking at how they have been applied to industrial relationships.



In the first three chapters, then, the concepts 'democracy', 'industrial democracy', and in the third 'participation' and 'worker participation' will successively receive attention. The reason for this ordering is that the concept of participation is partly clarified in the course of the examination of theories of democracy.

The exegesis and discussion in these first three chapters has two related objectives:

(1) The emphasis is at first on political theories and their application to the factory. The range of definitions of each term will be charted (with some reference to legitimate usage in a linguistic sense) and the assumptions entailed by the differing definitions identified. It emerges that there are certain distinct constellations of usage marked out precisely by these explicit or implicit assumptions.

(2) This survey of theories provides the clues required to investigate the retinue of meanings attached to worker participation in the real world. In chapter three these meanings will be set out and will be shown to fall into a pattern closely related to the structural location of the users in society. In short, the implicit (it is rarely stated or even conscious) theory behind a particular idea of worker participation is a reflection of the class interests being promoted. This is, of course, a significant finding, given that the competition between proposals for worker participation is commonly supposed to be over the best means to improve the position of labour.

The investigation of the range of real-world conceptions of worker participation reveals a pattern which supports particular theoretical approaches. It also reveals a serious flaw in those treatments of the subject mentioned above which seek to terraform arbitrarily the concept of participation to their own requirements. By dismissing conventional usage as irretrievably unmanageable, they divorce themselves from a key resource for explaining reality. This is only one aspect of the shortcomings of these approaches, however, and I shall return to them in Part Two.

## CHAPTER ONE: DEMOCRACY

Today the very word 'democracy' has become a touchstone of legitimacy for social institutions. As one prominent commentator testifies:

...democracy is not only or even primarily a means through which different groups can attain their ends or seek the good society; it is the good society itself in operation. (Lipset, 1960:403).

Yet for all the distinguished social scientists who have applied themselves to recounting the precious blessings of democracy, there is a remarkable deficiency of clear and substantiated explication of its actual meaning. How much more prevalent, then, is this vagueness in journalistic and everyday use.

Few of the advocates of industrial democracy offer a definition of democracy. The word is indeed, used to denote and elicit approval. (Kilroy-Silk, 1970:169).

Regardless of whether those who liberally dispense the word 'democracy' are conscious of their failure or not, its significance is far greater than a matter of simple oversight. An examination of implicit usage, and of the few explicit statements, suggests that a major element of ideology, of tautology and apologetic, lies embedded in the conventional wisdom.

### PLURALIST ORTHODOXY

This emerges most blatantly in a common tendency amongst political sociologists and scientists to circumvent the need to give a definition by resort to the assertion that democracies are adequately

identified as those societies commonly called democracies.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this miraculous circularity is, however, rarely if ever extended to include those socialist societies which call themselves democracies. To do so would be to undercut much of the polemic which these writers are impatient to reach having applied a thin veneer of pseudo-objectivity.

A survey of contemporary political theorists readily produces examples of failure to define democracy at all - Almond & Verba<sup>2</sup>, and Berelson<sup>3</sup> being particularly prominent examples. However, others do go as far as to suggest certain key elements of democracy. Dahrendorf (1959:308) is typical, citing freedom of coalition, free communication, parties to represent groups of opposed interests, no absolute deprivation of any socio-economic group, and an elaborate system of conflict regulation. This last notion of regulated conflict is particularly common, emanating from the classical source of de Tocqueville (1835). It marks a powerful consensus on the image of democratic society as 'pluralist', characterized by:

...power as an automatic balance, with...a plurality of independent, relatively equal, and conflicting groups of the balancing society. (Mills, 1956:243).<sup>4</sup>

In this scenario, pressure groups combat one another to get their interests adequately represented. The conflict is, however, a restrained and 'responsible' one. For this to be possible, those involved must accept the rules of the system, and so therefore the broad structure of the system itself. This concept of pluralism becomes more prominent still when considering

relations in industry, it will be found.

Habitual accompaniments to the above conditions are rights such as freedom of speech and equal life-chances, and not infrequently explicit reference is made to the value of a free market (capitalist) economy (c.f. Lipset, 1960:74). The pervasive elements of pluralism and of 'freedom' ( a concept itself ill-specified, legitimatory, and severely problematical, as the later discussion of ideology will by implication make clear) lead to these orthodox approaches being conventionally referred to as 'liberal democratic theory' or 'pluralist democratic theory'. It is also sometimes designated the 'modern' theory of democracy, in contradistinction to the 'classical' theory.

This last description follows from the work of one of the writers most influential on current thinking in this area, Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter argued that the 'classical' view, which called for direct involvement of the citizen in governmental decision-making, was rendered unrealistic by the inevitable apathy of the real-world citizen, and by the need for decisive and efficient leadership. Democracy could only operate as a system based instead on rule by governments who were elected and who therefore had to be responsive to public demands in competition with an opposition party or parties also seeking electoral victory (Schumpeter, 1943). Political democracy thus takes on still more clearly the form of the capitalist market-place.<sup>5</sup>

Pateman (1970) argues that this defining characteristic has in effect been adopted by almost all political

theorists since Schumpeter. She traces the theme through the work of writers such as Dahl, Sartori and Eckstein. In fact, Lipset too can be found using this notion of the competitive struggle for votes as his cipher.<sup>6</sup> It reduces democracy from a form of direct influence on community decision-making by all citizens to the concept of representation alone. Consequently that which we found expressed as an ideal, as itself "the good society", turns out to be at best a pragmatic adjustment in the face of suppositional reservations as to the potential of people to participate and as to the logistics of arranging this.

The problems with the liberal democratic concept of democracy, in the currently conventional form discussed thus far, can be conveniently divided into questions of theory and of fact. The chief theoretical objection is that there is a confusion in all the definitions we have noted between the concept of democracy itself and the identification of logical or empirical conditions for its realisation, or even at times of features which are merely associated with democracy.<sup>7</sup> It would appear, on reflection, that competitive voting, or pluralism more generally, have the status only of conditions for democracy, rather than actually constituting democracy itself. Similarly factors like free markets, equal opportunity and the like are either causal conditions or merely associated features. It is this lacuna which introduces the element of tautology to the pluralist democratic approach. The chosen causal factors, bearing so close a resemblance to the proclaimed status quo in the societies to which most of these theorists belong, are never actually verified against some absolute

standard which they are supposedly instrumental in achieving. Instead, they are manoeuvred into becoming that standard themselves. The fatal weakness of this position is exposed, however, by the counter-attack of alternative theories of democracy, offering quite different criteria.

#### THE RADICAL CRITIQUE

In the empirical dimension, liberal democratic theorists must confront critics who argue that those societies they believe to exhibit a balanced power distribution, a bountiful collection of freedoms, and a real responsiveness of government to popular opinion entailing a genuine choice at elections, are in truth nothing like this at all. The literature here is extensive and, beyond the related discussion of Chapter 6 below, cannot receive the attention it deserves within these pages. Briefly, there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that the portrait painted by the pluralists is spurious. In this view, it becomes the product of a blinkered, self-fulfilling methodology and of unremitting allegiance to the dominant ideology. The reality is argued to be one of a concentration of power in few hands, a spurious competition for votes between political elites with few features to distinguish them from each other, and a 'freedom' which evaporates under pressure.

For the moment, however, our concern is not empirical refutation of the pluralist orthodoxy. This will become a focus of attention only insofar as it directly relates to the analysis of the operation of 'democracy' in the workplace, when the implications of the alternative Marxist class framework will be explored.

This chapter will confine itself to conceptual criticisms of and alternatives to the standard liberal democratic model. Since this model appears largely as a celebration of the Anglo-American status quo, substitutes entail a critical stance towards this prototype and a programme of change. One such proposal gaining some credence at the present time, and closely associated with the central concern of this thesis, is a revival of one strand of the 'classical' democratic theory rejected by Schumpeter. Often referred to as 'radical democratic theory', it proposes the restoration of the emphasis on direct involvement of the citizen in government - i.e. her or his participation. A particularly effective exponent of this view (and its immediate relevance for industrial organization) in recent years has been Pateman.

Pateman's examination of the standard liberal democratic offering highlights another of its features, a move away from a concern with democracy per se and towards the legitimation and preservation of existing social morphology. The institutions themselves thus take on wholly the mantle of 'democracy', and so become that which must be fought for; any alternative system becomes by definition a 'threat' to democracy - and that may include any proposal to increase the interest and involvement of the typical citizen in the operation of the polity. This mutated perspective assumes the form of an overwhelming concern with the conditions for 'stable democracy'; and these conditions entail democracy itself taking a back seat.

Two extreme examples are found in the work of Eckstein

(1966) and Almond & Verba (1965). In consequence, Eckstein advocates a 'healthy element of authoritarianism', and refers to a need for firm leadership to keep 'democracies' steadfast. Almond and Verba take their lead from the theories of Talcott Parsons, and set out to examine the optimum conditions for the internalization by social actors of a 'civic culture'. This civic culture in turn is identified as that most likely to guarantee acceptance of the existing system. It is constituted by a solid respect for the competence of government, together with a willingness by the vast majority to participate politically within the available channels up to a certain point (e.g. by voting rather than abstaining) but no further. Equilibrium is seen as endangered by too much participation just as much as by too little. As with Parsons himself, these authors are peculiarly vulnerable to any strong evidence suggesting that weak participation and internalization of 'civility' actually serves not some massive common set of interests, but the rule of an elite or ruling class at the expense of the rest of the population.

The radical or participatory theory of democracy repudiates the modern theory's view that democracy effectively serves only a protective or negative function for the citizen (i.e. that is merely a matter of maintaining channels through which policy-makers can be vetoed should they step visibly too far out of line).<sup>8</sup> They propose instead a return to a classical tradition, but not the utilitarian one of Bentham and James Mill, who Pateman shows also held to a protective conception of democracy (1970:78ff).

An alternative tradition is evoked, traced from Rousseau through J.S. Mill to G.D.H. Cole (Pateman, 1970:Ch 2) which, particularly in the Guild Socialist form proposed by Cole, is seen as being not anachronistic but highly relevant to 'modern industrialized' society.

The fear of writers like Almond & Verba derives from their perception of the authoritarian attitudes of most lower class individuals in society, coupled with the self-assessed low competence of these individuals to take part in the making of important decisions. Such an analysis is rightly exposed as mechanical and untenable by Pateman. The very factor which these theorists take as immutable is instead the key variable: the human being. For Pateman, it is the very stifling of democracy, of the chance to control their own destinies, that generates in people a sense of incompetence and so apathy. In the words of one author, concluding a review of major sources of use of the term 'apathy':

At each point patterns of thinking emerged which, to be sure, had reference to actual patterns of behaviour. But they also had strong ideological overtones. The quality of the language of 'apathy', however, is not only interesting as language. Its users frequently have the power to shape behavioural patterns which they then use in a variety of ways to ratify their own social roles. (Yeo, 1974: 311).<sup>9</sup>

The process of socialisation itself, then, becomes the source of authoritarian and apathetic outlooks. Modern theorists have not been entirely unaware of this, but have attributed such outlooks entirely to the influences of early childhood experience within the family, and seen them as fixed thereafter.<sup>10</sup> The

participatory theorist, by way of contrast, stresses the potential effect of secondary socialisation, and argues that people's conception of themselves and of the world can be transformed by the opportunity for real participation within school, and later community and work. Thus in this view participation itself creates the social basis for a full participatory democracy. Pateman (1971:301) is able, in fact, to hoist Almond and Verba on the petard of their own evidence, since they themselves suggest that opportunities to participate in the home, school and workplace are crucial in the process of political socialization.

The participatory theory - which we may contrast with the conventional obsession with certain institutions - is certainly appealingly iconoclastic in its dissection of certain domain assumptions in the theory of democracy. It is important to note also, however, that it fails itself to examine a whole series of questions relating to the underlying reasons for the prevalence of the institutionalist approach and its acceptance not only by intellectuals but by the population at large. The participatory perspective can offer a partial explanation of the maintenance of institutionalist theory but not of its origins. Participatory theorists remain attached to a notion of the political which is detached from any analysis of the nature of capitalism. As such, on a number of grounds participatory theory remains quintessentially a theory of liberal democracy. To elaborate on this, it will be necessary first to return to a consideration of the meaning of 'democracy' itself, a matter which has not yet been properly elucidated.

Holden (1974) suggests that the various different theories of democracy have as their common denominator the notion of 'government by the people', and that arguments are over the conditions for achieving this. The origin of the word lies in the Greek demos (people) and kratos (rule); an alternative translation which perhaps get closer to the spirit of the original is 'popular power'. Unfortunately Holden's definition, whilst accurate in specifying the definitional limits of 'democracy', affords no sense of the theoretical warfare which continues around this concept. There remains a total dissensus both on the feasible extent of democracy (based on notions of human nature) and on the actual nature of those societies with which this thesis is concerned (to the extent even of whether they are capitalist, post-capitalist, non-capitalist or whatever). In the process he has missed the real content of what are in fact two fundamentally opposed concepts of 'democracy' which have emerged in relatively recent history.

#### MARXISM ON 'DEMOCRACY'

The concept of democracy has not entirely escaped the attention of socio-historical analysis, and it is this which helps to put the matter in clearer perspective. Particularly valuable is the work of Macpherson (1964, 1966, 1973) and R. Williams (1976). As both note, democracy (as popular power) was a pretty disreputable term amongst the policy-makers of society until around a century ago. It became approved in a particular form, however - the liberal institutionalist form (Williams refers to it as

'representative democracy'). This entailed a break with the socialist strand, which retained the original stress on popular power, implying a situation where the interests of the majority took precedence, and their furtherance was itself controlled by the majority.

These two conceptions, in their extreme forms, now confront each other as enemies. If the predominant criterion is popular power in the popular interest, other criteria are taken as secondary (as in the 'People's Democracies') and their emphasis is specialized to 'capitalist democracy' or 'bourgeois democracy'. If the predominant criteria are elections and free speech, other criteria are seen as secondary or are rejected; an attempt to exercise popular power in the popular interest, for example by a General Strike, is described as 'anti-democratic', since 'democracy' has already been assured by other means. (Williams, 1976: 86).

The socialist theory of democracy is distinguished from its liberal counterparts by its recognition of classes and class conflict. As such it recognises and can analyse the possibility and nature of conflicting theories of democracy. Given that such differences do exist, this undoubtedly lends the socialist account a clear theoretical edge over its competitors. This in turn adds weight to the Marxist claim that liberal democratic theories, far from being objective, are in fact ideologies reflecting and justifying the rule of a particular set of class interests over the rest.

Market ideology, in the Marxist account, serves uniquely the interests of the bourgeois class, despite its claim to stand for 'national interests'. Marx and

Engels argue that "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (1846:64), but go on to observe how these ideas may become objectified:

If now in considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class itself and attribute them an independent existence...without bothering ourselves about the conditions of production and producers of these ideas...we can say for instance...during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts freedom, equality etc [are dominant]. The ruling class itself on the whole imagines this to be so. (Marx, 1846:65).

Hence the term democracy, a neutral concept at first glance, on closer scrutiny exhibits in its particular dominant form the hallmarks of the interests of a particular class.<sup>11</sup> What Williams' account does not go on to tell us is that the two theories he identifies are thus based on the pursuit of divergent class interests. In other words, they are not merely indicators of an abstract debate, or even indicators of dissent over the appropriate mechanism for democratic decision-making; at root they are aspects of the struggle between classes itself.

This Marxist perspective can help to make sense of a fact conveniently overlooked in almost all contemporary discussions:

...liberal democracy is strictly a capitalist phenomenon. Liberal-democratic institutions have appeared only in capitalist countries, and only after the free market and the liberal state have produced a working class conscious of its strength and insistent on a voice. (Macpherson, 1964: 19).

Hence the institutionalists in particular conform to Williams' description, claiming that the only alternative to their 'stable democracy' is a spectre labelled 'totalitarianism'. This presumption is supported by an influential development from de Tocqueville of what has become known as mass society theory. The best-known statement of this theory is probably Kornhauser's (1960) where he argues that without liberal democratic institutions and a plurality of intermediate pressure groups, there will be direct manipulation of the masses by elites or anarchistic pressuring of elites by masses. Popular power thus becomes identified with catastrophe.

This account collapses, of course, if Mills' contention that the USA is the prototypical manipulated mass society is confirmed. For those who dismiss this view, though, even when they remain critical of the totally de-classed version of society offered by the mass society analysis, the incompatibility of popular power with democracy is confirmed.

Marx's theory has no place for democracy under communism.

This is Lipset's claim (1960:26) in a text often critical of the mass society version of particular historical conjunctures. The assertion is either one of ignorance or of unsubstantiated preference for the liberal model, since in the Manifesto of the Communist Party itself, Marx and Engels write:

...the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of democracy. (1848:52, my emphasis).

This concept of democracy as the dictatorship of the proletariat, necessary because if the working class do not rule then the bourgeoisie will at their expense, is entirely consistent with the root meaning of 'democracy' noted above, and can be justified by class analysis. Once again, when the rhetoric is penetrated, the issue comes down to the choice between opposed theories of the nature of the societies in question.

#### A ROOT DEFINITION

From our discussion of the meaning of 'democracy', then, we are left with an indication of sharply divided understandings of its operational meanings. These differences are, in essence, based upon advocacy of socialism or of capitalist liberal pluralism as the ideal social form. It is possible, however, to identify a certain core meaning of the term, emanating from the basic notion of 'rule by the people'. Roughly, who takes decisions, by what means, and in whose interests<sup>12</sup> therefore become the key questions to be raised in any consideration of whether a particular social form deserves to be called 'democratic'. Although the criteria and method of investigation (and so the conclusions) of competing perspectives are almost entirely at odds beyond this point, the definitional floor remains of some value in excluding certain proposals altogether, as we shall see.

#### RADICAL PARTICIPATORY THEORY: A MARXIST REASSESSMENT

Before concluding this survey of democratic theory, there remains the task of examining more closely the

theory which has surely lent much of the impetus to the current vogue for 'participation' in industry, community, educational establishment and other walks of life as well as government itself. Some idea of the rationale of this approach has been given above, but the discussion cannot stop there, since in the light of certain of the arguments concerning the divergence between liberal and Marxist notions of democracy the position of the participatory theorists may seem inadequately covered. On the one hand I have described the severely critical and accurate assault of participatory theory on certain important tenets of institutionalist theory, and it was observed that a radical return to the idea of popular power was proposed. Yet it was also asserted that participatory theory remained quintessentially a liberal pluralist theory. Can these two claims be reconciled?

The answer is a little equivocal: they can be reconciled, but only through the acceptance that radical participatory theory is itself anomalous and internally contradictory. It recognises some but not all of the problems of institutionalist theory, and because of those aspects generally not recognised, it is incapable of fuelling a practical transcendence of liberal theory. The following points apply unevenly to different advocates of participatory society, insofar as their own analysis of the problems inherent in the existing state of affairs in capitalist societies is also divergent, and hence too their proposals for change.

To clarify the reasons for which it can be argued that participatory theory demonstrates the tenacity

rather than the defeat of liberal assumptions, it will be convenient to contrast the typical form of its arguments and proposals with those of Marxism. From this it will become apparent that Pateman's claim that there are two categories of 'classical' theory needs revision; the Marxist variant affords at least a third alternative to the interpretation of radical theory propounded by Pateman herself.

(1) Pluralism. Where the Marxist analysis draws an explicit diagram of the failing of democracy as consequent upon the fundamentally dichotomous class nature of capitalist society, this is almost totally absent from the analysis of participatory theorists. Amongst Pateman's three sages, the strongest case for exception is G.D.H. Cole who, despite strong liberal elements in his discussions, recognised the prevalence of class, and that it was 'slavery', not poverty per se, which had to be overcome. Thus he advocated a reversal of the system whereby capital employed labour, to destroy the wage-labour economy.<sup>13</sup> Thus the conception of the form to be taken by government once full democracy is introduced as desired is vague but distinctively liberal-pluralist in outline i.e. multiple cross-cutting interests but without fundamental, disruptive divisions. One consequence is the inability of participatory theorists to explain satisfactorily why the institutionalists should have opposed participation and resorted to a concern with stability to the exclusion of democracy. Implicitly, all that is offered is an attack on intellectual elitism. For Marxists, on the other hand, explanation is sought far more concretely through an analysis of ideology, and the legitimation of ruling class interests.

(2) Individualism. The emancipation which the participatory theorists thus seek seems to approximate most closely to an attempt to achieve the liberal ideal of 'freedom' of the individual. Although the acceptance of community action, as derived from Rousseau, is something of a modification of this, there is once again no view of the necessity of collective action by one class against another. This individualism is traceable chiefly to the bourgeois notions of freedom mentioned by Marx in the quote on p10 above, expressed chiefly through bourgeois economic theory. So it is that this 'radical' democratic approach remains based on psychologistic theories of individual oppression or liberation.<sup>14</sup> A Marxist analysis, on the contrary, insists that before and after any social transformation the dominance or subordination of people must be conceived in class terms. Either the political economy of the working class or that of the capitalist class will prevail, and if the former is to preserve any victory then the latter will have to be subordinated to proletarian control. In these collective terms, in the context of continuing class conflict, the concept of freedom also undergoes a change:

Freedom consists in knowledge of necessity and transformation of the objective world.<sup>15</sup>

(3) Reformism. Their analysis leads participatory theorists to what is essentially the advocacy of reform, as opposed to the revolutionary overthrow of the old order and its ruling class insisted on by Marxism. That reform also seems limited to the involvement of people more fully in decision-making. No discussion is offered of whether decisions

themselves should change given the conflict of interests between capital and labour. The possible ruptures which would accompany the implementation of the political economy of labour ('irrationalities' to those who accept the logic which supports the interests of capital) are blithely passed over.

It is on this basis that Pateman is able to remain strangely reticent about both Cole's views and the socialist arguments which are put forward to justify their system by the Yugoslavs (despite the devotion of a whole chapter to Yugoslavia). This alone makes possible her conclusion that a relatively minor set of modifications of the industrial authority structure will achieve the desired changes. Those changes have by this point become confined to an increase in the 'political efficacy' people feel they command (1970: 105). Such a constricted manifesto neither satisfies the requirements even of a theory such as Cole's, nor is it likely in practice to be achieved until a more realistic social analysis is undertaken.

(4) This brings us to a final factor distinguishing participatory theories from those of Marxism. The liberal radicalism of Pateman and her fellow participatory theorists is based on a kind of broad humanism, and is consequently abstract and idealistic rather than practical. Thus they remain vulnerable to institutionalist scepticism that their proposals can sufficiently raise the competence of participants to make them effective, or maintain momentum over a long period of time. By merely criticising the effectiveness for democracy of existing institutions, rather than recognizing their roots in a particular system of social relations and domination, most participatory theorists share

with their nominal opponents the neglect of the social structure in the context of which their proposals must ultimately be considered. As will be argued later, participation may be applied for very different reasons than the idealistic ones of Pateman, and with very different results. The abstracted style of argument pervades the other aspects of participatory theory described above, as will be apparent.

The work of J.S. Mill, included in Pateman's pantheon (supposedly for his recognition of the potential educative effects of participation, including in the workplace) illustrates vividly the kind of perspective to which participatory theorists can become allied. Mill's motives for advocating that working people should be allowed to participate (and it is 'allow' rather than 'have the right to' which forms the drift of his argument) are made more visible by his assertion that:

The prospect of the future depends on the degree to which they [the labouring classes] can be made rational beings. (Mill, 1848:123).

In other words, participation becomes a means to mould people into having the desired outlook (the purpose of 'education' pursued by reformists after the 1867 Reform Bill). The interests of the ruling class Mill saw not as partial but as objectively rational.

It is this possibility which Marxists fear the supposed 'radicalism' of participation proposed by many contemporary proposals may in fact conceal. The communication of what one side sees as 'efficacy'

or 'competence' (c.f. 'education') may turn out to be a means of attempting to install certain ideological accounts of the world in the minds of those who are to participate. Hence participation might mean nothing other than the effective transmission of certain principles on the basis of which it is said decisions should be made. Apparent sharing of decision-making is then a sign of successful socialization of the participant into the dominant class's way of thinking, not of emancipation. If the novice is not prepared to accept this view, he is readily portrayed as not willing or mature enough to participate 'properly'. The substance of these fears, or of other reservations about the participation panacea, will be explored in later chapters.

#### CONCLUSION

An examination of notions of democracy produces neither a boundless variety of meanings on the one hand, nor a consensus on the other. A kernel definition of 'rule by the people' yields three sharply divergent accounts. All three claim to be descriptive, but also contain prescriptive elements. The three perspectives have been labelled 'institutionalist', 'participatory', and 'Marxist' (or 'socialist') approaches.

The institutionalist approach constitutes a dominant orthodoxy in capitalist societies. It stresses the creation of appropriate institutions to ensure a competitive struggle for votes by parties representing a plurality of interests and views, and puts particular emphasis on the protection of the stability

of the system.

The participatory approach puts above all else the need for the direct involvement of people in decision-making. Its advocates criticise the subordination of real popular power to protection of the status quo in the institutionalist approach. The ultimate vision of democracy remains a pluralist one, however.

The Marxist approach, it has been argued, is able to account for these competing theories in a way they themselves cannot. Like participatory theory, the emphasis is on popular power, but the conditions for the achievement or obstruction of this are analysed in terms of the whole social system (mode of production) rather than in isolation. Thus it is argued that the structure of capitalist society and the domination of it by the political economy of capital (bourgeois interests), render transparent any pretence that power is democratically distributed. (The concept of power becomes crucial here - see Ch 6 for an elaboration of the argument). For a Marxist, any analysis of democracy which does not consider class structure and class conflict is ideological and, intentionally or not, legitimatory of the capitalist order of oppression. A transformation of the system alone can achieve genuine proletarian democracy, understood as rule by the majority (labour) over those who exploited them (the bourgeoisie) until the abolition of classes is achieved.<sup>16</sup>

As stated in the Introduction, the intention here is to employ Marxist concepts as a critical tool to

point out inconsistencies in, or areas neglected by, other accounts. In this chapter, it has been argued that both participatory and institutionalist theories are unable to offer a comprehensive analysis of the conditions for or obstacles to rule by the people, since both approaches are rooted in a liberal pluralist account of capitalism (and in the case of participatory theorists, of their desired alternative modifications). Both, therefore, implicitly embody an analysis which denies the fundamental role of class struggle.

The next step is to examine the application of pluralist theories to the industrial context and to extend the alternative, Marxist perspective on these accounts.

## CHAPTER ONE: NOTES

1. See e.g. Holden, 1974. This contortion is performed in a particularly elaborate form by Lipset (1960:ch2) in his investigation of the prerequisites of democracy. He takes what amounts to the standard liberal picture of the USA with a few embellishments for his major elements of democracy, and it is therefore a supreme anti-climax when the USA emerges from the far end of the analysis as the closest approach to 'democratic'.
2. 1965; see Barry, 1970:89.
3. 1954; see Pateman, 1970:8
4. C.f. also Galbraith's notion of 'countervailing power' (1952). Exchange theories of power also bear close relation to these views, based as they are on a free market economics relationship between people (see e.g. Blau, 1964; Ekeh, 1974:200-203). Mills himself saw pluralism as a mythical account of manipulated societies.
5. Epitomised by the emergence of 'economic' theories of democracy - see Downs, 1957; Olson, 1965 and the discussion in Barry, 1970. C.f. also Brittan, 1975. These theories have their roots in the nineteenth century work of Bentham and James Mill (Macpherson, 1964; Barry, 1970) which leads Pateman (1970) to claim that Schumpeter's monolithic conception of 'classical' democratic theory is untenable, since this approach is quite alien in her view to that of participatory writers such as Rousseau.
6. Lipset, 1967. See Barry, 1970:64.
7. Holden, 1974:3. It should be noted that, unlike those who have followed his formulation, Schumpeter himself insisted that democracy was not, in his opinion, a goal at all. It was no more than a 'political method' or institution for getting decisions made. (1943:242; c.f. Pateman, 1970:3-4).
8. C.f. Pateman, 1970:14,20.
9. Yeo, it should be noted, locates the source of this process precisely in the structure of capitalist society, which the participatory theorists themselves do not do.

10. See Pateman, 1971, on Almond & Verba.

11. Note further that Marx & Engels clearly felt many writers on the topic of democracy even in their own time were not so much misguided by the influence of their own social origins as conscious apologists for the existing regime. This is implied, for instance, in Marx's writing on the governmental proposals following the accession of Napoleon III in France (1852:122), and also by Engels explicit reference to "vulgar democracy" (1895:644). This last term parallels the description of the work of contemporary political economists, who Marx felt were not merely mistaken but were deliberate propagandisers for the ruling class, as 'vulgar economy'.

12. The first two parts of this definition are derived from Lucas, 1976:10. The last adds the possibility of conflict which, in some form at least, is recognised by both pluralists and Marxists as being the duty of a 'democracy' to resolve.

13. C.f. Cole, 1917:40 (see also p35 on class struggle). Pateman reports these aspects of Cole's arguments (1970:38-39) but seems to make no use of them in her own analysis (or, perhaps, like Cole she fails to realise their implications for the constraints on the achievement of genuine participation). Indeed, she innocently acknowledges (1970:44,46) the similarities between the participatory and pluralist (mass society theory) approach. Like Cole, she seems to see change as possible through the gradual victory of liberal, humanist logic.

14. This is a typical characteristic of most 'radical' non-Marxist theories (and some which claim to be Marxist too) such as many of those associated with feminism, environmentalism, black power, radical psychology etc. It is significant that in so many cases such movements have either been disillusioned by the failure of reform to change things, or have been absorbed into the establishment (like so many of the old 'hippy' leaders). In the absence of a social structural analysis, it may be contended, this vulnerability is inevitable, since only the symptoms of oppression and not its causes are apprehended and attacked. The irony in Pateman's case is to have criticised Almond & Verba for their psychologistic account, and then to have implicitly offered an alternative of a like epistemological nature.

15. From an editorial in People's Daily (People's Republic of China), 16.7.76, translated in Hsinhua weekly edn. (389) 22.7.76:8.

16. A full analysis here would involve an empirical evaluation of socialist attempts to achieve democracy. My intention here is restricted to an application of Marxist insights to the analysis of 'democratic' arrangements in capitalist industry. Some first steps in the analysis of socialist experiences are attempted in Ramsay, 1974, 1977; and in Corrigan, Ramsay, Sayer 1978, 1979.

## CHAPTER TWO: INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

Today we are all in favour of industrial democracy. (Horner, 1974:11).

This statement, which opens a recent book, reflects the current approval of an idea which closely mirrors the endorsement of democracy. That acclamation is not quite universal, however. For instance:

...the main function and purpose of the enterprise is the production of goods, not the governance of men. Its governmental authority over men must always be subordinated to its economic performance and responsibility ...Hence it can never be discharged primarily in the interest of those over whom the enterprise rules. (Drucker, 1951 quoted Fox, 1966a:4-5).

The firm, then, remains in the view of some quite distinct in status from the polity; social democracy may be approved but industrial democracy abrogated. The basis for this difference is generally along the lines of Drucker's argument - the enterprise has a specific function to perform, and democracy would hinder this and so must be subordinated to it. Even at this early stage of the argument it is worth noting the use of a functional analysis and asking from where this primary function actually derives.

The quotation from Kilroy-Silk (see the opening paragraph of Ch 1) informs us that the nebulous, diffusely commended use of 'democracy' extends to, and plays an important part in, discussion of 'industrial democracy'. Chapter 1 has also shown, however, that we should not retreat from analysing the term into a claim that it has simply become meaningless.<sup>1</sup> Instead

I shall examine some of the efforts that have been made to discuss industrial democracy to assess their basis and viability.

#### THE WEBBS

The classic source for much that is written today on industrial relations is the Webbs' Industrial Democracy (1897). The book is wholly concerned with trade unions and their negotiation with employers, and very early on they argue that unions are themselves democracies:

...that is to say, their internal constitutions are all based on the principle of 'government of the people by the people, for the people'. (1897:v-vi).

The specific claim may, of course, be contestable, but it tells us something of the Webbs' initial assumptions. These emerge more clearly in their last chapter which discusses the relationship between unions and both industrial and overall social democracy. Their arguments exhibit an intriguing alloyage of the perspectives we have identified in Ch 1 as 'institutionalist' and 'participatory' democratic theory, with powerful leanings towards the former model of liberal pluralism despite a reputation for socialist thinking and an attack on 'Liberals' (p841). Trade unions are sources of democracy both through the internal self-government structure described in the earlier quotation (which the Webbs (p808) say is feared by 'autocrats' because of its educative effect - c.f. participatory theory) and

through their role as a countervailing force to the concentrated power of capital (p823-824). Democracy for the Webbs was to be based on a development of the British industrial relations model of that period, together with a powerful restraint not on capitalism per se but on unbridled capitalist enterprise (841 - hence their attack on liberals, which amounts to agreement with the official ideology of modern liberalism). Their definition is (despite their later eulogies of the USSR)<sup>2</sup> directly opposed not only to aristocratic rule but also implicitly to the Marxist dictatorship of the proletariat:

Democracy is an expedient - perhaps the only practical expedient - for preventing the concentration in any single individual or in any single class of what inevitably becomes when so concentrated, a terrible engine of oppression. (1897:845).

This is the main theme of what are otherwise fairly unclear statements concerning the nature of 'democracy' - it is approximately that which the Webbs see as the antonym of oppression. But other considerations sometimes appear also:

If democracy is to mean the combination of efficiency with genuine popular control, Trade Union experience points clearly to an ever-increasing differentiation between the functions of the three indispensable classes of Citizen-Electors, chosen Representatives, and expert Civil Servants. (1897:844, emphasis added).

Popular control is the expedient, efficiency the requirement, and continuing division of labour (seen as an industrial advance to be extended to 'democratic' institutions in industry itself - trade unions - and in the polity at large) turns the former into the servant

of the latter in a classic modern institutionalist conception of the form of democracy.

The Webbs thus constituted an element of the Labour Party (often referred to as 'Fabian', but stretching beyond the bounds of that Society) which adhered to radical pretensions and a critical stance towards the rule of big business, but which also opposed the syndicalist and Guild Socialist supporters who would move for greater direct control by workers of their own destiny. This the Fabians did as disciples of what can be interpreted as liberal capitalist objectives of efficiency and order (though they, predictably, saw them as absolute, not relative, goals). Within the Labour Party itself, the culmination of this conflict was to be the public corporation debate of the 1930s<sup>3</sup>, wherein the various institutionalist forces including the Fabians seemed to give a great deal of ground to the left on the degree of workers' control of enterprises which should prevail after proposed nationalisation. After the Second World War, however, the line of the TUC<sup>4</sup> and the Labour Party turned sharply in favour of the arguments of Herbert Morrison, and unions were given only consultation rights and no representation on or control over the composition of the boards of nationalised industries. The latter was to be determined on the basis of 'best man for the job', and 'best' was in turn judged by the criteria of capitalist business efficiency.

To return to the Webbs themselves, then, we emerge with an understanding of industrial democracy which focusses on the key role of collective bargaining by trade unions with employers.<sup>5</sup> This provides the

all-important safeguard against oppression by uncontrolled capitalism. Beyond this, a degree of popular control is envisaged through the running of the unions themselves, though this should be constrained to allow the most skilled experts to come to the fore here as in society as a whole. Employing some of the rhetoric of popular power, in a manner reminiscent of the participatory model, the Webbs nevertheless set a pattern for an emphatically institutionalist understanding of industrial democracy.

#### DERBER

Where the Webbs were a little evasive in their discussion of democracy, Milton Derber is one of the few commentators to have attempted explicitly to delineate the concept of industrial democracy. Choosing to start from a definition of industrial relations as a system of government (rather than as an economic process, and administrative process or any of the five other alternatives he offers - 1970a :3) he suggests five general forms of such government. These are: autocracy; paternalism; bureaucracy; technocracy; and democracy. Concentrating on the last of these, he begins as this thesis does with a consideration of how to conceptualise 'democracy'. He identifies three possible strategies: the use of some "abstraction" such as "government of the people, by the people, and for the people"; adoption of some more "realistic" model closer to actual practice; or a variant of the second, by reference to an "actual example" (1970a:12). The first of these, Derber insists, tells us nothing except what key variables to look out for, whilst the third creates several

difficulties, so Derber opts for the second method (though in fact, his argument would suggest a need to use the first and second approaches together).

Applying his 'realistic' model, then, Derber quickly concludes that 'direct democracy' must be excluded, insisting that only a representative form can work in practice. Democracy thus becomes the right to elect and replace representatives (1970a:14). This is ornamented with associated rights needed to make the system work (protection of minorities, due legal process etc) and with selected further attributes (equal rights, equal opportunity, minimum education and other standards, and a sense of responsibility on the part of citizens to fulfil their role).<sup>6</sup>

Derber then proceeds to present a series of differences between the state and the enterprise (1970a:16-18) which would occupy too much space to be recounted here, but which are both presumptive and tendentious (e.g. he argues that whilst political parties compete for the same power positions, actors in the enterprise perform set roles - management, unions, workers - wherein only the share of decision-making is in question. This confined interpretation of industrial democracy, and endorsement of the capitalist division of labour, finds an echo in the work of Hugh Clegg discussed below). Finally Derber produces an operational definition of industrial democracy based on nine principles:<sup>7</sup>

1. Right of employers and employees to representation.
2. Employee participation (on terms and conditions of employment - note the limitation imposed by Derber).
3. Equal rights and opportunities.
4. Right of dissent.

5. Due process - the existence of adequate channels for resolving grievances.
6. Responsibility - "orderly and lawful" acceptance of contractual duties by all.
7. Minimum socially acceptable standards of employment (wages, conditions).
8. Information rights of interested parties.
9. Personal dignity.

Derber next sets forth to analyse the "evolution" (see e.g. 1970a:521) of industrial democracy in the USA since 1865, and finds a gradual move towards the collective bargaining system which he feels best fulfils the requirements he has posited.

Like his liberal 'institutionalist' counterparts in the field of political sociology, Derber's method, his 'commonsense' approach to industrial democracy, has begged all of the questions it sought to answer. It is not hard to discover why - Derber is actually quite open about the reason, apparently not realising the epistemological absurdity laid out by his admissions. Let us recall his method. He discarded any absolute notion of democracy or industrial democracy and went for what he called a 'realistic' model. But to select either this choice or that of an 'actual example' without any initial definition brings one to an impasse: how are these practices to be determined as examples of democracy (let alone at its 'realistic' limits) rather than of anything else? To identify a model as democratic one must incontrovertibly have fed in a definition of democracy somewhere, and having rejected any absolute definition Derber has been left free to choose any set of characteristics that takes his

fancy. In short, he has predetermined his key features of 'democracy' in very much the same manner (and form) as modern theorists of political democracy are wont to do, by camouflaged fiat.

Derber's admission is, as he stresses several times, that he deliberately chose a view of industrial democracy "in the American context"(1970a:19, original emphasis), or again:

... a conception derived from American experience and American thought. It is 'realistic' in the sense that it is realizable under American conditions (1970a:20).

The status quo is sacrosanct, and it is to be called democracy, so industrial democracy must be whatever form of industrial relations is adjudged possible, conforming to official ideology and supportive rather than threatening to the status quo - this is the effective message.<sup>8</sup> This is, of course, a tour de force in the art of tautology, made still more explicit by the author's announcement of his intention to start "with the premise of a private ownership system" (1970a:18). As Lipset used the United States as his input to determine the prerequisites of democracy, and produced the USA as his resultant output of 'democratic states', so Derber performs the same act for American industrial democracy:

Derber is able to dismiss from his analysis of collective bargaining the classic democratic principle of popular sovereignty, while 'proving' his case by a neat tautology: if collective bargaining is a (limited) form of democracy, and if a (limited) form of democracy is (realistically) American, then collective bargaining is industrial democracy in America. (Irving, 1972:72).

Irving's resurrection of "the classic democratic principle of popular sovereignty" is significant, for it tells us that the same conflicting models as were found in the democracy debate have indeed extended to that on industrial democracy. Thus we can now turn to a contemporary debate in the British context which it transpires tramps this very same terrain.

#### HUGH CLEGG vs. PAUL BLUMBERG

In 1960 Hugh Clegg published a text, A New Approach to Industrial Democracy, which has become a focus of some controversy. Clegg sought to reject two broad movements in pursuit of industrial democracy - the revolutionary (workers' control) and reformist (worker participation) traditions - and to substitute a 'new' theory which returned to and expanded the third, alternative tradition of collective bargaining. His argument is developed through the medium of a potted history of (what he calls) political democracy. The existence of a wide franchise had not been sufficient to keep Russia or Germany democratic, Clegg argues, and as a result of the failure he claims that political thinkers have come to propose opposition as the central democratic principle (1960: 21). Opposition was to be positively encouraged by freedom of speech and association, and all efforts had to be made to ensure that any government failure would be capitalised upon by opponents awaiting their chance to displace their opponents and become the government themselves. Even then, Clegg warns, Germany and Italy had all this and lost it, so every source of

independent power must be promoted as the bulwark of democracy. In other words, pressure groups must be encouraged, and above all this was judged to involve the development of trade unions. Without trade union opposition Clegg believes that not only is democracy indirectly undermined, but without such an institutionalised channel for expressing their views the working class are likely to advocate communism, which might either succeed or provide an excuse for fascism. Both possibilities constitute "threats to democratic government" (1960:21).

Clegg's argument thus far should be familiar - the competition for votes, the advocacy of pressure groups, the posing of a fearful sole alternative of totalitarianism, and the consequent overriding concern not with democracy per se but with stable democracy (1960:19-20,27). He fits the institutionalist liberal-democratic model with fine precision. He goes beyond the theorists of this mould examined in Chapter 1 by his extension of the definition to the industrial context. Here he opposes his own model to alternative notions of industrial democracy. Clegg's view of industrial democracy is informed by three guiding principles:

1. Independence of trade unions from the state and from industrial management.
2. Unions alone can represent workers' interests.
3. Ownership of the means of production is irrelevant.

The last of these principles is a particularly important one in the context of the debate with Marxist theories (which hold the abolition of private property to be a

necessary - though usually not sufficient - condition for the defeat of what they see as the undemocratic nature of capitalism itself) and to some extent for that with participatory theorists. It emerges logically from the principle of opposition as democracy, since if this is what counts neither equality nor assumption of the management function can be of importance (1960:24,29,131).

Clegg, too, has indulged in a certain sleight of hand in his argument. It will be recalled that he began from democracy as a system with an opposition party striving to replace the government, and added pressure groups only as a crucial reinforcement of the culture of opposition. Now, in transferring to his discussion of industry, he retains the oppositional pressure group role for the union, but the idea of an opposition party prepared to assume control has been delicately mislaid. If it were not so, of course, changes in management would suddenly reassume a real significance. I shall return to this shortly.

Firstly, however, attention is merited by Clegg's methodology in his initial attainment of a definition of democracy. He does not actually state his procedure until four pages from the end of the book in fact (1960:131). There he considers three alternatives: a general definition such as "a form of government in which all the governed have, or can have, an effective share"; compiling a list of countries which can be called 'democracies'; or specifying institutions without which a country could not be called 'democratic'. He rejects the first as leaving room for fruitless argument, and suggests that the third is a more sophisticated method than the second.

The sense of deja vu is caused by the near-replication in these three alternatives of Derber's trio. The second and third are in reverse order, but otherwise Clegg's rejection of the first alternative is practically identical to Derber's, and his own choice is the same. As such, of course, it is also a duplicate of Derber's tautology. There are no grounds on which one could initially decide what was 'democratic' so that one could know what factors must be present if a society is not to be labelled 'undemocratic' other than the author's own predilections. Thus Clegg's whole concept of industrial democracy - founded on collective bargaining as was that of his American counterpart - is a target for interrogation.

It is not surprising, then, to find that Clegg's 'New Approach' has been subjected to heavy and searching criticism. Probably the most sustained such attack has been mounted by Paul Blumberg. Blumberg lends support to the view that workers should be able to take part in management decision-making, including (but not exclusively) through their unions. This entails a confrontation with Clegg's principle of complete independence of unions from management, which he feels must be threatened by any such worker involvement. Clegg is emphatic that any such identification of workers and management would involve "totalitarian theories and methods" (1960:132).<sup>9</sup> Blumberg attempts, therefore, to shatter each of the pillars of Clegg's analysis.

Firstly Blumberg insists that opposition is not a sufficient condition for democracy, nor even a

necessary one. It is at most ancillary to the true definition:

...accountability of leadership to an electorate which has the power to remove that leadership. (1968:144, original emphasis).

By itself, opposition does not ensure accountability. The content and extent of this accountability, on the other hand, are not really investigated by Blumberg himself, and this proves a severe flaw not in his criticism of Clegg but in his own alternative vision. It should be observed that Blumberg's argument against Clegg here seems to owe a great deal to an earlier critique by Royden Harrison (1960), but Harrison's subsequent substitute for the 'new approach' is not identical to Blumberg's.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, Blumberg observes that Clegg's conception of industrial democracy is not equivalent to his model of political democracy. In an earlier work Clegg had been more explicit about this difference. The union was "an opposition which can never become a government" (1951:22). Blumberg is not slow to point out the consequences of this shift. It largely limits union challenges to management to dealing with immediate terms and conditions of employees, whilst it destroys the reality of pluralist choice and opposition, he notes. An ally of Blumberg's observes caustically:

It would be a most curious kind of 'democratic' theorist who would argue for a government permanently in office and completely irreplaceable. (Pateman, 1970:72).<sup>11</sup>

Blumberg concludes that in terms of accountability, very little industrial democracy exists in the current system of industrial organization. There is little control of management decisions by employees beyond a fairly narrow band of issues (Blumberg, 1968: 145-146). He then sets out to contest each of Clegg's three principles in turn.

Clegg attempts to substantiate his arguments by conducting a review of the operation of various schemes of works councils, consultation, and even 'self-management' (in Yugoslavia) which have been experimented with in other countries. I shall be examining most of these cases later<sup>12</sup> so no account of the detailed arguments involved will be offered here. In sum, however, Blumberg is able to demolish Clegg fairly efficiently by reference to Clegg's own evidence.

On the first principle of trade union independence, Blumberg notes that Clegg's review of elaborate participation schemes in Germany and Israel, amongst others, confirms if anything a strengthening of already powerful union organizations in each case. This view he supports by reference to further evidence.<sup>13</sup>

As for the second principle, that only unions can represent workers, Blumberg attests that the case of German works councils, elected on a non-union basis, goes against Clegg (1968:158). Such bodies, Blumberg claims, may represent different interests to those championed by unions, thus broadening democracy. Further, even in pluralist terms a choice of different

representative channels can hardly be assumed to undermine democracy. Competition for support is, after all, a key to the democratic theories on which Clegg has founded his conclusions. Such a situation may well, in Blumberg's opinion, force unions to be more responsive to the expressed desires of their constituents rather than resting unchallenged on their laurels.

Clegg's third principle actually amounts to a refutation of his own attachment to nationalization after the Second World War (Clegg, 1951). It is, as Blumberg perceives, rendered impotent by the inconsistency between his political and industrial theories of democracy. If the opposition in industry were to have parallel attributes to that in the polity, it would have to be able to replace management (the 'government'), and it is precisely the private ownership system which blocks this possibility. Of course, there could be competition between managers or groups of shareholders for control, but this would hardly be democracy (1968:165). It is here that Blumberg's notion of accountability becomes distinct from mere opposition; neither a governing elite nor its rivals need necessarily be accountable to the electorate (national or industrial) and frequently they have not been.

Blumberg's argument fulfils the function of being a defence of his own support for participative mechanisms in industry as a means of facilitating industrial democracy. He therefore falls unmistakably into the tradition of participatory democratic theory, and his debating points will be seen to echo at many points those of Pateman outlined in Chapter 1 above.

However, to complete the participatory account, it is not sufficient to stop, as Blumberg does, with the advocacy of 'participation' as a means to overcome 'alienation' at work (even ignoring for the moment all the difficulties raised by the use of these two terms). Pateman views the democratisation of industrial government as part of total social democratisation itself, through its stimulatory and educative impact on those becoming involved in industrial decision-making. Relations in industry, Pateman insists, occupy a massive proportion of one's total waking hours, and in a crucial sphere of one's life - production - at that. Hence these relations, typically undemocratic in the extreme, are an important factor blocking the political efficacy of the mass of working people, whilst they have the potential to become the major fount of a participatory democracy penetrating all aspects of social life. Pateman is able to quote two of her own betes noires in her own support: Almond and Verba report a finding that by far the most important factor determining the sense of political efficacy felt by individuals was the chance to "participate in decisions at one's place of work" (1965:294; quoted by Pateman, 1970:49). Thus industry and polity are linked in participatory theory where they are kept apart in institutionalist accounts. It should not be presumed, however, that participatory theory is superior on all counts to its pluralist rival, despite Blumberg's rout of Clegg.

#### A MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

A Marxist would tend to concur with many of the

participatory theorists' criticisms of institutionalist analysis, on industrial democracy as on democracy. Placed within the context of a class analysis, however, many of the points take on a different significance. Moreover, on certain issues this analysis leads Marxists to views which appear in line with institutionalist arguments, particularly at a tactical level. Some initial observations are made below, and will be developed in later chapters.

The institutionalist view, epitomised by the writings of Clegg or of Dahrendorf (see Ch 4 below), advocates the separation of political and industrial matters, each into their own channels of constrained contestation within agreed rules. Such a separation is rejected by Marxism, and the rules viewed as devices for control of labour within limits required by capital. It is also worth pointing out a confusion in work such as Clegg's, which on the one hand claims to observe reality (as in the derivation of a 'realistic' definition of industrial democracy) and on the other views 'what is' as a threat to pluralism, which becomes what 'should be'.

Nevertheless, this threat is one many Marxists would agree with Clegg on - that of the undermining of union independence, or the displacement of the union in the firm, by incorporative participation schemes. However, only a few institutionalists are prepared to follow the logic of their own assumptions about the need for conflict through to the condemnation of unitary proposals, preferring to skirt round the problems. Marxist political economy, on the other hand, sees the conflict as far more fundamental and

irresolvable, and so rejects collaboration more emphatically. Yet in criticisms of some forms of proposed participation, of the 'human relations' variety for instance, the two approaches often echo one another. (The reactions of 'right' and 'left' within the British trade union movement to worker director proposals in the 1970s show a similar apparent consensus).

However, the analysis of trade unionism and its relationship to genuine industrial democracy is quite different between institutionalist and Marxist accounts. For the institutionalist, unions and collective bargaining arrangements are the epitome of industrial democracy. For the Marxist, unions are a working class response to capitalism, and as such are by nature profoundly dualistic.<sup>15</sup> They are a challenge to absolute management authority by their very existence. Yet at the same time, by accommodating to a role of bargaining for change at the margins within the system in which labour is subordinated, they deal only with the terms, not the fact, of exploitation. Union compromises do produce real benefits for their members as commodities, but in the process they buttress the very structure which makes them commodities and creates the injustices unions exist to amend.

Lenin's analysis of the limits of 'trade union consciousness' (1902) remains relevant here. Gramsci (1919/20) observed further on the manner in which union organization becomes detached from the membership, and the official comes to see "industrial legality as a permanent state of affairs" and so

"too often defends from the same viewpoint as the proprietor" (p17). Yet on some occasions, unions have put forward surprisingly radical demands for change, if usually under rank and file pressure<sup>16</sup> and they have retained official socialistic aims which play at least some symbolic role (though more it would be hard to claim). Moreover, an effective union movement can constitute a real challenge to the system when that system is already rent with the effect of contradictions. Nonetheless, it has to be said that union leaderships have also played a role in quelling socialist movements from the ranks and maintaining law and order for the employer at the expense of the militant. An analysis of the contradictory aspects of unions, and the conditions under which different aspects are dominant, is beyond the scope of this thesis, but their existence forms one theme underlying much of the experience of participation traced in later chapters.

The immediate conclusion of this discussion is this: if the role of unions is so contradictory, and often works to constrain or destroy real forms of opposition to the status quo, then to regard them and the system of which they are part as industrial democracy is unacceptable. Such a reflection is inherent, of course, in the Marxist analysis of capitalist relations as exploitative of labour. The institutionalist implicitly regards such exploitation either as a thing of the past, or as less profound in its extent and effects than the Marxist does and as the least undesirable of the alternative systems. Here we return to the institutionalist concern with stable, 'realistic' democracy; the Marxist shares with the

participatory theorist a rejection of such 'realism' as an excuse for protection of the status quo. If unions were to become a full-blown opposition - challenging for political supremacy in the name of an alternative system - or even if their more normal activities threatened stability, the institutionalist's support for them might be expected to evaporate.

Moving on to consider the Marxist approach vis a vis that of participatory arguments such as Blumberg's, we find once again elements of agreement. Thus both reject the separation of industry and polity. They agree further that the division of labour in industry between decision-makers and subordinates conditions the operation of political democracy. The interpretation of the nature of this division of labour, of the conditions for overcoming it, and so of 'democracy' itself, differ profoundly along the lines identified in Chapter 1 above, however. We find once more the characteristics of a pluralist rather than class analysis, of individualism, of reformism and of idealism identified in Chapter 1. This constellation of features has particular consequences for the analysis of industrial relationships and attendant recommendations for change, consequences which the Marxist would regard as weaknesses. Above all the source of authoritarian structures and the division of labour is implicitly sought outwith the nature of the social system itself, though its precise location is hard to trace from the participatory analysis. Indeed, this is a considerable shortcoming of participatory theory: it criticises modern institutionalist orthodoxy sharply yet offers no adequate account of why this is the orthodoxy. This naivete blinds

participatory theorists to the way proposals for worker participation are likely to operate in the real world (as distinct from the ideal world of goodwill in search of policies to help all which pervades their arguments), or disposes them to an interpretation which ignores crucial facts or neglects their significance. The latter is true of Blumberg or of Pateman, as later empirical chapters in this thesis will show.

There are also notable inconsistencies in the participatory view, emanating from their precarious position between 'popular power' and institutionalist notions of industrial democracy, and from their blindness to class analysis. Pateman's amnesia concerning Cole's analysis of property rights and of wage 'slavery' provides one example. Blumberg is similarly forgetful despite his rebuttal of Clegg's third principle on the irrelevance of ownership. Blumberg's own survey of experiments in industrial democracy all concern consultative and job design modifications. They involve not even the slightest consideration of property relations. He speaks of these experiments as relieving 'alienation', yet this concept is used in a Blaunerian sense, 'de-humanized' (Horton, 1964) and torn from its political roots in Marx's analysis of production relations and the commodity status of labour-power.<sup>17</sup> Blumberg has leapt from the observation that a change in ownership is not sufficient for industrial democracy (1968:3), which is quite correct as far as it goes, to the apparent assumption that it can be left for the theoretical aside on Clegg.

Blumberg's redefinition of industrial democracy as dependent upon 'accountability' also begs some very important questions. Firstly, this notion implies that, rather than workers running things themselves (the idea of 'self-management' that he goes on to examine), there are decision-makers whom they can only influence in varying degrees. Thus the division of labour between management and worker is after all uncritically written into Blumberg's definition.

Secondly, even if this division of labour is left unchallenged for a moment, there remains the question of the basis on which accountability is to be achieved. Even if management are forced to justify their policies to workers, something must be said about the criteria on which justification takes place. All too often such criteria correspond to those of 'business efficiency', and as such express the political economy of capital (c.f. the case of Lewis's in Ch 11 below; or the Yugoslav case on which both Blumberg and Pateman focus).<sup>18</sup> There seems little point in talking of industrial democracy as accountability if the terms of that accountability do not serve the interests of labour.

Two further points arise from this. The first concerns the evident gap between radical pluralism and Marxism not only in immediate political interpretation of social phenomena but in the very methodology which informs that interpretation. Marxism, as we have seen, inclines explanation towards a systemic account (a 'political economy' of any issue) which is far more likely to question the absolute nature of any concept such as accountability. Secondly, and relatedly, Marxists consistently seek to explore the

social (class) basis of ideas. Thus ideology, and the consciousness of those experiencing social phenomena such as participation schemes, become matters for urgent investigation for a Marxist (hence Chs 6-8 below). In contrast, the problem of consciousness might as well not exist for the participatory theorist; except that is in Pateman's sense of a political inefficacy which should melt before the experience of participation itself, the political context of which seems to be regarded as irrelevant or unproblematical.

The Marxist account of class conflict leads to the argument that unless 'industrial democracy' takes the form of worker-initiated and controlled changes it will not aid emancipation. A reformist approach, based on an analysis of inequalities and undemocratic practices not rooted in a class perspective, does not confront this problem. Subsequent chapters will seek to show that such a class-based analysis makes it possible to comprehend policies and their consequences in a way which participatory theory is powerless to emulate.

The logical conclusion of Marxist analysis is that industrial democracy is only to be achieved as part of a socialist transformation of society. I propose to say little more on this topic, concentrating on the analysis of participation within capitalism. Marxist disagreements on this topic will be discussed in later chapters. However, I feel it only fair to at least acknowledge significant differences between socialist ideas and the practice of 'workers' control'.

Crudely, one can distinguish notions of workers' control

which stem from a Leninist conception of 'democratic centralism' (control from the centre by a party acting in the interests of the working class as a whole); and those which have their origins in syndicalist perspectives (emphasising decentralisation of control to the workers in each factory). These two conceptions find their prototypical application in the USSR and (as near as any existing socialist practise gets to syndicalism) Yugoslavia respectively. I have argued elsewhere that both viewpoints have strengths, and that both derive from the same kind of weaknesses of theory and practice (Ramsay, 1974a, 1977a); and in joint work the nature and origins of the problems of analysis and practice (Corrigan et al, 1978). I must leave elaboration to those texts.

#### THE UNITARY CONCEPTION OF INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

The calls for participation by those I have labelled participatory theorists are well-intentioned ( I have no cause to believe otherwise) proposals for achieving a liberal pluralist form of industrial democracy. The rhetoric put forward by another group of writers sometimes presents their goals in a similar light, although their conception of the enterprise is, like that of Drucker (quoted opposing democracy in industry at the beginning of this chapter) a functionalist one. Such an analysis denies any element of real conflict of interests within the producing organization in capitalism altogether. The only interest that must be considered is that which is claimed to serve everyone - the enterprise's. This grotesque reification we might choose to ignore if it were not for its grip in many prominent circles of decision-making (Fox, 1966a) and its significance

when participation of workers is regarded not as an unwarranted slackening of the profit-making purpose but as its apotheosis.

A great number of writers in managerial circles in the last couple of decades have developed the 'neo-human relations' approach to industrial behavioural science with great gusto. These authors have come to see participation as a means to gain employee commitment to 'the enterprise', and so improve productivity.<sup>19</sup> As such, they will concern us more in the next chapter, but there are two reasons for raising this type of perspective at this point. Firstly, if implemented successfully it would mean not the emancipation advocated by participatory democratic theorists, but the more effective harnessing of the participant to his slavery.

Secondly, there is a tendency to use industrial democracy as a label very lossely at the present. It has practically been rendered interchangeable with participation in many quarters, and is latched onto because of its legitimatory properties. Thus there is an increasing tendency to describe schemes actually based on the neo-human relations analysis, or some similar theory which relies on the assumption of common interests in industry, as experiments in 'industrial democracy'. Kilroy-Silk (1970) reviews four areas of use of this term: for bargaining, 'workers' control', participation in management (roughly participatory democracy) and, significantly, for 'industrial partnership'. This last, which presumes a commonwealth of interests, he particularly attributes to Liberal Party proposals for the sharing

of profits, ownership and (in a very constricted way) control. To this we can immediately add the influential Industrial Copartnership Association, founded before the start of the Twentieth Century and counting amongst its members many powerful corporations.<sup>20</sup> This association was cited by Fox as the archetypal model of what he called the 'unitary' view of industrial relations (1966a:3).

To exemplify this unitary view of industrial democracy, it will be helpful to quote from a newspaper article which appeared whilst an earlier draft of this chapter was in preparation:

There is also the wider question of what is now called 'industrial democracy' - that is to say, providing a framework of custom or law for giving workers a greater sense of responsibility towards, and belonging to, the organizations for which they work. (R. Butt, The Times, 11.3.76).

Here the boundaries of the meaningful use of the concepts of democracy and industrial democracy are crossed. There is no way, either in the liberal pluralist or Marxist understanding of the terms, that such a unitary usage could be condoned. The employment of the phrase 'industrial democracy' is, in this case, illegitimate. The conclusion must be that the attractions of the term led to its adoption, since one would be hard put to find a reasoned argument in support of the definition of this incorporation as democracy. Yet the use of such rhetoric can generate a grossly misleading impression amongst those at whom it is directed.

At this point, it is at last necessary to turn to the word 'participation' itself, which has been used with increasing frequency in recent pages without any clear definition being made available. Once this is presented, it will be possible to consider the social basis of differing definitions more closely, and to begin considering the significance of this discussion for theories and practical experience of worker participation.

## CHAPTER TWO: NOTES

1. See e.g. Levinson, 1972:205, who uses this as an excuse, it seems, to ignore any need to define the term at all in his 1974a. See also Thakur & Sethi, 1973a; Macbeath, 1975; Irish Management Institute, 1969. Scott (1955:7) also argues that the employment of the term has become too broad because it extends from worker control to advisory committees. As the pattern which emerges below reveals, these authors have failed, along with many others, to see the crucial continuities of discrete themes amidst the apparent plethora of variations.

2. See Webbs, 1937.

3. See inter alia Dahl, 1947; Shell, 1957; H. Clegg, 1951.

4. T.U.C., 1944.

5. This view of the role of trade unions fits ill with Flanders' belief (1968a) that the Webbs saw bargaining, and industrial relations generally, only in terms of economic exchange. Fox, 1975, provides some redress on this score, but does not explore the Webbs' views on democracy closely enough himself.

6. This last attribute, known more commonly by the term 'political obligation', is a requirement the belief in which is rife amongst liberal and conservative political sociologists and philosophers. It is effectively exposed for the ideology it is by Pateman, 1973 (though once again the basis of that ideology is left unclear).

For an approach similar to Pateman's on participatory democracy and industrial participation, but far more oriented towards the support of the status quo, see Wooton, 1966. On p6 Wooton refers approvingly to 'civic obligation'.

7. 1970a:19-20. Elsewhere (1969:181-182) Derber offers ten principles. 'Personal dignity' is omitted from this list, whilst 'sovereignty' (effectively meaning 'equal, balanced power') and 'majority rule' are added. How this juggling of his concept of industrial democracy is justified Derber does not tell us.

8. The analytical circularity does not prevent us from examining the validity of Derber's assertions about the state of affairs in the United States appertaining to the issues he does raise. It is possible to offer empirical refutation on the operation of industrial relations just as it was feasible to counter the ideology of political pluralism with the exposure of elite control. In the American context, a source which is particularly devastating for most of Derber's comfortable assumptions is Braverman, 1974; such alternative views cannot simply be banished by ignoring them and asserting that a pluralist system exists.

9. Clegg's stand on this issue is one of the few consistent strands of his argument when compared with his earlier discussion in 1951. Then he insisted that "the trade union cannot become an organ of industrial management...Nor can the union enter into an unholy alliance for the joint management of industry" (1951:131). For a variant of the institutionalist view which succumbs to certain arguments of the participatory school rather than maintaining the logic of his own assumptions (as Clegg at least does) see Flanders, 1966:148-150 especially, and Flanders et al, 1968. For arguments as single-minded as Clegg's own see Dahrendorf, 1959, 1967; but look also at the way he reneges on this position in 1975.

10. Harrison suggests the need for a shift in social ownership, which Blumberg's discussions imply at times but ignore at others (see below in the text). Harrison, too, remains confused in his proposals, though - he wants men to "run their lives in their own way" (1960:38) through 'workers' control', but advocates an ambiguous gradualism. Thus he suggests that in the NCB, as an illustration, top management must make any decision on the level of production but miners could be allowed a say in which way a given level is achieved (ibid). This sounds rather like participation for workers within the political economy of capital, and suggests Harrison, too, is essentially a radical liberal theorist after the manner of Pateman and Blumberg in his comprehension of the issues.

11. Several other writers offer parallel criticisms of Clegg - see Harrison, 1960:35; Ostergaard, 1961:44; Kilroy-Silk, 1970:172; Coates & Topham, 1972:42.

12. With the exception of Yugoslavia, which raises special issues since it pursues policies justified as socialist. I have chosen to focus on capitalist societies only, and would assert that to treat a socialist country in the same terms would beg the most important questions involved. Indeed, it is part of my criticism of both Blumberg and Clegg, and other pluralist writers, that the question of socialism is excluded from their analysis by presumptuous fiat. See Chapter 4 for discussion of related points concerning the use of continua of degrees of participation by pluralist writers.
13. Blumberg, 1968:148-57, and see Chapter 10 below for further exegesis and critical evaluation of Blumberg's own observations. Clegg, 1976, 1977, seems to concede this view completely.
14. As with the more recent writings of both Clegg and Dahrendorf themselves.
15. For a discussion of forms taken by this dualism see inter alia Lane, 1974; Cockburn, 1976; Allen, 1964, 1966, 1968; Hyman, 1971, 1972, 1974; Hyman & Brough, 1975; Hyman & Fryer, 1975.
16. In British labour history, the demands of railway and mining unions for joint control in nationalised industry during and after the First World War come to mind. These were a response to syndicalist criticisms of official union policy - and provoked employer and government offers of dilute consultation. See Pribicevic, 1959, for one account of union demands at this time.
17. See the discussions of Blauner, 1964 (who, via Seeman, 1959, claims to be applying Marx's concepts developed in 1844 Mss.) in Israel, 1971; Eldridge, 1971; Lukes, 1967; Abrahamsson, 1977; Ramsay, 1973.
18. The literature on Yugoslavia which shows the constraints on participation there is considerable: see e.g. Burt, 1972; Hunnius, 1973; Benson, 1974; Warner, 1975 for reviews of the evidence. The argument that these constraints are closely tied up with policies generating capitalist relations is put in Corrigan et al, 1978; and in Ramsay, 1974a, 1977a.
19. Some of the most prominent names here are Argyris (see especially 1957, 1964); Likert (1961, 1967); McGregor (1960, 1966) and Herzberg (1968, et al 1959).

See also the review, which uses Argyris as an example, in Ramsay, 1973.

20. Such as (in 1974, Spring issue of the periodical Industrial Participation) ICI, IBM(UK), Courtaulds, British Petroleum, Boots, The Imperial Group Ltd etc.

### CHAPTER THREE: PARTICIPATION

Participation has come into vogue. It is on everybody's lips. But, like many vogue words it is vague. Everybody wants it, but is not at all clear what 'it' is...(Lucas, 1976:136).

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary offers the following definition of 'participation':

1. The action or fact of partaking, having or forming a part of. The partaking of the substance, quality or nature of.
2. The fact or condition of sharing in common (with others, or with each other); partnership, fellowship; profit-sharing...  
b a taking part (with others) in some action or matter.

Dictionary definitions are not (if you will forgive me) definitive for the social scientist in search of meanings. They can be a useful orientating device, however. In this case attention is drawn to certain themes with which the term seems laden. One is that of being or becoming a part of something. Another entails taking part in something; implying a more active role perhaps. In addition, there is a notion of having a share in something (the Shorter OED uses a quotation on profit-sharing to illustrate this).

Certain observations can be made on these elements. Firstly, there is a persistent unitary cast to definitions of 'participation'. The emphasis tends to be on some common action, or on a conscious state of fellowship. Secondly, if decision-making or power is that which is to be shared, there is a clear area of overlap with the term 'democracy'. The two

terms are not, however, identical. This is particularly apparent where a third observation holds - that 'participation' may describe involvement (becoming actively committed to something), which is a cognitive state rather than a matter of substantial receipt of benefit. In other words, participation could refer to a situation where someone becomes attached to a cause or organization without actually sharing the control of existing decision-makers - indeed they could more readily obey through a new-found legality.

Participation thus embodies a range of meanings some of which run counter to democracy as understood from Chapter 1. Moreover, this definitional exercise is not just a matter of intellectual nit-picking. The elements of the concept, 'participation', are reflections of everyday usage, and it will emerge later in this chapter that real-world employment of the term nurses diverging combinations of these elements. Some uses are predominantly unitary in character, implying involvement and commitment above all else; while others stress having a share, entailing redistribution of power or other resources.

#### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

A typical definition of political participation is offered by Parry:

...taking part in the formulation, passage or implementation of public policies (1972:5).

Such participation is usually seen as a check to the

power of a governing elite, particularly where the alternative is mass disaffection with government. However, it is questionable how far participation in this sense is to be regarded as implying an active engagement in decision-making.

Parry's discussion of what is to count as political action casts light on the way in which earlier debates on democracy find an echo in those on participation. He presents two contrasting versions of what constitutes a 'participant political culture'. In the first, that of Almond and Verba, a participant political culture requires a strictly limited activity by the majority. 'Participation' takes place through a few representatives who are, in a fuller sense, political activists. The second, constituted by a group including Pateman, entails a critique of Almond and Verba's model the essential features of which have been indicated in Chapter 1 above, and a system of political participation requiring more direct involvement of the majority.

It is not surprising that those two renditions of pluralism have re-emerged. However, Almond and Verba's approach, with its powerful leanings towards stability of the status quo as the goal rather than democracy per se, suggests again a divergence of the possible meaning of participation from those of democracy. This divergence will be particularly important when we come to consider the possible meanings of industrial participation. Almond and Verba describe the participant culture as one in which:

...the members of the society tend to be explicitly oriented to the system as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

This says a great deal about the degree of real conflict approved by some 'pluralists'. Indeed, it is apparent that many of the arguments for institutionalist pluralism reduce under scrutiny to a unitaristic insistence on consensus. Lively observes this from another angle:

...contemporary pluralism...must fall back on an appeal to consensus. It is forced to do so by its dual desire to present the State as politically neutral and at the same time to resist assigning to it any functions morally superior to other forms of social organization...If the State is depicted as arbitrating between groups, it is merely representative of a shared community of values (1978:201).

Common interests are presumed to exist, the 'good society' has arrived, and anyone bucking the system must be criminal, insane or a political subversive. In political rhetoric, the message is familiar - stability is the prime concern. Lip service is paid to the freedom of citizens to oppose the official line, but that freedom is regarded as abused by anything which might threaten the system itself (or, historically much more inclusive, anything those in authority might construe as a threat). Raymond Williams' description of the bourgeois democrat's attitude to 'popular power' exercises as 'unconstitutional', quoted in Chapter 1, finds countless echoes in official pronouncements of today.

Participation in this context takes on its sense of involvement, of feeling a part of the system and

committed to it. It implies no more than a positive attachment to the status quo, and requires no active role in decision-making. From a Marxist standpoint such participation is seen as the opposite of democracy. Instead, it is an expression of the ideological incorporation of the working class, and as such is a supreme exhibition of ruling class power (see chapter 6 for an elaboration of this argument). It is, nonetheless, a valid use of the actual word 'participation': to participate fully within capitalism is to become involved in and committed to the system. However, the argument will be developed below that such a total incorporation is unlikely. Trade unionism, and other features of working class beliefs and actions reveal important intrusions by the real world of conflicting interests on the dream-world of the pluralist. Social contradictions are always prone to manifest themselves and rupture the image of unity whatever temporary appearance of solidity such an image may sustain for a time.

The different views of participation among political theorists can now be summarised. They fall once again into the categories identified in chapter 1, although some blurring is generated by the tensions and ambiguities we have found to be inherent in the term 'participation' itself.

1. The unitary view is compatible with the notion of participation, seeing it as a matter of involvement and commitment rather than necessarily as actually sharing in power or any other resource.

2. The institutionalist may view participation as dangerous or anti-democratic if it is not accompanied by independence, as with Clegg. By and large, however, participation is seen as embodied in those institutional forms which they think constitute democracy (i.e. which protect the existing system). Thus a recent study of 'The Modes of Democratic Participation' (Verba et al, 1971) took four forms of activity as adequate indicators of their subject: voting, campaign activity, co-operative activity, and citizen-initiated contacts. There are few institutionalists who would view the danger of incorporation through participation as Clegg does; Almond and Verba's perspective predominates. Participation thus becomes first and foremost, a stabilizer.

3. The coherence of participatory pluralism can now be seen to be endangered by the ambiguity inherent in the concept of participation itself. The meaning of participation in their view is the maximum feasible engagement in decision-making by everyone, this having a snowball effect through its educative impact on the demand for such participation. Any form of participation without this self-determining element would normally be seen as pseudo-participation. The growing fund of books advocating community politics, participation in planning and so forth is largely motivated by this conception. Such a perspective is, however, haunted by the need to show that participation is genuine in this sense, or whether it has an incorporative outcome instead. The possibility that participation may express and reinforce passivity - and even be intended to do so - is never satisfactorily

confronted. Nor are the implications of such forms of participation for the results of their application analysed. This is a point whose significance will emerge as we proceed to look at industrial participation schemes, as is the related one of the relationship between participation and the distribution of power.

4. The Marxist analysis of the structure of capitalist relations of production leads to the view that participation within capitalism can only be participation in their own exploitation for the mass of the people. Thus contrary to the participatory view, the Marxist sees participation as being a barrier to the creation of true democracy by the overthrow of capitalism.<sup>2</sup> It is, however, a device which will exhibit severe limitations in its attempt to create working-class acquiescence and to override conflicts of interest.

#### WORKER PARTICIPATION

At long last we can turn to worker participation and examine this against the backdrop of discussion thus far. In considering the workplace, the obvious first observation is that any form of participation is indeed tied up with a status quo, including the established rule by a managerial and/or property-owning group, within which and with whom the participation must take place. Any worker participation proposal on the agenda thus entails at most some modification of relationships within the broad organizational division of labour characterising capitalism. Perhaps one of the classic understatements in this connection was uttered

by Professor Tony Eccles in his commentary for an Open University programme dealing with worker participation schemes in G.E.C.<sup>3</sup> Following an interview with a unionist who said he was not particularly keen on participation, and felt the objective had to be worker control, he observed:

Workers' control is not a management objective either at Trafford Park or in G.E.C. as a whole.

But it was what he then went on to say was the management objective that brings out the contrast:

The aim rather is to raise the level of worker involvement and commitment so that workers can help managers to make better decisions.

Unfortunately, if there is conflict then there is no absolute criterion of 'better' decision-making. The unanswered question thus becomes 'better for whom?'

However, taking at face value for the moment the idea of participation as sharing, there are three broad resource areas in which the term 'worker participation' is normally used to denote sharing: profits, information and power (Hespe & Little, 1971:323). In the present debate the focus is chiefly on the last of these, but as all three are aimed at involving workers more fully in the enterprise, actively or passively, all can legitimately be referred to as participation. It will be noted, on the other hand, that industrial democracy must always refer to a decision-making process.

There are, in fact, good logical reasons for regarding participation as power-sharing as taking precedence

over the alternatives. In particular, the possession of power would itself provide the ability to command both information and a share in profits. Moreover, it can be argued from within most of the analytical positions considered thus far that the purpose of workers having more information is to improve their ability to exercise influence on decisions - though those with an attachment to the 'Human Relations' perspective, with its unitary image of the firm and so of the aim of 'communication', might well reject this claim. Finally, when the most common phrase relating to participation in industry - 'workers' participation in management' - is introduced, then the primary concern with the process of decision-making and administration becomes easier to pinpoint. This provides the closest parallel to the earlier discussion of political participation, which it will be recalled dealt with governmental processes, i.e. decision-making, when used in a sense other than mere involvement.

By and large this thesis will focus on this version of participation as a share in decision-making, since this account currently predominates. Nevertheless, since other meanings have had and in some instances retain considerable significance in terms of actual use by actors in the industrial context, no artificial confinement of the term to decision-making alone will be made. Such a limitation would, in fact, preclude much of the analysis required, since it would presumptively exclude crucial continuities in the concept of participation and in the historical practices associated with it. The laborious tracing of the themes embedded in 'democracy' and 'participation' thus far has been pursued because the different ideas

are themselves aspects of (and thereby indicators of) real social movements and forces. To surrender any attempt to disentangle their meanings, then, is to abandon a key resource for analysing the phenomena themselves in a proper sociological perspective. The result of such an erasure, as indicated in the Introduction, is to favour certain conclusions and eradicate the possibility of even considering others.

It will be useful at this stage to examine the relationship between ideas of worker participation and those of industrial democracy. This will clarify both the overlap and the distinction between the two. The first point to make is that although some accounts of industrial democracy see it as essentially embodied in power-sharing through worker participation in decision-making, others see democracy as not necessarily involving participation by workers at all. Among institutionalist pluralists, for instance, Clegg sees worker representation, in the form of trade unions, as the ideal, to express and institutionalise limited conflict. Although Flanders is less totally opposed to other methods of participation, he makes his own view as to the best means clear (incidentally exemplifying the confusion of 'participation' and 'democracy' in the process):

...collective bargaining serves yet another great social purpose. Apart from providing protection, it also permits participation. A worker through his union has more direct influence on what rules are made and how they are applied than he can ever exercise by his vote over the laws made by Parliament. We hear a lot these days about participation, including workers' participation in management. I have yet to be convinced that there is a better method than collective bargaining for

making industry more democratic, providing its subjects and procedures are suitably extended (1968b:42).

Derber, too, saw participation as one, but by no means the only, benefit of industrial democracy understood as collective bargaining. The Webbs, it was noted earlier, saw democracy as arising within the union itself far more than through any say in the running of the firm.

For participatory pluralist theorists there is obviously a direct and intimate link between participation (understood as a share in decision-making) and industrial democracy. For the unitary theorist, on the other hand, it follows from earlier discussions that participation may have nothing whatsoever to do with democracy (unless this term is used for legitimacy purposes as suggested in Chapter 2). Rather, participation may mean attachment to the firm. Banks (1963:19) offers one such definition of participation as "the extent to which employees positively accept the system whereby the firm attempts to achieve its goal of efficient production", for instance. This perspective does play a significant part in the real world, as will be seen later.

Finally, for the Marxist, worker participation, even more emphatically than political participation, is regarded as incorporation, if it takes place in the ambit of capitalism. Only if participation takes the form of consciously and temporarily compromised opposition, a strategic partial suspension of outright hostility, might it be condoned. Otherwise it is a hindrance to the attainment of democracy, an attempt

to reconcile the worker to existing relations of production.

If industrial democracy means something beyond participation when considered fully, so too 'worker participation' is not reducible to some subset of industrial democracy. Walker & de Bellecombe (1967:12ff) for instance, identify not only 'transformist' and 'reformist' versions of industrial democracy as goals lying behind the advocacy of participation, but also find alternative purposes:

- to stimulate efficiency (as motivation, suggestion schemes, co-operation etc.)
- as a rejection of the view of the worker as a mere commodity or resource to be manipulated to the end of profit-making - rather he is a moral being with human rights.
- to bring about industrial peace.

Their distinctions are a little too neat and sharp. The second is not independent but a part of the liberal-democratic ethos, particularly that of participatory democracy theorists. Expressed differently, it becomes part of the socialist tradition. Meanwhile, the 'efficiency' and 'peace' conceptions are generally closely interrelated, both readily tying up with the unitary view of the enterprise, or more widely with the problematic of social integration. Nevertheless, it is clear that participation can include practices which could by no stretch of the aware imagination be called democracy, as we have already seen.

The complexity of the interrelationship between these two terms is also apparent, however, and explains at least some of the rife confusion in the use of each separately or the two conjointly. Conflation of the two is the most common error. Blumberg, for instance, entitles his (1968) book Industrial Democracy: the Sociology of Participation, and discusses experiments from job involvement schemes in the human relations tradition through to 'self-management' in Yugoslav socialism. Glover (1974) offers a supposed survey of industrial sociological writings on 'industrial democracy', the majority of which do not deal with democracy in any meaningful sense at all (as he himself admits), but with participation schemes aimed at 'motivating' and 'involving' employees. The largest fund of unconscious syncretics is to be found in the evidence to the Industrial Democracy Committee, set up by the Labour Government in 1976 under the chairmanship of Lord Bullock. Any scan of reports on the material submitted to the committee revealed ill-considered uses of the two terms under consideration trampling heavily on each other's toes across the pages. The C.B.I., for instance, insisted they would:

...make recommendations about employee participation generally in relation to industrial democracy however defined.<sup>4</sup>

This is particularly ironic in view of the form the C.B.I. proposals take. But more of this shortly. Perhaps the most remarkable prestidigitation of the terms to exclude certain conclusions and magically produce another is to be found in the words of the erstwhile Secretary of State for Employment, responsible

for the Industrial Relations Act (1971) during his period in that office. He was speaking to the earlier-mentioned Industrial Co-partnership Association:

If we are to talk about participation we must begin to introduce into industrial life some small equivalent of the right to choose and to change one's government. The equivalent in industrial terms is the right to choose and to challenge and change one's union. (Carr, 1971:10).

Carr proceeds to advocate the introduction of "'guided democracy'" (p10) to "canalise shop-floor power" and give it "expression in more orderly [N.B] and more representative ways." One is tempted to ask: representing whom?

#### CONCEPTS OF PARTICIPATION: ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

Thus far I have presented arguments on worker participation and industrial democracy which have enabled a classification, but seemingly only of academic perspectives. It remains to be shown that similar sense can be made of the imbroglio of claims put forward in governmental and industrial circles themselves. Taking as a starting-point a division between managerial/business views on the one hand, and union/shop floor views on the other, one might expect to find distinct premises involved according to which side of the line a statement comes from. Obviously one would expect unitary views to be confined largely to the management side and radical socialist demands to the shop floor side, but I suggest that one would also expect to find a

difference between perspectives on either side both of which may fall within the conventional 'pluralist' label. The so-called 'moderates' amongst capital and labour are almost invariably presumed to share a world-view that accepts some conflict of interests, but feel these can be largely peacefully resolved through some channel, and see worker participation as an advancement towards the full realisation of these expectations. It is noticeable that Fox, for instance, largely conflates management and union pluralism, seeing the latter in his later work as a simple derivative of the former (see Fox, 1974:259-260). It is argued below that an analysis taking its departure from the concept of class makes significantly better sense of expressed views.

#### MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The old image of an efficient and all knowing management directing an obedient and willing work force is out of tune with the times, unacceptable to the majority and, because it does not fit the facts, is unworkable. (Gordon-Brown, 1972:7).

This is a typical management acknowledgement of the need to consider other parties in the firm than the owners and controllers of capital.<sup>5</sup> It faces 'the facts' of today, with a wistful glance at the past (though one might well wonder when this past actually existed). "Reasonable men of all opinions seek for some means that will accommodate different interests without denying legitimate claims and demands", Gordon-Brown goes on to tell us. These men "turn to a participative approach to industrial questions". Moreover, once such a view is accepted, it turns out

to be the best for production efficiency; "man is in his deepest nature a responsible, participative being" (1972:9) and will seek a genuine opportunity to contribute with both hands (once any initial, anachronistic suspicion is overcome).

Even the gloss of radical participatory rhetoric is present in accounts like these. It is supplied partly via the channel which flows through modern managerial human relations from Abraham Maslow (see his 1943), and partly as an adaptation of the current communal popularity of the participatory argument. It is here that the perilous ambiguity of the liberal participative argument is its own downfall, since a managerialist has only to assert to his own satisfaction that the goals of efficiency ('organizational goals') are neutral and ultimately rational and he can present participation as a means for achieving these. Hence Vinson in the foreword to Gordon-Brown summarises the purpose of the book and the policies it promotes thus:

The significance of the current interest in industrial participation is the recognition that today management governs by consent... For this reason, the Association has appealed particularly to those industrialists and trade union leaders who recognise that the object of increased efficiency, and the attainment of higher production through the maximisation of resources, is to achieve a fuller and richer life for all.

Unitarism peeks round the mask of pluralism. Indeed, I shall argue that in practice managerial pluralism is little removed from the 'unitary' adjustment to reality described by Fox as leading management spokesmen:

...either to practise 'double-speak', i.e. to make an initial verbal genuflection to the pluralist idea and follow this with unabashedly unitary sentiments, or to pay lip-service to pluralism while behaving in ways clearly motivated by unitary attitudes and principles (1973:205).

Such a cynical re-reading, however, does not capture the force and probable sincerity of such views uttered repeatedly from a whole series of managerial sources. It truly does sound like a recognition of labour's interests, and can only finally be revealed as other than this by close scrutiny of the practical results, the actual schemes set up with such a philosophical basis. Nevertheless the seeds of dissension can be found in management statements about the nature and purpose of participation once one is alerted to the nodal features of managerial ideology on the subject.

The following passages, taken chiefly from recent managerial bodies' policy statements (particularly to the Bullock Committee), illustrate vividly the perception of capital once the rhetoric is penetrated. Whilst they are obviously selected to highlight certain prominent contours, so that other passages are more vague and by themselves might seem less distinctively business-oriented, these quotations are not chosen to mislead. Often they were presented as thematic keys, considered (importantly) unexceptionable by their authors, and in no case do they seem anomalous rather than central to the overall argument presented. Moreover, they are but a tiny sample of similar statements of which the reader can verify the existence by even a scanty survey of the daily news media.

The City Company Law Committee, an influential body seen by many as the spokesman of the City as a whole, published a report on worker participation in 1975, and reaffirmed its conclusions in evidence to the Bullock Committee the following year.

It has ...to be recognised that on occasions there will be conflicts between the immediate interests (real or apparent) of the employees ...and the overall interests of the company. If companies are to attract equity capital, it is essential that shareholders should retain the power in the last resort to insist on the resolution of such conflicts in the manner most conducive to the continuing success of the company....(para 17).

Employee participation is to be welcomed if, by giving to employees a greater understanding of management problems and a greater sense of involvement in the fortunes of their company or by otherwise improving industrial relations and leading to greater co-operation between employees and management, it contributes to the efficiency and profitability of the private sector. Proposals for its introduction should be judged by whether they are likely to have this effect (para 25 (a)).

The idea that management serve something impersonal, the reified image called 'the company', is an unquestioned and central presumption that runs through this and other accounts by management themselves. It is this which makes possible at all the at first sight absurd welding of the recognition of conflicts with the assertion that efficiency and profitability must come first.

In 1973 the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) issued what amounted to an implicit rejection of a draft plan for a unified European statute on employee

representation published that year by the Commission for the European Communities.<sup>6</sup>

So far as employee interests are concerned, the communication, consultation and negotiation arrangements within the company should be such that employees will have full confidence that their views on matters which affect them are taken fully into account by the board (1973: para 2.65).

We consider that it is the duty of each member of the board to pay full regard to all interests which should be considered...from which it follows that no member should serve one interest only (1973:para 2.66).

The guiding principle should be to act in such a way as to convince all employees at all levels that they are part of the company, that the company's prosperity is their prosperity, that they share with the members of the board the responsibility for securing the profitable operation of the company (1973:para 2.73).

Here we find the board represented as a kind of neutral arbitrator between interests, representatives of that mythical entity 'the company' once more, in a manner no doubt intended to recall the supposed role of the state, and of those elected to administrate it. This is a further prominent element of the managerial view,<sup>7</sup> and one of its more transparent aspects.

In their evidence to the Bullock Committee in March 1976, the CBI defined participation as:

...a means of achieving a more competitive, more efficient industry through improved employer-employee relationships. (quoted in Times, 11.3.76).

TUC proposals for supervisory boards with 50% union representation were described as:

...damaging to industrial efficiency and not a recipe for effective participation...in direct opposition to the national interest. (Financial Times, 11.3.76).

'Effective' participation and the 'national interest' are left undefined; they can be interpreted as profit-supporting in each case, and thus form part of the standard repertoire of tautological managerial rhetoric. Five objectives of participation (job involvement, employee understanding of how they fit into wealth creation (!), of why decisions are taken, of the business situation of their firm, and of its future objectives) are laid down by the CBI:

The development of greater participation must build upon existing experience and arrangements; the fundamental requirement is to involve all employees in company affairs at the operating levels at which most decisions affecting their interests are made. (Financial Times, 11.3.76, emphasis added).

So employers have a definite interest in bringing about a more constructive and participative relationship with their own employees. (Times, 11.3.76, emphasis added).

It is this meaning of participation in the last analysis as involvement rather than democracy in any sense which is the hallmark of the managerial analysis. In short, conflicts are fine if they don't interfere with (what management define as) the common interest.

Strenuous efforts are thus made to rule out of court any reason for allowing conflict to intrude into participation. Consider this argument put to the

Bullock Committee by the Association of British  
Chambers of Commerce:

Those who are really seeking worker control of industrial management all wish, nevertheless, to retain free collective bargaining. That poses a major problem: it would then be extremely difficult to identify who actually bargained with whom...Employee participation in genuine management [sic] is a matter primarily for the actual employees of a company [i.e. not for 'outside' bodies like TUs]...and needs to be rooted in common purpose, not in organised opposition to management.<sup>8</sup>

Most management pronouncements have very little to say about why it is that participation has now become worth considering by them as, in an 'appropriate' form, an eminently desirable means to problem-solving and an employee right. In Chapter 9 below this is examined closely, but just occasionally one finds an unwitting giveaway. In 1975 the British Institute of Management discreetly spoke of pressures to improve efficiency, to prepare for forthcoming EEC and national legislation, and to meet rising employee aspirations (1975:9) but an earlier statement in one of their publications was more blatant:

In a highly industrialised society, forced to undergo great technological change and to find new ways of holding if not raising the standard of living, people feel that at present democratic processes work badly. This creates unrest and tension: radical relief will be required to avoid an explosion. We need not look far abroad to see the dangers. Soon we must take new measures to realize the main ideals of industrial democracy while safeguarding the Wealth producing industrial framework.(BIM, 1968:8).

Note the use of the holy capital letter in the last

sentence - not "goods" or "wages", but "wealth".  
Other fare from BIM follows a familiar path:

...labour and labour motivation have an important part to play in the economic equation and...the traditional form of collective bargaining provides only one of the possible means of tapping that potential contribution.

Participation goes beyond collective bargaining ...Participation, for participation's sake, will not ensure greater efficiency unless it serves the company, its employees and the community as a whole. (B. Cotton, preface to BIM, 1975:6).

It should be borne in mind that in almost all of these management publications the subject under discussion is stated at some point to be 'industrial democracy', though as will be increasingly apparent democracy per se has little to do with these proposals. They owe their allegiance to a greater deity.

In the service of this religion, it is common to agree as above that employees should participate more in decision-making, but to be extremely chary about any legislated form. The call is for flexibility. Officially this is to enable adaptation to local circumstances - on the face of it a reasonable point against rigid, universal formulae. What really seems to be at stake, however, is a desire that management should have room to manoeuvre rather than any neutral aim of seeking optimal channels for participation. The fear is that more concessions will have to be made by some firms to staunch demands for worker power than otherwise necessary, and that in the long run

a de jure commitment may be an albatross around capital's neck where a current de facto obligation could be quietly abandoned at a later date if labour's power to disrupt receded. As it happens, experience in the UK and elsewhere suggests that employers can always choose to become blind to or effectively negate legislation if they and the state are confronted by a weakening union movement unable to police worker 'rights'. But we are here dealing with management fears and anticipations, not with an objective analysis of their abilities.

It is this which lies behind the solid phalanx of management bodies' opposition to legislation in their evidence to Bullock.<sup>9</sup> At most, they will countenance enabling legislation, to support the broad aim of participation but leave the precise scheme to the firm itself. The CBI's clarion call for management to take the initiative on participation and forestall external imposition of schemes (as with the 1968 BIM quotation above) is echoed widely in these circles:

Managements now have the opportunity to take action themselves according to their own circumstances and in their own interests.<sup>10</sup>

The participants themselves appear to get little consideration here.

This is not merely the opinion expressed by official bodies in the name of managers. An Institution of Works Managers survey of members' views as to whether any form of participation should be backed by legislation produced 57.6% who said 'not at all',

32.4% who said 'partially' (enabling legislation only?), and only 10% who replied 'entirely'.  
(Institution of Works Managers, 1975).

Another debating device frequently employed in managerial pronouncements entails the redefinition of the term 'employee' or 'worker' which prefixes 'participation'. The purpose is to undermine the claim that employees have different interests and must retain full independence from their bosses. An example is found below in an extract from a report on motions to the BIM National Convention in March 1976, following immediately on the theme identified above:

Motion C: Participation and Industrial Democracy.  
Legislation was not an answer to achieving participation, Sir Jack Callard, former chairman of ICI, said when summing up the third debate ...The motion, which was carried, asked for recognition that everyone engaged in commerce and industry today was a 'worker'. It considered that the concept of the two sides of industry created a damaging image, resulting in 'artificial and divisive barriers'.  
(Quoted in Times, 6.3.76).

The 'two sides view' is almost invariably a 'concept', or 'idea', or 'dogma' for managerial spokesmen, distinct from their own objective account, but they can never explain why it persists except as an anachronism or, alternatively, as the subversive influence of a tiny minority.

The 'all workers now' line testifies to the flexibility of management ideology by the extent of its departure from the old paternalism (two breeds of men, with a bond between shepherd and sheep), which is not to say

that the old ideas have entirely vanished. There is a deep contradiction here, in that managers still wish to argue for their own right to command, and to limit the scope of worker participation so as to allow this. The paradox emerges neatly in the following paraphrase of the Stock Exchange's submission to the Bullock Committee:

If, says the SE, one is talking about increased participation as opposed to control, then one is talking solely about changes in relationships among employees - everyone from the shop floor worker up to the chairman being (contrary to 'folklore') no more and no less than an employee...

...is enforcement really necessary at a time when the process of consultation between managers and managed is steadily improving?  
(Times, 2.4.76, emphasis added).

The semantic game with the term 'employee' thus reflects no change in the perceived division of 'managers and managed'. The logic of the argument may now seem absurd, but it should be remembered that an ideology does not have to be internally consistent in order to perform its functions.

One management solution to the tension between unitary and pluralist aspects of their belief system may be found in the attempt to separate areas of conflict and co-operation along the following lines:

Bargaining is a proper process for deciding the share of proceeds to be allocated to pay and other employment costs; participation is the means of enlisting employee co-operation in increasing the proceeds to be shared.  
(CBI policy document of February 1976, reported in Financial Times, 20.2.76).

This strategy of parcelling up issues into safe and unsafe areas has received strong support over the years, and was particularly common in Britain in the wave of joint consultation schemes following the Second World War. It repeatedly emerges in proposals throughout the capitalist world, and for reasons relating to the contradictions of their own position it frequently has considerable appeal to trade unions also. In practice it faces a whole series of difficulties which will be examined later. Nevertheless it remains significant as an indicator of the way participation can be placed into a fully unitary framework even by parties professing to recognise conflicts in a pluralist manner, while the term 'industrial democracy' continues to be used in train with it.

#### LABOUR AND PARTICIPATION

In what follows I shall keep largely to the dominant themes of union and shop floor demands on participation i.e. to those which, like the management statements above, would fit broadly into the category of pluralism, seeking reform within the current system rather than radical change, and accepting the existence of conflict which should not, however, cause such disruption as to endanger the present system. Despite all of these provisos, it rapidly becomes apparent that the gist of even official and semi-official union statements is quite distinct from those discussed in the section above. This can be initially starkly represented by quotation from two articles appearing side-by-side in The Guardian by the Director-General of the CBI and the General Secretary of the TUC respectively:

The issue of employee participation is important because it provides a major opportunity for us to improve industrial relations in this country... The essential requirement is to develop proposals for greater participation which would improve relationships between employers and employees by enabling employees and trade unions to become constructively involved in the decision-making processes in enterprises, but without being detrimental to efficiency....(Campbell-Adamson, 19.7.76).

Looked at from the trade union point of view, industrial democracy is a long-standing objective that has been implicit in the whole development of trade unionism. The rationale for industrial democracy, as for political democracy, is that people have a right to a voice in decisions that affect their lives...(Len Murray, 19.7.76).

The employer stance is plain now. It is predicated on a common interest in efficiency where the chief objective is to promote employee loyalty and 'understanding' of the management's view, the latter presumed objective. The union view is almost without exception encapsulated in Len Murray's words, though there remains, as will be seen, sharp disagreement on the means to achieve it. The purpose of participation, if it has one, is the achievement of industrial democracy, where 'democracy' is at least legitimately used (which in the employers' case it is not). One further statement, also from Campbell-Adamson's article, puts the seal on the difference:

The TUC proposals have nothing to do with genuine participation if by that we mean communication, consultation and involvement in decision making by employees.

Just what is meant by 'genuine participation' is precisely what is at issue.

This, then, is the first feature of union pronouncements - that industrial democracy is an end in itself. In Radice's words:<sup>11</sup>

The democratic challenge to management prerogative within industry is the same as the challenge to autocracy everywhere - 'by what right?' (Radice, 1974:5).

This is not to say that trade union leaders and their allies are insensitive to arguments about efficiency. On the contrary, several key statements, particularly those by one of the prime movers of current TUC policy, Jack Jones, argue also that efficiency will be greatly enhanced by putting this form of participation into effect.<sup>12</sup> But whilst there is some seepage of management ideas about getting employees to realise and make sacrifices to solve management's problems, there is another vital element not found in the perspective of capital. Workers, it is argued, will be able to learn enough through participation to demystify the management function, lift the veil of 'expertise', and force their bosses to pull their weight also. Again the verbal subtlety which often surrounds these different meanings may at first glance conceal the differences, but the potential impact of contrary expectations behind the words once schemes are actually instituted will be apparent.

Whilst management representatives are inclined to regard the legal requirement in company law to put shareholder interests first as sacrosanct, and even to

legitimate their conception of participation through it, the labour side is at least somewhat less hypnotised by this statute. Both the TUC (1973,1974) and the Labour Party (1974,1976) propose juridical modification. The first paragraph of the now defunct private member's bill on Industrial Democracy of 1975 included this in its first paragraph:

The matters to which the directors, the members of a supervisory board or the members of a management board of a company shall have regard in exercising their powers shall include the interests of the company's workers generally as well as the interests of its shareholders.

This remains a classically pluralist statement, shareholders not being excluded, but becoming one of at least two competing interests. Yet to fail to distinguish it from management's pluralism would be an error as colossal as to claim that managers adopt only a straightforward unitary argument.

The first main feature of the union view, that democracy is the goal, is accompanied by a second also expressed in the passage quoted earlier from Len Murray. While it is common for employers to call for participation as an activity separate from unionism, and involving non-unionists as much as unionists, the unions argue that the foundation of industrial democracy has been the development of bargaining on an oppositional basis. To preserve the independence of worker representatives from management, it is felt that a single-channel basis must be maintained. An alternative channel would not only run the risk of capture by management but could then be used almost as a form of company unionism.<sup>13</sup> This is in part

the argument of Hugh Clegg, but modified by the willingness to go beyond the traditional territory of collective bargaining in the belief that independence can be maintained if unions control the new forms. The 1974 TUC policy document thus opens:

Throughout their history trade unions have generated a substantial measure of industrial democracy in this country...The term industrial democracy cannot be considered outside that context...but there are a number of specific questions of close concern to workpeople which are not being effectively subjected to joint regulation through the present processes of collective bargaining, and additional forms of joint regulation are therefore needed (TUC, 1974:7).

Yet in this respect, whilst the union side can make striking debating inroads on the employers' position because of the current legitimacy of the term democracy, the pluralist arguments of labour are now vulnerable to the vagaries of the democratic concept. Their use accepts the liberal premises of the debate, and liberal ideology is based above all on bourgeois individualism. Thus Adamson, in his Guardian piece, echoes many of his colleagues in pointing out that to limit participation to the union is to exclude those who are not union members, and further prevents industrial 'freedom' of expression. This contradicts the whole basis of labour organization, since the political economy of the working class is based on forms of collective action which in the final analysis must be anathema to liberalism.

It is this contradiction in their philosophy, and in the concrete situation which they face in capitalist society, which generates the third salient feature of

the trade union line. This is its very ambiguity. Many unionists remain acutely aware of the cleft stick of participation - democracy vs. involvement, a chance to control decisions as against the threat of incorporation voiced by Marxist and Cleggian pluralist alike. The labour movement not only voices this uncertainty today, but has expressed it historically in a series of policy about-turns. The public corporation debate, as noted in Chapter 2 in discussing the Webbs, saw in the 1930s a general agreement to press for direct union representation in the control of nationalised industries, despite Herbert Morrison's caveats. But the post-war era saw both TUC and Labour Party shunning any attempt to give unions a voice in management. The result was that nationalised industries became as remote as private industry boardrooms from the workforce in the shape of their policies and the style of their formulation. Thus the late 1960s saw a reversion to demands for union representation in management, hardening in the 1970s to a demand for 50% union membership of the (supposed) policy-making body not only of publicly-owned enterprises but in the private sector also.

But the uncertainty on this front continues abated. The 1975 Congress voted a qualification of their policy adopted the year before, by rejecting any form of participation likely to weaken union independence. Moving the amendment, M.J. Townsend of the Post Office Executives put the reasoning thus:

...we feel there is a great danger of getting involved at board and management level in the management process. We shall,

in fact, be used by the management as a Trojan Horse to get our members to accept the sort of policies that the management knows it would not have a cat in hell's chance of getting through if it came to us during the normal course of collective bargaining.<sup>14</sup>

These reservations have been reinforced by varying degrees of dissent with the worker director proposals by the Electrical and Plumbers Trades Union and other unions in the Electricity Supply Industry,<sup>15</sup> the General and Municipal Workers' Union,<sup>16</sup> the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers,<sup>17</sup> and the full Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Workers.<sup>18</sup> The management side are fond of accusing those on the union side who demand participation as wanting 'power without responsibility'; if they reject any participation scheme they are similarly accused of not being prepared to accept responsibility. But in truth union vacillation reflects the contradictions of labour's position under capitalism. Further, if one considers management's contradictions in similar fashion, then what might seem confusion or pusillanimity resolves itself into a readily comprehended pattern of proposals and abnegations.

Certainly having emphasised the degree to which the union view is not a derivative of its managerial counterpart, it would be as well not to forget the point made earlier about trade unionism as a bulwark of capitalism through its acceptance of and legitimation of certain limited forms of conflict. Nor would it be accurate to deny altogether the dangers of managerial attitudes slipping undetected into the statements of even militant seekers of industrial democracy. Jack Jones, head of the

Transport & General Workers' Union, epitomises this when despite declaring that "the key to the expansion of industrial democracy remains in the process of negotiation itself" (1974:266), he raises the spectre of incorporation in his comment that:

The key to modern industry is good labour relations and the participation of workers' representatives in ironing out problems certainly improves labour relations. This is because, above all, the workers know about labour problems and it is therefore foolish to exclude them from the management of industrial relations (1974:262).

Jones also legitimates the management function forcefully (1974:253,262). And if the above-quoted passage could all too easily be read as a text on managerial techniques rather than a leading unionist's call for democratic rights for workers, what is one to make of Jones' endorsement of the archetypal 'trendy' job enrichment management consultant Lynda King Taylor?<sup>19</sup> Yet if the worst fears an observer might have for these actions were realised, it seems unlikely that Jones would be pleased. A manager would.

#### FURTHER EVIDENCE

The above division of perceptions between the main parties to industrial relations may in retrospect seem so simple and obvious as to be facile. Yet astonishingly it has received very little attention as even a possibility; it only becomes 'obvious' if some sort of class account of society is accepted based on the conflict between the political economies of capital and labour. A straightforward 'incorporation' account of trade unionism, all too common on the left,

also serves only to obscure it. A few writers have referred to it in a superficial manner but failed to investigate it further or see its import for their analysis.<sup>20</sup> Others recently (appearing since this thesis was begun) have penetrated further, but have in no case pursued the analysis to its logical consequences.<sup>21</sup> Further evidence, can, moreover, be produced to confirm and extend the picture of two distinct though still 'pluralist' perceptions by labour and management, with the additions of radical views on the labour side and reactionary autocratism or paternalistic unitarism among the representatives of capital.

However, some recent surveys appear to contradict any suggestion that participation is something which management might be expected to want. The Commission on Industrial Relations found only 42% of managers wanted to see more worker representation in management, as compared with 75% of employees (Ryan, 1975). The Institution of Works Managers found from a survey of their members that the main source of initiative for participation schemes was management (IWM, 1975: para 3.12). Yet when asked if resistance was likely to arise to participation amongst managers, supervisors, unions or on the shop floor, a narrow majority expected management resistance, whilst only a minority expected resistance from any of the other groups. Dickson also found that workers were far keener on participation than managers, the latter being "non-committal if not negative" (1976:11).

How can it be possible to reconcile the IWM finding (confirmed by other studies) that management typically

take the initiative in installing schemes with the apparent relative disaffection of managers with participation? By reference to the substantially antithetical notions of participation held by the union and management sides, it becomes possible to make some sense of this paradox. If the model of participation managers were asked (or felt they were asked) to accept or reject were seen as based on the labour rather than the management notion of what participation is for, then disaffection with that proposition would in no way preclude a willingness to start a scheme based on the managerial view. Returning to the above cases, Ryan does not cite the question used by the Industrial Relations Commission, but tentatively at least one can suggest that his use of the term 'representation' is suggestive of a primary emphasis on democratic reform, i.e. of a labourist perspective. The Institution of Works Managers themselves comment on their finding as a probable fear by managers of a loss of control - that, in other words, participation might not fulfil the functions they might wish to see served. Those last are made clear in the assumptions apparent in a later question asked in their survey:

What has your company achieved, or hopes to achieve [sic] by introducing E.P. [employee participation] ?

- (a) High productivity
- (b) Reduced stoppages due to industrial action
- (c) Reduced labour turnover
- (d) Better communications
- (e) Others

(para 3.14)

The members of the Institution seem to agree to a remarkable degree with the idea of what should count as an 'achievement' offered by the organization to which they belong. In no case out of 740 members answering the questionnaire did any 'other' factor than the distinctively managerial priorities of (a) to (d) get offered as first or second choice. In the event, communication came out as clearly most important, followed by productivity.

Turning to the final survey quoted, when we examine Dickson's questions (1976:9) we find that all four statements used to convey the idea of 'worker participation' (with which respondents were asked to agree or disagree) display in some degree a union-type conception. For instance: 'The working classes should have more say in running society'; 'Factories would be better run if workers had more of a say in management'. In the perspective generated by the discussion of this chapter, it hardly comes as a surprise to find a large measure of management antipathy for such ideas. This shows the crucial role of theoretical understanding of the possible implications of different questions, not only at the formulative but also at the interpretive stage. (For a still more striking example, consider the use of questions comparing firms to football teams - c.f. Ramsay, 1975, and the discussion in Chapters 7 & 8 below).

Having identified the mark of social class on attitudes to participation, and exemplified some of the explanatory ability of that perspective, it now becomes necessary to complicate the picture a little. Thus far I have

spoken in a somewhat cavalier fashion of the 'labour' and 'union' view on the one hand, and that of 'management' or 'capital' on the other. Whilst the real world goes a surprising way towards slotting into these neatly machined grooves, it is never quite so kind to the sociologist. Thus there are inevitably marked variations within the ranks of each side which must be explored if a fuller explanation of the dynamics of movements for participation in industry is to be attempted. One invaluable attempt to quarry these different 'vocabularies of participation' is to be found in a recently published volume.<sup>22</sup> It relies on a study of management and labour attitudes in the British Steel Corporation during the early years of the worker director experiment in that establishment. The authors (Brannen et al, 1976) start from a set of categories of models of industrial relations derived from the work of Fox (unitary, pluralist, dichotomous) and attempt to cram their responses into these. The result is an enlightening discussion, but one severely handicapped by the impediment of starting from these categories rather than from social classes. Thus they find managerial and worker attachment to 'dichotomous' notions, but of an entirely opposed nature (i.e. the managers in this group approve of autocracy, the workers condemn it), while they have to further divide each dichotomous group into 'hard' and 'soft' variants. After an arduous discussion, they finally clamber to the conclusion that "particular frames of reference tend to be most congruent with particular structural positions" (1976:42). Translated, this arch-sociologese turns out to mean that workers and managers tend to see participation differently. The

results reproduced in Table 3.1 below bring this out well (though they do not explore e.g. the possibility noted earlier of differing meanings attached by managers and workers to the causes of inefficiency, and process by which it would be increased).

TABLE 3-1: MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR PARTICIPATION (%)

Single most important reason	Directors	Management	Full time union officials	Stewards	Employees
a) to increase men's satisfaction with their work	24.0	13.5	21.0	32.0	38.1
b) Because it is basically a just and human right	-	14.5	37.0	23.0	11.1
c) To increase efficiency	52.0	39.0	26.0	36.0	36.0
Both c) and a)	24.0	21.0	8.0	-	-
Other combinations	-	2.0	5.0	-	-
Other/D.K.	-	10.0	3.0	1.0	3.9
There should be no participation	-	-	-	8.0	10.9
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	12	90	38	317	2379

Source: Brannen et al, 1976:45, Table 3-1.

To go on from this to examine the variations among managers and shop floor respondents, and the social roots of these variations, is an important step which must not be dodged. The argument here is that it would be far easier and clearer to begin with social classes rather than have to drag them forth from a quite different set of concepts, and that elaboration becomes much easier from this platform which they, too, eventually confirm the solidity of. As I shall argue later, the unwillingness of these researchers to openly and fully recognise the need for class analysis leads to serious shortcomings in other sections which attempt to tackle themes also explored in my own research. This particularly applies to an ambitious discussion of the historical emergence of participation schemes (Brannen et al, 1976: Postscript - See Chapter 9 below).

To summarise the key findings presented in the table reproduced above, it will be apparent that there is a clear contrast between managers and directors on the one hand, and the three labour groupings on the other. Managers, and particularly directors, focus on efficiency, and give relatively little credence to questions of 'human rights'. The attitudes of union officials, stewards and employees is interestingly more ambiguous. I have already noted the potentially contradictory implication of the relationship between participation and efficiency on the part of labour, and that this choice is therefore not necessarily isomorphic with the support for this view from management. Also worthy of note is the low concern of employees, as compared with

their representatives, with the abstract notion of human rights, and the concomitantly higher concern for satisfaction. Finally, given the availability of efficiency as a choice to convey the reason for participation, it should be observed that, in contradistinction to the surveys discussed earlier, no managers are now found opposed to any participation. The only opposition comes from the ranks of stewards and employees.

Additional material on the interpretation put on participation by shop floor and managerial respondents is available from my own attitude survey on the subject in three establishments in the North-East of England.<sup>23</sup>

An open-ended question was used to tap views on this: 'The phrase "Workers Participation" has appeared frequently in the press, and has been talked about by all the political parties a lot just lately. Now we'd like to get your views on it. First, what does the phrase "workers' participation" mean to you?' The responses were found to fall into a wide range of categories which can, however, be roughly divided into the following:

TABLE 3-2: THE MEANING OF WORKER PARTICIPATION

<u>%s</u>	<u>Manual</u>	<u>Managers</u>
1. Nothing	6%	-
2. Consultation/ Discussion	8%	26%
3. * Say in things (integrative)	19%	28%
4. ** Say in things (conflictive)	38%	19%
5. Disclosure of information	1%	-
6. Job control	6%	4%
7. Profit sharing	2%	-
8. Workers on the board	5%	15%
9. Cynical views	14%	9%
10. Other	4%	-
	<u>103***</u>	<u>101***</u>
	(N=320)+	(N=47)+

\*This includes combinations of integrative views with other responses (2% manual, 4% management).

\*\*This includes combinations of conflictive views with other responses (7% manual).

\*\*\*Totals exceed 100% due to rounding.

+Not Answereds are excluded - and many of the manual respondents did not reply to this and other open-ended questions. No distortion of the pattern of findings seems likely, however, even if it cannot be absolutely ruled out.

The key notions being examined here are the extent to which manual workers and management respectively see participation in unitary or oppositional terms. From the above list, the answers in categories 2 & 3 tend to fit the former, 4 & 5 fit the latter; and the others are more specific and less easily allocated



in these terms. On this basis, 27% of manual replies are unitaristic and 53% more oppositional, the rest being indeterminate; 54% of management replies, in contrast, are unitaristic, against 28% oppositional (though a cynical view of a manager tends, of course, to have a different oppositional stance to that of a worker). These contrasting perceptions are confirmed and clarified by other results in the survey, which are discussed in detail in Part Five of the thesis.

In conclusion, then, it is clear that even amongst those prepared to operate within the system there is a distinct divide between those on the management side chiefly concerned with efficiency, involvement of the worker in an incorporative sense and, of course, with protecting their own authority, professional integrity and so 'right to manage'; and those on the labour side who argue above all for an improvement in the position, both on the job and in wider determination of his or her working life, of the employee. The former want an employee 'satisfaction' which is contributory to efficiency and to rule by 'experts' (i.e. themselves); the latter believe one or both of these objectives may, and if necessary will, have to be subordinated to the goal of democracy itself. Management tend to believe their criteria for policies are objective, and would benefit chiefly from the communication of this 'rational' perspective to subordinates through them having to face the 'realities' of decision-making, and from the increased effort forthcoming from more humane treatment of the man on the job. But if the labour side expect, as seems likely, to be able to use

participation schemes even partially as a means to get an alternative rationality operating in company policy-making, then there is an obvious and vigorous potential for conflict. This is the irony of a proposal commonly expected to reduce the totality of disagreement between the two sides.

If this clash is so readily apparent from a brief examination even of public statements such as those with which we began, it may seem strange that it has gone almost unnoticed in the large volume of writing on the subject. Yet this is a related phenomenon explicable in terms of the strength of the ideologies which also inform most of the discussion. The impulse to debate participation is also one which precludes such analysis in most cases.

Chapters 6 & 7 seek to grapple with this question of ideology. For the moment it suffices to note that the two sides may both attest to a willingness to make participation 'work', but hold contrary views of what 'working' entails without being aware of it. The reaction of either side to actions by the other not in accordance with the first side's understanding of the purpose may well be to presume bad faith on the part of the other. The divergence of expectations is real; this is therefore a real consequential possibility.

#### CONCLUSION

In Chapter 5 many of the points pursued in this chapter will be discussed further with reference to analytical material on industrial relations presented by Fox,

Goldthorpe, Eldridge and others. In that chapter the framework of a Marxist theory of worker participation in capitalist society, to be applied and put on trial in later empirical sections, will emerge from the debate. At this point, however, it may be helpful to pull together the discussion of academic and industrial actors' views as identified thus far, to attempt some provisional observations on the relation between them.

The academic approaches identified were unitary, liberal institutionalist, liberal participatory and Marxist. There is obviously no one-to-one correspondence between these categories and those of management and labour groupings. This is the reason why Fox's typology was not simply applied to the subject, it being not only too restrictive on the range of academic pluralism, but entirely unable to cope with some of the central divisions amongst actors.

It can, however, be said that managers are widely oriented to a unitary view of the enterprise, and so of the purpose of participation. Nevertheless they may well use the rhetoric of the participatory view, and even consider their views to encompass democratic conflict (only rejecting 'unreasonable' or 'irresponsible' antagonism which, however, is quite likely to seem perfectly justified to the 'pluralist' union man). They may also reject participation with a managerial version of the institutionalist account, arguing that unions should steer clear of management, and that a firm exists (as Drucker argued) to produce and so is not a miniature state whose democratic principles must follow those of the polity. In all of

these cases, the important thing is that the arguments are turned to managerial interests.

Similarly, labour views are more likely to follow Clegg or adopt the idealistic participatory stance, but this time from an angle seeking to protect or further the interests of labour. Some may accept the management outlook to a considerable degree (far more, one suspects, than managers adopt an unqualified pro-labour position), whilst others may move to a more avowedly socialist belief-system. The Marxist account comes closest to representing both an academic and an actors' position, though a working man need not be cognizant of all the arguments of Marxism to reject the capitalist system and see through participation schemes accurately.

Therefore, the academic categories serve some considerable contextual use, but in practice have to be used in a careful and restrained manner, as ancillary to a social analysis which begins with class.

## CHAPTER THREE: NOTES

1. Quoted by Parry, 1972:4.
2. The only possible exception is where participation is used by the participants to take advantage of contradictions in the system, a strategy which some Marxists have actively sought to realise in community politics, social work and so forth. For a discussion of the parallel view on worker participation schemes see Ch 5 below.
3. Programme for the Industrial Relations Post-Experience Course, 1976/77, broadcast on BBC2, Sunday 22 August, 11.50 a.m.
4. Reported in Income Data Services Brief, 82, April, 1976:5.
5. See e.g. Pearce, 1972; Duncan, 1973; Lord Watkinson, 1973; Catherwood, 1973, 1973a; Kenny, 1969; BIM, 1975:6; Macbeath, 1975; Robertson, 1975; Stokes, 1976 - a few of countless examples.
6. For an outline and discussion of the draft proposals see Commission on Industrial Relations (CIR), 1974:Ch3. For more recent revised proposals see Commission for the European Communities, 1975 (though in 1979 the European Parliament's legal affairs committee threw out the plans as a result of a coalition against them including the British Conservative Party - See Financial Times, 10.9.79).
7. See e.g. Rhenman, 1968:34, 39.
8. Quoted in Income Data Services Brief 80, March 1976. See also Financial Times, 28.11.75.
9. See evidence by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, the CBI, the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF), the Industrial Society, the Industrial Participation Association, the Law Society etc. etc. See also the Institute of Directors' view reported in the Guardian 17.2.75; Wigham, 1973:102-103, 157, reports on resistance to the threat of legislation by the EEF after 1917 and again after the Second World War.
10. CBI, 1974, quoted in Labour Research Department, 1976:9.

11. Giles Radice, a Member of Parliament, was later to introduce a private member's bill, the Industrial Democracy Bill, in the House of Commons in 1975. The Bill got through two of its required readings in the Commons before being withdrawn in favour of a government promise to introduce official legislation. See also Radice, 1978 for Radice's perspective on the resulting Bullock Committee's Report.

12. See Jones' seminal argument (as far as the current participation wave is concerned) in his 1966, and that of the Labour Party working party on Industrial Democracy (1967) of which he was the chairman. See also his 1974:262. The TUC's evidence to Bullock (TUC, 1976) also refers to increased production as a salient benefit of participation.

13. Not a new tactic, as the inter-war period experience in Britain is a constant reminder to many unionists (see Ch 9). More recently, the staff of the Automobile Association rejected a scheme by management to replace the staff association and potentially undermine the role of the union ASTMS by introducing a new participation plan. A spokesman for the staff indicated that a chance to participate was still wanted, i.e. that by implication it was the proposed form and its apparent purpose that was deemed undesirable. (See Financial Times, 24.5.76).

14. See Guardian report on Congress, 6.9.75, and Labour Research Department, 1976:31. See also the suggestion by H. Stephenson in The Times, 29.3.76, that the TUC was looking for a way to get off the 'two-tier hook', and Len Murray's letter denying this in The Times, 30.3.76.

15. Outright opposition to the TUC - see Financial Times, 20.11.75, 10.3.76, 5.5.76, 25.6.76, and Guardian, 23.8.76, this last quoting a motion to Congress that workers' interests can only be protected through an effective and independent trade union movement.

16. Financial Times, 9.2.76, 18.2.76, 5.4.76. They favour a more flexible policy of allowing workers to decide the structure to be accepted in a firm - see Guardian and Financial Times, 14.6.76 and an extended justification of this line by the union's General Secretary (David Basnett), wherein worker directors are seen as only part of the development of collective bargaining, in Financial Times, 3.9.76. A refined but emphatically managerialist reply is

published by the Financial Times on 10.9.76, written by a Unilever director K. Durham.

17. Opposed to worker directors in private but not in nationalised industries. See Financial Times, 17.6.75, 18.2.76, 10.3.76, 25.6.76 and the debate at the 1976 Congress reported in The Times, 9.9.76.

18. The Times, 25.6.76, and Financial Times of the same date.

19. See L.K. Taylor, 1976 - foreword by Jack Jones.

20. See e.g. Fogarty, 1975, 1976; Balfour (ed), 1973, in his introduction; Emery & Thorsrud, 1969; Rhenman, 1968 (who believes that the differing goals can be conjointly achieved).

21. See e.g. Poole, 1975; Brannen et al, 1976; Labour Research Department, 1976.

22. This study was published after this chapter was first written - but provides heartening confirmation of its arguments.

23. For a full description of this survey, including of the types of establishments examined, see the introduction to Part Five below.

PART TWO: RE-APPRAISING THE THEORY OF PARTICIPATION

## INTRODUCTION

Certain social conjunctures impel the awakening of management and bourgeois intellectual interest in policies such as worker participation. An analysis of the forces which engender such periods, including that through which we are now living, must be part of any meaningful theory of participation, and will therefore be attempted in the course of this thesis. For the moment, though, I shall continue with an examination of the conventional academic approaches to the subject. One feature of these contributions is their lack of reflexivity, i.e. their failure to consider the reasons for their own existence - and so to be aware of the very historically specific circumstances which call forth both that which they are studying, and their own studies.

Most discussions of participation thus remain trenchantly a-historical. As such, they tend to embrace the assumption that what is happening is an evolutionary process, based on the growing attachment of business to universal principles of national justice. This is precisely the outlook described by Marx as a feature of ruling class ideology (quoted in Ch 1). Chapter 4 will look at a selection of pluralist writers who have exerted a significant influence on the participation debate (from both participatory and institutionalist camps), and will explore the analytical consequences of their theoretical presuppositions in some detail. It will also seek to demonstrate the internal weaknesses of existing approaches.

Chapter 5 will make use of some of the more general critical treatments of pluralism in the literature to clarify further the problems of the dominant approaches to the analysis of participation. Such destruction of erroneous accounts can serve a purpose even if no alternative is immediately offered, since it may create the conditions for formulating the alternative. However, as I have already argued and will seek to clarify below, certain theoretical assumptions are built into any analysis even if they pretend neutrality or to encompass all approaches. Thus, my criticisms (beyond those which tackle only analytical inadequacy) also imply an alternative theoretical comprehension. I have already indicated certain key components of this, which I have argued are to be found in the resources of Marxism. I shall attempt in Chapter 5 to elaborate an alternative framework of analysis of participation, calling on these resources. Subsequent chapters will develop this further.

This does not mean that all of the descriptive terminology developed in existing accounts will be abandoned. Where certain heuristic categories are felt to be useful, and convenient labels already exist, I shall make use of them. There is no virtue in creating a new vocabulary of description where an old one will do. Moreover, although such categories are sometimes mistaken for theory in themselves by pluralists, as descriptions of certain aspects of reality they may still afford insights, even where the totality of that reality has not been comprehended. A direct comparison may be made to the bourgeois economists' categories of profit, price, wage, rent and so forth. Marx did not dispense with these concepts.

Instead he undertook a critique of bourgeois theories concerning them, so as to generate a more adequate description of the reality they partly comprised.

## CHAPTER FOUR: LITTLE BOXES

In recent years we have been inundated with attempts to provide a 'theoretical' foundation for the study of participation based on the elaboration of lists or typologies of schemes. In this chapter an exposition of certain representative efforts along these lines will be given, and some general points will be drawn out concerning the inadequacies of such approaches. To my knowledge, no concerted effort to criticise these accounts has been made - a point I make not for self-aggrandisement but to indicate the unquestioned, taken-for-granted nature of these methods. In order to clarify the arguments to be made, it will be necessary to outline in some detail the typologies being subjected to scrutiny, a task which is sometimes tedious. This is particularly the case with the first writer to be examined: Kenneth Walker. Pateman and Dahrendorf will thankfully be rather less wearing.<sup>1</sup>

### WALKER

Kenneth Walker represents in many ways the apotheosis of an extensive tradition in the analysis of participation. These approaches have in common an allegiance, in Walker's case explicit in his other work,<sup>2</sup> to the systems analysis of industrial relations promoted by Dunlop. The effects of such an input will be more fully explored later in this chapter when the systems approach will be examined directly.

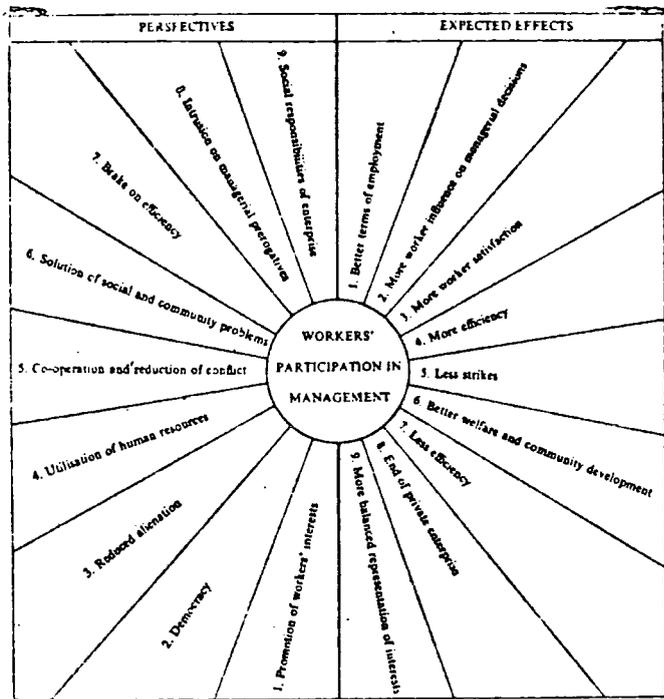
Walker was for many years the chief organiser of the International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS) in Geneva, a branch of the ILO which has been a major

co-ordinating centre for the study of participation in recent times. In formulating the ground rules for a series of studies in countries from Japan to the USA, from India to Poland, and then in processing the results, Walker has produced a veritable mountain of categorisations, continua and concepts. His first major contribution came in a paper written with de Bellecombe (1967) which was designed to constitute the basis of the IILS studies. This was progressively elaborated until in 1974 the results of the studies were assimilated in the most extended discussion to date.<sup>3</sup> The summary of Walker which follows concentrates largely on the 1974 formulations, and on the influential Times Management Lecture (1970a).

Reference was made in Chapter 2 to Walker and de Bellecombe's list of perspectives on the need for industrial democracy. By 1974, Walker has identified nine such perspectives, together with a parallel list of the expected effects of participation as viewed within each perspective. He presents them in one of the eye-bending diagrams to which he seems closely attached. (See over, Figure 4-1).

There is no contesting the compendious quality of Walker's collage. Within the 'democracy' perspective, for instance, he recognises that worker participation is viewed differently depending on the conception of 'democracy' in operation. He cites Clegg and Pateman ('pressure-group' vs 'participatory' democracy) as alternatives (1974:3-4). Yet at the same time one finds a curious re-working of an earlier distinction between 'reformist' and 'transformist' views of industrial democracy (1967:75-77; 1970:7), the latter

FIGURE 4-1: PERSPECTIVES AND EXPECTED EFFECTS OF WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT



NOTE: Each "expected effect" on the right-hand side of the diagram corresponds to the particular perspective bearing the same number on the left-hand side. Thus when viewed in Perspective 1 (promotion of workers' interests) workers' participation in management is expected to produce Effect 1 (better terms of employment). When viewed in Perspective 2, participation is expected to produce Effect 2 (more worker influence on managerial decisions) and so on.

(Walker, 1974:6).

of which is significant for bringing socialist theories into the reckoning. The distinction is now transferred under the first heading in Figure 4-1, "defence and promotion of workers' interests" where it is discussed as workers' control ideas (transformist) and expansion of collective bargaining (reformist) (1974:3-4). This seems a most awkward reformulation - e.g. it splits Clegg off from the collective bargaining view, and at the same time separates the advocates of workers' control from the democracy heading. The effect is, though, quite significant on reflection. It enables Walker to offer, uncontested, only liberal-pluralist notions of democracy. Democracy thus becomes, in his account, concerned with greater equality of power distribution without reference to the groups between whom power is to be distributed, and with "democratic procedures" for handling conflicts (institutionalism).

The idea of democracy in the enterprise is then asserted by Walker to be distinct from that pushing for the advancement of workers' interests in that it (a) insists on democracy in the participative form itself and (b) because "the democratic view implies harmony within the enterprise" (1974:3). He acknowledges one view of this last requirement may be fulfilled through the syndicalist (he ignores the other socialists here) proposal of eliminating the bosses, but interposes the alternative suggestion of "peaceful accommodation" of interests.

Already here we find powerful evidence amidst the confusion of how apparently innocuous categorisation can harbour quite blatant bias in the presentation of

the subject in question. Firstly, Walker has suppressed non-pluralist notions of democracy by defining democracy in a classically pluralist manner, ignoring any problems raised by the capitalist system per se, so that socialist notions can be elbowed out. In fine circular style, the adjective 'democratic' is used as though it were unproblematical to describe the requirements of 'democracy' in the enterprise. Secondly, we are offered a most unlikely separation, it seems, between syndicalists and 'workers' control' theories, though this matters little since both are hereafter swept under the carpet and ignored despite (because of?) the totally distinctive implications they raise. At the same time, it is implied that workers' control theorists are unconcerned about the internally 'democratic' format of participation, an utterly unsubstantiated and patently false assertion. Finally, the idea that democracy in the enterprise implies harmony fractures any coherence left in Walker's discussion, given the proposals of even pluralist models of democracy. Consciously or not, Walker has rigged the rules so that only his horse can even enter the race.

Extending the range of vision to include the whole range of nine categories by Walker, the most striking thing about them is their lack of coherence. We are offered not a thematic treatment of different approaches but merely a hotch-potch list. This may give the (rather misleading) appearance of wide representation of views, but it offers very little in the way of explanation. In Chapter 3 above, it was seen that views can be organised on the academic lines discussed or, most practically, according to whether they are

likely to reflect the interests and outlook of management or labour. Where a category proves ambiguous in these terms, then one would be inclined to look for ambiguity in the category itself. Approaching Walker's perspectives on this basis, then, 1 & 2 are almost exclusively labour interests (though with the proviso that Walker's interpretations, e.g. of democracy, need not be an accurate reflection of labour demands); 3, 6 and 9 are ambiguous in obvious ways, but may tend to be more labour than management perspectives, with 4 and 5 reversing this indefinite tendency; 7 & 8 are very much management views, 7 and 4 appearing as opposite sides of a debate about the means to achieve the same overall managerial objectives.

One category here requires at least passing further comment. This is the third, where Walker employs the term 'alienation'. In Chapter 2, in discussing Blumberg, mention was made of the tendency of sociologists to depoliticise this concept, transforming it from an analysis of the effect of capitalist property relations, as in Marx, to a consideration of ways of reforming jobs to increase 'job satisfaction'. In this way the determining effect of the market and class situation of a worker (i.e. existence as a commodity), including the possibility of his or her being unaware of the nature of the oppression involved, is displaced by a superficial consideration of the immediate experience of the work-task. In the case of Walker, the use of the descriptive phrase "labour is not a commodity" (1974:4) to describe the case against alienation, and his reference elsewhere to the origins of the phrase in Marx (1970a) may raise hopes. But firstly he has already used the phrase "reduced

alienation", as if it were measurable on a scale and progressively ameliorable. Secondly, he has separated alienation from other socialist theories, thus enabling him to treat it as part of a humanistic i.e. liberal outlook. Thirdly, and consequently, he is able to speak of reform, and to complete his shuffle across to the depoliticised approach by introducing job-reform solutions along human relations lines. Thus he ends up talking of the need to "modify modern technology" (1970a), and to give the worker more "autonomy" to overcome his "powerlessness" (1974:4; powerlessness is a term used by Blauner, 1964, the arch-depoliticiser of 'alienation'). Thus Walker now introduces the Tavistock socio-technical systems approach, to which he has explicitly expressed allegiance in previous work (1970a; 1970b; 13), an approach which amounts to little more than a more sophisticated rendering of the arguments of neo-human relations theorists for paths to 'job enrichment' etc.

Beyond this point we enter a forest of terms and concepts. By way of a basic guide map, I have put together a summation of these concepts in Figure 4-2, though as will become apparent their very proliferation makes it difficult to see an organised and mutually contributory relationship between the various locations indicated thereon. This truly is typology run amok. (See over).

Look first at the three basic problems of work organization identified by Walker. If this is an attempt to represent all possible views then it is a poor one, since it is avowedly pluralist in form, and weighted towards management at that. In assuming that

FIGURE 4-2: A SUMMARY OF WALKER'S (1974) CATEGORIES

- A. 3 basic problems of work organisation:  
 - how to share power between workers and management  
 - how to increase worker/management co-operation  
 - increasing personal involvement of workers
- B. Nature of participation:  
 - situation of workers/managers  
 - management functions taken by workers
- C. 'Structural' & 'living' participation
- D. Co-operative vs. antagonistic participation
- E. Scope of participation (range of functions taken on)  
Degree of participation (how far influence these functions) Amount of participation  
Extent of participation (how far spread through workforce)
- F. Levels of participation ('government' & 'administrative' issues)
- G. Direct & indirect participation
- H. Forms of participation: Individual Integrative Formal (modification of formal organisation)  
 Collective Disjunctive Informal
- I. Participation in ownership ≠ participation in management
- J. Amount of participation... Effects of participation
- K. Ascending & descending participation  
Human determinants  
 Highly favourable Very unfavourable  
 'Living' 'Formality' (situational determinants)  
 'frustration' 'apathy' participation potential  
 (Human determinants)  
 propensity to participate  
 of - workers/management
- L. Situational Determinants  
 Highly favourable Very unfavourable  
 'Living' 'Formality' (situational determinants)  
 'frustration' 'apathy' participation potential  
 (Human determinants)  
 propensity to participate  
 of - workers/management
- Situational factors: enterprise autonomy; technology; enterprise size; organisational structure  
Human factors: workers... attitudes & objectives; perceived power to participate; capacities to participate  
 management... attitudes (dictatorial, paternalistic, constitutional, democratic/participative);  
 perceived relative power; capacity to manage participatively

management must always exist, the arguments of syndicalists are dismissed without a backward glance. The most involved is 'sharing' power i.e. at best participation not control. But, further, the stress on 'co-operation' and 'involvement' suggest that the term 'work organization' has about as much interest-neutrality as 'the company'. Whose problems are these? Who is it that participation is meant to help?

Following this, we are next offered a distinction between two aspects of any participation scheme: "structural" and "living" participation (1974:8). 'Structural', it is indicated, refers to institutional form while 'living' participation is concerned with "the extent to which participation is actively lived by the participants"(1974:8). However, with a recall of the ambiguity of the term participation, this last statement starts to look fuzzy. Is 'actively lived' participation a reference to intense involvement, to actual decision-making, or what? It is unclear whether 'living' participation implies only the actor's perception, or some objective judgement, or a combination of both. Walker offers a clue by indicating that his dichotomy is "similar, but not identical" to distinctions made by S.K. Roy (1973) between 'institutional' and 'interpersonal' participation, and by French (1964) between 'objective' and 'psychological' participation. This, unfortunately, seems to establish only that Walker is unaware of his own potential conceptual infirmity. He argues that these other authors' distinctions:

...refer essentially to the extent to which, within a given structure, the individuals

concerned feel personally involved and are interacting directly with one another face to face in decision-making situations. (1974:8, emphasis added).

Is it, then, only a matter of perception (i.e. if people 'feel involved' then we need not worry about their actual influence on decisions)? The last part of the sentence may be inarticulately attempting to introduce actual influence, if tendentiously. However, Walker says that as 'interpersonal' or 'psychological' participation rises, so worker participation is more 'living' and less 'structural' (can it live without structure? Walker now wants the two as alternatives, but let us leave aside this problem). Perhaps, then, if we find out more clearly what Roy and French argued, Walker's meaning will be made clear after all.

Roy's distinction proves to be one between official structures and actual management styles in the work situation (1973:60). The latter is in turn based on a psychologistic (1973:49) neo-human relations conception of 'participative management' (1973:57). It thus refers in a unitary manner to leadership style, making it a very limited and dubious approach altogether.

Although related to the same psychologistic, human relations tradition, French is actually offering a potentiall much broader and clearer distinction. For him, 'psychological participation' is the "extent of influence on a jointly made decision which the participant thinks he has" (1964:38), while 'objective participation' is "the amount of influence on the decisions which he actually has" (ibid). French

recognises that these two can diverge, though he believes they are generally correlated. However, if we broaden the term 'psychological' to a more sociological form, expressed perhaps as 'the definition of the situation', and consider the theoretical vectors that it thereby becomes possible to embark upon, then the need to consider manipulation becomes apparent. The discussion of 'pseudo-democracy' in Chapter 5, and of 'pseudo-participation' by Pateman (1970, see next section of this chapter), deals with this initially, and it is taken up under the heading of power and ideology in Chapter 6. Should unity be achieved by some participative device, in a context where objectively there is actually a conflict of interests, clearly management control far from being shared out is actually objectively increased by the technique. This applies where participation is defined as influence on decisions (as with French), but becomes more ambiguous where the vague but generally unitary terms of involvement and co-operation are seen as constitutive of participation as seems at least partly the case with Walker. Roy's concept of 'interpersonal' participation certainly exudes this sense, and as such is quite different to French's.

Walker's own stress on 'living' participation as a matter of feeling involved thus straddles uncomfortably two conflicting ideas of participation which he has erroneously conflated. His failure to appreciate this is particularly clear from his apparent belief that his 'structural' (and Roy's 'institutional' to which it does approximate) are the same as 'objective' participation, which they very plainly are not.

It must be concluded, therefore, that Walker's concepts here are not merely imprecise but seriously confused and misleading. From the above discussion it emerges that there are at least three things being discussed, all of them analytically quite distinct, and each in need of painstaking examination. These are:

- formal (structural/institutional) participation
- perceived (psychological, possibly living) participation
- actual (real, objective) participation

In addition, other factors are quite often confused with these in the literature. For instance, it is not uncommon for accounts to accept at face value a management perception (or, probably different again, a public management statement) of how far workers actually participate, and/or how far workers perceive themselves as participating.<sup>4</sup> In the light of the discussion in Chapter 3, this seems singularly treacherous ground, even without considering the word participation and its different meanings directly. Meanwhile, a further distinction must be made between perceived participation and the amount of participation employees would ideally like to have (or, for that matter, the amount of influence management would like them to have).<sup>5</sup>

We can now move on to consider Walker's distinction between 'antagonistic' ('conflictual') participation and 'co-operative' participation (1974:8). It is not altogether clear whether Walker is here including collective bargaining as a form of participation or not, but antagonistic relations imply this. In 1967 he and de Bellecombe noted the frequent attempts in

practice to separate negotiation and participation (1967:72), and relate this to Walton & McKersie's (1965) distinction between 'distributive' and 'integrative' bargaining (a reasonable parallel, though made more confusing by the use of 'bargaining' to describe 'integrative' activity by the latter two authors). Walker does not consider those arguments, which present bargaining as a pluralist form of maintenance of the status quo, as "antagonistic co-operation" in the apt phrase of a prominent pluralist contributor (Dubin, 1954:56; see the critical commentary by Hyman & Fryer, 1975). But at least he says we must define participation solely as 'taking part in' (a "neutral definition" he calls this more dubiously) and not add in 'sharing' (no more nor less "neutral") or 'co-operation' (which he seems previously to have done). As a consequence, though, his next step is to produce a "scale of degree of worker participation" which is phrased almost exclusively in the language of bargaining rights. The six-point scale (source unacknowledged, but very similar to the five-point scale composed by Hespe & Little, 1971:341-342) has management and worker unilateral decision-making at its two extremes with intermediate categories paraphraseable as prior information, consultation, negotiation with management to go ahead if no agreement, and negotiated agreement before action. This is a little confusing as a shift by Walker from his discussion before (and after) of co-operative forms of negotiation, but the conflict/co-operation dichotomy may be useful provided that it is explicitly presented as alternatives within capitalism, and that there is recognition of the oversimplification involved in so sharply separating the

two. Thus in practical industrial relations, bargaining is typically over the terms of co-operation, and striking a bargain in practice itself entails elements of co-operation and even collusion, not merely the manifest use of power in the immediate situation.<sup>6</sup>

To fill out his discussion of the 'amount' of participation, Walker adds to his notion of 'degree' described above the concepts of 'scope' and 'extent'. For scope, Walker cites British joint consultation and French comites d'entreprises as narrowest, Yugoslavia as widest - thereby raising the problem of employing such continua. A continuum of this sort - which is a common feature of such analyses of participation<sup>7</sup> - is a device which may seem harmless, but in most of its manifestations is heavily laden with dubious assumptions. Most notably, the idea of an incremental scale joins weak consultation forms under capitalism to socialist self-management. The implication is, of course, that only quantitative differences exist between the two - and so that the revolutionary transformation of society required for self-management can be ignored. This is a remarkable denial of Yugoslav reality and the Yugoslav's own view of the basis of their system. But more significant than this remarkable arrogance on the part of those who blithely construct such continua, is the unambiguous reformist, pluralist, and so anti-Marxist social analysis latent in their approach. This is not the first time this underlying content of Walker's neutral-seeming lists has been observed.

The 'extent' of participation, in Walker's usage, is

more problematical than 'scope' or 'degree', though the latter two are likely to be difficult to distinguish between in practice. The difficulty with 'extent' is that it conceptualises participation in purely personal, individualistic terms (and so in terms of liberal rather than socialist theory). In turn, this raises enormous problems relating to how one judges the exercise of power, and so actual participation in decision-making, and again Walker's bias towards an individualistic, purely phenomenal, pluralist analysis of the operation of power is in evidence here. This raises once more the tendency of Walker to slide over the issue of possible manipulation through participation.

The following stage in the sequence is the offering by Walker of a typology of 'forms' of participation, as shown in Figure 4-3. In introducing this set of types, Walker shifts participation's "neutral definition" from merely 'taking part' to "taking part in managerial functions" (1974:8). Were it possible to allow this to refer simply to decision-making, it might be overlooked, but it must be said that a danger is present of slipping through the idea that management itself is a neutral function, whereas the functions of management can be argued to serve a quite specific constellation of interests both in law and in practice.

Walker is not content with offering one typology where two can cause still greater disarray. Thus 'formal' and 'informal' classifications now constitute an admixture to the already uncertain 'structural' and 'living' participations encountered earlier. In fact,

FIGURE 4-3:

**CLASSIFICATION OF FORMS OF WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT**

Formal (modification of formal organisation)		Informal	
Integrative Individual	Disjunctive (Collective)	Individual	Collective
e.g. Suggestion schemes	e.g. Works councils	e.g.	e.g.
	Employee directors (from the enterprise)	Participative supervision of individual worker	Participative supervision by group methods
Delegation and "flat" organisation	e.g. collective bargaining Tripartite grievance procedure Tripartite promotion tribunals Unilateral work-rule making by union	Informal individual restrictive practices	Informal group restrictive practices
Job enlargement and enrichment	Autonomous working groups		

(Walker, 1974:9, fig.4).

'formal' and 'structural' appeared to be adopted as interchangeable, but 'informal' refers not to 'living' as it seemed to be used earlier but vaguely to styles of management adopted within the formal set-up. The difficulties of the term 'informal' and its separation from 'formal', arise in the forms that have led to criticisms of the Donovan Report's use of the same distinction.<sup>8</sup> The individual-collective dimension is clear enough, but the integrative-disjunctive distinction seems to serve no purpose other than complication. There seems to be no difference between these new terms and those of antagonism and co-operation already discussed. Finally, all of the types are disseminated through different possible 'levels' in the organization from job up to company level (though this treads on the toes of the individual/collective separation). However, the concept of 'levels' is shortly tied up by the use of a distinction between 'government' and 'administration' of the enterprise. The former refers to policy determination which is the function of the top echelons of management, whilst the latter applies merely to the application of that policy.

Since this distinction is similar to that between 'management' and 'enterprise government' (1970a) discussed below, I shall pass no comment on it at this stage. It may be noted that 'levels' here have become entangled with the category of 'scope' as used earlier by Walker. The notion of 'level', also used by Pateman (see below), will be found useful in the analysis offered in Chapter 5. However, the profusion of terms like this, overlapping and ill-defined, in Walker's collage is sufficient to devalue any worth of the categories even without the wider theoretical

shortcomings of his treatment.

A further distinction between 'ascending' and 'descending' participation illustrates the disarray of this terminological matrix. The former is described as referring to worker influence on decisions taken at a level above their own in the hierarchy, while the latter is intended to convey the assumption of managerial functions by those at the foot of the conventional chain of command (1974: 7). Even operating simply at Walker's own level of analysis for a moment, it appears that this would be far better left to be dealt with under the rubric of 'degree' of participation, i.e. part influence on decisions or fuller assumption of the right to make them. This could then be more effectively elaborated in terms of 'scope', 'level' and the 'integrative/disjunctive' nature (i.e. whether certain decision-making rights are passed down willingly by management for integrative purposes or wrested from them by the workers).

As it stands, the 'ascending/descending' division raises constantly slumbering questions about Walker's whole approach once more. Firstly, it appears that (as a review of all his writings over the years from 1967 to 1974 will confirm) he has thought up various categorisations as heuristic devices to act as hinges for his discussion of participation. He then appears to be unwilling to let them go, hence the proliferation of overlaps and the disorganization of what set out to be a highly organized 1974 presentation. This speculation suggests that, at the very least, the theoretical power of such typologies is in itself limited, and this is a question which will be taken up in the general discussion at the end of this chapter.

Secondly, to return to the specific distinction under review, both ascending and descending participation are presented in a manner suggesting that they are management bequests. Once the reality of conflict in industry is introduced, then this presumption appears as a 'granting' of responsibilities to workers rather than power. Management is relieved of the burden of taking decisions, but the same criteria of decision-making operate (workers assume 'functions' of 'the organization') to confine them to the same decisional space.

In 1967 Walker and de Bellecombe offered an analysis of the conditions affecting the actual working of participation, and in 1974 this is reconstituted by Walker. It might be hoped and expected that the multifarious strands thus far would here be drawn together, and their practical implications considered. No real effort at this is made however. Instead there are some more terms to absorb, as the diagram below shows:

FIGURE 4-4:

CHARACTER AND IMPACT OF WORKERS' PARTICIPATION UNDER VARIOUS CONDITIONS

SITUATIONAL DETERMINANTS	HUMAN DETERMINANTS	
	Highly favourable	Very unfavourable
Highly favourable	Vitality/Living Participation (Strong)	Formality (Weak)
Very unfavourable	Frustration (Weak)	Apathy (None)

(Adapted from 1967:91 and 1974:23)

Situational determinants here include enterprise autonomy, technology, enterprise size, and organizational structure. These are certainly relevant considerations, though how far they are independent variables is more questionable. (In particular, 'organizational structure' was, surely, what the whole subject in question revolved around). A narrow focus on the enterprise is reflected in a failure to attend to issues of power structure and social values.

Human determinants are subdivided into those attributed to workers (attitudes and objectives; perceived power to participate; capacity to participate) and managers (attitudes - 'dictatorial', 'paternalistic', 'constitutional', 'democratic/participative'; perceived relative power; capacity to manage participatively). Apart from obvious terminological and conceptual problems, the question of the independence of these variables arises once more; they could as readily be tied in with structural ('situational') determinants.

The categories emerging suffer from the debilitation inherent to Walker's whole approach, riddled as it is by unannounced and unjustifiable assumptions. Apart from the old problems with concepts like 'living' participation, there is a more general premise behind the format of these discussions. This stems from Walker's unwillingness to discuss conflicting interests and objectives. To evade the question of whether workers and managers really have compatible views of participation (and if they do not, all these determinants which treat as alike e.g.

desire and capacity (?) to 'participate' by workers, and capacity to manage 'participatively', collapse in incoherent disarray), Walker tries to define the problem away by stressing the importance of congruent objectives and expectations (1974:22). But all this succeeds in doing is reducing all participation to the integrative type.

Walker's 1974 account, then, may on flipping through the pages seem an impressive monument to the power of systematic categorisation. On dissection, we find that the most insistent chord struck is more of a discord, a concatenation of confusion. Nothing should make one more wary than a declaration of intent which promises 'practical' or 'objective' study, then proposes to leave messy 'ideological' or 'theoretical' conflict on one side to facilitate this. The path is left open instead for the author's presuppositions (ideology) to rule unopposed, a ready path to mystification of acutely slanted results. Walker makes precisely such a claim of objectivity at the start of his offering (1974:2). From this stems his erasure of Marxist accounts by predefinition of participation and democracy, by assertion, and by common or garden invalid argument. From this, too, comes an unwillingness to admit to the motivating theory which results in the plethora of lists of terms, seemingly disembodied from any unifying analysis, and certainly far removed from reality.

These tendencies, a magnification of the difficulties identifiable in the work of many other participation theorists, are further illustrated by another influential and much-quoted piece of Walker's output - his Times Management Lecture (1970a). This time the catch-word

is 'industrial democracy' rather than participation, though the discussion shows little evidence that Walker remembers to distinguish between these two. In his talk, Walker distinguishes four 'forms' of industrial democracy: democratization of ownership; of enterprise government; of the terms of employment; and of management. We might dismiss this odd list if it were not for its function as a vehicle for all kinds of assumptions, prescriptions and judgements of competing theories. As such it exposes nothing so clearly as the biases and purposes underlying the Walker theory itself.

With a magnum-sized reproduction of (the 1967 version of) Figure 4-4 behind him, Walker addressed his audience of prominent industrialists and unionists with a glib (but unsubstantiated) dismissal of ownership as the basis for solving the 'problems' of relations between 'managers and managed'. To assess the real significance of this echo of Dahrendorf or Hugh Clegg, let us recall two points. Firstly the 'propensity to participate' category included management's capacity to manage participatively, which presumes the necessity of management and thus bolsters the rejection of ownership by fiat. Secondly, thinking further back to Walker's list of three work-organization problems, it will be recalled that these, too, presuppose the permanency of social relations of production founded on a continuing division of labour between managers and managed. Walker has no new argument to break the circularity of the assertion that ownership is insignificant.

Thus when Walker asserts that in Yugoslavia and Poland the 'problems' to be solved are the same, since managers

and managed continue to confront one another on the same ground, he speaks volumes about his own analysis and about the spectacles through which he views the countries cited themselves. These societies are, it seems, to be treated as exhaustive representatives of 'alternative ownership' and then summarily dismissed as no different to Walker's homelands.

Lack of space means that I cannot pursue the tempting tangent a reply to Walker invites here. I shall only observe: firstly that these two societies cannot so readily be presumed to share capitalist forms and problems; and secondly that those 'problems' which do bear superficial similarity arise above all from an impoverished conception of socialism and the introduction of capitalist-type policies as though they were neutral.<sup>9</sup>

Walker also dismisses democratization of the enterprise government (by which he means, it emerges, worker or union directors on the board, a view remarkably limited and classically pluralist in its blinkered field of vision) as of little consequence for management democratization. This fate is rapidly administered to democratization of the terms of employment also. These rejections, crucial to Walker's ensuing conclusions about what needs to be done to achieve industrial democracy, hinge on pre-definitions of democracy and management. The latter is, evidently, seen as somehow separate from either enterprise government or determination of the terms of employment. Presumably it is thus confined to running of the enterprise within the framework of Board decisions and union-imposed agreements, thus

pandering in a way that cannot be analytically condoned to management's own ideology. Next, however, we are told that since bargaining seems increasingly to spill over into 'management' issues (which on the face of it dissolves the very separation so carefully set up) the "democratization of management.. is the key issue in industrial democracy". In short, participation in decision-making and no more is the requirement.

Even without counterposing the socialist theories which Walker chooses to ignore, certain destructive fallacies in his argument can be discerned. Firstly, Walker's claim that merely changing ownership (or those factors he calls enterprise government and terms of employment for that matter) does not transform management/subordinate relations automatically is perfectly justified - but it does not follow that such a change is irrelevant to the achievement of real democracy for producers. Walker has confused necessary and sufficient conditions; even if one were to accept his distinctions (which I do not), then 'democratization of management' hardly holds up as sufficient by itself on the most favourable assessment. Secondly, and decisive in rejecting the concentration only on 'management', the definition of democracy itself remains unquestioned by Walker. The way that, even within the pluralist framework, Blumberg and Clegg could come to different conclusions about democracy and so about ownership (remember particularly how facile was Clegg's discarding of ownership), reminds us of the importance of this consideration. As it is, Walker's notion of 'democratization' shifts insupportably with each of

his four terms, even at times accepting human relations views as a valid interpretation of democratization of management. In fact, this was one point on which Walker was so nebulous as to be picked up by several of his audience. One in particular deserves quoting - a union leader (of the E.T.U. as it was then), Les Cannon, perhaps best known for his witch-hunt against communists:

What worries me about the discussion on this subject is the unclarity of definition about industrial democracy, and I must say, with respect, that I am as unclear now as I was before I attended any lecture. I believe we need a proper analysis of the power structure in industrial relations before we can begin to talk about sharing power.  
(Times Business News Report, 4.3.70).

As is often the case, a representative of labour's interests even on the political right is confronted with realities which lead to a more accurate assessment than that of the supposedly sophisticated, expert, academic despite obvious continuing limitations. Walker has indeed obliterated power from his analysis, and it is precisely the issue of power which undermines his untenable distinctions between 'ownership', 'government', 'management' and the bargaining relationship between capital and labour. Only in its absence is Walker able to peddle his diluted liberal solutions. The attempt to produce a conceptual framework for practical research and so eventually prescription was, it seems, the product itself of (being charitable) self-delusion. The finished article bears all the birthmarks of its ideological womb.

PATEMAN

Pateman's framework for analysing participation attracts

the attention of this chapter because it illustrates an approach from the participatory school. She begins (1970:Ch4) with quotations from three authors<sup>10</sup> relating participation to the exercise of power/ decision-making in tandem with management, and moves on to examine critically the continua of participation presented by McGregor (1960) and Likert (1961). McGregor's range runs from 'a little participation' (subordinates can question managers on decisions) to 'a lot' (employees can choose from alternatives to which the superior is indifferent). Likert's version goes from 'little participation' (no information to employee) to a situation where superiors and subordinates tackle problems as a group. Pateman argues (p68) that Likert in particular covers far too wide a range of issues, and that:

...for the notion of participation to be at all useful in dealing with the problems involved in industrial democracy (or with general management problems) a much more rigorous analysis must be attempted. (1970:68).

This analysis she sets out to provide. She turns firstly to a definition proposed by French, Israel & Aas, who see industrial participation as "a process in which two or more parties influence each other in making plans, policies or decisions" (1960:3). This excludes merely taking part in group activity or receiving information without concomitant influence on decisions. Pateman says that the broadest sense of simply interacting in some situation must indeed be excluded in discussing worker participation:

The whole point about industrial participation is that it involves a modification, to a greater or lesser degree, of the orthodox

authority structure; namely one where decision making is the 'prerogative' of management, in which workers take no part. (1970:68).

Before continuing to examine the refinements of the initial concept of participation put forward by Pateman, a few comments are in order. Firstly, Pateman criticises Likert for operating with too wide a range of definitions for participation - yet as she herself half acknowledges on the same page, Likert & co. are largely concerned with management techniques for raising efficiency, not sharing decisions per se. What she does not seem to realise is that this stems from a view of industry and of the interests of employees and management quite at variance with her own, since Likert (and McGregor) are neo-human relations, unitary theorists, with a managerial perspective. Their view of what constitutes participation accords with this. Secondly, though, the meaning of participation can, as has been shown, extend to such unitary views; Pateman is quite wrong to declare that participation in the industrial context must be used in the way she defines it. The severe ambiguity of the term participation thus proves, predictably, an ever-present snare for the unsuspecting participatory liberal democrat. Pateman has further foresaken analysis of the actual usage of the term, the value of which was seen in Chapter 3 above, for arbitrary definition, an approach proscribed earlier in this thesis.

The assertion by Pateman of the superiority of the French et al definition emerges with a confusion

Pateman slips into along with so many others. She argues (see first quote on previous page) that participation's purpose is to solve the problems of industrial democracy (also predefined her way, naturally); in response to this, it would be equally possible (and futile) to assert that industrial democracy means workers' control and that participation in the existing system is only a means to foil the achievement of this. But because of the confusion and the lack of any attempt to recognise and analyse the different available views, very little effective debate is possible; hence the plethora of views, all seeming coherent (as many are in their own terms), yet incommensurable. Pateman's own perilous uncertainty is apparent in her strange reference, following her quoted reference to industrial democracy, to "general management problems"; not, one feels, because she wishes after all to take management's side, but because the concrete implications of her words are undetected.

Thirdly, consider the definition Pateman tells us is a rigorous one, from French et al. On reflection this, too, (i.e. as with Likert & co.) not only suffers from the limitations of being arbitrary rather than expressing linguistic use by industrial actors, it is also an emphatically behaviouralist, reductionist notion of participation. Decision-making, and by implication power, is conceptualised in terms purely of interaction, of phenomena directly observable in a face-to-face relationship.<sup>11</sup> It further seems, from Pateman's discussion of 'traditional' authority structures as ones where workers have no say, that either she is going back a very long way to find

tradition, or she is excluding influence on decisions through conflictive, collective worker action. Again, this is less surprising from French, Israel & Aas themselves, since they are writing very much in the human relations tradition; the query against Pateman is that she does not recognise the effects of this on their definition. All in all, the first signs are not overly promising, despite the critical insights Pateman provides on institutionalist, pluralist, democratic theorists; it is disappointing to find disregard for such significant epistemological presuppositions from a political philosopher who claims to be in search of 'rigorous analysis'.

Despite these limitations, which do affect the rest of her analysis (or reflect it - the causal direction is not of importance here), Pateman does go on to suggest some interesting classifications. On the basis of her definition of participation as a real modification of decision-making, she is able to classify any proposal for participation which is not thus intended as 'pseudo-participation'.<sup>12</sup> Given the ambivalent meaning of 'participation', the term 'pseudo-democracy' would have been clearer (see Ch5 below). Nevertheless this is a concept which, elaborated within a Marxist framework of analysis, takes on a far greater significance than Pateman herself attaches to it; her limitations on her application of the term tie up with her enduring pluralism, and so the implicit shunning of class analysis. She uses the term 'pseudo-participation' to refer to situations where management regard participation as a method for getting employee consent, and where no more is seen as being possible.<sup>13</sup> No wider purpose is envisaged

than improvement of efficiency and profitability, and perhaps reinforcement of management authority. Pateman recognises that manipulation can take place, but does not regard this as a significant form of pseudo-participation.

This last point seems dubious in itself, in that manipulation may well be fairly important; indeed the distinction between persuasion of the sort Pateman describes and manipulation seems a particularly fine one, especially given the self-righteous, principled declarations that accompany most human relations case studies on participation. The objection to Pateman is broader in scope than this, however. An account of the falseness of participation, to maintain consistency, must refer to any situation where a scheme purporting to give workers a share in decision-making - greater power - actually does nothing of the sort, but instead tends to reinforce management's control. Pateman's use covers only those schemes which are avowedly non-redistributive of decision-making, whereas most of the patrons of the schemes with which this thesis is concerned claim stridently quite the opposite. It will emerge that in practice many works councils and other participatory bodies are no more than advisory or rubber-stamping institutions, where the most labour is given is information (see Chs 10 & 11). Pateman's concept of pseudo-participation is hard-pressed to cope even with this. However, I shall argue that even where worker representatives have co-decision rights in a scheme which is based on presupposition of common interests, this is in practice an attempt to impose the management (consensus) frame of reference on the

representatives, and ultimately on their constituents. As such, considered through the medium of the wider structural notion of power described in Chapter 6, and so of the political economy of interests - a concept of power of which Pateman takes no cognizance - such representation can only amount to pseudo-participation. The potential meaning of the following observation by Pateman in such a broader context is apparent:

... some writers use the term 'participation' to refer not just to a method of decision making, but also to cover techniques used to persuade employees to accept decisions that have already been made by management...often the concern was not to set up a situation where participation (in decision making) took place, but to create a feeling of participation.. (1970:68-69).

The analysis is too specific to interaction alone; "decisions...made by management" needs to be broadened into "management's frame of reference (ideology)".

Pateman's next step is to trim 'participation' further to fit her own discussion. She accordingly modifies the French et al definition by observing that they talk only of 'influence on' decision-making, whereas participatory democracy requires equality between the parties to decision-making. She cites a definition of 'power' as participation in the making of decisions (Laswell & Kaplan, 1950:75), and notes that 'influence' on a decision is not the same as the power to make it. This smells of semantic games. One might as well say a share of power is not the same as the power to make a decision - and it is sharing of power (equally, between all) that concerns her. To escape this she

uses a definition of influence, following Partridge (1963:11), which sees it as leaving the final decision in the hands of the other party. Where there is 'influence' on decisions only by a group, she refers to this as 'partial participation', as distinct from the designation 'full participation' where all parties ("each individual member" she says, p71) have equal power to determine decisions.

This formulation is riddled with problems. Its 'equilibrium' notion of power is typically pluralist, and has been devastatingly criticised by (in the industrial context) Fox in particular. Further, in these terms we cannot talk of power inequalities, since anything other than equality leaves just 'influence' for one side. Thirdly, the approach is so encapsulated within the liberal problematic, that its insistence on analysis in terms of individuals rather than collectivities (in particular, classes) leaves a still less realistic and narrower abstract scope for discussing power and decision-making. Perhaps one could talk of one side being 'in control', whilst still being able to discuss an uneven balance of 'power', but even then in the concrete industrial situation one cannot talk meaningfully of the power (or influence) of each employee as against fellow employees or as against managers; one must talk of the relative power of labour (usually the trade union) as against management, for power is collectively based. As we saw earlier, Pateman always seems to forget unions and awkward things like that in her discussion.

These difficulties seem to dissolve the point of Pateman's concepts of 'partial' and 'full' participation

as they stand. In particular, 'full' participation, the ultimate state for Pateman, is an unacknowledged rejection of the socialist view of workers' control, and the analysis of specific modes of production which it requires. Pateman is the prototypical liberal at core, wishing only to discuss individuals in an idealistic vision of equality of all, and to ignore the reality of class which requires that one side will inevitably control the other. Instead she insists here and in a later work that in a situation of 'full' participation the 'two sides' disappear (1970:70-71; by 1973:334, a system of 'full participation' has become 'industrial democracy', which term comes to refer to the same all-equal, no-sides situation). Thus she argues blithely that 'workers' control' can be dismissed and replaced by 'self-management', since the former concept offers no clue as to who is going to be controlled by whom.<sup>14</sup> This blatantly ignorant statement, so confident in pluralism that it assumes socialists share her pluralist vision, ignores the central tenet of Marxist accounts of society after the revolution, that struggle between classes continues throughout a protracted transition period of dictatorship of the proletariat. For Marxists, workers control the bourgeoisie; they also control things - machines, raw materials, etc - that under capitalism dominated them. 'Self-management' is debased also by Pateman who is one amongst many<sup>15</sup> who see it as a liberal solution, and ignore the Marxist basis of the Yugoslav system. This Pateman does, despite devoting a special chapter to Yugoslavia. A further consequence of the Pateman definition of 'full' participation and associated terms (in her vocabulary) is the familiar one of an implication that progression towards the extreme 'democratic' form can

be gradual and reformist. So much for objective analytical rigour.

Pateman does usefully distinguish 'higher' and 'lower' levels of participation. Lower level participation entails participation with management on matters "relating to control of day-to-day shop floor activity", whilst higher level participation involves "decisions that relate to the running of the whole enterprise, decisions on investment, marketing and so forth" (1970:70). Unfortunately, she goes on to introduce her 'partial/full' distinction here, making this still more pointless. For she claims that both 'partial' and 'full' participation can occur at either level. As an example of 'full' participation at the lower level she cites gang systems, where workers make a collective contract with management and then organise their own work. This attempt to apply the notion of 'full' participation within a work group, abstracted from the effect of the wider context of the structure of enterprise (and social) power illuminates only the impoverishment of her concept of 'fullness'. Even Fox's analysis(1973a), in many ways related to Pateman's in overall nature, rejects this crass reductionism. Part of Pateman's error comes from an apparent slide to talking of 'participation', forgetting not only her own stipulations about 'industrial democracy', but even the lesser notion of 'worker participation in management'. It is not far from here to seeing participation in unitary terms, embracing what was earlier exposed as 'pseudo-participation'.

As already noted, Pateman seems to substitute 'industrial democracy' for 'full participation'

in her 1973 comment. But in 1970 she discusses it separately (pp71-73). She criticises human relations uses of the term to describe what amounts even in her terms to no more than 'pseudo-participation'. Clegg's view is also dismissed. Democracy in industry, she insists, involves election of the enterprise government by all. It can only refer to full, higher-level participation, i.e. "the terms 'participation' and 'democracy' cannot be used interchangeably: they are not synonyms" (1970:73). Partial participation can never be industrial democracy, Pateman correctly observes - for this is, as we have seen, true even within the limitations of pluralist conceptualisations.

Before moving on from Pateman, it will be useful to glance at a critical piece (1973) attacking a text by Robbins (1972), thereby to clarify both the strengths and weaknesses of her analysis as compared with a less well formulated, more typical alternative. Robbins' text is notable for its influence on Australian government policy (Pateman having, since her earlier work, moved to Australia). He distinguishes the socialist view of "participation as democracy" from a view emerging from managerial circles treating "participation as technique". He proposes the use of the term 'worker participation' to refer to the latter, schemes which offer involvement to solve "practical difficulties" (1972:430), whilst 'industrial democracy' (or 'worker control') is retained for schemes aiming at employee control by right. Participation, he then says, involves a "limited role" whilst democracy is "not...reducible" and refers only to schemes "which seek to give total involvement in management" (1972:430-431). Strangely,

'worker involvement' has now become his "generic term" to cover all variants, and what began as a promising discussion lies in ruins. Thus, rapidly betraying his firm stand on democracy's irreducibility, he proceeds to discuss the elements of democracy in schemes ranging from joint consultation, nationalization and collective bargaining, to self-management (which term he says, bewilderingly, is best used to describe job enlargement (p433)). and, at the furthest end of another version of the familiar continuum worker control. The debacle is thus completed.

Robbins' initial distinction could have enabled him to pursue the contrasting and incompatible perspectives of management and labour to some effect. But, as with Pateman and so many of the writers discussed here, he fights shy of any such analysis which would bring him face-to-face with the unpalatable reality (for unitary and pluralist writer alike) of social class. Without wishing to descend to a mere semantic juggling and nit-picking, the use of 'involvement' as a master term is ominous, while the notion of democracy as simply 'total involvement' has most unpleasant undertones. Pateman rightly notes the loss incurred by the retreat from the democracy/technique distinction from which he began (though she, predictably, does not apprehend its true significance), as well as the misleading use of 'involvement'. She argues, again correctly, that to talk of participation as separate from democracy, as mere technique, is in fact to talk of 'pseudo-participation' (1973:333).

However, apart from the misconceived discussion of workers' control mentioned earlier, Pateman continues

to run a risk of collapsing her own supposedly irreducible notion of industrial democracy much as Robbins has done. For whilst industrial democracy is only to apply where full, higher-level participation obtains, where all are equal, and (rather less certainly) all management must be elected (p333), this full participation still lies, it must be recalled, at the end of a continuum of 'partial participation'. This could lead logically to a discussion of degrees of democracy, if a closure were not arbitrarily applied, as a result of a reduction of the important ideas behind the pseudo-participation concept to a relatively trivial level. If a critical analysis of the social system and its structural implications for any participation scheme were introduced, then the continuum collapses, and all participation which seeks to create attachment and involvement of employees to the existing system becomes pseudo-participation. Pateman is not prepared for such a usage, which would swallow much of her 'partial participation' into the ambit of pseudo-participation also. The limited scope of her analysis follows naturally from an attempt both to treat industry as a polity per se, and from regarding the wider polity as just that and no more, i.e. as unconnected with systemic features of a (capitalist) mode of production. The concept of mode of production is the key feature in absentia amongst pluralist accounts, which like Pateman wish to leap from the sordid possibility of management manipulation to utopia, without getting even the feet muddy in the cloying unpleasantness of class conflict. Robbins and Pateman are, after all, well matched.

## DAHRENDORF

In his earliest book (1959) Dahrendorf identifies five structural arrangements which constitute elements of the effort to introduce 'industrial democracy' in advanced "post-industrial" societies (p257). These are: (1) the organization of conflicting interest groups; (2) the establishment of 'parliamentary' negotiating bodies in which the groups meet; (3) the institutions of mediation and arbitration; (4) formal representations of labour within the individual enterprise; (5) tendencies towards an institutionalization of workers' participation in industrial management.

In Dahrendorf's view, (1)-(3) here constitute a "coherent pattern", whose "rationale lies in the autonomous, in that sense democratic, regulation of conflict" (p261). For Dahrendorf, then, much as for Clegg, industrial democracy, and political democracy itself, are the products of the channeling of old and new conflicts rather than attempting to suppress them or leave them unregulated. In his account items (4) and (5) also form a coherent pattern:

Its most general principle can be described as the attempt to institutionalize industrial conflict by modifying the authority structure of the enterprise itself.  
(1959:261).

Dahrendorf's inclusion of the system of employee representation within the enterprise as an aspect of a style of reform also associated with worker participation may seem strange to the British reader, since it implies a condemnation of shop steward systems also (p261), but it is in fact directed at

the German system of shop councils, whose task as defined by legislation he quotes as "to defend the common economic interests of employees... vis-a-vis the employer, and in order to support the employer in realising the functions of the enterprise" (p262). Dahrendorf is undoubtedly correct to identify an important ambiguity here, one which attempts to mingle contradictory unitary and pluralist assumptions about industrial relations. His mistake is to see American and British shop steward systems as similarly trapped, for these seem to fit far better his first 'coherent pattern'. They are, of course, still ambiguously situated in roles which oppose yet must indulge in everyday collaboration and compromise with the employer, as all union activities within capitalism remain ambiguous; but Dahrendorf, wearing his post-capitalist blinkers, does not recognise this problem.

This aside, Dahrendorf's analysis of participation schemes based on the assumption that common interests between employees and employers prevail remains forceful and distinctive. For him, shop councils of the German type, and co-determination especially, are crippled by consensus ideology. Far from creating co-operation, in Dahrendorf's opinion:

It seems probable that this kind of perverted conflict regulation will increase rather than diminish both the violence and intensity of conflict by simultaneously opening and blocking one of its channels of expression (p263)...

Regulation requires acceptance of conflict; but co-determination is based on a conviction that conflict is bad and must be abolished. (p267).

In this Dahrendorf at least carries to its logical conclusion the premises of an institutionalist pluralism that believes in unions as a channel for ordering conflict rather than marshalling disruption; his argument has some phenomenal conformity to real events and social processes, unlike the idealism of the participatory pluralist or the apparent insensitivity to such problems of other pluralist commentators such as Walker.

In a later work (1967) Dahrendorf goes on to bewail the German choice of a utopia, shunning conflict rather than recognising and safely channeling it (p170). Although conflicts are based on the distribution of authority within the enterprise, rather than on social class conflict (1959; 1967), that clash is still a structural and fundamental one. If ideologically suppressed, then not only is liberal democracy itself thwarted (1967:170), but ultimately on the 1959 arguments they are a source of profound social instability. In his 1967 work, however, Dahrendorf is far more concerned with what Neumann predicts, that "far from achieving anything, [co-determination] may actually destroy the little militancy that is left in the German labour movement" (Neumann, 1951, quoted in Dahrendorf, 1967:182). Thus Dahrendorf heads one chapter 'The Tragedy of the German Labor Movement', by which he seems to mean its effective incorporation. In the event, both the Dahrendorf criticism and the encomia are oversimplistic in their assessment, as Chapter 11 will argue. However, Dahrendorf's distinction between a set of proposals based on conflict of interest and one ('participation') based on a unitary perspective remains relevant, particularly when grounded (as

partly attempted by Dahrendorf) in a consideration of the class sources of the different perceptions.

Yet Dahrendorf's pluralism with its attachment to an underlying status quo (i.e. its inherent element of corporatism), reveals its fatal weakness under stress quite startlingly in his recent recantation of many of his arguments. This disavowal of what seem fundamental principles for the integrity of his pluralist position is achieved explicitly in conditions of crisis. Thus in 1975 Dahrendorf reiterates the basis of his old attack on co-determination, and then argues that the "pure theory of conflict" which informs it can in practice be mitigated by the element of "contract" (1975:8). The arguments offered in fact amount to little more than an admission that, where before the ultimate purpose might have been expressed as conflict for democracy, this democracy has as with the institutionalists attacked by Pateman become identified with the status quo per se. In sum, stability of the system, tautologically labelled desirable, has displaced the achievement of democracy itself. Dahrendorf has succumbed to his old enemy, the functionalist view.

In Dahrendorf's 1975 opinion, we are moving into an era of lower growth and therefore necessarily lower expectations. In this situation, it becomes necessary to pull together more, or we will end up with something nasty in the way of social government (he quotes approvingly the arch supporter of business interests in 'free' market capitalism, Hayek, on a 'constitution of liberty', without asking any of the questions about whose liberty and on whose terms). We

have to set about "making those concerned understand" (p9) the need to co-operate to protect liberty. The social contract form can achieve this by increasing the flow of information (no doubt Dahrendorf's information, presumed to create commitment to the system, not estrangement); by increasing mutual confidence; and by giving the 'political community' a legitimate role in constraining industrial relations (p13). On the second of these, Dahrendorf argues:

I would maintain that one of the effects of industrial democracy can be to close the confidence gap and make conflicts manageable, defining them in such a way that over time both sides stand to gain. (1975:12).

But this is only possible either through manipulative propaganda or (if one assumes away the root causes of the collapse that so preoccupies Dahrendorf) by dispelling the oppositional system which these compromises are supposedly intended to maintain. This is now plainly revealed as a system of pluralist democracy that favours the rights of the capitalist, the bourgeois, at the expense of the political economy of the working class (who are the ones to be restrained so profit margins for incentive can be retained). The very notion of 'contract' itself heralds a sanctification of the essential status quo as a basis for agreement, and encapsulates the inviolability of 'bourgeois right' and of the justification of a system of hiring and disposing of labour as a resource. Dahrendorf patently offers no grounds whatsoever for abandoning his fears of incorporation, though it seems this has now superceded any fears that institutionalized conflict must be allowed expression to avoid the

explosion originally feared as the consequence of containment. Instead we can only conclude that the incorporation is now deemed desirable, that stability indeed outranks democracy, as seems confirmed by unitary notions such as 'political community' and the need to "make industrial conflicts manageable for our societies as a whole" (p13, emphasis added - and almost paradigmatically functionalist in form). One needs only to introduce Fox's demonstration of the inequality of a contract struck when the parties do not start equal, but rather the employee representatives:

...take their place...as men who have already been socialized, indoctrinated and trained by a multiplicity of influences to accept and legitimize most aspects of their work situation...(Fox, 1973:217).

This indicates the absurdity of Dahrendorf's miracle 'contract' cure, and his own earlier work serves to indicate the role of his proposals as an attempt at reinforcement of this very inequality.

The lessons of Dahrendorf's shift in position on industrial democracy are that while a pluralist conception of industrial relations can indeed provide highly relevant insights on some aspects of industrial relations - as with the distinction between unitary and conflict based approaches to 'industrial democracy/participation' - its penetration is shallow. It remains committed to the status quo, if necessary at the expense of modification of previous principles under pressure. The commitment is a feature of the unwillingness, for various possible reasons (few of them complimentary in terms of academic integrity or objectivity), to consider critically the system itself.

The 'problems' to be solved - industrial unrest, inflation and the like - remain those of the employing class, for all the bold talk of industrial 'democracy' for their employees; all that is accepted and championed is a more pragmatic way of preservation than that hell bent on enforcing the employer's interests as the only valid ones.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The first draft of this chapter considered a number of other writers who have sought to announce some analytical framework within which to classify participation schemes.<sup>16</sup> The selection of Walker, Pateman and Dahrendorf was made because each represents a major tendency in the literature, as well as being prominent examples of those tendencies. Walker provides the supreme version of systems theory as applied to participation. His pigeonholing exercise, and its implicit political economy (of which more in a moment) is characteristic of much of the literature - hence the title of this chapter. Dahrendorf also provides a classification, but his analysis is derived from the institutionalist approach and seeks to elaborate the basis of consensus and conflict-based schemes, with approval confined to the latter. Pateman we have already encountered as a protagonist of the participatory theorists and her categories seek to develop an analysis to fit this theme.<sup>17</sup>

The three approaches in the light of analysis in Part One and here are unanimously found to be pluralist in outlook, though Walker in particular purports to

embrace all perspectives, and along with Pateman, both capitalist and socialist societies. This last point formed the basis of one of the criticisms directed at a major proportion of attempts to provide a framework of analysis: the use of a continuum which rides roughshod over other social factors and so over the political economy of differing modes of production.

The three analyses examined earlier also represent some of the more coherent approaches within orthodox paradigms. Simple lists of types of participation schemes, with little sign of analytical categorization are more common.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, despite the sarcastic hint in the title, I have no objection to the use of heuristic categories provided that they neither masquerade as theory, nor embody premisses which play a major part in their formulation but which remain unacknowledged or are even denied. I shall employ certain of the categories introduced by Pateman, for instance, and that between conflict and consensus-based representative systems suggested by Dahrendorf (though in a rather different form) in Chapter 5 below.

Nonetheless, taken as a whole, approaches such as these three reveal a number of ways in which such analytical frameworks fall short of requirements for an adequate theory of participation put forward in the introduction to this thesis. Let us restate the prerequisites briefly:

- (1) A clear theoretical grounding for any attempt to explain participation. Assumptions concerning the nature of social relationships are embedded in any

explanation, and must therefore be made explicit, and elaborated as necessary to clarify the basis of analysis.

(2) An explanation of participation consistent with its operation in the real world, rather than a lapse into prescription where reality does not fit.

(3) The ability to account for the existence of competing versions (including one's own), and for the dominance of certain accounts.

(4) A set of heuristic categories which derive from the theoretical framework, or whose role is related clearly to that framework. Categories do not themselves constitute a theory; they rely on postulates which must be clarified as (1) above argues.

On the second stipulation above, Parts 4 & 5 of this thesis will seek to provide an empirical account and explanation of participation schemes which will, at the same time, show the inadequacy of orthodox analyses such as those discussed in this chapter. As for the third, the problems of Pateman in accounting for modern democratic theory were noted in Part One, and it will be apparent that Walker offers no contribution in the direction of explaining the various perspectives he purports to summarize. Dahrendorf's analysis, which forms part of a wider study of class theories, and which argues for the emergence of a post-capitalist society, is a little more satisfactory in this respect at least (and far more so than Clegg, Derber, Flanders and other institutionalist writers). The substance of his account will not be scrutinised further here, but analyses of power (Ch6) and criticism of the idea of a qualitative shift to post-capitalism (in Ch9) have

a direct bearing on the problems of Dahrendorf's analysis.

The major issues raised in this chapter focus upon the first and fourth requirements. Internal inconsistencies and conceptual woolliness of the accounts have been mapped, and these are important, but they are secondary to the implications of the content of the underlying analysis. To pull together the arguments from this and earlier chapters:

(a) The analysis of participation is consistently presented as the construction of categories per se, as if from thin air or the raw imaginative power of the brain. This is true of almost all the literature on participation, as it was shown to be true with Walker. Pateman and Dahrendorf, in many ways the most sophisticated contributors of their genre, do offer at least some broader basis for their arguments, though their weaknesses have already been extensively discussed. A fuller literature survey would, however, reveal the far more common phenomenon of 'analysis' by arbitrary classification alone.

(b) It follows from the above that the dominant method is to present an account of participation which fails to provide any theoretical infrastructure. Repeatedly issues are raised which it becomes apparent can only be resolved by reference to a wider account of the social environment within which the particular phenomena under investigation exist, and of which they form a part. Issues such as power, ideology, social class (or the absence/modification of it) impinge on the subject matter throughout, yet are almost entirely ignored. (Dahrendorf, it should be again acknowledged, is partially exempted here - but again he is an exception). The resort to unjustified

definition and ungrounded categorization are features of this deficiency.

(c) However, no account can escape theory by failing to recognise it. In order to create any classification, certain assumptions are inescapably built into the analysis, whether consciously so or not. The problem then becomes to disentangle or deduce the implicit theory of management-labour relations, and of social relations more generally, from the presented analysis. When this is done, the result is almost without exception either a managerial or functionalist, unitary view of social relations, or a pluralist variant. In the case of Likert, McGregor, French et al (all discussed by Pateman) the unitary perspective dominates as it does in the vast number of other managerial writings. In the three examples scrutinised in this chapter, however, as in most reputable efforts in the industrial relations/sociology of participation literature, the perspective is pluralist. Conflicts are recognized, but either participation can transcend them or it can be confined to issues which escape them or else it must be confined to a conflictive basis.<sup>19</sup> Class in a Marxist sense is not discussed, but implicitly the picture is of a plurality of interests which do not have a fundamental theme based around the production relationship as in Marx, but have a large variety of social bases.

This pluralist input has been identified in both Walker and Pateman's discussions already; it needs no analytical safari to discover it in Dahrendorf. It has been seen that it embodies certain features such as reformism, and a more general critical review of this approach will begin Chapter 5 as a prelude to the

construction of an alternative analysis there. To anticipate, pluralism serves to legitimate the existing social order as requiring only some modifications to maximise the possible achievement of democracy. Despite its pretensions, in some (particularly institutionalist) variants, to be quintessentially pragmatic, it is in fact an ideological account. As such it cannot, of course, offer a fully satisfactory analysis of worker participation schemes or of any other aspect of industrial relations.

Before closing this chapter, however, it will be useful to examine one outgrowth of pluralism which claims most grandly the status of a 'theory' of industrial relations, and which, it has been noted, is particularly influential in the prevalent approach to analysing participation - the Walker / Globerson variant. This is the 'systems' analysis of industrial relations advanced by J.T. Dunlop. Indeed, Dunlop's influence extends well beyond the extreme cases of 'little boxes' analysis, as I have termed it, and his approach is widely accepted as a neutral and unexceptionable technique, as is reflected in the general nonchalance with which an arbitrary classification is presented as theory. In varying degrees, then, Dunlop's analysis and especially the epistemology he represents, is directly relevant to our dissection of the academic literature on participation. As such, a chance to clarify and extend the arguments of this chapter is afforded by an examination of the problems of his approach.

Dunlop's analysis is too well-known to merit more than the most summary exegesis here.<sup>20</sup> He argues that industrial relations constitutes a system per se,

and is a discrete sub-system of society as a whole. He then seeks to analyse the relationship between different 'parts' of the system, in particular between the three main sets of actors representing workers, management and government.

Dunlop sees the chief output of these interactions as the production of a set of rules which govern and stabilise the relationships between the different interests. These rules form the basis of a common value system for the industrial relations sphere, which should reflect the central value system that is asserted to exist for society as a whole. Subsequently, Dunlop seeks to classify types of industrial relations systems, each with characteristic patterns of relations between the groups of actors. His analysis at this point takes on the 'little boxes' look and the kinship with certain discussions of participation becomes plain. There are, however, a number of criticisms which have been directed at Dunlop's 'theory' in recent years, and which apply with equal force to these derivative contributions.

A. It is questionable whether Dunlop has really provided adequate grounds for regarding industrial relations per se as a system at all, except in the loosest meaning of the term (as a set of factors interrelated in some way) in which case the significance is minimal and the statement trivial. One possible response to this is to demolish the notion that industrial relations exhibits systemic features in the manner suggested by Dunlop, or at least that one can presume a priori the applicability of such an analysis.<sup>21</sup> Alternatively it may be argued that 'industrial relations' is anyway an

artificial and unjustified abstraction from the broader notion of 'economic' or production relations, provided that the latter are shown to exhibit structural, systemic features.

B. It may be argued further that the particular form which a systems account takes in Dunlop's work is not merely inadequately founded and justified, but that it exhibits distinctive distortions that amount to the infiltration of ideological rather than analytical precepts. In this instance I use the term 'ideological' to refer to a false representation of the real world with the further implication that this deformation serves certain interests. In general it has been argued that, despite the acknowledgement of at least some conflicts in his model, Dunlop has absorbed from the work of Parsons (whose influence on his work is made explicit early on, c.f. 1958:5) a dominating concern with the maintenance of order and fundamental consensus.<sup>22</sup> It is more specifically argued that by focussing on 'rules' and institutions as the system's components and output, crucial factors which would force a radical change in the analysis are excluded, such as class relations and conflict, and property relations (on the latter see Banks, 1974:14-18). As a result of this inherent orientation, Dunlop's analysis is seen as a legitimation of the status quo and so of those who benefit most from it, partly through direct justification of certain roles and functions, partly through that which is concealed and omitted, and partly through a reification of the system itself. In the last case, Dunlop presents power, ideology and goals as variables which are not traced to certain groups and so interests, but which are treated as attributes of the system.

Thus, for instance, the rationality of any act (withdrawal of labour, creating redundancies etc) comes to be judged by its effect on these 'system' goals, so that any action designated as counter to the interests of 'system' stability and goal attainment can be labelled as irrational and irresponsible. Dunlop's appears as a managerial pluralism, then, for it pays lip-service to conflict but paramount attention to integration.

C. There is considerable doubt as to whether Dunlop's account qualifies as theory. In criticising the excessive empiricism of the study of industrial relations, Dunlop cites approvingly Huxley's caustic reference to "Mountains of facts...piled up on the plains of human ignorance" (in 1958:vi). But as we found in the first criticism of Dunlop we noted ((A) above) it is far from clear that Dunlop has established satisfactorily that there is such a thing as an 'industrial relations system'. It can be convincingly argued that his constituent concepts are no more than the products of assertion masquerading as analysis. Thus Dunlop's 'theory' may have started as an heuristic exercise which took on a life of its own, in that the a priori categories he employs shape reality to their own requirements, reproducing the social portrait from which they sprang. The facts have now been sorted into neat but arbitrary piles. In their review, Wood et al (1975:292-293) recall Parsons' description of four stages of theoretical development: at the lowest level, ad hoc classificatory systems; then categorical systems (more internally consistent and related to the real world); theoretical systems (specification of laws or empirical generalisations); and empirical-theoretical systems (prediction

possible). Wood et al place Dunlop on the second level, and suggest that its supporters would see it as having attained the third level. But one cannot help but feel not only that there are strong elements of the most elementary stage (neat irony though it may be to undermine Dunlop with the help of Parsons), but that the notion of progression from stage to stage implied by Parsons' account and Wood et al's own efforts is spurious, since the arbitrary and value-biased categories initially used colour the entire future developmental process, particularly since the process of theory building is based at such an abstracted level. However, such an elevated debate on the nature of method is beyond the scope of this project, and for the sake of brevity it is necessary to proceed at a more mundane level.<sup>23</sup>

It is the combination of these various criticisms which exerts the most destructive influence on Dunlop's formulations, and so by implication on the approaches discussed in this chapter to the subject of participation. Parsons himself provides a far more specific delineation of the deterministic relations between different parts of society, but his functionalist method thereby makes all the more explicit the features of systems analysis vulnerable to criticism (B). This set of unjustifiable premisses had to be dragged out of the far cruder and more elementary classifications with which I have dealt. In the following comment, however, Ryan seems to speak volumes for the enterprise of Dunlop and his counterparts of particular concern to this thesis when, in speaking of parallel classificatory efforts in the field of political science, he notes:

There has recently been something of a proliferation of 'conceptual frameworks' ...offered by writers who hope to provide not theories about political behaviour, but an agreed terminology within which these theories can be constructed...But when we are offered a 'conceptual framework' ...avowedly the framework is a pre-theoretical product...But in most sciences, and in the social sciences until now, conceptual schemes - which is another way of saying classificatory schemes - have always arrived only in the wake of, and as aids to, genuine theoretical advance...no-one reading Aristotle, Montesquieu or Marx could possibly believe that their 'conceptual framework' would have been produced other than in the process of their producing theories of politics. There is thus a strong case for supposing that conceptual frameworks are either theories whose authors are afraid to assert them like men, or else a wasted labour...(Ryan,1970:96-97).

In short, Dunlop and our participation classifiers are purporting to build a theory, but in so doing they are merely feeding in assumptions which can only recreate the ideological account from which they sprang in its own image. To claim otherwise is, as Ryan puts it, already to expose " a lack of attention to plausible causal sequences" (1970:97).

Where the field of debate is largely ruled by unitary or pluralist pre-suppositions, therefore, it is the aim of this thesis to present an alternative based openly on Marxist precepts, and in the process to offer a critique of competing accounts. To do this their basis had first to be made clear. In Chapter 5 a more direct criticism of unitary and pluralist approaches can proceed, together with an elaboration of a Marxist theory of participation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: NOTES

1. The first draft of this chapter was far longer and discussed a number of other typologies, including those of Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970; Child, 1969a; Fox, 1973a; Shuchman, 1957; Asplund, 1972 and Globerson, 1970. The arguments developed below apply with only minor variations to each of these, however, and key points will be indicated in this text. Even this list does not, however, indicate the sheer number of such approaches to the subject.
2. See e.g. the work of Tabb & Goldfarb, or Globerson for similar attachment.
3. See also his 1970, 1972 for development of some of the ideas presented more briefly in 1974. Walker's influential 1970a discussion has been adopted by Clarke, Fatchett & Roberts, 1972 and the CIR, 1974 amongst others.
4. Chapter 10 discusses this phenomenon of the myth about the 'success' of participation. For other examples see e.g. L.K. Taylor, 1972; Maher (ed). 1971; Social Policy Research Ltd., 1974; Sawtell, 1968; Thomason, 1971; Butterriss, 1971; Scottish Council for Development and Industry, 1976, 1978.
5. Chapters 12 & 13 below explore this distinction empirically.
6. See e.g. Hyman & Fryer, 1975:189-91; Gottschalk, 1973; Walton & McKersie, 1965; Batstone et al, 1977; Poole, 1974; Dalton, 1962.
7. See e.g. Globerson, 1970; Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a; Shuchman, 1957.
8. See e.g. Turner, 1968; Parker, 1973; Hill & Thurley, 1974; Hyman, 1975.
9. See Corrigan, Ramsay, Sayer, 1978; Ramsay, 1977a for relevant discussions including direct reference to the Yugoslav case.
10. McGregor, 1960; Sawtell, 1968; Lammers, 1967.
11. Chapter 6 below examines the inadequacy and effect on analysis of this conception of power.
12. 1970:68-69, following Verba, 1961:220-221.

13. This interpretation is based on personal correspondence with the author, in particular her response to my earliest formulation in terms of manipulation (Ramsay, 1972). She commented that even this conception (which was itself inadequate in its lack of a structural appreciation of power) she had not considered, intending to refer only to situations where a leadership style aimed at imparting a feeling of participation was thought to be all that could be achieved.
14. For some specific criticisms of this see Coates & Topham, 1972:192n.
15. Denitch, 1973 observes perceptively that many Western liberal commentators have sought to abstract self-management as an institution from the reality which sustains its existence. We saw this in a particularly pernicious form in Walker's continuum, but other examples include Wachtel, 1973; Yaroslav Vanek, 1970, 1971, 1975a; Jan Vanek, 1972; Warner, 1975.
16. See fn.1 to this chapter.
17. An alternative would have been to examine Blumberg's typology, drawn largely from Shuchman, 1957. Shuchman's approach has also been echoed by Asplund, 1972 and Poole, 1975.
18. To give only a few examples, see MacBeath, 1975; Gordon-Brown, 1972; Glover, 1974; Eldridge, 1973; Miller & Form, 1964, Schregle, 1970, 1976; Warner, 1976. The list could, if I searched my files thoroughly, fill a page.
19. Examples of this institutionalist view, other than those directly discussed above, include Daniel & McIntosh, 1972; McCarthey & Ellis, 1973; Alexander, 1975; Ross, 1969; Fogarty, 1975.
20. See his 1958; Kerr, Dunlop et al, 1960.
21. Blain & Gennard, 1970 are amongst those who criticise Dunlop's failure to specify the notion of 'system' clearly.
22. See e.g. Bain & Clegg, 1974; Fatchett & Whittingham, 1976:53; Hyman, 1972; Hyman & Fryer, 1975; Hill & Thurley, 1974.
23. For a fuller discussion of methodological issues, and an analysis of the problems of positivism (to which approach Parsons is seen as adhering) see especially Keat & Urry, 1975.

## CHAPTER FIVE: TOWARDS A THEORY OF WORKER PARTICIPATION

Consider the new Industry Bill and the emotive phrases used by some public figures like 'no hierarchy', 'participation', 'industrial democracy', and so on. The underlying intention appears to be destructive - literally - of industrial society, since it constitutes, in effect, an attack on the management system. (Sir Arnold Weinstock, chief executive of G.E.C., in an interview for the Business Observer, 2.3.75).

I think participation means the involvement of every worker in his own job to the fullest possible extent, in the affairs of the business in which he works, in the affairs of the community of which that business forms a part. It's a synthesis really of the realisation of the personality of the worker, and the objectives of the concern for which he works...

...I think participation is necessary to reach a stage of optimum efficiency in the company...(Sir Arnold Weinstock, interviewed on the Open University Programme Who's Going to Manage? BBC2, 22.8.76).

Worker participation does not give workers any controlling say...It gives the men a false sense that they have some sort of control. In fact, it is a con-trick to say workers are participating. (Ken Ternent, a branch secretary of TASS on Tyneside, Evening Chronicle, 3.2.75).

It is time to return to some of the points raised about conflicting conceptions of participation in Chapter 3. This time, a consideration of the insights - and limitations - of Alan Fox's typology of industrial frames of reference will afford a useful starting point. It inaugurates a discussion of the grounds on which 'unitary' and 'pluralist' accounts of industrial reality, which underlie most official and influential

statements on participation, must be subjected to searching criticism. The fleshing out of these criticisms both vindicates the need for and forms part of the task of a Marxist analysis of the phenomena under investigation.

For Fox, the 'Unitary' perspective<sup>1</sup> envisages the firm as a system in which all actors have a common purpose. It follows therein that all should seek to fulfil that purpose by common effort. Particularly prominent in the evocation of this view is the analogy between the firm and its actors and 'the team', accompanied by the alternative metaphor of the family (Fox, 1966a:2-3). Anyone attempting to introduce an element of disunity into this environment of harmony and trust must be an illegitimate, disruptive malcontent, seeking to create an illusion among some members of the firm ('subordinates') that there are two sides. In short, the unitary view is premised upon a complete unity of management and worker interests.

According to Fox, the 'Pluralist' model<sup>2</sup> sees the enterprise as a coalition of "related but separate interests which must be maintained in equilibrium".<sup>3</sup> Conflict is inevitable, and must therefore be faced and 'managed',<sup>4</sup> to achieve the lowest common denominator of objectives, keeping the organization in existence. This sets a limit to the scope and intensity of conflict, tending to constrain its manifestation within certain rules of conduct, whether written or not. Pluralism postulates further a balance of power between different interests (which are seen as multiple and cross-cutting) to the extent that no one interest can be tyrannically dominant.

It is Fox's contention that both of these perspectives are ideologies of management which represent the powerful interests of capital. These ideologies serve legitimatory functions for the powerful, justifying their existence and activities both to themselves and to those from whose subordination they benefit.<sup>5</sup> This argument is supported through the presentation of a third alternative, the 'radical' perspective.<sup>6</sup> This view takes its departure from the fact that those who must sell their labour and have no other resource can only be in conflict with and at a disadvantage to those who hire them, and who own and control the means of production. This immediate disadvantage is reinforced by the social conditioning undergone by those who must offer themselves on the labour market, this leading them broadly to accept the basic status quo which supports the interests of their exploiters. Thus Fox seems to indicate the existence of an essentially dichotomous division (as opposed to pluralist ones) between labour and capital, the objective nature of which is profound rather than marginal as with the grapplings countenanced within the pluralist framework. In this respect Fox has clearly drawn heavily on the Marxist account, though rarely explicitly and with certain possibly crucial reservations that will be discussed later.

Let us return firstly to the unitary account of industrial reality. Fox's argument about the influence of such a perspective is well-founded, since it has formed the platform for most management pronouncements. Indeed, one reservation to be stated here is that ideas have not really moved so far from this position today, as will be apparent from the discussion of what Fox would call managerial pluralism as it relates to

participation in Chapter 3 above. Indeed it is the phenomenon of participation as idea and in practice which affords one of the insights into this feature of management ideology, and the depth of its influence. The idea of a firm as a unified whole, with members identified by the role they play within 'the organization',<sup>7</sup> is encountered repeatedly in management texts not only from the days of Taylor or Elton Mayo, but also in modern 'standards'. Thus as we saw earlier, neo-human relations theorists such as Likert, McGregor, Herzberg or Argyris all embrace a unitary account of the enterprise explicitly or implicitly. Although for purposes of time and space it is intended to concentrate on British formulations of the need for participation, whereas the main application of these other theorists has been in the American context at the level of the individual and his job, it would be disingenuous to fail to recognize the influence these neo-human relations ideas have had, not least through their prevalence in the courses of British business schools.

Briefly, the neo-human relations writers have paid increasing attention to 'participation' in place of the overriding concern with communication and a paternalistic supervisory style found in classic human relations. The justification is phrased in terms of an employee's need for 'self-actualization', which is seen as being a higher-level need (on the Maslow scale)<sup>8</sup> than the social ones which the classic human relations writers sought to serve. Thus more emphasis is put on creating the conditions for self-actualization, in particular, through a 'democratic' (i.e. consultative) supervisory style and various forms of job restructuring to increase personal responsibility (job enrichment). In the view of these writers it is the frustration of individual

potential which is the root of conflict, both of an individual and collective nature. The organization can be realigned to obviate this, so raising commitment and productivity of the employee and uniting his interests with those of his employer. Thus not only are inequalities of wealth and power seen as irrelevant, as with Clegg, but in sharp contrast so too are trade unions.

Worker participation in this perspective is used above all in its sense of 'involvement'. Insofar as decision-making is raised as an issue at all, it is not a matter of giving the employee greater power to pursue his own ends vis-a-vis those of the employer, but of manoeuvring her or him into a position of wishing to contribute to strategies for the company's future prosperity. In one or another form, the same observation applies to other variations on the unitary theme.

In a recent editorial, The Times newspaper seems to echo the ideology of its readership (to judge by the typical letter to the paper on the subject of worker participation) when it expresses its view of the subject as follows:

There is a double case for industrial democracy. It is apparent that Britain has suffered from very poor industrial relations caused partly by the failure of industrial management to retain the full loyalty of their employees...there is sometimes no concern at all for the employer's interest, that is to say, for the interest of the business as a whole...The purpose of industrial democracy is to reintegrate the workers in a business and to put the trade unions on the side of efficiency and profitability rather than in opposition to efficiency and profitability. (Times, 7.8.75).

The unitary perspective, to be put into practice satisfactorily for the employer, requires sufficient strength to ignore the challenge to authority (i.e. to the legitimacy of managerial power). The pluralist view is far more accommodating to the fact of interest conflicts. Where a principled pursuit of unitarism could only entail the immovable opposition to unionism, pluralism on the contrary accords such organization an extensive measure of legitimacy, provided it sticks to rules which define the system itself (i.e. is 'responsible'). As such, industrial relations are made possible, in the sense of interaction in more than a purely antagonistic way, by pluralism. Its attractions lie in its appearance as "an altogether more realistic and sophisticated frame of reference than the unitary" (Fox, 1973:205). This appearance extends to the practical possibility of conducting an ordered bargaining relationship within its terms.

The pluralist approach seems well represented by the following letter from an academic in response to the above-quoted editorial from the Times:

One of the main reasons for scepticism about some forms of industrial democracy, among trade unionists and others, is that it will lead to trade unionists or other representatives possessing responsibility without power. This scepticism is well founded if your editorial view that the interests of employers and the firm as a whole are identical is widely shared ... Fortunately, I doubt whether many industrial relations managers - as opposed to directors - perhaps - would be so foolish as to make such an overt declaration.

If managers approach industrial democracy in the frame of mind indicated by your editorial, industrial democracy will be at best irrelevant, at worst a disaster... The successful development of industrial democracy - or, indeed, the achievement of any industrial harmony, is only

possible if managers and others recognize that the interests of all 'stake-holders' in the firm (workers as well as shareholders) are equally legitimate...One way of catering for this plurality of interests...is by some form of industrial democracy. (R. Martin, Times 12.8.75).

Note particularly here the notion of "equal" legitimacy for workers and others, fitting the 'balance' concept which Fox observed cropping up in pluralist accounts. Incidentally, the reference to the difference between directors and practising managers is probably valid (c.f. BSC results cited Ch3 above), whilst the reference not to managerial rejection itself so much as overt rejection, however it was meant, also ties up with the managerial pluralism described in Chapter 3 and referred to again below.

Indeed it is the findings of Chapters 1-3 which make one wary about Fox's all too easy use of this monolithic notion of 'pluralism'. I have found it useful to use the term to describe a perspective which seems to acknowledge interest differences, but is distinguished from Marxist and other accounts yielding transformatory demands by its continued concern with maintaining the basis of the existing system. Nonetheless, it is necessary, as we have seen, to recognize important differences within the ranks of pluralists, not only at the level of philosophical dispute, but far more importantly in the conceptions of industrial actors themselves. Fox does acknowledge that he has attempted to distil elements from many individual variants (1973: 192;1974:260), but this disclaimer does not excuse the way he proceeds to ignore the very practical implications of those 'variants' for his discussion. A discussion of ruling and working-class ideologies, starting from

several valuable recent contributions, brings out some of the most important features of industrial relationships in general, and of attitudes to participation in particular, which Fox largely overlooks<sup>9</sup> (see Part 3 below for a brief discussion of this material).

Thus when Fox becomes critical of pluralism in his more recent work, this has the paradoxical effect of demeaning many aspects of working class organization, in particular trade unionism, through a treatment of its conceptions and concomitant demands as merely reflecting a more subtle and successful management image.

Let us look again at managerial pluralism- this time considering Fox's quotation from a Director-General of the Engineering Employers' Federation adduced to exemplify this perspective:

Today there is a recognition of mutual interests ...Both sides recognise the paramount need to keep industry prosperous and the need to co-operate on many issues...employers accept responsibility to shareholders, to the enterprise itself, to the employees, to the customers of the enterprise and to the public and the State...important though a man's job may be, it is perhaps of even greater importance that he should work as a reasonably contented member of a team... (Jukes, quoted in Fox, 1974:259).

Fox claims that these views were almost unconnected with the unitary, human relations philosophy (1974:258n), yet one can find statements echoing this choice of Fox's throughout the speeches of prominent guests and members of the Industrial Co-partnership Association,<sup>10</sup> picked out by Fox in 1966 as the epitome of the unitary view. Moreover, a glance at the quoted passages suggests, prima facie, strong elements of a unitary philosophy

amidst the tepid acknowledgement of various interests. Not only is the 'team' notion present, but so too is that key reification, "the enterprise itself...". Elsewhere Fox has described a concept of 'rationality' tied to the unitary account, defining management's overriding task as the insurance of profits (1973:186). Management are themselves 'appointed' as the arbiters of rationality, and in consequence if the 'enterprise itself' is felt to be at risk from labour, the latter's organizations quickly lose their legitimacy in management's eyes. If in fact this view of rationality is inherent in capitalist managerialism - and Fox's own implicit understanding of the purpose of the pluralist adjustment suggests along with much other work<sup>11</sup> that it is - then it becomes essential to recognize the powerful strands of underlying unitarism in management's pluralism. This is not to deny the significance of pluralism as a preparedness to live with trade unions and so at least in part to legitimate their existence, with all the attendant industrial relations implications of this, several of which are recognized by Fox in his praise for the perspective (1966a). As a pragmatic adjustment for the sake of the stability of the overall profit-generating system it remains highly significant. Yet it is rarely a straightforwardly approving acceptance of labour's rights which is involved. Paternalism or authoritarianism may be displaced, but is questionable that they would not rapidly return, presented subtly as after all the 'true' meaning of any universal principles management might have openly embraced in the interim, if for some reason the threat from labour were to diminish.<sup>12</sup> The tension between unitary and pluralist beliefs helps greatly in making sense of the actual operation of participation schemes in Great Britain and other countries. Thus these schemes will be shown to be a managerial

compromise and at the same time an attempt to achieve a renewed measure of control (see Ch9). In the quotation used by Fox from Jukes, therefore, it is informative if unsurprising to find reference to the need for communication and consultation in order to remove suspicion.

Fox, in 1966, offered an insightful observation concerning those who felt compelled to pay lip-service to the acceptance of differing interests without ever really shaking off the basic belief in common goals and the unitary view generally which seems to apply neatly to what has been called management pluralism here:

The fact that trade unionism and the whole panoply of shop stewards and disputes procedures are widely accepted by management might be taken as evidence of realistic behaviour, whatever the nature of ideas... but such activities have been virtually forced on managements by a combination of full employment and changing social values ...And where behaviour is in conflict with ideology, we must sometimes expect irrational responses which are otherwise difficult to explain...(1966a:6).

But this description is not an exhaustive picture of managerial pluralism. Research for the Donovan Commission and since<sup>13</sup> reveals that managers appear to look favourably upon their dealings with shop stewards as a way of doing things. This does not mean that their perception of 'benefits' is either informed by a fully-fledged version of what Fox describes as pluralism, nor even that their interpretation of the situation is the same as that of shop stewards themselves. The only reliable test of management support for union representation would be whether they supported it in circumstances where they could ignore or destroy it.

The criticisms of pluralism itself, by Fox and others, might be taken to suggest that in any case the elements of common interests ideology contained therein render it little more than a tolerant, flexible variant on the unitary view. Before pursuing this point however, let us examine more closely the nature of trade union pluralism. At this point we are operating with unwieldy generalisations to some extent - 'the' union view being a tenuous entity - but I believe it can be broadly stated, from evidence such as that presented in Chapter 3 above, that despite some superficial similarities, the attitudes of those who are generally depicted as speaking for labour are distinct from the management versions with which we have been concerned. Fox is able to pick his quotation to establish the undoubted similarity, the legitimisation of the managerial role, but he ignores the verbal and practical evidence (strikes, threats, etc) that requires at the least a significant modification of his account.

Thus Fox selects a passage from the statement of the TUC to the Donovan Commission which seems to support his case:

Many decisions, if presented in the right way ... might well be acceptable which at present are unacceptable and therefore the subject of conflict. Accordingly, management has an interest in involving employees in day-to-day decisions as the means of removing this factor of unacceptability. (quoted Fox, 1974:260).

Indeed this does echo many management statements - but other and more recent union demands, e.g. for union control of all representative schemes, have encountered virulent management resistance, not least from employers expressing otherwise pluralist sentiments. Again, reference to Chapter 3 should clarify this gap, as would a consideration of other

countries (e.g. Sweden).<sup>14</sup> The union view may at times be criticised as naive and likely to play into the hands of the capitalist, but this is quite different from treating it as a subset of management opinions. Far more sense is promised by considering the union and general working class attitude to such issues as participation as a patchwork of accommodation to their contradictory role within capitalism.

#### PLURALISM: THE END OF IDEOLOGY AS IDEOLOGY

The picture of pluralism as a form of political support for a particular structure of privilege, rather than the apolitical transcendence of social cleavage it claims to be, has been voiced already at several points. Fox himself echoes the infamous Flanders claim that management can only regain control by sharing it<sup>15</sup> when he argues that management have failed to adapt to the shift in power relations since 1945:

They can only regain control by recognising the reality of work-group power, by coming to terms with it, and by containing it within the limits of negotiated regulation. To pretend that it does not exist, or to suppose that coming to terms with it is somehow immoral, is to allow it to grow unchecked. (1968:58).

It is not difficult to see worker participation as an attempt to extend this reclamation of control by a still bolder show of seeming to share it. Fox was soon to turn on pluralism from a 'radical' perspective, wherein the pluralist ideology:

...becomes another of the conditioning influences which indoctrinates the victims of an exploitative set of economic and social relations into accepting the system. (1974:274).

The relationship between participation and unitary or pluralist ideologies is extensively examined by Fox in his 1974a. It is perhaps more explicitly still made clear to us by Macbeath when he argues in The Times that 'conflict participation' already exists, and that the key issue has therefore come to be:

...about demand from below for a greater influence on the decisions which affect working lives, and in particular about how to channel this demand into an institutional form which is not damaging.<sup>16</sup>

The unanswered question, of course, is "damaging to whom?"

In an article clearly stimulated by Fox, Goldthorpe shows how pluralism's recognition of conflict fails to constitute a break from the determining purpose of supporting the status quo.<sup>17</sup> Goldthorpe summarises the two approaches to the problems of British industrial relations as the 'Tory' view which sees organised labour as too powerful and irresponsible (c.f. the unitary view) and the 'liberal pluralist' view that the difficulties stem from the inadequacy of existing institutions (1974: 419-420). He points out that both camps share a common definition of what the 'problems' are: strikes (of labour), restrictive practices, and wages (inflation of labour costs). He goes on to pose the question "whose are the problems?" (p426, emphasis in original), and answers "these are, primarily, problems of management."<sup>18</sup>

More broadly:

The increased economic and organizational strength of workers on the shop floor and their readiness to use it to pursue a widening range of demands has surely given rise to problems of order - that is to say, of control - for managements and union bureaucracies alike. (1974:431).

In other words, the liberal pluralist shares the central concern of creating not change but integration and control.

Goldthorpe argues that there is no necessary identity between those with whom control is to be shared, and those to be submitted to control once more. By implication, this suggests that participation may be a means of incorporating the representative whilst pacifying the masses.<sup>19</sup> It is not clear if Goldthorpe wishes to go so far, but he does assert:

It may therefore be persuasively argued that if the liberal programme of reform were to be realised, the most probable outcome would be not an expansion of industrial democracy but rather whether intended or not, the consolidation of managerial capitalism. (1974:440).<sup>20</sup>

It is in this light that we should also consider Fox's explanation of the growing interest in participation as:

...the search for a strategy, to be operated in parallel with collective bargaining, which will, as far as possible, integrate rank and file into a common team effort with the higher levels under management's leadership. (1974a:102-103).

When Dubin, a classic pluralist, comments that "the conditions of worker participation in a business firm are established by management" (1954:49) he means participation only in the sense of being employed by the firm, but his words have an ironic veracity.

It is important to observe, however, that despite their telling onslaughts against ideological orthodoxies, neither Goldthorpe nor Fox offer alternative strategies nor even a proper explanation as to the origins of the ideologies. There is some affinity with the cutting,

critical edge of participatory liberal democratic theorists, but without the idealistic attachment to the participatory cure-all (Fox's adherence to optimism about 'high-trust' situations in his 1974 may mark a change here, though the grounds for his optimism appear to be contradicted by his other recent discussions). Rather their work seems to amount simply to a cry of disillusionment. Both of them examine structural inequalities - Goldthorpe (1969) in his critique of Flanders and Fox, 1969, where the latter attempt to explain disorder in British industrial relations by use of the concept of 'anomie'.<sup>21</sup> But, as with Fox even in his reborn formulations, Goldthorpe trembles on the brink of plunging into a wholesale recognition of class then pulls back. This is perhaps unsurprising in view of his attacks elsewhere on Marxism (e.g. 1972). Thus in 1974 he refers in passing to the "perfunctory and dogmatic" nature of most Marxist commentary, and whilst acknowledging recent "more seriously argued challenges", he prefers to stay "nearer home" and so acknowledges only Fox. As for Fox himself, he acknowledges the importance of Marxism in the critical, radical perspective on capitalism (1974:274) but in effect chooses to ignore the major implications of this for his own discussion. These writers thus remain no more than radical pluralists - they would love to see pluralist democracy at work,<sup>22</sup> but recognise certain features of its bankruptcy.

In reply to criticisms, the pluralist may profess merely a neutral pragmatism, a matter-of-fact recognition of social prerequisites. It is argued that manager/subordinate relations and similar features must exist in all societies, hence it only makes sense to unify one's account and include all ideas for modification of such omnipresent factors. This claim of pragmatism is examined by Eldridge (1975:4).

Eldridge argues that theorising and interpretation of facts is taking place even where the writer is unaware of it - "Language in use is not simply a catalogue of facts" (1975:4). Concepts in everyday use which seem 'pragmatic' may in fact harbour a considerable disparity of interpretation;<sup>23</sup> Eldridge gives as an example 'participative management' (p5). The pragmatist sees his own approach as 'realistic', in contrast to the 'myths' or 'ideologies' of competitors. Yet in fact a slanted aim is involved - that of manufacturing a working consensus based on 'enlightenment' and a middle of the road compromise (pp6-7). Again Eldridge provides an example highly pertinent to the subject-matter of this thesis. He notes Flanders' criticism of 'left' and 'right' views of trade unions, amongst other things for claiming to know the purpose of unions better than the unionists (Flanders, 1968b). Rather than merely recording members' opinions, the seemingly logical alternative, Flanders however recommends amongst other things the acceptance of an incomes policy, arguing that only thus will unions be able to serve their true purpose of participating in job regulation. "So", Eldridge observes:

...the pragmatic solution does not consist in finding out what participants are actually doing and then letting them get on with their problem-solving, it consists of a particular kind of solution within the context of political debate. (1975:6-7).

Eldridge is easily able to tie this pragmatic form of argument to Clarke Kerr's 'end of ideology' arguments, and to Dunlop's systems account (wherein the 'system' can cope through "pragmatic problem-solving" -Dunlop 1973). The ends in the latter are not discussed, but taken for granted as "the maintenance of the system in some

working order" (Eldridge, 1975:8). Eldridge concludes that all such approaches operate "within a functionalist and pluralist framework with a good number of assumptions built in" (ibid). Even rhetoric and myth may be used, in the pragmatic strategy, if it achieves a desired end. Once again Eldridge's example is highly pertinent. It consists of a quotation from Kenneth Walker writing with Yves Delamotte, discussing 'problems' of absenteeism, labour turnover and the like:

To the extent that such problems persist or become more serious, management will continue to be driven to search for solutions, Unless jobs become scarce once more, humanising innovations in work organizations are likely to be among the possible expedients tried. (Delamotte & Walker, 1974:13).

The same, we can add for Eldridge, applies to experiments in 'worker participation' more generally. This is a hallmark of 'pragmatism', particularly for practising management - you drop your concessions unless they yield profit and/or the pressure keeps up. Even one of the arch-pragmatists Daniel, is forced to record Philips' withdrawal from their much-publicised job restructuring scheme under tighter labour-market conditions in the mid-'60s (Daniel & McIntosh, 1972:27-28). Or, from the managing director of Saab-Scania, a firm in the vanguard of work reorganization experiments in Sweden, we hear:

In another ten or twenty years, we won't be able to use the production line in Sweden; though it will still be possible for Swedish firms to set up production lines in Africa.<sup>24</sup>

Interestingly, in scrutinising the orthodoxy of system accounts of industrial relations Hyman & Fryer also link this to the notion of pragmatism. They are, however, more assertive about the pragmatist's role than Eldridge: he

or she accepts a definition of problems which in practice are always management's, never the employee's.<sup>25</sup> Whilst reminiscent of the above-related argument of Goldthorpe, 1974, Hyman & Fryer proceed further and accurately trace the 'problems' back to:

...efficiency...constructive adaptation to change and the 'orderly' reform of industrial relations (1975:165).

This amalgam of unitary and pluralist views, as they interpret it (p163) entails a crucial flaw for the systems approach and pragmatism generally:

Neither approach probes behind its definition of problems and solutions to analyse whose interests are at stake and thus who will gain and who will lose from particular proposals and strategies. (1975:165).

Turning again to the question of worker participation in the light of this discussion, it clearly becomes of utmost important to interrogate all academic or general public statements on the benefits of worker participation with the query 'whose benefits?'. Participation for whom?

#### POWER AND PARTICIPATION

The remainder of this chapter is concerned chiefly with the elaboration of a framework for the analysis of participation based on the Marxist arguments outlined in the introduction and in Chapters 1-3. Where the first three chapters aimed firstly at clarifying the differences between unitary, pluralist and Marxist perspectives, Chapter 4 and the first part of Chapter 5 have sought to identify the inadequacies of the pluralist orthodoxies and their approach to worker participation. Above all, pluralism is blind to classes and class struggle, and so

to the structural context within which participation operates and is shaped. Hence it cannot answer the question to which this thesis has addressed itself.

Before embarking on the main task of this chapter, however, it will be useful to clarify how different perspectives view (explicitly or implicitly) the relationship between participation and the distribution of power. In the words of Allen:

...all industrial relations problems are basically questions of power. Collective bargaining, joint consultation and worker participation have to be seen firstly as power issues (1976:22).

It should be borne in mind, however, that the very conception of power varies from perspective to perspective - an issue to be further explored in Chapter 6.

From the point of view of the unitary approach, worker participation is not concerned with power. Power is something 'functionally' distributed (as authority) to those playing certain roles within the enterprise, but is possessed by the organization itself. In other words, it is not a matter of control over others against their will, but a matter of efficient administration to the benefit of all. Participation is thus about creating a sense of involvement in the employee, to realise in practice the real underlying community of interests of all.

The next group of academics are more difficult to label, but may be referred to as unitary-pluralists (bearing much resemblance in this to the 'progressive' management groups). This approach is typified by a form of analysis to which no close attention has been paid thus far in these pages - one which sees participation as concerned with power

and its distribution, but where both management and employees can gain. The situation is seen as one of a 'positive-sum game', wherein the total amount of control is seen as being increased by participation so that both sides can gain, rather than a zero-sum game in which the accretion to one side of control must be achieved through a corresponding loss for the other. Thus potential conflict is in the same breath recognised and abolished, or at least turned into a side-issue. The chief exponent of this analysis is A.S. Tannenbaum (see especially 1966,1968). He in turn quotes March & Simon to justify his notions (1966:99-100):

'Participative management' can be viewed as a device for permitting management to participate more fully in the making of decisions as well as a means for expanding the influence of lower echelons in the organization. (March & Simon, 1958:54).

It should be noted that this perspective involves a major shift in the notion of power and control, in terms of that which is to be controlled. The positive-sum view sees control in terms of the ability to regulate processes and things rather than people, whilst the zero-sum game approach places stress on the relative power of different groups. The shift to the former, seen in this light, takes on an affinity with the notion of power as a systemic, organizational attribute necessary for 'self'-regulation and control of the environment, and sweeps conflict between interest groups under the carpet rather than actually being able to dismiss it. There is no logical inconsistency between the possibility of increasing total control in Tannenbaum's sense and the continuance of an inherent conflict over the distribution of that control, particularly once supposed control over things and processes is de-reified and reconnected with its relational consequences. I return to this issue below.

The pluralist perspective, as before, is the most fragile to try and parcel. It tends to fissure under close scrutiny into many fragments, so that even attempts to offer internal categorisation are threatened by the insecure texture (internal contradictions) of their accounts. Nonetheless we can identify, as before, two major strands in the pluralist argument. On the one hand, the institutionalists such as Clegg or Dahrendorf, who adhere to a genuine recognition of at least some degree of conflict, see participation as based on principles alien to industrial relations. It attempts to introduce co-operation and common interests in a manner which can in practice only undermine the independence of labour organizations. On the other hand, the participatory theorists envisage a real share in decision-making as an authentic possibility. Thus while the participatory pluralists see worker participation as promising redistribution of power to workers, the institutionalists see any shift as being in the opposite direction, towards management. As our excursions thus far have shown, however, most pluralists who might seem to fit the institutionalist mould do not follow the logic of their position through to suspicion of participation as Clegg does. Indeed, it is not uncommon for such writers to present 'participation' as a fresh step in an evolution to a pluralist post-industrial democracy. A further, less problematic complication is provided when one of these institutionalist writers argues for a negotiation-based extension of 'participation', a proposal commonly found also amongst trade union activists. In this view, power redistribution can be introduced, perhaps by legislation or public support as well as simply greater resources of unions themselves, but only through an extension of collective bargaining depth and coverage. This finds its 'real-world'

counterpart in the G&MWU proposals in response to the Bullock Report.

The radical pluralism of, in particular, Alan Fox, seems in many ways to endorse the arguments of Clegg, but to extend them to cover the incorporation embedded in the everyday activity of trade unions. Here the picture is one of a massive power imbalance favouring the employer class, and expressed not merely through coercion but through the capacity for the manipulation of ideas by the powerful. This engineering of consent is a far more effective way of achieving production than the use of direct force. Fox himself pays considerable attention to the role of 'participation' in this process (1974a), but considers also the way that collective bargaining can operate to the same end.

As has been noted, Fox shares a great deal of ground with the Marxist approach, and many of his specific conclusions re-emerge there. The major difference is the Marxists' placing of this type of discussion within the more structured framework, based more explicitly on an analysis of capitalism and the political economy of the class relations it constitutes. There is still, however, plenty of scope for dispute within the Marxist perspective on the precise configuration of power relations and their articulation with the idea of worker participation. As before, rather than becoming too deeply enmeshed in such a debate at this point, I shall merely outline certain key features of this approach for further development below, though some critical remarks will be required even here.

a) In Mandel's words, "capitalism has time and again proved it is capable of giving...reforms which thus do not upset the system itself" (1969:346 , original emphasis),

and so more specifically "'Participation' means: associating the workers with capital" (1969:356). Within this statement lie several features of a Marxist approach. Capitalism is seen as a flexible, adjustable mode of production, capable of adapting to new pressures. But the reform is always aimed at securing continued expropriation. To this end, it seeks to create a false consciousness in the working class, to make them feel a part of the system, to conceal the reality of their continued exploitation. Similar references to the function (and so, by implication, cause) of participation, or more specifically 'job enrichment', may be found in Mandel, 1975:583 and Hyman, 1973:205. Mandel argues that worker participation may indeed succeed in integrating workers, or at least in tying their loyalties sufficiently to an enterprise so as to dull their class consciousness and limit their vision to short-term gain and to narrowly production-oriented issues. The form of Mandel's Marxism (which it should be noted, is directed in his 1969 against the policies of the major non-Marxist union confederations in Belgium) is weak in a good many directions, two of which require mention here. Firstly, to say that 'capitalism' adapts is not sufficient to explain the processes at work in the introduction of participation. In Weberian terms one might argue that it is not an adequate explanation at the level of meaning, and whilst contemporary structuralist Marxism may disdain such a requirement it is my own feeling that if Marxism is to be done justice a Marxist must not neglect this dimension, nor is there any need or justification (in Marx or more generally) for doing so. Secondly, and paradoxically, a particularly voluntaristic (and pessimistic) understanding of working class consciousness is implied by the suggestion that the mere introduction of participation

schemes is sufficient to inveigle labour away from a true critical awareness. Rather, participation might be seen as one surface feature of all those processes and structures in capitalism which inhibit revolutionary consciousness. Either it will be ineffective, or if effective it will be merely a symbol or immediate device for realising an incorporation of which it is not itself the progenitor.

b) One form of this last analysis is suggested in a stimulating recent discussion by Poole (1975). Although not explicitly Marxist, this text exhibits many features of a Marxist approach. Poole argues against Mandel and other analyses that power and the processes associated with it are the essential causal factors. Participation must be seen as epiphenomenal to these underlying shifts in the balance of power between management and labour:

...it is by the development of their own independent power that workers acquire the right to participation and control. In other words, participation is only likely to occur on any scale when workers' organizations are also at an advanced stage. (1975:36).

The key for Poole is not exercised ('manifest') power but potential - 'latent' - power. This notion will receive further attention in Chapter 6, but it should be noted here that whilst it offers an insight neglected by Mandel and others it is also theoretically inadequate as it stands. Crudely, as Mandel sees participation only as a conscious and potent independent variable, a ruling class device rather than a phenomenon of class relations in a wider sense, so Poole treats power as if it had an existence independent of those relations and the immediate 'strategies' associated with them. At the risk of seeming to wave the mystical Marxist wand, it should be

said that both these approaches neglect dialectics. In this sense it will be found that an element of accuracy in one does not exclude an insight emanating from the other. The same applies to a third point, though more precariously.

c) The third approach relies implicitly on the notion of contradiction - that employer-instigated policies aimed at the incorporation of the worker may have unintended consequences, and (prescriptively) that rather than try to persuade labour organizations to shun any involvement in participation schemes, the correct strategy may be to take advantage of them. It is argued by several prominent members of the Institute for Workers' Control, for instance, that although the dangers of participation should not be forgotten, their ambiguity should be used.<sup>26</sup> Where employers offer a 'share', unions should turn this to a demand for 'control'. To this end Coates (1971b) praises the decisions of the Belgian General Federation of Labour (which actually seems highly tendentious as a real alternative strategy avoiding the threat of participation)<sup>27</sup> to demand areas of control in reply to an offer of a degree of co-determination. In fact, if we explore more carefully the context in which offers of participation arise it becomes apparent that the idea is typically an adaptation by employers of labour demands for control and 'industrial democracy', though certainly not intended to perform the same purpose. In this sense the existence of contradictions within ruling class ideology and practices should not be merely dismissed; but it should be remembered that any utilisation will not be by some fully class conscious group, but by existing working class organizations.

It will be seen that the Marxist analysis offers certain

insights on the relationship between power and participation, but that at the same time there is no easy step to unity even within the perspective. At the same time, I shall attempt rather than being bound by any of the above, to make use of any aid they offer in elaborating a general theoretical apparatus. Thus it will be suggested that participation is essentially a device aimed at incorporation of the worker into capitalism on the one hand; but that at the same time the notion arises in particular socio-historical nexuses in capitalism which inevitably involve the intimidation of the political economy of the bourgeoisie by that of labour in some form. Conflict - which is at root class conflict - is, moreover, incessant. Participation is always bound up with the balance of power, but not in the straightforward way either any of the pluralists, or even Poole, are inclined to suggest. It remains the case, unfortunately, that to date even Marxist accounts have made far too little effort at analysing the phenomenon of participation with the theoretical tools they claim to espouse. The perspective cannot rely on rhetoric for its verification.

#### SOME HEURISTIC CATEGORIES

I have already indicated an intention to make use of the distinction between 'formal' (official, institutional appearance), 'actual' (real, objective - though subject to the difficult subject of power allocation) and 'perceived' participation. A further resource employed is that common distinction of levels at which participation takes place, making use of Pateman's terms referring to 'higher' and 'lower' levels. No absolute significance is attached to this distinction. Its significance must be judged by how far it highlights a meaningful dichotomy

in the attitudes of people at work. Whilst the Marxist approach is amenable to this distinction, it is not an inherent product of that approach, nor obviously unique to it. At the same time the separation does take on a distinctive slant within the Marxist perspective. Higher-level decisions, dealing with whole-organization or at least whole-plant matters require the election of representatives in all but the smallest plants for participation to take place; the participation is not only in management but also always with management in this context. It may be consultation or (formally at least) co-decision which is involved, but the prefix in each case correctly stresses the joint nature of the activity. Very often this will also be true for lower-level (direct, concerned with the immediate job context) participation e.g. where departmental managers or first-line supervisors run discussion groups,<sup>28</sup> or where human relations 'participative management'/'democratic supervision' policies are in operation. The individualistic basis of most job enlargement/job enrichment schemes (particularly in the US) is also of no relevantly distinct nature except that, insofar as it is 'effective' (in terms of the aims set for it by management) it contradicts the interests of labour.

However, a qualitatively different situation exists where work groups organize collectively against management to seize control of certain work practices. Here management and their representatives may be excluded from at least some territory altogether (though the area of autonomy may involve a bargain struck with management, as in most gang-systems).<sup>29</sup> In this sense, such encroachment on management control does contain seeds of socialism,<sup>30</sup> as the IWC suggest in their backing of this as a policy,

though whether it can form the basis eventually of a revolutionary consciousness is another order of question altogether.

It may well prove necessary to discuss intermediate levels at which participation can take place at times, such as the departmental level within a large plant, or to distinguish plant from company level (which becomes of particularly crucial strategic importance in a multinational corporation, for instance). Similarly, the 'supra-enterprise' engagement of labour representatives e.g. on government-organized industry-wide bodies, or even in government committees, should not go without mention. The higher-level dichotomy serves adequately for most general discussions, however. It finds support, as has been seen, in the discussions of Child, Blumberg and Walker; or, with greater empirical impact, the Norwegian research of Holter(1965) and Emery & Thorsrud (1969,1970,1976).

I have already indicated my decision to confine the bulk of the examination within this thesis to representative, higher-level participation schemes, largely because these form the major movement in Britain and (notwithstanding the Swedish and Norwegian workgroup experiments) in Europe as a whole. They also constitute the basis on which judgement must be made as to whether power-sharing in the major decisions which ultimately determine people's working destinies (i.e. participation as some form of industrial democracy) is feasible, whatever the immediacy and interest in job-level factors.

At the same time, it is necessary to note a general criticism of the higher-level approach by observers who claim that no form of representation can create a

feeling of interest and reduce the sense of powerlessness for the average working man. It is thus claimed that only the job-restructuring approach has any practical value in being relevant to the worker. By and large this criticism takes a unitary or pluralist form; it sees the problem arising not from the constraints imposed by capitalism on people's minds and actions (representatives and constituents alike) but in the avowedly universal problems of 'modernity/bureaucracy in 'advanced industrialism'. Thus Blumberg, for instance, refers to schemes such as co-determination in West Germany, or to French and Israeli experiments in higher-level participation (which, it should be remembered he is later to defend against Hugh Clegg), and concludes that there is a "basic failure of all these schemes to change the meaning of work for the worker" (1968:2). Citing Cole in support, he suggests that while it is the big decisions that matter to people in political democracy:

In industry, on the other hand, it is what occurs at the lowest level, on the factory floor, that matters most to the worker. (1968:3).

Blumberg does admit that to attempt only to create participation directly at the level of the job is inadequate, but this fact never really comes to the forefront of the discussion since he continues to talk about industry in general whilst only dealing, at this point, with Western schemes.

Bearing in mind this broad, non-socialist criticism of higher-level schemes, it will be necessary to show that if they fail to attract interest, it is through their genetic political incapacity to make decisions more responsive to worker interests rather than merely thanks to their remoteness from the individual employee.

Notwithstanding this area of debate, however, it will now be clear that there is at least prima facie a sound reason for making use of the higher-lower separation.

Another set of useful classifications is that which follows the German legislation and identifies certain subject areas in which participation may be offered or taken. I shall follow Fox's designation of the content of these areas:<sup>31</sup>

- (a) Personnel matters: wages and salaries; hours of work; hiring and firing; promotions and transfers; holidays and shift arrangements etc.
- (b) Social matters: welfare administration; health and safety regulations; pension fund administration etc.
- (c) Economic matters: (i) technical: methods of work; materials; organizational arrangements; job allocation; division and design; production planning etc.  
 (ii) business: organizational objectives and priorities; markets and sales; investment; rationalization and growth or contraction decisions; distribution and use of profits; mergers etc.

Again we can accord these categories no sanctified status.<sup>32</sup> There is an obvious degree of overlap, for instance, between some of those items described above as 'personnel' matters and others listed under the 'technical' heading. Further, there is likely to be a considerable range of possible degrees of control within any of the items mentioned (e.g. even 'hours of work' can extend from marginal consultation on starting and stopping times through to control of the number of hours, the time of work and so forth).

It will be observed that those areas classified as 'personnel' issues above constitute the issues within which by and large unions have struggled to extend the depth of their coverage. They are the zones where bargaining, and so conflict, has centred (more so, for instance, than social issues where conflict may well still arise, but where it is more likely that negotiation will be over the economic terms surrounding them than the administration itself).

Whilst some negotiation procedures may give a degree of influence (at least formally) over personnel issues beyond just wages or technical questions such as redundancy or job control, this is not to say that further (and direct) control may not be sought on the shop floor. Indeed, informal and unwritten control at this level may be more efficacious in practice than officially negotiated and acknowledged control which has thereby been charted and 'officialized' by management (see Herding, 1972; Hyman, 1974).

As indicated in parenthesis above, although the 'business' decisions may appear the most remote from the shop floor (which, in an important sense, they are) they are ultimately the decisive ones. Any change in the framework of apparent co-operation in these areas will ultimately be determined by negotiation, and so the balance of power of the disputants. This will involve such matters as the funds available for pensions, safety precautions or raising the standards of working conditions. It may not come as a surprise when, after the fact, management ideologists attempt to imply that these concessions are granted as a matter of human rights and company goodwill, but realistic cynicism suggests that if management do take the initiative it is usually from

a conscious desire to gain a strategic advantage (perhaps the most accurate rendering of that deceptive term 'good industrial relations'). The question of working conditions in these situations has become a 'basic' personnel issue once more. The social area is thus one limited almost entirely to the application of agreed rules and allocating predetermined funding. It is thus a relatively trivial operation as far as the workforce is concerned, despite the potential importance of matters such as health and safety to the worker.<sup>33</sup> The circumstances which engender participation schemes not uncommonly serve to reinforce this superficiality, as we shall see, through management attempts to define and delimit discussion to areas of at most minor dissent.

This leads us to a last set of distinctions concerning the relational basis to the participation schemes. The ideal-type opposites come down to unqualified consensus/co-operation/integration at one extreme, and implacable and total opposition at the other. Unfortunately in the real world ideal-types are a severely limited guide, but we do have amidst the various shreds of grey the guidelines provided by our 'unitary' and 'pluralistic' terms, together with the outright opposition implied by a Marxist standpoint. Our concern is with relations taking place within the orthodox capitalist framework rather than revolution and/or the attempt through co-operatives, or any other form of 'worker control', to construct an alternative. This leaves us with the heuristic possibilities - which I think can be readily enough justified as a starting point from the discussion to date - of a co-operative or consensus basis to participation vis-a-vis one based on conflict, even when this latter is the limited conflict of negotiation.<sup>34</sup>

An important further observation must be made here, again following from earlier discussion. These two types of basis for participation, through conflict or through consensus, correspond to the outlooks identified in Chapter 3 as those of the two sides in industry - and thereby to the political economies of labour and capital. Despite the complications introduced by management acknowledgement of at least some need for bargaining and even for trade unions, this correlation of the two divisions largely holds, and particularly so when it comes to examining what is regarded as a 'participation' scheme, as Chapter 3 suggested. Thus management initiatives are almost invariably aimed at integration of the worker; if conflict is acknowledged, then it is common for it to be seen as confined to narrowly defined areas, and for a participation scheme to be envisaged as quite separate from these matters. In practice management take most of the initiatives in setting up schemes. Such labour initiatives as have occurred have been far more inclined to stress the erosion of management prerogatives (not co-operation in their reinforcement) or the need to extend the right for labour's interests, distinct from those of management, to influence the making of decisions.<sup>35</sup> With these categories, it is now possible to develop a typology of participation schemes and to derive therefrom a set of provisional observations for further investigation.

#### A TYPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION

There is always a problem in offering in an apparently didactic and fully fashioned manner some overarching theory on a much-discussed subject. To be sure, the debate on participation appears sadly deficient to date, but nevertheless it would be supreme arrogance (and a

mark of personal futility for the future), to acclaim the account presented below as in some sense complete and final, despite the simultaneous need to express full support for it. Disclaimers made, however, it is my belief that we can utilise the findings and conceptual inquisition presented thus far to good advantage in progressing beyond the debilitated status of the analytical treatment of participation presently dominant in the literature.

For all the sardonic treatment of categorizing procedures in Chapter 4, it is not my intent to deny their importance as a tool of the 'sociological imagination'.<sup>36</sup> To allay suspicion (hopefully), this is not to exonerate those previously pilloried, but to insist that first any such method requires explicit theorisation, and that of course the theory should be directly open to critical examination. In this light I propose to examine participation in the first instance by categorizing schemes according to the level at which they occur; and by the proposed relational basis of the scheme, consensus or conflict. The latter of these might be alternatively rendered as management or worker perspective/initiation, as indicated, with little bending of the typology.<sup>37</sup>

The diagram (overleaf) gives some indication of the forms of 'worker participation' which fit into the various categories. Boxes A and B contain those schemes which are most likely to be found bearing the label 'participation', since it is less usual to find the discussion broadened to include either conventional bargaining or various work group controls. Participation is commonly seen, presently, as a reform added on to existing mechanisms, and not infrequently aims at replacing such practices

FIGURE 5-1

PARTICIPATION: A PARADIGM FOR DISCUSSION

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

HIGHER

LOWER

Consensus/  
co-operation

(Management  
initiated)

A. e.g. joint consultation  
profit-sharing  
co-partnership  
safety/pensions/  
suggestions committees

B. e.g. (i) human relations  
'democratic' supervision  
(ii) neo-human relations  
job-enrichment  
'participative management'  
primary work group  
discussions  
autonomous) ?

Conflict

(Labour  
initiated)

C. e.g. collective bargaining  
sit-ins/work-ins

D. e.g. 'gang' systems  
'restriction of output'  
and work group controls  
'encroachment'

RELATIONAL  
BASIS OF  
PARTICIPATION

in this connection as are considered 'non-functional' to 'the organization'. Thus when we look in later chapters at such schemes as joint consultation it will be found that there is a repeated and pervasive stress on co-operation between management and men as the goal. This also serves as empirical support for the above ad hoc classification of proposals into category A. For the moment, however, the intention is an analytical one: to explore the theoretical significance of the consensus basis of 'participation' proposals in the light of a Marxist perspective on the real nature of relations, and so to explore the logical consequences to be expected given the combination of participative form and those relations.

Category A, then, includes profit-sharing and co-partnership schemes, various committees on what have been termed social issues, joint consultation and related forms of works councils; it also embraces in practice worker director schemes, co-determination (as in the German model), and almost all schemes of this type operating with the official aim of extending worker influence on decision-making. The possible exceptions are those few proposals under the explicit rubric of participation which seek to reinforce the depth and scope of collective bargaining (such as, it appears, the Swedish Co-determination Act which came into force on 1 January, 1977). These fall into box C. Worker-initiated plans for worker directors (such as those of the TUC) may well envisage them as a kind of extension of negotiation, but given the circumstances under which these proposals are formulated, and the attitudes of those in government and/or the firm who are their gatekeepers, they will almost inevitably fail to take this form. Productivity bargaining is located at the margin of conflict and consensus policies

in the diagram because whilst its engine was indeed extended bargaining, in other cases the chief innovation was the introduction of co-operation clauses into agreements, and the establishment of some sort of productivity committee operating on consensus assumptions.

Category B, covers human relations and related approaches which see participation as a means of harnessing the worker's effort and loyalty by increasing his or her attachment to the job and to organizational superiors. Where the existence of worker organization at this level is recognised, it is, as with Mayo, a perception of some 'natural solidarity' in the workgroup which it is management's task to turn to the firm's benefit rather than debit. With both type A and type B policies, the keynote is, to use the term isolated in Chapter 3, the 'involvement' of the worker in the enterprise, and it is in this sense with only an incidental connection to the making of decisions that participation is spoken of.

Category D, contains those many workgroup controls which are, in countless forms, enormously widespread in industry. On occasion these emerge, as in the Durham mines or the Coventry aircraft, bus and automobile factories<sup>38</sup> in the form of quite elaborate systems of control, or 'gangs'. Large and organized areas of job control are also common, and practically traditions, in such industries as shipbuilding, printing and the docks.<sup>39</sup> But equally relevant are many of the practices commonly labelled as 'restrictive' practices<sup>40</sup> (apostrophised because the definition is a relative, managerial one, c.f. Ditton, 1972). Indeed, Crozier's (1963) whole discussion of the way management and groups

of employees struggle for control over 'areas of uncertainty' reflects this feature of power relations and decision-making within organizations.

Autonomous work groups are, like productivity bargaining, placed ambivalently in the diagram. As before, this indicates an ambiguous potential. Sometimes these take the form of gang-type systems similar to those described in the previous paragraph, with a high degree of genuine autonomy. More often perhaps, particularly when officially proclaimed by management, experiments given this label are a technique more akin to an extension of job enrichment than anything else. The limited independence here is often echoed in the modified tag, 'semi-autonomous'. In general, my own reading of the evidence suggests that the effectiveness of these groups as genuine sources of worker power vis-a-vis management depends on whether the initiative in forming the group is management's or the employees', though this is not an absolute rule. It is certainly not impossible, for instance, for management to accept a set of group practices established by employees and to suitably (for them) modify those practices; nor is it totally inconceivable that a management experiment might backfire by creating unified work groups who may oppose management. This possibility of a scheme turning against management's vision seems greater at the lower level, where decisions are most distant and too numerous for management control (though this will clearly vary with the predictability of the production process)<sup>41</sup> whilst for employees they are most immediate and most readily commandeered. The far more potent forces which constrain representatives in higher-level schemes will be discovered as we proceed, overshadowing even the obvious problem of that person's partial

isolation, in their representative capacity, from many of the realities of work. At the same time, to reiterate, it is at the higher level that the crucial decisions are made; management always retain the power at this level to close the factory gates on any lower-level resistance which becomes too irritating or expensive. The paradox of lower-level participation is thus that, from the standpoint of the exertion of power by labour, efforts in category D have been at times notably successful; yet it is the human relations techniques of category B which have been the most blatantly, and for management successfully, manipulative.

#### HIGHER-LEVEL PARTICIPATION: CO-OPERATION AND PSEUDO-DEMOCRACY

It is now time to turn more directly to the schemes currently attracting most attention under the rubric of participation in Britain: the co-operation-oriented, higher-level schemes of category A. In the terms of both unitary and the pluralist visions of modern capitalism, industrial relations is seen as evolving progressively towards its present state over the years. Despite the few dissenters, such as the Clegg of 1960, most pluralists join unabashed unitarists in seeing the current mounting wave of acclamation for worker participation as the latest stage in this progression. This belief (stated baldly here, but to be further examined in Chapters 8 & 9 below) is not so readily compatible with one derived from a Marxist perspective, which sees any change in what management feel forced to concede to employees as contingent upon a shift of the balance of power in favour of labour.

By implication, then, the concessions may be as readily withdrawn, the need for 'humanitarian' policies as quickly forgotten, in a period of decline in labour's potency.

Here we find a direct conflict between the predictions of Marxism and the presumptions of its competitors which it will be possible to investigate and test against hard evidence.

The third quotation of the trio which opens this chapter suggests that worker participation is a 'con-trick'. This has an air of conspiracy theory about it. This does not mean that it is automatically wrong. Nonetheless, it is the contention of this thesis that the conditions for participation delineated by Sir Arnold Weinstock in the previous two quotations are far more significant examples of the treacherous nature of participation for labour. Pateman's notion of 'pseudo-participation', or the preferable alternative of 'pseudo-democracy' (which avoids the confusion of the term 'participation'), becomes relevant at this juncture. 'Pseudo-democracy' is a term proposed by Blau & Scott (1963:186-191), whose discussion is perceptive, but restricted as with Pateman to the directly visible, behavioural level of analysis of activity and power relations governing it. Their definition of democracy is 'self-rule' (1963:186), and they argue from this that merely to enable workers to implement decisions made by management cannot count as democracy. Only the making of the most basic decisions can qualify, and the common alternative amounts to no more than an "effective management technique".<sup>42</sup> In many organizations, they continue, democratic forms are attempted in an effort to appease social values favouring democracy.

Unfortunately, the forms alone are insufficient, and the result is often a kind of pseudo-democracy which easily degenerates into a device for the manipulation of employees. (1963:188)

The pseudo-democratic form appears also in therapy-oriented psychiatry, the authors show, the appearance of consultation with the patient commonly concealing an attempt to interpret and guide the patient's behaviour to the satisfaction of the psychiatrist (1963: 188-191).<sup>43</sup> Blau & Scott's discussion is more coherent and complete than that of Pateman and provides a clear basis for an expansion of the critical examination of 'democratic' forms within the perspective gained by a structural analysis of the power effects.

The reaction of employees to a pseudo-democratic scheme may of course, be acquiescence; Pateman and Blau & Scott deal with only this result. Yet it is questionable how far such a scheme can be expected to escape the realities of industrial conflict which, if not producing revolutionary attitudes, do create a firm and persistent attachment to trade unionism. If the Marxist interpretation is to be vindicated, it seems that either a massively manipulated consciousness would have to be adduced and proved to explain a total success of unitary participation schemes in industry, or it must be expected that participation schemes will not live up, on close examination, to the brochures drawn up for them by academics and by managerial exponents seeking publicity. Since the participation plan based on co-operation alone cannot, in this view, deal with the matters (of conflict) which are of most concern to workers, their response may be a perfectly rational response to this: apathy, disinterest, and a failure to participate on the proffered terms. The management rejoinder, in turn, seems likely to be to experience and represent this as sheer cussedness, or as an immaturity of employees causing an unwillingness to take on responsibility; from the unitary position few other interpretations are available.

To provide an initial illustration of the applicability of this last analysis I shall make use of a description not of a factory, but of a prison. The prison is Coldingley, and the narrator an ex-inmate, Rod Caird (Caird, 1974). Coldingley is a rather special (and specially relevant) gaol, having been established as a 'progressive' experiment. It was, for instance, described by James Callaghan, later British Prime Minister, as "not so much a step as a leap into the future" (quoted in Caird, 1974:123). The aim is rehabilitation, to be achieved through the prisoner's experience of Coldingley Prison Industries Ltd. It is described in the freshly incarcerated individual's introductory booklet as follows:

'Coldingley' is based on the hypothesis that for a certain type of prisoner the most important part of his training is to learn to work in an efficient, well-managed industrial organization, to have to work under supervision and against the clock in achieving economic levels of output and quality, to earn more or less money according to how hard he works and his own abilities will allow and finally, to enjoy the rewards of his own actions. (Quoted Caird, 1974:123-124).

If this sounds repellently like a 'rat in a maze' approach to conditioning the inmate, and if it further echoes disquietingly one's impressions of many education proposals (including 'progressive' ideas for the content of the 'non-academic' school leavers' year), then this should not perhaps on reflection be very surprising. More to our point, though, it says a lot about the typical image held by those in authority of the industrial worker himself.

Needless to say, Her Majesty's Prison, even at experimental Coldingley, would never condone trade unionism within its walls nor any other manifestation of conflict. Nor

could any real power be given to the inmates that could be used against their keepers. Participation of the unitary type is not excluded by the above, however. Having noted the refusal to give the prisoners power, Caird describes just such a system being offered (and I quote at length to convey the irony and strength of the analogy to be drawn):

Nevertheless - or, rather, accordingly - the Works Manager one day called all the prisoners in the machine and sign shops together and announced the formation of a Works Committee, to be elected from the shop floor. He was quick to point out that this would not be a Trade-Union type committee (his exact words were: 'God forbid!'), but would serve the purpose of establishing channels of communication for grievances, complaints and information, in both directions. The Committee duly met every couple of weeks - and any attempt by its prisoner-members (of whom I was one) to consider wages, conditions, overtime or grading was ruled outside its terms of reference. And many of the remaining suggestions which were made by prisoners were passed on by the industrial management either to Head Office or the Governor, only to come back with negative answers, the reasons for which could not be told to us because they concerned the ever-present 'security'. ...Because of the impotence of the Works Committee, it was generally hard to find prisoners who were prepared to sit on it; and this reluctance led the authorities to believe - quite wrongly - that prisoners were uninterested in having a say in how the prison was run. (1974:152)

Should this be insufficient to give a sense of visitation, then a consideration of the following comment on the various residential committees in Coldingley should complete the picture:

The problem with all these committees was that their powers were never properly defined;

in fact it seemed rather as though the decision as to whether an issue came within their terms of reference was made at a higher level after the issue had been raised by the prisoners on the committee. The inevitable result of this vagueness was that prisoners came to regard the committees as useless - because no sooner had they brought up a matter of importance than they were told it was for the Governor, or Head Office, or the Kitchen Manager to make a decision on it, not them. And the corollary of this attitude on the part of the prisoners was that the prison's ideologues (such as the Deputy Governor) thought that the unwilling prisoners were not 'responding' to the responsibilities that were being offered to them; that they were trouble-makers or vegetables. (1974:156-157)

It may be objected that a prison, even Coldingley, is not a fair comparison for a factory in the normal world. Workers are not criminals being subjected to justice and the loss of freedom that entails, and are not so helpless as prisoners must be if punishment or whatever the prison's allotted task is to be carried out. Clearly the fact that unions do exist in the outside world, and wield some power, may lead to a different end-result. Nevertheless, my own reading and experience suggests that the above description rings far truer of many industrial participation schemes than might be realized. I cannot resist the sardonic observation that it is perhaps fitting that the effort to make a prison like a factory only makes it all the plainer how much a factory is like a prison.

In sum, then, pseudo-democracy is a phenomenon not only of blatant manipulation but of any attempt to impose a unitary frame of reference upon industrial relations. Any category A scheme which survives in that form, and is at all efficacious in its own terms, is thus seen here as

pseudo-democratic. It cannot by its nature transfer power to employees (a real transfer as understood here would be a failure in management's unitary terms), and is in fact aimed more or less explicitly at strengthening management's hand. In the words of one who knows not how much he says, attacking the failure of human relations writings to deal with power:

There tends to be an assumption that if you just learn the techniques you can ignore power, or better yet, you can establish a greater power differential between yourself in management and your subordinates. (William F. Whyte, quoted by Gomberg, 1966:138)

This is, in effect, the spectre raised by Clegg and Fox in their different ways, and the detractors of neither have been able to confront and allay these fears. Although the recognition that participation may operate in reverse to its official direction of redistribution is uncommon, it is not unknown. Strauss & Rosenstein accord it some notice (Strauss 1963, 1968; Strauss & Rosenstein, 1970), whilst Crozier, commenting on the position of the French office worker faced with participation imposed from above, observes:

Participation is in fact dangerous, because it gets one involved...Subordinates, basically ready to participate in the functioning of the organization, are afraid to let this be known, because they do not want to risk finding themselves involved...(1965:137)

Most damaging of such comments from within the mainstream of writings on human relations and participation are those of Mulder (1971; Mulder & Wilke, 1970). He takes Strauss' (1963) notion that participation is about 'power-equalization', and extends Strauss' admonishment of those writers who adopt a manipulative style into a far wider-reaching hypothesis. He suggests that participation is actually a

means whereby an expert can exert greater control over a subordinate than otherwise (Mulder & Wilke, 1970:434). This he is able to demonstrate in psychology laboratory experiments; but more importantly, he also shows that it describes the operation of manager-subordinate relations in European works council experiments (Mulder, 1971:32ff). This follows partly, in his view, from management's greater grasp of problems and their expertise in communication and in handling face-to-face relations. But if we locate this argument within the wider ideological and political-economic comprehension of power, it assumes still greater force. From this it will be apparent that the notion of pseudo-democracy underlies much of what is to come in these pages. In the words of one union leader:

Concessions to workers' aspirations have to be made and, all too often, a facade of 'democracy' is presented to conceal the realities of power and to 'involve' the workers' representatives in the implementation of unpopular managerial decisions. This form of 'industrial democracy' is expressly designed to head off the movement; it represents 'participation' in industry on the terms set by capital...if we are to be realistic, trade unionists must recognize that private ownership of the means of production can be the greatest obstacle to any future advance...(Scanlon, 1974:235,247).

#### THE OUTCOME OF PARTICIPATION

It has been hinted above that a Marxist perspective must face up to certain implications of its own analysis of reality. These do not altogether accord with the deceptively easy and common leftist criticism that participation is indeed as successful as the claims made for it proclaim, but that it is potent imposture. This fits ill with the theory of ideology offered by Marxism and it also poses

uncomfortable questions about why the worker, faced with a daily round of exploitation, should be so gullible. The problem lies in taking at face value the official claims made for worker participation. Let us instead consider the logical possibilities, given a situation where a co-operation-oriented scheme is introduced into a situation of basic conflict, and their likely contingencies. We can later measure these against the available evidence, and see whether the patterns to be expected from the perspective adopted here are found, or whether the orthodox view has more bite.

1. Management success. In this outcome the managerial definition of the situation is successfully communicated through the scheme, which achieves a belief on the part of the workforce in common interests and co-operation centred on the attainment of efficiency and profitability. The Marxist would see this as incorporation, while the more orthodox supporters of participation will take it at face value. They will, moreover, be on strong ground if this result is dominant empirically, for the burden of self-justification will fall heavily on the critical interpretation. Since theories of false consciousness are in a divided and uncertain state, the onus would become all the heavier.

2. Triviality. Here a scheme may get off the ground, perhaps even with considerable optimism from both sides. However, joint commitment by the two sides is likely to conceal, as we have already seen, quite different objectives beneath quite similar vocabularies. Management's frame of reference leads them to seek to limit the participatory body to dealing with matters of common interest, and that on an advisory or consultative basis (since they are the 'experts' and have to 'bear responsibility' for the final

decision). By the time all the issues not in contention have been excluded - and the labour organization, if there is one, is also likely to add to this list - there is likely to be little of significance to constituents on either side left to be uncovered. This last sentence implies, however, that there are two basic contexts in which participation may become concerned with matters trivial or of no concern for labour.

(i) where labour organization is weak or absent altogether. There is thus no power base for negotiation with management, and the managerial frame of reference remains unchallenged. It is not enthusiastically embraced either, though, the main employee reaction being apathy. This defeats the major management objective of generating involvement and commitment, though they may not realise this for a while, until all the bold resolutions for production in the committee fail to achieve anything. Whether such a scheme vanishes or is kept in limping existence depends on the nature and extent of managerial commitment to it.<sup>44</sup>

(ii) where a relatively effective trade union exists in the plant, but this union has been able to negotiate with the employers through the agency of a bargaining channel which can cope with most major issues that arise and that the union is in a position to pursue. We noted in Chapter 3 the possibility of management adopting an expedient, faced with an effective union, which proposes limiting joint consultation or other participation machinery to matters of 'common interest' (typically the 'social' matters described earlier are the characteristic content of the 'trivia'). The

union may well agree to this though for their own, perhaps different, reasons (e.g. of not becoming 'involved' in compromising matters). Whether this is the case or not, the outcome will in all likelihood be the same: all important and so contentious matters will be steered into bargaining, and the participation machinery will degenerate progressively into publishing monthly, yellowing minutes on the company noticeboard concerning 'tea, towels and toilets'.

The difference between these two situations is marked partly by the fact that whilst in the former all issues may formally be covered (in practice, management using the meeting to announce and possibly to try and sell their policies), in the latter participation is largely confined to minor 'personnel' and 'social' matters. As indicated, this may not be the original intent, especially of management, though in other cases it may be effectively written in from the start with little glossy packaging to disguise it. The committee may even get off to a fine start, if both sides approach it with a belief that they are after the same end, but this spirit is unlikely to last once each side's expectations are disappointed. If the union tries to introduce grievances or demands information management wish to retain control of, or if management insist doggedly on permitting talk only of means of production improvement, the interest is likely to fade from one side or the other, to be replaced if the inception was optimistic by disillusion. The consultative body, or whatever it is styled, may fade out or it may survive in a ritual form for a great period of time. Countless company rule books in Britain still mention such schemes, yet the employees in these plants will in all likelihood be almost completely unaware of their existence;

it may be an antediluvian survivor of the period following the Second World War or in some cases even earlier. Either way, participation is of little importance for industrial relations in these enterprises.

Thus triviality may refer to the insignificance of the subject-matter under the participation body's purview, or to the inconsequential impact the discussions have (i.e. they may include investment, but no effective influence is exerted by worker representatives). I shall use the term to cover both possibilities.

3. Instability. Dahrendorf's pluralist analysis of co-determination in West Germany leads him to the conclusion that this device, based on a philosophy which denies conflict, is dangerous since:

...any attempt to eliminate conflict altogether is bound to fail as such, and, in fact, intensifies existing cleavages. Regulation requires acceptance of conflict...(Dahrendorf, 1959:267).

Dahrendorf's claim is actually too narrow (even for German Mitbestimmung), since as we have seen here instability is only one of a series of possible consequences of a unitary participation scheme, though its chances are admittedly increased if the scheme is indeed part of an effort to 'eliminate conflict altogether'. This outcome is, on the other hand, made more probable once the differing expectations of capital and labour described earlier are taken account of. The contingent conditions which make instability likely can be summarised in three overlapping categories:

(i) Labour is well organized, but management either totally refuse to recognize the organization or pay lip-service to negotiation rights whilst de facto

obstructing the bargaining process to their utmost. Here management are in fact attempting to impose their own frame of reference, and so their conception of real interests, regardless of official proclamations they may offer. A participation scheme is set up by management intended to deal with all issues considered of relevance to employees within a co-operative framework. Employees may either refuse to take part in this scheme from the start, or they may be led by official company pronouncements to see it as a genuine means to articulate their interests. In the latter case they will be disillusioned. Once a contentious issue arises and management vetoes its discussion altogether, or at least in non-consensus terms, the accumulated frustration is likely to erupt. The key variable is the non-availability of an institutionalised negotiating channel into which grievances can be shunted and power relations brought at least partly to bear.

(ii) a shift in the balance of power between capital and labour takes place (perhaps even due to the onset of unionisation, or to a change in labour market conditions) in a situation where the division between matters of negotiation and co-operation ('participation') are sharply drawn. Such a shift in favour of workers may lead, for instance, to a desire on their part to extend the coverage of bargaining to areas where they are currently granted only consultation or information access. Management attempts to block what they see as an intrusion are likely to provoke anger and frustration which is likely to emerge in the

participation committee, where these issues are discussed if at all. A breakdown of 'good' relations, and even overt action by employees, may ensue. A shift of power to management is likely to lead them to lose interest in their reason for setting up the scheme in the first place, since as we shall discover this move is usually related in some way to a challenge to their authority and represents an effort to staunch any depletion thereof. This is the realist's interpretation of the recapture of control by (seemingly) sharing it, to adapt Flanders.

(iii) Where there are particularly high expectations on both sides which are nevertheless mutually incompatible, without being perceived as such, again the situation is unstable. The chances are that in the initial meetings, after early enthusiasm, one side will try to introduce issues or consider a particular issue in a way the other regards as illegitimate. It may well be that the outcome is mutual accusations of bad faith, and a thorough souring of relationships. It will be noted that this is one variant on a contingency discussed in the 'triviality' section, and it may well be the case that rather than the participation machinery being dissolved, it degenerates hereafter into a ritual, trivial form. A good example of this is provided in the NIIP study (1952) where each side finds itself disappointed by the other:

The overall result was that both management and workers lost faith in joint consultation and their attitudes at the time of our investigation were less favourable than at the start (some four years before)...the chief executive expressed his attitude to joint consultation in these terms: 'Disappointed. Workers' suggestions are strongly encouraged but worth very little. So long as it

provides an outlet for grievances I am prepared to continue but if it peters out I shall make no effort to revive it.' The workers' representatives remarked that, 'Joint consultation is a great disillusionment to us. It is only for the benefit of management.' (NIIP, 1952:68)

The instability alternative is thus a result of a management attitude which forces the issues of conflict to be raised within a participation framework designed to operate only without belligerency. It is an example of the disruption warned against by Fox in his 1966 Research Paper if the unitary view should be uncompromisingly adhered to by employers. The machinery for participation, fragile to such pressure, is likely to disintegrate under the strain. No less a figure than Max Weber seems to presage just such a problem for works councils:

For organizations which are composed of delegated representatives of conflicting interests, whether their basis be in ideal causes, in power, or in economic advantage, may at least in external form be collegial bodies. What goes on within the body is then a process of adjustment of these conflicts of interest by compromise... Today there has been a revival of a somewhat similar theory of representation by occupational groups. The advocates of this proposal for the most part fail to see that even under these conditions it would not be possible to arrive at genuine agreement but that compromise would be inevitable. Insofar as free workers' councils were the bodies concerned, the tendency would be for questions to be settled in terms of the relative economic power of the different groups, and not by spontaneous agreement (Weber, 1925:396-397).

If the participation scheme is not dissolved, it may continue as a focus of bitterness and dissent, almost a gauge of conflict within the firm overall, or as indicated

the withdrawal of interest by one or both sides may leave it to play a residual, peripheral role.

4. Change of Committee Status. This is best thought of as a pragmatic managerial reaction. Recognising the danger of instability (or possibly triviality), they accept the introduction of bargaining relations to the participatory body (i.e. it becomes type C). In some cases a scheme may operate thus from the beginning, regardless of outward appearances and official rhetoric. In other cases it is an emergent form necessary to the scheme's survival, and most likely, of course, where labour do not already have access to an established negotiation channel. The scheme thus gains strategic survival qualities, but at the expense of the underlying integrative rationale of participation as usually conceived from a management point of view. This is thus likely to be either the act of an 'enlightened' pluralist such as Fox idealised in 1966, or an acceptance by management of the need to retreat from a hardline refusal to do more than consult and discuss.

5. Labour Success. Here labour are able to appropriate the scheme and turn it to their own advantage. This is, within the perspective offered here, by far the least likely outcome,<sup>45</sup> since it requires a level of knowledge, consciousness and organization on the part of the workforce which is highly improbable in most situations. It also requires a fair degree of management ineptitude (which, pace conspiracy theorists of the first order) is perhaps a little more probable.

Let me conclude this section by sticking my neck out (or appearing to) and stating that it would be my prediction that triviality and instability, not success of any kind

nor adaptation to bargaining, are likely to prove the most common results of co-operative, higher-level participation. The main allowable exception would be where, unlike the case in Britain by and large, labour organization had made little headway in advance of a sweeping participation scheme; there the most durable examples are likely to prove, on scratching the surface, cases of at least partial bargaining. Broadly, then, I am suggesting that, although it is next my intention to mention certain logical problems for trade unions expecting to participate in management, the effect of participation at the factory level is likely to be negligible insofar as the creation of consensus goes. This is not a reason for unconcern - rather it is presumed, in making the prediction, that the concern of labour for the inherent dangers of participation helps ensure a struggle against the realisation of the managerial ideal. The effect of participation at the societal level, on generalised ideology, is more problematical.

#### TRADE UNIONS AND PARTICIPATION: THE DILEMMA

We saw in Chapter 3 above, the ambiguous position of trade unions vis-a-vis proposals for participation. It was argued there that this uncertainty represented not a febrile pusillanimity on the unions' part, nor yet a simple political division in their ranks, but was rather an accurate reflection of the contradictory appearance of the promise and the less favourable implications of worker participation.

Worker participation is, as Hugh Scanlon or Ernest Mandel would agree, a device aimed at integration or, more polemically, control of the working class. This is true regardless of the perceptions of those who formulate

participation schemes, be they convinced it is an act of political benevolence or of self-aggrandisement. It is for this last reason that the problematical position of unions should be considered seriously, if only because this is liable to affect the attitudes and actions of representatives and members quite significantly. Historically it may be possible clinically to dismiss the likelihood of large-scale absorption through the agency of participation (though the possibility of incorporation cannot be ignored), but this does not remove the uncertainty suffered and energy spent by those caught up in the historical process any more than an observation that broken limbs heal erases the pain and suffering of the victim in the meantime.

The dilemma of the trade unions is well-described by Eccles (1976, 1976a). He rightly points out that it is an illusion that management are most threatened by worker participation; on the contrary, it is unions who face the greatest challenges. The chief issue raised is that of the relationship between the right to share in decision-making and the acceptance of responsibility for decisions. In their 1974 report and at the 1974 and 1975 Congresses the TUC pressed its demands for participation rights, and tried to resolve the divisions in its ranks by attempting to argue that at the same time the unions should in no way be in a position where their independence might be endangered, or where they might be forced to accept part responsibility for decisions of a compromising and unpalatable nature.<sup>46</sup> The TUC's evidence to the Bullock Committee revealed little softening of this position, but at the 1976 Congress Len Murray, the General Secretary, announced "we are prepared to accept our share of responsibility for joint decisions - as we do in respect of joint agreements now" (quoted Eccles, 1977). Eccles - and Peter Wilsher

(Sunday Times Business News, 5.9.76) - are right to point out the absurdity of a union belief that they could really hope to get away with taking decisions and yet being able to disassociate themselves from them. Whatever the formal rights they might have gained to this end (and the legislative chances would have been infinitesimal) neither their own members, management nor anyone else could but regard them as implicated. But, with respect to Len Murray, and Professor Eccles, the acceptance of responsibility within the framework of a participation is not a simple equivalent to accepting it for bargained agreements as I hope the discussion thus far will have made plain. Collaboration is, indeed, also present in negotiation, but the qualitative differences remain transparent.

The dilemma is thus unavoidable if trade unions are actually going to try and make worker directors work. They may instead choose to ignore the whole affair, but for a time this may entail the risk of employees in a firm breaking with union policy and 'going it alone'. Yet Eccles underestimates the depth of the dilemma. Wilsher, on the other hand, urges management to push for participation, and his reasons illustrate the purposes of employers that Eccles seems to forget. Management must get employee consent or risk losing all; participation ("and industrial democracy"!) is all about 'team-building' (STBN, 30.11.75). The problems must be resolved if participation is to serve its purpose, to "eliminate the 'them-and-us' division in British factories, and improve our deplorable per capita productivity" (STBN, 5.9.76). In other words, seen within the context of the political economy of participation, trade unions can share decisions, and so bear responsibility also, but the rationale of the decisions is predefined. In effect, then, participation of

this form grants no real power; but it does indeed require inextricably the acceptance of responsibilities. The trade unions may get to pull some of the levers, but they cannot change the machine or what it does; and being occupied by (or even chained to) the levers makes resistance to the machine's process difficult to organize.

#### ATTITUDES TO PARTICIPATION

The final matter I wish to raise in this chapter is the likely attitude to participation to be found amongst the chief sets of actors in the industrial situation. This involves reappraising observations made on this subject in Chapter 3, in the light of the formulations developed thus far in Chapter 5.

As before, opinions can be divided into those of management, trade union representatives, and workers. The last two are in general upon the same terrain in their overall criteria for judging participation, in terms of the benefit (or detriment) to labour; the differences of opinion within each group and between the two stem from different interpretations of the situation. Management judgements also tend to be on a common terrain, whether favouring or opposing participation, but it is a different terrain to that of labour; it reflects the political economy of a different class. Having made these sweeping statements, there will obviously be exceptions to any such rule - the description is of broad movements, not of every constituent part of any category.

The attitude towards participation is thus considered to be dependent on the overall social attitudes of those

involved (i.e. their model of how social and industrial relations work and why), which in turn depends on their structural situation. This last is comprised of those factors described by the general term 'class', together with any specific additional influences rendered by the structure of their particular occupational role, its obligations, strains and conflicts (e.g. a personnel manager's attitudes may be not alien to a production or sales manager, but may place significantly different emphases within the same overall set of goals).

To repeat, the delineation of different attitudes has a considerable effect on one's analysis of participation. It ridicules any attempt to say that 'society' or 'people' want 'participation', for participation is no longer visible as a single 'thing' which is straightforwardly accepted or rejected. Instead we have different notions of participation, some hardly more than an ill-formulated cry for something better, and the scope for a massive range of conflict in demands. The definition of and attitude to worker participation is contingent upon, firstly, the situation (conflicts, pressures, possible methods open to each side etc) and more sweepingly the ideology and consciousness of those involved, and the factors upon which this is in turn contingent. Moreover the varying possible experiences of participation discussed earlier may be expected to make attitudes volatile over time.

To summarise on attitudes then, management are likely to favour type A or B participation, and to prefer to limit this to a fairly powerless level of communication and consultation. Whatever else, they are likely to oppose as far as possible the sharing of the key, 'business' decisions, and even if allowing this formally may well seek (with, we shall see, a fair chance of success ) to

effectively give workers no operative say here. Management are in favour of participation insofar as it seems to offer a means to quell pressure on them from below, to increase worker commitment and productivity, and to increase management authority. They would prefer unions not to challenge for access to decision-making but if they do they must be prepared to take decisions 'responsibly' and accept responsibility. If management are against participation, it is either because they have experience of its inefficiency, or because they feel no need to resort to it. Rather, they may argue, it can only cloy decision-making by the dread device of committees, or more righteously they can announce it as an interference in the hallowed area of management prerogatives. Certainly they will tend to oppose any form of participation which is not felt likely to deliver the goods they feel are to the benefit of all. If participation does go wrong, it is almost sure to be blamed on the failings of an awkward union or workforce.

Although employees and their union representatives in particular, may accept a type A (or even B) scheme at face value, their demands actually entail the possibility of pressing their claims, against those of 'the firm' seen by management as paramount. This would therefore require what these schemes cannot provide. Employees' greatest emphasis tends to be on pay, job security, and after these on work satisfaction, and they are unlikely to be greatly moved by any higher-level scheme except at times of crisis when top management decisions are suddenly seen in their true importance. Union activists on the other hand, may put more emphasis on questions of principle and human rights. They will almost certainly put a great deal of stress, probably more so than their members due to their direct experience of management in

pressing for decisions in the past, on the need for participation to be through the union. Otherwise, there is a risk, visible to them, of a participation scheme being used to get decisions through that undermine the union's bargaining position without the union being there to spot and prevent this process. This is part of a dilemma, though, since some unionists may be so opposed to getting involved with management that they prefer to pull the union right out of participation and dissociate themselves from any decisions made with other representatives right from the start. Further up the union hierarchy, there may be an opposition to participation predicated on the additional fear that, even if it can become a useful centre for negotiation, the initiative will lie at the factory level and will be further drained from the union organization.

Many, both in the ranks of active unionists and amongst the rank and file, may accept management's arguments, of course, particularly those on efficiency (though I have indicated the different slant they may in some cases have on this). On the other hand, many may also accept sufficient management ideology of a related kind and feel that the union and workers have no business trying to get management matters made over to their control. Finally, a very large number of shop floor workers are likely to be above all intensely indifferent to the whole issue. They may even fit the Affluent Worker<sup>47</sup> stereotype, wanting no more thought about work than what it takes to pass the day away and earn the money for 'privatised' activity in the outside world.

Thus for the labour side, there is, we discover again, scope for much confusion and internal contradiction, stemming from the contradictory position of the worker

in modern capitalism. On the one hand participation promises to destroy class barriers; on the other, the worker may see around her or him the evidence that employers, at least her or his own, will be only too ready to use it to get more out of him or her in return for his or her 'satisfaction' and nothing more. For management, the idea is in any case only attractive if something is being sought to allay a foreboding of losing control. For both sides a reaction, though for obvious reasons not the same one, is likely dependent on the outcome of the scheme. These prior and developing attitudes in turn contribute to that outcome - and overall to that which concerns us most: what form participation finally takes (including interment as a real alternative!), and whose interests, if anybody's, it ultimately serves.

These questions of worker and management attitudes to participation and related aspects of industrial relations will be taken up again in Chapters 7 and 8, and finally in Part Five, using data from my own survey.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Participation in its higher-level, co-operative form is viewed differently by the representatives of capital and of labour as a consequence of their different structural positions within society. This forms the essential starting point for examining opinions on participation, though there is plenty of room for disagreement on each side, and an undefined scope for the incorporation of working-class members into the management frame of reference.

2. This last possibility is particularly likely for members of the working class most intensely subjected to

management ideology - those on participation bodies. The more remote they are from their fellow workers here, the greater the likelihood of their absorption. The implications for worker director schemes are obvious.

3. Management are not usually alone in pressing for participation of some kind, but they are the gatekeepers of its effective introduction (even when required to do so under legislation) and almost invariably, therefore, determine the forms and limits of any actual scheme. In this sense the initiative is theirs, and the scheme will tend to reflect the frame of reference which thus informs its construction. It is likely, further, that any legislators will be at least soundly imbued with the principles of the political economy of capital. Most participation will therefore be founded on a notion of consensus; as such it will amount to pseudo-democracy.

4. Schemes such as these may succeed, fulfilling management's aspirations for them, but given the reality of conflict they are far more likely to become trivial, unstable or to change to a bargaining form. Unless the last of these is the outcome, matters of importance to workers will either never come to the participative institution, or they will be dealt with in a manner which will be unsatisfactory to labour.

5. Lower-level participation, which offers some possibilities of a real increase in worker determination of their own work, is at the same time faced with the impasse of the limited scope of issues controlled, and the lack of influence on broad policy decisions which affect the destiny of all concerned. Workers may, however, express themselves fairly satisfied with existing job control plus wage negotiation, until some such threat as

a plant closure looms up. In recent years the reaction to such circumstances has generated a return to a more radical type C strategy, of sit-ins, work-ins, and often demands challenging the fundamental tenets of management ideology.<sup>48</sup> Indeed the current wave of management interest in participation is partly an effort to quell this, but it does not have the capacity to deal with such issues as, for instance, the case of the British Steel Corporation has already shown (see Chapter 10 below).

6. Bargaining reflects more genuinely the political economy of labour, despite its acknowledged regulatory and institutionalizing functions. It cannot, however, provide control over policies which would shut down the plant itself, since withdrawal of labour is its limit. This is a growing problem, also, with the mounting ability of multinational corporations to transfer production beyond a national union's possible sphere of control.<sup>49</sup> Sit-ins, mentioned above, were a tactic which aimed to deal with this, but also have evident limitations here. Even on many other business issues unions retain at most a veto power, even presuming that they are aware of the policy before it becomes a fait accompli. This explains the continuing belief in the union movement in the need for some form of representation beyond the current confines of bargaining procedures.

7. Participation's introduction is subject to the balance of power, not only in its particular form but in whether it appears at all. Further, a particular scheme may be rendered unstable or untenable by such a shift. On the one hand suspicion of participation is merited, since it is typically a management and State concession cast in the image of their own industrial utopia, and aimed at quelling 'trouble'.

At the same time, it reflects a rise in the power of labour, and the demands of labour, which it seeks to reincorporate. One thing is clear if this account is valid: participation is not some token of the 'evolution' upwards of 'society' to a new, integrated peak. In other words: Participation is an aspect of class struggle and not as most writers would have us believe a sign of its transcendence. This is a crucial assertion which follows from the theoretical account offered here and runs directly counter to conventional accounts.

## NOTES: CHAPTER FIVE

1. Fox's first discussion of this concept is found in his influential research paper to the Donovan Commission (1966a:3-4,10-15). Other discussions are to be found in 1966b:366-371; 1973:186-192; 1974:249-250.
2. 1966a:4-5,6-10; 1966b:371-372;1973:192-199;1974:255-274; 1974a:10-15. This perspective was at first accepted by Fox as the true account of reality, but was rejected in partly explicit self-criticism from 1973 on.
3. Quoted from N.S. Ross, by Fox, 1966a:4;1966b:371.
4. 1974:261. This notion of the management role is significant for my own discussion.
5. In 1966a:5, Fox argues this for the unitary approach, only later extending it to the pluralist account.
6. 1973:205ff; 1974:274-296;1974a:15-20.
7. For a discussion of the significance of this metaphor, with all its ramifications, see Ramsay, 1973. It is shown there that pluralists also make bountiful use of this concept. This suggests that the pluralists will in fact only countenance conflict of a limited scope as 'normal' or legitimate (and the hurried condemnation of all strikes which threaten to do their job by being disruptive from pluralists and unitarists alike confirms this). It also raises questions as to the status as independent categories of unitary views and such forms of pluralism.
8. Maslow, 1943,1954. Maslow attributes to human beings a set of needs which must be satisfied in order of progression from the most basic. In order, these are: physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualization needs.
9. In this respect Fox's 1971 discussion is more enlightening than other work of his discussed here, and in many ways fits uncomfortably with his contributions both before and after.
10. See e.g. Catherwood, 1973; Neal, 1972; J. Davies, 1972.
11. See e.g. Braverman, 1974; Hyman, 1973b; Hyman & Brough, 1975; Lane, 1974.

12. The myth of the socially responsible managerial corporation is readily dispelled by considering the way British firms operate to reinforce apartheid in South Africa (see e.g. First et al, 1972) or to maximise exploitation of Sri Lankan tea workers.

13. C.f. McCarthy & Parker, 1968; E.O. Evans, 1973:111; Batstone et al, 1977.

14. In Sweden there has been a clear divide between management and trade union adjustments to growing shop-floor unrest. Management have gone for work reorganization experiments in an effort to head off the threat to the authority structure of the enterprise, whilst the unions have with some success felt compelled to demand legislation curbing longstanding, arbitrary management powers. See Martin, 1976 and Chapter 11 below.

15. The quotation, from Flanders, 1967:172, runs as follows:

The paradox, whose truth managements have found it so difficult to accept, is that they can only regain control by sharing it.

It is cited with varying astringency by Clarke & Fatchett, 1972:190; Fox, 1973:212; Goldthorpe, 1974:440.

16. I. Macbeath 'Towards a Better Understanding of Industrial Democracy', The Times, 26.4.76, emphasis added.

17. It is this repeatedly revealed tendency which justifies the method of treating pluralism as an ideology rather than as merely one competing analytical account. Thus when Clegg attempts to defuse Fox by arguing that pluralism is not a proper theory per se (1975), he tends only to confirm rather than undermine the arguments against it.

18. 1974:427, emphasis in original. See also Fox, 1973:219.

19. C.f. also Fox, 1974a:113; Coates & Topham, 1968, 1972 and the discussion of the materials in their 1970; Coates, 1971; Coates & Topham, 1973 and Coates' introduction to his 1971a, fit oddly with these other arguments, seeming to imply that trade union initiation is sufficient to transform the potential of a participation scheme. C.f. also n26 below.

20. Similarly, Fox argues:

...for management to concede collective bargaining and other means by which employees or their representatives can participate in the making of some kinds of decision may well strengthen rather than weaken their control. (1973:212)

21. An introduction of Marxist views would have enabled Goldthorpe to discuss, by way of effective contrast, the concept of alienation. Such a step led to Eldridge's effective injunction against Blauner (1964 - in his discussion of paternalism in the American textile industry) for "smuggling in a cure for anomie (social integration) as a cure for alienation" (1971:192). Precisely this malformation could be attributed to Fox & Flanders.
22. Fox as good as says this in 1974:  
 Criticism will be offered here not of pluralism as a political ideal (many radicals would presumably approve the fragmentation of power), but of the kind of analysis which presents existing Western industrial society as pluralist in nature.  
 (1974:274)
- In his reply to Wood & Elliott's (1977) critique, Fox makes his attachment more explicit (see Fox, 1979).
23. Here Eldridge is following Baldamus, 1967. The pragmatism/ideology separation is embraced in the Bullock Report itself (p34).
24. Kaj Holmelius, quoted by Corrigan, 1975:2.
25. Hyman & Fryer, 1975:163-164. For wider discussion of the philosophical approach labelled 'pragmatism', which is particularly prominent in the sociological tradition, see C.W. Mills, 1964, and Keat & Urry, 1975:222 (including the related discussions of 'instrumentalism').
26. See e.g. Coates & Topham, 1970a:35; 1972:208-209; M.B. Brown et al, 1975:303; E. Roberts, 1968 (though see also his 1973:24). Hyman, 1974, criticises their approach in detail.
27. Thus the FGTB (who were a subject of criticism by Mandel in his 1969) proclaim their opposition to shared power, yet at the same time seem to advocate precisely that:  
 When we agree freely to give our advice, and to the extent it is followed, we are obviously assuming a degree of responsibility, the scope of which we ourselves have determined. It would be quite another thing to endorse all the decisions of a ruling class.  
 (Coates (ed) 1971a:49)
- This sounds like a pipe-dream; the difference is in practice more likely to be at most quantitative, not qualitative. See the discussion in Ramsay, 1974a, especially ppl6-17.
28. The stimulus here, too, is usually from human - or neo-human - relations, in particular Likert. Two discussions

of attempts to introduce such groups in Britain are to be found in Bond-Williams, 1953, and in Sallis, 1965.

29. See R. Wright, 1961; Melman, 1958; Rayton, 1972 on the Coventry gang systems. Douglass, 1972, describes the organization in the Durham mines, whilst Goodrich, 1925 deals with miners' work controls also. Goodrich, 1920 offers an increasingly re-popularised general discussion; whilst even H. Clegg, 1960 comes up with the closely related work-group 'collective contract' idea.

30. A form of gang system, with internal collective contracts, was not uncommon in Chinese factories before 1949 - a degree of work control not found, for instance, in pre-Revolutionary Russian factories. See Brugger, 1976.

31. Fox, 1973a:1; 1974a:94-95. C.f. Shuchman, 1957.

32. As Fox himself observes, the categories are somewhat arbitrary, particularly as:

An interest in any one category can lead to an interest in either or both of the other two. (1973a:1)

33. See Ramsay, 1976 and Chapter 12 below.

34. It is this which helps to render complete polarisation of types unworkable - in particular when schemes are considered in practice. Any industrial relations situation, including the negotiating relationship, involves a degree of compromise and so co-operation, since it is rare to find labour prepared to entirely destroy their employer. See Batstone et al, 1977 and the related discussion in Poole, 1974, 1976.

35. See Poole, 1975.

36. C.f. C.W. Mills, 1959. See also the discussion in Eldridge, 1973a and the work of Baldamus, particularly in his working papers in Birmingham University.

37. It involves some bending, however. Worker directors are commonly a labour initiative as demands, for instance, though their actual introduction remains shaped by management's gatekeeper role, given their ability to obstruct or veto more threatening forms.

38. See n29 above. Trist et al provide a bowdlerized version of the Durham mines, which Douglass' account (and my own informal discussions with Durham miners) suggests disguises the worker initiatives involved. Similarly Melman's account of the Standard-Triumph factory seems an expurgated version when compared with Wright or Rayton.

39. On shipbuilding see R.K. Brown & Brannen, 1970b; R.K. Brown et al, 1972; G. Roberts, 1967. On printing, Sisson, 1975; Sykes, 1960, 1960a, 1967; Rhodes, 1976; Child, 1967; Cannon, 1967. On the docks, Wilson, 1972; R.C. Miller, 1969; Mellish, 1972; Jackson, 1974; Mars, 1974; Hill, 1976. Not all of these authors see the practices concerned from the positive side of work control, e.g. Wilson heads his relevant chapter on the docks 'Wasteful Practices'.
40. See previous note, and (examples amongst many) Roy, 1952, 1953, 1955; Lupton, 1963; Matthewson, 1931; Ditton, 1972, 1972a, 1976; G. Brown, 1977; Dubois, 1976.
41. Here an examination of the literature on technological forms and the differing possibilities/necessities of decisions being left to the man on the job is of value. C.f. Woodward, 1965, 1970; Burns & Stalker, 1961; Stinchcombe, 1959; Blauner, 1964; and the work of the Tavistock Institute. On work group activity in this connection, see also Sayles, 1958; Kuhn, 1961.
42. 1963:187. See Child, 1969 (e.g. pp76, 78-79, 119, 122, 129-130) for a description of the way in which management misused the term 'democracy' to describe motivational techniques from the 1920s onwards.
43. This view is lent chilling force by other work exposing the seamier side of 'therapeutic' psychiatry. The book (and film) One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by K. Kesey, 1962 (Picador, 1973) provides a dramatic presentation. More academic dissections are to be found in Radical Therapist Collective, 1974; D.H. Clark, 1964; Wigley, 1974; P. Brown, 1974:Ch7; A. Crozier, 1979. See, too, Szasz, 1962: Ch3 and the critical analysis of his and Laing & Cooper's contributions by Pearson, 1975:Ch2.
44. Examples of its endurance due to a particular commitment are provided by Quaker religious attachment to consultation. See e.g. Child, 1964; Briggs, 1961, especially Ch4; Cadbury, 1912.
45. As indicated earlier, it is nonetheless the view of writers in the Institute for Workers' Control that workers may be able to take advantage of participation schemes. I am thus adopting a sceptical view of this perspective, though only evidence can really settle the issue.
46. For a synopsis of the TUC discussions see Labour Research Department, 1976; Doyle, 1976.
47. See Goldthorpe et al, 1968 for the clearest statement of this perspective and the debate between Daniel and Goldthorpe

(Daniel, 1969,1971; Goldthorpe,1970,1972a) together with the commentaries by Westergaard, 1970 and R.K. Brown,1973 for a discussion of the issues raised.

48. Hence also management plans to prepare against the eventuality of sit-ins: IWC,1976; IPM,1976.

49. On the problems of trade unions facing MNEs see Bye & Usher, 1975; Bye & Doyle, 1976; Gennard, 1976; Martinelli, 1975; Twitchin et al, 1975.

PART THREE: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AUTHORITY IN INDUSTRY

## INTRODUCTION

It has emerged from the discussion thus far that most theories (with the exception of the unitary approach) agree that participation is in some way connected with the redistribution of decision-making, and thereby of power. If this redistribution is to be verified, or refuted, as the outcome of worker participation, then we need to know first exactly what is being redistributed. Thus at repeated intervals in earlier chapters it was necessary to refer forward to the discussion which follows. In short, if we are to decide whether or not power is being redistributed we must first know what power is. Thus far the chief finding is that its conceptualisation is singularly muddled and feeble.

In the previous chapter it will be recalled that I argued for a recognition of three broad strategies for assessing participation schemes. These were observation of visible processes, reliance on the perceptions of actors involved, and reference to the structural context of the scheme and its consequences. In what follows it will emerge that these are not mutually exclusive methods, but that on the contrary the first two are necessary preliminaries for the third. However, a focus on either the first or second strategy alone is common, with debilitating effects on the subsequent analysis. It will be argued below that it is indispensable to proceed beyond the surface, directly observable features of industrial relationships to get at the political-economic forces which shape them and which, at the same time, they constitute and sustain (and in some cases also threaten).

The aim here will be to trace the outline of the key arguments rather than to offer a full rendition. This should suffice to clarify certain themes and enable us to get to grips with applying the emergent account to the central subject-matter of the thesis. At

the same time, it seeks to avoid the all too common tendency to pretend that this issue is one on which didactic statements can be made without need for recognition of difficulties and complications, a tendency apparent even amongst the few writers on participation who recognise the issue at all.

## CHAPTER SIX: POWER, IDEOLOGY AND PARTICIPATION

### POWER AND THE PLURALIST

The standard definition of power derives from Weber - or, more justly, from a particular reading of Weber. To quote Parsons' translation:

Power (Macht) is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests. (Weber, 1925:152)

The most notorious reformulation of this within the pluralist framework is that offered by Dahl.<sup>1</sup> He conceptualises power in terms of the ability of one person, A, to "get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (1957:203). Though at first sight this formulation has a pleasing symmetry (force of A minus resistance = power), and a plausible ring, in recent years it has been subjected to severe criticism.

Dahl's approach, it has been argued, reproduces a pluralist vision of social reality through its very epistemology. In this it is, it should be noted, an approach which implicitly or explicitly informs almost all available, non-managerial analyses of and recommendations concerning worker participation. It remains affirmedly pluralist, rather than unitary, because in the retention of the notion that people have to be forced or induced to do some things it thereby introduces at least some degree of conflict between the parties concerned. Nevertheless, Dahl's concept of power has the major limitation that it operates purely in terms of the interaction between individuals. In addition, it considers only that which is directly observable in a relationship. It thus regards the resources which each individual brings to the interaction as inherently his or her own. Power is thus a personalised property in this schema, to be assessed only in and through its direct manifestation. It might be objected here that Dahl's stipulations about observability and these objections can be reconciled by transferring the focus from individuals to interest groups confronting one another.

However, it emerges that once interests and classes enter, the concept of power rapidly becomes unmanageable within the Dahlian framework. In fact, that framework serves rather to conceal the dominant. In Stewart Clegg's words:

Where such a concept...goes powerless to the world,  
the world of power need not fear. (1975:21)

Clegg goes on to show (1975:23) that Dahl's conclusions concerning the distribution of power (as widely dispersed) follow inevitably from his supposedly objective empirical research, given the premisses which inform his methods of investigation, and so that which he can and cannot see.

Dahl's grounds for criticising C. Wright Mills' power-elite analysis (1957) also derive from his assumptions. These lead him to lay down a series of stipulations for proven existence of such an elite, including conclusive identification of a well-defined clique (Dahl, 1961:359) and irrefutable demonstration that certain key decisions were made by the group in accordance with their selfish interests (1961:362). Yet, whilst acknowledging that, as Clegg suggests, Dahl's stated requirements are formidable and seem designed to block any conclusion that there is a power elite (i.e. giving the benefit of the slightest doubt to a pluralist explanation, and weighting the investigatory procedures so that there is no chance of eliminating all doubt), it does not seem a foregone conclusion that pluralist methods will protect the researcher from all unpleasant findings. Thus Domhoff seems able to make at least some headway towards refuting both Dahl and Rose in their arguments against there being an American power elite, not least by use of Rose's own evidence (Domhoff, 1968). The reproduction of pluralist conclusions may thus require the application of preconceptions and prejudices even within the protecting barrier of methodology. Such prejudice is apparent for instance in the pluralists' interpretation of what constitutes the 'national' or 'public' interest, or 'rational' decision-making.

Nevertheless, Clegg's point is well made because it draws our attention to the limitations imposed by a constricted conception of power. In fact we can add that although there are significant differences in method between power-elite and pluralist theorists, both remain bounded by certain important shared restrictions, in particular an obsession with visibility and intentionality.

An early critique of pluralist orthodoxy was offered by Bachrach & Baratz (1962, 1963, 1970). These authors contended that to concentrate on the phenomena to which Dahl limits his attention is to ignore the fact that power is often exercised to restrict the very matters which get discussed, and the scope of that discussion, to 'safe' areas for the powerful. An approach which allows only for actual decisions taken, and for charting openly vocalised opposition which has been overcome, excludes one of the two 'faces of power':

...Power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to recreating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. (1962:379)

Moreover, since Dahl defines a 'key issue' as one which provokes disagreement, these two critics are able to argue that he may thereby be identifying those issues which are actually of least significance. Bachrach & Baratz thus make a good case for the need to consider 'non-decisions' and the 'mobilisation of bias' as crucial features of the operation of power, however hard they may be to measure.

One might have expected that this perspective would lead Bachrach & Baratz to confront issues such as those raised by Goldthorpe (1974) in connection with conventional (Tory or pluralist) approaches to industrial relations, and reinforced by discussions of 'pragmatism' (see Chapter 5). There, it was argued that certain biases were embedded in treatments of the subject which claimed to be neutral. Thus certain 'problems' were being commonly identified as 'social' ones which, on reflection, proved to be specifically managerial embarrassments.

This kind of question evidently calls for a wrenching of the debate right away from that level of analysis which deals purely in directly observable (i.e. without even the medium of a critical interpretive framework) activity. But instead, the authors seem to retreat to an attempt merely to extend this same methodological line of attack, i.e. to directly observe non-activity too, as Lukes (1974) shows. Thus in their 1963 work they insist on retaining the requirement that for power to operate there must be a conflict of values or interests between A and B, B must further bow to A's wishes, and that a power relation only exists if one party can openly threaten sanctions. This 'relational' concept of power, as they call it, is further concentrated by 1970, and appears to resurrect all of the dilemmas which these writers exposed in 1962. It thus raises the issue again of whether power is relational, not in the sense that it only exists in and through relationships between people (which is true, and important, but obvious), but with the implication that it only exists insofar as it is manifestly employed to conquer in debate or to prevent the debate itself. After all, it was Bachrach & Baratz who upbraided the pluralists who:

...made the mistake of discarding 'unmeasurable elements' as unreal. (1962:387)

It is difficult to reconcile this with their later argument that if no conflict can be observed then "the presumption must be that there is consensus in the prevailing allocation of values, in which case nondecision-making is impossible" (1970, quoted Lukes, 1974:19-20). The confusion is enhanced by their alternative line, that in such a situation it is impossible to tell if there is consensus or nondecision-making (1970:50). In the latter version, rather than being evidence that nondecisions are absent, consensus may appear as an attestation to such power at its most effective. A formulation of 'mobilisation of bias' from 1962 suggests that at that time this was very much the way Bachrach & Baratz viewed the issue; there had to be an analysis of:

...the dominant values and the political myths, rituals, and institutions which tend to favour the vested interests of one or more groups, relative to others. (1962:382)

Despite the giveaway adhesion to the vocabulary of multiple groups rather than classes, the basis seems to be offered here for progressing beyond the pluralist account to more structural considerations. However, even here they go on to state their intention to derive these dominant values from the process of decision-making itself (1962:387). This startling pronouncement makes clear the reasoning behind their paradoxical insistence on visibility as the basis for establishing the contours of the invisible. The modus operandi of dominant values, rituals etc. are, after all, to create what at least may appear to be a consensus, which we have seen is later found by the authors to be something with which their method is incapable of coping.

Before leaving this analytical wreckage washed up on the shore of pluralism, it is worth noting one penetrating and highly pertinent comment made by Bachrach & Baratz in the light of their early, potentially radical assault on pluralism. In a passage which undermines the whole logic of relying on a visible conception of the way compliance is secured (or, perhaps better, arranged) they castigate "the pluralist", for whom:

Power...means 'participation in decision-making' (1962:378)

In other words, where the mobilisation of bias is brought into consideration the mere fact of being involved in the immediate process whereby a decision is reached is no evidence that thereby the participant has affected the decision. By implication, reference would have to be made outside the interaction itself, to the structural context of decision-making and to the interests which it serves.

#### POWER AS IDEOLOGICAL RULE

Until relatively recently pluralist accounts of power, with their accompanying heralding of an 'end of ideology', remained largely unchallenged despite the resistance of 'power elite theorists'. The past few years have seen a wave of critical treatments of pluralist myths emanating from the rediscovery of ideology as a means of control.

Most of the new critiques acknowledge some debt to Marxism, and in particular they are liable to quote the following passage from The German Ideology to introduce the idea that people may be dominated through the successful dissemination of a legitimacy ideology:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every age the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (Marx & Engels, 1846:64)

We shall have reason to reconsider this quotation - and in particular the passage immediately following it in situ - in the next section. For the moment, though, its plausible resemblance to relatively straightforward analyses of control through ideological production will be apparent.

The methodological issues which industrial sociologists, amongst others, were led to raise, recognised a need to:

...include consideration of the ways in which most employees' objectives in work come to be ones which are not too disruptive of the social order. (R.K. Brown, 1973:37)

The pace was set in the attempt to answer this question within the academic sphere of industrial sociology/industrial relations by Alan Fox:

If we ask how it comes about that this widespread legitimation and acceptance exists of institutions, mechanisms, principles, and beliefs so necessary and convenient for the owners and controllers of resources the answer is, of course, that, as was noted earlier, their very power affords them the facilities for creating and maintaining social attitudes favourable to that acceptance. The greater the extent to which power can be used indirectly to shape perceptions and preferences, the less the need for it to be used directly in ways which make it visible. (Fox, 1973:209)

In his attempt to progress beyond the analyses of power provided by the orthodox pluralists or by Bachrach & Baratz (which he calls 'one-' and 'two-dimensional' treatments of power respectively), Lukes resorts to a similar approach in order to allow:

...for consideration of the many ways in which potential issues are kept out of politics. (Lukes, 1974:24)

Lukes tries to generate a 'three-dimensional' account of power to achieve what Bachrach & Baratz seemed to be trying to encompass but retreated from. For Lukes, manipulation by the powerful prevents realisation of their real interests by the less powerful. The crucial consequence of this is to raise the analysis of power from one of a purely individual, face-to-face exercise into a collectively generated and utilised resource. On this account, the power of the manager to command acceptance and implementation of his or her instructions cannot be comprehended purely in terms of personal qualities or immediate position. Here we seem to be well along the road to a class and ideology-based explanation, though Lukes here draws back himself (as in many ways does Fox on class), shunning the 'structural determinism' he criticises in Poulantzas (1974:52ff).<sup>2</sup>

Lukes seems to want to reserve 'power' to apply to the exercise only of control over actors in supposed interstices between the girders of structure - what he believes to be areas of relative freedom, indeterminacy and contingency. Thus Poulantzas' suggestion that power is "the capacity of a social class to realise its specific interests" (1973:104) is rejected as reducing to structural determinism. Indeed in Poulantzas' case the criticism has some justice as it applies to his overall analysis, related as it is to the Althusserian methodology of specifying definitional categories a priori, rather than extracting them empirically. The general approach implied in Poulantzas' words is, however, correct and necessary - as Lockwood's strictures on the degeneration of pluralist

analyses of latent power should remind us. (Lockwood, 1964)

Lukes' own final position seems to have done just this. His view of the structuring of reality and perceptions thereof seems at odds with the drift of the rest of his discussion. Thus he later wrote:

My own hunch is that what for any theorist counts as structural is what he holds to be uncontrollable by agents. (1976:35)

Again Lukes' barbs find some purchase, yet this is not sufficient to deny the need to recognize and analyse the 'structural'. After all, Lukes, like the early Bachrach & Baratz, had also attacked precisely those pluralists who excluded from analysis elements not readily subjected to measurement (1974:39). That structure is often ill-defined or arbitrarily introduced by so many thus hardly serves as an excuse for ignoring it.

There seems to be one concrete reason for Lukes' position. He appears to wish to retain commensurability between the various 'dimensional' approaches to the topic, as he has represented them (1974:26). The 3-D version would then merely be a more inclusive, augmented account than the 1-D or 2-D versions, lending a symmetry to the argument. Lukes' position here has been dissected and rejected on the grounds that the 3-D account does not operate on epistemologically comparable terrain to its lesser-dimensional counterparts.<sup>3</sup> It is my contention here, however, that there is no need to explore these criticisms, since it must anyway be acknowledged that to move to an analysis of power not of Lukes' 3-D type, but of a collective, class-based, structural variety is in any case to transform the picture of all interpersonal manifestations of power described as 1-D and 2-D. In this sense commensurability is a nonsense - the most inclusive methodology transforms the examination of all phenomena described. Lukes' final position is thus untenable.

## DOMINANT IDEOLOGY AND FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

It has been established that power may be conceived of as exerted collectively through the rule of certain ideas which favour the interests of the dominant groups in society. Moreover, this approach can be shown to be more inclusive and in other ways superior to pluralist accounts.

However, there remain important points to clear up before the discussion is complete. Whilst accounts which speak of ideas of the ruling class being imposed on the working class have a certain plausibility, it is apparent they do not account for the processes whereby this imposition is achieved. Moreover, insofar as mechanisms are discussed, such as Miliband's (1969) state agencies, for socialization and control of media images, closer consideration shows them to lack plausibility. In brief, there are problems in terms of their treatment of the level of interpretation and meaning, which lead to a somewhat facile notion of 'dominated', 'false' consciousness. Paradoxically, these accounts are also inadequate as analyses of the structural sources of ideology in Marx's terms, a point to which I shall return shortly.

If the dimension of meaning is to be brought into the analysis, it might seem logical to turn to analyses of power within that constellation of methods referred to by the umbrella label of 'social action' approaches. Such an explanation would indeed produce returns for the depth of our analysis of power, but since the discussion here must be truncated, the digression cannot be made. Briefly, though it can be observed that the use of concepts such as 'definition of the situation' do provide useful illumination, particularly if definitions can be thought of as imposed on others.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the concept of 'negotiating reality' affords considerable promise, again allowing that the powerful may be able to construct reality for the weak.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the source of this ability is generally left unexplicated, shunted aside by attributing it unilluminatingly

(and tautologically) to a power differential. In consequence, it is easy for a trivial conception of manipulation to be adduced to bridge the gap, or for power to be reduced to a wraith confined only in people's imaginations. The same is true of ethnomethodological descriptions, by Cicourel, Garfinkel and others, of the 'rules' which govern interaction and which for them ultimately constitute the fabric of the social order.<sup>6</sup> These writers talk of 'deep' rules which constitute the everyday, taken-for-granted reality. They rebut fiercely any attempt to provide a structuralist account of the origins of such rules, however, and insist that they are merely definitions of the individual and any definition counts for as much as any other.<sup>7</sup> The impotence of this line is well encapsulated in these two comments on the approach:

...the basic rules of everyday life thus by ethnomethodological procedures made visible are not necessarily a free product of the subjectivity of members in search for meaning...they are closely interwoven with, and structured by, factors arising out of the system of production and the system of domination. (Dreitzel, Introduction to his 1970:xvii-xviii).

The freedom of the conversational market in Cicourel's rhetoric is as illusory as is the freedom of the market in utilitarian economics... on this basis...the slave is as free as the master, the workers' 'powers' as good as the bosses'. (S. Clegg, 1975:74)

It is, therefore, necessary to apply some of the insights of ethnomethodology and like accounts without losing our grip on concrete, structural reality altogether and reducing everything to definitions. There is a noteworthy (and not altogether accidental) parallel between the 'free-floating' nature of ideas in such an account and an analysis which takes the processes by which domination of bourgeois ideas is possible as unproblematical. What, it must be asked, is the taken-for-granted reality which suffuses working class interpretations of the world (or 'meaning-systems')? People define reality in some way according to their observation and experience of it - and simply to announce that their view is 'false' and that their ideas are fed to them

by their rulers and obediently ingested seems singularly unconvincing. That ruling class interpretations are pumped out in the media, in the schools and elsewhere has been plentifully confirmed,<sup>8</sup> but there remains the empirical question of whether such interpretations are so uncritically accepted.

Chapter 7 will demonstrate in detail that ruling conceptions are not so neatly internalised by the working class and in the light of the account of power and ideology outlined in the next section of this chapter, will attempt to trace the contours of working class consciousness. It should be noted here, though, that several recent attempts have been made to get beyond simple dominant ideology/false consciousness accounts, and to recognize the greater complexity and problematical nature of working class reactions to the dissemination of ruling class accounts of reality. For some writers a working class counter-culture is absorbed by reformist concessions and corporatist devices (a labour party, universal education, welfare, enfranchisement etc.) into the capitalist order.<sup>9</sup> This form of incorporation allows that many institutions are contradictory in being simultaneously both agencies for control and concessions to working class interests. Another account which has gained a fair measure of popularity talks of working class culture as a subordinate one, not identical with but overwhelmed and encapsulated by the dominant, ruling class one.<sup>10</sup> The resulting value system is distinct, but 'accommodative' rather than oppositional.

The ramifications and empirical problems of these accounts will also be explored in Chapter 7. However, it is important to note here that, despite such efforts, the generation of ideas and the processes by which they are disseminated and accepted/rejected/modified by working class actors remains inadequately explicated.

Although all of these dominant ideology accounts take Gramsci's concept of egemonia and Marx & Engels' passage in the German Ideology quoted earlier as their inspiration, it is my view that they fail to comprehend

the analysis of ideology in Marx's work (and in important respects in Gramsci's work also). On the other hand, certain structuralist approaches to ideology such as Althusser's,<sup>11</sup> by starting from the analysis of commodity fetishism, relate ideas less to simple manipulation and more to the way reality impinges on men's minds. The analysis is, unfortunately, highly formalistic, pays little attention to process and threatens to retreat to an ideological functionalism in its account of these ideas. Thus, for instance:

In a class society ideology is the relay whereby, and the element in which, the relation between men and their conditions of existence is settled to the profit of the ruling class. (1964:235-236)

Curiously this raw determinism is laced with a detachable voluntarism in later analysis of ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1970), where a partial autonomy of these apparatus, and so of the creation and dissemination of ideology from the 'economic' processes of capitalism, is described. This reduces Althusser's account in many respects to a crude dominance one.

The strange bedfellows of voluntarism (manipulation and conscious shaping of ruling ideas) and economism (ideas as a mechanical reflex of class interests) are in fact strikingly familiar combinations. It will be argued (though not fully demonstrated) below that their co-existence relates to the pervasive influence of the 'base-superstructure' metaphor used by Marx, hoisted to the level of definitive analysis. The effect is to treat ideas (as part of the superstructure) as both determined by the 'base' and as formulated in a 'relatively autonomous' sphere of the mode of production.

In order to move beyond this constricted analysis of ideology and power, it will therefore be necessary to outline an alternative analysis of ideology as a relation of capitalist production which also avoids reliance on the base-superstructure account. This will now be presented.

## POWER, IDEOLOGY AND REALITY

If we deduce world schematism not from our minds, but only through our minds from the real world, deducing the basic principles of being from what is, we need no philosophy for this purpose, but positive knowledge of the world and of what happens in it. (Engels, 1894)

Engels' words provide the clue to the approach to ideology offered here. My comments above indicate a scepticism concerning the prevalent theories of domination, and a concern to seek the source of hegemony more in the structure of reality itself than in some power to manipulate and misrepresent that reality by the ruling class. Yet the quotation above may seem to do no more than return to the commodity fetishist account of Althusser. In a sense it does, or at least its point of departure has much in common with Althusser's, relying heavily upon the analyses offered by Marx in Capital. Such a structurally determinist account might seem as far divorced from the need, just expressed, to pay the closest attention to perceptions and experience and indeed this criticism has some justification in the case of Althusser's own approach. There a great deal of use is made of a priori categorisation, this involving in particular the imposition of the base/superstructure model on which an onslaught will be mounted below. The effect of this model is to allocate consciousness a menial position as the mere echo of movements of the economic base, by which the structure of relations is 'ultimately determined'. For Althusser, ideology is "an organic part of every social totality" (1964:232). In itself this is not a statement to which I would take exception, though the phrasing I would prefer to use would be that 'ideology is a relation of production', which should be seen as internal to the capitalist mode of production, a view which I hope to make clearer in what follows. But Althusser goes on to argue that "Ideology has very little to do with 'consciousness'" (1964:233), seeming to suggest here that ideology is not itself on the same ontological level as the actor's definition

of the situation. True, this leads him to scorn those who offer an analysis of ideology as ruling class fabrication and manipulation (ibid:235), but it also leads him to sunder ideology from its specific embeddedness in class struggle within capitalism. This should, however, be a question of empirical investigation, not of universalistic assertion, and Althusser has thus distanced himself from the method whereby Marx arrived at an analysis of ideology. For Marx's discussion was specifically devoted to discovering the reality that was concealed behind bourgeois ideology, and it is to the method Marx uses that Engels refers.

Several recent contributions<sup>12</sup> to Marxist literature have returned more carefully to Marx's methods, and in particular to that of critique. They have shown how reality is reconstructed by this means from an investigation of existing accounts of the system, whereby the contradictions in these accounts are identified and the conditions which make possible the existence of those appearances is inferred. Here it can be seen that perceptions are the sources of information, and that while it is not assumed that these are necessarily accurate (or unimpeachable, as phenomenologists would have us accept), they are seen as related to a reality. Thus definitions are seen as a direct consequence of experience. At the same time, there is no suggestion that reality - or any predetermined 'basic' features of reality - underlies appearances and so perceptions, at a somehow more fundamental level. Appearances - phenomena - are reality. That reality may, however, be conceptualised in different ways.

A critique is thus necessary to determine the actual nature of relations between people in a given mode of production, but the relations themselves remain at all times the things which are being perceived. On this account, then, the source of inadequate or ideological cognitive descriptions of the reality are to be found in the way that reality 'presents itself', i.e. in the way it is experienced. At the same time it becomes apparent that:

...phenomenal categories cannot be totally inadequate;  
they must allow people to make sense of their experience,

and they must provide a framework within which people can formulate courses of action. If they did not, they would rapidly become subject to disconfirmation by experience. (Sayer, 1975a:5-6)

Mepham puts this in more specific terms:

Bourgeois ideology dominates the workers' movement because, within serious limits, it works, both cognitively and in practice. (1972:19)

At the moment, these descriptions are too broad and sweeping to apply straightforwardly to the subject of this thesis, but the aim of Chapters 7 and 8 will be to bring such general discussions down to earth, in an attempt to make sense of available information on working-class and managerial consciousness, and so of information on attitudes to and the operation of workers' participation schemes.

It is worth noting one area of study much neglected by Marxists, almost certainly because of the presumptions about manipulation which have dominated their reading of Marx. This is the study of management ideologies, and indeed of ruling class ideology in general. Naturally the experience of the ruling class is different, since they enjoy a different place in the structure of reality, but they remain part of that reality and it is within the reality that their ideas are formed. I do not propose to reject the impact of media, education and other socialisation as nugatory, nor to deny that in many ways these agencies are directed by ruling class bias; yet to appreciate properly even this we must become sensitive to the roots of that bias, and to its internal dynamics, or we are consigned to an implicit account based on nothing more than conspiracy. The theory of ideology outlined above erodes the meaningfulness of typical statements about working class 'false' consciousness, since it relates thoughts to experience rather than some mental defect; the same is also true for the bourgeoisie. Once again, to use Mepham's words:

To say that the bourgeoisie produces ideas is to ignore the conditions that made this possible, to ignore that which determines which ideas are produced...It is not the bourgeois class that produces ideas but bourgeois society. (1972:12, emphasis in original)

Although Mepham relies on Capital as the source of Marx's theory - a source often taken to represent a break from the early idealism to which might be attributed the idealist account of the domination of ruling ideas - in fact the Marx of 1846 was far closer to this position than a reading which halts at the point where the quotation above leaves off would suggest. After their sentence discussing control of the means of "mental production", Marx & Engels continue thus:

The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class a ruling one, therefore the ideas of its dominance. (1846:64)

They go on to observe the tendency for ruling class intellectuals to abstract ideas from the class position and society that produce them. Chapter 8 will examine this same phenomenon.

This account of ideology stresses the fact that ideas are embedded in institutions - the family, the pub, the supermarket, as well as the media or the factory. One might recall the description of mobilization of bias offered not by Bachrach & Baratz but by the originator of the term, Schattschneider, when he observes that "organization is the mobilization of bias" (quoted in Bachrach & Baratz, 1962:380, emphasis added). The degree of voluntarism he attributes to the concept of 'organization' is debatable, but it would be easy to re-read his description in a way closely congruent with the analysis offered here (and thus not with that finally distilled by Bachrach & Baratz).

It should be emphasised, even at the expense of repetition, that the approach in use here accepts fully the argument that it is the continual activity of and interaction between people that creates and sustains social reality, but seeks at the same time to map and account for the structural patterns that emerge. There should be no contradiction or discontinuity between a description of the manoeuvrings associated with the everyday exercise of power in any community, and an explanation of the dominance of certain forms of ideas and certain classes in communities generally. Where the two are treated discretely, or the latter is concealed and denied through the very methodology (itself an

organization of analysis, a mobilization of bias) which is used to deal with the former, as by the pluralists, then the structure of domination remains unexplicated and even unrecognised.

The problem of reconciling the essence/appearance account of ideology with the concrete ways in which ideas are formed (and of which they are part - a qualification of expression that seeks to avoid slippage back into a crude materialist causality) seems to lie behind certain recent criticisms of this approach.<sup>13</sup> There seems a fear that, by appearing to deny that classes produce ideas, Mepham et al have at the same time reified the entire process, and excised class struggle and experience altogether. There is a certain justification in this but only to the extent that the abstracted and generalized nature of the discussion may create this impression and that actual empirical investigation is eschewed amidst the statement of grand theory (though such a criticism could equally well be directed against the critics).

It matters little for the account offered here whether Mepham (or Marx) is inconsistent in the presentation of the theory of ideology, provided that the analysis finally produced is clear and acceptable. It is, however, important for this last purpose to refute any argument that all such approaches constitute an abstraction with little reference to real life processes. Ideology becomes, through the account offered here, the substance of domination under which people live. That dominance is expressed in and through their own actions. Yet one might expect ideas also to contain the elements of an opposition arising from daily experience particularly where the structure of reality is contradictory. This requires direct investigation to explore the nature and consistency of ideas held by members of different classes. Whatever the findings, the exercise of control and the nature of thought must be located solidly in its experiential context. In this, the essence/appearance account assumes at many points a congruency with the analysis derived by some recent writers from Wittgenstein's analysis of 'language-games' and 'forms of life'.<sup>14</sup>

We are left, then, with a view of hegemony which echoes Thompson's critical remarks against Anderson, that it is not a matter of one class simply creating hegemony over another by imposing its values and goals, but that one can speak only of a 'state of hegemony' in a manner which dispels the conspiratorial and voluntaristic overtones of Anderson's formulations (see Thompson, 1965:345-346). It is thus not surprising to find Mepham illustrating his own discussions by quoting from Thompson's (immediately prior) description of the manner in which working class organizations became entangled within the system in the nineteenth century, the prelude to the present situation of activities and ideas:

...each advance within the framework of capitalism simultaneously involved the working class far more deeply in the status quo. As they improved their position by organization within the workshop, so they became more reluctant to engage in quixotic outbreaks which might jeopardize gains accumulated at such cost. Each assertion of working-class influence within the bourgeois-democratic state machinery, simultaneously involved them as partners (even if antagonistic partners) in the running of the machine. Even the indices of working-class strength - the financial reserves of trade unions and co-ops - were secure only within the custodianship of capitalist stability. (1965:343-344).<sup>15</sup>

Once we start also to consider elements of the bourgeois view of this process - of a wish to draw working class institutions into their order of things combined with fears of opening the floodgates to a revolutionary takeover by men who at times apparently possessed quite alien attitudes and purposes (views which could coincide in one bourgeois participant or could be represented by opposed factions) - then we can begin to escape the crude materialist and the crude voluntarist versions of the history of power and ideology.

#### THE REJECTION OF THE BASE/SUPERSTRUCTURE DISTINCTION

I have, at various junctures, referred to the disutility of the base/superstructure distinction which continues to inform so many Marxist accounts. In this section I shall very briefly outline the grounds on

which the distinction must be rejected (at least as an a priori formulation, and empirically for the capitalist mode of production), and indicate certain consequences of failing to do so.<sup>16</sup>

The nature of the distinction under examination was initially sketched and questioned above. The economic base is seen as those relations directly involved in the labour process, and other relations, in particular those of a cultural, political, ideological or legal nature, are consigned to the superstructure. Typically the base is seen as determining the forms of the superstructure, the latter being secondary manifestations of the mode of production, though as we saw certain concessions to the apparent significance of ideological controls and State activity have led many exponents to speak in one form or another of the 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure.

The grounds for the rejection of such a schema can be sketched by reference to observations made by Marx and Engels themselves. Firstly against a priori categorisation:

Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. (1846:46)

On these grounds, it is hard to see why a base/superstructure distinction should have been arbitrarily introduced in the first place; it becomes still harder to discover its value for analysis as one looks closer. Marx was later to propose a conception of production which gives good grounds for regarding any such separation as a hindrance rather than an aid:

Man himself is the basis of his material production, as of any other production that he carries on...In this respect it can in fact be shown that all human relations and functions, however and in whatever form they may appear, influence material production and have a more or less decisive influence upon it. (Marx, 1863:288)

Let us return to the issue of power and the key nature played in the discussion of this by the State in Marxist thought. To quote once

more:

The conditions under which definite productive forces can be applied are the conditions of the rule of a definite class of society, whose social power, deriving from its property, has its practical-idealistic expression in each case in the form of the State...  
(Marx & Engels, 1846:94)

An interpretation of this passage from within a perspective pre-oriented to a base/superstructure view would present this as offering a picture wherein private ownership of the means ('forces') of production forms a foundation upon which the edifice of the State is built to exercise the control this property relationship affords. Social power is thus 'economically' determined, and only thereafter realised through the activation of the State, being derived ultimately from the possession of means which make possible the hire of labour power and force the propertyless to make such labour available. In this sense the State is seen as external to production. It may intervene (as it clearly does) in economic activity, but it is an intervention rather than itself a productive act.

It is proposed here that this analysis of the State is neither justified by any unweighted reading of the quoted passage from The German Ideology nor is it at all helpful. On the contrary, it obstructs understanding. The capitalist State cannot be reduced to an epiphenomenon of production relations; it is itself a central relation of production, a sine qua non of the capitalist mode of production as I have argued in the introduction to this thesis. Thus the term 'property' here must be read in its widest usage, as a social relation itself synonymous with the division of labour that characterises production in capitalism. There are, then, no legitimate reasons for the arbitrary assignment of particular facets of the system to 'base' or 'superstructure', nor indeed any empirical means of designating the boundary between the 'economic' and the 'political', 'cultural' etc.

In fact, by accepting such a separation, Marxists are affirming a phenomenal separation made by bourgeois social scientists, and one

which serves the maintenance of bourgeois hegemony. There is an irony here, since Marx's critique not only discusses the misleading nature of experience but also exposes that deceptiveness is itself a condition of the maintenance of the system. It is an irony which takes on far more destructive aspects when it reappears in the application of such conceptions to the policies of socialist construction (as in the academic world occurs with 'socialist economics' for instance.)<sup>17</sup>

From these arguments, it follows that ideology cannot be consigned tidily to a 'superstructure' nor can power be analysed as 'basically economic' power expressed in ideology only through the ownership and/or control that wealth gives over the propaganda machinery. On the contrary, power is expressed in and through the experience of reality; it is embedded in the form of social organization, and the ideas which living in that organization produces. Two commonly contrasted distortions of Marxism - economism and voluntarism - in fact go hand in hand in vulgar Marxist treatments of power and ideology (just as they do more generally in many Marxist analyses).<sup>18</sup> Economism is expressed in the view that wealth and ownership somehow determine and 'underlie' other phenomena; voluntarism manifests itself in the view of domination as a manipulative conspiracy.

To concur with Bettelheim:

Power is precisely a relation between classes and not an 'object' which is 'seized'. (1977:91)

Those analyses, including Marxist ones, which incorporate a base/superstructure model as a preconception in their analysis of power, are generally also those which see socialism as achieved merely by 'taking over' the capitalist state and pronouncing a change in formal ownership.

#### CONCLUSIONS: POWER AND PARTICIPATION

This chapter has established certain prerequisites for the discussion of power. Since that topic is evidently central to the analysis of worker

participation schemes (whether in terms of what they achieve, or more fundamentally of why they exist) the results of the debates examined in Chapter 6 will affect radically the manner in which the thesis proceeds. Therefore it is worth reviewing the chief features that it can now be argued are necessary for a plausible analysis of power:

(a) - the operation of power must be explored as a collective, class-based phenomenon, not merely at the level of manifest individual or group activities.

(b) - similarly, power cannot therefore be analysed merely in terms of visible interaction processes and their appurtenances. Thus to examine participation only in a case-by-case manner, as in pluralist methodology, fails to consider possible mobilisation of bias, or more fully the structural context which shapes and gives its full social significance to any scheme, is to offer an account which can hardly be anything but superficial and unquestioning of the real substance and movement of power relations.

(c) - to meet the stipulations of (a) and (b) above, the structure of domination must be mapped not simply in terms of coercive or threatened coercive control, but far more importantly in terms of the rule of ideas. Participation schemes need to be analysed as phenomena governed in their operation by the form of this domination, but at the same time as part and parcel of it. But we are not merely assuming that participation is a reflex of managerial control, since it cannot be assumed that any social process is so straightforward and simple; rather, insofar as the real world is riddled with contradiction and conflicting experience, so participation schemes will reflect and constitute features of the consequent struggles. This last observation follows from the argument that ideology cannot be regarded as simply manipulation, but must be considered as a result of perceptions i.e. experience and appearances.

(d) - the analysis of the operation and limits of social power, and thereby of the ongoing processes of class struggle, cannot be consigned to some epiphenomenal level of significance secondary to 'material' factors.

On the contrary, the study of participation schemes, or of the structure of domination in industry and in the wider society of which it is part, is an interrogation of core processes involved in getting production done

in a specific way under specific circumstances. In short, we are not examining the 'superstructure' of some underlying property relations, but the processes of the maintenance of the capitalist division of labour itself.

(e) - the manner in which structural relations are experienced by people is an important conceptual issue. Although I have not examined this specifically above, it can be usefully expressed in such terms as constraints upon and conditions of action of which people become aware, and which lead to their formulation of their everyday rules for action and for comprehending the social world. Unintended consequences of action both reveal at the level of action the inadequacy of a purely phenomenological frame of reference and express in that action the experience of the social contradictions and constraints. In historical terms the analysis of such constraints, and of their political-economic patterns, yields a picture of the emergence, forms and limits of domination. An analysis of participation will be found to require such historical as well as contemporary study to clarify the operation and function of this phenomenon, and the specific conditions of its existence at a time of popularity, and this is the purpose of Chapter 9.

This chapter can now be concluded with passing reference to some existing explicit discussions of the relationship between power and participation. It will be recalled from Chapter 5 that many writers on the subject devote little open attention to the subject at all, but that while some (the unitary managerialist writers in particular) might deny its relevance, for most an implicit model of power relationships in industry, and of the effect participation is likely to have on them, can be inferred. By far the dominant majority have adopted a position which concurs with their general political stance, viewing the issue of power in unrefined, pluralistic terms ('pluralistic' here referring to the method which produces the political image as well as the image itself). The inadequacy of such an approach should now hopefully be evident. Before passing on, however, I should like to refer to some of the more open discussions on the subject, the more sophisticated of which have appeared in the period covered by the long process of writing this thesis.

To begin, however, with illustrative conventional treatments, I shall look at the work of Lammers (1967) and of Strauss (1963). These writers are by no means straw men; on the contrary they provide some of the most sophisticated discussions and recognise that certain issues must be dealt with when their compatriots remain largely silent.

Lammers distinguishes two schools of thought on the nature of power in organizations: the "functional" or "human relations" approach, and the "conflict of interests" alternative. The argument hinges, he suggests, upon whether power can be understood as subject to a zero-sum game situation in which, as the conflict theorist claims, the key issue is its distribution among social actors; or whether the total amount of power can be increased to the gain of all. Lammers argues for the latter, and claims in consequence that participation, defined as "the totality of such forms of upward exertion of power by subordinates in organizations as are perceived as legitimate by themselves and their superiors" (1967:205), is a means to achieve this. In Chapter 5 above it was suggested that the writers such as those on whom Lammers relies most heavily - Tannenbaum and Likert - are in fact proceeding from a definition of power quite different to that inherent in conflict accounts. Control over objects rather than distribution of control among people becomes the implicit definition employed, and control thus becomes an attribute of the social system. This follows naturally, of course, from a 'functional', harmonistic view of the enterprise itself. But Lammers, whilst admitting that "goal consensus between the major parties" is a "prerequisite" for his perspective to hold water (p216), also claims that this can be achieved through the possibility of greater mutual influence by "managers and managed" over each other (p204). It is from this, in his version, that the enhanced control over the environment follows.

The discussion of power in this chapter poses a gallery of problems for Lammers' account, of which only a few will be explicitly discussed below. Most obvious is the presumption of common interests. Lammers prefers to use the term "goal consensus", a term which the possibility of ideological dominance suggests need not be synonymous with objectively shared interests at all.

But even on his own terms Lammers is likely to be disappointed. This emerges most clearly from a re-examination of the practical examples he advances in his support, such as the Glacier Metals scheme or the more general discussion of the German co-determination system. This empirical refutation is implicitly afforded by later chapters in this thesis.

In addition the two approaches to power identified by Lammers (he conflates all conflict approaches and traces them to Marx on p202) are presented in a manner which effectively excludes all structural analyses of power. Thus power is regarded as operating merely at the level of interaction between "managers and managed" (the very terminology here again serves to demonstrate the inadequacy of such a perspective). Further, even within this boundary one is left with an impression of a 'slippage' in the use of the concept of power in the attempt to reconcile the conflict criticisms with the harmonistic view. It is by no means clear in what sense it can be said against the conflict theorist that two parties can each exert more power over the other since the reply can always be that thereby neither has more power, for power is a concept of relative control. In other words, Lammers actually retains the view of power as a systemic attribute, and is merely asserting one definition against another. He circumnavigates the issue of class (or any interpersonal) control rather than vanquishing it.

It is, therefore, at the level of real relationships between people, and in the form of the analysis used to investigate these, that Lammers predictably proves most inadequate. Participation itself was defined, it should be remembered, in terms of "legitimate" exercises of power by subordinates, as perceived not only by those subordinates but also their superiors. As before, this presumes consensus as a prerequisite of participation, but it further ignores the significance of legitimacy itself as a probable expression of power. In fact, Lammers' predisposition towards the status quo is such that he fails - in common with most of his fellows - to consider that the very maintenance of the existing system of industrial relationships is a manifestation of power should it serve one interest group rather than another. Thus greater phenomenal influence

from below, whether judged by observation or by tapping the perceptions of participants, may well accompany a strengthening of those whose interests the present structure serves. Is it really a gain for an employee to participate in, or even take unilaterally, decisions which can only be details in the process of his or her exploitation?

Even were we to accept Lammers' view that the total amount of power can be increased, there remains the empirical question of who would benefit from this. Would there not then be a conflict over the distribution of the power accretion? The issue then is, who stands to gain in practice? I suggest that Lammers' own words provide the answer under the conditions created by the forms of participation he, and most of its proponents, propose:

By ceding power to workers, management improves the chances that its decisions (influenced by or taken by workers) will become effectuated. Therefore the initial "loss" of power by management can eventually be turned into a power gain in the sense of a better grip on the organizational apparatus and an increase in external power. (p204)<sup>19</sup>

But let me withdraw the concession made at the start of this paragraph, for the supposedly neutral notion of "organizational apparatus" must actually, if interests do conflict, mean control over those who operate the apparatus. It would appear, then, that Lammers is actually describing a management gain in power under the camouflage of offering a share of power to employees.

Strauss can be dealt with far more briefly. He argues from a belief that a common thread running through definitions of participation is a concern with "power equalization", i.e. "a reduction in the power and status differential between superiors and subordinates" (1963:41). He proceeds to be fairly critical of the assumptions of human relations writers (with whom he is almost exclusively concerned), questioning closely and often acutely the practical implications of their proposals, including the notion of consensus. Over time, his remarks become progressively more penetrating (1968; Strauss & Rosenstein, 1970) until participation is

recognised as constituting in many cases "symbolic solutions to ideological contradictions" (1970:198). Yet his orientation throughout seems to remain rooted within a pre-given goal framework, i.e. he is asking whether participation really is likely to be an effective management method or whether it is largely based on myth. As such his explicit discussion of power never proceeds beyond a fairly superficial level, whilst his findings hint at but never quite face up to issues such as manipulation through participation which would render his initial 1963 definition nonsensical.

Yet Strauss does touch upon a subtle point in one section of the 1963 paper that deserves mention. He argues that "forms of programming" exist in organizations which enable management to ensure that the work required is done without seeming to exert constant direct control (1963:71ff). Control is instead exerted through the operation of 'rules', 'goals', 'indoctrination' and 'technology and work-flow', all of which act as constraints upon the employee's action. All but the last require a degree of normative integration. And by implication all are forms of the exercise of power (which are also reminiscent of the discussion of 'rules' by phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists). It is a pity that Strauss does not pursue this theme, for the line of thought it suggests is both intriguing and explosive.

To take an example of the operation of 'rules', Strauss recalls a discussion with a chief operator in which he suggested that the nature of the job limited the amount of autonomy that girls could be given.

"Oh no", he was told:

Once a girl is trained I let her alone completely. She knows her job and what she is supposed to do. She has complete freedom as long as she does her job." (quoted 1963:71)

Power is exerted through the rules of the job, and operates all the time the person does that job. Yet it will only become visible if the girl should fail to conform to the rules. A form of supervision is prescribed, for instance, when control is by mechanical work-flow that intervention

only takes place when things get "out of control" (p74), a most revealing phrase. Similar forms of control to that described as 'rules' are provided by 'goals' and 'indoctrination' ('commitment'), which in the perspective on power offered within this thesis are hard to distinguish from each other or from rules themselves. Here Strauss brings us to the brink of a structural analysis and abandons us; but the leads are strong enough to be picked up and followed. It becomes clear that apparent job autonomy may be offered by management in a way which actually increases their power over and exploitation of the employee with the 'enriched' task.

We can readily extend this insight further afield. Consider, for instance, the hypothetical case of the headmaster. On the face of it headmasters wield near-absolute power. As regards compelling staff and pupils to conform to the rules of what a school is 'supposed' to do, as conventionally defined, their power is, indeed, very considerable. But if the headmaster fails in certain ways to fulfil his designated role and contravenes the definition of his employers or those who claim to be the voice of 'the public' as to what a school 'is' and 'does', the limits of his power may rapidly become visible. Rising Hill, William Tyndale and other examples of the recent past testify starkly to this. Yet a superficial analysis of most schools could never detect such limits, or, accepting the rules as being unquestionable, will not see the discussion of such limits as relevant to the analysis of power - just as the manager will see the limitation imposed on 'freedom' by the capitalist order as unworthy of discussion because any alternative is fanatical irrationality. Participation, then, becomes desirable for employers only so long as it can be ensured that it will be 'responsible' in its operation. Workers must therefore be adjudged 'fit' to participate before they may be allowed to do so, for 'power' means also 'responsibility' (which means, if conflict of classes is real, that no power is granted in a structural interpretation). Here we find, for instance, the main drift of the minority report of the 1977 Committee of Inquiry on Industrial Democracy (the Bullock Committee), and of the employers' reaction to that report which calls for other forms of worker participation.

To return to the definition of participation as power equalization offered by Strauss, it will be apparent that there is a certain circularity here which at the least constrains the scope of Strauss's critical assessment. Mulder has queried this definition, and the association it implies. He treats participation rather as involving communication between employees and their organizational superiors, so as to make testable the question of whether this does indeed have the consequence of power-equalization (or, it may be noted, the increased mutual influence presumed by Lammers). The empirical material presented by Mulder, relying both on social psychological experiments (Mulder and Wilke, 1970) and on a review of participation schemes in Europe (Mulder, 1971), confirms instead an opposed hypothesis: that the effect of such participation is to increase the power of the superiors. This results from the increased exposure of lower-level participants to those with 'expert' knowledge, who can use this increased accessibility to persuade employees to accept their definitions. Thus Mulder is able to demonstrate that what amounts superficially to greater influence from below via an exchange of views - a process what is more which, it is possible, is experienced by the employee as greater influence - may in fact constitute a redistribution of power to management: in other words, 'pseudo-democracy'.

Mulder, too, has ventured to the very fringes of offering a more structural analysis of power, and has done a great deal to expose the internal contradictions of more conventional discussions of participation and power. The introduction of expertise as a special factor offers the basis for going further, e.g. to question the manner in which some view comes to seem 'expert' and superior to that of 'laymen' (an issue on which the discussion of collectively created legitimacy, and further its relationship to aspects of phenomenal reality, offers many insights). But the questions of ideology which this raises are still left untouched by the largely pluralist conception of power that seems to permeate Mulder's approach in the same way as it did that of Bachrach & Baratz. For the same reason, we get no examination of the real historical processes which form the context of the introduction of, rhetoric surrounding, and consequences of

participation schemes.

However, as I intimated earlier, there have been recent more penetrating attempts to deal with the issues of participation and power which at least point the way forward to a more effective analysis, though despite their relative sophistication they share many of the faults common amongst radical or Marxist analyses that were described earlier in this chapter. By far the most extensive discussion is that of Poole (1975; c.f. also 1976). Poole rejects as inadequate any approach which deals only with the manifest operation of power, and insists instead that both 'latent' power (potential resources)<sup>20</sup> and the effect of values and ideologies must be considered. His treatment of the concepts reveals, however, a mechanical reliance on the kind of base/superstructure distinction which we have already encountered. Thus he refers to Marx's account of the way the "material base" evolves, producing social change, and suggests that this offers "the germ of a theory" about the nature and the distribution of power "and the way in which this can be affected by economic and technical change" (1975:18). Thus values, legitimating rhetorics and so forth are seen as important, but it turns out that their role is seen as essentially only a symbolic representation of deeper processes. They form, in Poole's words, "a critical link between the other latent or potential aspects of power and their actual realization" (1975:19). It is thus not surprising that Poole devotes most of his analysis of the basis of participation to 'latent' power and pays relatively little attention to the question of values and ideologies in the rest of his text.

Poole's analysis can thus be characterised as an 'economistic' one. It treats as epiphenomenal the generation of ideas, and thus offers no real appreciation of the processes involved therein. This explains the perspective on participation described in Chapter 5 above, where Poole dismisses the fears of Mandel that participation can operate as a means of incorporation. At one level this is a useful antidote to the voluntarism in the notion of domination that Mandel and others offer, for it has been argued here too that ideas are rooted in experience and

will therefore not be so simply manipulated by some alchemy of a participation scheme; this will become clearer, too, when we examine the historical and contemporary experience of participation and discover that it has indeed not been the success for management that it is often believed to have been. Yet it replaces that voluntarism, as we have seen, with economism. Thus the dangers of power exerted through the expression of a certain account of reality, and perhaps mediated through a participation scheme (as Mulder suggests) are instead dismissed altogether. The problem is that participation in each case, Mandel or Poole, is being treated as a surface phenomenon, not as itself an expression of, as part and parcel of, the ongoing dynamic nature of the struggle between classes in factory and society.

I shall refer to one other recent discussion of participation by Brannen et al (1976) which it seems to me makes acute observations on the operation of participation schemes which can be more fully understood and generalised within the analysis offered here. Unfortunately, the authors mention it almost as an afterthought, although it can be seen to profoundly affect the significance and meaning of the remainder of their findings. Their discussion is based on the ineffectiveness as a form of industrial democracy of the worker directors in the British Steel Corporation, and in particular deals with the failure of those representatives to take the part of employees in the face of management proposals for redundancy. They first recognise the structural context of the impotence:

...the lack of effectiveness of worker directors in situations such as we have described reflects not only the structure of this scheme of participation and the orientations of the worker directors themselves; it also reflects the structure of power and system of values and legitimation in the economic system more generally.  
(1976:208)

But the authors are not merely offering an explanation in terms of class control of ideas in the simple sense either, for they relate these ideas to the real situation which workers perceive confronting them. Thus they live in a system which requires that viability is determined by market profitability;<sup>21</sup> and where "arguments against closing a

particular works or mill also tended implicitly or explicitly to be arguments in favour of closing someone else's mill" (ibid). Thus to be able to escape this enclosure, worker directors and workers alike would have had to have available "a different and more radical set of ideas than those generally held by steelworkers" (ibid). It is the view of this author that this observation should have been almost the beginning of the discussion rather than coming at the end, and calls for a far more thorough analytical grounding, together with an examination of the available information on consciousness of workers and managers alike to place in richer colour the general, plausible comments made by Brannen et al. It is hoped that Chapters 7 and 8 will go some way towards filling this gap, and will inform the examination of participation in practice in a way effectively clarifying the activities and perceptions that constitute it. Nevertheless, we shall have cause to return to the BSC study for valuable contributory information in future chapters - including some consideration of the way those involved in BSC as worker directors reacted to the report with little or no attention to this critique not of the specific scheme but of the system which it had to operate within, and within which it could not genuinely pass power into the hands of the producers of value.

## CHAPTER SIX: NOTES

1. Dahl, 1957. See S. Clegg, 1975 and Lukes, 1974 for pertinent, extended discussions of Dahl.
2. See also, to give a few early examples of what has become a complicated and extensive literature debating this issue. Poulantzas, 1969, 1973, 1976; Miliband, 1969, 1970, 1973; Laclau, 1975.
3. See e.g. Jessop, 1976; Cox, 1976.
4. A good example is Hargreaves' analysis of the way in which a teacher seeks to use his power advantages to "enforce his own definition of the situation on pupils" (1972:139). However, the weaknesses of the approach are shown by Hargreaves' failure to analyse the sources of power (beyond reference to the phenomena of adulthood and authority attached to the teacher role), or the extent to which kids internalise the teacher's definition rather than merely accommodating to it.
5. See e.g. Scheff, 1968; or the use by J. Young, 1971, in discussing deviancy 'amplification', partly through the power of the judicial system's officials to force a particular account of reality on offenders in return for leniency.
6. See Cicourel, 1969, 1972; Garfinkel, 1967.
7. This is made particularly clear in Zimmerman & Wieder's (1971) rejection of Denzin's (1969) interpretation of the ethnomethodological project. For a discussion of the contradictions in their arguments, and its overall inadequacy, see Ramsay, 1976b.
8. See e.g. Miliband, 1969. Specifically on the media, see TUC, 1979; Downing, 1977; Morley, 1976; Glasgow University Media Group, 1976 and Beharrel & Philo (eds) 1977 for treatment of industrial coverage. On education, see e.g. M.F.D. Young (ed), 1971; Bordieu, 1974; Sharp and Green, 1975, dealing with the control effect of 'progressive' 'child-centred' education; and, perhaps, in its way most relevant of all, Willis, 1977, on the constraints shaping working class children for service to capital.
9. See e.g. N. Young, 1967; Mann, 1970.
10. As in the work of Parkin, 1971; see in similar vein the work on 'labour aristocracies' by Crossick, 1978; R.Q. Gray, 1976.
11. Especially the essays in his 1966, and Althusser & Balibar, 1968.
12. See particularly Mepham, 1972; Geras, 1972; Ranciere, 1965 (significantly, perhaps, excluded from the 1968 edition of Lire le Capital); Sayer, 1975, 1975a, 1977.

13. See McCarney, 1976; Easton, 1976; and (more obscurely) Butters, 1974. See also Callinicoss, 1976:100-101, where he directs a similar bolt against Althusser.
14. See Benton, 1976; Easton, 1976; S. Clegg, 1975,1976.
15. C.f. Cousins and Davis, 1974, arguing that 'incorporation' is an inadequate concept to describe a rational series of adaptations by workers to the experience of being commodities, seeking to make the best deal within the system. C.f. also Morley's analysis of mass media representations in his 1976.
16. The observations which follow draw on joint work with Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, together with the latter's own work (see bibliography for references).
17. I have discussed this, with particular reference to the relationship between such policies and the forms of industrial authority relations, in Ramsay, 1973a,1974b.
18. This is a central argument of Corrigan, Ramsay, Sayer, 1978; see also Bettelheim, 1970,1974,1977.
19. The similarity of this view to Flanders' much quoted statement on management's ability to regain control by 'sharing' it is uncanny.
20. The concept of 'latent' power is usually traced back to Bierstedt, 1950. For Bierstedt, power is the basis of organization and order, and much of it is unused or latent. Unfortunately his appreciation of this basis of power goes no further than numbers, organization and resources mustered behind an issue. Lockwood, 1964, offers a partial basis for going beyond this conception to a more structuralist one. But the concept remains underdeveloped, in Lockwood and in Poole.
21. See also the brief discussion of this by one of the authors of the BSC study, Batstone, in his research paper for the Bullock Committee (Batstone,1976:19).

## CHAPTER 7 : WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE LIMITS OF LEGITIMACY

This chapter and the next will commence the consideration of empirical evidence, both interpreting the significance of other research, and clarifying the arguments drawn from this by means of some findings of my own.<sup>1</sup> For convenience and clarity of presentation, the evidence on working class beliefs and those of management will be examined serially. Their interdependence, and common grounding in the same social organization, as well as the contrasting experiences they represent, should be borne in mind throughout.

The aim of presenting the material reproduced below is to give focus and depth to the more abstract arguments of Chapter 6. The general purpose of this enterprise is to show the extent and limits of the rule of ruling class ideas, particularly in the context of work. The direct relevance of this for the issue with which this thesis is concerned is that it gives some clues as to people's likely reactions to participation schemes, such as those described broadly in Chapter 5, and will thus help to make sense of the empirical reality of the operation of such schemes examined in subsequent chapters.

To describe class consciousness takes as 'given' in many ways the analysis of class (see Introduction) and of ideology outlined earlier. At the same time, such a description should not seek to ignore the diverse hues and contours within the overall picture; on the contrary, that diversification is part of what must be explained.

As was indicated in Chapter 6, not all theorists of incorporation have treated the matter of imposing dominant ideology as non-problematical. Some evade the reduction of working class actors to mere inhalers and exhalers of the corrupting fumes of bourgeois concepts, and attempt to analyse the interaction between the dissemination of ruling ideas and the impact of experience, which I have suggested is crucial to any meaningful account.

Parkin (1971) describes a range of possible reactions to the contradictory impact of experience and of dominant values. Some members of the working class accept such values, and either become 'deferential' towards their masters or aspire to rise into their ranks. Others may adopt an aware

radical analysis of society in opposition to the ruling class. But for Parkin the predominant adaptation is that he calls a 'subordinate' value system.

This last perspective, Parkin feels, is not a conscious challenge to the status quo, but an 'accommodative' response to an environment which may not seem ideal, but does seem unassailable and inevitable. Parkin's exploration of the nature of working class consciousness is itself a sequel to an earlier essay (1967) in which he related Labour Party support to the degree of insulation of actors in community and work from the dominant value system. It is this which sustains the 'deviant' action of supporting a political organization which, though it may itself be regarded as ineffectual in changing the order of things, is clearly not the choice of the ruling groups or of the mass media.

The subordinate value system in Parkin's description is thus not a class consciousness, but "an uneasy compromise between rejection and full endorsement of the dominant order" (1971:91-92). It is a "negotiated form of dominant values, rather than a completely differentiated normative construct" (1971:95), a description which suggests an attenuation of ideological incorporation created by the exigencies of the actual situations working people find themselves confronted by.

The inability of dominant ideology to wipe out or adequately reinterpret their existence for the mass of people is similarly suggested by Mann (1970). He summarises data from a collection of other studies of attitudes which reveal that value consensus in any positive sense is spread thin. 'Deviant' responses emerge in particular in support for populist statements, and above all for those where the term 'class' is used. Both Mann and Parkin refer also to the widespread shop floor support for trade unionism as evidence of the limits to internalisation of dominant values.

Yet, Mann observes, there is no working class radical consensus either, and he argues with reference to a wide range of evidence that a 'false' consciousness can be shown to be created by value-manipulation. Thus a full class awareness is stunted by the effects of, in particular, educational socialisation that prevents the formation of a coherent radicalism even if it does not itself retain a full grip. Moreover, Mann argues that there is no real pressure in terms of normal experience that

would require the value inconsistencies which result from this state of affairs to be resolved by most people. Since "meaningful life" is "largely on an everyday level" a person's "commitment to general dominant and deviant values may be irrelevant to his compliance with the expectations of others" (1970:435). This suggestion will be further explored below.

With Parkin we took our departure from a more than usually sophisticated version of the incorporation thesis that recognised the existence of a working class culture that is not merely plasticine in the hands of the dominant groups, but has some basis in experience. Mann's observations reinforce and extend this impression. Experience thus enters these accounts as a significant factor influencing ideas - as Chapter 6 argued it should.

Lockwood's influential and controversial delineation of three ideal-type working class images of society (1966) also takes experience of social relations as its point of departure. Rather than there being a single broad form of working class ideology, Lockwood argues that this must be expected to vary according to the milieux in which workers are located. Thus 'traditional proletarians' should be found in occupational communities which are internally solidary and isolated from the wider society, such as mining, docking and shipbuilding. Their consciousness revolves around an 'us-them' and power-based model of society. The 'traditional deferential' worker is more closely associated with his employer and less with fellow workers, as in small family businesses and agrarian work. He is inclined to hold a status view of social stratification, in which his superiors are seen as justly placed above him. Finally, the 'privatised' worker is not tied closely by work group relationships, nor with his employer, nor indeed with the community in which he resides. This leads, says Lockwood, to an instrumental view of work as a means to the end of financing his domestic existence and to a 'pecuniary' model of social hierarchy (i.e. based on material, not status or power differences).<sup>2</sup>

Lockwood's neat categories and explanations have come in for mounting criticism. These have been based for the most part on empirical findings which (often to the surprise of the investigators, one suspects) failed to replicate the common-sense expectations aroused by the three ideal-type

images. In particular, the image of the 'traditional proletarian' worker has received a battering, as studies have revealed that shipbuilding, docking and mining can all show strong features of other types of consciousness.<sup>3</sup> The 'money' model of work and of social hierarchy originally ascribed to the privatised worker of modern industry has been unearthed amongst shipbuilding and docking respondents also.

Further criticisms have pointed to the lack of homogeneous images amongst any group of workers who have been studied. Large numbers always deviate from the modal response within samples, suggesting again that broad categorisation of milieux are too simplistic and thereby conceal the complex process at work in the creation of world images.<sup>4</sup>

This last point leads us onto an associated feature of working class perceptions and rationalisation of reality which we touched on above in discussing Mann. That author has more recently developed his arguments that the most significant feature of such accounts may be their inconsistency and incompleteness - not only as between different members of the class, but within the image of each individual. "To the extent that consensus exists", he argues "it is the product, not the cause of institutional stability". Longstanding domination "attains a tremendous facticity. What 'is' becomes what is natural." (1975:280).

Mann has attempted to extend this thesis by discussion of evidence from a study of workers in Peterborough. The results reveal that responses to a set of statements designed to test political position in left-right terms produce above all inconsistency (Mann, 1975a).<sup>5</sup> An examination of other data from this study, this time on the labour market and its effects, revealed that whilst in objective, market terms workers do share a common class position, their awareness of this is disrupted by the complexity of that market. The effect is to "fragment their consciousness" of themselves as a class (Blackburn & Mann, 1973).

Mann describes a world that shuttles and shakes people around, that seems to reveal both solidary and competitive interests with fellow employees. "Contradictory consciousness is the reflection of contradictory reality" (1975:281), but a radical consciousness could only emerge if reality were sufficiently fissured by contradiction (1975: 278; 1973). The analysis here has taken on the angular tidiness of the base/superstructure

distinction (the contradictions described are those between e.g. different sets of capital, and the discussion of consciousness is of a mere "reflection" as above), but it retains much suggestive relevance for the account of ideology developed in Chapter 6 and of the form of its realisation in present-day capitalism.

Other studies in recent years have also shaken themselves free of the shackles of the orthodoxy that states that workers are either contented, incorporated souls or are bubbling and heaving with the pressure of corked proletarianism. They have similarly explored the inchoateness and lack of coherence in most workers' views of the world even when asked by an interviewer to express their views (which, in the normal run of events, is an unlikely and abnormal demand, and perhaps likely to give an exaggerated coherence to their views). Some of these findings will be presented shortly.

Thus far the discussion has moved progressively towards the conclusion that workers are prevented by their very existence from appreciating the structure of domination and exploitation to which they are subject. This seems to imply that the system will be maintained by the experience it generates, for this prevents the construction of a common, oppositional consciousness amongst its subjects as part of the process of creating profits and power. Yet this is to forget the existence of a massive, visible resistance to the order of things, or at least to its unhindered operation, above all, through the institutions of trade unionism. Trade union consciousness may be a narrow, economistic adaptation as compared with the revolutionary ardour many activities long to see, but it nevertheless represents a powerful deviation from the status quo and one which can threaten the viability of the capitalist system on occasion. That threat may be unintended - and for union leaders the willingness to collaborate in restabilisation e.g. through the Social Contract confirms this - but it is real nonetheless. Moreover, to many members of management, and others in the ruling class, the threat is perceived as far greater, far more constant, and apparently as far more intentional than it really is.

It is ironical, given this management perception, that so frequently judgements on trade unions from the left lapse into reliance on the intentional sell-out to explain the lack of visible support for socialist ideals. Yet the pursuit of gains within the confines of the employment

contract represents the logical and necessary path for the achievement of employee support by wresting concessions from employers within the experience of the capitalist employer, market and State. This compromise, conscious or not, is at the root of most 'collaboration' as seen from a purist left perspective.

This apprehension of constraints and possibilities can be succinctly expressed as the experience of being a commodity (c.f. Cousins & Davis, 1974). For those who have only their labour to sell, the choice is between starvation, individual contracts (in line with the dominant value of individualism, but a supremely weak position for the worker) or collective organization. If the goal of this last adaptation is economic, this is readily comprehended, though not by condemnation. Combined with Mack's analysis of commodity fetishism, these observations account well for the limits and possibilities of consciousness explored here.

From this substantial but limited support for trade union action, we can proceed to another observed feature of working class ideology. Parkin notes that a study by Cannon (1967) found that only 33% of printing workers disagreed with the statement that trade unions have too much power, while an N.O.P. survey in 1969 found 67% of union respondents concurred that their leaders' actions were a 'threat' to the prosperity of the country. It is not hard to discover more recent reports of the same attitudes. Yet industrial action retains its force, and members not only remain willing to support it but are commonly to be found pressurising their leadership to adopt a less collaborative, 'responsible' line as over the Social Contract. Parkin suggests an explanation:

... it could be hypothesised that in situations where purely abstract evaluations are called for, the dominant value system will provide the moral frame of reference; but in concrete social situations involving choice and action, the negotiated version - or the subordinate value system - will provide the moral framework. (Parkin, 1971:93).

Hill (1976:140-141) takes up this theorisation as making sense of the discrepancies in attitudes amongst the dockers he studied.<sup>6</sup>

Nichols and Armstrong also identify surviving opposition to dominant values, but remark also upon the failure to appreciate reality in cases not directly affecting the individual. In the absence of direct

experience of a strike or of unemployment, workers at Chemco were peculiarly susceptible to the message presented by the mass media:

As the men themselves frequently pointed out 'I only know what I read in the papers'. So Fred could go on believing that strikes were simply the result of agitation and Stanley that unemployment is a consequence of idleness on a mass scale, even though in certain other respects both men saw society in class terms. (1976:151).

Even those who directly experience conflict with management may well define theirs as a special case. Thus, one researcher told me of his survey of supervisors who had just been on a long dispute, which revealed that a large majority still saw strikes in general as irresponsible actions. This has obvious implications for the ideology on participation : if the image is of general harmony, this will not make a local scheme work to transcend conflict, but it may well limit the perception of the sources of failure to personality factors and staunch the emergence of a more generalised critique of the participation concept. Thus participation may be insignificant in its effects on power distribution at plant level and yet the ideology at the societal level may operate with some efficacy to management's benefit. We shall obviously have to return to this question.

Meantime, we have resurrected the role of the mass media. Within the account of power and ideology developed thus far, a simple domination account has been discarded. Clearly, however, the media may play a major role where it is the major or sole source of 'experience', i.e. of information on a subject. The bias in presentation has now been subjected to careful content analysis. This reveals an overriding concern with a harmonistic, management - and order - oriented accounts of industrial relationships, and with an image of the prevalence of essential social justice (hence stressing the marginality of critical accounts).<sup>7</sup>

Yet if the fissuring of concrete experience and generalised propaganda seems to offer a considerable clarification of the farraginous visions we find around us, it is not in itself a sufficient description of the contradictions in working class consciousness. It will be recalled that

Mann also found support for generalised populist statements oriented to class-structured issues, and this is confirmed by other research. In other words, the dominant ideology does not hold uncontested sway over social images of wider scope. This raises important question marks against the simple characterisation of working class values as a 'subordinate' culture, and there seems good reason to think instead of a counter-culture which provides in some degree a real alternative and in many ways a conflicting (not just 'accommodative') meaning-system. In this sense, the radical perspective is not merely the possession of a select few, but spreads tendrils of influence more widely.

Communism is inextricably part of the history of British Labourism for close on fifty years..... As a pattern of attraction and repulsion, Marxism and anti-Marxism permeates our culture (Thompson, 1965:347-348).

This is not only a struggle between individuals and groups, it is a struggle within the perceptions of each member of society. As Corrigan observes:

Surely workers are in an almost perfectly contradictory position. On the one hand experiencing the lowliness of her or his 'station in life'; on the other being told that she or he is capable, with workmates, of holding the country to ransom, watching the lights go out, the trains stop, the candlelight illumine those who write to the Times. (1975:230-231).

C.Wright Mills has written of the way in which people use 'vocabularies of motive' to account for their actions and beliefs. These vocabularies are seen as not merely facades - they will have some ties with 'psychic structure' (Gerth & Mills, 1954:119-120), but generally someone "will internalise many vocabularies of motive which may well be in conflict" (loc.cit.:122).

Back of 'mixed motives' and 'motivational conflicts' are competing discrepant situational patterns, and their respective vocabularies of motive. With shifting and interstitial situations, each of several alternatives may belong to disparate systems of action which have different vocabularies of motive appropriate to them. (Mills, 1940:450).

Once this is connected to our information on competing accounts of the world, not only those of ruling class versus direct experience or community tradition, but those arising from the vicissitudes of experience itself, the bewildering complexity of people's attitudes becomes clear. So at the same time do the problems of the sociologist seeking to extrapolate from restricted responses to interview or questionnaire schedules.

But people are not so completely beyond the grasp of description as this may make it seem. It still seems possible to talk meaningfully of a struggle at root between bourgeois 'dominant' interpretations and those which arise out of their appreciation of political economy of the working class. If this is true, different rhetorics should tap different vocabularies of response and there is evidence that this indeed is the case.<sup>8</sup> Another incidental example of inconsistency is cited by Barnsley (1972). When a sample was asked 'Do you think the United States should allow speeches against democracy?', 21% only said 'yes', 62% 'no'. When the proposition was adjusted to read 'Do you think the United States should forbid speeches against democracy?', several respondents in a similar sample appear to have been affected by confrontation with the logical need to act against 'free speech', so that just 46% said they should and 39% that they should not be forbidden. Hyman (1972:147) cites a survey where 89% of respondents expressed opposition to the closed shop, then the question was rephrased and the opponents fell to only 45% of the total. He notes how conventional opinion poll methods are designed to elicit the dominant value-oriented response, e.g. referring to strikes as a 'problem' or posing closed shop questions in terms of freedom of the individual not to join a union rather than of the right of workers to choose not to work with non-unionists.<sup>9</sup>

In anticipation of this possibility, my own questionnaire posed two questions on adjacent pages, both of which aimed to elicit a degree of agreement or disagreement with selected statements. The first statement was designed to reflect a dominant value/mass media perception, whilst the second invoked definitions which were more pro-labour. Otherwise they represent, logically, approximate inversions of each other.

(A) "Strikes are irresponsible and against the national interest, and every effort should be made to put a stop to them".

(B) "Working men should always have the right to withdraw their labour as it's sometimes the only way they can get a fair deal".

The inversion is only approximate as it would for instance be possible for someone to accept (A) but believe that the cause of strikes is management's intransigence. It seems unlikely that this or similar possibilities can account for the results obtained, however.

TABLE 7.1 \* 'STRIKES' AND 'WITHDRAWAL OF LABOUR'

%s	<u>Weldrill</u>		<u>Epoch</u>		<u>Natco</u>		<u>All</u>	
	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)
Strongly Disagree	22	1	21	0	11	1	16	1
Disagree	28	8	35	3	21	9	26	7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	13	13	9	7	18	12	14	12
Agree	16	34	20	60	33	52	35	48
Strongly Agree	23	45	15	30	18	26	19	33
	(N=102)	(N=103)	(N=75)	(N=73)	(N=171)	(N=171)	(N=350)	(N=349)

\* Columns do not always add to 100 due to rounding, here and in the other tables to follow.

Overall, the pattern is one of a very clear shift - from a fairly even split over whether or not strikes are irresponsible, to a 10:1 majority (excluding the 'neither' category) supporting the right of workers to withdraw labour. At the same time, the effect of concrete experience does come through in the case of Epoch workers who had just had their first strike. Here there is a strong majority against the first question, in strongest contrast to the nationalised industry (where relations seemed least oppositional generally) where the majority runs the other way.

The extent of the 'shift' in position provoked by the differing rhetorics of the questions can be highlighted by dichotomising 'agrees' and 'disagrees', and calculating the deviation from the mirror image of agreement and disagreement that should represent an ideologically consistent response.

TABLE 7.2 : RESPONSE 'SHIFT' BETWEEN RHETORICS

	<u>Weldrill</u>		<u>Epoch</u>		<u>Natco</u>		<u>All</u>	
	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)
Agree	50	69	56	3	33	10	42	8
Disagree	39	79	35	90	51	78	44	81

The degree of transfer towards a pro-labour position in question (B) is thus strongest by far in Natco, where the greatest support for the view that strikes are irresponsible were found. Hence consistency as between firms is higher in question (B) than in (A), and in general a third or more of all respondents change in question (B) to a pro-labour position.

If, as seems likely, this is a pattern of response which could be repeated over a wide range of questions, not only do all opinion polls and related attitude thermometers come to require the closest of scrutiny to trace any mobilisation of bias, but we have good reason to believe that an appropriate approach may tap a substantial reservoir of potentially radical conceptions amongst the working class. A brief survey of evidence confirms this last suspicion.

#### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IMAGES

It is true that in Britain 43% of a sample in a recent poll attributed poverty to "laziness and lack of will-power", while only 16% blamed "injustice in our society", and that attitudes are no more liberal among the lower classes than among their social superiors on social issues.<sup>10</sup> Yet Moorhouse & Chamberlain's Study (1974) finds a 64% majority who agree that no person should have more than one home until there are enough for all (and even when the question is reversed to a dominant value form, that people should be allowed to own as many houses as they can afford, a 53%

majority remains opposed). Amongst an American sample, Garson (1973) finds 80% agree that 'the laws favour the rich', and in a result which follows the recent British response noted above, 44% agree 'people's problems are the result of their own doing'; the rub comes in the contradictory 100% support for the view that 'working class people can get ahead by sticking together'. Inconsistency amongst American respondents are also observed by Rytina & Form.<sup>11</sup>

If we turn to voting, it is perhaps the case that the very act of voting represents incorporation or accommodation at some level. Nevertheless, the survival in Britain of a clear class-based voting division<sup>12</sup> implies that the act by no means marks the unqualified victory of a dominant ideology. Goldthorpe et al concludes that:

"loyalty to the Labour Party is but one expression of a more general social outlook which we have termed 'socialistic collectivism'". (1968:75)

They do not find a significant drift from this loyalty amongst 'affluent' workers. But perhaps most telling is the finding that amongst working class Labour voters politics was seen as being a matter of 'opposing class interests' by 39%; 'simple class interests' by 47% and of 'class political norms' by 5%. Thus only 9% allotted politics no class content.<sup>13</sup>

A widespread acceptance that a class struggle exists in Britain, and a strong tendency for manual workers to see class as a relevant form of self-description and to rate themselves 'working' class are shown by many studies.<sup>14</sup> The type of categorisations through which people are allocated to classes by respondents has, however, been an issue of some controversy in recent years. The debate was sparked largely by the evidence used in the Affluent Worker study to back up Lockwood's conception of the modern 'instrumental privatised' worker discussed earlier. The argument of the Luton researchers was that a 'money' model of class structure should typify this type of individual (i.e. they should view the differences between classes in terms of income and wealth). In their sample, 54% of respondents are identified as expressing such a model, as compared with only 4% with a 'power' model, 8% with a 'prestige' model and 33% with other or unidentifiable images (1969:150). The prominence of money as the sole or major criterion given by workers in describing class has been confirmed

in other studies,<sup>15</sup> - though one notable factor is the discovery of these views amongst workers who on Lockwood's account should be traditional proletarians with a power model more prominent, e.g. shipbuilding and dock workers.

The implication of the 'money' model is that class divisions are not perceived in terms of 'us' and 'them' i.e. of domination between fundamentally opposed interest groups. However, one of the Affluent Worker researchers has since questioned whether respondents offering a money image may not be merely describing the most obvious differentiating factor rather than describing root cause (Platt, 1971). If this were so, a 'money' and 'power' response might be merely different expressions of the same type of image and this is suspected by Brown et al and Hill in their discussions. Moorhouse (1976) asserts this still more strongly and shows that despite a reproduction of the 'money' model in his study with Chamberlain, when asked directly about power differentials 85% agreed top classes had more power than others (p.483) and a clear majority of these disapproved of this superior power.

A further question employed by social scientists that can be of some use to us is that which asks in what manner the country is ruled. The pattern for this question was set by Form and Rytina in their investigation on reactions to different models of the distribution of power in the U.S.A.

They employ three statements describing pluralist (Riesman), power elite (Mills) and big business domination of government decision-making (Marx) as the alternatives for respondents to choose between. Avoiding complicating objections to such categorisation (especially in labelling terms) for the moment, we find overall 59% support for the pluralist model, 22% for the picture of big business rule and 19% for the power elite; the pluralist image remained a majority view for both negroes and whites, though for those with less than seven years education it was surpassed by the big business image (40% to 33%). Garson's study of automobile workers evokes 42% support for the pluralist model, 22% for the elite version and 32% for the big business account (so the latter two combined do command narrow majority support - see 1973:167-168). He also found, however, that 52% disagreed that 'people like me do not have any say about what the government does'.

In British polls, the New Society survey (Barker & Spencer, 1975) found that 56% disagreed that 'people in Britain have a big say in how the country is run'. Their question on who runs the country asks people to choose the two or three most accurate descriptions of influential groups (hence the total adds to 265% not 100%), with the following results:-

TABLE 7.3 : NEW SOCIETY SURVEY ON 'WHO RUNS THE COUNTRY'

Top Officials and Politicians	57%
Ordinary Man and Woman	16%
Pressure Groups	37%
Trade Unions	61%
Business Men and Industrialists	32%
Election Manifestos	29%
Mass Media	33%

The figures for occupational groups C2, D and E do not deviate far from these overall figures which, on the face of it, confirm low perceived influence of 'ordinary' people. Yet trade unions are attributed high influence by twice as many people as industrialists. This finding confirms the success of dominant propaganda in one sphere at least (notwithstanding the limited influence given by the respondents themselves to the media).

Moorhouse & Chamberlain (1974) found that 75% of their interviewees felt ordinary people had insufficient say in how the country was run, but 77% of those who believed this attributed the deficiency to non-responsiveness and unapproachability, and only 6% to big business power. This is the case despite clearly anti-dominant views on property, and a response of 37% that the most effective way of affecting decisions was collective action such as strikes, demonstrations etc. (34% saw no effective action, 11% suggested voting, 15% normal channels such as M.P's.). This and the New Society survey suggest that whatever the realities of industrial power distribution, the appearances of political decision-making effectively conceal the determination of policy by capitalist interests and exaggerate union interests. This separation in the minds of men of industrial and political issues, the ideological concretisation of pluralist imagery on 'institutionalisation' etc., demonstrates the limits of experience and so

awareness which enable the grip of dominant ideology to be extended. Nichols and Armstrong comment persuasively on this (1976:184-186) - and incidentally also uncover, in their extended exposition of the interviewees' perceptions of the world, several responses which would fit Rytina & Form's 'marxist' or 'power elite' categories from respondents with ideologies which in other respects could be markedly reactionary.

Bearing this last point in mind, it was nevertheless of some interest to examine the response to a similar question to those discussed above in the questionnaire to my own sample (see appendix to Chapter 7 for full question):

TABLE 7.4 : WHO RUNS THE COUNTRY? (Own Survey)

1. No One Group Runs The Country - Lots Of Little Groups	12%
2. Power Elite	32%
3. Big Business	19%
4. Trade Unions	14%
5. Ordinary People	9%
6. Combinations of (2) and (3)	4%
7. Combinations of (4) and others	5%
8. Other/Other Combinations	5%
	(N=339)

In this case, big business at least gets a higher 'score' than do trade unions, though the former are still low in the reckoning compared with the power elite notion. Once again, the 'ordinary people' are not thought to have a great deal of say.

It seems possible that having allowed for comments thus far, it may be worthwhile to group responses into those which identify some distant, ruling group ((2), (3) and (6)), those which accord with a pluralist vision ((1) and (5)) and those which adopt the view that unions somehow command most power ((4) and (7)). Using this categorisation we find results, broken down by firm, as follows:

TABLE 7.5 : WHO RUNS THE COUNTRY? BY IMAGE AND FIRM

%s	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>Total</u>
Ruling Groups	59	70	47	55
Pluralist	25	16	21	21
Trade Unions	13	9	26	19
Other Combinations	4	5	6	5
	(N=97)	(N=77)	(N=165)	(N=339)

As with the 'strikes' questions, it will be seen that Epoch respondents were most 'radical' (if this can be meaningfully associated with the ruling groups selection) and those in the nationalised industry leant furthest the other way. Overall there remained a majority who adopted a 'ruling groups' image by contrast with the U.S. data (and perhaps clarifying somewhat the other British findings cited).

The issue of working class consciousness is clearly, then, far more complex and contradictory than notions like 'false consciousness' and 'incorporation' allow. Despite widespread tendencies to endorse dominant values on the nature of government or to take an apparently limited, money-based model of class, there is a deep-rooted and widespread belief in distinct and ill-legitimated social divisions, and in a lack of democratic control of the State, all of which militate against the straightforward, quiescent contentment which would best suit those who benefit from capitalism. The survival of a counter-culture, evoking strong response to critical statements concerning political relations, and the persistence of contradictions always threaten to provide the reasoning for militant action when the oppression of capitalism makes itself patently visible.

#### WORK AND THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

The implication of the evidence considered thus far is that we can expect participation to be considered with a mixture of approval and suspicion by employees. At the societal level, the degree of control (or involvement) seems low, and there is a distrust of ruling groups, yet this is mingled with acceptance of claims for their trustworthiness (and of the villainous

intent of those who seek to challenge their general order) and a belief that the people should have more say. Responses become more militant when related to directly experienced injustice, or when invoked by more general statements which call forth class, community and personal awareness of domination.

The perspective on ideology developed thus far might lead to some expectation that attitudes within the workplace context, where the relations of capitalist production have to generate profit directly, should be somewhat more oppositional to the dominant order than those found generally. This is by no means automatically the case - the appearance of work relations may remain as deceptive as those other social relations which encompass and interweave with them. But as Parkin and Mann were both seen to observe, we do know that there is a considerable support for trade union action in practice. What we do find, nevertheless, is conflicting and inconsistent attitudes, which depend heavily on the vocabulary of motive in use in responding to an interviewer or to situations (as the already cited data on attitudes to strikes suggests). It is these attitudes which form the immediate terrain for opinions in participation schemes, so we shall need to give them further attention. In so doing, I shall present material from my own and other surveys, though the discussion will be somewhat curtailed, so as to dovetail with rather than repeat the analysis of later chapters.

The major source in my own questionnaire of the data analysed below was a set of "general statements", the full questions and responses to which are contained in the Appendix to Chapter 7. The questions were in most cases from previous schedules, in particular from the Peterborough survey of Mann & Blackburn. The results will be considered in the appropriate section below.

#### THE CAPITALIST ENTERPRISE AND MANAGEMENT

Let us begin by considering workers' attitudes to the rationale of the capitalist enterprise itself. Here the data is unusually scanty, although it is a major area of pressure for management, as is reflected not only in the vicissitudes and contortions in positions on the issue of worker participation itself, but also in the sustained campaign to present

favourable company images and a general notion of 'social responsibility' to employees and to the public at large. One company noted for leading the way in terms of internal communication and opinion testing, Guest, Keen & Nettlefold, discovered "a lack of understanding on the shop floor as to what profits are all about" (Thomas, 1974).<sup>16</sup> For marxists, the insistent talk by the CBI and others of the urgent need to tell employees how profits are "really" made must cause some pupil dilation, though it is, of course, highly indicative for our discussions here.

If we confine ourselves to questions about profits, we find that in a 1970 survey 29% thought firms made too much profit, 41% a reasonable profit, 8% too little, though the first figure rose to 38% for C2 class respondents and 39% for D/E.<sup>17</sup> Such a response is limited in the information it provides, however, for as we have found and shall find repeatedly with polls, implications are often adduced which need not follow. Thus the term 'reasonable' could represent anything from a consensus to an indifferent 'accommodative' response. Other polls show fairly widespread support for suspicion of Stock Exchange dealers and for a feeling of insufficient say in financial institutions.<sup>18</sup>

A CBI sponsored survey on employee attitudes purported to show that 83% disagreed, and only 8% agreed, that profit was a dirty word. When asked what should be done with profit, however, 69% of workers felt they should be part ploughed back into the company, 58% that some should go to workers and only 22% and 10% respectively that any should go to shareholders or directors.<sup>19</sup> Discussion focussed on the first of these results (and on the 86% who were reported to feel it important to live in a free enterprise system) and far less attention was devoted to the other findings. Yet we cannot even assume that ploughing back profits means the same things to both managers and workers. To the latter it may well be seen not as the expansion of entrepreneurial activity but as the securing and expansion of jobs. There may be (and in practice evidently is) room for severe altercation over the actual allocation of funds.

Turning to my own findings, 55% agreed and 22% disagreed that 'Industry should pay its profits to workers and not to shareholders' (Statement E). Interestingly, the workers in the nationalised industry, generally the least 'left' insofar as this term has any meaning in this context, were the strongest supporters (68% to 12%) and Epoch workers, usually most

radical, gave only a narrow majority (39% to 37%). Weldrill respondents were 54% to 27% in favour of the statement, while in Mann & Blackburn's Peterborough survey using the same statement, 50% agreed and 27% disagreed. This provides clear evidence of a view of the social role of profits strongly at variance with management's (q.v. Appendix to Chapter 8) and suggests that the endorsement of profit sharing by workers (see Chapter 12 below) does not mean they have accepted the harmonistic conception of this that managerial proponents advance.

If we consider next the attitudes to management in general, it will be apparent from the material on the conception of and demand for participation presented elsewhere<sup>20</sup> that there are marked limits to the legitimation of, and passivity in the face of, managerial 'authority'. We can provide general background for those findings with reference not only to the rejection of statement (D) and the support for (A), which raise directly the issue of industrial democracy, but also to the responses to questions (B) and (C). On (B) a majority of workers reject the idea that managers have their welfare at heart. The Peterborough study, on the other hand, finds the statement accepted by a majority, though 49% of workers agreed (as against 36% disagreeing) that 'all managements will try and put one over on the workers if they get a chance'. Similarly, 69% of Blackburn and Beynon's study agreed that management at 'Gourmets' were genuinely interested in the workers well-being, yet 59% also agreed that management would put one over on the workers if they got a chance (1972:57-58). In Garson's U.S. study, where supposedly workers are less radical, similar contradictions emerge, but the rejection of the statement cited in Table 7.6 is certainly far more decisive than any G.B. study equivalent.<sup>21</sup>

TABLE 7.6 : WORKERS VIEWS OF MANAGEMENT

	Most management have the welfare of their workers at heart. (own survey).					Garson (1973:167) Management makes its decisions in the best interests of its employees.	Managers know just what's best for the firm, and workers should do just what they are told. (own survey)				
	<u>All</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P'brgh Survey</u>		<u>All</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P'brgh Survey</u>
Agree	22	30	15	20	50	4	8	12	9	6	48
Disagree	56	45	68	57	34	86	76	66	86	77	40
(N=)	(353)(104) (77)(172)						(355) (105)(77)(173)				

As for question (C), there is a decisive rejection in all firms of the unique competence of management (even, as we shall see, amongst managers themselves), once again in contrast to the Peterborough survey finding. At the same time, there is a tendency, unearthed by the sensitive depth of Nichols and Armstrong's interviews, to conflate management and technical experts, and to overlap the legitimacy of the latter onto the former (see 1976:198 esp.). Amidst all these findings, it is nevertheless hard to see as likely in an industrial context an acceptance by workers of all the apparent implications of the Gallup finding, reported by Jessop (1974:97), that 80%, consistent across class lines, felt strong management was good for the country.<sup>22</sup>

#### THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

It will be seen from the findings reported above that the ambiguities detected in socio-political attitudes are to be found equally sharply in attitudes to the employment relationship. This undoubtedly has extensive implications for a comprehension of attitudes to worker participation schemes. Most discussions of this - and of workers' attitudes to their jobs in general - have unfortunately shown little appreciation of the subtleties, complexities and contradictions (real and apparent)<sup>23</sup> in employee meaning-systems. If we explore attitudes to the firm more fully, the first and most consistent discovery is a feeling amidst all the perceptions of untrustworthiness, conflict etc., that one's own firm is at the least an 'average' employer (see Chapter 12 below). This may be a consequence of selection (those who dislike a firm leave) of rationalisation, or of fact - though it does not, it should be noted, denote absolute approval, only relative.<sup>24</sup>

In general, the attachment to employment is near enough absolute - workers, particularly (given social role definitions) male workers, have to work, and have to come to terms with their existence on that basis. Some industries - e.g. shipbuilding (Brown & Brannen, 1970:206) - create an industrial pride and ethos, although the predominance of instrumental priorities remains even here for the most part. The employer is thus both a compeller - he or she is there to make sure you do something for the money - and a participant in joint enterprise, for production remains visibly, even under commodity conditions, a matter of effort by all concerned.

Most employees in such circumstances are likely to express some variant (or several depending on context, vocabulary of motive evoked etc.) of that described by Nichols & Armstrong:

Whilst Fred's view of society does not transcend the system where there's got to be profit, he remains keenly aware, that the same system poses a constant threat to men's security of employment ... (1976:159).

The consequent tendentious nature of any assertion that most perceptions of the employment relationship are likely to be 'essentially harmonistic' or 'essentially oppositional' has not prevented such a simplification being common. Perhaps the most blatant example of this in recent years has been the interpretations placed on a popular question which tests people's views of their employer in terms of a 'football team' analogy. I have discussed this in some detail elsewhere (Ramsay, 1975) and will therefore only outline the issues raised here, and add information which has come to hand since writing that piece.

The football team question is generally assumed to tap precisely the distinction between "harmony" and "conflict" perceptions of the employment relationship. Agreement that the firm is like a football team is taken to indicate a feeling on the part of the respondent of common interests with the employer, and is used as a prime ideological indicator.<sup>25</sup> The interpretation is originally Willener's (the first to use the term) and, latterly, that of the Affluent Worker study.

The oversimplification lies in the view that a simple dichotomy exists - or an appropriate one in which respondents will at least lie along a single dimension, and will answer according to which side of some dividing line they feel they fall. Table 7.7 summarises data from other studies, though in fact the question was not always posed in precisely the same manner, and given the argument that follows, even internal comparability should be regarded as tentative.

TABLE 7.7 : ANSWERS TO FOOTBALL TEAM QUESTION, VARIOUS STUDIES

	<u>Willener *</u> (1964)	<u>Goldthorpe et al (1968a)</u>			<u>Wedderburn &amp; Crompton (1972) +</u>							
	<u>White Collar</u>	<u>Crafts men</u>	<u>Sett ers</u>	<u>Process ists</u>	<u>Machin Assemb lers</u>	<u>All Manual</u>						
Agree (with analogy)	28	76	59	83	52	51	79	67	78	76	68	56
Disagree (with analogy)	79	24	36	13	44	39	16	28	15	16	25	36
		<u>Cotgrove &amp; Vanplew (1972) p.172</u>			<u>Mann &amp; Blackburn I (1972)</u>		<u>Brown et al **</u>					
		<u>S.Wales</u>	<u>E.London</u>	<u>Manchester</u>	<u>Grangemouth</u>	<u>Severnside</u>						
Agree	67	67	53	75	85				31		(a)	(b)
Disagree	31	33	45	23	9				51		79	54
											17	37
		<u>Mackenzie (1973) ++</u>			<u>Hill (1976)</u>							
		<u>Craftworkers</u>	<u>Clerks</u>	<u>Managers</u>	<u>Manual</u>	<u>Foremen</u>						
Agree	72	82	74		56	33						
Disagree	Not given	Not given	Not given		41	66						

\* The full figures (for French workers) are as follows: strongly agree 12%; agree 16%; disagree 28%; strongly disagree 41%; no answer 3%

+ Figures do not add to 100 due to 'don't know/not answered/other' categories.

I This question takes the form of a statement which aims to tap an oppositional vocabulary of motive: 'Full teamwork in firms is impossible because workers and managers are really on opposite sides'. Hence agreement with the Statement is treated in the Table as disagreement with the team analogy and vice-versa.

\*\* Column (a) refers to the standard football team question, but for Column (b) the rider was added, 'is it like that at Swan Hunter's?' I am grateful to Richard Brown for access to these full results (see 1972:131 for part).

++ U.S.Survey.

This Table presents an impressive display of evidence, on the face of it, of a remarkably consistent majority in traditional or 'modern' industry who view industrial relations in harmonistic terms. Yet there are great holes in this data which are revealed on close examination of the fabric which looks so tight-woven at first, distant glance. Let me enumerate only a few sources of doubt. Firstly, there is the anomalous Mann and Blackburn finding amongst employees in other respects at least no less 'conservative' than others. Secondly, there are Hill's foremen, or even the manual dock workers. Hill's response was to distinguish 'descriptive' from 'normative' responses, (i.e. whether they were describing what is, or what 'reasonably' ought to be). Those who disagreed or did not give a reply he asked whether they felt matters 'could' become more akin to teamwork, and most respondents (32% of 44% manual, 63% of 67% foremen) said it could. Surprisingly, Hill did not explore whether the 'harmonistic' responses were 'normative' or 'descriptive', nor does he really ask what a 'normative' response implies, despite a comment cited below which suggests reservations as to the meaning of the question similar to those investigated here. Thirdly, there is Willener's finding that French workers' views are proportionately an inversion of those here. Is this truly, as Mann suggests, a reflection of contrasting ideology in the full sense of the set of beliefs and attitudes of the respondents? Or is it a consequence, at least in part, of cultural meaning of the question (which is also, it should be noted, phrased in terms of 'shooting goals together', and identifies management as the 'captain', a phrasing which could well evoke sharper opposition).<sup>26</sup>

Fourthly, we have the results of the Tyneside shipbuilding study (Brown et al) in which 23% of workers shifted from agreement to disagreement when the general question was specified to Swan Hunter circumstances. Moreover, the same study suggests far more 'harmonistic' views amongst new apprentices which decay as they spend more years at work. In each instance, the implication reinforces the expectation that views about concrete experience may be more radical than those on abstract or generalised managerial visions. We shall find this conclusion applies a fortiori on reactions to several ideas for participation, and to those for specific schemes in operation. Fifthly, we have evidence from Martin & Fryer's study of largely 'deferential' workers that a direct use of 'interests' as the issue voiced in the question rather than the football team surrogate can produce a response which seems, in consequence, more

'radical' than most of the others.<sup>27</sup> Sixthly, both Wedderburn & Crompton (1972:44-45) and Hill note that for many of their respondents it is unclear:

... whether the question required a descriptive evaluation of industry, or whether it was concerned with the inherent and essential nature of employment over time ... (Hill, 1976:112).

It seemed to me that a query similar to Hill's but leading in a different direction from the way he chooses to interpret and apply it, needed to be raised about the whole football team question. It could be taken on the one hand to evoke agreement which did concern harmony or interest, or it could refer only to the observable "inherent and essential nature of employment", i.e. to an appearance based on 'common sense'. This latter would involve agreement as a recognition only of the need for a degree of co-operation if production is to take place at all - a 'co-ordinative' response it can usefully be called. This possibility was explored by use of the following question:

Some people once said that a firm is like a football team in which managers and workers are on the same side. Would you generally:

Agree, but only because people have to work together to get things done.

Agree, because managers and men have the same interests in everything that matters.

Disagree, because workers and managers are basically on opposite sides.

The results (Table 7.8) were startlingly decisive in their support for a need to re-evaluate the meaning of responses.

<sup>28</sup>  
TABLE 7.8 : FIRMS AND FOOTBALL TEAMS

%s	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Agreement (co-ordinative)	46	47	42	44
Agreement (harmonistic)	8	8	7	8
Disagree	38	43	41	41

Table 7.8 shows overall slightly more opposition (i.e. disagreement) than is typical in other studies (though the figure is very close to the Luton study). It reveals, however, an impressive and reassuring consistency as between firms. It also produces almost a 6:1 split of 'agrees' in favour of the co-ordinative version, and in the process produces an 85% majority of all respondents who reject a harmonistic view of the enterprise. In the plant which had experienced a strike in the recent past the only real difference is a slightly more definite response, leaving fewer Not Answereds - and a few more Disagrees; by and large, the co-ordinative account can, it seems, readily combine the 'team' image and the real-world conflicts of management and employees.

It is not claimed that this result tells us all we need to know of the employee's image of 'teamwork'. It does suggest, however, firstly the tension of co-operation and conflict in the experience of relational 'facts', and secondly the limits of an integrative (or simple dichotomous) interpretation. The images of workers become more lifelike as we expand out of crude categorisations, but as they become more comprehensive so too they become more complex, cluttered with eddies, cross-currents, and whirlpools designed to suck in the over-glib interpreter.

#### JOB ATTITUDES

If we move on now to consider attitudes to the job itself, it becomes rapidly apparent that the 'orientation to work' has a context, often only partly if at all recognised, in the broader social images considered to date in this chapter (though the relationship between the images is dialectical and internal rather than causal in some simple manner). Thus it becomes almost worthless to identify 'instrumental orientations' as such without having some clear idea about what this signifies. Is it a conscious and coherent attitude? A rationalization of monotony (i.e. determined by work experience itself rather than prior attitudes)?<sup>29</sup>

A form of alienated consciousness of work and life that arises from being a commodity?<sup>30</sup> The frame of reference of this study suggests that the most adequate formulation must be a refinement of the last of these, the implication of which is to give rather different meaning than is provided by either Goldthorpe or Daniel to the forms and dynamics of the attitudes observed.

Given the snares and sheer volume of evidence on attitudes to work, I shall restrict myself (beyond the above somewhat cryptic comments which presume a knowledge of the debate on the part of the reader) to certain selective and arbitrary comments on the data. It may be useful, however, to consider the various findings in relation to the advocacy of a 'unitary' form of participation offered by the neo-human relations school. It is, for instance, interesting to observe not only the continuing salience of conflict, but also that there is no sign of workers 'ascending' the Maslovian hierarchy of needs which underlies all the versions of this school. Indeed, Goldthorpe's model implies the opposite to this proclaimed move away from material (or 'hygiene') factors towards the fulfilment of social and individual - creative needs. The refutation of Goldthorpe's interpretation requires, as has been suggested, an analysis of alienation rooted in social structural factors, and neo-human relations writers have erased these from their pages with meticulous diligence.

The interpretation and exact complexion of the evidence may be in contention, but there is little room for denial of the predominance of material remuneration in the priority profile of most industrial workers. There is thus a consistent tendency for high income, and alongside this job security (both 'instrumental' yet reflecting the unavoidable relational overtones of that term) to be rated highest in importance. As Daniel implies in his work, this does not preclude an interest in intrinsic job satisfaction but rather overrides this where the two confront one another given the nature of the employment relationship.<sup>31</sup> This precedence of pecuniary interest holds not merely in the 'modern' industries which the Affluent Worker study suggested would be exceptional in these terms, but emerges also in the more 'traditional' sectors.<sup>32</sup> The chief exceptions seem to relate to small firms<sup>33</sup> (whether through self-selection or socialization at work, or in what combination of these, I shall leave unpursued).

Instrumentalism certainly wreaks havoc upon the participation proposals of the human relations school. It does not mean, however, that work is not experienced as an oppressive requirement - as the Affluent Worker studies themselves display. The progressive degradation of work depicted by Braverman (1974) and the deprivation repeatedly made in personal accounts<sup>34</sup> make a mockery of the offerings such as Blauner's, which purport to promise a new horizon in job interest. Nevertheless, a measure of intrinsic satisfaction can be gained in certain

tasks, though rarely in a manner pleasing to employers, e.g. by exerting various controls over production (participation type D),<sup>35</sup> a form of activity which employers are in turn attempting to turn to their own advantage via 'job enrichment'.<sup>36</sup> For various reasons connected with later discussion of higher-level schemes (see Chapter 10), but also with particular relational features colouring job enrichment, success is almost certainly far more limited than is widely believed. Publicity as with participation in general is predictably chiliastic in its presentation of the results.

#### TRADE UNIONS

The significance of attitudes to unions, and to the need for collective action in general will be apparent; on the one hand, unions are regarded by some pluralists, and many unionists themselves, as the appropriate channel through which employees may attain industrial democracy. On the other, the potential for organization against the employer may be markedly hindered if unions are badly regarded by a large section of the workforce, despite their perception of conflict with capital. In practice, indeed, we find the fissuring of vocabularies of motive between concrete and general circumstances, and between rhetorics which evoke dominant or anti-dominant ideological images of the appropriate function and actual activity of unions.

There is no doubt that trade unions do not have a good 'public image'. A series of opinion polls have shown consistently that a majority will agree unions are too powerful.<sup>37</sup> Although lower occupational groups or trade unionists are less likely to view the unions as too powerful, many still do so. Perhaps the most startling result of all comes from a Marplan Poll where union leaders were the most often cited group exercising "a lot" of power (by 87%) only 46% feeling the power was used to benefit the British people (though perhaps this is a surprisingly large figure on reflection).<sup>38</sup>

These seemingly unequivocal findings are by no means straightforward, reliable indicators of feelings on unions, however. It is unclear whether the "too much power" relates to a personally strongly held view or to a generalised little-considered opinion unrelated to the respondent's own

circumstances. It is clearly very much a media-promoted image, yet the nature of the allocation of blame in such distorted accounts is to malign a few extremists in charge of or somehow manipulating the union, rather than referring to that aspect of the organization an individual member relies on. Of course, even then one would expect a considerable overspill of attitudes, but as we have seen the separation of beliefs can be surprisingly hermetic. However, another puzzling feature of the results needs emphasising. When the question about unions having too much power was asked in the context of more extended schedules on industrial attitudes<sup>39</sup> the results, even amongst largely non-radical groups, is quite markedly at variance with those in opinion polls. A large minority continue to feel unions have too much power, but they are nonetheless clearly outnumbered. Why this should be so is a matter of conjecture, but one possibility is that the vocabulary invoked by the fuller research situation that has related many issues already to the workers' own circumstances (and is usually conducted in the work place) may be different to that brought forth by pollsters.

The Economist (10.1.1976), in discussing the findings of a MORI poll, refers to an "underflow of trade union unpopularity". It is noticeable, however, that little attention is paid to certain of the results: e.g. that 86% of unionists, no less, agree in this opinion poll situation that "trade unions are essential to protect workers' interests". This is the nub: when nationalistic or organizational (both unitary) images are evoked unions are seen as antipathetic to such units; but when more oppositional images are offered the response shifts.

It is, after all, the case that trade unions growth has been remarkably healthy in recent years of depressed labour markets. Thus Price & Bain (1976) were able to report that registered unions represented more than half the working population, and growth has continued apace since (from just over 11 million then, to almost 13 million by the end of 1977). Moreover, more and more 'professional associations' are converting their rhetoric and bargaining style to that of trade unions.

Clearly, we face here a contradiction of 'public opinion' and actions which leaves room for far different forms of attitudes to unionism at factory level. Consider the following comment from one of their interviewees to Nichols & Armstrong; a man who has just said he doesn't believe in trade unions:

"Wrong with unions? They've gone too far, that's what's wrong. The boss can't tell anyone what to do anymore. Don't get me wrong. The unions have done a good job. The working man wouldn't be where he is today if it weren't for them. But it's these stupid strikes that're putting the country in a mess". (1976:181).

The value of such quotations is that they give life to the dead confusion of the statistics cited above and below. Here we see both the apparent rejection of unions in concrete experience and at a general level, and yet a sudden acknowledgement of a general value. Thus we see the potential effectiveness of media representations in stultifying solidarity towards other workers who might be in dispute, or towards today's unions; yet, as the authors observe, this individual had experienced no strike and had no workmate to counter the official line. The grip the anti-unionist notions held over him might thus prove to be tenuous should circumstances change. Already the basis of a different stance is there.

It is in the light of the individual complexities which lie behind summary categorisations that the data we have needs to be interpreted. Turning to this data, we find consistently a high degree of support for trade unions at the workplace. Thus in Blackburn & Beynon's study 86% of members and, remarkably, 74% of non-members felt all workers should be in a union (1972: 122-123) whilst Martin & Fryer's sample produced only 11% of manual workers and 12% of non-manual workers who felt it was unimportant whether or not a person joined a union. Amongst more 'traditional' workers, 84% of ship-building workers thought union membership should be compulsory (Cousins & Brown, 1972:131), whilst 82% of dockers and 62% of their foremen disagreed that 'trade unions are no longer as necessary as they used to be'. Other studies also suggest an attachment to union membership and so collective representation as appropriate to the present day.<sup>40</sup>

The attachment to trade unions is found similarly amongst my own sample, as Table 7.9 shows:-

TABLE 7.9 : ATTACHMENT TO TRADE UNIONS

%s throughout

(a)

"Workers like me need a stronger trade union to fight for their interests".

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Strongly Agree	21	10	22	19
Agree	25	45	28	30
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29	26	34	31
Disagree	21	18	14	17
Strongly Disagree	5	1	2	3
(N=)	(101)	(74)	(170)	(345)

(b)

"How important do you think it is for a worker to be a member of a trade union".

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Very Important	77	59	53	59
Fairly Important	13	30	30	27
Not Very Important	4	9	13	11
Not Important At All	6	1	4	4
(N=)	(48) *	(77)	(167)	(292)

(c)

"How would you feel if the union was unable to continue in this company?"

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Very Badly	72	51	44	51
Quite Badly	17	25	30	27
Wouldn't Mind All That Much	9	15	19	16
Wouldn't Mind At All	0	3	6	4
Be Pleased	2	7	1	2
(N=)	(48) *	(76)	(163)	(286)

\* Low response due to refusal of one union in Weldrill to countenance questions on this issue.

Although the general question calling for more powerful unions produces, predictably, the least emphatic result (and, notably, a very high level of abstention from agreement or disagreement) the other responses leave little doubt of firm support for trade union membership in all three firms. Thus 86% feel it is very or fairly important to be in a union, and 78% would feel very or quite badly if their present union had to withdraw from the firm.

It would be inadvisable to presume that this kind of finding indicates a strong attachment to trade unionism as a principle. Indeed, the thesis of Goldthorpe et al (1968) is rather the opposite - that the instrumental orientation of a worker applies also to his trade union affiliation, and that the days of 'principled' unionism are fading if collectivism itself is not. Yet this thesis is equally hard to sustain, for there is hardly a clear separation between the two aspects of collectivism, that of material benefit and that of solidarity per se.

In fact, 'instrumental' reasons for union membership are only cited by 30% of Luton respondents, 20% offering 'solidaristic' causes (i.e. a belief in the principle of unionism), 31% who joined through pressure or just because others did, 20% "other/don't know".<sup>41</sup> For comparison, 58% of workers in the U.S.A. indicated in one study that they "almost always side with the union against management" (Garson, 1973:167), whilst Mackenzie's craft workers also exhibit strong union attachments; but the latter were found to see their relationship with the union as "purely instrumental" (Mackenzie, 1973:144).

#### CONCLUSIONS : WORKER BELIEFS, AUTHORITY AND PARTICIPATION

The chief impression left by the above review may be one of the sheer complexity of meaning systems. Even this suffices to render suspect pretty well all available theories concerning attitudes to and the practice of participation, whether they predict acceptance, rejection or indifference.

However, hopefully rather more than this emerges. What the complexity itself indicates is that attitudes are the product of attempts by people to come to terms with their experience of an intricate and confusing (contradictory) reality. It is thus confirmed (from Chapter 6) that a simplistic account of the unchallenged rule of dominant class ideology is no more helpful than the invention of a short-fused revolutionary working-class.

I shall firstly recall the major findings of the evidence I have reviewed, and then point to some specific indications or implications for the perception and operation of participation schemes. The discussion began by reviewing various writers who have indicated that alongside apparent endorsement, or at least acquiescence in, the dominant representation of reality are important elements of dissent and even resistance to ruling class views. These, it was argued, can be most readily comprehended if they are seen as rooted in experience (following Chapter 6). This does not only engender a fissure between attitudes expressed in general, abstract terms and those relating to direct experience however. It also could present itself in the reaction of working class people to differing rhetorics - those of labour and capital - even at the level of the general and abstract. This was taken to imply that even notions of a 'subordinate' culture were in themselves inadequate in grasping the full implications and potential effect of working class views.

These arguments were then tested, verified and elaborated by the examination of survey material on attitudes to both social and political issues, and a range of matters relating to the perception of being labour. On all issues it was found that the general expectations of response patterns fitted well with the explanatory framework advanced. There was both a tendency for replies to survey questions to appear more oppositional in relation to directly experienced circumstances, and also for differing general rhetorics to induce seemingly conflicting responses. This was confirmed both for reactions on social and political issues and in the context of the employment relationship. In particular on the former, voting was found to be a form of acceptance of the status quo in itself, yet for a majority of the working class the vote was cast on a class basis. 'Money' models of social class were prevalent, yet could be read as surrogates for a power model rather than an alternative. Images of who runs the country in orthodox opinion polls reveal a large variety of views among which union control is prominent - yet a 'ruling groups' view of some kind was found to be predominant in my own study, and when faced with a direct statement on the excessive power of top classes, an overwhelming majority in another survey confirmed that this was their view.

The enterprise's search for profit seemed justified in the eyes of employees on the basis of some polls, but other explorations found workers also demanding that profits should go to those who produce rather than to share-

holders. Management were seemingly legitimated in their role - and yet seen as prepared to 'put one over' on workers given the chance. Depending on the context of the question, management as a function was seen in both a 'good for everybody' (but what function did people envisage?) and an anti-employee light. Most employees are likely to view their employment in relatively favourable terms (though the 'relatively' raises anew many of the interpretative problems). Their supposedly harmonistic view of their company, based on the well-worn 'football teams' question, was found to evaporate under scrutiny, to leave a split between limited acceptance of a need for co-operation and oppositional views.

Expressed job satisfaction was found to focus around material rewards, in a way which displaced contemporary, managerial views of an overriding yearning for job interest under management's 'participative' guidance. Once again, the interpretation of this was shown to be problematical - either taking an instrumental response at face value, or reading some form (often opposing conceptions - liberal/managerial or marxist) of alienation between the survey lines. Trade unions, meantime, could be seen as too powerful nationally and too weak in terms of local defence of workers' interests. Regardless of criticism echoing media presentation of the societal role of unions, however, most workers felt it was important to belong to them.

What implications can be drawn from all this, then? Some points have been made in the text above, but let us recall and elaborate a little on the main conclusions pertinent to subsequent chapters:

1. A distinction needs to be made, it would appear, between general attitudes to worker participation as an idea and the practice of participation. Whereas the notion may gain 'public approval' in some forms promoted by the media, and attract opprobrium in those maligned by the media (c.f. the coverage of the Bullock Report), the attitudes to it at workplace level may well not conform to these generalised views. These will depend instead on specific experience of the scheme, and in advance of any such experience the prospect of local application may even be viewed with enthusiasm. If schemes operate to the disadvantage of employees, or fail to live up to their promise, however, they are unlikely to be supported merely because of support for the abstract ideal.

It may be, nonetheless, that given the picture of participation in general, blame will be allocated to local individuals or structures rather than to the idea of participation itself. This, it may be recalled, conforms to one of the possibilities for instability as an outcome suggested in Chapter 5.

2. At the local level, the application of participation also seems likely to call forth demands for a less harmonistic, more oppositional format in terms of the participative body's rights and powers than is implied in the general perspectives on participation (change of committee status). Alternatively, employees may prefer to see the scheme unable to interfere with negotiated or informally defended (e.g. restrictive practices) rights, and so to limit its purview (triviality). Either way, management's view of how it should operate, in accordance with media accounts, is likely to be frustrated if the attitudes discussed in this chapter extend to the implementation of industrial relations policy. It should be observed that the ambiguous and contradictory nature of employee attitudes may lead to the above outcomes only after arguments, and perhaps experience; in consequence, conclusions are unlikely to be as clearly drawn as they might otherwise have been.
  
3. Even at a general level, it is likely that different rhetorics will produce different conceptions of and reactions to the idea of participation. In Chapter 3 those differing conceptions were initially explored, and it may well be that such differences will promote unintended consequences in terms of the debate's effect. This possibility was echoed above in the employee view of profit-sharing as a matter of giving profits to workers not shareholders. More generally, it may be that the promotion of worker participation, albeit on a unitary basis, will raise demands and expectations mediated through a different perception of reality which cannot be met by the system. This may explain the different results of the Affluent Worker study in the early 1960s, which produced a majority against unions seeking to go beyond pay and conditions to get workers a say in management, and the majority in favour of this extension of activity in Hill's (1976) and my own (1974) studies. Although the effects may be

absorbed partly in local anger (as suggested in (1) above), more general conclusions may still be widely drawn, in the light e.g. of the large numbers who feel that workers should be given more say in running firms (Appendix statement D).

4. It should also be recognised, however, that amidst the distrust of management and the cynicism about harmony at work, there are also powerful elements of legitimation of management and of at least some co-operation. This helps further to explain why powerless schemes can be initially accepted, and the difficulty of union activists promoting an awareness of the need for a negotiating stance on all matters. Any shop floor response is likely to be divided and confused until some issue brings matters into focus. Limited commitment to work and the workplace (the 'instrumental' view of the job) will also engender an apathy which suggests the conditions for schemes in practice simply to fail to attract interest, and so drift into triviality.
  
5. There is no widespread adherence to a coherent radical doctrine of workers' control. By and large the role of management is accepted though severely hedged round by restrictions which might seem (and often do seem to managers themselves and to the media), to contradict that acceptance. Legitimation is thus partial, conditional and whilst pervasive it is also in many ways fairly tenuous. Thus most workers feel as Beynon describes the view of Ford employees:

"... 'the car plants for the car workers' makes no sense to the lads who work on the line ... Although they control the line they do it because they have to ..." (1973:318).

Yet there remains a powerful undercurrent of demand for the populist idea of management accountability. Given the suspicion of management that we have seen this also seems to make sense, and the rhetoric of 'worker participation' can seem to offer it. Even in the U.S.A., Garson (1973) found a widespread demand for institutions purportedly aimed at achieving this, in a country where the idea has been presumed to have least roots. We shall explore the nature, extent and limits of this demand later.

If these conclusions seem patchwork, rather than offering a clear, definitive prediction on how workers are likely to react to participation schemes, then that is because we have found attitudes to be patchwork. Ambivalence, ambiguity, accommodation and opposition co-exist within workers' meaning systems, consequences of the contradictory reality in which they live and the conflicting appearances and experiences this entails. Nonetheless, amidst the confusion, it is apparent that any notion that workers are likely to be easily taken in by the general propagation and local application of unitary participation schemes - such as might be implied by a 'dominant ideology' account - is ill-founded. Any acceptance is likely to be provisional and dependent on expectations of real benefits (see Chapter 12 for further investigation of this), in the absence of which reactions will be indifferent or negative, dependent on circumstances.

This review of beliefs and attitudes thus enables us to give colour to the processes by which trivial, unstable or change of committee status outcomes may be induced. Not only are these results confirmed as consistent with, and plausible in view of, the attitudes of employees, but the uncertain relation between the reality of conflict and the vision of co-operation helps to explain the acceptance of an idea as well as the likely rejection of practice. The next step is to try and examine the views of management, to see if these, too, are consistent with the picture being built up, and to add further detail to that picture. It will then be time to examine the practice of participation.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 7

GENERAL OPINIONS - MANUAL WORKER RESPONSES

W = Welldrill            E = Epoch            N = Natco

S.A. = Strongly Agree  
 A. = Agree  
 N. = Neither Agree nor Disagree  
 D. = Disagree  
 S.D. = Strongly Disagree

%s throughout

(A)

(B)

Most decisions taken by foremen and supervisors would be better taken by the workers themselves.

Most managements have the welfare of their workers at heart.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	22	15	14	16	3	-	3	2
A.	23	38	34	31	27	15	17	20
N.	30	21	33	29	25	17	23	22
D.	22	21	18	20	35	37	40	38
S.D.	4	5	2	3	11	32	17	18
(N =)	(105)	(77)	(171)	(353)	(104)	(77)	(172)	(353)

(C)

(D)

Managers know what's best for the firm and workers should do just what they're told.

Giving workers more say in the running of their firm would only make things worse.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	5	3	2	3	3	-	2	2
A.	7	7	4	5	14	11	15	14
N.	23	5	17	16	14	12	16	15
D.	35	45	44	42	48	51	45	47
S.D.	31	41	33	34	20	26	22	22
(N =)	(105)	(77)	(173)	(355)	(104)	(77)	(171)	(352)

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 7 (Continued 2.)

(K)

To get a decent wage you have to ruin your social life by working much too long on overtime or shifts.

(L)

Nowadays management treat people like me just as numbers and never as human beings.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	40	40	38	39	15	32	37	30
A.	36	49	35	39	36	37	37	37
N.	10	3	15	11	21	19	18	17
D.	12	7	8	9	27	12	10	15
S.D.	2	1	3	2	2	-	2	1
(N =)	(102)	(74)	(171)	(347)	(102)	(74)	(173)	(349)

(M) \*

Nationalisation so far has done nothing to help the ordinary working man.

	<u>N.</u>
S.A.	23
A.	36
N.	19
D.	17
S.D.	5
(N =)	(174)

Not all totals add to 100 due to rounding.

(A) - (F) Statements about industry; (G) - (M) Statements about "the position of people like yourself in the country as a whole".

\* Natco only.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 7 (Continued 1.)

(E)

Industry should pay its profits to workers and not to shareholders.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	22	12	31	24
A.	33	27	38	34
N.	19	24	20	21
D.	23	31	7	17
S.D.	4	5	5	5
(N =)	(101)	(75)	(171)	(347)

(F)

The worker should always be loyal to his firm, even if this means putting himself out quite a lot.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	10	3	6	6
	30	23	35	31
	30	19	33	29
	20	44	18	25
	10	12	9	10
(N =)	(103)	(76)	(172)	(351)

(G)

In this contry there is not enough opportunity for people like me to get promoted and get ahead.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	27	12	18	19
A.	39	44	48	44
N.	22	26	21	22
D.	12	18	12	13
S.D.	1	-	2	1
(N =)	(101)	(76)	(172)	(347)

(H)

Workers like me need stronger trade unions to fight for their interests.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	21	10	2	19
	25	45	14	30
	29	26	34	31
	21	18	28	17
	5	1	22	3
(N =)	(101)	(74)	(170)	(345)

(I)

Management should let people like me organize our own work in our own way.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	14	8	10	11
A.	30	38	39	36
N.	29	32	34	32
D.	26	22	16	20
S.D.	2	-	2	1
(N =)	(101)	(74)	(174)	(349)

(J)

People like me have no opportunity to use their real abilities at work.

	<u>W.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>N.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	16	12	14	14
	37	45	42	41
	24	26	27	26
	21	16	16	18
	2	-	1	1
(N =)	(99)	(74)	(169)	(342)

## NOTES : TO CHAPTER 7

1. For details of my own fieldwork see the introduction to Part Five below.
2. There is a certain circularity here, in that subsequent Affluent Worker studies (Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al 1968, 1968a, 1969) were to attribute work attitudes and isolation to prior instrumental orientations to the job. Yet here lack of work group attachment is cited as a determinant of that orientation.
3. On shipbuilding see R.K.Brown et al 1972; Brown & Brannen 1970, 1970a. On dockworkers see S.Hill, 1976. On miners see Moore, 1975; Bulmer, 1975a. The fullest discussion of the concept of the traditional worker is to be found in Bulmer, 1975, a collection of papers from an SSRC Conference in 1972 which sought specifically to examine the viability of that concept.
4. See the discussion in Hill, 1976:192; Nichols and Armstrong, 1976; Poole, 1974:70ff; Brook & Finn, 1977.
5. Hill, 1976:188 and 234 (Table 10.10) finds rather greater consistency in dockers' attitudes than does Mann among his sample.
6. C.f. Hyman & Brough, 1975:208; Nichols & Armstrong, 1976; and Rytina, Form & Pease, 1970, who find that the official ideology gets less support when put in terms of specific situations than when put in general rhetoric.
7. See Chapter 6 fn. 8 for references. This predominance of harmonistic accounts co-exists with a stress on union/worker-caused industrial disruption and its harmful effects, particularly for large, threatening strikes, or for the car industry. Contradictory images are thus by no means the prerogative of the 'man in the street' - and the very conflict in the pictures presented must weaken the tone of the message. Frequently, accounts of industrial harmony are presented as contrasts to 'strike-prone' companies, however, and moreover the irrationality of strikes is a derivative of the assumptions about a lack of real interest conflict
8. This would also help to explain how people may "flip into militancy", as Eldridge notes (in his comments on p.155 of the SSRC volume from which Bulmer, 1975, is derived). See also Newby, 1975, whose criticism of the attitudinal version of the deference concept and more general discussion is relevant, and Genovese's (1968) description of how under certain conditions slaves in the American South could shift from apparent acquiescence to revolt.
9. See also D.Bell, 1954, for an earlier and perceptive discussion.
10. Reported in Guardian, 21.7.1977. The poll was carried out throughout the EEC, and Britons were found by a clear margin to be the most likely to blame fecklessness, and the least likely to blame social injustice. Other polls show that the lower classes are not simply more 'authoritarian' than higher groups - see Reid, 1976:233.
11. Form & Rytina, 1969; Rytina, Form & Pease, 1970; Huber & Form, 1973 (the Huber here is Joan Rytina's married name).

12. See e.g. Butler & Stokes, 1969; Runciman, 1966.
13. The same pattern is reported by Butler & Stokes, who find that working-class Labour Party voters overwhelmingly see politics as the representation of class interests (86%), whereas most Conservative middle-class voters see it as having no interest-related content (65%) - see 1969:121.
14. One poll reported by Reid, 1976:230 shows that around three-fifths of the population perceive a class struggle, while Moorhouse's (working-class) sample shows 48% among Conservative and 74% of Labour voters who think this (1976:477-478). The self-rating of working-class membership is found e.g. by Butler & Stokes, 1969:97; Runaman, 1966:187; Hill, 1976:189; Moorhouse, 1976:480; Cotgrove & Vanplew, 1972:178; Batstone, 1975 (p.32 n.22 in 1972 version); and in the U.S.A., Huber & Form, 1973:83 and Garson, 1973:167.
15. Moorhouse, 1976:182; R.K.Brown et al, 1972:126; Hill, 1976:191; Hiller, 1975a:265.
16. See also A.Gleeson, 'Employee information: still much to learn?' Times 5.7.1976, and 'How G.K.N. is attacking the ills of "economic illiteracy", Times, 4.7.1977. The latter of these refers to : "... the development of a programme of employee indoctrination - the management calls it education ..." Perhaps most significant is the measure of official approval accorded to G.K.N. policy by a complimentary article in the Department of Employment Gazette, July 1977:598, 703.
17. See Reid, 1976:229. Jessop, 1974:94 cites figures from a 1971 poll of 28% overall who feel too much profit is made (33% C2, 32% D/E).
18. Jessop, 1974:94. Only 25% felt they had enough say on this.
19. See Times 13.5.1976; F.T. 13.5.1976, 24.9.1976.
20. Chapter 3 above, 12-16 below, and Ramsay 1976, 1976a.
21. But c.f. also the findings of Beynon (1973:100) in Fords. There a majority of both stewards and members felt management understood workers problems, but whereas workers feel management would try to help workers given a chance, stewards emphatically reject this idea - no doubt from their own more direct experience of management.
22. The 1972 N.O.P. finding that only 12% distrusted management to have employee interests at heart (Jessop, 1974:97) also seems quite at odds with other findings reported here, and perhaps shows the importance of the context in which a question is posed.
23. I say 'apparent' because the notion of consistency is often itself dubious. Many of Mann's supposedly 'left' or 'right' statements might, for instance, seem open to varied interpretation, and nor would I like to categorically label all my own questions thus in simple 2-dimensional terms. The concept of consistency is a particularly imposed one as long as the respondent is not given a chance to account for his or her apparently discordant answers. This is not to seek to abolish the consistency notion, but to issue a caveat for it to be treated with care - again equally in

## 23. Continued..

the case of my own data - and to avoid the 'false consciousness' label that follows out of over-arrogant imposition of the observer.

24. Some of the findings here, which can be seen to use the 'relative' concept, include the following:

%s Employer	Weldrill	Own Study			All	Blackburn & Beynon *	Goldthorpe et al **
		Epoch	Natco				
Above Average	80	22	31	44	46	65	
Average	20	42	47	37	49	25	
Below Average	0	36	23	19	5	6	

\* 1972:45

\*\* 1968:72

Mann (1973a:71) found 81% of his sample of Bird's workers felt they were a 'good' or 'excellent' company. Blauner (1964:202) found that in research he cites 73% felt their own place was as good as anywhere to work, 17% felt there were better places (the range of findings in different industries being 8-28% on the latter view).

25. The use of the response as a cross-cultural, comparative indicator of ideology is found at its clearest in Mann, 1973:35.
26. See Gallie (1978), whose study of British and French process workers (in the oil industry) shows that workers are critical of management in both countries, but chiefly on grounds of technical inefficiency in Britain, while French workers stressed class differences.
27. The question was 'Some people think the interests of managers and workers are opposed, others that they are one and the same, what do you think?' The responses were distributed as follows:

	Manual %	Non-Manual %
Opposed	50	49
Same	41	46
Depends	9	5
	(N=96)	(N=61)

(1973:79)

28. In this table I have, for the sake of comparison with the findings reported in Table 7.7, departed from my rule of excluding responses with no replies. Thus the totals do not add to 100%.
29. As suggested by, among others, Daniel in his criticisms of the Affluent Worker study (1969, 1971).
30. C.f. Westergaard, 1970; Robin Blackburn, 1967.
31. See Daniel's debate with Goldthorpe, and his 1970 and 1973. See also Goldthorpe's comments (1970, 1972a), and the discussion in Whelan, 1976.
32. See e.g. Brown et al 1972:28; Hill, 1976:312, Table 4.6.

33. On attitudes of employees in small companies see Batstone, 1975; Ingham, 1970. See also Martin & Fryer's study (1973, esp. Chapter 3) of the 'deferential' workers of 'Casterton'.
34. See Fraser, 1968, 1969; Terkel, 1975; Toynbee, 1971.
35. See Chapter 5 above for the classification of type 'D' participation. Good recent analyses of such phenomena include Edwards, 1979; G. Brown, 1977; Dubois, 1976; Montgomery, 1979.
36. For early influential critiques of job enrichment see Pignon & Querzola, 1973; Bosquet, 1972. More elaborate and empirically substantial accounts have appeared in the last few years.
37. See Butler & Stokes, 1969:210; Jessop, 1977:197; Reid, 1977:228; The Economist, 10.1.1976; Sunday Times, 23.10.1977; Times, 21.1.1980, to select a few examples. Elliott, 1975:327, finds a majority of workers who will accept this view, and yet a larger majority who believe the union in their workplace has too little or just the right amount of power.
38. Source Guardian editorial 26.7.1977, from results repeated in The Sun. The Guardian asks whether union leaders are really so powerful '... or is it merely highly personalised nature of industry reporting makes powerful bogeymen out of individual union leaders?'. Similar results though without the relatively perspicacious comment, can be found in a later MORI poll (Sunday Times, 18.9.1977).
39. See e.g. Goldthorpe et al, 1968:113; Martin & Fryer, 1973:36; Hill, 1976:221.
40. See e.g. Wedderburn & Crompton, 1972; Goldthorpe et al 1968, 1969.
41. Goldthorpe et al, 1968:97. Other surveys show some deviation, but not massive, from this pattern. Thus Cousins and Brown (1972:131) find 26% 'solidaristic', 40% 'instrumental', 24% 'as spokesmen'. Beynon & Blackburn (1972:118) find 45% 'ideological unionists', 13% 'business unionists', 33% 'everyone else joined/asked to join', 8% others. See also Cotgrove & Vanplew, 1972:175; Wedderburn & Crompton, 1972:102.

## CHAPTER 8 : MANAGERIAL BELIEFS AND MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

When we come to examine managerial attitudes, we are dealing with an issue where there is a grave shortage of substantial (as opposed to assertive) material. Yet this is a matter on which as much or more weight is placed than upon the working class beliefs that we have examined above. We are not, after all, dealing only with the views and motivations of the 'other side' in industry, but also with a critical component of what has been called the dominant ideology. In the light of this it may seem surprising that so little serious attention has been paid to the subject, the left being inclined to deduce its nature as ordained by the structural requirements of ruling class interests, while pro-management writers have tended not to consider the issue of ideology at all for reasons which are themselves a part of that ideology.

For lack of space (and information) little attempt will be made here to integrate our discussion of management ideas with those of bourgeois thought as a whole, nor even to look far beyond those ideas which explicitly and directly concern the issue of management-labour relations. A further constraint is imposed by the dual nature of that which is to be considered: on the one hand we have to deal with the general ideology, philosophy and methods of work which defend and legitimate the management function i.e. with management thought; on the other it is important to pay some attention to what practising managers themselves think and do, since this cannot be taken for granted as a straightforward transposition of prevalent general ideology. The connections - and possible contradictions - between these two levels can only be hinted at below, the main aims remaining those of description and of drawing out those points germane to the formulation and operation of participative schemes.

### MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

We shall begin with management thought. Although students of the subject have differed in precise approach and emphasis, there has been general agreement that it is possible to identify a sufficiently coherent body of ideas connected with the role of business and management to warrant a unified study thereof. There has been a weaker consensus that the precise forms of this body of ideas constitute a defence and legitimation of the managerial function in a way closely tied to the interests of management

as a group or class. The classic academic statement of this interpretation is that of Bendix, who defines ideologies of management as "all ideas which are espoused by or for those who exercise authority in economic enterprises, and which seek to explain and justify that authority" (1956: 2n). He finds little trouble in amply documenting that "the few" who command "have seldom been satisfied to command without a higher justification" (1956:1). Any challenges to this view have been poorly founded. Child, for instance, offers a historical account of British Management Thought (1969) which is still more compelling in all but its coverage of the present (where it succumbs to self-legitimation, it would seem, in the form of a paean to the takeover of the neutral managerial academic), but nonetheless objects that ideas are not merely rooted in economic interests, having an independent existence. He accuses Bendix, and the similar discussion of McGivering et al (1960) of being marxist, and so crudely materialist. Ironically, Bendix is in fact a confirmed and eminent Weberian.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Child admits that Marx himself would not have subscribed to such a crude analysis (1968:229), and that Bendix also modifies his model.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, Child himself proceeds to employ what amounts to a base/superstructure model (Child, 1968:225ff). Like Nichols<sup>3</sup>, Child is effectively expressing qualifications of an explanatory model which he nevertheless for the most part accepts.

Perhaps the main opponents of the interests account are Sutton et al (1956), who counterpose to it the view that ideas reflect "the strains to which men in the business role are almost inevitably subject" (p.11). Just as a response to the 'independence of ideas' argument accepts it yet absorbs it by noting that the ideas which are accepted, and the way in which they are used, bear more relation to business interests than is healthy for real autonomy to be suggested (the distortions practised historically on Quaker ideas or 'industrial democracy' itself, and the times of little need when these remained conveniently ignored, illustrate the point well), so the strains account proves to be readily incorporable. Quite simply, all that Sutton et al seem to be identifying are the actual experiences of prominent business spokesmen which mediate the structural determinants that relate to 'interests'. Thus for instance, Fox's well-known discussion of management ideology<sup>4</sup> refers to three functions of such ideology: persuasion, authority legitimation, and "self-reassurance" of which he says:

"For many managers, the full and complete acceptance of the idea that substantial sections of those whom they govern are in certain fundamental respects alienated is corrosive of self-confidence. This can be a powerful motivation towards believing that a basic harmony of purpose exists, and that any apparent demonstration to the contrary is due to faults among the governed - to stupidity, or short-sightedness, or out-dated class rancour, or an inability to grasp the basic principles of economics, or the activities of agitators who create mischief out of nothing." (1966a:5).

The analysis of Bendix & Child traces the shifts in dominant managerial pronouncements and writings, and shows their relation to the (class) interests of/pressures on business at any particular time, revolving around a general purpose of defending and enhancing as far as possible the autonomy, and legitimate autocracy, of the entrepreneur or manager. I shall not tread the orthodox path of reviewing Taylorism, human relations and so on, but in Chapter 9 we shall return to this topic and find that, when combined with evidence on the history of proposals for and management attitudes to worker participation, the implications of accepting this simple analysis are considerable.

For the remainder of this discussion I shall limit myself to identifying certain common features of management ideology in its current form. In doing this, the first feature of which one becomes aware is that which Fox is discussing in the above quote, and which in Chapter 3 it was found pervades statements well beyond those of simple paternalism and the like. Essentially, the theme is one of unitary interests, repeated in an assortment of variations, some overlapping, others mutually complementary.

#### Unitary Images

The most familiar form of the unitary, integrative model that pervades management ideology is that identified by Bendix (1956:327) as the 'team' or 'family' image. The team image in employee views of the firm was investigated earlier in Chapter 7. At least as important, however, and possibly more effective as a legitimatory device for its lesser visibility as such is the concept of 'the organization' or 'the enterprise' (see Ramsay, 1973) which is so universal, and which can generate an image of unity even amidst apparently pluralistic statements. It is this which sustains many of the arguments that seek to defend, legitimate and enhance employee commitment to the goal of profitability which lies at

the very heart of the nexus with which we are concerned. Thus at the centre of the supposedly more enlightened and impartial outlook of the modern manager one often finds, insofar as the expression of views by spokesmen or those who produce the literature are concerned, a more subtle but ultimately thereby perhaps more suffocating definition of the interests of all in terms of those of the rulers. McGivering *et al* discuss this feature of management ideology, and the attempt to create 'enterprise consciousness', and indeed discuss the role of participation and profit-sharing schemes as part of the project (1960:94).

### Expertise As Ideology

Such reference to modifications in the absolutism of property rights is usually found to be accompanied by other elements. These include an emphasis on the professionalisation of management, i.e. its social neutrality, on the one hand, and on the expertise required to justify a rule by merit rather than birth. It has been common for increasing stress to be placed on the academic as the source of management thought, as an extension of this feature. However, to see this as proving a qualitative change in terms of actual forms of policy in labour relations, or of business goals is a piece of remarkable naïveté.<sup>5</sup> There is evidence, in fact, that business schools are patronised by companies far more as a legitimisation than from a serious belief in the content of courses and the superiority of academic tutors (c.f. Marceau *et al* 1977). At the same time it is apparent, as from the exposure of the social reality behind worker participation schemes, that a far more compelling account of the role of academic contributors is provided by Baritz (1960 - as 'servants of power') than by Child.

The role of managerialism, the arguments of which we shall attend to shortly, is not only to stress unity (in the 'we're all employees now' vein) and expertise, but as Elliott (1975) points out is to elaborate this through the presentation of claims of structural constraints. Here, particularly when unpleasant decisions have to be enforced, justification can be made a depersonalised thing by reference to "irrefutable economic or technological imperatives" (Elliott, 1975:61). In the process, management is stressed as the informed exercise of a necessary, even scientific function, thereby coming to appear a "technical rather than a political process" (*ibid*). For Elliott, this perspective

and the appearances which sustain it are major factors in the power of management. Clearly this dovetails with the discussion of power and ideology in Chapter 6 above. In practice, however, there is always likely to be some uncertainty, since the manager's job exists to manage uncertainty, including that emanating from the behaviour of labour.<sup>6</sup>

### The Managerialist Thesis

The notion of a new managerial class, who have replaced the property owners at the head of economic enterprises, is an important part of most managerial accounts of the present and deserves some further attention. A recent letter to the Times illustrates well the perspective under discussion. The correspondent, a Mr P. Kelly, argues that the 1944 Education Act has led to a domination of management by individuals of blue-collar origins:

Lord Butler did Lord Bullock's work for him in 1944; the workers, or at least the sons of the workers, are already in control of British industry ... they are wage-earners no more or less than their blood brothers on the shop floor ... (12.8.1977).

This remarkable argument (factually quite false, as we shall see) fits well with the more sophisticated managerialist accounts which now provide a picture almost taken for granted as true by the media and most other popular sources. Given an ironically crude definition of capitalism in terms of property ownership and control, writers such as Dahrendorf (1959) conjure up arguments that the 'decomposition of capital' entails a qualitative change in capitalism itself. To this must be added, however, a picture of management as non-sectional rather than merely as a self-interested, new interest group. At the same time, while this scene is being painted, it becomes more difficult to use property rights as a sufficient legitimacy source for action, a feature which points to an active contradiction in the ideology of the employing class and which readily 'lets in' claims for accountability from below. Again the potential resource of the concepts of expertise and of contingency-constrained decisions becomes important to patch this potential leakage.

The notion of a new, managerial class with authority justified by their expertise and, in the view of the managerialists who unsurprisingly predominate in management thought, with the interests of

all groups at heart rather than that of any sectional group, has been attacked from two angles. The first concerns the actual composition of top management and the continuity of their social values with the owners of wealth; the second scrutinises the extent to which the decision-makers in large corporations (where the decomposition of capital is supposed to have gone furthest) are really 'managerial' in some sense distinct from capitalist. In each case the evidence points strongly towards a rejection of managerialism as a factual account, all this without reference to the greatest constraint on managers, survival in a market (again the way in which the power of capitalist interests is most effectively enforced). Thus both the background and the in-company socialisation and selection of top management lead to serious doubts as to the substance of any claimed separation on these terms.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, an examination of what constitutes a significant enough proportion of shares to provide effective control for the owners in large companies,<sup>8</sup> of the financial interests of managers in share income regardless of the proportion of shares owned, thereby uniting their interests with shareholders,<sup>9</sup> and finally the growing concentration of ownership in the hands of financial institutions<sup>10</sup> all serve to undermine the myth of the insignificance of ownership for control. At the same time, a new dimension has been introduced in recent years which exacerbates rather than merely maintains the conflicts inherent in capitalism - the proliferation of the multinational enterprise, with all the attendant issues of non-accountability the abilities of these organizations arouse.

#### Social Responsibility And The 'Evolution' of Management Thought

One significant and persistent feature of managerialism and of management thought as a whole has been that of social responsibility. The tendency has been to see this as a recent phenomenon, though this affords a singularly ahistorical picture of the justification of authority, which whether confined to industrial contexts or broadened to society as a whole (the boundary is often untraceable in statements of this sort), has always consisted of 'appeals to society' (c.f. Corrigan, 1973). These appeals have, too, almost without exception consisted of assertions as to the capacity and legitimacy of the ruling group to decide matters as they are

the most impartial section of the population, with a will to serve the interests of all.<sup>11</sup> Thus the current pronouncement of 'social responsibility' is firmly located in a clear genealogical heritage; nor in many respects does it differ markedly from earlier versions.<sup>12</sup> Indeed the notion of an evolution of management thought and practice, of which the social responsibility thesis, and the current concern to offer participation rights, is seen as the high water mark to date, is itself a feature of the ideology. We encountered it before, it may be recalled, in the writing of Derber (see Chapter 2), whose own historical evidence on the U.S.A. is far less convincing than his teleological account allows.

I shall argue in Chapter 9 for a quite different perspective on management thought from the evolutionary one. Instead, it will be suggested that management thought, and in particular the theme of participation, has been remarkably flexible in adjusting its pitch to the demands of the time. Thus rather than the management account evolving, business thinkers have stressed the responsiveness, social neutrality and so forth of their class when the pressure was on them to do so, i.e. when for some reason their legitimacy was experienced as being under attack. It would be equally possible to trace the same flexibility in the theme of social responsibility as a whole (c.f. Bendix and Child, whose work separately suggests this very plainly), though no attempt will be made to do so here. The 'soulful corporation' is neither a new image, however freshly polished some of its chrome may be, nor a particularly convincing one in historical or contemporary terms.

It is in this perspective that the apparent liberal 'socialism' of powerful themes in current managerial ideology (Nichols, 1975) needs to be considered, including those which offer concerned determination to improve the 'quality of working life' by participation at higher and lower levels. Without requiring any resort to a conspiracy account of those managers who attempt to apply such policies, it becomes possible to see their utility as weapons in the capitalist enterprise's armoury for advancing productivity, reducing manifest conflict, and so enhancing profits. As before, such a 'functional' account requires validation by an examination of the mechanisms whereby practising managers come to believe in these methods, and the link turns out to be by no means automatic. Thus many practising managers will reject such ideas (as 'fads' or 'unrealistic', perhaps), others may become over-enthusiastic

and take it all too literally.

We shall turn to the theme of the perceptions of practising managers immediately below, and to the more general ideological role of ideas on participation at certain times in Chapter 9. For the moment the main messages of this section on management thought are: firstly, that it can best be comprehended as an ideology, today as much as ever, and not as the emergence of a basically neutral science of administration; secondly, that its precise form can vary quite markedly over time according to the circumstances with which it must cope; though, thirdly, beneath the surface transmogrifications there remains a consistent and solid core organized around the justification of business activity in general and profits in particular, and of the maximum area of managerial prerogative that can discreetly be claimed. This last point is made in deliberate recognition that it is normally accepted that a crucial break can be discerned between classical capitalist or entrepreneurial theory and managerialism.<sup>13</sup>

Some shifts there may have been, but it is contended here that far too much can and usually has been made of this; shifts over time, or from place to place of operation, show a far greater variability within either supposed paradigm than supposedly exists to divide them. I choose to emphasise the far more significant areas of continuity.

#### THE BELIEFS OF PRACTISING MANAGERS

At several points there has been recognition of the need not merely to presume the attitudes of individual managers from the identification of a generally propounded ideology. Bendix excuses his own neglect of this dimension cogently:

Studies of ideologies imply a neglect of persons and private beliefs. I shall treat managers ... in terms of their respective organizational positions and by virtue of the common experiences to which such positions expose them. And I shall attribute to such 'groups' ideologies of management which have been articulated in response to the logic of authority relations in economic enterprises ... attitudes of individuals do not become public opinion merely by the process of addition. Instead, public opinion is formed through a constant process of formulation and reformulation by which spokesmen identified as authoritative seek to articulate what they sense to be the shared understandings of the moment. A study of ideologies deals with these ... which reflects ... collective responses to the challenge of changing circumstances. (1974:xxiii - xiv).

By and large this is acceptable. But it does, as Bendix admits, gloss over important divergences of opinion, and these are likely to be still more important when a dynamic situation impels flexibility on the ideology. It is also the case that, if we are to apply our theory of ideology, experiences may be widely divergent for managers (both qua managers and in other contexts). Experience may also be such as to generate conflicts in the beliefs of practising managers, just as were found amongst employees, and these may be resolved or left unresolved and paraded in tandem in a whole variety of ways. In these circumstances 'public opinion' among managers may prove to be quite different to that which would emerge from a simple 'process of addition'. In fact, as Bendix notes for both Taylorism (1956:280) and Mayoism (1956:331), their acceptance by practitioners was tendentious and attenuated to say the least. Child concludes similarly for the British case that:

... management thought, a system of knowledge so attractive ideologically and technically, was never in fact wholeheartedly accepted by most practising managers. Not only did managers openly express their criticism of management thought, but equally management intellectuals themselves expressed their exasperation at managers' lack of concern for their ideas. The continuing low membership of management institutes over many years also indicates the distance between intellectuals and practitioners. (1968:233 or 1969:237).

Given this, it becomes necessary to consider the views of practising managers in our account, and to examine in particular their outlook on the matters of industrial democracy and worker participation. To some extent the contiguity of the analysis of management thought with practice on these issues at least will emerge from the case studies in Chapter 10, but the evidence below will also enable certain qualifications to be made. Such qualifications do have a real significance for a proper and effective comprehension of the realisation of management power and the potential contradictions within management ranks, which is precisely why it would be so foolish to discard this area as trivial.

#### The Social Origins Of Managers

First, it will be helpful to know something about the social composition of the group under discussion, not least to escape simple stereotyping. Even here, it becomes necessary to distinguish between those demographic

studies which have dealt largely with the top men (company chairmen, directors etc.) referred to above, and those which cover a broader spectrum of management at plant level. The former, who tend to be closest to the creation of management thought as discussed above, are constituted as a body in a way which makes nonsense of the 'workers' sons at the top' ideology. Stanworth & Giddens (1974:83) found that only 1% of company chairmen were from working class origins, 10% middle class, and 66% upper class (23% origins not known). Moreover, their evidence suggests that after a period of relative 'openness' in recruitment, the most recent echelons in their study reveal a closing of the gates once more (1974:96). Even the new grammar-school recruits rarely progress through the doors of the boardroom.<sup>14</sup> Hence the predominance of Oxbridge graduates amongst those who have attended university.<sup>15</sup> Even more marked (and, probably, more indicative of social values) is the public school origin of the majority.<sup>16</sup>

Similar patterns amongst the businessmen of France are revealed by Marceau *et al* (1977:19, 19a, 24), who are able to extend the analysis to show that a study of entrants to business schools in Britain (and France) are also clearly located in terms of social origins. From their data it can be calculated that 37% of entrants had fathers who were company directors or managers, 6% employers or proprietors, 40% professional or administrative, with only 5% routine non-manual and 12% manual backgrounds.

It has been observed that the proportion of managers in Britain (again most of the information related to those at a fairly senior level) who have some form of qualification is relatively low, particularly given the stress on the 'neutral expert' role in managerial ideology. Thus a 1969 study found only 40% of British chief executives had been to university,<sup>17</sup> as compared with far higher figures on the Continent (e.g. 89% France, 78% Germany). Technical qualification is still rarer, being possessed by only about one-third of managers in firms of less than 2,000 employees, and about one-quarter in firms of over 20,000 employees according to a study cited by Nichols (1969:82), the picture being similar at all levels of management in these organizations. Moreover, in Nichols' own study, it was found that 61 of his 65 respondents had attended no managerial training prior to being appointed to management jobs, only 24 had been to management courses since then (1969:85-86), and 47 did not regard themselves as 'professionals' (1969:89). Only personnel specialists of

the remainder appeared to embrace this self-description with any conviction as managers (rather than as accountants, engineers etc).

#### Practising Managers In Three Firms

Most of these studies clearly have little to say about practising managers. Nichols' study comes closest, and the divide from official ideology is already apparent there. My own research gave me the opportunity to give questionnaires to managers in the firms where the manual surveys were carried out, particularly those likely to have some contact with industrial relations matters. The findings are clearly tentative, since the sample is small and narrowly-based,<sup>18</sup> but given the remarkable dearth of information in this area it seems worth summarising. From this information it will be possible to make some observations both on the attenuation of official ideology, and yet on its continued relevance in certain key respects for practising managers.

The sample of managers in the three North-Eastern firms show certain notable demographic divergences from the pattern described thus far. 34% had left school by the time they were 16, and only 28% had stayed in full-time education up to or beyond the age of 18. Only 18% had a university degree, though 47% were members of some professional association; 29% had only a craft or technical qualification, 4% G.C.E 'A' levels as their highest educational achievement, 4% 'O' levels only, and 4% could name no qualification at all. Their social origins are also quite different to those of the managerial strata described earlier, as the following table shows:

TABLE 8.1 : SOCIAL ORIGINS OF MANAGERS (OWN STUDY)  
(Registrar-General Classification)

<u>Father's Occupation</u>	
Class 1	Nil
Class 2	2%
Class 3N	46%
Class 3M	13%
Class 4	25%
Class 5	15%
(N=48)	

If the respondents of manual working class origins are reclassified to distinguish between 'traditional' working class (mining, shipbuilding etc. particularly strong in the North-East) and other working class, 15% of the sample fall into the former category and 33% into the latter. Finally, it is also of interest to note the previous work experience of these managers, of whom 15% had no previous job, 40% had worked entirely in white-collar or managerial occupations, and no less than 46% had done manual work.<sup>19</sup>

It would appear, then, that this is a management group far more likely to embody some direct experience of the worker's position in society and at work than is remotely possible for the vast majority of the directors and chief executives canvassed by other studies. It is therefore of some interest to see how far their responses are affected by this, and how far their present positions lead them to adopt an outlook which is still characteristically managerial, or at least statistically distinct from the manual sample. Secondly, we may observe that a social distance between boardroom and practising managers (one likely to increase if the studies of directors are reliable) exists in terms of life experience as well as current circumstances.

#### Managerial Consistency : Strikes And Political Rule

We can now examine the actual attitudes and beliefs of managers. It will be recalled that Mann (1970) predicted a greater degree of internal consistency in the ideologies of middle class respondents than for the working class. Yet Form & Rytina observe that on the basis of their own findings:

... the respondents whose political ideology is least consistent are those who receive most from the economic and political order. The richer and better educated more generally espouse political pluralism as a norm, but are more likely to see business dominance in politics as legitimate, and are least supportive of governmental action to equalise opportunity in the society. These observations support the growing evidence that the higher income groups do not understand the principles of political pluralism, nor do they support them consistently. (1969:30).

The same would seem to follow from our considerations of the contorted versions of pluralism to be found in managerial statements on worker participation, and on reflection it would not be surprising after all to find that ordinary managers are inconsistent in their views. The practising manager certainly finds him/herself in a position as awash with contradiction as the worker.

To appraise this question of consistency, we can turn once again to the two statements on industrial disputes for which the responses of manual respondents were summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.2.

TABLE 8.2 : MANAGEMENT RESPONSES ON CONFLICTING RHETORICS OF LABOUR ACTION

%	(i)	
	(A)	(B)
	"Strikes are irresponsible ..."	"... right to withdraw labour..."
Strongly Agree	28	2
Agree	38	59
Neither	20	8
Disagree	10	18
Strongly Disagree	4	12
	(N=50)	(N=49)
(ii)		
	(A)	(B)
Agree	66	61
Disagree	14	30

Firstly, we can see from Table 8.2 (i) that managers are far more likely both to accept (A) and to reject (B) than manual employees. It would be a little surprising if this were not so. But part (ii) of the table shows that the inconsistency of responses as between (A) and (B) is every bit as high for managers as for workers. Thus the right to withdraw labour still gets support by a 2:1 margin at the management level. This lends further support to the argument that there exists a distinctive counter-ideology to the dominant one, rather than merely a 'subordinate' working class culture.<sup>20</sup>

On the question of perspectives on the organization of political power in British society, these managers' views are as follows (see Tables 7.4 and 7.5 above for equivalent shop floor response):

TABLE 8.3 : WHO RULES? - MANAGERS' VIEWS

%s			
(1)	Lots of Little Groups	32	
(2)	Power Elite	28	
(3)	Big Business	2	Ruling Groups 30
(4)	Trade Unions	20	Pluralist 34
(5)	Ordinary People	2	Trade Unions 28
(6)	(2) + (3)	-	Other Combinations 8
(7)	(4) + other	8	
(8)	Other/Other Combinations	8	

(N=50)

From this it seems clear that management have no clear, unified image as a group any more than did workers. Predictably, perhaps, big business is almost lost from view as a factor, whereas the unions are ranked rather higher than by manual respondents. A pluralist view does command the greatest support, to turn to the right-hand reorganization of the results, and yet it commands barely over one-third support and is close pressed, interestingly, by ruling groups views. This, then, is the political world as managers see it - or at least as they say they see it. A germane point is that management at plant level can feel as distanced from the control of society as their employees. Their world is often confused, and they too feel powerless, in the grip of forces beyond their capacity to influence. This is one major probable difference from the directors who we found to be the focus of most other studies.

#### The Employment Relationship

Next we turn to a discussion of the responses to general statements (see Appendix to Chapter 8). These show that in many cases managers views reverse the direction of the majorities amongst shop floor workers (see Appendix to Chapter 7). Consider firstly the findings dichotomised below (see Table 7.6 and Appendix to Chapter 7 for comparison):

TABLE 8.4 : MANAGERS' RESPONSES TO GENERAL STATEMENTS (DICHOTOMISED)

%s	(A) 'Decisions'	(B) 'Welfare'	(C) 'Obedience'	(D) 'Participation'	(E) 'Profits'	(F) 'Loyalty'
Agree	4	66	20	30	10	70
Disagree	90	14	56	44	64	12

We find here a strong rejection of statement (E), that industry should pass its profits on to workers not to shareholders. This is unsurprising (perhaps it is more surprising that 10% should have said otherwise) for despite remarks above on the distance from power at a societal level that managers may feel, their position remains tightly circumscribed by their role as superintendents of labour for capital. As Nichols & Beynon point out in rejecting the managerial revolution thesis, "None of the managers we talked to there was in any doubt that his job was to make profit and that if he failed in this his future in Chemco was in jeopardy ... their lives are structured by the imperative to make profits." (1977:31). Some of them felt uncomfortable with human relations techniques because the link with producing profits, however real, seemed so attenuated and blurred (1977:41).

There is still stronger disagreement with the idea that workers should displace foremen (A). Meanwhile, also by contrast with workers, it is felt that management (they themselves?) do have the welfare of their subordinates at heart, though again a small but noticeable 14% disagree. This response is readily comprehensible in terms of the self-legitimation theory if nothing else.

On the other hand, answers to statements (C) and (D) exhibit less corporate management certainty. Thus a clear majority, not as large as that amongst workers themselves but still considerable, reject the approval of outright obedience from workers. On the issues raised by the 'participation' question the result is still more equivocal, but a majority of those making a clear response one way or the other disagree that participation would be bad. Here the division of opinion suggests that we may be tapping the contradictory feelings practising managers may have on this subject, particularly given the confused and conflicting meanings associated with it. Finally, the 'loyalty' statement, which divided workers but produced more who agreed

than disagreed, gets a strong approbation from managers.

Nonetheless, it is apparent from these findings that the acceptance of management thought of the currently popular 'neo-human relations' type is at the least uncertain and tenuous amongst management themselves.<sup>21</sup> They don't actually oppose it, one gets the impression, so much as feel that it is rather airy-fairy. It may be worth trying (77% thought job enrichment a good idea, for instance) provided it doesn't get in the way of normal operations. One of the managers quoted by Nichols & Beynon expressed just such feelings:

... I don't doubt the theory at all, the theory of Herzberg for example makes a deal of sense. What I doubt is the application of it, its applicability to industrial situations. (1977:41).

Just such a dichotomy between theoretical and practising belief is found both by Haire, Ghiselli & Porter (1963:296-297) and by A.W.Clark & McCabe (1970:5-6) in their comparative studies on management 'culture', in almost all countries studied. In their case it is expressed as a gap between the philosophy of democratic organization and reliance on employees, and a belief that employees are not capable of operating in such a situation. This is, of course, a most convenient position from which to argue both that management is legitimate (and any failings in consultation do not ultimately therefore devolve on management) and yet to excuse keeping control. What is required, however, is a more careful consideration of why managers are so wary of participation, and for this there may be not merely issues of maintaining personal direct control, but an underlying suspicion of whether employee attitudes are the appropriate, 'responsible' ('mature') ones that will make participation the productive enterprise that other elements of the theory suggest it should be. Even as controllers, then, managers face clear dilemmas in resolving the contradiction between ideology and reality, particularly as the latter affords both co-operative and conflictive images of the management-worker relationship.

#### The Contingencies Of Managers' Attitudes

Yet the uncertainties of these managers seems likely to relate also to an awareness, however constricted, that they are themselves labour. They rate autonomy and participation in decisions markedly more highly than

workers (a function of expectations as well as experience, it seems probable), though my own sample also expressed themselves more satisfied on these matters than their shop floor counterparts. Nevertheless, the aspect of pressures on management that relates to their own subordination is too easily forgotten where studies focus on the elite, and its inclusion clarifies the reasons for the inchoate nature of their views considered overall, just as other pressures helped to make sense of the confusion on the shop floor.

Elliott's work indicates a pattern that fits well with the different pressures on senior and departmental management, and the effect of this on their attitudes to authority relationships (1975:299-301). Senior management were prepared to countenance "laxities" in management control in order to maintain relations which were beneficial to long-term production. Departmental management, however, experienced the disruption of such laxities directly, and perceived it as a threat to their own authority.<sup>22</sup>

As managers, there is good reason to believe that, whatever the high-flown principles invoked, the policies adopted by these individuals are ultimately determined by the exigencies of maintaining the interests of capital. We have already seen examples of this, and it will provide us with a means to make sense of a great deal of evidence on participation that most accounts have had either to ignore, misrepresent, treat as exception or as cussedness by one or both sides. Nichols' research casts further light at least on the nature of senior management attitudes in this respect. He set out to ascertain whether managers held 'laissez-faire', 'long-term company interest' or 'social responsibility' as the principle on which policy should be based. For the ideologists of 'modern management' the last should have held sway, but the predominant response fell into the second category. Still more significant, though, is Nichols' conclusion that most of his respondents make no substantial distinction between company interest and 'social responsibility' (1969:182). He gives an example of a firm where management spoke proudly of 'enlightened' labour policies in keeping workers on when work was short. It transpired, however, that the seasonal nature of the work, the shortage of labour and the training cost made this a commercially advisable tactic, and when confronted with this, the managers accepted this side of the argument. This shows, then, how the general management ideology that industrial

capital's interests are society's interests is not only accepted, but is reinforced by practising management's attempts to recast the purpose of their actions in terms of general, grand principles even to themselves.

Nichols suggests that the effect of corporate identification and socialisation for the manager is likely to be that philosophical dilemmas will be dismissed as academic, too abstract and impractical to cause concern (1969:189). This further welds the join between company interest and 'social responsibility' for a practising manager.<sup>23</sup>

As a final note here, it is worth considering the possible effects of different organizational roles on managers. Nichols finds that 9 of the 10 personnel specialists in his sample leaned towards 'social responsibility' preferences which contained reference to moral rather than merely rational commercial obligations to carry out certain policies. It may well be (and my own impression confirms this) that managers in this sphere find the conflicts less easy to ignore in the labour field, and also act as a kind of human buffer, sympathetic to demands but compelled and able to present a front of implementing policy imposed on them within which they do what they can. The function of such a role, which also reduces the role conflict for other management, is obvious, and this proposition on the internal dynamics of management clearly deserves careful investigation from a non-managerial perspective.<sup>24</sup>

#### The Right To Manage : Images Of Unions, The Enterprise, And Managerial Perogatives

The role of participation is constricted if those who grant it do so only on the basis that 'fitness to participate' is judged by willingness to accept a definition of criteria for decision-making compatible with the interests of profitability. It is still further muffled if it is directly limited by a more active notion of management's rightful role. Nichols & Beynon's account exemplifies the combination of these perspectives, in a situation where the union was under management's thumb to the extent of shop stewards being management-nominated in some cases:

They justify all this with the language of 'participation; with talk of the new style and the new modern corporation. But in its practice this ideology is inevitably flawed. When they talk of 'participation' they don't mean 'equal participation'; nor does trade unionism imply equal rights

for all. In their view - a view that is firmly established within the structure of corporate capitalism - 'participation' and 'trade unionism' are inevitably subordinate to the need for hierarchy and the need for profit. The need for management to manage. (1977:115).

Where trade unions are better established, one might expect evidence of a more pragmatic acceptance amongst the majority of managers of trade union rights to have some degree of say on a wide range of issues. Elliott's study also suggests this, although as she points out, managers who have actually to implement this are likely to feel more pressure and to resist it, even where they accept the principles underlying such a broad strategy. Thus personal attitudes and practice come to be shaped by role strain. However, she also finds that departmental managers are, paradoxically on the face of it, more likely to agree that management relies on subordinate consent (a managerialist belief contrasting with various assertions of absolute right to rule on property, genetic or other grounds). She discovers, however, that this arises from a tendency to see 'consent' as simply the 'absence of dissent', and that managers at all levels ignored a rider to the consent statement that suggests a consequent requirement to abandon certain prerogatives.

They were not concerned with seeking positive agreement through an extension of democratic decision-making processes, but stressed rather human relations techniques of securing compliance with management decisions. (1975:301).

Departmental managers were thus actually concerned with the "smooth implementation" of policy already decided, whilst at senior management level, that of policy formulation, consent was regarded as irrelevant or of less importance. This had a certain consistency with their unitary image of the firm, and of management as therefore exercising 'power to' rather than 'power over'.<sup>25</sup>

However, when managers are confronted with the need to evaluate images of the enterprise they find it harder to maintain a unitary, consensual picture (Elliott, 1975:301). The degree to which this is true emerges also in the following results, presented in Table 8.5, for the football team question (see Table 7.7 for a discussion and description of the question):

TABLE 8.5 : MANAGERS ON THE FIRM AS A FOOTBALL TEAM

ts

Agree (harmonistic)	28
Agree (co-ordinative)	52
Disagree	20

(N=50).

The result is different to that for workers, with a far larger proportion of answers seeing things in "same interests" terms (harmonistic), and far fewer in outright oppositional terms. Yet the overall majority falls not to the fully unitary view, but to the co-ordinative alternative, which emphasises only 'the need to work together to get things done' rather than common interests. This does not necessarily mean that managers don't think there ought to be harmony, though it does suggest once again that, whether because of reality or the influence of a counter-culture, the dominant ideology is not unchallenged for these people. On the other hand, on less difficult issues the manager tends to return to a view contrary to that of the shop floor, as a glance at the appendix to this chapter will show. Thus managers firmly reject the statements, accepted by the majority of workers, that the latter should be able to organize their own work in their own way (N.B. contrast this with their approval of job enrichment noted earlier) and that management treat people just as numbers; they also reject the view that workers get no chance to use their abilities, though with a large number of respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing, again in contrast to the shop floor.

Moving on to consider attitudes to trade unions, that managers' attitudes are ambivalent here too can be confirmed by recalling the responses to the strikes/withdrawal of labour questions (see Table 8.2) discussed earlier. Trade union power is on the one hand seen as 'power over' not 'power to' on Elliott's evidence (1975:301). At the same time, the growth of trade unionism has in many firms (not all by any means), led to at least a pragmatic acceptance of their existence and role. Again Nichols & Beynon illustrate this well. Professional management:

... know too that trade unionism has become a necessity; that it is better to 'have it in' and clearly established along agreed lines than be involved in perpetual arguments about a 'closed shop', 'non-union workers' and so on. They accept trade unionism and a lot of them will say they 'agree with it' - providing it's 'properly set up'. (1977:120).

Similar conditionally favourable (conditional, that is, on 'responsibility') attitudes of management are suggested by the broad acceptance and approval of the shop steward system as revealed by other studies.<sup>26</sup>

It is in these terms that we can make sense of the findings of my own survey, where 87% of management respondents thought it very or fairly important for a worker to be in a trade union, only 13% felt it was not very important, and no-one thought it not important at all. Nevertheless, in contrast yet again to the majority of workers, 76% disagree that employees need stronger unions (8% agree). In an open-ended question asking what the purpose of unions was thought to be, 5% said there was no purpose, 41% indicated protection of workers, 12% help to management in solving problems, and 43% the facilitation of co-ordinated negotiations.<sup>27</sup> Asked further whether there was anything unions should be doing, of those answering<sup>28</sup> 19% stated that there was nothing, 16% the furtherance of workers interests, but above all 62% stressed either the advancement of common interests or the improvement of communication, the last 3% mentioning participation. Chapter 13 will extend the analysis of these and related findings.

### Summary And Conclusions

Let us now move to some conclusions about the form and significance of management ideology, at both the general and the 'grass-roots' levels that have received attention above.

Firstly, we need to consider the nature and extent of management power, particularly as it derives from/is embedded in ideology. Indeed the other points made below are qualifications of this issue. It has been argued that power is not reducible to the visible and direct, interpersonal use of superior force. In Chapter 6 it was suggested that the perception of the legitimacy, or at least the inevitability, of prevailing power relationships was determined not merely by the imposition of social persuasion (though this remains important, particularly as a mechanism of reinforcement) but also by the experience of reality by workers. The skeletal framework of this dominant ideology is constituted as a justification of capitalist activity as a source of benefit to all, and as necessitated by the forces of the market which is the source of profits.

In consequence, it stresses the commonality of interest of all social groups within a nation (and within that, a company), whatever the concession to conflict at the margins of distribution in the more sophisticated pluralist account. The analysis of ideology also hinted at the existence of a working class view of reality which would combine elements of acceptance of these appearances with contradictory feelings associated with contradictory experience of their role as labour. On this basis, it was further suggested that management experience, and so ideology, would not accord on many issues with that of workers despite evident pressures for consensus.

The present chapter has enabled us to colour in this sketch, and also leads to some modification of its broad drift. The trends in what was referred to as 'management thought' provide strong supporting evidence for the straightforward version of class ideology. Persistent attempts at social persuasion were observed, all based on some derivation of the unitary formula, with empirically unfounded reference to a new managerial motivation and even a new class supposedly signifying the redundancy of old antagonisms. As will be explored further in Chapter 9, this ideology and certain accoutrements thereof (such as participation) can also be found to vary according to the (experience of) pressure on the legitimacy of the management function. Beyond this, there is also evidence that, where their actions take on an ill-concealed sectional form (such as a failure to invest, or laying employees off) management spokesmen will invoke the force of circumstance imposed by technological or market (apparently impersonal) imperatives as the 'culprit', and an irreproachable one at that.

Yet when we came to consider the position of management, the perils become apparent of presuming that the practising manager was a convinced, consistent and confident exponent of the ideology observed at an altogether different level. Further investigation reveals that management thought, particularly that of a more abstract and idealistic nature, may well be regarded with uncertainty, scepticism, or even not regarded at all through simple ignorance, by the practising manager. In short, it is too easy to query management thought on one level, in its accuracy as a purported description of industrial reality, and yet to accept it as it presents itself on another level, as the near-universal representative statement of the views of fully socialised, business school-output, professional

managers. In practice, managers turn out to be plagued by attitudinal inconsistency nearly as much as their employees, and in particular many of them are influenced by the counter culture of labour.

Let us recall the salient findings and observations which provoked this conclusion. Firstly there was found to be a potential social gulf between top management and those who actually live in day-to-day contact with industrial relations, or who simply find themselves organizational subordinates. This emerged from differences in social background as well as of ongoing experience, the latter embracing both a 'pragmatic' appreciation of the requirements for practicable labour relations, and some perception of selves as hired labour.

This implied that, for middle managers downward at least, reality may well generate contradictory appearances just as was discovered for workers, and that attitudes might also be subject in some ways to the counter-culture of labour. This was confirmed by the inconsistencies of the managers in my own sample on the strikes/withdrawal of labour statements, and in other contexts, political and in relation to industry. Management attitudes predictably tended to reject ideas of workers replacing foreman or securing rightful access to profits, and to support the need for greater worker loyalty or the existence of management good intent, but in some cases there was more dissent in management ranks than might have been expected.

Managerial pluralism, and the lack of unity on issues, are both confirmed by the tentative, limited, but nonetheless substantial endorsement of the need for trade unions. They emerge, too, in the images of the firm revealed by the 'football team' question.

Having noted these equivocations in managerial beliefs, it remains to ask whether they will significantly affect management actions, and the effectiveness of these for the political economy of capital. Certainly one would expect various adaptations in response to these perceptions - tacit collusion of managers in union activities, for instance, perhaps in defiance of official boardroom policy, or even failure to enforce the policies of capital on the labour process as rigorously as they could. This is counter-balanced, however, by Elliott's observation of a division between senior practising management and their subordinates, the latter objecting to the relaxation of management control which undermined their

own authority.

Moreover, these are but cracks and strains in a structure of values that in crucial respects follows the pattern of a defence of management - and capitalist - interests and legitimacy. Both the fissures and the overall solidarity with these interests can, of course, be explained in terms of managerial socialisation and experience. It is worth noting, for instance, that Nichols' evidence reveals no visible differences in the ideologies of managers from different social origins (unless, that is, those from loftier stables show a slightly greater inclination than their lesser fellows to opt for 'social responsibility' images) (1969:191-192).<sup>29</sup>

The exigencies of the situation, possibly enhanced by the greater normative commitment of those who have had to strive to attain relative privilege, continue to command the ship. Hence the managerial conceptions of participation were found in Chapter 3 to extend beyond spokesmen to practitioners, and so too are the salient features of the unitary and managerialist vision of the enterprise. At the same time a disaggregation of management views to reveal the internal range also makes it possible to comprehend the flexibility of ideology over time without reliance only on presumptions of sharp changes of direction by individuals. The latter does occur, of course, and ambivalence makes this more comprehensible also but one may speculate that there might also be mechanisms whereby the 'hard-liners' can take the initiative at times when the challenge from below is weak, and the conciliators and/or incorporators will be to the fore when times are less easy.

In essence, then, it is suggested here that the contingencies and constraints of being a manager will tend to override those elements of his or her beliefs which might interfere with 'proper' performance of management duties. Both immediate controls and the requirements of job protection and promotion militate against any such conscience in most circumstances, as well as tending to shape the conscience itself to 'company' interests, as if these equated to 'social responsibilities'.

It remains for me to draw out of the above the implications for the instigation and operation of participation schemes.

1. It was confirmed that management thought, as a body of ideas, embraces the idea of participation if at all in an emphatically unitary form. The common interests to be pursued were, of course, those of the firm, and participation emerges once more as a means to achieve the goals this stipulates. Specifically managerial elements of this outlook stressed the emergence of a professional group of employees, in charge but not tied to the narrow limits of the old capitalist, and with an attendant responsiveness to societal needs. At the same time, the possibility of the subjection of decisions to democratic procedures giving a real say to the workforce was blocked off by appeals to the need for knowledge and expertise to inform ultimate decision-making, and for constraints imposed by market and technology to be 'realistically' allowed for. One may conclude that there continues to be a quite different cast to any ideas of participation from the side of the agents of capital to those which meet the requirements of industrial democracy for labour.
2. These management precepts are echoed in many ways by practising managers. Career contingencies, the desire to protect personal authority, and socialisation, all help to ensure that participation is likely in practice to be welcomed only if it does not challenge the political economy of capital, but instead improves labour's acceptance of and co-operation with management decisions. Even where managers announce ideas which seem to conflict with this, they are unlikely to echo these in deed.
3. For many managers, there will be a reluctance to become committed to participation as a strategy at all. Partly this may be because experimentation puts their jobs on the line, but also it has been shown that many managers are little convinced by business school ideas, read little of the professional management literature and regard ideas like job enrichment etc. as unlikely to bring any great changes. As we shall see, the scepticism of this considerable group is 'confirmed' in most experience.

4. Managers are, however, split in their ideas about workers' position - they did not, in my own survey, think workers should do just what they're told, for instance. This and other elements of labour ideology do compromise the meaning-systems of many managers, and lead to a partial acknowledgement of the justice of claims for democratic rights.
  
5. What does all this imply in terms of the likely pattern of outcomes for participation? Once again, it strengthens the plausibility of predictions in Chapter 5, and gives some insight into the likely processes within management involved in the formulation and operation of a scheme. Management success could follow from a conscious and skilful exploration of participative rhetoric (c.f. Nichols & Beynon), but there are likely to be severe limitations on this in terms of management skills, awareness, and attitudes to the ideas. Worker success, too, might seem possible by taking advantage of management uncertainty and acquiescence in some labour demands, but the constraints on management action discussed earlier render this unlikely on any significant scale. What is clear is that management are almost certain to propose a thoroughly pseudo-democratic set-up, but the most likely consequences of this remain change of participative committee status, instability and triviality. Change of status seems likely to follow from the more pragmatic (or resigned) outlook of most practising managers, where bargaining can be usefully extended through a new channel. Instability is more likely if the scheme is applied by managers who are convinced immovably of the rectitude of unitary principles - probably most likely if policy is made by top management. Triviality remains most likely, however, not only in view of worker attitudes reviewed in Chapter 7, but also in the light of management cynicism, confusion or 'realism' noted here.
  
6. Finally, managers clearly seem likely to adopt ideas such as participation as 'good' (or an inevitable compromise) when it is particularly well spoken of in media by management spokesmen and others. As was seen above (and see Chapter 3 also), managers in my own survey had come to accept at least

the idea of participation as a 'good thing'. This in itself makes disappointment more likely in the event of failure (and so instability), and helps to explain the spread of schemes, notwithstanding the vagueness and cynicism about application which many managers (and workers) retain. The next step is to examine the causes of such a period of interest in the idea. The next chapter turns its attention to this.

GENERAL OPINIONS : MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORS

Mgt. = Management                      Spvrs. = Supervisors

S.A. = Strongly Agree  
 A. = Agree  
 N. = Neither Agree nor Disagree  
 D. = Disagree  
 S.D. = Strongly Disagree

%s throughout

(A)

(B)

Most decisions taken by supervisors would be better taken by the workers themselves.

Most managements have the welfare of their workers at heart.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	-	-	-
A.	4	-	3
N.	6	10	7
D.	68	67	68
S.D.	22	24	23
(N=)	(50)	(21)	(71)

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	6	-	4
A.	60	52	58
N.	20	33	24
D.	14	14	14
S.D.	-	-	-
(N=)	(50)	(21)	(71)

(C)

(D)

Managers know what's best for the firm, and workers should just do what they are told.

Giving workers more say in the running of their firm would only make things worse.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	2	5	3
A.	18	10	16
N.	24	29	25
D.	44	43	44
S.D.	12	14	13
(N=)	(50)	(21)	(71)

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	2	-	1
A.	28	29	28
N.	26	33	28
D.	40	33	38
S.D.	4	5	4
(N=)	(50)	(21)	(71)

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 8 (Continued 1.)

(E)

Industry should pay its profits to workers and not to shareholders

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	-	-	4
A.	10	14	11
N.	26	33	28
D.	50	33	45
S.D.	14	5	11
(N=)	(50)	(21)	(71)

(F)

The worker should always be loyal to his firm, even if this means putting himself out quite a bit.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	14	5	11
	56	57	56
	18	33	23
	12	5	10
	-	-	-
	(50)	(21)	(71)

(G)

In this country there is not enough opportunity for people from the shop floor to get ahead.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	2	5	3
A.	30	25	29
N.	20	15	19
D.	38	55	43
S.D.	10	-	7
(N=)	(50)	(20)	(70)

(H)

Workers need stronger trade unions to fight for their interests.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	-	-	-
	8	20	11
	16	20	17
	60	50	57
	16	10	14
	(50)	(20)	(70)

(I)

Management should let people organize their own work in their own way.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	4	5	4
A.	12	20	14
N.	18	25	20
D.	56	40	51
S.D.	10	10	10
(N=)	(50)	(20)	(70)

(J)

People on the shop floor have no opportunity to use their real abilities at work.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
	-	5	1
	18	20	19
	32	25	30
	43	45	43
	8	5	7
	(50)	(20)	(70)

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 8 (Continued 2.)

(K)

To get a decent wage workers have to ruin their social life by working much too long on overtime and shifts.

(L)

Nowadays management treat people just as numbers and never as human beings.

	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Mgt.</u>	<u>Spvrs.</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
S.A.	-	10	3	10	10	10
A.	14	33	20	10	20	13
N.	22	29	24	20	10	17
D.	56	24	47	45	50	46
S.D.	8	5	7	14	10	13
(N=)	(50)	(21)	(71)	(49)	(20)	(69)

Total do not always add to 100 due to rounding.

(A) - (F) Statements about industry (G) - (L) Statements about the position of shop floor employees in this country as a whole.

## NOTES : CHAPTER 8

1. See his text on Weber (1959a); and his 1974:xxv. Bendix also wrote a critical account of Marx which makes his distance clear, with S.M.Lipset, 1953.
2. In his 1959. C.f. also Bendix, 1974:xx
3. 1969, and to a lesser extent 1976.
4. See his 1966a:5ff; and also 1966b.
5. Such a view is presented by Child, and by Bartell (1976).
6. C.f. Nichols & Beynon, 1977:43 and elsewhere, where a discussion of the solid appearance and yet essentially ideological nature of the 'imperatives' of production is to be found.
7. C.f. Nichols, 1969; Whitley, 1974; Stanworth & Giddens, 1974, 1975; Barrat Brown, 1969; Miliband, 1969; Westergaard & Resler, 1975; Pahl & Winkler, 1974; Zeitlin, 1974. For the most effective discussion see de Vroey, 1975.
8. Berle & Means, 1932; Florence 1961; Gordon, 1961; Larner, 1966, all suggested management control existed widely. Nichols, 1969, esp. Chapter VI; Child, 1969a:Chapter 3; Westergaard & Resler, 1975; Miliband, 1969; Singh, 1971, are amongst those sceptical of this, or at least its significance.
9. C.f. critical references in Note 8 above, and also the work of Scott & Hughes.
10. C.f. Guardian 26.9.1977 reports 54% ownership by such institutions by 1975. See also Scott & Hughes, 1975, 1976a; Midgley, 1974; Stanworth & Giddens, 1975. An allied issue covered in several of these is that of interlocking directorships, (c.f. also references in Notes 7 and 8 above).
11. See especially P.R.D.Corrigan, 1977; and Perkin, 1969 on the battle of class ideologies in the Nineteenth Century.
12. Seider's evidence, based on an analysis of speeches by American business executives, is indicative here. Having made a distinction between 'classic' and 'social responsibility' stereotypes in attitudes, he was forced to admit that these "overlap a good deal" (1974:811). Moreover, despite questioning whether any one dominant ideological stance prevails, he concludes that for all the disagreements:

This is not to say big business does not agree profoundly on certain issues. The unity that does exist is unwritten and unspoken, is based on a strong acceptance of the fundamental elements of capitalism - private property, employer dominance, economic stratification - and it is never challenged. (1974:811-812).

13. C.f. Bendix, 1956, 1959; Sutton et al, 1956; Nichols, 1969.
14. Stanworth & Giddens, 1974:101. Nichols, 1969:116 cites an Institute of Directors survey in 1964 showing the same exclusion.
15. Whitley, 1974:70; Stanworth & Giddens, 1974:85; Sunday Times, 26.9.1976; Nichols, 1969:116.
16. Whitley, 1974:70; Stanworth & Giddens, 1974:84 - both studies suggesting at least two-thirds of the total. A Sunday Times survey (26.9.1976), less concentrated at the very top of the management tree, produced a figure of 47%.
17. Hall & Amado-Fischgrund, 1969 (cit Marceau et al, 1977:20). See also the studies cited by Nichols, 1969:116. The Sunday Times (26.9.1976) found 54% of their sample had been to university and about half the rest had at least some professional qualifications, suggesting perhaps some movement towards higher paper qualifications for British top management.
18. See the introduction to Part 5, and Chapter 13, for more details.
19. Similar findings are reported in Clements' (1956) study in Manchester - and compare also Nichols' (1969) remarks on the managers with working class backgrounds in his study.
20. A correlation analysis of responses to the various statements is not reproduced in this thesis, but preliminary analysis suggests that, insofar as one can say what would be a 'consistent' political position, management coefficients are little higher than those for manual respondents.
21. C.f. Nichols 1969:198; where he observes that 80% of his sample had never heard of Mayo and 46% were unable to name any management text. Child (1969) and Watson (1977) report similar ignorance.
22. In my own experience this is also the feeling of many supervisors - with justice, since they are liable to be scapegoated for either failure to control or for enforcing control too 'zealously', according to shifting rules of the situation over which they have little control. Elliott's supervisors, it seems, opted for a quiet life in a way which departmental managers in the situation she studied were not able to.
23. The more general ideological argument for this is epitomised by Peach and Hargreaves (1976) in an article entitled, 'Social Responsibility : The Investment That Pays Off'. The authors are, significantly, executives in IBM (UK), which has so strenuously resisted the advent of trade unionism. C.f. also Beesley & Evans, 1978, aptly paraphrased in a review in The Times:

The authors argue that a policy of voluntary social responsibility is not to be seen as an act of philanthropic generosity, it is a matter of social regulation rather than individual ethics. (13.2.1978).

24. However, see Watson, 1977, who shows the limits of such an adaptation for the personnel manager in the face of the direct pressures to conform to senior management expectations and requirements.
25. These two concepts refer to functionalist and distributive (or positive- and zero-sum) notions of power in organizations respectively. Thus Elliott distinguishes managers' own views of their power to gain compliance for the good of the firm, as against a view of power as something exerted over (and so against) others, to compel their obedience.
26. Such as McCarthy and Parker (1968) or Evans (1973) cited earlier. There is also plentiful evidence of widespread management acquiescence in and even active encouragement of the closed shop - see e.g. Hart, 1979; and the preview of a study at the Warwick SSRC unit by R.Taylor, Observer, 16.12.1979.
27. N = 42.
28. N = 32, i.e. a third of all respondents offered no reply here.
29. Watson finds some differences in ideology related to background among his sample of personnel managers, but confirms that in terms of action ideology does not obstruct decision-making in line with the interests of capital. My own study revealed no significant relationship between managers' class backgrounds and their ideological mapping, in line with Nichols.

