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V O L U M E T W O

PARTICIPATION FOR WHOM?

A CRITICAL STUDY OF WORKER PARTICIPATION IN THEORY
AND PRACTICE

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PART FOUR -

PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE - A CRITICAL REASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Industrial democracy already exists and irresistible social and economic forces are at work on its evolution, Mr Albert Booth, Employment Secretary, said last night ...

Industrial democracy was a tender plant but its roots were firmly embedded in the democratic principles on which British society was based. The "faint hearts and doubters" might nibble at the subject like worried mice but greater industrial democracy was not only desirable, it was inevitable ...
(Report in FT 6.1.1979).

This speech by a Minister of the Labour Government already looked dated a few months later when the specific advance of a law requiring workers to be appointed to the boards of companies which he was canvassing was repudiated by a Conservative Party victory at the polls. Its general message, that "joint responsibility will evolve as all great human principles have evolved "throughout history" (Booth quoted in ibid), is one which could have come from almost any orthodox political or business source. Chapter 9 will demonstrate the pervasiveness of the evolutionary assumptions in the discussion of industrial democracy. It will then seek to refute them by reference to historical and contemporary events, the latter being elaborated and extended by chapters 10 and 11.

A sceptical appraisal of this overswarming ideology of the ineluctable emergence of industrial democracy entails a similarly jaundiced evaluation of the practice of participation. Parts One to Three of this thesis have laid the groundwork for this, but have offered little in the way of evidence on the reality of participation. I shall recap the reasons for critically assessing the evidence shortly, but first let us consider the orthodoxy itself a moment longer. The task undertaken here would appear to face overwhelmingly unfavourable odds. Apart from the massive quantity of literature which does not query success but merely prescribes participation, there is a mountain of material proclaiming its accomplishments. Blumberg's survey leads him to conclude, in a manner typical of the field:

There is hardly a study in the entire literature which fails to demonstrate that satisfaction in work is enhanced or that other generally acknowledged beneficial consequences accrue from a genuine increase in workers' decision-making power. Such



consistency of findings, I submit, is rare in social research.
(1968 : 123).

It is, pace Blumberg, very much part of the issue whether most such schemes are in fact about "a genuine increase in workers' power" - who they are designed to serve.

Participation committees of the joint consultative type were found in one recent report to exist in three-quarters of companies, though only half of all companies had JCCs at company-wide level (Knight, 1979).¹ Similar percentages are reported in CBI surveys in the last few years.² Undoubtedly this proportion is far higher than it was during the 1960s (though not, as we shall see, necessarily higher than during the late 1940s and early '50s). This makes it clear that we are not dealing with an unusual or merely 'experimental' set of propositions. Participation in this form is neither exceptional nor innovatory. In the light of this finding it may seem odd that talk of participation has such a messianic quality, and looks so firmly to some future nirvana. These are further indications of the ideological nature of such discussions, and suggest all the more strongly the need for a more measured evaluation of actual experience.

The mid-1970s saw the confirmation of participation as the political talisman that all wanted to claim possession of. The following quotations from the manifestos of the three major parties in the October 1974 general election illustrate this well:

... a phased introduction of worker-participation and co-partnership schemes at all levels of industry from the shopfloor upwards, should involve union and non-union workers in the exercise of power. We would require legislation to set up works councils in all industries above a certain size and to establish the principle of worker representation at board level. The introduction of approved profit-sharing schemes ... is also essential if the necessary co-operation is to be achieved at plant level.

Our aim is to make industry democratic - to develop joint control and action by management and workers across the whole range of industry, commerce and the public service.

We want to promote partnership between government and industry, and partnership between those who work together in industry. It is on this that our chances of overcoming

the country's economic difficulties and laying foundations of a new prosperity for everyone will depend To strengthen this partnership, we will lay a formal duty on all large and medium-sized firms to consult employee representatives on a wide range of subjects. This is necessary not only for economic reasons but also because a better understanding is important in its own right. We want to leave the precise methods and procedures as flexible as possible

There are sufficient clues here for those familiar with the full proposals and debate between the parties to pick out which is which. In fact the order is Liberal, Labour and Conservative parties respectively. The similarities (and vagueness) in the rhetoric are nonetheless noteworthy.

The development of proposals since 1974 will be examined in the course of Chapter 9. It should be observed here, though, that other parties were to reach out for the same touchstone. The Scottish Nationalist Party, for example, advocated 'employee councils', elections to the board, and the encouragement of profit-sharing.³ The last of these proposals has long been advocated by the Liberal Party, but in recent years has also become a pet proposal of the Conservative Party. Worker directors have tended to be shunned, particularly as a legal requirement and even more so if based on a union channel of representation, by Tories and Liberals, and have found most of their support in the Labour Party. The 1979 election saw participation take far more of a back seat as an issue (most significantly), and the subsequent Conservative government, insofar as it attended to the subject at all, showed most interest in encouraging profit-sharing.

With all this attention, activity, and enthusiasm during the 1970s, participation is clearly central to industrial relations beliefs. Let us, then, recall the main drift of the arguments developed thus far on the topic. Part One showed that although both 'industrial democracy' and 'participation' are terms which embrace a series of conceptions of labour relations, the latter could embody proposals which did not redistribute decision-making power but were 'pseudo-democratic'. Moreover, it was suggested that managerial plans incorporated (in more ways than one) such a conception. Part Three extended the analysis by examining the notion of power, and arguing that it was embedded in ideas and practices, rather than being a simple, transferable resource. This led back to an analysis of the ideologies of management and of the working class, to assess the

extent and limits of the dominance of ruling class ideas. One implication of this discussion was that the nominal representation of workers in decision-making, even in the corridors of management HQ, in no way demonstrated that power was being redistributed to labour. Indeed, it is conceivable that such representation could be a means to attain worker acquiescence in decisions favouring the interests of capital.

The analysis did not deal only in the abstract possibilities conjured by an exposition of the concept of power, however. It also drew out strands from Chapter 5 of Part Two concerning the likely upshot of introducing participation based on managerial unitary conceptions. The most likely outcomes suggested by Chapter 5 were triviality and instability, with a shift to de facto bargaining as a possible result under some circumstances Chapter 7 clarified and confirmed the plausibility of this argument. It charted a working class ideology which it seems valid to describe collectively as ambiguous and ambivalent, accepting certain general ideas propagated by ruling class interests, but in a limited and fragile way often contradicted by everyday experience. Thus many alternative, labourist ideas were also espoused, and moreover the hold of 'dominant ideology' over the reactions of people to everyday experience of the phenomenal forms of their exploitation at work was particularly tenuous. Thus for instance - a particularly relevant instance, of course - an acceptance of a general statement concerning the need for workers and managements' to 'work together' in industry implies neither the rejection of radical labourist images about the need for control by workers over management nor the embracement of a participation scheme which serves the interests of management only. Indeed, the evidence suggests that such a scheme will be ignored or actively repudiated.

Part Four thus confronts the taken-for-granted assumptions about participation with an alternative set of predictions. Chapter 10 examines in detail some of the most publicised participation schemes, to see what results they have in fact produced. Chapter 11 scrutinises some of the material on other countries of which it is so often claimed that participation has been introduced on a wide scale and with unmitigated success. Firstly, however, Chapter 9 takes on one particularly influential element of management ideology invoked at the outset of this introduction: the notion that industrial democracy is a development which is part and parcel of a social evolution. Just what form this social

evolution is supposed to take, and how it connects with other aspects of ruling class ideology, will be elucidated in the course of Chapter 9.

PART FOUR

INTRODUCTION : NOTES

1. This survey was carried out in 1976 by the Social Survey Division of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.
2. E.g. in large companies (employing 2000+) nine-tenths of chief executives - also the source for the OPCS survey, a significant factor in the light of Chapter 10's discussion - claimed workers were regularly informed on trading results, and three-quarters said they had joint consultation (Personnel Management 9(9), Sept. 1977:9). More recently, in response to critical comments on management by Prince Charles in 1979, the CBI claimed 73% of companies had a works council, and 56% some less formal arrangement (G 23.2.1979).
3. See FT 13.5.1976. The National Front and National Party both placed a stamp of approval on some form of participation also.

In Chapter 2, I examined various analyses of the concept of industrial democracy. Prominent among the pluralist and unitary analyses alike was a seemingly unquestioning belief that industrial democracy had arrived or was ineluctably developing. It was also observed that a teleological argument underlay this belief, that modern Western society was good, and good equals democratic (equals good, to complete the circle). Such a sealed argument can be disrupted only with difficulty. It might be possible to show that the assumption about democracy and the present-day working of social institutions in those societies do not match reality; Chapters 10 and 11 seek in a way to do this (though the competing epistemologies discussed at the start of Chapter 6 form an obstacle to convincing pluralist acolytes). It might also be possible to attack the way in which history is written (or left unwritten) to vindicate the idea of evolutionary development.

The teleological approach, when applied to the interpretation of the past, operates in the manner exemplified by Derber. Appropriate past events are selected for highlighting, presented as stepping stones to the present. Thus the present is revealed as a natural and inevitable development of the past, and all other events and forces in the past are treated as secondary, proven unimportant by their (alleged) eclipse in the present. An alternative to Derber's approach is to ignore the past altogether, and indeed this method is far more common amongst analyses of worker participation, though in such cases the historical account must be regarded as implicit.

The evolutionary image of participation is not confined to academic discussions. It figures prominently in the pronouncements of would-be and actual policy makers on the political front. The beginning of the introduction to Part Four showed this for one Minister in the last Labour government, but let us confirm the typicality of that image.

... we concentrate on how western capitalism can evolve to this end guaranteeing individual freedom via co-partnership at work ... In short, we are not merely concerned with a better approach to industrial relations, but with a new society, indeed a new ideology relevant to modern industrialism throughout the world. (Liberal Party, 1968 : 32).

Greater involvement not only makes work far more rewarding but in the longer run it also has a vital role to play in gradually breaking down the old attitudes of conflict and hostility in our industries and indeed throughout society generally. (J.Prior, Conservative Party spokesman on employment, reported in Times 27.3.1978).

Our proposals would encourage a movement towards participation in democratic procedures; a natural evolution rather than an attempt to conjure democracy out of the air. (1968 NEC statement from the Labour Party, appendix to Labour Party, 1967 : 62).

In itself there is little significance in the fact that the parties advance millennial elements in their visions of the purpose and effects of policy; they are hardly likely to present views expressing the temporary and probably historically marginal impact of their proposals. Yet such declarations as they do make are still of some substance to the extent that they reflect at least partly the views of the political figures themselves, and to the extent that they reflect and communicate to a wider public aspirations and beliefs.

The Labour Party refer in their 1967 comments to the slower evolution at plant level of union representation than that achieved on NEDCs and the like at national level. They are, nonetheless, clearly at one with the other parties in seeing industrial society, and the worker within it, on an upward path to prosperous, participative nirvana. Always provided someone (the other parties, irresponsible elements in industry etc) doesn't rock the boat, that is. This kind of picture is expressed a little more elaborately in two speeches in the early 'seventies to the Industrial Co-partnership Association given by figures of considerable influence when they spoke. The then Secretary of State for Industry placed his discussion of the future of participation in the context of a global conception of growing "interdependence" in society. In a manner reminiscent of a Mayovian interpretation of Durkheim, he argued that growing complexity entailed greater co-operation, and the conquering of "mythical pseudo-differences" that "figure too largely in our minds". (J.Davies, 1972). Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Commission on Industrial Relations posed the question: "What is the reason for this growing demand for various forms of participation?" His conclusion is that "the answer is evolutionary". They have grown out of expanding union power and collective bargaining scope, and out of the worker's reaction to his changing work and social environment. (Neal, 1972).

To complete this sketch of the ideological moods that surround the public discussions of participation policy, let us take a preliminary look at the Bullock Report. There we find a clear elaboration of an evolutionary view, at the heart of the Majority Report, in a chapter headed 'The Pressures For Change'.

New concepts of the role of employees in decision-making at company level are not just reactions to economic trends. They also derive from social changes which have taken place since the war (p22).

Turning to the minority report we find harsh criticism of the proposals of the majority, but hardly a rejection of the belief in the need to continue some 'advance' on a road already under construction. If the emphasis is on the greater social responsibility of management than that acknowledged by the majority report at one level of argument, it is at the same time for a more gradualist progress in the future at another. This paradox arises, of course, from the competing union (as largely embodied in the majority report) and management conceptions of the purpose and role of participation outlined in Chapter 3. For those signing the minority report, all businessmen, the emphasis is all on "involvement" for "efficiency", and away from the need to control management via participative arrangement towards a need for management to harness (control) employee contributions. Thus the call for "flexibility", and for "due regard for the evolution of the changes required" (p173).

The historical account implicit in this view is brought out by a letter to the Financial Times from the Director-General of the Chemical Industries Association a year later:

If we are to keep this matter in perspective we should remember that the Bullock Report was an irrelevant mutant in an already well established evolutionary process and not the stimulant to a new approach conceived or implemented in defensive panic. (M.Trowbridge, 10.2.1978).

Derber's selective account of US industrial relations history presented institutionalised collective bargaining as the embodiment of industrial democracy. That account has already come to seem perilously fragile in the light of events in the 1970s, which have seen the increasingly

beleaguered state of collective bargaining outside of a few well-organised industries reflected in the falling density of trade union membership.² In the British context, the equivalent phrased in terms of the emergence of a dialogue between employer and employee is presented by Charles (1973), whose text is subtitled "Studies in the evolution of collective bargaining at national and industry level". Charles seeks to represent a series of meetings between employers and unions in the period 1911-1939, and the setting up of Whitley committees after 1917, as signposts to the future in which we now reside. This he does despite the fact that each of the instances he chooses to focus on was a manifest failure at producing the kind of labour-management co-operation he sees as the essence of the new order. He thus opts to treat as incidental the intense conflict amidst which these bodies were set up, and in response to which they were defensive reactions (the Whitleys) or little more than token gestures (the Industrial Council, National Industries Conference, or the Mond-Turner talks).

In contrast, the position adopted here is that past periods of participative innovation are far more readily understood as management reactions to a situation where they have felt their power to be under siege. A salient feature of this is that management authority is challenged from below. But central to the analysis, in the light of what has been argued about ideologies in Part Three, must be the way in which people experience circumstances - not only the challengers but also those who feel themselves to be challenged. Clearly one would expect management to perceive a threat as sharpest precisely when labour discontent and disruption is greatest, but their perception of the extent and urgency of the danger will be mediated by how they experience it, and it is perfectly possible for a loss of legitimacy to go unnoticed under some circumstances, or for a minor disturbance to be seen as a major threat. (The latter is perhaps easier to appreciate - letters to The Times by candlelight etc...). As Chapter 8 suggests, it is certainly feasible that different levels of management will experience the threat in different ways, as well as viewing the practicability of alternative solutions differently. The same point applies across types of industry. I have not sought to pursue these points in this account, however, preferring to present a broad brush picture for want of space and research.

According to the way different challenges or 'problems' present themselves to management, then, their seriousness will be variously assessed, as will the justification and likely efficacy of different strategies to cope with them. A conspiracy account of the introduction of participation schemes is thus not strictly necessary (though it should not thereby be ruled out altogether, since ruling class collaboration is visible at many points in history in many areas of social control). With this, let us turn to an historical account presented without the gloss of evolutionary assumptions.

BRIGGS AND AFTER

The earliest period in which participative schemes attracted serious attention from capitalists saw the establishment of some twenty-five profit-sharing arrangements between 1865-1873. That the idea was not new is shown by an examination, for instance, of French history, and it was in response to the efforts in this direction by Charles Babbage (significantly a precursor of Taylorism in many respects) that Marx had commented that profit-sharing served only as:

... a special bonus which can achieve its purpose only as an exception from the rule, and which is in fact, in noteworthy practice, restricted to the buying-up of individual overlookers etc in the interests of the employer against the interest of their class ... or else it is a special way of cheating the workers and of deducting a part of their wages in the more precarious form of a profit depending on the state of the business. (Marx, 1858:288).

In the UK the pioneers were the coalowners, Henry Briggs, Son & Co. Their scheme, explicitly directed at the exclusion of unions from the company, followed a period of progressively worsening labour relations. Early profit pay-outs heralded a period of apparent success in the goals of the plan until a renewal of recession in 1874 saw Briggs acting with other coalmasters to cut wages. To their disgust, employees showed little loyalty, and joined a widespread strike against the employers' action. Thus the 'preventative' rather than 'palliative' which the Briggs had advertised in their attempts to publicise their methods had at best temporary impact. The scheme was abandoned at the shareholders' insistence in the face of failure.

It is significant that this and subsequent waves of interest on the part of employers in participation schemes in many respects follow the pattern noted by Allen (1964a) for the use of conciliation and arbitration procedures. He too observes a pattern in which apparent concessions were made in those industries and at those times when pressure on employers was greatest, but that despite the frequent embracing of universalistic principles justifying the new arrangements the best efforts were made to avoid formal recognition so that the relationship could be readjusted should 'better' times return. A similar analysis can be applied to the introduction of employee welfare schemes (Hay, 1977, 1977a).

The analysis of two recent and one rather older study of profit-sharing before the First World War³ confirm the pattern described above, and also the interpretation offered here. In Church's words:

If one examines the subsequent history of profit-sharing down to World War 1 it is possible to identify a direct relationship between the introduction of profit-sharing or co-partnership schemes with a high level of employment and labour unrest. (1971:10).

A recent study of J.T. & T. Taylor's profit-sharing scheme (Pollard & Turner 1976) extends this profile well beyond the period examined by Church. This scheme was in fact begun during the second peak of profit-sharing inauguration, 1889-1892. Where one early observer (Sedley Taylor, 1884) had found little interest among capitalists in profit-sharing in preceding years, the conflict of this period brought forth a revival of attention. Subsequent periods of interest in 1908-1909 and 1912-1914 are associated with similar conditions.

In practice, profit-sharing does not appear to have been overly successful in achieving an "enterprise consciousness" (Bristow's term, 1974:262), with a failure rate well over 50% (Bristow, 1974:288). Many cases exhibiting the sort of instability shown by the Briggs' scheme are apparent, but on top of these visible failures must be stacked schemes which became ritual annual bonuses with little significance to employer or employee, yet surviving for many years as a token gesture.

The unitary, entrepreneurial/managerial ideology which guided these profit-sharing schemes is manifest. The United States saw similar attempts by employers:

In their ways, employers had been responding sporadically to the demand of their workers with schemes of employee representation ... by instituting schemes of profit-sharing, and by the construction of company towns in which they would exhibit varying degrees of benevolence. By such measures American employers hoped to undermine the appeal of the trade unions, and they reacted vigorously and with hurt indignation when they did not succeed. (Bendix, 1956:266).

I have not attempted to explore US history in the detail that I have Great Britain, but my impression is of a similar pattern. Perhaps most striking is the coincidence in time of radical working class movements in many different countries during the twentieth century, commencing with the varieties of industrial unionism and syndicalism in the first two decades. Then as now, offers of 'participation' in some form were found in many countries as a consequence, illustrating the extent of interlinkage which has existed for a very long time already between the capitalist nations, and so their crises.

WHITLEYISM

Thus we find the early years of the twentieth century beset by mounting unrest, the varying causes of which have been severally investigated by authors interested in the generation of the shop stewards movement from 1915.⁴ Our attention must be confined to the consequences.

As the rigours of the First World War precipitated the intensification of conflict between working class movements, widely antagonistic to an 'imperialist war', and their employers, the latter seen as backed by a visibly 'servile state', so middle-class fears grew. The events in Russia did little to calm such anxiety. At the same time, where the war effort did produce patriotic effort from the shop floor, the benefits of co-operative activity were made clear, as were those of dilution for the introduction of more effective technology to speed the labour process. Thus whilst anti-Bolshevik feeling ran high⁵ there were also moves afoot to encourage the idea of setting up a joint committee of labour and management representatives in each firm, with a national industrial council in each industry. These moves were first mooted by the Garton Foundation, at the particular instigation of a Quaker, Malcolm Sparkes, and an ancestor of Anthony Wedgewood-Benn, Mr Ernest J.P. Benn. They provoked the establishment of a Government committee under the

chairmanship of J.H. Whitley, which in its division between employer and union representatives was in many ways a pre-echo of the Bullock Committees of 1976-1977. White (1975) makes clear the continuity between the tactic of Whitleyism which emerged, to try and ameliorate conflict, and the preparation and utilisation of other forms of social control, including coercive repression.

It is significant that Whitleyism is now associated with diluted bargaining in parts of the public sector and in other areas of employment with weak union organisation. It is common to find joint consultation grafted on top of these arrangements, even. This also makes it all too easy to forget the original aspirations and rhetoric which surrounded its emergence, and the initial scope of its coverage. The following quotations from the First Interim Report of the Whitley Committee are illustrative here:

What is wanted is that the workpeople should have a greater opportunity of participating in the discussion about the adjustment of those parts of industry by which they are most affected ...

In conclusion it may be pointed out that the sub-committee has tried to devise, in general terms, a plan which would give opportunities for satisfying the growing demands made by the trade unions for a share in 'industrial control' ... (quoted by Charles, 1973:107, 112).

If this rhetoric is plain, then despite the appending of their signatures to a document which trod with notable skill a rhetorical path that both employer and union representatives could read their own interpretation into, there was also a rejection in part of the conclusions on the part of Smillie et al which is echoed in many caveats today:

... a complete identity of interests between capital and labour cannot thus be effected and that such machinery cannot be expected to furnish a settlement for the more serious conflicts of interest involved in the working of an economic system primarily governed and directed by the motives of private profit. (Quoted by Charles, 1973:101).

What, then, was the result of Whitleyism? At its peak it covered 3½ million workers, in a wide range of employment (Halevy, 1921:130). In an enthusiastic review of experience with works committees existing prior to the implementation of the Whitley recommendations, the Ministry of Labour⁶ proclaimed that:

Works Committees have, in the great majority of cases, tended to introduce greater harmony and, through it, greater efficiency [as] is proved by the evidence of those concerned in their working. It is not denied that in some cases (though these are very few) Works Committees have failed In almost every case, however, the testimony is to the opposite effect. (p46).

Yet the optimism seems to have been misplaced, for even the full flush of Whitley propaganda, accompanied by the National Industrial Council of 1919, could not make the 'new' system, presented then as now as part of the evolution of industrial relations to a new basis, into a workable one. Behind the grand words, interpretations were inconsistent much in the manner described in Chapter 3 above:

The workers talk about participation in the management of the business. The employers reply by talking about participation in profit and, in the most favourable cases, concede only the most bastard form of joint control to the workers ... we know very well how illusory this control is, and the appearance of control is intended to create the narrowest possible bond between the interests of the worker and the interests of the employer who hires him. (Halevy, 1919:108).

Thus in the key term, 'co-operation', Halevy finds unionists talking of the elimination of profits and employers of their grand enhancement. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that Whitleyism was largely ignored or rejected by organised trades who had already attained bargaining rights, and began to disappear fairly quickly in other cases. Some exhibited an instability inherent in conflict over the terms of the so-called co-operation, others faded into disuse more quietly. By 1926 only 47 of 78 established schemes remained,⁷ with many of these almost certainly operating on a ritualistic basis only.

The 1920s had seen a reversal of the power and so of the challenge of labour to employers, of course, and under this circumstance interest in maintaining the participative pretences declined sharply, apart from the impetus in this direction from the widespread failure of the councils in managerial terms. The 1927 Mond-Turner talks, which Charles, Chang (1936) and McDonald & Gospel (1973) all seem to regard as path-breakingly significant, serve far better to confirm the cyclical pattern, for they were practically ignored by employers (who had prior to the defeat of the unions been so eager) and offered the unions the most sketchy and

inoperative of consultations. The treatment of this conference is a good illustration of the way modes of interpretation and evolutionism lay stress on events from which a reflexive, analytical history could only derive embarrassment.

In the eyes of at least two authors the Whitley Committee system's publicity had achieved at least a short-term success for the employers' side:

The trick had come off, and the system of Whitley councils had done its work. It had allowed capitalism to play state collectivism/material demands/ and Guild socialism off against each other and to cancel each other out. (Halévy, 1922:152).

Even before 1920, it was becoming obvious that some employers had only dealt with the idea of shared control as a device to buy time. (Child, 1969:48).

To envision so conspiratorial and conscious a strategy is probably somewhat misleading. No doubt there were some employers who did calculate on the value of a delaying device, but there will have been many others who were at least partly (and rather temporarily) convinced of the need for participation; still others would have always pushed for participation, whether on idealistic or tactical grounds, and their voices would have assumed prominence at a time when this approach was in favour. Such 'pioneers' tend to fade back into being 'eccentrics' when interest fades once more. Pace Child this is a far more realistic account of the influence of Quaker ideas.⁸

JOINT CONSULTATION

The participation panacea was thus displaced by other methods more visibly associated with social control for most of the interwar years. Then the latter years of the 1930s witnessed a revival of the militancy of trade unionism in industries where employment prospects were picking up fastest due to military preparations. Those who rebuilt the severely depleted trade unions were, predictably, extremely hostile to the management establishment that had made to offer so much and then, once the opportunity arose, resorted to all the old tactics once more. Capitalism had, moreover, failed in its project of offering at least the most economically effective and secure system of production and employment.

The legitimacy of those who ran industry was thus once again under severe pressure. The Second World War was, however, less straightforward in its impact on this situation than the First had been.

Because of the shared opposition to the Nazi enemy, particularly once the Soviet Union had been attacked by Hitler, the labour movement was this time united in its support for the war effort. The result was the appearance of Joint Production Committees, apparently much indebted to initiative from the labour side. The government reacted by giving official approval to these committees and their equivalents in shipbuilding (yard committees) and the mines (pit committees). A committee was set up under the chairmanship of the General Secretary of the TUC, Citrine, to recommend action to set up regional organisations to harness these local efforts (ILO, 1944:14ff). By July 1943 there were 4169 JPCs covering 2½ million workers (Clegg & Chester, 1954:338), and 4565 in June 1944 (Flanders, 1968:135).

JPCs were forbidden to discuss matters covered by machinery for negotiation. Thus they dealt almost exclusively with production and efficiency. As such they came to seem attractive propositions to many managers, who found that:

... competent managers were given a means of 'putting their plans across' to their workers; that an undoubted enthusiasm on the part of many workers was canalized through the JPCs; and that a number of workers gained some experience of the problems of management ...⁹.

However, this lack of challenge to management, for them the essence of 'real' participation, encouraged less enthusiasm from employees even under wartime conditions. The left had expected (as some ironically hoped again in the 1960s) that access to management decisions would expose the inefficiencies and unscientific nature of management, but then as now the source of ideology runs deeper than mere propaganda. There was a growing reaction to the fact that committees were instead becoming the tool of management control and imposition of discipline.¹⁰ Despite ideal conditions for co-operation, then, Clegg & Chester (1954:339) conclude that there was no more than half-and-half success and failure (what they mean by the terms is unclear) for JPCs. Thus after the war JPCs fell away in numbers, to perhaps 550 in 1948.¹¹ In fear of the new Labour Government

introducing a statutory form of participation, some employers preferred not to pursue the matter (Wigham, 1973:158).

In the years following the war and the defeat of Churchill in the elections, the Labour Government put into operation the public corporation, based not on the dilute workers' control model proposed before the war but on the basis proposed by Herbert Morrison. This meant no rights to representation for workers at the executive level, where 'best man for the job' (judged in traditional capitalist terms) continued; but compulsory establishment of consultative and advisory bodies in the new organisations. Meantime, the threat of an economic crisis like that after the First World War haunted government and many employers, and when the situation worsened in 1947 there emerged a rapidly revived interest in joint consultation in the private sector also. The Ministry of Labour again campaigned for the 'new' arrangements, which again were to be voluntary for each industry and to act in advisory capacity only. They were also to be strictly delimited from areas of acknowledged conflict and so negotiation. By 1949, of 54 chief industries, 26 had agreed to recommend setting up joint committees at factory and workshop levels, 17 had decided to leave it entirely to local management, and 8 had decided existing machinery was adequate. Three had not decided.¹²

The spread of joint consultation was rapid and very extensive. Two studies in the period at the very end of the 1940s (NIIP, 1952; W.R.Brown & Howell-Everson, 1950) confirmed that around three-quarters of all companies (and over 90% in engineering) had such councils. Seven per cent had already discontinued, it should be noted. But if the scope of this cycle is so often conveniently forgotten today, so too is the spread of its decline. In a period of growing economic prosperity (and mounting Tory majorities) the rising apparent power of the unions did not constitute a threat to management. Legitimacy was for the time being buttressed by the delivering, literally, of the goods. Moreover, the consultation system produced rife triviality, offering little to either side of industry in the light of experience, now that the common war effort was over. By the early 1960s only one in five firms with over 150 employees reported having consultation committees (Marsh & Coker, 1963), and equally interestingly under 30% of these companies reported having such schemes in 1955. Whilst some of these cases can be accounted for by schemes which were retired before 1955, there would have appeared to be a good deal of 'amnesia',

whether deliberate or not, on the basis of the earlier known figures. Part of this is probably accounted for at the other end, too, by firms reporting schemes when they were fashionable in the late 1940s which were so token as to be soon forgotten. Some of these which had survived had done so in a ritual form, known only to students of the company rule book.

Clegg & Chester sum up the worker's view of consultation as founded in a cynicism based on a memory of pre-war management attitudes and a belief that little had changed other than the circumstances of full employment. In such circumstances "it is for the worker to make the best of it while he can, for if conditions change there will be little heard of joint consultation." (1944:345). For management such attitudes were ready evidence of the cussed unpreparedness of the worker for participation, on which they could blame any failure. The patterns are thus familiar. As a closing illustration of this, the following Tory policy statement from 1943, which but for a few specific terms could be lifted from the October 1974 manifesto quoted earlier (or that for 1979), speaks for itself:

The standard of living of this country can only be restored and improved if maximum production is regarded as the joint responsibility of capital, management and labour, working as partners. We consider that a man who invests his skill and labour in an industry should feel an interest in and exercise an influence over that industry, equal in degree, if not in kind, to that exercised by a man who invests his savings. To this end we welcome the extension of the system of production committees. (Forward By the Right: A Statement by the Tory Reform Committee, 13th October 1943).

ONCE MORE UNTO THE BREACH

So we reach the current period of management interest in participation as a solution to a challenge from below. Only by presuming this to be a permanent phenomenon is an evolutionary perspective made tenable, though this assumption is made with few visible qualms in the received wisdom. In the section following this one I shall lay out my objections to such an assumption on theoretical and empirical grounds. Firstly, though, let us examine how this latest wave came into existence for comparison with its predecessors.

The '60s and '70s were decades when economic crisis seemed to become indigenous, the only variation being in the severity of that crisis. The long-term decline in profitability noted by Glyn & Sutcliffe did not cease after the publication (1972) of their study. From the early 1960s onwards a solution to this and balance of payments problems was sought in policies aiming to limit the rate of increase in wages. Under the Labour government which came into power in 1964, incomes policy became associated with a form of wage bargaining which sought to safeguard profits by tying wage increases to increases in productivity (i.e. to make them self-financing). In order to gain acceptance for this productivity bargaining, innovative employers saw a need to 'involve' workers and to institutionalise the generation of ideas for increasing the rate of output from the labour process. Productivity committees in various forms were thus commonly a part of productivity agreements.

A further aspect of the growing pressure on management was the spread of trade union membership, particularly in the 'non-traditional' sectors of white-collar employees and female workers in manual and non-manual work. Above all, this brought a development of local union representation, through the burgeoning of the shop steward system. Demands for greater rights in the determination of company policies in areas traditionally management's domain were reflected in a shift of the TUC's position in 1966, when they advanced arguments for participation in decisions beyond orthodox collective bargaining matters.¹³ There followed a Labour Party Committee under the chairmanship of Jack Jones¹⁴ in 1967, the report of which (accepted by the 1968 Party Conference) called for extended information and bargaining rights and experiments with worker directors in the public sector. Demands such as these became a populist rallying call of the Labour movement in the 1970s (though the precise reforms demanded became increasingly fragmented as specific proposals were aired from the mid-'70s). The official demands of the Labour movement focussed on worker directors from the publication of TUC proposals in 1973 (see TUC, 1973, 1974).

Management awareness of this challenge grew from the mid-'60s, especially once it became apparent that productivity committees were not going to meet the needs of legitimacy and containing unrest. In public, management spokesmen were eager to acknowledge their desire to meet the needs of working people (tempered, naturally, with the sensible protection of

rational decision-making by appropriate experts - so that involvement, not power, became the offering). In gatherings of fellow managers, however, the contingent and reluctant nature of any concessions, and the determination to make them serve rather than attenuate management authority, was plain:

... radical relief will soon be required to avoid an explosion. We need not look far abroad to see the dangers. Soon we must take new measures to realise the main ideals of industrial democracy whilst safeguarding the wealth producing industrial framework. (British Institute of Management, 1968:8).

There ought not now to be any doubt in the mind of any businessman that the whole of our industrial system is under severe attack. Its values, especially, are under attack Authority needs some firm moral base. And the more authority is under attack, the firmer and more explicit that base must be. Authority based solely on election in an annual general meeting by a fraction of shareholders is not the firmest base on which to resist the present attack on our industrial system ... there are companies where these problems have been overcome. There are all kinds of internal joint councils ... (excerpts from Catherwood, 1973).

The last author, who has since been BIM chairman, and has been a noted management ideologist, author of three books on the Christian view of industry, and formerly Director General of NEDO, has elsewhere made his meaning plain. In an article recounting various responses to 'shop floor power' he avers:

The fourth counterforce is worker participation ... I would urge the unions to accept that management understands the power of decision-making in companies somewhat better than they do and to recognise that the right of unions to veto management decisions has little to do with the participation of employees at all levels in the affairs of the company. (Catherwood, 1976:300).

For management, the schemes which seemed most attractive were those which, firstly, protected and promoted the company's prosperity, and secondly, did not encroach in any serious way on their freedom of ('rational and necessary') action. Consultative and advisory bodies whose scope and pertinence to business decisions remained at local managerial discretion were looked upon favourably, provided they were allowed to 'mature' gradually, taking on responsibilities only insofar as the 'education' of worker representatives removed any dangerous, destructive dogmas of

ignorance. Profit sharing and job reforms also received attention as appealingly innocuous devices, though more marginally in the 1970s since they could not even pretend to appease and co-opt troublesome demands for joint determination from organised labour.

The impression that management were turning back to consultative committees in refurbished packaging is confirmed by survey figures. Thus one survey of engineering firms in the late 1960s (Marsh, Evans & Garcia, 1971) showed an increase from the figure reported earlier for the start of the decade, to 30% reporting having joint production and advisory committees, and 16% 'similar committees'. Another survey conducted in 1968 (Clarke et al, 1972) reported that 32% of all firms declared formal consultative bodies, the proportion rising sharply with the size of the firm (12% under 199 employees up to 62% of those with over 2000 employees). In 1974 the Institution of Works Managers (1975) found 44% of firms had or planned such machinery, with the concentration highest in the nationalised sector (three-quarters). The introduction to Part Four cites the most recent available figures, which show further rises by the late 1970s.

The 1970s were unquestionably a decade in which worker participation was a subject of exceptional topicality, the generator of widespread debate among both management and trade unionists, and a focus for frequent coverage in the mass media. The literature poured forth. But I think the interest can, in retrospect, be seen to have been far from even throughout these years. The issue faded far more into the background for much of the Heath government of 1970-74, when unemployment and anti-union legislation occupied most of the Labour movement's efforts (including the UCS, despite the significance in terms of industrial democracy demands by labour since attached to this). With the defeat of Tory policies, the worsening of the crisis from capital's viewpoint 1974-75, and the pressure of the labour movement on the Labour Party to fulfil election commitments and so retain union support, interest seems to have revived. Giles Radice's private members' bill, Industrial Democracy, slipped through two readings in the Commons in 1975, and was dropped only because of promises by the government to set up a Committee of Inquiry. Eventually a chairman was found in Lord Bullock, and the Committee was constituted with academic, management and union representatives. Its terms of reference echoed TUC policy in specifying worker directors as the channel for industrial

democracy to be particularly scrutinised. In January 1977 the Committee reported (Bullock Report, 1977), the Majority and Minority reports echoing to an extent the opposed view of management and unions on the whole subject area. The content of this was illustrated in more general terms in Chapter 3, but let us now briefly review the main recommendations and responses to the Bullock Report.

Bullock supported the concept of worker directors on the board, in a report which in most respects followed the lines of the TUC proposals. Thus it advocated parity (with an 'independent' group of appointees to ward off stalemates), and a single, union channel of representation to select or determine the means of selection for the worker side. Initially, the proposals were to apply only in private sector companies with more than 2000 employees. The chief departure from TUC proposals (the logic of which the TUC subsequently accepted) was that representation should be on a single, executive board, rather than on the policy-making or 'supervisory' board of a two-tier system.

Bullock was greeted (or anticipated, since the outcry began well in advance of publication of the report) with a massive fusillade of scorn and vitriol from the business community and the media. The form of the criticism was wholly predictable from the managerial conceptions of the nature and purpose of participation spelled out in Chapter 3, and I shall resist the temptation to quote further from the bloated files of cuttings I have kept from that period. There was rejection of above all the trade union channel of representation, secondly of parity, and also of the single-tier idea. It was argued that the Bullock formulae would exclude large numbers of non-unionists and leave the rest with a sham democracy controlled by union potentates. Decisions would be blocked, confidentiality lost, rational strategies requiring redundancies and the like obstructed, and conflict would be brought to the boardroom.

Most of the criticisms were poorly informed and logically unsound, in particular failing to acknowledge and confront quite detailed justifications for their proposals in the Bullock Report itself. For instance, the signatories mustered evidence that union membership was far higher than the national average in the organisations they were concerned with, and set out their reasoning for relying on the union channel carefully, but this was almost entirely ignored. However, it is not my task to weigh up

the details of the pros and cons in this debate. My concern here is with the conceptions and subsequent pattern of events. Thus Bullock was submerged under an assault which demonstrated the strength of managerial conceptions of what 'industrial democracy' was and was not about. There was outrage that participation schemes could be considered to be concerned with anything above profitability and worker commitment to their companies. The boardroom was the locus not of power play between interest groups, but of technically appropriate decision-making in the ultimate interest of everybody. Participation should take the form of experiments introduced, monitored and regulated from above, and extended according to the appropriateness of employee responses. They should seek involvement, and for this works councils, profit sharing and the like were far more suitable and embraced far more people than worker director proposals. Moreover, the evolutionary theme was prominent. One could not leap in with industrial democracy at the top, because such a system had to develop and mature, and it required a long period of employees learning from the organic growth of works council arrangements what the real problems and needs of industry were.¹⁵

These conceptions were proclaimed with particular clarity - and irony - in the minority report of the employers' representatives on the Bullock Committee. Not only do their comments unselfconsciously redefine the whole purpose of participation in terms of profitability and 'involvement' (see Bullock Report: 171), but in listing the criteria they feel are required to fulfil the aims they set for participation, there is reference to the need for "evolution" of information procedures, attitudes of all parties, education, and 'substructures' (works councils and the like lower down the firm), and again for the "evolvment of structures and procedures" (Bullock Report: 173).

The union response to Bullock was also firmly within the framework of conceptions indicated in Chapter 3. But what this entailed was a divided and uncertain set of reactions which effectively removed any chance of the Labour government putting anything along the lines of Bullock into operation. For some prominent union spokesmen, from Arthur Scargill on the left to Frank Chapple on the right, worker directors reek of incorporation and an undermining of union independence from management. While the T&GWU and ASTMS (both with General Secretaries on the Bullock Committee) back the proposal, the EPTU, UCATT, and for that matter the

National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear workers opposed it. The AUEW took the line that worker directors were acceptable in nationalised industries but not in the private sector, while the G&MWU opposed worker directors as the exclusive formula for progress. The latter, their views widely written up in the press by their General Secretary David Basnett, proposed that an alternative line of extended information and rights to require employers to negotiate on issues not traditionally covered by collective bargaining (such as investment) be legislated for as well. These uncertainties and divisions did not go unnoticed among employer or ministerial circles, and enabled them to soft pedal on the issue.

Finally, in May 1978, the government produced a White Paper, Industrial Democracy which, tentatively and in far less detail than Bullock, suggested a diluted form of worker directors surrounded by a unitary rhetoric of the purpose of the whole exercise which the Guardian referred to as 'organic Jimmism'. Worker representation was proposed to be only one-third of the board, and companies were to be given the option of setting up a formal two-tier system with workers only on the 'upper', supervisory body. Some concessions were made to the G&MWU proposals by the suggestion that a Joint Representative Committee be established by unions, who were to get certain information and consultation rights on company strategy. After three or four years only, this JRC could demand worker representatives on the board. The role of non-union employees in all this was left unsettled by the White Paper. It was emphasised, though, that worker directors would have to take the same responsibilities as other directors.

The discussion which followed was relatively muted by comparison with that after Bullock. It was generally received in the media as a welcome moderation of Bullock, but still suspect. Employers remained generally opposed, particularly to the whole principle of policies being imposed on them by law. Meanwhile, unemployment problems had intensified, and the main concern of the unions (and of many local activists) was moving away from short term anger at economic failure to fears of long term retrenchment. This, coupled with the disillusion wrought by their own divisions (and perhaps by the experience of many with revived forms of works councils), pushed industrial democracy proposals that had no immediate purchase on bargaining matters into the background. The same conditions eased the management experience of a need to concede. In the event the only formal moves were minor concessions by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to grant tax relief to certain kinds of profit-sharing as part of the agreements

made for the support of the Liberal Party in Parliament (the 'Lib-Lab pact').

The Conservative Party came to power in 1979, committed to preventing legislation imposing a participative constitution on companies, rejecting the sole, union channel, and calling, after the manner of many management spokesmen, for participation to develop from the bottom upwards.¹⁶ The raucous irony of this evolutionary call in the light of the history of dilute consultation and profit-sharing related above, is deafening. Profit-sharing was endorsed, and to date the only definite action by the government has been the extension of tax relief for such schemes in the 1980 Budget.

It seems for the moment, then, that we are in the midst of an ebb tide once again. Gone are the grand fanfares for the evolution of a new order. In one recent meeting at which I was present, a prominent management spokesman responded to mention of the issue of industrial democracy with a puzzled smile and the words, 'Oh, I thought we'd brushed all that under the carpet'. So we have.

THE HISTORICAL PATTERN

The basic conclusions to which the above observations lead confirm the critical perspective which was developed in earlier chapters. Participation has attracted management attention on a large scale at particular periods of time, thus producing a cycle or wave-like pattern. Whilst labour interest in industrial democracy formed part of the conditions, on some occasions, which ultimately provoked the setting up of participation schemes, the initiative in formulating and initiating actual schemes lay on each occasion with the management side. Thus the generating conditions were those which management perceived as requiring this action for one or both of two reasons: (a) intensification of effort and so of expropriation of the worker (the usual radical interpretation);¹⁷ (b) the protection of managerial legitimacy in the face of a perceived challenge from below. The latter has received the greatest emphasis in the interpretation offered here, although the two can only be separated in a somewhat artificial analytical manner in practice. It seems important to stress the perception of a threat, as compared for instance to Poole's account in terms of crude 'latent power', since in the terms Poole uses this, it becomes hard to see why the 1950s should not produce

a period of mounting interest in participation if union membership and bargaining power alone are taken into account. This connects closely with the criticisms of Poole's use of the notion of power at the end of Chapter 6. It should be said, though, that for much of the time Poole's approach yields a similar interpretation to that offered here.

For management, then, participation has indeed been intended as a counterforce to what were seen as anarchic and irrational threats to the necessary and appropriate co-operative relationships between manager and subordinates. Thus, too, the schemes which were introduced were founded on the integrative, consensus-oriented assumptions of management about participation that were outlined in Chapters 3 and 5.

It can be added that the results of participation schemes in periods of high activity prior to the current one fall into the pattern of outcomes suggested in Chapter 5 as those likely to occur where consensus-based schemes are introduced in a conflictual situation. If either side has gained, it seems clear that it is management, but more striking is the fragility of interest which would be unlikely were management to achieve their initial objectives on a large scale. Rather the triviality or instability of arrangements seems to emerge as more typical from the information we have despite the cast of reporting of schemes at the time of their operation during the cycle. In some cases, a shift of committee status is indicated (as with some Witleys), but only where bargaining is not already institutionalised and management finally accept its arrival. The kind of sweeping data with which we are dealing in this chapter do not allow any more thorough observations to be made on this front, since it is only individual case studies which can really provide a fully textured test of the validity of these categories and the theory with which they are connected. That is a task for Chapter 10.

History is not being presented here as simply a set of repeating conjunctures, echoing their predecessors in every way. It has, however, been argued that there is an element of repetition, that in circumstances disrupting the authority of those in power, a particular strategy is likely to become attractive. Since the underlying conflict of capital and labour endures, the consequences of such projects also fall into a pattern. In this sense the particular form of the dominant participative proposal - profit-sharing, consultation etc - is secondary to the

underlying processes identified above. Of course, each 'cycle' is very different to others in certain important respects: e.g. the current situation is not a post-war one as in 1918/19 or the late 1940s. Nor is the growth in manifest union power and the spread of membership irrelevant to an analysis of the specific conjuncture of the 1970s in Britain, any more than the severity and durability of the economic crisis it accompanies. Yet this does not attenuate the significance of the regularities that have emerged. It has become plain that the evolutionary model is untenable.

Nonetheless, one more formulation remains to be discussed, rarely explicit in the particular literature, but embedded in the pluralist theory that underlies much contemporary discussion. This argues for the current period of interest as marking a decisive break from the past, usually associated with a fundamental transition in the morphology of the whole of British society.

A QUALITATIVE SHIFT?

The majority Bullock Report addresses the reasons for a move towards industrial democracy. Its signatories argue that a number of "pressures for change"¹⁸ have produced (by what process is not made clear) proposals for extending participation. Amongst these pressures are included the growth in power, size and complexity of the enterprise, making the need for accountability more urgent; greater union strength to disrupt an unresponsive company; the growth of education, rising living standards and an erosion of deferential attitudes; and development in other countries, particularly EEC members.¹⁹ All of these are seen as marking a new and permanent era.

This theme of a qualitative shift onto fresh terrain which provides a secure roothold for the participation plant, whatever the infirmity of past efforts, is expressed in a number of versions deriving from accounts of 'post-capitalism'. I shall briefly summarise the main contentions, and offer a critical assessment.

Firstly, the power of trade unions is claimed to have grown, to the point where they are able to launch an assault on managerial prerogatives, any gains from which they should be able to sustain. As an extension of this,

it is argued that unions have become 'responsible', and that their role has acquired public legitimacy; thus they can now expect to be granted co-determination rights, and to accept the new responsibilities this brings.

Secondly, growing equality of opportunity, coupled with the support of a benevolent welfare state, defuses class oppositions and makes partnership both legitimate and possible. Social mobility, education, relative affluence of manual employees and the like are cited here.

Thirdly, this is seen as provoking a change of attitudes. Deferential acceptance of authority is undermined, but so too are class oppositional attitudes, both of which encourage the move to share industrial decision-making power.

Fourthly, it is claimed that management science has displaced earlier, ideological approaches. This means that a rational appreciation of organisational structure is possible, and this reveals the motivational rewards of a participative management strategy.

Fifthly, and connectedly, comes the vision of a managerial revolution in industry, replacing capitalists with a professional, well-rewarded group who are nonetheless employees. As we saw in Chapter 8, this new ruling elite in industry supposedly import a responsiveness to social responsibilities, as well as not being separated from other employees by a class gulf.

Sixthly, the role of modern technology is sometimes alluded to. In Blauner's work, for instance, it is suggested that automation and process production change jobs in ways that make them less 'alienating', and increase opportunities for worker-supervisor interaction and for transferring greater variety and responsibility to these at the point of production.²⁰

Seventhly, the new social order is seen as characterised by an increasingly interventionist role for a democratically elected and reasonably benevolent state. This is manifested not just in welfare provisions, but in the growth of public ownership and the state's own role as an employer (so that it can exemplify progressive industrial relations practice). Moreover, the state increasingly sets the stage (by legislated and/or

voluntary procedures and substantive rules) for industrial relations, including pressing for greater participation in management. By encouraging tripartite discussions on key policy issues, the state could also be represented as initiating participation at the very top.

The evolutionary perspective emerges most plainly in expositions of the 'post-capitalism' (or 'post-industrialism') thesis. Dahrendorf's (1959) account details many of the above changes, for instance, though he remained at that time hostile to participation premised on common interests between management and workers. A technocratic model of the change is particularly common - notable variants being the work of Bell (1973), Kerr et al (1960) or Galbraith (1968). It is noteworthy that the emphasis on technical knowledge as the source of decision-making capacity in all of these texts renders Bell's claim that democracy in industry will be extended (or that "the axial principle of the modern polity is participation" - 1973:12) highly questionable even in his own terms. I shall return to this point below.

One other version of the 'new era' thesis, this time advanced from a partially Marxist standpoint²¹ calls for attention. In the postscript to a book on worker directors in the British Steel Corporation, (Brannen et al, 1976), the existence of past cycles of interest and disinterest in participation is recognised. These are related to an analysis of societal reactions to the need for internal integration, apparently drawing on a Durkheimian analysis with allied functionalist implications.²² This is allied to a rather more convincing analysis of conditions which provoke the participative solution than do pluralist accounts. Increasing pressure on management is detected, for reasons including escalating capital intensity of production, and the interdependence of increasingly complex manufacturing processes. These, it is argued, dictate the necessity of progressively more co-ordinated production, requiring labour co-operation. Crises intensify the process, forcing governments to try to try and maintain co-operation. However, it is suggested that the above developments mean that, at least in the 'frontier' industries, management will now be inclined to take the initiative and establish participation on their own terms on a more permanent basis.

This argument is supported by reference to analyses by Goldman and others of a new technical working class with both special skills rendering employers vulnerable, and a growing radical consciousness. It is acknowledged that participation schemes here remain restricted in scope in power terms, and largely aim at motivation and incorporation (i.e. in the terms used here, they should be a management success). It is indicated that in declining, traditional industries, meantime, a different pressure initiated from below, for workers' control to arrest rundown, is found. On this last point, to which I shall not return, I shall just note: firstly, that it would be equally plausible to see participation in declining sectors as a management strategy to co-opt resistance and engage worker organisations in the administration of dismantlement; secondly, that the evidence indicates this in BSC itself and in other such sectors, often following state takeover to handle the process (see Chapter 10 below); and, thirdly, that such participation is hardly meaningful as industrial democracy and does not betoken a new era. Thus the focus of the qualitative break view remains the 'frontier' industries case.

A CRITIQUE OF 'NEW ERA' ARGUMENTS

The contentions that a new era is upon us can be criticised on a number of grounds, perhaps the most telling of which will be time, if the trends since the Bullock Report noted earlier continue. The other most important criticisms are summarised below.

Firstly, the epistemology of this perspective draws attention once more. Goldthorpe (1971) exposes effectively the nature and flaws in idealisation of the future in terms of personal attachments to the present by 'post-industrialism' writers. He labels it 'crypto-historicism', and ponders why liberal arguments against the (supposed) evolutionism of Marxism have not been brought to bear on this target. In addition, it may be observed that these authors indulge in a technological determinism outmatching the worst vices of Marxist adherents to a 'base/superstructure' conception criticised in Chapter 6.

Secondly, the trends to a more democratic and equal society as a whole are vulnerable to empirical assault. The idea that education, social mobility, incomes and other indicators of relative quality of life have brought a levelling up negating class discussions is effectively demolished by any number of studies.²³ Moreover, arguments on these lines reflect

an impoverished, superficial conception of class, rather than a structural and relational analysis. Thus the discussion, even from the left critical stance, is inclined to miss the point of class analysis and the continuity of exploitative and subordinating relations of capitalism today.

Thirdly, the same points apply to discussions of changing class attitudes and consciousness. This area was explored in detail in Chapter 7 above, where it was found that working class consciousness could not be straightforwardly assessed. It was ambivalent and contradictory, with acceptance of the status quo co-existing with potentially radical perspectives that originated in or could be provoked by experience. Without an analysis of how the system appears and is experienced, then, no ready prediction of the development of consciousness one way or the other can readily be made. The same fragility applies to the notion of past deference and present critical attitudes.²⁴

Fourthly, the idea of a transformation of management has also been subjected to critical evaluation already, this time in Chapter 8. Here I shall restrict myself to echoing the decisive point, that the entire approach of the managerialist argument fails to grapple with the key contention of Marxist analysis. Marx himself predicted a division of labour in industrial control, but this was shown to be part of the maintenance and extension of capitalist production relations, as opposed to their transformation. De Vroey (1975) makes this point particularly clearly, and reproduces Sweezy's observation that there should be no confusion:

... between making decisions within a given frame and deciding what goals are imposed by this frame on those operating within it The ultimate purpose of the enterprise is determined not by any individual or group but by the very nature of the business system.
(Sweezy, 1973, quoted de Vroey, 1973:13).

Fifthly, the conception of a transformed labour process, experience of work, and managerial approach in 'frontier' industries requires closer scrutiny. To some extent, the limits of the managerial shift are described in the above criticism of the managerial revolution thesis. However, the experience of labour relations may still be altered if the newer technology really does alter the whole nature of work and immediate

exercise of authority. The research of Gallie (1978) and Nichols & Beynon (1977) exposes some of the myths here, particularly on the motivation behind management strategy and the nature of work (see Chapter 7 above). The experience of participation in these companies shows that while management were more ready to experiment with it on a pseudo-democratic basis (Nichols, 1975), the result remained fragile and not, therefore, convincingly permanent under future conceivable labour market conditions or other sources of increased management power.

Sixthly, the idea of a benevolent state playing a permanent extended role in the husbandry of participation is also highly questionable. The analysis of the state as a relation of capitalist production, not an autonomous entity or neutral third party standing outside the employer-worker relationship, was schematically presented in the Introduction. From this perspective, the state may well take major initiatives to encourage participation schemes among its own employees and by legislation or other encouragement in the private sector. That initiative has tended to be confined to the cycles of pressure identified above, however, as witness the low profile of the current Conservative government. While legislation may not be abolished, the attention to its promotion and application can vary decisively, as in Britain can be seen in the nationalised industries. Their joint consultation was required by the Acts bringing about state ownership, in the 1940s but the interest in it and attention paid to it, and so the concern to develop it further, evaporated for state servants as it did for managers more generally.

Are there, then, no trends or developments pertinent to the emergence of worker participation as a more permanent strategy? Clearly, as already acknowledged, the particular form of the enterprise, and of industrial relations, are far from static or merely cyclical repetitions. Developments were, however, shown not to eliminate the processes which provoke the periodic resurrection and reinterment of interest in participation. This can now be extended to confront the claim that the current wave is a different and permanent phenomenon.

Thus Marxists (most notably Braverman) have also pointed to certain developments in capitalism which bear on the notion that the position of the worker, individually and collectively, is one of increasing autonomy, interesting work, and power. In some cases, it will be observed that the

trends identified are historicist and questionable just as are their pluralist counterparts. Nonetheless, these and the other processes identified serve to counterbalance the little-questioned assumption of an ever-improving situation for labour which must bring real and lasting changes in industrial democracy.

The power of management would seem to be far from declining if the accounts of the development of monopoly capitalism are accepted. The growth of the giant corporation and ever-greater concentration of production in the capitalist world into a small number of multi-national enterprises (and so a tiny group of executives)²⁵ with immense capabilities beyond the control of not only labour, but of nation-states, hardly needs elaboration once mentioned. If anything, this process might imply that participation would be at most a short-term strategy aimed at bridging the gap till sufficient co-ordination of multi-national strategy obviates the need for compromise. This, of course, depends on one's analysis of the dynamics of crisis and the control thereof in monopoly capitalism, a subject which for now I must neglect.

The same observation concerning the growing power of management follows, ironically, from the description of an increasingly technocratic, knowledge-based system by Bell and other post-industrial theorists. As Goldthorpe says, the prime social goal is set as economic growth, and the key decisions are claimed to require special expertise, so "participation in the democratic process must, for the mass of the population, necessarily be of a decidedly restricted and indirect kind." (1971:276). Such an observation ties in closely with the criticisms levelled at the dominance of a technocratic ideology by Habermas, and before him Marcuse. Galbraith (1968) actually predicts a decline in union power rather than the reverse. Marglin (1973) explores this question more deeply, and argues that the notion of hierarchy and division of labour between management and men arises historically not from the official cause, of efficiency of operation, but rather from the need to ensure and extend social control within the factory (by denying skills and by ideological mystification of the expertise involved in the management function).

The nature of this knowledge thus reflects not some inherent move to democracy, in industry or elsewhere, but the political economy of capital, as observed by Miliband (commenting on Galbraith) and Ross (on Bell).²⁶

It seeks to sustain and reinforce management's position, not to transform relations to a new basis. Kumar's questioning of post-industrial theorists seems particularly apposite for this thesis:

Old questions reappear : knowledge for what, and for whom?
(1976:461).

This concentration of access to knowledge applies also to observations Kumar makes on the progressive regulation and 'Taylorization' of white-collar and technical jobs. This, he says, robs them of any qualitative superiority to the manual job Bell sees them as displacing. However, the issue of Taylorism (considered as a general process of subjection of labour to the political economy of capital) raises the more general propositions advanced by Braverman in particular. Braverman has argued that the twentieth century has seen a progressive degradation, subdivision and ever tighter control by capital of the labour process. Far from giving way to human relations and participative management doctrines, these management themes are seen as a means to gain labour's acceptance of this Taylorization of work. Sowell (1960) has shown how the 'increasing misery' and exploitation of the worker predicted by Marx remains perfectly consistent with a rising absolute income level.

If such a trend to work degradation can be confirmed, then it points in the opposite direction to the evolutionary assumptions confronted earlier. Greater power for labour is not only not automatic; it becomes improbable.

Such an analysis is not beyond challenging. It ignores the resistance which workers can mount to management efforts to erode their controls, and the advances as well as retreats possible on this front.²⁷ yet if the Braverman analysis relies on an overpowerful conception of management, it serves to offset and show the presumption of its pluralist counterpart.

There is yet another recently burgeoning theme of analysis from a more critical standpoint than the pluralist celebration of the future. This concerns the nature and role of the state, which is seen as progressively extending its arena of direction and intervention, generally in defence of capital's interests rather than labour's. This process is referred to as 'corporatism'.²⁸

The corporate state is seen as a new mode of production, in effect, by some writers, though for others it is merely an elaboration of capitalism. Participation is suggested (e.g. by Crouch 1976) as one integrative strategy such a state may adopt, but certainly not as the basis for a new, enhanced democracy in industry. Thus the substance of development is quite different to pluralism, though corporatism is almost as suspect as its pluralist counterpart as a prediction of permanent change. Again, though, the fragility of pluralist presuppositions is transparent.

At the very least it can be said that the natural ease with which an evolution to greater shop floor power and participation in decisions is so widely presupposed to be occurring has evaporated. Any identification and extrapolation of trends on these lines now appears glaringly and ideologically selective and exclusive. My own inclination would be to pursue quite different threads concerning the growing resources of control accruing to the capitalist state and the monopolistic corporation, to insinuate a possible decline in labour's power. Yet this, too, would be questionable, excluding key areas of potential resistance, and could not be satisfactorily sustained here. So I restrict myself to stamping heartily on pluralist 'post-capitalism' and the idea of an organic accretion of participation.

CYCLES REDISCOVERED : THE HISTORY OF MANAGEMENT THOUGHT

The original indications of the cycles analysis have now been reinforced by an examination of the precepts underlying the evolutionary alternative. To conclude the investigation I shall return to the issue of management thought touched on in Chapter 8. It is here that we find confirmation of the pattern from another angle. The main investigators of management thought are as developmental in many respects as their counterparts on participation. Bendix, Child and McGivering et al all appear to be fixed on tracing the emergence of the present as a set of ineluctable trends from the past. Thus despite the emphasis in all three (pace Child's misplaced denunciation of the determinism of the other two) on the determination of the development by socio-economic factors, there is effectively presumed to be a unilinear trend with at most a few hiccups. Yet their presentations contain enough information indicating the dubiety of these presumptions as to lend weight to the argument here.

In British Management Thought (1969) Child purports to be tracing a single cycle of management thought, budding and finally blossoming as justification of the managerial role first became necessary, then important, then withering as in the last couple of decades social science purportedly takes over. It takes only a glance at his descriptions, however, to reveal a rather less neat pattern. Thus up to the First World War he notes that industrial democracy was paid at most lip-service. Anti-unionism he feels declined after the 1890s, though least readily where conflict was greatest and unions most militant (which may well tie up with the introduction of profit-sharing and associated counter-union 'participative' practices at times of such militancy in such industries as gas). He describes the wave of interest that was expressed in Whitleyism, but admits that this was an expedient and temporary 'conversion', so that by the late 1920s the argument was instead that industrial democracy hampered attainment of the prime goal, efficiency. Management was viewed as being morally and technically superior in its supposed common enterprise with labour. Social responsibility received little attention in the 1930s, with human relations being used insofar as it emphasised what management could control. Only with the renewed "period of stress", as Child calls it, in the 1940s, did the sense of social mission in most of Mayo's writing receive serious attention. With the 1950s Child's analysis collapses, as we have seen, into a paean to the arrival of objective, academic management theory. But the pattern which traces the path of the participation cycles with which this chapter is concerned is easily followed up to this point.

Although McGivering et al also claim to be talking of the development of modern management, thus tracing the inter-war years through the agency of Mond who, we have seen, was very much a maverick (for which Child correctly reprimands them), the cyclical story peers through between the lines in their account also. It is most apparent in the description of the rise of personnel management in and after the First World War, its retrenchment once unemployment set in and employer victories had been won in confrontation, then its revival from the end of the 1930s. The story is told more fully in McGivering, 1970 (and see also Watson, 1977:41).

The evidence on the United States is less easy to decipher, particularly given the fragmented and chronologically grasshopper-like quality of Bendix's account, and the rigidly evolutionist interpretations of

Derber's history. Without undertaking the lengthy slog that would consequently be necessary to reconstruct American management-labour relations history, it can fairly easily be observed that profit-sharing and representation schemes under management control emerged as one favoured employer response during times when the pressure of unionism was experienced particularly strongly by management. Thus it is particularly clear from Derber that interest dissolves among employers during the depression years as in Britain. The revival of human relations in the last ten to fifteen years, with much talk of job enrichment and the like, seems to echo loudly the turn of events elsewhere too (and incidentally shows up further Derber's flawed futurology when considered along with the limited and besieged union and institutionalised collective bargaining system in the USA). The elastic adaptability of management thought is reflected by Bendix's later (1974) observation that ideological vocabulary had undergone "yet another" shift to encompass the campaigns of environmentalists and of those who speak of the psychological needs of the worker in different terms to the 1920s (p.xf).

Child provides us with a useful distinction between legitimacy and technical elements in management thought, the former seeking to elicit no more viable generalisation than the other crude developmentalist generalisation reviewed thus far. Anthony has arrived at the quirkish conclusion that motivational impulses are now aimed at the key figures in production as he sees them, the expert-managers. Probing a little further, this turns out to be another version of the 'post-industrial' society thesis. Thus Anthony refers to at least a limited "end of ideology", which is attributed (and here we see the connection to Child's account) to the recruitment of the social scientist into industry (1977: 259). This time, Nichols does not agree, since his study of Chemco identifies as a key issue for modern management in advanced technology in the socio-economic conditions of the 1970s "the problem of motivation" (1975:249).

CONCLUSIONS

The historical pattern of participation described here jars with almost the entire literature on the development, past, present and future, of such schemes. On the other hand, it fits closely with the analysis which has informed the previous chapters of this thesis. Participation has

historically been an attempt by management to resolve their problems, by erasing the social conflict at the root of those problems. Participation, though, is not an agent of transformation; it is, on the contrary, a component of the system which it is supposed to transcend.

The pluralist evolutionary account begs the key question, as Goldthorpe observes:

What exactly is a problem to whom? Whose interests and values are at stake? Through whose action (or inaction) does the problem arise? In other words, the language of social problems can be used to discuss what are often in fact situations of social conflict in such a way as to politically 'defuse' them. (1971:284, emphasis in original).

Participation is, emphatically, a device to resolve management's problems, but the universalising of problems and principles is accompanied by a blindness to the past. The irony of current managerial appeals to the need to wait for an 'organic' evolution of below-board participation, when almost all sizeable firms in this country must have tried works councils at at least one point this century, is inescapable.

Historically, participation has not performed its managerial task very well. The echoes of management and government statements on the nature and purpose of participation schemes in the past are matched by the reproduction of their inadequacy in achieving labour acquiescence. But if they are only occasionally control devices, it is as control devices they are proposed in the last analysis. Thus one observer on the United States tells this story:

After the war private industry, revelling for a brief space in the flush of long deferred demand, was confronted by the same problem of removing blockages to production and works councils were widely adopted as the talisman likely to ward off strikes. When the depression of 1921 followed, while many of these councils were abandoned because plants were shut down, many others served to facilitate wage and personnel readjustments which permitted continuance of operation. Thus a further claim was made for works councils as contributing to the "stabilization" of industry. (Burton, 1926:63).

The reason I am drawn to this account is that Burton's example for the

above is the Bethlehem Steel plant, where Frederick Taylor was able to carry out his work study and anti-union policies.

Daniel has claimed that with the arrival of the Bullock Report in Britain "the tide seems irresistible" (1978:49). But tides, though they swallow Canutes, are also persistently inclined to turn when the forces that cause them reverse their pull. Participation is not, after all, the agent of evolutionary change.

In the words of an erstwhile influential trade union leader:

It does not seek to change. It seeks to perpetuate.
(Scanlon, 1975:31).

CHAPTER NINE : NOTES

1. This chapter restates arguments made elsewhere (Ramsay, 1977), condensing the historical account prior to the 1970s, updating the story to the time of writing, and extending the analysis somewhat.
2. See Hart, 1978. The USA has also witnessed the growth of the 'union-busting' consultancy in recent years, and the continuing use of extensive violent and intimidatory tactics by employers to resist unions.
3. Church, 1971; Bristow, 1974; Pease, 1913. Sedley Taylor, a protagonist of profit-sharing, nonetheless also provides telling evidence (1884).
4. See especially Hinton, 1973; Kendall, 1969; Cole, 1923; Holton, 1976.
5. See White, 1975. The government received regular reports on the state of revolutionary organisation throughout the war and for a good many years thereafter.
6. Ministry of Labour, 1918. This publication, of which I was unaware when writing 'Cycles of Control' neatly prefigures the treatment, including 'evidence' in the form of brief, uncritical case studies, currently adopted by the British State towards participation. See, for comparison, the series of case studies published in the Department of Employment Gazette during 1977. The 1918 version's introduction (by D.J.Shackleton) tell us that "the old trade union machinery has often been overburdened", and that works committees had grown up to enhance communication in these circumstances. In fact, many of these committees turn out to be early bargaining channels recognising shop stewards (the first case study is of Renolds, discussed over greater temporal length in Chapter 10), and belieing the unitary and evolutionary aura cast around them by this publication.
7. The figures are taken from E.Wigham, 'Worker participation : a new look at an old principle', *Times*. Flanders, (1968:209) gives different though similar figures, as does the fuller account by Seymour (1932).
8. The persistence of Sir Alfred Mond with works councils in ICI during the 1930s is interesting not because it heralds the future but because of its eccentricity. But Mond's intentions were never ones which pretended to benevolently grant power to labour; his strategy for control was simply at odds with that of most management of the time. Thus in 1923 Mond showed his beliefs in replying to Snowden's speech attacking capitalism in a riposte which Mowat (1955:154) describes as:

... a panegyric on individual initiative and a condemnation of socialism as a robbing of the rich and a clipping of the wings of enterprise in a 'bureaucratic, soulless machine'.

History is echoed today in more ways than one, it is confirmed.

9. Clegg & Chester, 1954:339. See also Walpole, 1944; ILO, 1944; and Coates and Topham, 1972, who find that:

With a few exceptions, shop stewards and unions alike combined to strengthen orthodox managerial power rather than control it. (p48).

10. See Agar, 1944; Calder, 1969, 1973.
11. Clegg & Chester, 1954:339; P.E.P., 1955:181.
12. Flanders, 1968:135-136; Clegg & Chester, 1954:343.
13. Confirmed in correspondence with the TUC as their first intervention of this sort in the current wave.
14. Jones had already made himself prominent in the debate by an early intervention calling for participation, 'A Plan for a Breakthrough in Production', Tribune, 11 Feb.1966. Subsequently he was to be a member of the Bullock Committee.
15. It was common for this point to be made with reference to European 'evolution' of participative arrangements. See e.g. EEF, 1977.
16. Few policy statements were made by the Tories before or after the election - a sure sign of the decline in saliency of the issue. The clearest was an article by James Prior, Shadow spokesman on Employment (and later Minister), in The Times, 24 May 1978, responding to the White Paper with the telling title, 'Keeping worker participation in tune with industrial recovery'.
17. T.Clark, 1977 is a recent example of this interpretation from a critical leftist standpoint - see e.g. page 375.
18. "The pressures for change" is the title of Chapter 3 of the majority report.
19. This last point refers both to demonstration effects of participation 'advances' elsewhere and to the moves to require all EEC member countries to accept a minimum common form of representation on boards and through company councils (international where necessary). These proposals are outlined in Commission for the European Communities, 1978, and began with the 'Fifth directive' on harmonising company law in 1972. However, in 1979 the legal affairs committee of the European Parliament rejected the proposals thanks to a coalition of right-centre parties including the British Conservatives (see FT 10.9.79, T 21.2.80). This entails a delay of any implementation of subsequently agreed proposals, if such should emerge, until the very end of the 1980s or beyond (FT 11.3.80).
20. Blauner, 1964. Similar implications are contained in Woodward's observations (1965). Daniel & McIntosh (1972) extend the argument by claiming that, since most of the Maslow 'need-hierarchy' has been fulfilled, companies must adapt technology and offer participation to meet self-actualisation demands.
21. An association between Marxism and teleological evolutionary forms of social analysis is not, of course, anything new. I have avoided becoming entangled in a discussion of these, however, since it raises complications which are beyond the scope of the thesis.
22. See Ramsay, 1977b, for further comments on this. The author of the postscript subsequently told me he had not intended to take on board the Durkheimian trappings, and was seeking to formulate a Marxist analysis. Nonetheless, one of his co-authors has also interpreted his analysis as Durkheimian - see Fatchett & Whittingham, 1976.

23. Westergaard & Resler, 1975, provide an overview. On inequalities generally, see also Townsend, 1979. R.K.Brown, 1978, summarises material on the workplace. Social mobility studies are numerous, but in Britain the most recent contributions are Halsey et al, 1980; Goldthorpe et al 1980.
24. See the discussion in Newby, 1975.
25. Bob Edwards, (1977:17) reports estimates that by 1985 300 corporations will control three-quarters of world production, and that perhaps 1,000 executives already controlled the core of the world capitalist system.
26. Milliband, 1968; Rose, 1974. See also Kumar, 1976:460.
27. See critical commentaries on Braverman by Elger, 1979, Mackenzie 1977 and (more problematically) Coombs, 1978.
28. c.f. Crouch, 1977; Panitch, 1976, 1977; Winkler, 1976, 1977.

CHAPTER TEN : BETWEEN THE LINES

In this chapter attention is turned to the practice of participation in the UK as known from case studies. On the face of it, the odds are against showing anything other than overwhelming success and enthusiasm for participation schemes. We are besieged by accounts of new areas of co-operation and understanding being opened up by the establishment of consultation procedures, job re-organisation programmes, discussion groups and so forth. A quick run-down on a television programme, a large, splash review every year or two in the 'quality' dailies and Sundays, two or three pages of enthusiastic exegesis in one of the management journals - all these are familiar. In recent years, they have been augmented by a series of books from practising managers, journalists, consultants, and the occasional academic operating through a professional management association.¹ The most important effect of all this comes not through one or even a few accounts together, but through the cumulative effect of so much favourable reporting with so little criticism. What criticism there is comes at a time when a less desirable (in management eyes) alternative is on parade, and then the condemnation is clamorous. This is precisely what we saw over the proposals of the Bullock Committee.

Unsurprisingly, the enthusiasm has not been confined to management publications. The government, too, has taken an interest. Thus the report on the 'quality of working life' reviewing forms of job re-organisation (N.A.B.Wilson, 1973), the establishment of a Work Research Unit of the Department of Employment in 1975, and the more recent series of prototypical short, favourable reviews in the Department of Employment Gazette during 1977. I found myself fascinated by the use of evidence in the introductory article in this last series (Jessup, 1977), where the general statement is made that recent surveys show the demand for greater say among employees. The references used are a Times ORC poll, and two articles of my own; yet there is no mention of the critical material concerning the nature and operation of participation which was contained in those articles. Selection is, of course, perfectly valid, and is plentifully indulged in within these pages; but for so many sources to operate so exclusive a system is to invite charges of ideology.

There will undoubtedly be readers who feel that I have equally winnowed out findings which do not support my interpretations above and below.

I acknowledge unhesitatingly that this may be the case and it will clearly take far more argument to finally establish the case one way or the other. At the same time, it seems necessary to muster the evidence in a strong concentration given the odds against which it has to stand. Thus in the chapter below, as the title I have selected indicates, one is commonly dealing with a strongly partisan support of a scheme, and the inconsistencies or giveaway comments must be teased out and highlighted. This I think reasonable under the circumstances, and I hope that the proof of the resultant versions will be found in the reading. Fortunately there are at least some relatively independent assessments of a few of the better known schemes, most of them produced by authors who would hardly fall into the same category politically as myself. While these accounts have been swamped by the favourable flood described earlier, their detail and independence are attributes which lend them telling weight.

Emphasis must be placed on the managerial concentration of the conventional accounts. Union voices are rarely heard; when they are, publicly or in personal contact, their views are commonly far more critical of participation schemes in operation. No claim that union views are any less interest-related than management's is made; that, after all, is precisely the point, that existing accounts are only one side, and that they reflect partial interests. The irony is, of course, that this partial view which is so comprehensively aired has as its most common component a declaration of the essential consensus between employer and employee, to be brought out by the participation scheme.

There are several good reasons for believing that there is likely to be a consistent and powerful bias in the available accounts from managers and/or their consultants (or from uncritical visitors who largely report management views) which predominate among available reports:

- the conceptions of the purpose and the perceptions of the 'achievements' of participation are likely for reasons of ideology and experience to be different to those of employees.
- presentation of a public relations image to the outside world by management is likely to be common. In my own experience I have found managers far more open and sceptical about the reality of participation as it operates in other firms than their own. Their presentation of what happens in their own enterprise I have found repeatedly to be laudatory at first, and then to relax into greater admission of difficulties as time went on (or if the possibility was raised of outside inspection). There is also a relaxation in a teaching situation when information about problems with well-known schemes such as those discussed below is conveyed by the teacher. Thus the response to a questionnaire or a cursory survey is likely to be highly misleading.
- the selection process of reporters and/or publishers. Since participation is billed as the 'coming thing', evolving as 'progressive management', there is an inherent tendency to report only success. This then forms 'best practice' as guidance to others. Failure, in contemporary counterpart schemes or later in the same scheme, is just not 'news' on these definitions.

There is likely to be an ideological fall-out from this kind of biased reporting. It is probable that where participation breaks down, the general propaganda could do little to save it. However, the media message about success being the overwhelming result may well lead both management and workers locally to see their own case as exceptional and to place blame on personal awkwardness or other shortcomings. The general incapacity of participation argued here is not perceived, and this will have clear consequences for the

reputation of those on each side (and of the other side by each camp) who must on this evidence be held responsible. Hence, too, the possibility of structural factors rendering harmony in the employment relationship unattainable is not widely entertained as established by events since no accurate account of events is permitted to circulate.

In Chapter 5 certain outcomes were argued to be likely given the assumptions about industrial relationships made and elaborated here. It was suggested that if participation were management-initiated and controlled (and it has been shown in later chapters that it generally is) then it would take a consensus-oriented form that amounted to pseudo-democracy, paying only lip-service to allowing employees a real influence over decision-making. In more structural terms, the argument has also been developed that the nature of the situation in which participation would take place constrains and impedes any other than those decisions which conform to the political economy of capitalism. Finally, Chapter 5 presented a typology of outcomes of participation schemes, according to circumstances, which included 'success' for management, for labour (seen as extremely unlikely), triviality, instability, and change of committee status to that of a bargaining body. The pattern predicted there is summarised in fig. 10.1, with the most likely results indicated by asterisks:

Fig. 10.1 : Outcomes of Type A (Higher-level, consensus-oriented)

<u>Participation Schemes</u>			
<u>'participation'</u> <u>introduced when:</u>	bargaining channel exists	no bargaining channel - management dogmatically unitary	no bargaining channel - management pragmatic
labour organisation weak/absent	(1) (2) trivial	(II) (2) *trivial or (1) management 'success'	(III) (4) - low key bargaining
labour well organized and placed	(IV) (2) *trivial	(V) (3) *unstable	(VI) (4) *change status

With the spread of union activity, the most common outcome is expected to be triviality. Instability is more likely where management retain some particular commitment to confining certain decisions to a consensus-based body in practice (or otherwise resisting the union, even where it is officially condoned), or where for some reason the 'participation' body provides a basis for reconstituting or establishing on its first proper footing the process of negotiation.

It is true that some support for the case argued here is available from surveys in the literature. Thus D.L.Davies (1962) observed, on the basis of a critical reading of management responses to his questionnaire, that:

The general impression gained is that the majority of firms do not fully believe in and practice formal consultation and all that it implies but use it rather as a forum for company pronouncements and the airing of employee irritants. (p17).

Preliminary findings from research at Nottingham University, reported by Chell (1977) confirm the poverty of participation by observation of 25 joint consultative committees. She argues that "joint consultation is neither democratic nor particularly participative". Management dominated

the operation of the committees, whilst there was also an observed division between management who viewed the committees as "all in it together", and unions who saw their own and management interests as separate. Here we see in practice, then, a reproduction of the division in attitudes outlined at a more general level in Chapter 3 (and in a different way in Chapters 7 and 8). That this may have real consequences in the reaction to experience of participation (particularly likely to cause disillusion with the scheme from one or both sides) seems evident.

In the sections of this chapter which follow, particular attention will be paid to four case studies where outside academic investigation has afforded much greater purchase on the texture of participation schemes in the companies studied than is normally available. Three are private sector concerns and one a nationalised industry. While other cases will be discussed, these four form the core of the material for this chapter. All have received a considerable amount of public attention, and so form a significant proportion of the dominant mythology, though it is also true to say that the factors which have brought them to such general attention may be considered to render them in some respects atypical. Yet if this be admitted, their unusual circumstances as usually considered should make for more rather than less hospitable environments for participation.

I PRIVATE SECTOR EXAMPLES

THE JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP²

The first example is perhaps the least typical. The Partnership is a large retail organisation with over 23,000 employees. Formally it seems more like a worker co-operative than a conventional enterprise, since Spedan Lewis decided to make over his shares to employees of the company. According to one portrayer:

... since 1950 it can be properly said that the ownership and overall control of the company has been in the hands of the members. (Farrow, 1964:87).

The shares are held by the John Lewis Partnership Trust Ltd., three out of five of whose members are elected by the Central Council of the

Partnership itself.³ The Central Council also elects five out of the twelve directors of the Central Board of the Partnership itself, the remaining seven being the chairman, his deputy (whom he selects), and five nominees of the chairman. The Central Council itself is about 140 strong, and consists of representatives from the various stores elected by members at the branch level, together with ex officio or nominated management members.⁴ The powers of the Central Council include the right to dismiss the chairman with a two-thirds vote, and to inspect and if desired veto any major capital decision. Other institutions include branch councils, and non-executive communication committees.

The John Lewis Partnership has been an experiment. Instead of the many being exploited by the few, there would be genuine partnership for all, managers and managed alike, all pulling together for their common advantage.

This is the view of Spedan Lewis, expressed on film screened from archives in the ITV programme 'What About the Workers'.⁵ Much emphasis is put on 'accountability' and the spread of information. If the operation of the scheme is examined more carefully, however, the element of paternalism becomes increasingly apparent, as does the fact that formal institutions tell one little about the real distribution and operation of power.

Firstly, the consensus orientation of the scheme is readily confirmed. In the television programme mentioned above, the management spokesman professed to have no knowledge of the number of unionists in the firm and several others are quoted with him as feeling that the spread of the union would break the co-operative spirit of the Partnership. The council representative is asserted to be quite other than a shop steward, who would oppose management instead of helping them. Trade Unions are not officially excluded, but the attitude to them is hardly positive:

Collective bargaining may, therefore, have to be accepted where there is a demand for it, but it should not be encouraged. The principles of the Partnership are held to have deprived it of its 'raison d'etre' within the organisation. (Flanders et al, 1968:181).

The generally weak organization of unions in the retail trade undoubtedly helps to keep this a relatively viable outlook, and leads to a prediction, in terms of the terminology developed earlier, that the scheme will either

be a managerial 'success' or a trivial one for most of those involved. Of course, no real world example is likely to fit exactly into a category, but the strength of the evidence suggesting some combination of just these types is extremely encouraging (for the author at least!).

The paternalistic, pseudo-democratic nature of the scheme is, therefore, also readily established. Spedan Lewis's own words will serve for the former:

Our own partnership has now almost exactly twelve thousand members. Many of them are young and inexperienced. Many of them have had little education. Many of them would not be very wise however much education they had had. For the most part they are honourable people ... But they are no more capable of grasping the problems of a big business and of managing it in the real sense of the word than most of us, no matter how long and carefully we were trained, would be capable of holding our own in the professional boxing ring ... (quoted from Spedan Lewis, *Partnership For All*, by the Rev.J.F.Maxwell, 1962:176-177, emphasis in original).

Yet this would be of little consequence if a genuine redistribution of power were demonstrated. According to Flanders et al the redistribution is in the opposite direction:

Another major effect of the system on management is paradoxically to reinforce their authority so that it is stronger and commands greater power than is usual, and often possible, in the normal run of private and public enterprise today. (1968:183).

This operates through the system of communication and official accountability. The communication is extensive, the authors acknowledge, but "Any system of communication ... is always auxiliary to some system of control" (p186). Moreover, "control by accountability is in effect control by ideology" (p188) they conclude. The reasoning behind this is simple. The criteria by which management are to be judged are managerially determined, so there is no control that enables employees to direct management "to further their interests as they see them" (p187, original emphasis).

It is thus made clear that democracy should influence decisions only if it does not harm efficiency. Again it is made clear that the division of labour is sustained and sharpened. Thus the television programme to

which we have referred already interviews a councillor who claims that anyone can be elected, then asks a manager whether a shop girl has ever been elected to the Central Board, to which he replies: "Not in my memory, which goes back some time". Later he is found saying:

I think we must get one thing clear, and that is that it's management's job to manage and to make plans. It's the Council's job to look at that ... to discuss it, and from that help management probably to improve plans.⁶

So in the end the advisory rather than true executive nature of the representative becomes clear.

Although employees share in the profits of the enterprise, their sharing does not extend to other aspects of pay. Remuneration is according to supposed worth of service to the enterprise, not equal, and worth is effectively measured by market price, i.e. by the criteria of capitalism. It would be difficult on this evidence to view Lewis's as anything other than an exercise in pseudo-democracy, then. Yet one prominent commentator, reviewing Flanders et al, concludes that the experiment is "a clear, but qualified success" (Lupton, 1968). His criteria are increased efficiency and commitment of the workforce; they appear to reflect more on the commentator than on the democratic value of the scheme itself.

As yet, the evidence appears only partly to support the arguments of this thesis. We have the consensus-orientation, the management initiative and control, and the lack of a real share in decision-making power. But where is the conflict?

In the case of John Lewis's, conflict is manifested most clearly, despite all the whitewashing referred to above, in the form of triviality. Despite the conclusions quoted above, the most outstanding feature of the scheme appears from other evidence to lie in this direction, rather than the accretion of managerial power beyond what is in fact apparent in most sectors of the retail trade already. If interest in the system is considered, it emerges that a majority of employees exhibited a low level (60% of men, 62% of women).⁷ The minority who did express greater interest did show more satisfaction with job and firm, and so tended to be longer servers. Yet the researchers found that:

... even this minority continue to view their immediate job interests in much the same fashion as the majority of rank and file Partners; in this respect involvement in the Partnership system has no particular influence on their attitudes. Hence our conclusion that the ethos of the employment relationship for the non-managerial employees of the Partnership closely resembles that to be found in employing organizations of the usual kind. Although they may regard the Partnership as a 'good' employer, their relationship with it remains a 'calculative' rather than a 'normative' one; except for a small minority it does not entail any firm commitment to the Partnership's ideology. (Flanders et al, 1968:189).

This kind of attitude is also given away by one of the representatives most vocal in her support for the ideals of the Partnership when interviewed for the What About The Workers? programme.

What I would like to see is the ignorance and apathy. I'd like to get rid of that, that is amongst my constituents, because a lot of them are not convinced that the Partnership works. They really do think there's a 'them-and-us' situation.

A fellow councillor admits that many come just for the money. Yet these are meant to be representatives. And not one voice is heard in the programme which represents the many calculative or opposed views which Flanders et al uncovered, and the existence of which those interviewed admit.

As for the operation of the various institutions, a majority agree that they would be sorry if they were dismantled. But the following quotations, all from this majority, indicate that this is a matter of choosing something rather than nothing:

Only power can talk to power and these committees are a waste of time.

They're useful but so far as I can see from reports in the Chronicle they don't get a tremendous amount achieved. They couldn't really/be given/up because we have to bring complaints up.

It's good in theory but it doesn't really work in practice. Management squashes a lot of good ideas. I suppose they do serve a purpose.

... my experience has been that they're very, very poor.

I don't think they're worth their salt ... But they're the best of the bunch.

These comments (from Flanders et al: 115) refer to the Committee for Communication, which it was found were rated more valuable than Branch or Central Councils.

For the John Lewis Partnership, then, if anyone gains from the scheme it is management, but the overriding impression is of apathy or limited interest arising from the inherent conflicts in the employment situation, and in the absence of effective union organization, which fits remarkably neatly into the predicted pattern.

THE GLACIER METAL COMPANY

If the John Lewis Partnership is well known, its reputation is small compared to that of the Glacier Metal Company, and of the 'Glacier Project' which has grown out of it. "The Glacier Project occupies a unique place in recent British management thought", acknowledges Child (1969b:195), and his opinion is not controversial. An extensive literature has now flowed, above all from the pens of Elliott Jaques and Wilfred (now Lord) Brown. The former was brought in as part of a research team from the Tavistock Institute at the height of the post-Second World War joint consultation wave, while the latter was managing director of Glacier at the time of the scheme's inception. Jaques subsequently became a consultant. There is now a Glacier Institute of Management, and managers continue to generalise from their experience to elaborate on the basic argument around which the Institute has arisen.⁸ It has attracted much attention in consequence, some of it informatively critical enough to be useful in attempting a balanced assessment, though no attempt to place the Glacier system and its outcome within a broader interpretive framework seems to have been made. Nonetheless, the Project has become important enough to have attracted a recent large volume devoted to analysis of it (Gray, 1976).

In many minds Glacier is a standard-bearer of worker participation in Britain. Emery & Thorsrud not only think that the system "works", but that it constitutes an alternative to board-level representation (1969:60). Child (1969a) rates it as formally falling into his highest category of 'whole organization' and 'goals + means (democratic)' participation.

Sawtell rates a company I, which is fairly easily translated as Glacier, as high on his scale of participation, and refers to the works council as "a powerful shared decision-making body" (1968:47). This, then, seems an eminently appropriate test case for our consideration.

A description of the structure and rationale of the Glacier system is a formidable task given the extent of the literature its constructors have produced on the topic,⁹ and only the briefest of *résumés* is offered here. Broadly, three management systems are identified in Brown's key exposition (1960). The 'executive' system determines 'definitive' policy, and here management take decisions unilaterally. The representative system is the channel for negotiation and consultation. Finally, the legislative system, the main channel for 'participation', consists of a works council, which has the formal right to discuss all manner of issues, including wage payment systems, redundancy, factory closure, working conditions and hours, and so forth. The latter organization is, as will be seen, regarded as of more importance than negotiation or consultation (which are not separated), though despite the partiality for formal allocation of functions I find it hard to determine the precise demarcation between the legislative and representative systems (as from the vagueness of other accounts do fellow interpreters).

The Works Council is officially an employee body with management representation. It consists of seven manual staff, three clerical workers, two middle managers and a senior executive, together with one management representative (usually the managing director).¹⁰ Decisions must be unanimous: the unanimous voting council has subsequently been proposed by Brown as a solution to wage inflation (1973), and by Jaques and Brown as a preferable alternative to the Bullock Report's proposals (1977). The basic concept which is said to dominate this system is "management by consent", the claim being that managers can have only as much effective authority as the managed are prepared to concede them. If this exposes the legitimization-seeking aspect of the structure, gaining acquiescence to rather than democratising the process of management, then it would still seem that the result is to grant a great deal of interventionist power to elected employee representatives. On closer examination, however, the Glacier system takes on an appearance which is less flattering.

The initiative in setting up the system at Glacier was a management one. Jaques' first book (1951) is an expanded account of the cajoling and

coaxing necessary to draw workers' representatives into the system at all; despite his interpretation (see below) their resistance seems on reflection to have been well-founded. Unions are not officially opposed, and indeed these days, with the Glacier factories being in a well-organized economic sector, they are solidly established in the firm. Nonetheless, the concept of 'management by consent', and associated values which we have seen to be apparent in the type of project the Glacier spokesmen have committed themselves to, entail a marked degree of tension between this philosophy and at least some of the requirements of pragmatic pluralism. For part of the time, an effective change of status in the institutions may take place, but at others the unitary ideology regains predominance with effects that will be seen to be directly predictable from the framework of analysis in use here.

The 'management by consensus' doctrine and the conceptualisation of works councils that goes with it thus confirm the placing of the Glacier system in the consensus-oriented category. Jaques and Brown also present the prototypical view of the boardroom as a centre for neutral, rational and non-interest-based decision-making which management spokesmen generally adopt, thus arguing against actual representation at this level (though not against unionists on the board per se).¹¹ Officially, though, there is recognition of "negotiating" rights¹², but as Pateman comments (1970: 75n2) in practice management resisted this as an encroachment on their prerogatives. We have seen that these prerogatives are at the heart of the legitimacy enterprise of both Jaques' and Brown's writings. Consequently, negotiation was in practice subordinated, whenever possible (and sometimes when it proved impossible as we shall see), to the consultative, consensual approach, conceding bargaining rights only under great pressure.

It remains the case as noted above, that formally the works council seems to be granted considerable powers for the implementation of employee interests. According to an official description it meets "not just to discuss but actually to take part in fixing what the firm's policy should be" (Glacier Metal Company, 1965:2). This is hard to reconcile with a consideration of the rest of the formal structure, however, where it is clear both from Brown's accounts and from Kelly's description that the source of policy is the Board of Directors in all matters of significant weight (and the views of Jaques and Brown on the boardroom we have already

seen). "I am the active initiator of new policies which, however, can be implemented only if I have sufficient authority" asserts Brown (1960: 250), narrowing the source of decisions down still further. The complex network of participative structures is quite openly described as a legitimacy device, the description of them falling into a section in Brown's text headed 'Sources of Managerial Authority'. The unanimous voting principle also emerges as a means to prevent any dangers arising from the existence of an employee body with only one management representative which could complicate decisions by going against Board policy.

Thomason clarifies the mechanism:

If there were likely to be a clash between definitive and conditional policy decisions, Brown, as a member of both Works Council and Board of Directors could withhold his vote in the former, and prevent this from happening. (Thomason, 1973:148).

From this appear the first indications that confirm the pseudo-democratic nature of the Glacier arrangements. Child summarises thus:

As with Mayo a fundamental point in the Jaques system is the avoidance of conflict ... to be achieved by means of an increase in management control over employees. (1969:200).

For Brown this seems to be in harmony, too, with what he refers to as "the requisite reality of the manager-subordinate relationship" (1960:149).

Other examples of the pseudo-democratic nature of the Glacier enterprises include the running of some of the institutions. Thus Kelly's observations showed that management tend to direct the path of discussion and to dominate the works council, the Chairman and General Manager speaking for 74% of the time in the meetings he attended (1968:245). In the use of appeals procedure, where the managing director hears the appeal (not a particularly convincing democratic mechanism), according to Brown's own figures (1960:278) from January 1953 to the end of 1958, 58 appeals were heard. Forty-three were disallowed, and in five compromise solutions were found, so that only one in six succeeded unequivocally. Since these were individuals who presumably felt sufficiently incensed and justified to take their case to appeal, the figures are not calculated to inspire confidence.

The Glacier Project's initiators advocate the 'working through' of problems in discussion, and interpretations in connection with this style are placed on the actions of employee participants. This 'working through' idea, taken from the use of groups or consultant-patient techniques in psychiatry, affords a further clear imposition of a unitary frame of reference, since it evidently presumes a basically common goal of consultant and 'patient', and further joins hands with other human relations approaches in assuming that a 'constructive' and mutually beneficial solution to 'problems' is always available if co-operation is achieved. The conceptualisation of circumstances which it produces comes across repeatedly as not only dubious but also as markedly patronising. Repeatedly we are told by Jaques in his 1951 account of the lack of self-confidence and maturity which afflicts employee representatives and leads them to find excuses for refusing responsibility or adopting conflictual stances. Thus at one point we are told that the Shop Committee:

... criticised the Works Council and the firm's consultative set-up, maintaining that top management could get whatever it wanted by talking the workers' representatives out of their demands or their arguments. (1951:98-99).

Jaques reports his response to this, giving an impression (to this reader at least) of heavy slanting of the account to get across his own interpretation, and entirely ignoring any validity in the workers' account. He claims to have suggested:

... did this not indicate some insecurity and a fear that they/the Shop Committee/ were not strong enough to cope by themselves with their present situation? (1951:99).

This was denied, he admits, yet claims that it was nonetheless partly accepted. There are countless examples of this sort throughout Jaques' descriptions. Brown makes fewer such references, his approach being more formalistic and less dependent on interpretation of specific interactions. He does, however, offer his own version when he accuses trade union officials, who fear employee entanglement in management decisions, of a "lack of objectivity" (1960:242).

Child is correct to point to the methodological problems of accounts such as these which afford only the manager or consultant's version of the situation and presume it to be naturally superior and objective (see

1969:197). Kelly, though, is more forthright. Rather than personal incapacities on the part of employees being the reason for the reticence observed by Jaques:

A more plausible view would be that the representatives intuitively realised that they could never fully control the policy of the company. (1968:54).

In fact, it hardly needed much intuition for this to be seen, given the structures already described. This was plainly responsibility without power, for decisions could only be 'made' if they were in accordance with management policy and approval.

Another noteworthy feature is the shift in emphasis as to the nature and philosophy of the Glacier system as between Jaques in 1951, where great stress is laid on participation and communication, and Brown from 1960 with his emphasis on formal authority, efficiency, and the achievement of policy implementation. This is Kelly's interpretation (1968:251), and is accepted by Pateman, and in a review by Revans (1968). As the last of these authors puts it, in the 1940s industrial democracy was 'useful', but by 1960 it was far less necessary and was "dropped in favour of unilateral demands". Such an interpretation has some validity; it certainly fits very neatly with the thesis of the previous chapter as well as this, and to extrapolate from this explains the revival of concern with participation from the end of the 1960s. It is hotly denied by Jaques himself,¹³ perhaps unsurprisingly. My own feeling on this is that it would be too convenient to rely overmuch on such a generalisation, and that part of the difference arises from the differing perceptions and approaches of Jaques and Brown, as seems natural given their differing roles in the project. It would also be foolish to overlook the plentiful evidence of an overriding concern with the management goals of authority production, efficiency and profitability in Jaques' account, just because it is less blatant. Perhaps what remains significant is the timing (relative to the broader 'cycles' described in Chapter 9) of each book's publication and so the stress within the Project of different aspects at different times.

A final confirmation of the insubstantiality of democracy in the scheme at Glacier comes from Child (1976), who reports that when the most significant decision of all was made in the company, to sell it, no

consultation took place.¹⁴ There are, it seems, occasions when the managing director ceases to have to seek legitimacy; one wonders what happens to all the good intentions towards the workforce at such times.

Next we must ask whether this is a system where management are victors, accruing gains in terms of control from the system. Its persistence over the years, and my own discussions with people who have experienced it, suggests that at times it may indeed operate to management's advantage and to the detriment of union strength. However, given the level of organization of the workers in the company, the analysis advanced earlier would suggest that when management concede bargaining rights in the council it will change status, or where they are conceded in other channels the council will lack significance. Both of these eventualities seem to have occurred, but management's attachment to a unitary ideology suggests a potential for managerial obstinacy which is more liable to create the conditions for instability. To quote an exchange reported by (but differently interpreted by) Jaques:

The Shop Committee Chairman opposed [the] "investigation of workers' attitudes, since all supervisors were on management's side."

The Divisional Manager complained: "You're suggesting there are two sides to the table. I feel that we're all in this together."

"There are two sides to the table, and I don't want the supervisors poking their noses into the Shop Committee's business." (Jaques, 1951:79).

More generally this division between the researcher-consultant and the management he represents on the one hand, and those who they are trying to co-opt on the other, is acknowledged in cryptic form by Brown and Jaques. They refer to it as a disappointing persistence of "the split at the bottom of the executive chain", which appears to be a contorted way of saying that the workforce are not involved.

One good example of this 'split' is found in the fate of the 'equitable payment' proposals by Jaques. Briefly, Jaques has argued for many years that remuneration should be governed by scientific principle rather than bargaining power (see esp. 1967). The principle he advocates is the 'time-span of discretion', a rough measure of responsibility which he believes to be consciously or unconsciously accepted as fair by all men.

He claims success for his approach in experiments in Glacier. Amongst many, often critical assessments of the time-span theory,¹⁵ probably the most damaging and certainly the most telling in the context of the discussion here is that of Fox (1966). By and large, he observes, time-span methods have only been applied to staff whose evaluation can be unilaterally determined by management, i.e. salaried managerial staff. Works council representatives in Glacier have not only refused to recognise it as a final arbiter on pay, but have vetoed systematic research on it within the factories (pp 363-364). For Jaques this stems from a familiar source, "an unconscious persecuted feeling of loss of personal freedom", but once again the threat to worker interests and existing scope for control, not least through the implied threat of the union itself, is a far more plausible explanation. To extend Fox's argument along the lines of earlier discussion in these pages, it can be said that more important than the criteria is who is to control their selection and application. Who allocates revenue between profits and wages? Who decides how great a time-span one person has relative to another, what the distribution of people among jobs should be, whether people should be able to exert personal control over their work (usually a unilateral matter anyway), even whether there should be a division of labour? In other words, at a whole series of levels Jaques attempts to pretend underlying harmony and the absolute rationality of management and the labour process they oversee. The result is a transparent attempt to increase management power, as Child has observed, and thereby it founders on the conflict it denies.

The clearest illustration of the instability engendered by the Glacier system is, however, that afforded by Kelly's account of two strikes in the Kilmarnock factory. I shall concentrate on the former, for each shows very similar management attitudes and consequences. This first strike in 1957 arose from a shift in the balance of power when management decided to announce 200 redundancies. The works council, management-dominated, accepted this, and on the basis of management selection agreed at an earlier legislative meeting. The AEU, however, called for a 'last in, first out' policy to avoid any victimisation in the name of management selecting to rid itself of the 'least suitable' elements. Management claimed that the works council, officially drawn from all employees, was more representative than the union. The consequence was a large number of men joining the trade union, a nine-day strike, and the eventual

meeting of the chief union demand.

In Exploration in Management Brown describes a strike which seems almost sure to be the same one, but his account of the outcome is quite different to Kelly's:

We had a one week's strike in one of our factories ... one of the major factors was the need to reduce the strength of the factory by about fifteen per cent because of work shortage. There existed at the time, a standing order on redundancy which had been duly passed by the factory council some years earlier. It was a sound piece of legislation It was clear from the comments made during the strike which ensued that the operation of the legislative system was not understood and was, therefore, mistrusted. A great deal of effort was expended by management during the strike to explain the legislative system. I think this made a substantial contribution to the return to work on a basis which was a little different from that existing before the strike. (1960:259-260).

Kelly, on the other hand, quotes a comment in the Glasgow Observer:

... because many regarded the Works Council as a pet idea of management and little concern of theirs, they did not feel morally bound - whether rightly or wrongly - by the council's decisions. (1968:177).

Goldring (1971:118) admits more readily the problems, but claims that shortly the Glacier system created the integrated atmosphere it needed. Yet Kelly's account of the 1962 strike shows a similar pattern of management resistance to all union rights, and precipitate action such as instructing management to run the machines. For Kelly, the chief consequence of these episodes was "an agonising reappraisal of the Glacier system" (1968:118) and two periods of prolonged hostility.¹⁶

One must regard with some sardonicism then, Heller's recent argument for closer attention to be paid to the successes of Glacier in an article entitled 'The Realities of Participation' (1978), or Jaques' (1964) statement that:

... on the whole people are not all that anxious to explore social reality.

SCANLON AT LINWOOD

In October 1963 a Scanlon Plan was introduced at the Pressed Steel plant at Linwood in Renfrewshire. The plant in question is better known for being a part of the Chrysler corporation which has attracted a great deal of (usually unfavourable) publicity for its labour relations in recent years. The account here will not attempt to explore these more contemporary events, though the pattern of these seems to indicate not only the mortality of the Scanlon Plan's aims but other relevant parallels with the past also.

The aim of a Scanlon Plan can be broadly summarised as being the raising of productivity and the improvement of labour relations (including the reduction of absenteeism, strikes, turnover and so forth) through the introduction of profit-sharing in the form usually of a productivity bonus, together with a replacement of authoritarian management styles by more participative or 'democratic' ones. The latter aim is particularly to be achieved through the setting up of productivity or suggestion committees and encouraging contributions from employees to enhance output and so, it is argued, everybody's welfare. The underlying philosophy is based on neo-human relations theories, particularly those of McGregor. There is, then, little question as to the unitary cast of the scheme, at least as seen by management who took the initiative to employ consultants and introduce it.

The Linwood scheme was an attempt to overcome problems of a crumbling piecework system, an authoritarian management style, and all the above-mentioned aspects of poor labour relations which went along with these. Management had resisted strongly the cession of bargaining rights to trade unions; for them this was a last-ditch attempt to create co-operative relations. The unions, too, were concerned at the fast-declining fortunes of the plant¹⁷ in an area which was not well endowed with employment opportunities, and were enthusiastic about what they saw to be the prospective benefits of the scheme, including greater stability of earnings and job control for their members. Thus the superstructure of a Scanlon Plan was constructed, including profit-sharing-by-results bonuses, suggestion schemes and productivity committees.

In the early days of the scheme at least, there was enthusiasm for

apparent success not only from consultants engaged to set it in motion, but also in a Financial Times article of 11.3.1964, relying apparently on brief interviews in the manner of such reports.¹⁸ It also received broadly favourable reportage (apparently highly inaccurate in several ways)¹⁹ in a research paper written for the Donovan Commission by R.B. McKersie (1968). On the suggestions front there seems to have been an early surge in ideas put forward from the shop floor that compared well with other such schemes. When problems were encountered, though, the explanations entertained by managers and consultants were typical of those advanced to explain the failure of such schemes, and so cast doubt on interpretations of those other plans also. As Gray observes:

When Scanlon enthusiasts mention failure of the Plan it is always because of transgression of the human relations rules of the game. (1971:301).

In other words blame is allocated according to the ideology which informed the original scheme, and events are perceived (or ignored) according to their fit with such interpretations, rather than any revision of the philosophy being entertained. Moreover, little in the way of alternative examination and so interpretation has been possible. In the case of Linwood, we fortunately have Gray's own investigation to help us (see 1971, 1972).

Gray shows that after the initial period of high suggestion rates the scheme ran into mounting difficulties. Suggestions fell off, as did productivity and the bonuses associated with it. Job flexibility remained a serious problem for management (as in other car plants, for reasons of the severe drawbacks of redeployment outlined by Gray in 1971:299), while "the Scanlon Plan did not abolish restrictive practices, but created a new and very serious one" (1971:301). In fact it seems to have generated greater reluctance for labour to move for reasons associated with, amongst other things, the differential rates of bonus earned in different shops. By March 1964 the scheme was already plainly in serious trouble in Gray's estimation. Absenteeism seems not to have improved either - it may even have worsened through the removal of the individual incentive (Gray, 1971:306). On the other hand, a cursory glance at the strike figures shows that in 1964 the proportion of working time lost through strikes fell to 0.29% from 1.68% the previous year (1971:307). But enthusiastic reporting based on this ignores the fact that in the rest of Pressed Steel the

decline was as great or greater without the agency of a Scanlon Plan, which appears to locate the cause in more general socio-economic factors.

The Scanlon Plan was thus rooted in consensus-oriented management conceptions of industrial relations, and it was these which formed the basis for its ineffectiveness. Managers rationalised failure with claims that workers did not enter the scheme with goodwill (which the early response with suggestions makes nonsense of), that the suggestions vein was worked out after an early burst, that the machinery became overloaded in the early stages and resulting delays stoked disillusion, or that the workers were interested only in money and so opted out when declining sales of the Hillman Imp cut the bonus that could be earned.²⁰ Yet another view was that men were too lazy for the Plan, or not ready for it (Gray, 1972:180); Gray ponders on the meaning of the latter, but it clearly fits the evolutionary perspective that we have found so dominant, and echoes the Fox, Head & Co. claim back in the first historical cycle that workers were not yet "civilised" enough to participate. Management consultants, on the other hand, were more inclined to blame the lack of human relations skills on the part of management. For Gray, these explanations remain stuck in the rut of human relations philosophy. Refusing to recognise real conflicts, all of these are variants on the views of the personnel manager who Gray says "cannot break out of the very framework of thought which has brought the factory's problem." The persistence and even exacerbation of problems arose from the continuing matters of power and conflict of interests, he finds (1971:302), which were merely realigned by a Plan which attempted to ignore them. Thus piecework disputes were replaced by ones on production standards and redeployment (1971:308). If management remained authoritarian, then this did not seem to be a significant causal factor in decline - the highest rate of suggestions came in the shop that was acknowledged to be most authoritarian before and after the Plan, for instance.

In Gray's view, it was management's unwillingness to accept the reality of conflict which made the Linwood scheme not only ineffective (trivial) but also unstable, generating fresh conflicts and interest groupings whose claims remained unrecognised and so undealt with. Management resented conflict issues when the stewards introduced them into the participative committees (1972:482), and there rapidly emerged a disagreement over the very nature of joint consultation and its purposes which echoes the

conflicting management-union perceptions outlined in Chapter 3.²¹ The goals are management-oriented, as we have seen, with benefits for the shop floor being motivational carrots; the pseudo-democratic nature of participation at Linwood survives, too, in the draft document of the revamped 'New Linwood Plan' of November 1965, which states that "Unions have an advising and assisting role in joint consultation, so that the decisions of the Management can benefit from searching criticism and from intelligence that might otherwise be overlooked."²²

In Gray's view:

... what was required was a serious attempt to understand the causes of bargaining and how bargaining might be harnessed constructively within the plan. (1972:452).

In short, Gray is advocating a pluralistic solution, akin to the 'change of committee status' which it has been argued here is the only means by which participation can expect to cope with conflicts and the shifting balance of power, by becoming negotiative rather than consensual. It is hard to see, though, where the 'constructive' transformation of relations could arise from; at most, such a change might overcome some of the worse unstable features of the system. Meanwhile, Gray's investigation of other Scanlon plans in operation reveals that behind the large, acclamatory literature he could find evidence of only one apparent success, at Laporte. Subsequently an American researcher reported to him that the Laporte scheme, too, showed little that would support the protagonists of Scanlon on closer scrutiny (Gray, 1972:362-363). Thus another myth bites the dust.

RENOLD AND COVENTRY CHAIN

Renolds have practised a form of joint consultation apparently fairly continuously since the First World War. They are the first case described in the 1918 Ministry of Labour report referred to in Chapter 8, and the main description is that of the Managing Director of the firm at the time of its publication, and the first chairman of the B.I.M., Sir Charles Renold. As such this scheme clearly falls into a category, in the light of previous findings, of 'read with extreme caution' or 'between the lines'. The account urgently needs both an updating, and a check via independent researchers or at least from an alternative version from the union side.

Neither of these can be offered at this time, and normally the case would not be deserving of inclusion. However, it appears to me that the durability of the scheme emphasised in the title of Renold's book, and the general form which it in fact took from an interpretation of the report therein, allows us to say something about the sources of this apparent 'success'. What will be said does not, however, accord with the view of Emery & Thorsrud (1969:60-63) when they say that it confirms the lessons of Glacier. On the contrary, Renold seems to illustrate a case of a different category, of being willing to accept what Glacier management proved, at the cost of instability, to be ill prepared to do.

It is intriguing to find that the first committee set up in Renolds, lasting from 1917-1920 and reported as we have seen by the Ministry of Labour, was a failure. It was constituted as a welfare committee, and to meet the emergent shop steward organisation separately on contractual matters that had to be negotiated. It was a management initiative at a time when, as in many firms, directors "felt the need for closer contact with their workpeople" (Renold, 1950:18). Thus it took on a unitary cast. In consequence, the committee "lacked 'pep'" (p23), i.e. became trivial. After 1920 the shop stewards committee was accepted as the sole channel for both negotiation and consultation, and while the arrangement is surrounded by Renold with references to seeking harmony and understanding etc., it is apparent that this led to the more ready acceptance of the rising strength and so potential scope of trade union bargaining power when the position of organized labour improved. The system was extended to the branches of the Coventry Chain Co. after its takeover in 1930.

The pragmatic acceptance rather than determined denial of conflict is what distinguishes Renolds from Glacier as far as can be told from this account:

As events turned out, effective consultation only began when the Shop Stewards Committee was accepted as the mouthpiece of the workers for all purposes. (Renold, 1950:110, emphasis in original).

Renold does not abandon appeals to common interests. He distinguishes negotiation, for reconciliation of divergent interests, from consultation implying a common enterprise, but argues that when negotiation was kept out of participative arrangements they failed. Current schemes (including the JPC introduced in the war, and the official extensions to "organized

joint consultation" in 1948 (p57)) he saw as effective because "they provide for both, though it is true that negotiation is perhaps the more prominent feature (p111). The change of committee status is thus clear.

This appears to be managerial ideology tempered by a pragmatism, then, and if so it not only accords with the typology constructed here but thereby further reinforces the theoretical arguments behind that typology. A cautionary note on the fate of consultation at Calais, in a branch of the Coventry Chain company, shows that possible variations in management and employee attitudes from place to place in applying company policy can affect the application of pragmatism. The official acceptance of negotiation is insufficient, as Glacier showed. Thus Renold regretfully notes the domination of the stewards committee by "communists" who have destroyed the value of consultation (1950:63). Pluralism, too, still has its limits.

II PUBLIC SECTOR EXAMPLES

Although the number of nationalised industries is small, they occupy a disproportionately prominent place in the incidence of participation schemes, and even more so in schemes which attract widespread attention. To some extent this arises from the importance of the industries, utilities and services in question; to a degree it also derives from the tradition of worker demands for greater control in some of these areas, such as the coal industry or the railways which were both at the forefront of movements for nationalisation and workers' control in the period before and during the First World War. But above all it probably originates in the obligations placed on State-run organizations to conform at least formally to the requirements of what the government of the day presents as good industrial relations practice. Hence nationalisation bills in the 1940s laid a formal duty to consult on management in public concerns where for private industry the voluntary principle was not interfered with, and so since that time public sector management have been required to maintain committees (if far from all of them appear to have done so) when private sector employers lost interest. The same applies to recognition of trade unions and of negotiating rights, so that industrial relations in the public sector cannot be treated without qualification as if it were merely capitalism in no different guise. The forms at least are a little different. It is my intention to consider briefly how far these

differences go, and therefore whether the principles identified thus far retain relevance for what is sometimes called a 'socialised' sector of the economy. The operation of participation in the public sector will then be reviewed, with particular attention being paid to the worker director scheme in the British Steel Corporation, chiefly because this experiment is another of the few which have been closely scrutinised by outside observers.

Following from the tendency of the public sector of employment to show more uniform standards in industrial relations practice and to conform to the State's view of 'progressive' arrangements, it is found that 83% of public sector workers are in unions as compared to 39% in the private sector.²³ If the level of disputes is taken as an indicator (and it is always a dubious one), then the public sector record appears poor. However, if the coal industry is excluded (since it is almost invariably, nationally and internationally, a massive factor in the statistics) the level of disputes is similar to that in the private sector. In occasional years official disputes will boost the public sector figure substantially; in other years working days lost have been less than in the private sector, and it would seem to follow that the record on unofficial strikes should show fewer losses.²⁴

The public sector thus appears to be more thoroughly endowed with both negotiating and consultative machinery than the private. Thus Clarke et al (1972) found that 60% of public sector establishments reported both negotiation and consultative machinery as compared with 33% in the private sector. They also report figures on the satisfaction with such bodies as expressed by those filling in their survey report. In the light of what has been said here about the methodology and reliability of such self-reporting the results must be treated with some scepticism, particularly as regards absolute levels of satisfaction. Nonetheless, let it be noted that 100% of public sector negotiating bodies were reported extremely effective or effective as compared with 90% in the private sector; 94% of joint consultative and negotiating bodies in public and 92% in private sector likewise; and 75% and 74% respectively of consultative-only bodies the same. Thus the state sector comes out each time a little better than the private sector (though the differences are too small to be significant in statistical or other terms). Solely consultative bodies in each case seem the least satisfactory.

The message appears to be, then, that State employment has a marginally superior industrial relations record, if no more than that, over the private.²⁵ It is also more likely to have some form of 'participation' scheme in operation.²⁶ Among the various views of State employment on the left,²⁷ ranging from arguments that it represents a progressive and worker-achieved advance from private ownership to those who see it as a new and still more oppressive form of exploitation, the position adopted here is that State employment is an integral part of the capitalist labour process. For the reasons outlined above the State sector is not merely identical to the private sector, but the differences are far less sharp than is sometimes claimed. Westergaard & Resler show, for instance, the overwhelmingly managerial capitalist background of board members in nationalised industries (1975:213). It is to be expected, then, that the kinds of analysis adopted for outcomes of participation in private sector employment will be applicable to the public sector also. This is important, since the public sector has, for instance, increased its share of public wealth from 8% in 1966 to 26% in 1975, according to government figures reported in The Times (8.2.78) and accounted for getting on for 7 million employees as against a private sector total of 18 million (Bullock Report: 6).

Let us now turn our attention to the actual operation of participation in some parts of the State sector:

THE BRITISH STEEL CORPORATION

The nationalisation of the steel industry was promised in the 1964 manifesto of the Labour Party, and in 1967 the plans for carrying out this part of the programme were drawn up. Already Lord Melchett had been appointed chairman, and together with Ron Smith (erstwhile General Secretary of the Post Office Workers and now responsible for the personnel/ industrial relations side of the new Corporation) it appears that he pushed hard for the inauguration not just of the standard consultative arrangements but also for the appointment of worker directors. Melchett was the grandson of Sir Arthur Mond of ICI, and like his forebear he seems to have been particularly keen on the forestalling of pressure from below by taking the initiative from above. This emerges from the account by Brannen et al who outline the radical demands being formulated or more formlessly

expressed among some groups of employees.²⁸

The scheme was thus, once more, a management initiative in the face of perceived pressure. So was its form, as we shall see. For an account of the results of the scheme, we have available a study by four academics of the first four years of its operation (Brannen et al, 1976). To some extent this version comes under attack from internal accounts, particularly of BSC Worker Directors (1977) writing with the aid of two authors (in whose names the book is copyrighted) one of whom was Senior Advisor on the corporation's Personnel Strategy. The status of their criticisms will be considered later, but first let us summarise the findings of the academic study.

The researchers found that the idea of employee directors gained majority support among employees, though only minority support among management. There was also a contrast in the perception of these groups as to what 'participation' was all about, with management viewing it far more in terms of profits and efficiency (see Chapter 3 for a more detailed account of these findings). It was the managerial model which took precedence in the construction of the scheme, with twelve employee directors being appointed, not elected, from union lists. The selection was management's, and the appointment was to Group Boards rather than to the Main Board of the corporation. This meant that observation and participation in the ultimate decisions was not possible for employee directors (and that they did not share full corporate responsibility which accrued only to the chairman of these boards).²⁹ However, while selection was felt by the researchers to be important in ensuring the placing of relatively compliant men in management heartland, each likely to take a 'responsible', non-oppositional attitude to the position and to be someone who "always attempts to see management's point of view",³⁰ socialisation was probably still more crucial.

The first stage of socialisation was the training course. Though this was partly run by the TUC, their element of the course seems to have been poorly received and to have failed to get across a counter-view to the role of (worker) director emphasised in the management course at the Steel Industry Management College in Ashorne Hill. The 'worker' is deliberately placed in paranthesis in the previous sentence, since the emphasis seems to have been on the 'problems' of the Corporation in management terms,

and on the responsibility of directors of all kinds in resolving these. Two quotations from worker directors are particularly revealing:

"... it conditioned our minds to the job we would come up against in the board room and the problems of management."

"There's a psychological approach to this; if we hadn't been thrown in we would probably never have been jolted out of our attitude that we had on the shop floor."
(Brannen et al: 131).

According to the alternative account by the worker directors themselves, critics who say the employees were socialised into management were working on a misunderstanding (p22);³¹ but as an interpretation by those who were making comments like the above, the defence is unsurprising and hardly very convincing. The process of socialisation would hardly be effective if those undergoing it saw it as manipulation of any kind.

The surrendering of union office which was required for the first batch of worker directors was seen both by the researchers and the unions as a significant source of difficulties which helped to account for the distancing which occurred between the worker directors and their unions. There were practically no contacts with full-time union officials (Brannen et al, 1976: 160), and the officials had a low opinion of the influence of the worker directors, 39% saying they had no influence, and 52% that they wielded some but not much; the remainder were Don't Knows/Not Answereds (p188). The reasons given were chiefly related to the structure of the board itself, and the lack of personal skills of the worker directors (which was also seen as a feature of the scheme, not of the individual skills of the worker directors themselves).

However, while those who reject the researchers' findings make much of a formalistic interpretation of the lack of union contacts, and point therefore to reforms since 1972 (when the study concluded) which allow holding of union office and purport to otherwise strengthen union contacts, this aspect of the weakness of the worker director role is far from the most important identified. It is the pressures for conformity to a management-defined role which are found to provide the more potent forces of further socialisation. According to the researchers, "management have a monopoly of knowledge, of language, and of authority" (p236) which gives them adequate sources of power to define the situation. In a lengthy and

detailed discussion we are shown how the worker directors were brought to negotiate a particular role for themselves. They felt 'second-class directors' (p136), and so too were they viewed by management, who adjudged their contribution no higher than did union officials (p148, 188). They came strongly to favour unitary views of industrial relations, supporting ideas that the unions and workers should take a positive, co-operative view of management, and of joint consultation and the like. The role which emerged for them was that:

On the one hand the directors expected their new colleagues to accept the conventions of boardroom behaviour and the overall goals of the board which they took for granted. In exchange they were willing to accept the worker directors as bona fide members and to listen to them as people who reflected a valid and reliable shop floor perspective. (p235).

The latter qualification was, it would seem, exactly what the worker directors had ceased to possess.

It is therefore not surprising to find that the contributions of worker directors in the boardroom were rarely challenging to management. According to the researchers' classification of contributions, 39% sought information, 18% gave it, 14% were critical (and most of these related only to poor communication to employees in general, not to substantive issues), 5% were supportive views, 15% 'neutral' views, 6% proposals, 3% 'other' (pp 182-183).³² Conflict was rare, and became less frequent as the scheme proceeded, but if worker directors failed to accept their role they were apparently put in their place firmly (p177). Perhaps the most telling illustration of the processes at work is found in the changing attitudes of one respondent who argued at the start of the experiment that regardless of the lack of any official representative capacity he felt he couldn't justify his position unless he were a representative of "the people below us"; two years later he viewed himself as part of the BSC authority system, "we're not representative of the unions at all" (p133).

In the terms employed here, the BSC scheme joins the others we have examined in being managerial in origin. It also appears to have been 'pseudo-democratic', and 'trivial' in terms of its industrial relations impact. The worker directors have exerted little influence, have largely

come to accept managerial perceptions, but seem to have had little effect on the attitudes or actions of employees or unions in the industry, let alone those of management.

The defence of the worker director scheme by managers and the employee directors themselves has already been referred to at various junctures. Particularly vocal has been the co-author of the worker directors' own book, T.K.Jones, who had also written a critical review of Brannen et al (1976) and an apology for the scheme using the researchers' findings in advance of their being able to publish (1973). In each case, much is made of post-1972 changes, as was the case in the worker directors' account where this is elevated to a separate section and called "A New Institution". The supposed refutations were quickly acclaimed in the media, reviews in both Times and Financial Times taking the worker directors' accounts largely at face value.³³ In other ways, too, the media have offered a largely uncritical representation of the BSC scheme, several television programmes, for instance, interviewing employee directors on the strengths of the scheme without a clear, critical alternative being made available.³⁴

Yet the substance of the worker directors' grievances about the researchers appears very watery on inspection. They claim to be representatives of employees, but their admission (1977:60-61, phrased as a positive aspect of their performance) to keeping confidentiality confirms the fears roused by the researchers' findings that not only are decisions not affected but even advance warning is not given to workforce. The tenth chapter of the academics' report outlined the way worker directors either were not told of closure decisions or kept them secret anyway from plants they went to visit and reassure. This seems not praiseworthy but horrifying. Naturally, it may be replied, BSC has extensive and thorough consultative arrangements not only of the traditional sort, but also a promise of two years warning to the unions and proper discussions of any closure decisions. The record on this has not seemed too good, though, of which more in a moment.

The kind of points made by the BSC worker directors in their reply (see esp. 1977:Ch12) to Brannen et al include arguments such as "If the experiment was as poor as they said it was, why was it that the employee director system was made a permanent feature...?", or that the researcher

was "a cold chap" who "couldn't appreciate that the members of the board were guided by the managing director and had an agreed agenda, so it was difficult for an employee director to pick up all controversial matters." (both 1977:66). Such points seem to work better for the critics than against them. So, too, does the aggrieved review of the accused text by an employee director in Steel Manager, quoted 1977:66-67, where he complains that there is continual reference to the "balanced and responsible" view of the employee directors. This is taken as an insult to many union officials "who act in a very responsible and balanced manner." The incomprehension of the worker directors of the criticism of the scheme (reflected in the fact that they appear to take as personal insult what is emphatically expressed as critical evaluation of their circumstances) comes through strongly here, for the researchers were referring to what management saw as balanced and responsible (see e.g. 1976:175), i.e. to the acceptance of managerial values as if they were absolute.

The worker directors claim, too, that the researchers were wrong in arguing that because they played only a managerial role, there was no conflict in the role (p46); yet only 4 out of 17, it is revealed on the next page, do admit to experiencing any role conflict. Certainly there is room for further investigation here, since many of the post-1972 worker directors do hold union office, but Chapter 10 of their book makes fascinating reading for the confusion and contradictions expressed from one worker director to another on the perceived problems (or absence of them) created by their positions. The view of this author is emphatically that to experience no conflict is to be suffering from an illusion, since the role of a union official in the present-day steel industry, given what we know about the two roles, must conflict sharply in interest terms with that imposed on the employee on the board.

In the face of concrete criticism of the ineffectiveness of the worker director role, it is revealing that the reply offers nothing in the way of concrete illustration of things achieved. As has been said, the British Steel Corporation has officially established extensive consultative arrangements with its unions. Ken Jones has even written a textbook for the Institute of Personnel Management, based on his experience and entitled The Human Face of Change. Yet the last few years have been a saga of repeated bitterness and antagonism between the unions and particularly workers in some threatened plants on the one hand and

the Corporation on the other. In 1975, the year after the publication of Jones' book, there was a massive row over the seemingly precipitate announcement that 20,000 jobs would have to be cut forthwith. The government had to step in. Repeatedly in the period before and since, stringent criticisms of the failure of "real consultation" to take place have come from the unions, the most recent at the time of writing being the row over the letter from local management at the Bilston plant (June 1978) which seemed to confirm that the closure decision had effectively already been taken, and that any 'consultation' would be taking place in the wake of management having already decided.

One worker director recently,³⁵ admitting that he could not reveal company plans in advance to employees, argued that in any case BSC had "a very good consultation process" so that discussion took place well in advance. So the consultative mechanisms that seem to have been so ineffectual are advanced as a let-out for the need for worker directors to break confidentiality. In fact the reputation of the worker director system has not been too good among the unions either, for in 1976 they asked BSC to freeze any extension, and the Financial Times reported (18.5.76) that "Some members of the steel committee are known to favour abolition of even the present worker director structure because they feel it has made no contribution to real participation." Since then, the Steel Corporation have been pushing hard to achieve a new industrial relations package that would involve extensive participation in formal terms. The unions have been repeatedly reluctant, but the severity of depression in the industry has made a willingness to show co-operation difficult to avoid.

The new argument takes the form of a 'Steel Contract', with a revamped set of consultative arrangements topped by a National Steel Trades Union Advisory Conference. There are also to be worker directors, including representatives on the main board. The unions have demanded a swift move to half the board seats, but predictably management are not so keen on this for all their enthusiasm about 'participation', and have even resisted fiercely the granting of a seventh union place to give one-third representation (Guardian, 29.6.78).³⁶ The judgement even of the Times correspondent is that it is "offering the form rather than the substance of power sharing in the industry" (17.6.78). He quoted passages from the working party report, that consultation would have "a real effect

on decision-making", yet also that:

It does of course stop well short of worker control. There is no doubt within the group that day to day decisions within the works will be taken by individual members of management.

The working party proposes an "evolutionary approach". The unions continue to express severe misgivings. Well they might. The original worker director scheme was criticised by the researchers partly because decisions did not take place where the worker directors were. Some of them were taken on the main board, but of far more significance is the effective sealing of major decisions among management before being brought to the board for ratification. This was startlingly confirmed a few years ago when a unique television documentary, 'Decision Steel', filmed the process of making the decision to build new, specialised plants at Hunterston. Sir Monty Finniston was shown passing instructions for the apparently arbitrary recalculation of the figures on different criteria till the decision to build two new plants rather than convert old ones, cheaper on the first estimate, could be justified. The deal was then negotiated with a German firm, agreed, and only then taken to the Board for rubber-stamping.

A review of BSC experience, then, confirms the findings of the researchers,³⁷ and their agreement with the analysis of this thesis, despite the volley of criticism that has been directed at them. Perhaps more justified would be a query as to why the most telling conclusions of all in their study were introduced so late and developed so little. This comes at the end of their chapter showing the incapacity of the worker directors to do anything for workers in the face of redundancy threats. It leads to conclusions not only that worker directors are about the last source of reliable accounts about their own performance, but also to reinforcement of the argument that modification of the scheme to a more union representative basis would have brought no fundamental improvements.

... the lack of effectiveness of worker directors ... reflects not only the structure of this scheme of participation and the orientation of the worker directors themselves; it also reflects the structure of power and system of values and legitimations in the economic system generally. (1976:208).

Not only is this seen to imply that a far more radical ideology than is present among most steelworkers would be needed for them to formulate an effective answer to closures. It also means that:

Given the structure of our industrial system, and its acceptance, wholeheartedly or resignedly, by workers, it might be argued that the impact of any participatory scheme will be limited because of the inevitable primacy of particular definitions of what is economic or profitable. (p209).

This raises questions far more fundamental than any addressed elsewhere in the study, or in the other evaluations of which use has been made in the preceding pages. Unfortunately its significance seems largely unappreciated elsewhere in the discussion and in the Postscript which implied an evolution to participation (see Chapter 9 above). It is also rather vaguely formulated, partly in the 'dominant ideology' terms which we have found it necessary to criticise (Chapter 6).

However, the groundwork of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 enable us to extend the point made by the researchers on the BSC. Firstly, while worker directors are affected by direct persuasion (the socialisation process the authors describe extensively), more potent still in constraining their actions is the structure of reality in which they are located. They must make decisions for a corporation which operates in a capitalist environment (state ownership notwithstanding) according to capitalist principles of effectiveness and survival. It was from this that I argued that the nature of ideology must be seen to originate, as an integral feature of the structure of power. Alternative visions are, thus, not a matter of technical recalculations, but of changing the whole basis of calculation and then somehow being able to carry it through in the face of management incredulity. This was hardly likely, and any opposition there might have been was likely to be stunned into inarticulacy by the lack of a vocabulary to express it. Thus the obstacles to realising the political economy of labour through even the parity of superiority of representation on the board of a capitalist company remain seemingly insurmountable.

THE COAL BOARD

Let us leave aside these fundamental conclusions for the moment and return to the survey of the practice of participation in nationalised industries. The National Coal Board experience can be summarised rather more briefly than that of steel.

The NCB has an obligation to consult its employees laid upon it by the 1946 Nationalisation Act. A strict distinction was created from the start between matters for negotiation and those adjudged suitable for consultation. The latter covers accidents, canteen and welfare matters, training, colliery efficiency and the like. According to the Coal Board "Everybody has the right to say how he thinks the work of the National Coal Board can be improved", and they go on to refer to the desirability of "constructive criticism" of the present set-up.³⁸ The miners, having fought for decades for nationalisation of the industry, could be expected to approach State employers with a good deal of goodwill, though the appointment of chairman like Robens or Sir Derek Ezra (currently president of the B.I.M.) hardly matches the socialist intent with which that goal was originally pursued. And as Anthony observes (1973:56) the consultative machinery was little different from that proposed by the coalowners to the Sankey Commission just after the First World War.

Nonetheless, the consultative machinery is reported in some quarters as being a considerable success. Horner (1974) believes that that system has helped to make the coal industry achieve all the objectives set out by the Labour Working Party report of 1967 except for board representation. The Times (4.2.77) claims that the coal industry "boasts at national level the most developed consultative machinery anywhere."

Other assessments of the consultative machinery in the mines are less complimentary, however. Anthony finds that the intention of the consultative arrangements, which exist at colliery, area, district and national levels was clearly to try and create a "sense of unity" in the industry (1973:69). This it failed to achieve but not, he feels, for want of trying on the part of management. For Anthony consultation is not about 'objective' participation, but about 'psychological participation', i.e. getting the worker to feel as if he has a say.³⁹

It afforded workers and their representatives little influence on the direction of affairs. Discussion concerned events that had taken place rather than changes to be made and the low incidence of conflict demonstrates the weakness of worker influence. (1973:71).

It is interesting to find Lord Robens derogating the use of participation as an integrative device, and instead invoking the worker's rational demand for more cash and security of employment. Yet his view of joint consultation is, in the context of its own ideology and the capitalist labour process it continues to legitimate, equally pseudo-democratic.

"There are those who manage and those who are managed" he announces (later it's "subject to management"). Joint consultation exists "to maximise the use of the assets of the business by the most effective use of the manpower resources".⁴⁰

Anthony shows that particularly at the local levels management dominated the committees, their domination increasing, moreover, over time (1973:59). The unions came to regard the committees as largely a managerial instrument, Anthony reports (p72), and indeed it is "as a managerial instrument that joint consultation must be judged" (p73). His findings are largely confirmed by Griffen (1972), who is an Industrial Relations Officer in the coal industry himself. For some managers, he feels, "'consultation' means telling workers what you have already decided to do and why you have decided to do it" (1972:38). Of the meetings he says:

The method of reporting on things like output and productivity at Consultative Committee meetings really assumes that the objectives set by management are shared objectives. (1972:43)

Thus he confirms Anthony's finding that joint consultation in mining is "dominated by a unitary frame of reference" (1973:77).

The next question is whether the consultative committees achieve their managerial objectives or not. In fact, as the discussion above implies, they have been experienced as a marked failure in this respect also, given the disillusion and suspicion in which the unions have come to regard them. The chief outcome is the channelling of important matters either into informal channels of discussion between union leaders and management, or into orthodox bargaining procedures.⁴¹ Formal joint

consultation "purports to be a process of joint control but it is largely concerned with the trivial in which employee interest is low" (Anthony, 1973:78). He shows that 89.7% of all items raised by management are matters of communication to the employees through the committees. Most of the union contributions, on the other hand, are complaints (71% of all NUM contributions, for instance). The latter implies an element of instability in the system, and it was the case that far more NUM items, particularly, raised matters of conflicting interests (some of them of the most fundamental kind, 'value conflict'). Conflict and contention became less, however, as one moved down through the hierarchy of committees. In 93% of discussions no conflict or agreement was recorded. This is understandable with management items intended only to inform, but for complaints it is more puzzling. It must be presumed that this means they, too, were largely noted and/or that the important areas of contention were left for other parts of the system to deal with. Graham confirms this kind of pattern, arguing that the restricted scope and limited access to information of the committees renders them largely ineffectual (1967:189). Anthony finds that the consultative channel is commonly deliberately by-passed by both sides (1973:66), while Griffen (1972:35) notes the failure of the unions to take advantage of the apparent strengthening of formal rights of the committees after 1968. He also remarks on the very low level of communication between the committees and the rank and file (1972:34), thus dashing any claim that at least the system works to this end. In the course of my own research I encountered a manager who had once been head of a colliery; he described how consultative committee business would be so routine that the minutes could be drafted in advance, and if they could not be written up within half an hour of the end it was an unusual event.

It is interesting to observe that a debate is currently in progress in the coal industry on the extension of industrial democracy. One idea that has been floated in the context of the Bullock Report has been worker directors on the NCB. For Graham (1967) it seems these representatives are already there through the persistent selection of ex-unionists to serve on the NCB. Graham seems encouraged by his finding that:

Any suggestion that an ex-trade unionist Industrial Relations Member would play any role remotely implying softness towards labour is completely discredited. (1967:197).

Perhaps this helps to explain the dislike on the part of the unions in the industry, particularly the NUM, for worker director proposals. Over recent years the NUM has rejected the idea, and at the important Harrogate Conference of the union on Industrial Democracy (December 1977) the proposal was again shunned not only by the left but also by the president, Joe Gormley (Financial Times 7.12.77).

What the NUM have proposed is a plan for transforming consultative committees at pit level into management committees composed entirely of NUM members or officials elected by secret ballot (Financial Times 5.5.76). The counter proposal from the Coal Board suggested Colliery Policy Committees of 14, including 6 NUM, 2 NACODS (overmen), 1 BACM (managers' union), and 5 NCB appointees including the colliery manager as chairman. The NUM in reply demanded 8 members on a 16-man committee, to which the BACM responded with horror. Their general secretary said, according to The Times (26.9.77) "We are in favour of worker participation. What they want is workers' control. We will not tolerate that." However, at the Harrogate Conference a management spokesman (Cliff Sheppard, NCB member for industrial relations) indicated that in their eyes at least the new committees would not run the pits. It would involve only 'some genuine joint decision-making' (Times paraphrase, 7.12.77). A committee could not run an enterprise in a modern economy, so "The functions and responsibilities of day-to-day management ... are absolute." The committees would operate "by consensus and not by the use of weight of representation."

This revival of the unitary principles of diluted consultation for the new proposals indicate that little has changed, and must have confirmed the fears of the many delegates at the conference who expressed severe misgivings about any form of involvement with management. The best-known critic of this sort is Arthur Scargill, who has expounded such opposition publicly for a long time (see e.g. 1975:25-26). Shortly before the Harrogate Conference he repeated his arguments:

Our constitution called not for collaboration with capitalism, but for a change of society ... It is impossible to have workers' control within a capitalist society ... we do not need workers' participation to play our part as a trade union inside the National Coal Board or any other industry in Britain ... (Times 5.12.77).

The debate at Harrogate thus took a familiar form along the contours of the union dilemma identified in Chapter 3, but despite an effective speech by the Energy Minister, Benn, arguing that the union could not act "like Joshua going around Jericho tooting his horn till the walls fall down" the backing for Scargill's position was considerable.⁴² The words of a South Wales delegate, Mike Griffen, will serve aptly to conclude this section:

"If they want production committees, let them say so - don't dress it up in fancy clothes and call it industrial democracy. We have never had power and we have never had anything out of consultation. All we have is what we have fought for."

THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Of the remaining areas of the public sector, several might have been chosen for the final example. Worker directors exist or are being proposed in many areas, including the Post Office, British Aerospace, and Harland & Wolff, shipbuilders. The participation machinery at the State-backed British Leyland, Chrysler or even Rolls Royce factories would also yield interesting (and supportive) evidence. British Gas, the Fire Service, Electricity Generation and Supply, the docks or British Rail⁴³ might all have figured strongly for their consultation machinery. One nationalised industry will be discussed later, since it was the subject of fieldwork of my own. Local and National Government pose certain intriguing issues all their own, but also stand rather apart from the other kinds of employment concentrated on thus far and would complicate the discussion unduly.

The National Health Service, like the civil service or local government, is a public service rather than simply a nationalised industrial concern. As such, it provides a valuable test of the arguments developed in this thesis in a contrasting employment sector to those examined thus far. The nature of the work in the NHS can be expected to create far greater areas of co-operation and commitment than in manufacturing, or even in most other services.

Nonetheless, recent years have seen the emergence of something much closer to 'conventional' industrial relations problems in the NHS. The problems led to an inquiry by Lord McCarthy at the instigation of the Secretary of

State for Social Services. The report which resulted provides an assessment of the joint consultative machinery which was tacked onto the system of labour relations in the NHS in 1950. The existence of this study makes the NHS a convenient as well as valuable case to examine.

Management and many employees in the NHS (particularly those with 'professional' qualifications and internalised obligations) resist strenuously any idea of parallels between labour relations there and in industry.⁴⁴ In recent years, however, the attention of Marxists has turned to apparently 'anomalous' areas such as the health service, and some moves have been made towards clarifying the nature of relationships in such sectors.⁴⁵ At the same time internal changes have brought militancy, a decline in dedication where this becomes transparently a control device, and the growth of more orthodox trade unionism. To abbreviate the findings, it becomes apparent that the demarcation of skills in the NHS defines also a sharp hierarchy of supposed competence in medical treatment which is reinforced by the defensive doctoral myths of professionalism, placing nurses lower in the structure and denying them much of their competence, and putting ancillary staff (the origins of the greatest rise in militancy now being followed by nurses) at the bottom of the pile.

Bellaby & Oribabor (1977) argue that a hospital is a capitalist system of production because it produces commodities, acts as a distributive network for the output of private capitalism, and also performs certain key functions in the reproduction of the labour force. This rather formalistic and incomplete analysis nonetheless clarifies the processes at work, and while the British system operates in marked contrast to the terrifying cash-orientation that seems to dominate the United States medical service it is still apparent that it is heavily marked by these factors. The form of treatment and its availability is often dictated by the medical profession's panache for the spectacular as we know (hence the resistance, in countries like Tanzania, to devoting funds to mass medicine rather than ultra-modernity), but it is far more circumscribed by the availability determined by the profitability of any particular medicine to the private companies who will produce it.⁴⁶

The division of labour in the health service thus maintains a class relation which became explicit in the conflict after 1973 over the control of pay-beds. This not only attacked privilege but also professional

control of the means of production (Parry & Parry, 1977:835). It was also a form of control, as elsewhere, dividing staff among themselves (Taylor, 1973:169). Trade unionism is seen as a feature of the reaction to this in all the studies we have mentioned, and it has reached fairly high densities of membership in several parts of the workforce.⁴⁷ The news media have vigorously deprecated the attendant threats of action from these employees. The Royal Commission on the NHS received evidence from ACAS (1978) which suggested that "a feeling of distance between management and staff" had developed, and that divergent interest groups had replaced the old family organization (Times 5.7.78). In recent years we have also seen unprecedented events in the form of occupations and work-ins at hospitals where a close-down is threatened or the existing organization is regarded as unbearable.

There appears to be widespread agreement that at least part of the blame for the disruptiveness of the current disputes arises from the lack of an effective negotiating machinery. Whitleyism has operated on a presumed basis of consensus (Berridge, 1976:21), and has thus prevented the adoption of pluralist solutions. Both the ACAS report and the report by Lord McCarthy mentioned above confirm this and advocate the development of more representative and effective bargaining channels, particularly at local levels where Whitleyism is most deficient. If Whitleyism is deficient, however, this suggests that the consultation machinery associated with it is also likely to be so. Since the analysis thus far makes clear the appropriateness of treating the health service within the same analytical framework as other capitalist organizations, we can proceed to consider the results for the consultation machinery as with other cases.

Although there is no proper channel for the expression of conflict, it would appear that much of the resulting disruption has been channelled through the Whitley machinery and into various forms of action. The consultative committees, it appears, have been almost ignored. Predictably, all matters such as wages, discipline and the like that might have connotations of bargaining were removed from the purview of the system. While consultation fitted management ideology, particularly in the NHS, and despite supposed attractions for other parties and repeated DHSS encouragement, "joint consultation has flourished no better within the NHS than generally within the UK" (Berridge, 1976:30).

It emerges that in many cases no committees were set up despite the requirement to do so, and that many of those that were had a short lifespan (McCarthy, 1976). M. Taylor (1973) cites a study in the late 1960s which found that 76 out of 197 hospitals in the sample alone had set up consultation in 1950, and by 1963 only 19 of the committees had survived. Another study, he observes, found in 1970 that 72% of hospitals still had no JCC (I say 'still' as this is a period of revival of interest in participation), and 60% of JCCs in existence met just three or four times a year. McCarthy lists the problems as uncertainty over matters for consultation which led to a deterioration into triviality and a progressive reduction in frequency of meetings in consequence; non-participation by doctors; paternalistic management; and the reluctance of unions to get involved, particularly alongside staff associations. It worked worse the lower in the structure one went (c.f. the coal industry experience). This suggests that even in the absence of proper local bargaining machinery, consultation was never taken seriously as an alternative. Taylor's assessment is still more scathing, and he quotes a 1972 assessment by Farrell of a South Warwickshire scheme whose purpose was "to consider how far the participative approach can help a Management Committee to implement change".

The pattern is thus repeated, with pseudo-democratic schemes degenerating into triviality. It is worth quoting the comment of one student writing an essay on joint consultation as an erstwhile manager in the health service. Managers, he says, determined the topic, and the basic assumption was that "management is always right", though a little pressure would do no harm and "ought to keep the troglodytes happy." In consequence "the first reaction that the JCC raised was angry frustration which has now subsided into a cynical disdain on the part of the workforce (and senior managers) except perhaps those who count toilets, restrooms and office parties as the main factors of human employment."

McCarthy's solution of developing more effective bargaining machinery is vague but probably reasonably sane. His calls for more effective consultative machinery are unlikely to improve matters much in the absence of a proper understanding of the failings of such bodies.

There is a sting in the tail of the story of the NHS. In 1974, the NHS was reorganized along lines advocated by managerial consultants. The

major sources of the principles used was the Glacier Project (Child, 1976:439). Much official rhetoric was, therefore, included, about the possibilities for participation both for staff and for the public, but in practice "traditional hierarchical management principles are being applied to a professional and public service, to the exclusion of effective patient and lay public participation." (Child, 1976:440). Child's analysis ties him to myths about the fundamental nature of the health service,⁴⁸ but his analysis of the way in which in practice 'expertise' came increasingly to displace any capacity for real participation is nonetheless convincing and telling. Another, related result has been the emergence of a managerial ideology within the service which not only strengthens the similarity to industry and reinforces the division of labour but also brings into play a new concern with 'efficiency' which goes along with, for the outside world, a process of 'bureaucratisation' (see note 48) that works in the opposite direction. Condemnation of the reorganized system is now ubiquitous, but rarely other than a vague condemnation of 'bureaucracy'.

The reaction of the unions has been to demand more effective participation (in a way which suggests they too are not aware of the roots of the failure of existing arrangements). In 1975 the Secretary of State proposed that two union representatives other than doctors and nurses should be elected to the Area and Regional Health Authorities who carry the management responsibilities roughly equivalent to boards of directors in orthodox companies. (R.Elliott et al, 1977:136). The TUC health service committee rejected the offer as inadequate, and also pointed out that proposals would give the non-TUC bodies on the Whitley Council the the ability to usurp the management role the TUC unions were seeking (Times 8.11.76). COHSE has since demanded half theseats on reorganized health authorities be elected by employees (Financial Times 11.5.77). Even if accepted, one could hardly have much faith in such proposals.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are, of course, a few more favourable reports of participation schemes, though my own inclination is to say that such is the weight of evidence that they should be carefully checked before being credited. One example is the relatively glowing picture painted in several accounts

by Cotgrove et al (1971) and by Daniel (1970, 1972 with N.McIntosh) of a job enrichment-cum-productivity bargaining scheme in a textile-synthetics process plant. What emerges clearly, particularly from Daniel's interpretation, is, however, the bargained basis of any co-operation. Management would have sought, in line with human relations ideology, to offer enrichment in return for productivity. But the workforce demanded increased cash for increased responsibility and output, this being kept apart from and seen as a priority over greater job satisfaction. Meanwhile, a far less cheerful picture of a similar management strategy in a similar factory is painted by Nichols & Beynon (1977) who find that:

When Chemco management 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).

Thus they return us to Brannen et al's conclusion.. Here, too, the employees, though generally accepting the notions that unions were nationally too powerful and so forth, resented the threat of management trickery and the weakness of their own unions in their own plant. Hence the force of management's methods was limited in its direct effort.

If the case studies reviewed in this chapter are examined in terms of the typology of outcomes advanced in Chapter 5, and elaborated at the beginning of this chapter, the results are encouragingly in line with that analysis. Labour organization was weak in the John Lewis Partnership, and fairly divided (for more complex reasons) in the NHS. In each case, the main experience of participation was triviality, with the absence of an effective bargaining channel in the NHS being reflected partly in disagreements within the consultative system, but more emphatically in other ways (including hospital sit-ins). In the other cases, labour organization was more fully established. Renold's found a pragmatic management prepared to accept the consultative committee becoming effectively a negotiation channel, an adaptation which seemed linked to long-term survival of the body in a significant role. Glacier management, and to some extent the management at Linwood, resisted bargaining in favour of unitary participation, although in each case formal bargaining channels

did exist. The extent of the resistance in each case provoked a degree of instability, most marked in Glacier. BSC and the NCB both had well-established negotiation, and the unitary participation schemes were consequently trivial in their impact, though again elements of frustration (a gap between management propaganda about possibilities of participation and experienced reality?) threatened touches of instability.

In many ways, these cases fit the analysis more closely than real world examples could have been expected to. Of course, the analysis was not purely hypothetical, in that it derived from my initial, poorly organized observations. It is my contention, moreover, that most other cases on which a significant amount of information is available fit well with and can be far better comprehended through this analysis. For example the British Rail case, mentioned earlier, suggests triviality consequent upon an alternative bargaining channel in a well unionised sector. The demise of the GPO experiment with worker directors has brought rather more anger because of the attachment to it on largely symbolic grounds by the unions. The British Leyland and Chrysler cases, much advertised when initiated, have been outstanding failures, again largely trivial but with the breaking of management promises perhaps provoking some anger (though somewhat overshadowed by other events).

Rather than continuing with individual examples-by-assertion, I shall turn finally to a survey study of the operation of participation whose findings have been presented as running counter to those indicated here. A survey of the state of industrial relations by Turner, Roberts & Roberts (1977) is said by Eric Wigham in his review to show "that formal provision for employee communications, particularly formal joint consultation, favours industrial peace." (Times 4.10.77). The statistical relationship in question only produces such an interpretation if looked at within the orthodox assumptions already identified. Alternative interpretations could include the possibility that managements with low strike rates are also more likely to announce the existence of consultation in a public relations exercise, or that the consultation channel often functions as a negotiating body in practice, enabling conflict to be resolved by bargaining.

These are possible explanations, but more likely still seems a reversed causal explanation - formal consultation schemes survive best in

circumstances where a stable balance of power and/or an alternative bargaining channel prevents it facing instability and dissolution. This interpretation is in fact given strong support by a finding which Turner et al find it difficult to explain: that when they tried to measure 'actual' consultation the results contradicted those for formal consultation, and appeared dependent on the degree of militancy in the labour force. For 'actual' consultation, 'negotiation' was scored as the highest development, so the conclusion that seems most plausible is indeed that which points to triviality as the most common fate of schemes in the ill-organized or stable power balance areas. Where neither of these conditions holds, 'actual' consultation as measured by the study rises, but formal consultation schemes survive less readily.

The authors also found that 80% of the plants they investigated had some kind of joint consultative machinery. This confirms the high and upward trend evidenced since the late 1960s (back to the level of the early 1950s) by other surveys. But if, as the CBI's own recent figures confirm, joint consultation is so widespread, why is it one may ask that the dawn of an evolution to new 'constructive' relationships is not also in evidence? Why do employer organizations, as with employer representatives on the Bullock Committee in their minority report, feel so urgently that participation must be allowed to 'evolve' and 'grow naturally'? The conclusions of the analysis offered here cast a hard light on this phenomenon. Consultation has rarely worked, at least not as employer conceptions of 'participation' would lead them to wish. The prospect of worker directors therefore seems to them like allowing the uncivilised vandals entry to sack the citadel (however groundless their insecurity in the face of BSC and other experiences). Rather, this can only be allowed when consultation finally does work (which they still believe it somehow must), and creates 'responsible', mature and so prepared worker representatives.

CHAPTER TEN : NOTES

1. See for examples of various of the species of this genre: Dickson, 1975; Jenkins, 1974; L.Taylor, 1972; Butteriss, 1971; Thomason, 1971; J.Elliott, 1978; Ceramics, Glass and Mineral Products Industry Training Board, 1976; Scottish Council for Development and Industry, 1976, 1978. See also Sawtell, 1968.
2. This description of the John Lewis Partnership is based on Flanders, Pomerantz & Woodward, 1968; Farrow, 1964; Page, 1977 and more incidentally on Elliott, 1978; Sawtell, 1968 (see 'Company O') and the second in the ITV 'What About the Workers?' series (transmitted 22.6.78). The accounts are not always entirely in agreement (see e.g. Note 3 below) but the broad structure is not altered significantly by inconsistencies (confirmed by a check against an outline helpfully forwarded from the John Lewis Partnership in 1979).
3. According to Farrow, 1964:87. The trust is held in 40/60 ratio between the chairman and three trustees of the constitution annually elected by the central council (Page, 1977 and JLP's own outline).
4. As will be seen, Flanders et al show the importance of these ex officio members who are frequently not mentioned at all in more 'popular' accounts, the impression given in the latter being that the Central Council is all elected.
5. This programme emphasises a positive interpretation of the scheme, interviewing employees or councillors all of whom gave a positive account of it. This contrasts sharply with the overall findings of Flanders et al and therefore implies some form of selection, conscious or unconscious. At the end a passing reference to criticism of the paternalism of the scheme is made, but with no elaboration and with the immediate qualification that the experiment is nonetheless an invaluable one. The evolutionist perspective is thus clearly and significantly prominent.
6. This is confirmed by the critical foreword to Flanders et al by Sir Bernard Miller, then chairman of the Partnership. He rejects the pluralist assumptions of the authors, and argues that executive decisions must be concentrated in few hands (p17), then ponders why "the managed" ignore suggestions that electoral arrangements be changed to favour rank and file candidates (p19). The ideology and paternalist control in the Partnership accounts perfectly well for this latter phenomenon - and justifies the critical assessment of it as a 'democratic' set-up by Flanders, Woodward and Pomerantz. Thus only 12% of the Central Council membership was found in their study to be made up of rank and file representatives.
7. Calculated from Flanders et al Table 13, p86.
8. See e.g. Goldring, 1971 (when he was principal of the Glacier Institute of Management); Collyear, 1975 (then chairman and managing director of the company).
9. See e.g. Brown, 1960, 1971; Jaques, 1951, 1964; Brown & Jaques, 1965. Generalisations from Glacier experience are found e.g. in Jaques, 1967, 1970; Brown, 1962, 1973; Brown & Jaques, 1977.

10. Kelly, 1968:58; Brown, 1960:245, outline this same structure for Kilmarnock and London factories respectively.
11. See Jaques, 1977, 1977a; Brown & Jaques, 1977.
12. See Brown, 1960:221; Brown & Jaques, 1977:8.
13. In a letter to New Society, 14.11.68 where he refers to a paper 'Employee Participation and Managerial Authority' written to give an exegesis of Glacier philosophy on participation.
14. This was confirmed to me by shop stewards at Glacier in conversation.
15. See e.g. Fox, 1966, also in J.L.Gray (ed), 1976 along with commentaries by Beal and Goodman; and the comprehensive reviews by Cameron, 1976.
16. More recently, the official Glacier constitution contains elements which suggest that consensus may no longer be so rigidly adhered to. Thus the Company Policy Document (quoted in Glacier Metal Company, 1965) acknowledges that: "Realism forces the recognition that power may be resorted to from time to time"; and further "The whole system would break down if managers, while negotiations with representatives were going on, tried to negotiate directly with members ..." (p8). Whether this marks a victory for pragmatism, or a temporary cessation in obstinacy which conceals a continuing ideological hostility to employee opposition is not clear.
17. For an account of preceding events see Gray, 1972; Carty, 1978.
18. See Gray, 1972:187-188. Gray sees this as evidence of early management ignorance of problems. It may be partly this, but in the light of earlier discussion of media reporting the selective choice of quotes (Gray observes that there were already areas of sharp dissatisfaction among the men at least) takes on a different significance.
19. See Gray, 1972, 1971:294 for examples. McKersie does not seem to report the collapse of the Linwood plan. He does note that it is the "most publicised" such plan in Britain (196:42), though less publicity seems to have attached to its demise.
20. C.f. Gray, 1972:ch.9. The last of these explanations was traced to an article by A.Berry in Personnel Magazine, Nov. 1965.
21. This is based on Dr Gray's own observations at Linwood and is confirmed by minutes of the committees kindly shown to me by him which show early exchanges about the strictly advisory nature of the committee from management, together with criticisms of union "rigid dogma" while the union side insist management make up their minds in advance so that consultation remains a sham.
22. Again I have drawn on Dr Gray's research file for this document.

23. R.Elliott et al, 1977:126; see H.Clegg, 1976:2 for similar figures on the UK which show a similar pattern in Australia, France, Sweden and West Germany, though the USA is sharply at variance with the others.
24. These findings (though not the last conjecture) are taken from Financial Times 14.2.77, summarising a NEDO report.
25. This may be a little unfair on the nationalised sector, since figures show clearly a strong relationship between size of company and plant and poor industrial relations measured by criteria such as strikes. Since public sector employment tends to be in large units their performance relative to comparable private sector employment may be far better measured thus.
26. This is reaffirmed in the Institution of Works Managers Survey (1975), which found that 44% of companies responding to their questionnaire had or planned to introduce participation of some sort; the figure for the nationalised sector was 72%.
27. Urry, 1977; Barker, 1977, offer discussions of the alternative approaches here.
28. The account from within the ranks of the employee directors (BSC Worker Directors, Bank & Jones, 1977) is, significantly, far less open on this. The scheme is described much more as the benign beneficence of Lord Melchett. For another account which lies somewhere between the researchers' account and that of the worker directors themselves, remaining fairly critical, see Horner, 1974:ch.2.
29. C.f. BSC Worker Directors et al, 1977:11.
30. A quote from one of the worker directors, in the BSC Worker Directors book (pp 18-19).
31. The course is treated almost totally uncritically in the worker directors' own assessment.
32. Worker director contributions also seem to have been above all on personnel and welfare matters and relatively little on business or other economic decisions (Brannen et al: 181).
33. C.f. I.Macheath, Times, 25.7.77; J.Elliott, Financial Times, 1.6.77 and in his 1978:169-175.
34. This I have recorded on ITV ('What About the Workers?', 6.7.78) and BBC ('The Right to Manage', BBC2, 12.9.76) to give two examples.
35. David Williams on the 'What About the Workers?' programme, 6.7.78, screened in the immediate wake of the Bilston incident.
36. On the final 'What About the Workers?' programme, 20.7.78 Ward Griffiths, employee director and produced as evidence of workers on the board, showed his affiliations (and hence his attractiveness to management) by saying one-third representation was adequate. He saw it merely as a matter of presenting rational arguments, as if to a set of neutral arbiters - a stereotypical managerial image of the board.

37. It would appear that large proportions of BSC staff still show little interest in the worker director scheme. Thus Tom Forrest, an undergraduate at Strathclyde writing his honours dissertation on the scheme in 1978, found widespread ignorance among management as well as employees on the subject.

38. NCB, Guide to Consultation in the Coal Mining Industry 1968, quoted by Griffin 1972:34. See also Rhodes, 1977:26-28.

39. 1973:68. The terms are Kaplan's, in Kahn & Boulding Power and Conflict in Organisations according to Anthony. The concepts were, in fact, discussed in Chapter 4, where they were found not in Kaplan but in French's (1964) contribution to the same book and correspond to the terms 'perceived' and 'actual' participation settled on in Chapter 4's analysis.

40. Quoted in Horner, 1974:52-53 from Human Engineering, London: Cape, 1970. Robens was a long-standing chairman of the NCB as the title of his Ten Year Stint (London: Cassell, 1972) shows, yet in that discussion the consultation machinery is almost totally ignored.

41. Will Paynter, ex-General Secretary of the NUM, regarded informal discussion as far more effective in practice than formal consultation machinery (Anthony, 1973:71; Horner, 1974:54).

42. See 'The Miners' Debate: Pit Democracy', Workers' Control Bulletin, January, 1978:16-17 (and preceding pages for Benn's speech).

43. An academic study of BR does exist, but it is highly managerial and psychologistic in its approach - not surprisingly, since it is the product of the Tavistock Institute. The authors do, revealingly, conclude anxiously that participation seemed to make employees more critical of management (Hilgendorf & Irving, 1976; see also a more extensive account in 1970).

44. This was confirmed in the reactions of some members of the audience when I gave a talk to the Institute of Health Service Administrators. Several times pleas were made that the NHS 'should not' be discussed like any other situation - regardless of what was objectively the case.

45. See e.g. Bellaby & Oribabor, 1977; Parry & Parry, 1977; Stacey et al, 1977; Nararro, 1978; Carchedi, 1977.

46. A perceptive discussion of these issues is found in two articles by Lyn Owen in the Guardian 1st and 2nd August, 1978.

47. See Berridge, 1976:23-24; P.Clarke, 1978; M.Taylor, 1973:171ff for details.

48. Thus Child views the process of bureaucratisation in some abstract Weberian sense, where the Parrys view it as class-oriented bureaucracy (1977) and Bellaby & Oribabor more accurately depict it as a specific consequence of the control by monopoly capital and its principles of operation in the State and 'public services' (1977:806).

CHAPTER 11 : A COSMOPOLITAN CIPHER

In this chapter I shall examine the experience of participation in a number of European societies (plus Israel, who do at least qualify for the Eurovision Song Contest). The descriptive review will be brief, since a great many such accounts exist. My aim will rather be to bring together and reinterpret, within the general framework of analysis of this thesis, the research findings on the operation of participation in other capitalist societies. Partly this will seek to validate the conclusions, drawn from the British material in the previous two chapters, in a less nationally parochial context. Further, it will thereby confront those accounts which refer to the supposed evolution and success of participation elsewhere as proof of its inevitability in Britain, or of a peculiar deficiency in labour relations here. As such it contests key myths of the participation debate identified earlier.

The discussion of each country below will necessarily be far more cursory than for the British case, (though care must be taken not to rely too heavily on sweeping generalisations about entire societies). This is partly, if unfortunately, facilitated by the paucity of penetrating case study material for supposedly participation-inundated societies, even by comparison with Britain. To a greater extent than before, evidence will be selectively used - not, I would contest, in a misleading manner, though it might be argued that I am not the best judge - to demonstrate certain features. These include, once again, managerial initiative in formulating and instituting the scheme; pseudo-democratic profile of the participative arrangement in consequence; and the pattern of outcomes (triviality, instability etc.) outlined in Chapter 5. Some reference will be made where possible to historical patterns, and particularly to the political, social and economic conditions under which recent interest in participation was developed in these societies. Evolutionary accounts for the European scene in general can soon be found to accompany those referring particularly to the UK.¹

The account below will continue the focus on 'higher level' participation schemes, particularly works councils and worker directors, though some comment will be made on the genesis and operation of work reorganisation schemes in Sweden. Apart from Sweden, the countries covered will be Norway, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Israel. Germany and

Sweden will receive the most attention, in rough proportion to the attention they have attracted in the British debate.

In the UK employer spokesmen have consistently adopted the view that for worker participation to be established properly it must first develop out of a 'substructure' of works councils and consultative procedures.² In support of this the prior existence of works councils in countries now experimenting with or fully institutionalising worker directors is frequently cited,³ and thus slow 'evolutionary' (the word recurs repeatedly) development is required. Some comment on this has already been passed, particularly in the light of the historical review undertaken in Chapter 9 which showed that works councils are hardly a new concept within Britain. To this can be added the observation - to anticipate what follows a little - that works councils in Europe often emerge as the only representative body at plant level, in the absence of the unusually well-organised activity of the union and so the shop stewards committee at this level in the UK. Most telling of all, though, is the finding of an OECD report that:

No matter how works councils have been conceived - as complementary to collective bargaining, or as a permanent problem-solving institution - in Western European industry they have been a failure. ... in most countries workers' reactions to the councils are overwhelmingly negative.⁴

The reason given for failure is "the complete lack of decision-making power". Thus the factual reports of these British employers' studies turn out to be predictably one-sided, and of more interest as a case study in the managerial ideology than as sources of information. It becomes necessary to lay the myths such reports propagate.

WEST GERMANY

In Chapter 2 we reviewed what has become a modern classic among critiques of the idea of worker participation, Hugh Clegg's A New Approach To Industrial Democracy. Clegg's argument is developed through a review of evidence from several of the countries discussed here. It attracted, criticism in turn from Blumberg (1968), it will be recalled; partly his attack was based on weaknesses in the theoretical basis of Clegg's

approach, but the hardest blows were those struck against Clegg's interpretations of the German and Israeli evidence - or rather, at the inconsistency of his acceptance of that evidence and his general thesis.

We shall come to the case of Israel shortly. Firstly, for German Co-determination⁵ it must be acknowledged that despite his view that participation must weaken a trade union and/or undermine its independence (by providing a competing channel of representation, and by implicating unions in management decision-making), Clegg states that German unions are powerful (1960:50) and remain unweakened by participation (1960:54,94). Blumberg's onslaught, in which he argues that union opposition to management is not undermined by participation, appears to carry the day, then, and with little resistance from his opponent.⁶ Clegg attempts to explain away the paradox by arguing that the participation web is weakened by representation being only on a supervisory board, and that in any case the German trade unions started from such a low point after the war that the only way was up (which actually makes their rise to supposed strength, even if Clegg believes their system inferior to the British shop steward alternative as he implies, still harder to explain). All this effectively abandons the field to the participatory pluralist, and it is not surprising to find that in his more recent accounts⁷ Clegg takes a far less coherent theoretical position on the whole matter.

Blumberg has, however, ignored the description of the effect of co-determination by a writer whose basic assumptions seem very close to those informing Clegg's principles of industrial democracy - Dahrendorf (1959,1967). Taking up Neumann's early misgivings (1951), Dahrendorf argues that there is an incompatibility between institutions that seek to institutionalise conflict in (for him) the desirable manner, and others like the works councils and supervisory board representatives who are strait-jacketed by a unitary frame of reference that defines their roles and activities. In 1959 Dahrendorf's chief fear appeared to be that the pluralist mechanisms would suffer, and so uninstitutionalised conflicts would eventually increase social cleavage; by 1967 he has become convinced that instead he has witnessed 'The Tragedy of the German Labor Movement' (the title of Chapter 12). In its search for 'utopia' in the post-war era, the labour movement has become incorporated into the social order in a way that echoes Clegg's fears of the destruction of opposition and so pluralist democracy. Dahrendorf, then, endorses Clegg's perspective on

independence, notwithstanding the remarkable complacency of the latter on the empirical case.

Despite Clegg's and Blumberg's opinions as to the strength of the German unions, from all but the most uncritical view of German unions, it is difficult to escape a strong impression of the kind of weakness Dahrendorf describes. Thus from an overall membership density close to the British figure at 39% in 1951, a remarkable revival from the scourge of Hitler's years, by 1967 the level had fallen to 30% and remains around that level or a little higher to the present.⁸ But more significant still are considerations raised by employing a concept of union power wider than the narrow, manifest recognition ones that seem to be common to Clegg, Blumberg and other approving observers. As Dahrendorf has observed, the pursuit of opposing interests seems to have been largely shelved beyond a fairly superficial level for many years, and the danger of incorporation seems a very real one. Two other pluralists have more recently mapped out a more detailed version of the problems, arguing that unions become implicated in managerial decisions and at the same time run the risk of having a wedge driven between themselves and union members at plant level (Kirkwood & Mewes, 1976). It should be remembered that German negotiations take place at regional and national levels for the most part, and that the union is not officially represented in the plant at all.⁹

Still more telling is the account offered by Schauer (1973), who operates with a more comprehensive, marxist concept of power (if with a strong flavour of the simplistic incorporation approach criticised in Chapter 6). For Schauer the unions have deteriorated to a point where their leaders at least have come to share most of the assumptions of management:

The DGB ... advances the concept of the 'functionally necessary gradation of decision-making authority in enterprises'. Managerial authority in industry is presented as natural and essential. Hence it is not only accepted, but protected ... it is no longer legitimate to question it ...

The representatives of the workers are expected to take direct responsibility for capitalist production It is a form of socio-political regulation and adjustment of interests which corresponds to neo-capitalist conditions of production In practice, the role of the unions as interest groups turns them into mediators and disciplined organs for the publication and dissemination of the socio-political decisions of the ruling system. (Schauer, 1973: 211, 215, 216).

Clearly on this account the qualitative assessment of union perspectives (and of class consciousness more generally) must become of extreme importance - though for such evaluations to be properly carried out requires extensive substantive verification. We shall have to rely, obviously, on the conclusions of others and on the arguments developed in preceding chapters. Thus a tendency for unions to accept managerial objectives is seen here as evidence of at least some degree of victory for the political economy of the bourgeoisie, of capitalist ideology. In terms of our own analysis of power, then, German unions appear considerably more acquiescent towards and even supportive of managerial ideology and so less powerful. Whether this is a consequence of co-determination or an explanation of the acceptance of it by unions and workers is more problematical, though some attempt to comment will be made later in the section.

First let us consider the historical genesis of the German system¹⁰. The first wave of interest in the subject of participation came in the 1830s and 1840s, in the period of unrest that culminated in the 1848 revolution. After the defeat of the rebellion, interest waned, until with the rise of union organisations towards the last quarter of the century interest was revived, culminating in a 1891 law encouraging the establishment of factory committees. Only a few employers took this opportunity, however. The German State adopted a more interventionist policy on social issues from the time of Bismarck (providing a model which Lloyd George's party was to follow closely in several respects, however, and so in 1905 a major strike in the mines led to the setting up of works councils being made compulsory.

During the First World War the government issued wartime instructions for negotiation committees of sorts to be set up in plants, as a concession to try and secure labour co-operation; employers resisted this step in a series of ways. Thus the idea of liberal paternalist employers and of a liberal corporatist State was hard put to make headway against the resistance of these employers who felt no need for them, and as in Britain numbers of councils remained dependent on the amount of pressure labour was felt to be exerting. The explosion of militancy after defeat in 1918 was a natural source of employer and government fears, and the Weimar Republic saw the passing of a Works' Council Act in 1920, followed

in 1922 by the right for workers to elect one-third of the supervisory boards of companies. Trade unions were reluctant to get too deeply involved, however, while employers were determined to limit discussion to matters of common interest. A National Economic Council was also set up with the intention of giving unions an apparent say at the macro level, but after the defeat of the KPD in 1923 the interest from the employers' side in all these arrangements went into sharp decline. Often works councils, where they survived at all, became responsible chiefly for the selection of fellow workers for redundancy. Finally, the formal apparatus itself came to an abrupt and brutal end, along with the unions themselves, with the accession to power of the National Socialists.

In 1945 the unions began to rebuild, amidst a powerful movement for the nationalisation of large tracts of industry and the total dispossession of the employers who had, almost without exception, appeared as fairly enthusiastic supporters of the policies of Hitler's rule. In many cases employers were forced to concede de facto large areas of control to plant level worker organisations. For the Allies, the dilemma was that to hand control back to fascist employers was infeasible and not altogether tactically desirable, but there was clearly massive revulsion against socialist measures of nationalisation, particularly on the part of the United States. The co-determination experiment began in the British-controlled sector (the Labour Government in Britain being least appalled at the method), and became formalised in the laws of 1951 and 1952. In the end, then, not only was the amount of power 'granted' to workers by the Allies and the new German government probably in most cases far less than they exerted in the period immediately after the war, but in the process a new institution was created, the works council, which supplanted the union role in the enterprise.

Up to 1952, then, the pattern of German history accords closely with the cyclical account advanced in the British case, the apparent problems for analysis arising after this time with the legislated persistence of the new system. As was observed earlier, however, this may be regarded as the institution of a system of industrial relations in a vacuum created by the Nazi years. Within this system the participation element may still attract variable interest over time. This is the impression given by the German situation. Thus in the 1950s and early 1960s recovery and affluence generated a complacency on the part of the workforce towards

greater self-determination, and little activity on the participation front. The end of the 1960s brought a period of unrest at plant level, as in other European countries at the time, and this prompted increasing State and union interest in advancing worker rights, whilst on the employers' side a few experiments in 'the humanisation of work' began. (Engelen-Kefer, 1976). The latter approach has been typically a managerial response to pressure (c.f. the case of Sweden, discussed below) which, like joint consultation, fits a unitary ideology whilst appearing to offer something to the shop floor, but at the same time posing no threat to the structure of authority relations.

The result of rising pressure from below has been chiefly the passing of a series of fresh legislative measures appearing to increase worker decision-making power, but without changing the structure within which that supposed power has to operate and which in broader terms negates any real gain. The Works Constitution Act of 1972 thus increased the formal rights of works councils, while the Co-determination Act of 1976 extended an emasculated (in the unions' view) form of parity representation to firms outside the Montan sector. The latter is still the subject of dispute, with employers challenging its validity in the courts, and unions responding by withdrawing from formal participation in the Concerted Action meetings which had been the basis of their acceptance of targets of an incomes policy sort in their negotiations. Employer ideology on the matter shows a startling identity with that in Britain, expressed in response to the Bullock Report.

In many ways, then, the impression gained from a consideration of the German system of participation in the post-war years continues to confirm the general features of interest or lack of it, and of attitudes of employers to union ideas of advance, observed in the UK case. It remains to examine the working of the institutions of participation more closely.

The Works Council

The unitary emphasis of the works council system is deeply embedded in the legislation which established it. Thus Section 2 of the 1972 Act states that "the employer and the works council shall work together in the best interests of the employees and the works, and shall do so ...

in a spirit of mutual trust". Section 74(2) prohibits the organization of industrial action by the works council against the employer, thus assuming that employees must refrain from using power to conform to acting for the good of that familiar, mythical entity, 'the company'.

One notable feature of the works council system has been the willingness and ability of large numbers of employers (mostly those in small companies) to avoid having works councils at all. A 1957 study suggested that only 40% of eligible plants held elections, while in 1961 one-third of plants with 100-200 workers in one city were found to have no councils.¹¹ It would appear that neglect subsequently got worse, not better as the 'evolutionists' would have it, for in 1968 the Federal Labour Minister announced that only 6% of enterprises legally required to have works councils actually possessed them.¹² Supposedly the 1972 Act and the renewal of interest should have amended this, but it would seem only partially so, judging by 1975 figures from the Minister of Labour showing that from 1968-1975 the number of works councils in operation rose only from 25,000 to 34,000.¹³

In those larger companies which have acquiesced in the legal requirement, however, management appear to be well pleased with the system:

Management generally considers that the works council is essential and conducive to effective management. There is very little feeling that management is hindered in its actions by the works council and many managers take the view that the works councils make them more efficient than they would otherwise be on the grounds that good human relations makes for an efficient firm. (CIR, 1974:31).

If this were not so, we could expect squeals of indignation from German employers, who already argue strongly against the extension of rights into economic areas that they fear would invade their prerogatives (Fürstenburg, 1969:19). For management, then, works councils are desirable because they become agencies of management control:

After having overcome its initial reserve and uncertainty towards newly elected members of works councils, management usually attempts to utilise their functions for its own purposes and to integrate them wholly into the existing structure of the factory. (Fürstenburg, 1969:22).

In return for 'company-mindedness', argues Fürstenburg, the management will often make minor concessions on areas of marginal importance; if they meet resistance they can instead find petty matters to occupy and entangle the representatives. But by and large, in Dahrendorf's view the problems should not be too great for management, since he felt that the works council has come to fill a role in the authority structure of the factory similar to that of the foreman (1967:173).¹⁴

This critical view of the operation of works council stresses the pseudo-democratic nature of the system. It needs to be said that there is, however, a surprising lack of hard information on the way in which German works councils or supervisory boards operate (Wilpert, 1975:61), and that in consequence generalizations abound where British experience would lead one to expect considerable differential activity. If this varied experience is, as seems plausible, reproduced in West Germany, to some extent differing opinions on the operation of the system may prove more compatible than at first sight seems likely.

There is some evidence of a strong attachment to works councils on the part of workers. The findings of Blume (1964) are by far the most widely cited; though they are not the only such results it appears that they are the most supportive of works councils.¹⁵ The problems for such evidence based on questionnaires concern the interpretation of the findings, in particular the significance of their own response to the respondents, and the context in which it is forthcoming. Other studies have found, for instance, that workers remain dissatisfied with, little affected by, and little able to affect their own destiny as a result of works councils, and 'alienated' from their work.¹⁶ Even the favourable sources reported in fn. 15 show a clear gap between enthusiasm for the idea and that for its actual operation, and Hartmann (1975:60) suggests that this is more sharply indicated by other studies. Nor is there any information on the attitudes to social and industrial relationships that fosters their outlook, i.e. the general level and nature of consciousness. The findings of Chapter 7 suggest that the ambivalence and volatility of consciousness require that any questionnaire results such as these need to be treated with massive caution, whereas little attention to such methodological issues appears to have been paid in the German case.¹⁷ Finally, whatever the judgement one makes from without of the effectiveness of the German works council, it should be remembered that for the German worker it is

her or his only channel for local dealings with management. Any concessions which management make (perhaps due to national pressures or negotiations) are likely to be credited to the works council, and in the absence of the experience of militant shop steward representation the employee has little else to judge by.

Other findings on the operation of the works councils that confirm their weaknesses can be summarised. Thus they are widely agreed to be compromised by the role duality built into their duties by the requirement to represent employees and the interests of the firm.¹⁸ It seems, too, that whilst personnel and social issues are at least partly coped with by the works councils (though satisfaction on the part of the councillors themselves reported by Blume and others is hardly the sufficient evidence to show this that many commentators seem to think it is), even the Biedenkopf Commission was brought to the conclusion that economic issues, dealt with by a specially established Economic Committee, are practically untouched.¹⁹ This familiar pattern, whereby influence is exerted only within safe boundaries erected by management, ensures the security of managerial power and authority in practice. It is a rarity for the factory assembly or company council to query the taking of decisions.²⁰ Works councillors are found not only to be highly integrated into managerial attitudes, but also to be paternalistic towards their constituents, and estranged from their original tasks by becoming 'professionalised' in their new role.²¹ There are reports, too, of skilled men dominating the elections.²² Schregle notes that foreign visitors may nearly be lured into mistaking works councillors for managers (1978:88).

Two phenomena of recent years indicate that the shortcomings of the works council as a representative body at plant level are beginning to come home to roost despite the apparent strength of capitalist hegemony. Firstly there is the growth in certain key industries of the Vertrauensleute, a shadowy form of shop steward.²³ Secondly, the inadequacy of the council as a means to cope with and so institutionalise matters of conflict emerged with the upsurge of unofficial strikes.²⁴

The impotence of the works council, as suggested by the above findings, and reinforced by the peace obligation that forbids it to be associated with any organization of conflict, seems conducive to a conclusion that

ineffectiveness has led to triviality (exhibited in the low salience of the system for workers) or perhaps management 'success'. The last seems most apparent in the defusing of global opposition, but other comments suggest that this may operate at plant level also, with the works council taking the employers' part against union policy.²⁵ Yet where labour is or is becoming able (and this must include readiness) to oppose the employer, the works council of this sort would be unable to provide an appropriate channel. One result we would expect is instability, so it is most significant to discover Fürstenburg observing that councils are often unable to control unrest, but instead become "barometers of stability", showing "many features of a compromise between conflicting interest". He adds that at times:

... the general conflict situation will also affect the works council by provoking instability which will be further aggravated by the lack of a suitably differentiated administrative apparatus. (1969:25).

Already, then, we have indications that there are differential experiences of German works councils depending on their circumstances. It is possible to account for another apparently sharp disjuncture in the evidence by considering differing outcomes also, namely those interpretations which view works councils as reasonably effective conflict channels. For this group of observers, the most successful form that works councils take is one of negotiator, at least within a limited range.²⁶ The emphasis here is on the works council as the arm of the union in the enterprise, a link seen as sealed by the fact that although non-union members outnumber unionists, and the system allows all to vote and stand, union members in practice predominate in the ranks of those elected.²⁷

This added dimension to the pattern helps make more sense of the persistence of the German works councils, but it should not lead to the over-estimation of their capacities. They remain far inferior (in pluralist as well as Marxist terms) to fully independent shop steward organization. Indeed, as one British steward visiting Volkswagen in Germany related, when the chairman of the works council was asked as to his function he described himself as "a castrated shop steward".²⁸ In practice the works council may be inundated with union members, but is far more structurally dependent on management and their willingness to play the game than it is on the union's support, even allowing for the minor revisions of the 1972 Act.

The works council may, then, be "the most effective mechanisms to be found in any of the six countries (Australia, USA, UK, Sweden, France, Germany) for fulfilling the purposes generally ascribed to joint consultative committees" (Clegg, 1976:93). But that does not seem to be saying very much, even if a managerial view of "those purposes" is adopted.

Co-determination On Supervisory Boards

The other, still more widely celebrated feature of German industrial relations is the system of worker representatives on the policy-making upper or 'supervisory' board of companies. This is particularly true of the parity representation structure in the coal, iron and steel sector, though a less convincing (still) form of parity has been legally extended to the rest of the private sector since 1976.²⁹

As with works councils, so here too the unitary principle is the predominant one in the legal codes governing co-determination. Thus Section 6 of the 1951 Co-determination Act requires all members of the board to work "for the good of the enterprise" (Hanson, 1977:36). The enterprise's interest has, moreover, been interpreted by the labour courts in a way which led to a prohibition being placed on all representatives from participating in the withholding of labour in an "active way" (Simitis, 1975:12). As Simitis goes on to observe:

... nobody has ever suggested suing those members of the managerial organs who categorically rejected the employees' claims and thus provoked the strike. What is therefore described as the company's benefit seems to be more or less identical with the interests of the owners. (1975:13).³⁰

The assumptions which generate this judgement also make a major constraint of the requirement for all board members to perform their duties with 'the care and propriety of a conscientious and orderly businessman',³¹ the breaching of which can lead to criminal proceedings. Further shackling (or in this case gagging) is secured by the 'vow of silence' which imposes confidentiality in the absence of release of information by the whole board.³²

These legal restrictions seem to have markedly hamstrung workers' representatives on the supervisory board. Moreover, the parity which unions were demanding in the industries outside the Montan sector has

been undermined by the stipulation that the chairman always be a shareholders' representative, and that the 'employee' side must include representatives of senior management (the point at which the "we're all employees now" ideology recalled in Chapter 3 shows some bite, perhaps). The unions have long attempted to justify their role in co-determination and continue to do so (in a remarkably confused manner to these eyes),³³ expelling militants in their own ranks if they become too effectively critical (Bye, 1974:30). Fürstenburg has further suggested that co-determination has the effect of creating elite positions for leaders in the movement, so tempering their resistance while promoting oligarchic tendencies in the unions (1969:36).

There is little evidence to support the notion that co-determination is significant or has achieved much for workers. Surveys in the mid-1950s showed that few people felt they had benefited in the early years (Adams & Rummel, 1977:11), and while it is claimed that more recent research shows "considerable improvements" (*ibid*) a 1972 poll showed that 66% considered the present system unsatisfactory (Krejci, 1976:160). The principle remains attractive, but the practice is criticised (Hartmann, 1975:58), and the salience of reform in this area rates low among the priorities of German workers.³⁴ This is a familiar combination of approval of the broad ideology (which leads to the tendency to blame local circumstances or representatives rather than the system itself for failings - a form of 'success' for the ruling ideology that we also found in the British context), and at the same time relative disinterest in the resulting institution.

Similar conclusions follow from a consideration of the lack of knowledge of the working of the co-determination arrangements on the part of German workers. Only half of those interviewed appear to exhibit any clear knowledge of the meaning of co-determination.³⁵ A quarter of workers in one study, and a half in another, were not even aware that co-determination had been introduced in their plants³⁶ and not surprisingly, therefore, few knew the detailed mechanics of the system or who their representatives were. Feelings towards employers and the operation of co-determination are in fact apparently somewhat worse in the Montan industries where parity representation on the board exists.³⁷ All told, IG Metall concluded as a result of a survey of their own that "one cannot really speak of a real positive co-determination consciousness among the

majority of employees".³⁸

In studies of the operation of co-determination, the results are strikingly similar to those for BSC reviewed in the last chapter (Brannen *et al*, 1976:218 confirm this). The main study of the system is that undertaken by the Co-determination Commission (Biedenkopf Report, 1970), but the methodology of that study has been severely mauled (see e.g. Daheim, 1973:24). The mauling is deserved, since it seems only chairmen of company councils, works councils and boards were asked to complete questionnaires, though the apparent similarity of their perceptions, which like the conclusions of the Commission are markedly managerial in nature, do remain of interest. Broadly the Commission approved the working of participation, but as Hartmann observes:

On balance the Commission was apparently more impressed with the pacifying effects which co-determination had on organized labour than by the sense of participation which it imparted to individual employees. (1975:56).

As Bye puts it, they take the view that "co-determination was not a question of controlling capital or power, but only a question of the internal running of the plant" (1974:28). In other words, efficiency was the ultimate goal, a view that was well represented in the review in Chapter 3 above. And Biedenkopf was well pleased that there seemed to be no detrimental effect on efficiency at all, with no evidence of stalemate in board decisions despite parity. The board members, and indeed the unions seemed to accept profitability as the central criterion of success.³⁹ In Biedenkopf's terms, the workers showed "understanding" of the requirements of the capital market.⁴⁰ Redundancies and closures had remained unhindered.⁴¹

There appears to be a predictable reaction to the role conflict faced by the supervisory board representatives of workers, whereby an informal division of roles takes place.⁴² Thus shareholders will be left to elect the chairman, and worker representatives the vice-chairman, so that in one study, for instance, two-thirds of chairmen were found to be shareholder representatives, and only 5% employee representatives.⁴³ The chairman can powerfully influence decision-making by controlling information availability and by handling the agenda. Further, supervisory board committees are important sources of influence, given the cumbersome

nature of a full board and its limited time. Here it is found that shareholders reserve most positions on committees dealing with financial and investment matters for themselves, and worker representatives end up on those dealing with social and personnel issues. Hence the conclusion that the effect of supervisory board representation, even with parity, has been primarily if at all on social issues, within profitability constraints, i.e. on the 'consequences' side of decisions.⁴⁴ Should the supervisory board members from the workers side be thought unmanageable, however, in addition to the device of limiting the number of supervisory board meetings to cut interference with management (one IG Metall member of a supervisory board in Hamburg is reported to have said that the board had not met since 1971),⁴⁵ it appears that the management board members will often turn to making agreements in advance with the typically more compliant works council, thus cutting the ground from beneath the worker directors' feet.⁴⁶

Thus although Davies (1976:65) does suggest that parity co-determination generates a limited form of negotiation, where a degree of cohesion and common action is maintained by workers' representatives, the idea of any significant inroads in this direction can be dismissed on the evidence reviewed above. One institution remains thus far unmentioned, the labour director on the Management Board for whose appointment the worker members of the supervisory board are meant to take the initiative. Nor is much mention needed. Very few of these individuals have actually been workers by origin,⁴⁷ and if they were their subsequent role conflict is resolved by their becoming managers with a liberalistic concern for personnel issues. Thus a managerial perspective is adopted,⁴⁸ and the labour director may well even be found on the other side of the bargaining table opposing union demands for wage increases (Schregle, 1978:91-92). Even the Biedenkopf Commission concluded that he was an ineffective representative of employee interests.⁴⁹ Fürstenburg adds, basing his arguments on Neuloh's research, that in the private sector where the appointment of personnel directors has spread, the provision of personnel facilities seems as advanced as in the Montan industries where the labour director is appointed, thus undermining the argument that the labour director has at least brought noteworthy gains in this field (Fürstenburg, 1969:40).

Conclusions

It may be concluded that the German system of works councils and 'co-determination' can be seen as anything but a means for, or expression of, social transformation. Inequalities remain sharp in West German society (Krejci, 1976), and there are signs that industrial conflict may be becoming more manifest rather than withering away. Even the buffer to confrontation long provided by the legions of re-exportable Gastarbeiter has been eroded severely. The absence of conflict can as readily be seen as a sign of the suppression of industrial democracy (Dahrendorf, 1967) as of its achievement. Batstone (1976) suggests that the low level of strikes may be seen as dependent on other features of German society which also enable co-determination to survive, rather than co-determination itself being the cause of industrial peace.

Batstone's argument is rendered all the more plausible by the evidence summarised above. There is no sign that the practice of participation in West Germany has changed industrial authority structures significantly or satisfied German workers. It has also been argued by a spokesman of the German employers that it has had no particular significance for productivity either (Thüsing, 1974). The DGB has moved in recent years to a realisation that high unemployment rates are unlikely to be alleviated in the face of new technological advances, and so to growing questioning of the consensus on acceptance of innovation, and so closures and redundancies.⁵⁰ Participation mechanisms will be ill-equipped to cope with such conflict, it is suggested. Meanwhile, as Herding (1972) has shown, the degree of control which these at shop floor level can exert is severely attenuated already in West Germany even by comparison with other capitalist countries.

The general conclusion advanced here is that the co-determination system in the Federal Republic of Germany is pseudo-democratic in nature, and that it may have aided the consolidation of management authority. This reinforcement of management is probably operative at a fairly diffuse ideological level, and more attributable to other social processes, however. This accords to some extent with Batstone's conclusion (1976:34) that worker directors have neither helped nor hindered anything a great deal: that they are essentially a trivial institution in their impact.

For works councils the judgement is more difficult. These, too, seem largely powerless, pseudo-democratic bodies, and it may be concluded that their maintenance has stunted the growth of more oppositional representative channels. At the same time, there were hints that in some instances at least, the councils did take on a moderately effective bargaining role.

It should be observed, finally, that it is difficult to 'prove' the contentions made here in summary and from impoverished evidence. The possibility of opposed interpretation from the same 'facts' is easily illustrated from the literature,⁵¹ and follows from divergent assumptions about the nature of the society and of power relationships within it, and so of the objective interests of workers and whether they are being achieved. To some extent, regardless of the evidence on participation itself, the argument can only be finally resolved by investigating the validity of the assumptions. Nonetheless, this section has shown that the West German case, far from contradicting the analysis developed to explain the British experience, can far more plausibly be argued to support it in crucial respects. I believe myself that this critical view further makes far better sense of the evidence than a more favourable account. Whether this is the bias of vested interest in a particular analysis peeking through the interpretation I must leave to the reader.

SWEDEN

In certain crucial respects the Swedish labour relations environment for participation schemes seems quite different to that prevailing in Germany. There is far less attachment to legislation, the tradition being for a more supportive approach to bargaining. The unions are extremely well-organized in density terms, the LO including some 95% of blue-collar workers in its member unions and the TCO about 70% of the non-manual employees. (Clegg, 1976:12). Sweden is, moreover, much-heralded as the most genuinely social-democratic state in the capitalist world, with its extensive welfare state provisions and the persistence in power (until 1977) of a supposedly left-wing Social-Democrat government.

As in so many European countries, a system of works councils was set up just after the end of the War in 1946, but in line with the voluntaristic

tradition it was the outcome of negotiations between the employers' association (SAF) and the unions. The works councils have been restructured since, in 1966, but their overall nature remains little changed, as indicated in the new agreement: that the works council should:

... fulfil the function of working for greater productivity and greater occupational satisfaction. In so doing it is the duty of the council to maintain continuous collaboration between employer and employees. (Quoted by Asplund, 1972:16).

The unitary nature of these councils may seem odd, arising as it does from a well-organized labour movement, but it is only one feature of the unusual position into which the Swedish movement had got itself. In 1938, in the aftermath of the depression years, the unions had agreed to Saltsjöbaden discussions with the SAF at which they signed the Basic Agreement which was to remain just that, the basis of negotiations down to 1976. In particular they accepted Article 32:

Reserving the observance of other rules in the agreement, the employer is entitled to direct and distribute the work, to hire and dismiss workers at will, and to employ workers whether they are organized or not.⁵²

For the head of the LO in 1974 this was "like a red-hot wire apparently impossible to remove" (Geijer, 1974:274). It is clear, moreover, that Geijer is a 'moderate' trade unionist, who notes that the unions work to reform not destroy the system, and had aided and approved rationalisation (1974:269).

Despite the opposition of the unions to the prerogatives they had allowed the employer in recent years, until the mid-1960s there was little questioning of the system on their part (Nycander & Nyheter, 1974:23), and no sign of the state of mind indicated by the words of union official to Jenkins (1974:263), "we are going to be saying 'No' to any more of this 'co-operation waltz'".

It is this which raises the parallels with the German situation. Tracing the roots of compliance is beyond the scope of this discussion, but amidst apparently militant strategies in social inequality that go well beyond anything in the Federal Republic there is an acquiescence in employer authority which went for long stretches almost unchallenged. The pressure

for a change in direction which led to the pressure for the labour reforms of the 1970s, culminating in the 1976 Co-determination At Work Act, came from below. It began, again as in Germany, with a wave of unofficial strikes in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and was maintained up to 1975 and indeed beyond.⁵³ The unions' reaction was to seek more effective bargaining rights to deal with the grievances with which existing plant level machinery and works councils had proved incapable of coping. Again like Germany negotiations had previously been focused at the national level. The employers' reaction has also been interpreted as being to offer 'industrial democracy' but it takes a different form as we shall see.

One consequence of centralised negotiations and the long acceptance of employer power is that despite the manifest strength of the unions their plant-level organization is poor. In effect the shop steward is the senior union representative in a plant, employed by the company and representing up to 750 members (Bye & Doyle, 1977b:2). The member thus has little support, even though it is argued that informally union representatives do more local bargaining than a strict interpretation of agreements would make possible, and for the individual the union is thus a distant feature of working life.⁵⁴

At a national level, this pattern melts into the more general scenario that has led to arguments that union leaders are incorporated (Karlsson, 1973), and that they are part of a more general trend to a corporate capitalism, though some writers seem to doubt this kind of vision, or to approve of it.⁵⁵ At the same time, it is at least clear that any notion of Sweden as having dispelled capitalist relations by a strategy of welfare capitalism is untenable,⁵⁶ and that the outcome of participation cannot be expected on this score to be different to the other countries examined here.

There is a further constraint on the local union member, and this is the Collective Agreement obligation to keep industrial peace, (Gustaffson, 1974:640), which obligation extends to each individual employee. (Nycander & Nyheter, 1974:22). Thus strikes are illegal while an agreement is in force, and are effectively presumed illegal unless proved otherwise, with workers being fined for breaking this rule (*ibid*). The limit on the fine was around £20 until the 1976 Act, but while the latter increased considerably the negotiating rights of the unions at the plant level, displacing Article 32, it also maintained illegality for strikes on a

matter once subject to agreement and removed the limit on the fine that had been in force from 1928.⁵⁷

Works Councils

Against this background, let us examine the record of the works councils after 1946. We have already seen the unitary basis on which they were established. As Karlsson puts it:

... it is based upon 'human relations' philosophy, which holds that conflict arising between management and employees is usually the result of a misunderstanding, and that problem can be ironed out if only the parties concerned will call a meeting of the council and discuss the problem thoroughly. (1973:181).

A large volume of literature is available from the SAF in Sweden on the operation of job reform and of various forms of councils, but there is once again an apparent dearth of research from outside the parties involved. However, a set of findings, most relating to the period before 1966, have been gathered together by Peterson (1968).

Peterson found that the councils had irregular meetings, and that management supplied these meetings only with that information which the law (of agreement plus publicly held stock) required them to, and then often with timing that made the information of less use than it might have been. This particular finding is reproduced in an LO survey two years after the 1966 reorganization of the councils, and the figures if anything are worse than those for the early 1960s, with advance information provided in only 38% of firms, and no information at all in 19% (Asplund, 1972:31). The unions have also criticised the unmanageable form in which information is presented by the employer when it is forthcoming (Peterson, 1968:193-194).

There is, in Peterson's view, no questioning the fact that:

The works council has had little or no influence in the area of managerial prerogatives. (p 194).

The same conclusion arises from the LO survey reported by Asplund, and is reinforced by more pessimistic feelings still on this front as expressed in an LO survey published in 1970 (Asplund, 1972:31). Confirming this

trend, a joint article by authors from the SAF and LO in 1972 acknowledged the failure of the councils to improve as had been hoped with the gain in employee representatives' knowledge and competence; employers had simply not been interested in letting them participate where they could be effective (Grafström & Moreau, 1972:179). For Jenkins, "It has gradually become clear that the workers' councils have failed, having been primarily used for the announcement of management decisions after the fact" (1974:262). The President of the TCO argued in 1979 that they were powerless and "do not fulfil the demands of today" (quoted Asplund, 1972:35-36).⁵⁸

The pseudo-democratic format is thus repeated in the Swedish case. It would appear from the above that the outcome is generally triviality, though there have been fears expressed that the shift from participation in decisions to coping with management production problems⁵⁹ leads to a "better understanding by the workers of the company operation" which may please personnel managers but is seen differently by the unions:

... the works councils served an important role as sounding boards. In this way an employer could gain an insight into the reactions of the workers to some policy or directive prior to application. At other times the council could give its support to management, thereby lessening the resistance of the workers. (Peterson, 1968:193).

However, the disappointment in the functioning of the councils in employers' eyes (Peterson, 1968:194-195) suggests that even this outcome was fairly limited. Of more interest is the apparent clash of conceptions of the role of the works councils, which follows once more a familiar pattern, and which explains, in Peterson's view, why the criticisms of the councils have been quite different from the two sides (1968:193). The conflict here is reflected also in the findings of the SAF study (1965),⁶⁰ though there seems little awareness on their part of the implications of their results.

The only role played by the works councils for employees is a marginal one on social and to some extent personnel issues. This, then, reinforces the analysis which has been pursued over the last few chapters. Finally, a case study which deals with a post-1966 scheme deserves mention. This is the consultation system set up in the partly State-owned mining company, LKAB, which purported to be a considerable extension of standard arrangements. The LKAB scheme arose from a wildcat strike in 1969-70 which formed a

significant part of the unrest of that period.⁶¹

The establishment of the LKAB scheme and its results are charted by Hammarström (1975), who makes it clear that the idea was very much management's:

After resisting strongly, ... management agreed to the demand for a new salaried system but made it a prerequisite that the employees commit themselves in different ways to a consultative system in order to maintain production (p.71).

Thus while the stress was also on the resulting information and participation rights of the employees, the goal which defined the system was plain from the start. Nonetheless the scheme was initiated in an "optimistic and hopeful spirit" (p.74), but within 18 months this had been displaced by impatience and finally a recognition of failure. In the view of the workers:

The work group meetings only strengthen the traditional organization and hamper the workers' chances of conducting matters in the union way (by negotiation). (Quoted by Hammarström, 1975:75).

Consultation had to precede negotiation in the new system. Under such circumstances, our expectation would be that instability would result, and from Hammarström's account it appears that just this occurred:

There are examples of workplaces where the former strike leaders or other prominent spokesmen among the workers succeeded in advancing and asserting their fellow workers' interests with the support of the formal arrangement. (p.75).

In the production committees conflict arose immediately over the fact that management wanted to train workers to see and discuss production plans in managerial terms, while the workers wanted to discuss the conditions of work (p.76). In these and other ways the scheme reflected the relations that it was set up by management to transform. In February 1972 the independent 'ombudsman' appointed from outside to supervise the working of the system resigned, condemning "a large gap between all the fine things that have been said and reality" (quoted by Hammarström, 1975:78).

Worker Directors

The worker director arrangements in Sweden are still fairly new, and in consequence hard information on their operation is difficult to come by. The unions came out in favour of boardroom representation in the early 1970s, though not in an over-enthusiastic manner (Geijer, 1974:271). For them the system seems to be an addendum to the reforms on collective bargaining rights, chiefly serving as a presence on the formally supreme decision-making body of the firm, and perhaps as a source of information. There is far less talk of co-determination by this means and so of parity as a requirement, and thus there is also less commitment to the acceptance of 'responsibilities' for the board's decisions. Hence only two elected representatives to the board were required by the legislation of 1973 (most boards have 6-8 members), and in 1976 this basis was confirmed and extended to all firms with over 25 employees. Two reserve worker representatives may attend but not vote on the board since 1976. The election is not to an 'upper house', as in Germany, but to a unitary board.

Thus little significance is attached to the existence of worker directors. Spokesmen for the Nordic Metalworkers Federation thus agreed that it operated only as an information channel, agreeing that while it was a useful "listening post", "of course, the board can always meet on the telephone without the workers" (quoted in D.Harris, 1975). Since boards meet only for about 5-15 hours in a year (National Swedish Industrial Board, 1976:25), the firm will largely be run by management committees in a de facto system in any case (Batstone, 1976:21). Thus although the SAF opposed the worker director law (in terms reminiscent of the CBI or BDA), this reflects more of a standard position, particularly against legislation, than a mark of real and justified fear.

This is confirmed by the Ministry of Industry's initial survey of the working of the scheme in 1974.⁶² The methodology of the survey leaves much to be desired, in that it relies for its information on the expressed views of board chairmen and the worker directors themselves, without even an observational check; the experience of BSC should lead to extreme caution in interpreting the results, then, which we would expect to be biased in favour of the scheme. But the results are still worth summarising.

Unions had exercised their right of board representation in 82% of eligible enterprises. Some 40% of employee representatives report that they have not contacted the reference group with whom they are supposed to liaise, and very few report back to the joint council (NSIB:30); they complain of lack of employee interest in the scheme. At the same time, having in many cases feared becoming management 'hostages', 97% of worker directors claimed to have been able to influence matters affecting employees, (p.34), while 40% claimed to have pushed an issue hard (p.31). All in all, around 60% claimed to be active one way or another (Askling:2).

On the other hand, over half the LO members feel key decisions are taken outside the boardroom (Askling:3), and there is a significant number (not specified) who feel that employee representatives are unable to seriously influence pre-packaged decisions (NISB:35). Problems have included too few board meetings, advance access to key information being "deplorably poor" (Askling:2), and the imposition of secrecy rules (10% ruling everything secret, and 20% of firms only introducing their rules with the advent of the worker directors - Askling:3).⁶³

On the employers' side, most respondents were at least not opposed to the scheme (NSIB:32-33). 71% claimed employees influence had risen to at least some extent (Askling:4), while only 10% referred to negative results, through lack of employee director competence (NSIB:33). Three-quarters feel that board work is unchanged, 16% that it has improved (Askling:4), but on most issues the worker directors are seen as having made little contribution; work environment and then personnel issues are the most intervened-in, while economic decisions are reported to be pretty well untouched (NSIB:33-34).

On this evidence, then, the experiment is a fairly trivial one. Were it not so, the noises of management directors would have certainly been very different, and it is interesting that their assessment of worker director activity seems to rate considerably lower on the above data than that of the worker directors themselves. For the NSIB, too, "one may question whether the reform in itself has done very much to increase the influence wielded by employees" (p.38), though one is inclined to doubt their belief that things will improve, and to wonder what is implied by the argument that it will improve "their opportunities of insight" (ibid).

Work Re-Organization

Although this thesis has not concerned itself with 'lower level' participation schemes, the Swedish programme for the creation of supposedly greater decision-making and autonomy for the work group has attracted so much attention and is so much tied up with the other elements of participation that a few words are in order. For the most part, accounts of this programme have been laudatory and uncritical, particularly those in the British media.⁶⁴ They are reinforced by a fusillade of publicity from the Swedish Employers' Federation in English. Yet to treat them in the usual abstracted sense is to ignore their real social significance.

The work re-organisation experiments were a further consequence of the period of unrest from the late 1960s, and are to be found in many of the firms where management perceive the threat to them from labour to be greatest. They are the management alternative to the union demands for negotiating rights and supporting legislation.

Essentially, the difference between the two approaches has to do with the distribution of power and responsibility in the enterprise between management and unions ... union participation has been kept within the confines of joint consultation in the sense that management retains the initiative and ultimate authority to decide what can and cannot be done. In short, this approach leaves intact the managerial prerogatives ... (A.Martin, 1976:1-2).

Work re-organization thus takes on an entirely different cast. It is a managerial strategy to appear to offer change without actually infringing on its authority. The analysis of Nycander & Nyheter (1974) brings out starkly the consequences of this in a conference dominated by a volley of those short, acclamatory accounts which we have come to know so well. Job reform, it emerges, has been tried not where the challenge from labour is least and the jobs most in need of help, as e.g. among women textile workers, but where the unions are already a threat (Nycander & Nyheter:24). Meanwhile, piecework rules in over 50% of jobs, despite widespread worker opposition, and employers would prefer to extend it to white collar work as well (ibid 24-25).

Holes have begun to appear in the job re-organization myth. Thus the Kalmar experiment in Volvo was admitted to be only a partial success⁶⁵ and there have been more strident criticisms from outside.⁶⁶ Other ways of looking

at the Kalmar plant, with its hexagonal shape in which production takes place around the periphery with computer control from the centre, suggest that it comes after a time to be experienced as a means of increasing control over work activity and the rate of work.⁶⁷ Finally, the degree of interest in the experiments has dropped away in recent years, and the result has been the disbandment of the LO-SAF body that oversaw them (Brannen & Caswill, 1978:249). The SAF are reported as wishing to focus more on engineer design of systems (ibid:250).

If this smacks of Taylorism, then this is hardly a new association. For amidst all the talk of the new methods, Palm's account (1977) shows clearly that petty and very tight rules abound in Swedish industry. Wedderburn, in her introduction,⁶⁸ admits that these controls seem tighter than those generally prevailing in the USA or Britain; and Karlsson speaks more evocatively of the military system of organization and "the triumph of Taylorism" (1973:187). That opposition with the theme of managerial-initiated job enrichment proves, as Braverman argued, not to be an opposition after all.

FRANCE

It has become almost a cliché to set the tone for a discussion of participation in France with the famous May 1968 poster conjugating the verb: 'je participe, tu participes ... ils profitent'. Its appropriateness made it irresistible, however. It also takes on a particular significance in that it reminds us of the response of de Gaulle and of management to the severe unrest that confronted them, a response echoing that in the other countries examined.

The legislation which established the 'Comités d'Entreprises' in France in 1945 was once more a wartime consequence; it took the form of an Ordonnance "to contain the workers' spontaneous establishment of production committees to run factories which had been abandoned by their owners at the time of the Liberation" (CIR, 1974:45-46). Poor relations with employers were hardly a novelty in France, but in contrast to some countries such as Norway, French employers had had a record in many cases of collaborating with the occupying troops and using the situation to secure deportation of troublemakers (Kendall, 1975:49).

The unions were, however, bitterly divided ideologically, and were unable to gain full recognition facilities (it was only in 1969 that the right to organise branches at plant level was achieved). The comités were thus established on an emphatically unitary basis. They had to be, in the words of the Ordonnance:

... above all, the sign of the fruitful union of all the elements of production, to return to France its prosperity and greatness." (Quoted CIR, 1974:46).

The committee was "not designed to press demands", but was to operate solely on matters of co-operation, never of negotiation or conflict (de Bellecombe, 1970:85). The authority of the managing director was to be kept sacrosanct, since supposedly he was running affairs for the nation.⁶⁹ From management's point of view, the major ideas informing the new system were those of human relations, here as in Britain being imported at a time when it filled an ideological need. As de Bellecombe sees it:

A large proportion of employers have accepted the idea of 'human relations' simply because it would help to improve, for the greater good of everyone, the means of exercising authority but would leave the basic conception intact. (1970:62).

The 1966 amendments to the constitution of the comités have done nothing of significance to alter their nature. And the unitary emphasis continues with the Gaullist and post-Gaullist proposals for profit-sharing (compulsory since 1969) and 'co-supervision',⁷⁰ as a result of the vague promises of 'participation' made during the 1968 upsurge of radicalism. It is this which forms the source of the revival of interest in the whole subject, in tandem with the subsequent spread of plant-level militancy⁷¹ and, with the newly won organization rights, of union organization in the factory.⁷² Union membership remains low⁷³ as well as fragmented into various groupings, which helps to explain the maintenance of relatively unchallenged and so uncompromising management policy of maintaining formal authority despite the relative militancy of consciousness.⁷⁴ Increasing membership under the new law, and the development of a measure of co-operation particularly between CGT and CFDT (Bye & Doyle, 1977c: 13-14) have therefore also marked a break with the past.

We have rediscovered the unitary framework, and the origins of interest in periods of pressure on management authority.⁷⁵ In recent times we have seen, too, an attempt by management to propagandise their concern with work interest.⁷⁶ This has not prevented their opposition to any proposals they consider would infringe their prerogatives, however, as the reaction to the Sudreau report reveals, with over 70% of CNPF members coming out against any change towards board representation for workers (rising to 84% in the largest companies).⁷⁷

Yet the excuse for such opposition can hardly be that the comités are sufficient in any sense. Almost all accounts of the committees portray pervasive elements of failure, even if the cause is sometimes attributed to the uncompromising attitude of French workers and their unions (erroneously, judging by the evidence from other countries).⁷⁸ Committees were set up in under half of the firms that were required to have them,⁷⁹ and moreover declined in numbers by half in the period 1954-64.⁸⁰ On those committees which do exist union representation considerably understates the proportion of votes cast for union candidates.⁸¹

The committees have certainly not been able to encroach on management prerogatives. Even the anti-Communist CGT-FO has criticised employers for affording the committee only the minimum role to which it is entitled by law.⁸² The workers are presented with faits accomplis (Legendre, 1971), and management are stubbornly reluctant to provide any meaningful response even in terms of provision of information (CIR, 1974:53). If management feel in any way hampered by the committee, they will take decisions elsewhere (de Bellecombe, 1970:89). Should they choose after all to consult:

... it would not be with the aim of listening to their opinions: "The final objective is to obtain support for the necessary decisions". (Jenkins, 1974:148, the quotation being from Francois Ceyrac, then Vice-President and since President of the CNPF).

Union suspicion of the pseudo-democratic intent of participation is, then, well-founded.

Reporting another study, the CIR conclude that, "Even in its strictly consultative role the enterprise committee does not appear to be very

successful" (1974:53), with only a small proportion of the activity involving any expression of opinion by worker representatives (let alone actually affecting decisions, which was not even considered). Moreover, management was least willing to give even information on the matters that most concerned the employee representatives, notably reductions in staff. The main tasks of the committees thus devolve onto welfare matters,⁸³ operating within the funding limits set by management (CIR, 1974:52). The post-1968 encouragement of 'participation in management by objectives' seems to have brought no changes (Bye & Doyle, 1977c:23).

By and large the role of the committees seems so proscribed that the unions give little serious attention to them, even where their organization is comparatively good. However, there are some indications that where the unions are better organized there may be an element of bargaining in the committee (Clegg, 1976:88,93), with pressure being put on management according to the General Secretary of the CFDT (Descamps, 1974:124). The squeezing of information is reported to rely on union strength in the firm (CIR, 1974:52). At the same time, given the inflexible attitudes of management (Jenkins, 1974:138-40), resistance to such strategy is to be expected in some cases at least, to which the expected outcome would be instability. De Bellecombe's observation is thus of particular interest:

In the opinion of some observers the existence of a committee may even have aggravated tensions in undertakings in which feelings already ran high. (1970:88; see also p.91).

Two further studies are worth mention, both of them confirming the overall pattern of pseudo-democratic triviality. Crozier's study of white-collar workers (1965) showed that they too shunned the kind of participation the works committees offered them - "Participation is in fact dangerous, because it gets one involved" (1965:137). On the other hand, those who did take part in these bodies were often the more critical and unionised who aimed to use the committee to air grievances (p.152).

Gallie confirms the triviality of the exercise, reinforced by management's devaluing of even consultation, and this is a supposedly 'progressive' petrochemicals company (1978:154-55, 161-62). Again welfare remained the dominant issue dealt with (p.154), with the unions blocked from effective operation through the committees (pp. 156-157). Gallie predicts that

this should lead to a feeling among French workers, despite the firm's paternalism, that the management's authority was illegitimate and the firm exploitative, and this he is able to confirm (p.211).

A glance at the recent discussion of further reforms in France confirms the predominant pattern of futility outlined above. It has been possible for French firms to appoint two employees to the board of a company that has adopted a two-tier structure since 1956. They are appointed by the works council, in a purely consultative capacity, but very few firms have taken this opportunity (CIR, 1974:44). Where they have, some information may accrue to the representatives, but by and large the unions agree that if confidentiality is of any importance to management an issue will simply be kept from the boardroom. (CIR:45). The two-tier format has not only been unpopular, but after early adoption up to 1969, the numbers fell away again, and for reasons of some interest:

"... friction and conflict have occurred in a significant proportion of dualist companies as a result of the supervisory councils having difficulty in confining themselves to control, and trespassing on management territory." (Commission for the European Communities, 1975:73).

In 1973 the French government committed itself to considerable fresh legislation on worker directors, and this resulted in the Sudreau committee whose report has already been mentioned. The notion of co-supervision in the report continues the theme of partnership of management and labour (Bye & Doyle, 1977c:24). It entails workers sitting on boards, but emphatically in a minority to avoid decisions being delayed (i.e. effectively to prevent any real hold on decisions being exercised). The report recommends similarly for works committees that despite their weakness they should not be given veto powers as this, too, may be "incompatible with the speed and unity necessary for the exercise of decision-making" (quoted EIRR, 15th March, 1975:4). Nonetheless, as we saw earlier, management have remained steadfastly opposed to the recommendations; Ceyrac argued for the CNPF that there would be a move towards deadlock with any workers on the board. (Times, 12.2.1976). If anything, then, the obstinacy of French employers in the face of (ineffectual) reform proposals is more massive even than that in Germany, Sweden or Britain, just as France is that little bit more static and class-ridden in appearance (Marceau, 1977). But the attitudes, processes

and outcomes are not of a different order. Essentially, capitalism reproduces participation and its failings in France to much the same recipe as elsewhere.

NORWAY

There is a tendency for commentators to talk of 'Scandinavian' industrial relations as if Sweden, Norway and Denmark (and perhaps even Finland) amounted effectively to one system. In practice, while relatively strong labour movements and employer organizations, together with a strong tradition of social democracy, are common features, there are important differences in the pattern also. The lower level of co-operation in Denmark is perhaps the most notable, though the much earlier interest in both board-level and job-level experimentation with participation also marks Norway off from Sweden. In other ways, though, Norway (as Denmark) does display marked similarities to the wider-publicised neighbour, with the pressure to try out participation being one of them.

The co-operative relationship between unions and employers, particularly at the national level, is still more marked in Norway than in Sweden, apparently partly through common efforts in resistance to the German invasion in the Second World War. This is made apparent in the speeches of Labour leaders.⁸⁴ So the conditions for success (in the all-pervasive sense of the term used by the proponents of participation as an integrative solution to labour relations problems) should be ideal, with high consensus (Qvale, 1976:455).

There are certainly plentiful arrangements for co-operation: works councils, joint production committees, co-operation committees.⁸⁵ The last of these is headed by a national Co-operation Council with representatives of the LO and NAF. The works councils are established in the negotiated agreement of unions and employers which has been renewed since 1945, as in Sweden. The stated purpose remains unitary:

For the individual it is of the greatest importance that the feeling of unity between him and the undertaking is strong and alive, and this is also a prerequisite for effective production. In order to obtain such a feeling of unity it is important to have practical ways of discussing common problems. (Quoted from the agreement by Asplund, 1972:16).

To whom, one wonders, is the individual's attachment really so important? The usual assumptions surround the directive guiding the councils:

... through co-operation to work for the most efficient production possible and for the well-being of everybody working in the undertaking. (*ibid*).

Unfortunately accounts of the practice of works councils in Norway are pretty well non-existent. One union leader admits the poor reputation of production committees⁸⁶ (yet defends them, and from the literature the sources of the criticism, presumably from within the lower ranks of the union movement, are unexplicated amidst apologism). Emery & Thorsrud merely tell us that the experience with works councils is "not impressive" (1970:189) and imply the kind of failings we have encountered elsewhere when they call for an expansion of its negotiating role (1966:445; 1970:192). Brannen *et al* offer the same dismissal, and conclude that this failure led to the legislation for board representation in large enterprises with a heavy stake from the State in 1948. It is therefore to the experience of worker directors that we must turn for a detailed examination of evidence relevant to the thesis.

In the early 1960s there was evidence of a desire for increased influence over decision-making amongst employees, not manifested in disorder, but confirmed by an opinion survey reported by Holter (1965).⁸⁷ However, although employees do express an interest in participation, the unusual aspect is highlighted by Holter herself when she notes that:

Demands for joint decision-making did not in Norway stem from the rank-and-file at the work-place as did the pressure for better working conditions and higher wages. 'Industrial democracy' has been introduced by politicians and 'theoreticians', often by persons who themselves are 'outsiders' in relation to industry. (Holter, 1965:318-319).

In fact, the introduction of worker directors on a widespread basis was not to come until legislation in the 1970s, more in line with the pattern observed elsewhere, and the experiments with autonomous work-groups, and with employees on the board in five firms, were indeed sponsored chiefly by the Oslo Work Institute, headed by Einar Thorsrud.⁸⁸

The results of these experiments remain of interest as one of the few

case studies available. The first observation of interest actually precedes the empirical examination, with a review of the debate in Norway (see Emery & Thorsrud, 1969:6-16). From this emerges just the kind of conflicting perceptions of the purpose of participation, amidst all the rhetoric about co-operation, that was outlined in the British context in Chapter 3. Elsewhere, the authors add that "general agreement disappears the moment people attempt to make industrial democracy a meaningful concept in a particular social setting" (1966:442). I would have preferred to say that it is in the concrete instance that the real disagreement ceases to be disguised, but the meaning is plain.

In 1950 the first worker directors had been placed on the boards of companies like those subject to this experiment, i.e. State-owned or part-owned, but without elaboration we are told that industrialists and union leaders disagreed as to their effectiveness (Emery & Thorsrud, 1970:189). There is less room for disagreement on the findings of the researchers; the most difficult task is for them to find anything positive to say about the experiments.

There was little feedback between the board representatives and the workers.⁸⁹ This shortcoming was recognised as such even by the representatives themselves, and was a result partly of confidentiality problems and partly of the distancing of the worker director from his workmates through being made to feel responsible to "the company" (1969: 21-22).

This reflects the role conflict encountered by the worker director. In the boardroom context the representatives found themselves with little ability to resist the pressures placed on them by management. They could only adopt a limited range of strategies - to work along with the board and hope to raise the general level of prosperity by their efforts; to act as a source of information about workers' views on matters that directly concerned them; or to take up a negotiating stance and risk opprobrium and perhaps expulsion. (C.f. 1969:84). The first two could be combined, with the former being the ruling adjustment, and it is no surprise to observe their dominance in the responses of the worker directors:

And I must say I often felt that it was a difficult task to be on the board having to make decisions that made you go right against what you were there to represent - you had to look at things from the company's point of view. There could be situations when you had the body of workers on one side; but then you had to look after the interests of the company, and these could often lie in the opposite direction ... (quoted Emery & Thorsrud, 1969:72).

Management pressure to this end was relentless (see p.73), and there is evidence of the kind of shift to a company viewpoint on the matter seen in the BSC case. One representative refers to a time when boardroom representation was used as a union channel, and that the chairman had to stamp on this (p.74). But with patronage as an added resource, the board being seen as "a way up and out" for a worker (p.75), there is little doubt where the power to define resides. And if there is any threat, then employee representatives can be excluded from the discussion (p.75).

There is thus a failure in the end for worker directors to act as genuine representatives by pushing employee interests. Instead, the representative is incorporated into a boardroom perspective that places production above all else. Nine of the twelve representatives interviewed mentioned having to take this position explicitly (p.25). Thus:

The major task of the representative - or of any board member - is to create the right conditions for the best possible production. (Quoted p.18, emphasis in original).

Obviously, when you get a wider perspective you see what a company consists of, and you understand more (quoted p.19).

It is good for the workers to have a representative to exchange information with him so that as many as possible get to understand company problems from the board's point of view. (Quoted p.20, emphasis in original).

I have also told the employees that I represent the company, for example in orientation meetings ... but it is not a board member's job to be the receptacle for the workers' complaints. (Quoted p.22).

As a trade union man and a representative on the board, I have seen how very important it is to have a positive attitude towards the workers, to understand their point of view and to have good relations with them. This forms the basis for good productivity. (Quoted pp 22-23, emphasis in original).

The last quote offers the epitome of pseudo-democracy; the others confirm the ability of absorption of the boardroom, creating the myth of a 'broader' perspective that to the outsider is all too obviously just a different one - management's.

This success for management is not decisive in terms of results, however. As Brannen et al conclude, the pressure on the worker director from below suggests that the constituents are not so easily taken in, and that therefore management too gained little. (Brannen et al, 1976:213). The chief outcome remains triviality, in which worker director schemes fail to make a significant impact on industrial relations.

Nonetheless, when a committee was set up by the government to investigate proposals for industrial democracy in 1968, under the chairmanship of Judge Eckhoff (see Aspengren, 1974; Balfour, 1973a). It split three ways. The unionists wanted a board of directors elected by a company assembly with one-third of this assembly elected in turn by employees; the "neutral experts" and the chairman were prepared to countenance some moves towards workers on the board on a limited basis, but not the company assembly; the employers rejected the company assembly idea also, and wanted at most just a few experiments with worker directors. The Ministry of Labour came down on the side of the unions, and in 1973 amendments to the Joint Stock Companies Act came into force to this effect. The company assembly proposals were backed up with a requirement in companies with more than 200 employees for a least two employees to be elected thereby to the board itself.

The results, however, have hardly seemed to match union aspirations. Data are as yet limited, but while the unions make claims that they have gained access to financial and investment information, and have at least undermined the principle of owners' control, their claims are tempered greatly by the ineffectiveness experienced by workers' representatives on financial and legal matters, and the situation of an inability to do more than object to owners' decisions powerlessly. (Bye & Doyle, 1977b:12). The defensive response of the unions correlates with a relatively enthusiastic one from the employers. In one survey 78% of them said employee representatives were just as profit conscious as other board members, 79% said they had not affected the company's operations (i.e. decisions) but 55% said that they had contributed to board meetings (i.e.

as sources of information of the approved sort) according to a Financial Times report (18.11.1975). Some managers still admit to holding informal meetings as well to avoiding discussions of some matters in front of the worker representatives. Employers claim on the other hand that the company assembly serves no function between works council and board, while unions defend it though admitting it to be ineffective so far (Dullforce, 1977).

The unions have reacted to the contentment of management with worker directors with suspicion that has led, for instance, to a warning from the Iron and Metal Workers' Union to its members not to side with management against the labour movement (Dullforce, 1977). Worker directors themselves, in the usual manner, rate their experience good, despite feeling inadequate on financial issues. On evidence from other countries, these attitudes can hardly comfort the unions. Nonetheless, disinterest among employees appears uppermost, with very low voting rates in the elections even in companies where the workers have asked for board representation. Disclosure, feared by Norwegian employers at first, is no longer seen as a problem. (*ibid*).

Finally, a few words are in order on the work group experiments inaugurated by the Oslo researchers. Again most reports (including the few in English) give notification of positive results.⁹⁰ The researchers' aims reputedly included the promotion of long term political education and self-generating interest in greater participation (again reminiscent of Pateman's notions), though this was not the aim of the employers who agreed to the experiments.⁹¹ The main objective, though, appears to have been an alteration of local authority structures without changing 'organizational' objectives (Brannen *et al*, 1976:214; Qvale, 1970). An alternative representation of the results would speak of mutual benefits for workers and management, but these can only occur within the narrow confine of the controls exerted by the work group. Were the management to be able to persuade the work group to accept company objectives, then unions might be weakened (and this is undoubtedly their hope), but Qvale claims that this possibility is only a temporary outcome at most, and that after a short time workers return to standard agreements. He sees the more successful projects as those which lead to the opening up of new areas of negotiations (1976:466).

This experience thus seems hard to evaluate, particularly as it is based only on a few experiments with a small number of subjects, and since the researchers themselves appear to differ somewhat in the slant and enthusiasm of their accounts. A recent (1975) Working Environment Act seeks to use legislative means to spread more widely some of the areas of control (see Gustavson, 1977). The main possible benefit, though, seems likely to be in opening up new areas of negotiation. In the final analysis, then, Norway hardly seems to offer anything that breaks startlingly with experience elsewhere.

ISRAEL

When most people think of participation in connection with Israel, they probably think of the kibbutzim. These institutions are not, however, the concern of this review; they are mainly agricultural co-operatives, and though kibbutz factories do exist, the structure of relationships in them creates theoretical and analytical issues that it has been decided to exclude from this thesis (as with worker co-operatives in Britain or elsewhere, for instance). Instead the focus will be on more conventional industrial situations, and in particular on those enterprises owned by the Histadrut through its economic branch, Hevrat Haovdim.

Let us return to Paul Blumberg's critique of Hugh Clegg. On the Israeli case, Blumberg launches a still more forceful attack on Clegg's empirical analysis and his general principles of industrial democracy. Once again, Clegg proves to be his own worst enemy (see 1960:67-69). He admits the implication of the Histadrut in management, and then adds that it seems nonetheless to have maintained independence as a union, using strikes and demanding improvements in wages and conditions. He offers two possible explanations: that managers have emerged able to take on the running of Histadrut enterprises, freeing the union itself from managerial duties though also making the enterprises no different to work in than the private sector,⁹² secondly, immigrant Jews with a broad experience of union activity have been able to take the strain at the work place.

Blumberg wishes to show both that Clegg is wrong about there being any threat to union strength and independence, and that a union is capable of running industry effectively. The latter he establishes by reference

to the record of Histadrut against private enterprises (1968:152-153). This issue does not concern us here, and will not be examined further. The former claim is supported on several fronts. Firstly it is argued that a clear separation is kept between union and management sides; managers think like managers and unionists like unionists (though why the former of these should be 'good' is something of a mystery). Secondly, at plant level, the role of negotiation remains with the workers' committee, and is firmly oppositional, while an adequate grievance machinery exists to cope with disputes. Unions have more power in the plant than in the private sector, wages and conditions are better, while management, contrary to Clegg's view, tend to be weak. (1968:153-154). Thirdly, a claim by other commentators that unofficial strikes are a result of poor union representation stemming from the duality of its role as representative and entrepreneur is rejected, the problem being seen as a result of erosion of differentials by egalitarian wage policy, and the nationalist Zionist commitment of the Histadrut. (1968:154-155). (If this last point is accepted, however, it merely seems to give a different twist to the danger of union loss of independence. It adds nationalistic pressure to that of being an employer, to the Histadrut's need to raise productivity and intensify labour expropriation).

Finally, Blumberg informs us, the disappointment in the Histadrut concerns the lack of added participation, and has prompted a joint consultation experiment though with little success (1968:155-156). This strangely off-beat point will in fact prove more supportive to the arguments advanced here than to Blumberg's more general thesis.

It is not the aim here, of course, to vindicate Clegg's theory of sacrosanct pluralism, but rather to observe the grains of truth in those assertions he makes which stem from a belief in the essentially conflictual and oppositional nature of industrial relationships under capitalism. Against Blumberg it has been argued that participation is not something separable from negotiation without unseemly consequences, and that his vision of a new industrial order is impracticable. Once more it can be demonstrated that the analysis advanced in this thesis makes far more sense of the Israeli data than Blumberg's somewhat garbled argument against a straw opponent, who even makes a claim that Blumberg does not, namely that the productivity councils (it is not clear if he means the plant councils or the productivity committees) have generally worked well (Clegg, 1960:68).

The Israeli case is hardly typical in terms of setting. Not only is Israel a State where nationalism as a unifying entity is particularly potent,⁹³ but the relationship between this and calls for work productivity are lent cogency by the constant perceived threat of hostile activity by surrounding States. There is, moreover, the strong element of socialist ideology buttressed, as we have seen, by the major role of the Histadrut not only as a trade union organizing 90% of the labour force (Fine, 1973:235), but also as a major employer.⁹⁴ This might be taken to mean that relations in these union-run parts of the economy should be better than elsewhere, and the expressed view of Histadrut officials is that this should certainly be the case. Indeed, this forms a major source of impetus to the introduction of participation schemes which is obviously a factor marking the origins of experiments in Israel off from elsewhere. In the private sector, too, the initiative has tended to come from the Histadrut (and thereby effectively of the Israeli State which, particularly in the years of Labour Party rule, was closely allied with the Histadrut).

These abnormal factors might seem to offer a let-out for this writer. Yet the fascinating thing is how little practical difference they seem to make. A few comments will highlight the problems of the Israeli system which Blumberg appears to have ignored or misunderstood. The first concerns the nature of the Histadrut as union, supposedly separate from Histadrut as employer. The emphasis of the Secretary General in 1974 was on "the cohesion of purpose and unity of action" of the different sectors, not on their independence in any sense (Aaron, 1974:189), and most other accounts emphasise the closeness of connections, in contrast to Blumberg (see e.g. Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:159). Hanegbi et al conclude that, "There has never been the least trade-union independence in the Histadrut" (1971:14-15), while Fine describes the growth of an increasingly managerially-minded bureaucracy emphasising productivity and so forth as prime goals (1973: 239, 240, 263). The 'union' also acts as a top management appeals committee; and the dual role of the union in this and other respects is found to create a good deal of suspicion on the part of the workforce (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:95, 97).

As for the plant level organization, it is true that worker committees have been established in most plants, but if they have protected workers from the depredations of management, it seems to owe little thanks to the Histadrut; rather they have repeatedly resisted the attempt to undermine

their role that participation in practice comes to represent. Tabb & Goldfarb describe the absence of any clear definition of their authority or appropriate areas of activity (a recipe for probable instability), which results in widespread action beyond official rights (1970a:77ff). Derber (1963:52ff) describes the problems of poor communication to rank and file, and the inadequate institutions for shop floor grievance settlement. Poole (1975:128-131) suggests that the lack of an effective bargaining channel thanks to the dualism of the Histadrut actually makes conflict worse in the Histadrut sector than elsewhere. And Rosenstein (1970:73-73) describes the annoyance of the workers' committees at the lack of support from the union for their activities. This loss of confidence in the union is confirmed by the Histadrut's own survey in their 1966 Year Book, where unofficial strikes are widely thought desirable, and:

A very considerable number of workers hardly notice the Histadrut's trade-union activities, and they consider that their situation would not have been modified if there had been no trade union. (Quoted by Hanegbi et al: 1971:17).

Such crises of confidence, the evidence for which has been there since the 1940s, but which seem to have progressively intensified and been reinforced by the flow of immigrants less committed to a unifying ideology blunting strife and increasing acquiescence (Rosenstein, 1977:57), form part of the pressure which impels the Histadrut to push for participation schemes. Its unique nature makes these crises more telling, of course, but it seems plausible to view the reaction thus negatively (as reaction) than as primarily positive idealism.⁹⁵ This is supported by the continual emphasis on efficiency, productivity, and integration as a means to achieve this - all echoing managerial perspectives on the topic in other countries.⁹⁶ Pressures were increased by the spread of the wildcat strikes, which resulted in peaks of trouble in 1951, 1956-57, 1962 and 1969, each time providing a boost to the urgency of the discussion of participation in the Histadrut (for statistics see Hanegbi et al:18-19).

The impetus did not, then, come from either local management or employees, but from the Histadrut itself; but apart from this, the origins of participation continues to mirror the experience elsewhere. On this basis, a fresh urgency might be expected to follow the stagnation of the economy from 1974 (Times, 11.5.1978), the strengthening of the defence forces after

the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and the wave of severe strikes after 1975.⁹⁷ Unless, that is, repeated failure has dulled the enthusiasm for trying yet again - and repeated failure is the unanimous verdict of observers, most of whom are apparently inclined to sympathy for the project and so offer typically voluntaristic explanation for the difficulties.⁹⁸

Joint Productivity Committees⁹⁹

The JPC began to appear in Israel in 1945. By 1952 an agreement had been signed with the Manufacturers' Association of the private sector to introduce them in all plants (the only one of the three stages of experimentation with participation that was to be extended beyond the Histadrut sector itself), the year after a wave of unofficial disputes. The aim of the JPCs was always explicitly unitary and pseudo-democratic, being aimed at worker integration to meet an urgent need for increased productivity, and their role being purely advisory and strictly limited to non-negotiative areas. However, workers expressed fears that these councils would become a means of 'sweating' labour, whilst shop stewards were anxious lest they should weaken them by competing with them (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:166). This awareness of the dangers signalled the improbability of such a 'successful' operation taking place, and indeed the activity of the committees on the intended basis proved to be a notable failure. Interpreting the various pieces of information, it appears that most of the committees which survived underwent a change of status, shifting from offering 'psychological' benefits to setting piece-work incentives (Rosenstein, 1970:174). This part-bargaining function came to dominate most of their activity,¹⁰⁰ and the formal separation from workers committees broke down (Derber, 1963:51).

The impact on productivity of the JPCs seems debatable, Tabb & Goldfarb seeing it as positive (1970a:94-95) while Derber sees it as at best static (1963:55). However, the infringing of official authority of both JPCs and workers' committees led in many instances to instability also:

Thus the basic industrial relations problems not only remained, but became more acute. The new environmental influence highlighted the contradiction between the ideological concepts of the Histadruth and the reality of the newly developed situation. (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:96).

Workers did not come to identify with the problems of the enterprise as intended, while management proceeded to become an increasingly separate and 'professionalised' stratum (*ibid*), with predictable practical and ideological consequences for the division of labour. In only a few plants did management acquiesce in the expansion of JPC activity; elsewhere the bargaining role was itself a consequence of the emergence of conflict in the committees, with management attempting to restrict the committees to their minimum possible role (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:169). Thus the outcomes appear to be a mixture of triviality, instability and change of status according to local conditions and reactions.

Tabb & Goldfarb refer to a revamping of the JPCs in 1967, and hopefully anticipate improvements (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:170-171). But Rosenstein's 1977 review (with its own painful optimism for then recent changes) fails to indicate any marked change in the intervening period. Meanwhile the failure of the JPCs to achieve their assigned tasks, particularly in the Histadrut enterprises where relations were supposedly inherently more co-operative, was to lead to demands for a further series of experiments, heralded at the 1956 8th Congress of the Histadrut. Again the urgency coincided with a fresh wave of unofficial strikes.

Plant Councils

With the proposal for the new councils, once again the reluctance of local management was expressed in fears that workers were 'unready', or would resist necessary change, while Workers' Committees were again worried that their role and authority would be eroded and workers that change would be forced on them for little benefit.¹⁰¹ Again the aims were worker identification with the enterprise and resulting efficiency increases.¹⁰² The councils were to discuss all matters, including economic ones, that were not the province of negotiation and so of the workers' committee. They were to be joint management/employee bodies with decisions by two-thirds of each side being binding on both (an arrangement which effectively allows a management veto on decisions) and meetings were to take place at least 8 times per annum. The Charter was finally set out for application in 1958.

The results followed a pattern similar to that of the JPCs except that even less rationale seemed to be recognised locally for the new bodies. An absence of common objectives, on which the scheme was predicated, was

apparent everywhere, and in no case did the council succeed in any sense, or even survive very long. (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:108). Management adopted a tactic of passive resistance (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:175). While workers and committee members favoured the notion of participation¹⁰³ they proved most unreceptive to the practice, and particularly to its unitaristic elements. There were some signs of instability in councils once again:

In many works councils the discussion often deteriorated into mutual accusations and, paradoxically, contributed towards the worsening of labour-management relations within the undertakings. (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:175).

Management and workers pursued their own differing interests, and pulled the councils apart (Rosenstein, 1970:177); some representatives sought to investigate matters ruled beyond their authority, while communication to the rank and file remained poor (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:111). In frustration at the blockages on their activity, worker representatives often became aggressive towards management, who reacted in kind and resisted any real sharing of authority (Rosenstein, 1970:178-179).

Eventually, though, the ineffectual nature of the councils led to their decline and dissolution in a welter of triviality. While the Histadrut advertised that the councils' existence proved that workers wanted to participate (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:176), a 1960 survey showed that employees and stewards were overwhelmingly of the opinion that the councils had changed nothing (*ibid*:177). Their status declined as they failed to produce any results, and indeed as nothing of significance was brought to them for discussion; the frequency of meetings declined and by 1961 to all intents and purposes they had ceased to function.¹⁰⁴ Relations in Histadrut plants continued to be as bad as or worse than those elsewhere, and the pressure of disputes meant that the officials of the union would feel compelled to try yet again. In the event the argument was that the councils had not been bold enough, and that a real role in management for worker representatives was a pre-condition for success. The debate developed at the 1963 Haifa Conference, at the 1964 76th Histadrut Council, and at the 1966 Tenth Convention, with a call for moving on to the next planned phase of 'joint management'. The final product of this was the issuing of rules and regulations for the new experiments in 1968, the result of a compromise between the growing managerial elite and the

political leadership (Rosenstein, 1970:180).

Joint Management Committees

The new phase was in fact heralded by an experiment in the Phoenicia Glassworks starting in 1964. The plant was selected because it appeared to offer favourable conditions, having been economically successful, with a relatively homogeneous workforce and no serious political splits (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:208, 211). Yet opposition was almost immediate, with a large group of workers fearing 'sweating' as a result of having three workers elected to act as management (while engineers feared the erosion of their job controls by unskilled employees), and with one of the elected representatives actually standing on an anti-participation platform (Tabb & Goldfarb ibid:212). In their account Tabb & Goldfarb relate how the Phoenicia scheme for representation on a JMC failed ever to be provided with a constitution by the Histadrut. In the absence of this an attempt was made to demarcate an area of activity, but the 'teamwork' aim was never realised. Meetings were held weekly at first, then gradually fell away until they became rarities (ibid:217). Management opted to keep secrets on important issues, the representatives of the workforce became gradually more disillusioned, communication to the rest of the workers ground to a halt, and the system of planned departmental committees got nowhere (ibid:218). Meanwhile, a struggle developed between the Joint Management representatives and the workers' committee which actually precipitated crises and disruption, the stewards wanting to take over the role of the representatives on the JMC. (ibid:223). Exacerbated by the exigencies of economic recession, the result was "a kind of friction which had seldom been known at Phoenicia" (ibid:224).

This instability is overlaid by the ineffectual triviality of the JMC itself, with few meetings, and a passive role being played by the representatives when meetings did occur, creating a still more pervasive lack of confidence in the whole idea of participation (ibid:224-225). The representatives themselves became management minded since they aspired to be managers rather than representatives proper (ibid:242), while the workers' committee feared such an outcome, and the loss of some of their functions to such spokesmen (ibid:240). For Tabb & Goldfarb participation was never really tried to be given a chance to work (ibid:243), but in this reviewer's view this is itself part of the reality of participation

in action. It is striking to find these authors describing as the most successful available experience the Israeli Electric Corporation (ibid:246) when although this scheme had entailed having workers on the board from 1957 onwards, troubles were considerable here too. Thus there was severe criticism of the dual role of representatives from the workforce (ibid:259), and the crisis that resulted together with the unimpressive record brought extremely poor publicity to the scheme (Derber, 1963a:63). The problems were made worse by a split between Northern and Southern sections of the company, which was partly expressed in conflict over the boardroom scheme (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:261ff). The workers' committee's suggestions to enhance the democratic structure of the scheme were almost entirely ignored (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:190). Again a clear constitution was never completed, and the workers remained uninterested (Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970a:276-277). The claim that increased productivity after 1957 can be attributed to the scheme (1970a:268-275) therefore seems tenuous, and there is no concrete evidence to support this assertion in the text. If this is the best the authors can find, then the performance of participation is a tour de force in anti-climax.

In the late 1960s it was nonetheless decided to go ahead with further experiments in joint management, both at Central and Plant management levels in companies of the Histadrut sector. At central level there was quickly evidence of infrequent board meetings, inadequate information, and a lack of perceived competence on their own part experienced by the representatives. (Rosenstein, 1970:180-181). These appointees of the union also found themselves forced to take decisions against workers' interests (ibid:181). Central management, Rosenstein reports, even welcomed this scheme:

... because they expected it to make the authority relationship in the plants more effective, and because they hoped to strengthen their own legitimacy to manage enterprises belonging to the labour movement. As a matter of fact, the high-level participation brought representatives of the trade unions - the 'other side' with whom the central managements negotiate - closer to the center of managerial decision-making. The prospect of co-opting the representatives into management while at the same time limiting their influence undoubtedly caused many managers to welcome such a plan. (ibid:181).

Not surprisingly, claims are made for active discussion, but the rank and file remain unimpressed (ibid:181).

At plant level, the JMCs were to meet weekly. Again its functions were clearly separated from bargaining ones to try and maintain a unitary cast to proceedings (ibid:183). Rosenstein reports that only two studies exist of the operation of the scheme, sponsored by the Histadrut itself. Nonetheless it showed that one management had managed to co-opt the worker representatives, while the other went through only the motions of participation in the face of a bargaining stance by the representatives (ibid:185). In Rosenstein's later article, we are told of the slow introduction of schemes, with workers still indifferent and management resistant (1977:63). On the basis of the Phoenicia case and two personal studies, Rosenstein notes the danger of disruption arising out of conflict related to the scheme. One of the two studies thus showed more severe conflict than at Phoenicia, with the workers' committee objecting to the managerial partiality of representatives on the JMC and finally resigning over the issue (ibid:165). Like Tabb & Goldfarb, though, Rosenstein tries to explain the problems away without considering the unpalatable thought that participation might inherently generate such problems, thus finding fault with particular problems of getting through to rank and file and so forth.

Finally, the Israeli case can also be used to illustrate the need for a careful analysis of power, by reference to Poole's discussion of this case (see Chapter 6 for a discussion of Poole on power). His factual inaccuracies do not help (he argues (1975:131) that the rank and file gave "unreserved support" for participation, and that they were "ill-organized", a claim which ignores the evidence from several plants referred to above that workers' committees were often effective in their opposition and the indications that in this they were acting in a manner representative of the rank-and-file), but the theoretical ambiguities are more severe still. Thus he talks of failure arising from the imposition from above of schemes bearing "little relation to the underlying structure of power and of values" (p.131). This perspective now gives no clue as to why participation should have been imposed in such conditions, which was a major part of what the theory was attempting to explain. It thus ignores the pressures outlined earlier, which clearly have a great deal to do with power, particularly as used here. Indeed it is difficult to know what an

'underlying structure' is if it can be ignored via imposition 'from above'; it is not even clear whose power is now being discussed, given the confusion in the role of the Histadrut. Thus we are reduced to a voluntaristic explanation of failure in terms of the ability of management to suppress effective participation (whereas on the contrary, as Derber, 1963:57-58 shows, it was precisely the weakness of Histadrut management that enabled the Histadrut leadership to take the initiative and impose the schemes) against workers who wanted it; and this makes no sense of the evidence at all, any more than Blumberg or the battered Hugh Clegg did.

OTHER EXAMPLES

The countries selected for discussion were amongst those for which most material was available in the English language. They could readily have been supplemented, however. The Netherlands for instance, provides a showcase of almost all the trends we have identified. Thus a works council system set up after the Second World War was given only weak consultative rights, and failed to impress. The 1960s onwards saw a growing plant-level pressure on management (and on the unions who were organized on a national level),¹⁰⁵ to which they responded by attempting various participation 'experiments', for which the government latterly sought to provide co-ordination through the C.O.P. (Productivity Commission). The works councils were either becoming sources of conflict (if local activists attempted to use them for negotiation) or were supplanted by emergent local union organizations.¹⁰⁶ A 1971 Act extending their consultation and information rights has not materially altered their role, which continues to be expressed officially in unitary terms.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile the debate in this area shows all the contradictory conceptions of management and unions that we have come to expect, with unions distancing themselves from the human relations-oriented experiments which made little practical impression despite considerable publicity,¹⁰⁸ and remaining deeply suspicious (except the Christian CNV) of works councils and of the strikingly dilute system of boardroom representation. Triviality, instability, and occasional change of status are thus the dominant themes.¹⁰⁹

The Belgian case provides a variant on these same themes. Works councils set up in 1948 were of the traditional unitary type, with information and consultative rights in all but a few minor areas.¹¹⁰ Management resist any further extension stoutly.¹¹¹ Trade union delegations in the plant

(the unions are well-organized with about 60% density among the whole workforce) assume the main role, and the councils stick to 'problem-smoothing' and "huddles in little controversial personnel problems".¹¹² Ten per cent of the councils were found to be significantly active in 1966-67, and despite an extension of information powers in 1973 by Royal Decree (the main attraction to the unions) there is little sign of any substantial improvement.¹¹³ The change was probably a consequence of the increasing pressures via strikes and a workers' control movement from 1970 particularly.¹¹⁴ There is also some evidence of a few cases where unions have been able to press negotiating demands through in the framework of the works councils (Janne & Spitaels, 1975:184). The overwhelming pattern is triviality, however.

In Denmark works councils are actually called 'co-operation committees' and have been established since 1947, with revamping in response to criticism in 1964, 1970, and with the establishment of a national Co-operation Board in 1971. The role they are assigned is the usual consultative one,¹¹⁵ with the definition of 'co-determination' under the 1970 Co-operation Agreement being "an obligation to strive for agreement" (CIR, 1974:118). The conflicting perspectives of management (who feel that amidst 'participation' they should not lose their controls) and employees (who wish greater equalisation of power) is confirmed by Lund's research (1970:9-12). The limiting of activity to personnel and welfare areas, the poverty of information and other areas of weakness have persisted.¹¹⁶ Some changes to bargaining status may occur, as where management want to implement productivity agreements (Bye & Doyle, 1977b:15), but while shop stewards' automatic membership of the committees (CIR, 1974:117) may facilitate this, the availability of other plant level bargaining channels in a country with a high density of union membership (CIR:120; Lund, 1976: 2ff) generally constrains the likelihood of this. Meanwhile a case study of the operation of the 'participative' mechanisms by Lund leads him to conclude "that the experiences from the case study make it doubtful whether it is at all defensible to place employee representatives ... in the column of 'plus power'" (1976:15).

The pressures for participation reform in Denmark were rising levels of plant action (CIR, 1974:120-121) and of discontent marked by absenteeism and the like (Jenkins, 1974:274). They produced not only the recasted co-operation committees but also legislation for boardroom representation

in 1973. This latter system provoked considerable, fairly enthusiastic support in the British press in the aftermath of the Bullock Report, with in particular the Secretary of State for Trade (Mr Dell) reported to be favourably inclined to it above the Bullock proposals (see e.g. Times 16.6.1977). The advantage is claimed to be a two-tier system that grants considerably more policy-making power to the supervisory board than in alternatives (a claim made e.g. by the British Government's White Paper of 1978, p.15). In practice (and since the major obstacles to real decision-making by supervisory boards are practical rather than legal) this is hard to place much belief in.¹¹⁷ Reaction to the scheme appears to be that the two members on the board at least may provide information, though it can hardly be expected to change decisions substantially, i.e. a still milder version of the attitude noted in Sweden.¹¹⁸ In many companies the employees have not voted to have the optional system introduced at all.¹¹⁹ Reporting an early study of 17 firms by Westenholz, Lund informs us that:

In general, employee representation has not changed the decisions of the firms, but the representation has legitimized the decisions. The representatives take as their primary task to take care of wage earners' interests, but representatives who are shop stewards have had a "tendency to act more softly in i.a. [?] wage negotiations". (Lund, 1976:5).

Meanwhile, the unions have pressed for 'economic democracy' via capital sharing, frustrated by the inability of the Social Democrats to sustain a majority in Parliament, though in any case the enthusiasm for the idea seems minimal.¹²⁰ A limited number of autonomous work-group experiments¹²¹ have been, as in Sweden, part of the employer response in offering participation without affecting management control.

In Italy the upsurge of unrest in the 1960s was amongst the most spectacular in Europe, climaxing in 1969 and leading to the demand for effective representation at shop floor level.¹²² Before this, the representative body for employees at plant level was the internal committee or works council, but its task was specified in unitary terms as the advancement of production.¹²³ For a time, the committees may have reflected the severe conflicts for which they were the only channel, but since 1970 the right to set up union delegations, shop stewards, and a new conflict-based form of works councils has hastened their demise, in a movement from below which recalls but in rapidity outdoes that in Britain.¹²⁴

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this chapter has been to investigate the ideology and practice of participation outwith the British context on which the analysis had hitherto been based. The analytical framework concerning the nature and outcome of participation proposals outlined in Chapter 5 proceeded from Marxist premises which purport to be relevant to the analysis of all capitalist societies, notwithstanding specific socio-cultural and institutional differences. This chapter has examined experience in a number of capitalist countries, sometimes quite marked contrasts with Britain in these respects (as in the case of Israel), and has confirmed the explanatory power of the approach adopted here with striking consistency.

It should be noted that the accounts on which I have drawn above were largely orthodox in their views of participation (as 'good', progressive, evolutionary etc.), and were compelled to report as paradoxes results consistent with a pattern which the analysis applied here predicts as normal. It should also be acknowledged that the investigatory (as opposed to rhetorical) material available was often of questionable quality and remarkably small in quantity. Generalisations abounded where case studies and other observations suggest the need to distinguish a range of circumstances and outcomes.

Let me first of all offer generalisations of my own, notwithstanding the above caveat. The overall impression has been in conformity with (this author's) expectations in a number of respects: firstly, the timing of introduction of participation, or of renewed interest in and revamping of arrangements, is concentrated in many countries in the late 1960s, and coincides with a widespread wave of labour unrest and radical demand for change. Sweden and France exhibit this pattern most vividly, but the other examples discussed show similar processes at work.

Secondly, employer attitudes to participation seem in each case to follow closely their British counterparts. Management are wary of directive legislation, and see participation as a means to restore their legitimacy, reduce conflict and raise profitability. Thus they propose unitaristic schemes, based on advisory works councils, profit-sharing and job reform in most cases.

Thirdly, the role of the State varies in scope quite markedly, but in most cases it has been considerable and often has entailed legislation (Britain is unusual in having, as yet, no such legislation other than that for health and safety representatives). State agents often seem to recognise the system-maintaining benefits of apparent concessions, and in many of the countries examined governments had passed legislation despite loud employer protest (as with the 1976 Co-determination legislation in West Germany, and the rather different Co-determination at Work Act in Sweden of the same year, or that on worker directors in Sweden and Norway). However, compromises and continuing government commitment to consensus solutions (so that conflictual labour demands receive little credence under new arrangements) undermine the efficacy of such arrangements as real changes in the industrial authority structure.

Fourthly, unions have consistently supported, if not outright oppositional proposals, then reforms which they felt would effect a genuine change in power relations. Naively or not, they have often seen some form of participation as a means to this, despite their confrontations with employers on its purpose. Thus the Meidner capital-sharing proposals in Sweden continue to be viewed as a threat by management. However, the Norwegian unions' achievement of company assemblies illustrates well the illusions of how power distribution might be changed by its failure to have any great impact. Only where specific bargaining rights are sought, as in Italy for example, do real gains seem possible.

Fifthly, the outcomes of participation schemes have been found repeatedly to fall into the framework developed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 10. Most schemes, as we have seen, end up dominated by unitary conceptions of labour-management interests. In consequence there is a singular failure of participation to redistribute decision-making power democratically - the schemes are emphatically pseudo-democratic.

In one case, that of West Germany, it might be possible to argue that participation has successfully incorporated labour and defused opposition to management. It was argued above, however, that neither co-determination on supervisory boards nor works councils are likely to have achieved this in their own right. 'Management success' as an outcome specifically of participation arrangements seems less plausible given evidence of widespread triviality, and sometimes a degree of instability, or signs

of a shift to bargaining status where the arrangements seemed most actively to operate. Certainly it becomes possible to cast severe doubt on the picture of West Germany as evolved, successful, harmonistic participation as deputed by employer organizations in the UK.

The main outcome seems to have been triviality as indicated by the OECD's observations on works councils quoted in the introduction to this chapter. Participation simply failed to achieve much of significance for anyone, and either faded from existence or continued in formal, ritual form with both sides expressing disinterest or dissatisfaction.

Instability, it can be tentatively suggested, is likely to be more common where local militancy has no effective channel of expression - as where negotiation structures have become heavily centralised and/or where unions have been unable to get management to bargain at plant or enterprise level. France provides frequent examples of this sort of instability, the evidence suggests, and the LKAB case study in Sweden shows the same pattern. In Israel, parallel problems arose from the dual role of the Histadrut.

In some cases, management may concede bargaining de facto through formally unitary bodies, to appease or forestall instability arising from worker demands. There are signs of this if one reads between the lines of accounts covering West Germany, Israel, the Netherlands and Belgium, for example, though here as elsewhere the theoretical preconception of those reporting outcomes remain at odds with those in use here, and their accounts are consequentially elliptical and unclear.

Finally, it can be observed that as the 1970s drew to a close, in all of these countries as in Britain there were clear signs of disillusion and waning interest in the subject of participation. Many pieces of legislation or other institutional reforms proposed or even enacted in the mid-1970s seem to have fallen into disuse (I am informed by a recent contact¹²⁵ that no agreement has yet been signed under the 1976 Swedish Co-determination At Work Act, for instance). This shift coincides, of course with a deepening worldwide capitalist depression, which has weakened the position of labour and shifted its attention to defence of jobs rather than seeking to encroach on management control.

It would seem, then, that notwithstanding national differences, the analysis developed here is capable of accounting far more readily for the reality of participation well beyond Britain's quirkish shores that are the dominant orthodoxies of managerial social science or pluralism. Indeed, the degree of conformity to the expected patterns is almost disturbing. The reader will have to judge whether it is manufactured by selection of fact and interpretation, but to this writer's eyes the evidence is overwhelming. The cosmopolitan strategy is uniformly unimpressive in its impact.

CHAPTER ELEVEN : NOTES

1. See e.g. Sorge, 1976; Jacobs, 1973 (c.f. pp 54ff); Daniel, 1978
2. See e.g. the Minority Report of the employer representatives on the Bullock Committee, and the evidence of various employer bodies to the Committee (discussed in Chapter 5 pp 34-37 of the Minority Report).
3. See e.g. EEF, 1977; Roger Harrison, 1977.
4. Quoted by Asplund, 1972:32 from New Perspectives in Collective Bargaining, OECD, Paris, 1969.
5. The term 'co-determination' is used commonly in two ways, firstly to refer to the German institutions of worker participation as a whole, and secondly (more accurately) to describe specifically the system of parity representation on the supervisory boards in the 'Montan' (coal, iron and steel) industries. Here it is used in the former, loose sense for convenience.
6. For Blumberg's full arguments against Clegg see his 1968:156ff.
7. See H.A.Clegg, 1976, 1977.
8. CIR, 1974:13; Bye & Doyle, 1977a; Clegg, 1976:12 (who cites a figure of 37% for 1972). The retreat has been particularly due to a failure to recruit effectively in the expanding white-collar sectors.
9. Though the union official now has the right to visit the plant and attend the works council meeting since the 1972 Works Constitution Act, whilst a diluted shop steward (Vertrauensleute - trustmen) system has been emerging in some areas in recent years. The trustmen have no legal rights or protection however.
10. The following account is a severely abbreviated one culled from among others, Poole, 1975; Bye, 1974; Fürstenburg, 1969; Shuchman, 1957; Adams & Rummel, 1977. Most versions are 'evolutionary' accounts of one sort or another.
11. Both reported in Fürstenburg, 1969:12.
12. Ramm, 1974:22-23. The concentration of works councils in large companies (as in the UK) is confirmed by the fact that the 6% of enterprises who had complied with the Act employed two-thirds of the labour force.
13. European Industrial Relations Review, No.39, March 1977:19-20. BDA estimates are given in CIR, 1974:26.
14. A similar impression has been gained by some visiting British shop stewards. I recall one steward's horror as he recounted attending a factory assembly where the works council members spent most of their energy on exhorting greater production effort rather than being accountable to the membership or seeking grievances that needed taking up with management.

15. In Blume's study 67% evaluated the council positively, and 92% felt they could not do without it (CIR, 1974:31). Bleucher's findings (see I.Roberts, 1973:354) are similar, Fürstenburg's a little less supportive (1973:30), whilst a union study by IG - Chemie - Keramik (1966 - see I.Roberts, 1973:354) found positive ratings from 50% of workers.
16. C.f. Adams & Rummel, 1977:10-11, 22; Asplund, 1972:26; Hartmann, 1975:57-58; Simitis, 1975:13n.45; Emery & Thorsrud, 1969:48). Other critical views are summarised by Coates & Topham (1972:206) from M.Buhning, 'Mitbestimmung: A Midpassage', International Socialist Journal, February, 1967:94-111. Fürstenburg (1973:321) found that when asked with whom personal problems could be discussed (the meaning of 'personal' is not clarified) only 5% named their works councillor, as against 54% their supervisors. The intensity of relations with supervisors, incidentally, indicates further a weak shop-level organization among workers and so a dependent relationship; research in the UK and the USA suggests that supervisors are far more indifferently or hostilely regarded when worker self-organization and autonomy are high. Hartmann, 1970:144, shows that co-determination as a whole has little salience for workers relative to other issues (see Ramsay, 1976a and subsequent chapters here on this general issue).
17. It is worth recalling that a far more critical view of works councils and co-determination seems to have emerged in the more class-oriented approach of Popitz et al (1957).
18. C.f. Dahrendorf, 1959; Schauer, 1973; Wilpert, 1975:61; Ramm, 1974:24.
19. Biedenkopf, 1970:60; Hartmann, 1975:57. On the relatively greater powers for personnel and social matters as compared with economic and financial ones, see e.g. Schregle, 1978:86; Ramm, 1974; Hartmann, 1970:143 (on areas of perceived influence); Fürstenburg, 1969:17-19.
20. C.f. Daheim, 1973:25; Schauer, 1973:212.
21. Kliemt (1971 - see Wilpert, 1975:61) found for instance that 40% of works councils chairmen in his sample had been in office for over 11 years. See also Fürstenburg, 1969; 1973:323; Asplund, 1972:26. Daubler suggests the same arising out of the attraction of high salary on the supervisory board (1975:224).
22. Pirker et al (1955 - see Adams & Rummel:16) refer to a "notables democracy". Fürstenburg (1973:318) reproduces this finding.
23. CIR, 1972; Adams & Rummel: Schregle, 1974, 1978; Douglas Miller, 1977.
24. Adams & Rummel, 1977:13; Bergmann & Muller-Jentsch, 1975.
25. C.f. Clegg, 1976:60, where he notes that works councillors will even ignore and openly disapprove of official strikes. C.f. also Fürstenburg, 1969:23-24.

26. Inter alia, CIR, 1974; Clegg, 1976 (conflicting with some of his earlier observations); Emery and Thorsrud, 1969; Sturmthal, 1964; Fogarty, 1975. A recent article in the EIRR (No.54, June 1978) offered two case studies on the same theme.
27. Fürstenburg, 1969:15-16 says that 82% of councillors in 1961 were members of DGB unions, while Blume found 98% of chairmen likewise; CIR, 1972:27 gives similar figures of 83% members of works councils in 1965, declining to 77% in 1972; confusingly, EIRR (No.54, June 1978:16) says the current average is around 70%; and that IG Metall are claiming a 50% increase in seats going to unionists in the 1978 round (which would appear to take them past 100%!). Ramm, 1974:23 gives figures on the variance of union representation from industry to industry.
28. From 'Workers on the Board and All That', BBC2, 13.2.1974.
29. The employers opposed the new Act on constitutional grounds (that it undermined the rights of private property), and it took until 1979 for their objections to be rejected by the High Court.
30. Ramm, 1974 extends this analysis by showing that all German labour law is governed by unitary assumptions about social relations in industry and thus acts to muffle conflict as far as the law can do so.
31. See Hanson, 1977:36; EIRR No.39, December 1976:3.
32. Deppe, 1973; Vagts, 1966; Biedenkopf Report, 1970:61.
33. See e.g. DGB 1967, where it is argued that co-determination is still only a step "far removed from the principles required by a truly free and democratic order of society" (p 210); yet also it is averred that labour and capital must be "equal partners" and that "the well-being of the enterprise must be secured and promoted within the framework of the free market economy" (p 199). See the more defensive and equally uncertain defence by the more militant erstwhile head of IG Metall, Otto Brenner (1974, especially 100-101); and the essay by Otto (Chief of Bureau, Executive Board) 1974.
34. See e.g. Hartmann, 1970:144; and Jenkins, 1974:121, who cites a DGB survey showing that co-determination figures only eighth of a series of nine factors in priority for change.
35. Fürstenburg, 1969:37; CIR, 1974:21. Other studies suggest even smaller numbers with such knowledge - see Adams & Rummel, 1977:11 n.58 for a summary.
36. Fürstenburg, 1969:37 reports the first finding from the 1950s; Daubler, 1975:224 the second, from a study by Thomson which is significantly more recent (1970).

37. Jenkins, 1974:120 citing a 1966 study by E.G.Erdmann. Interest (not necessarily satisfaction) is greater amongst skilled workers than less skilled ones - c.f. Popitz *et al*, 1957; Fürstenburg, 1969:37; Krejci, 1976:160.
38. EIRR, 13, January 1975:19 c.f. also Asplund, 1972:26.
39. CIR, 1974:18-19; Schauer, 1973; Davies, 1976:65.
40. C.f. Daubler, 1975:223; and see Biedenkopf Report, 1970:63-64.
41. Batstone, 1976:36; Schauer, 1973:218; CIR, 1974:19.
42. Blumenthal, 1956; Daubler, 1975:22-23; Davies, 1976:65.
43. Blume, 1965 - see CIR, 1974:17-18 for a discussion.
44. Davies, 1976:65; Fürstenburg, 1969:42.
45. By Bye & Doyle, 1977a:15.
46. Hartmann, 1975:57, from Biedenkopf Report.
47. See CIR, 1974:20 for data.
48. Daheim, 1973:27-28; Adams & Rummel, 1977:12.
49. Davies, 1976:66; Hartmann, 1975.
50. This is based above all on conversations with and a seminar presentation by Dieter Hockhul of the Economic Department of the DGB (February, 1978). The general approval of Adams & Rummel, like that of Biedenkopf, for co-determination as an agent of technical change is therefore derivative of a partial perspective (disclosed by their use of the word "rational" (1977:17) or "dysfunctional" (p 16)) which the German unions may be forced to reject.
51. Compare, for example, the account of Adams & Rummel, 1977 with that of Bergmann & Müller-Jentsch, 1975, or of Müller-Jentsch and Sperling, 1978.
52. Quoted by van Otter, 1975:202. See further Gustafsson, 1974:631.
53. See Hufford 1973; van Otter, 1975; Faxen, 1977.
54. See Palm, 1977:17ff, and the introduction to this book by Dorothy Wedderburn.
55. For positive views of 'corporatist' elements in Swedish arrangements see Ruin, 1974; List, 1973.
56. See e.g. Korpi, 1978; van Otter, 1975:196-197, 212; Svalstoga & Carlsson, 1973; Scase, 1974, 1974a, 1976, 1977a.
57. See EIRR, 31, July 1976, for the text of the new Act.

58. The works councils are in practice far from universal - even an SAF survey in 1965 found only 40% of firms had a works council, 41% only an "informal joint committee" and 19% not even this (SAF, 1965:11). Meanwhile a 1974 survey reported in a publication of the Central Statistics Board showed that 59% felt that they had no influence over their work hours, 23% likewise over work planning and 83% over the appointment of their immediate superior (see New Society Findings: a swede life?" vol.39 No.746, 20.1.1977:126).
59. Peterson, 1968:192 summarises this trend.
60. Thus 72% of managers in large enterprises and 36% of those in small enterprises felt that the main task of the council was to inform workers of management's problems, as compared with 17% of workers and 14% of council members in small enterprises. Had the questions been asked in terms of what "should be" (rather than "is") the main task, the divisions might well have been sharper still.
61. See Hufford, 1973:33; van Otter, 1975:214-215.
62. See National Swedish Industrial Board, 1976; Askling, 1976.
63. In this connection it is interesting to recall a television programme (Tonight, BBC1, 25.1.1977, 10.35 p.m.) which interviewed two workers' directors. One said his life was no different, and he still had the same shop floor friends (indicating that he felt this needed saying, that it might be problematical) but that he was accused of 'sitting on the fence' by many workers. They did not realise that he had to consider profits too, and that only when the cake had grown further could one bargain for more for workers. He admitted keeping things from the union. The other worker director claimed to pass all information on to the union, even if the Board tagged it 'confidential'. Grafström of the SAF felt, however, that most worker directors had accepted the rules.
64. See e.g. Jenkins, 1974; P.Dickson, 1975; D.Wilson "Saab's experiment pays off" Observer, 15.10.1972; "Sweden cuts monotony of working" Guardian, 2.12.1974; D.Thomas "How the workers are involved", Financial Times, 2.10.1973; N.Foy "Volvo's job enrichment philosophy applied on a grand scale", Times, 13.9.1976; M.Arnold-Foster, "The car plant that works", Guardian, 9.11.1975; P.Harrison, "Saab's drive to democracy", Sunday Times, 15.2.1976; C.Webb, "Should car men follow Volvo's lead?", Times, 6.6.1974. To see how all this fits into the general myth, see e.g. L.Davis & Cherns 1975; or L.Davis & Taylor eds., 1972.

Perhaps the most sustained publicity has been provided by the writings of H.G.Jones, an academic who wrote as an enthusiastic expert in the Guardian on 3.4.1975, 19.1.1976, 3.5.1977 (on worker director training), in the Times on 26.4.1977 and 17.1.1977, and in Futures 7(2), April 1975. Significantly his reaction to the demystifying union demands for bargaining rights are dealt with as 'changes that threaten Sweden's prosperity' (Times 17.1.1977).

Meanwhile, the President of Volvo has conducted his own advertising campaign - which quickly reveals the true motives to a reader with but an ounce of cynicism. See Gyllenhammar, 1974, 1977.

65. See Aguren et al, 1976; J.Elliott "Qualified success for Volvo assembly" Financial Times, 23.11.1976; "Job enrichment: An Assessment of the Volvo Experiment", EIRR 36, December 1976: 4-6.
66. See e.g. quotes from workers' unions in R.Young "Not quite a car workers' paradise" Times Diary, The Times, 3.9.1976; D.Wilson "The Trouble with Volvo's Valhalla", Observer, 9.6.1977; and the adverse reactions of most of a group of Detroit car workers who were brought across to try the new system (Financial Times, 28.1.1975; 30.7.1976 and Wedderburn's introduction to Palm, 1977:xii).
67. For this insight (and confirmation of the loss of interest in the work re-organization issue in the face of recession and new problems of negotiation) I am indebted to Bengt Sandkull. He described how the focus of the plant had become not the workers but the sophisticated controls at the centre. Clearly this control makes near-impossible the kind of autonomy described by Lupton (1963) among others; in Herding's (1972) terms it "officializes" other controls and so gives management a fresh grip on the situation. By creating separate groups who complete their work and move it on to the next section, the pressure of work can also be raised, and this apparently is increasingly being realised by the workforce. This adds significance to new measures to increase group competitiveness in Volvo (Times, 23.5.1978).
68. Despite the reservations expressed in her earlier comments at an SSRC Conference in 1974, Wedderburn's remarks in this introduction are somewhat at odds with her earlier apparent enthusiasm for Swedish work organization 'advances'.
69. See de Bellecombe, 1970:82; CIR, 1974:48-49.
70. This is the term used in the proposals of the Sudreau Committee, reporting in 1975.
71. Reynaud, 1975:279ff; Kendall, 1975:80ff; CIR, 1977:56.
72. CIR, 1974:48; Bye & Doyle, 1977c:5.
73. Estimates range from 18 to 25% density of union membership among the workforce (CIR, 1974:37).
74. Gallie, 1978, confirms the latter in a relevant context.
75. As usual, even accounts which contain information showing the failure of participation continue to see the introduction of it as 'progressive' or 'advanced'. (See e.g. de Bellecombe, 1970:61, 66, 75; Gallie, 1978:153; Jenkins, 1974:151; CIR, 1974:35). This makes possible that tour de force which refers to demands for radical change and opposition to integration,



as of the CGT, as 'conservative'. The most remarkable slander comes from Begg (1960:46) when he describes the Communists as "only interested in representing the workers so long as the workers wishes suit their policy", and adds puzzledly that the unions "which might provide honest representation" can not get sufficient worker support to enable them to do so.

76. Thus, in October 1977, a congress was held by the CNPF (Employers' Federation) on "man and industrial enterprises", preceded by an exhibition on moves to improve working conditions despite the economic crisis (Times, 18.10.1977). The French government have also appointed a Minister for Job Enrichment.
77. See G.Meritt "France's Shopfloor Directors", Financial Times 14.2.1975.
78. Two exceptions are Carby-Hall, 1977, who seems to just take the whole exercise legalistically (i.e. official functions are treated as factual) or to tacitly approve of the narrow, trivial confines of their operation (c.f. e.g. pp. 90-91, 112) and Montuclard, 1963. Montuclard argued that the committees were succeeding and becoming gradually less trivial on the basis of a study in four enterprises. But not only do his findings run counter to other observations before and since, they are also based on an explicit definition of the purpose of the whole exercise as integration, suppression of outmoded, oppositional views of the enterprise and provision of the best chances to solve management's problems. (See "Workers' Participation in Management : Notes on Two French Studies", IILS International Educational Materials Exchange, on which uncritical precis I have based my understanding of Montuclard's approach). C.f. also de Bellecombe, 1970:88n.1.
79. CIR, 1974:49; Sudreau Committee report quoted in EIRR No.15, March 1975 says "almost half" do not have the committees, but are probably too optimistic on the weight of the evidence.
80. Asplund, 1972:29-30; Garson, 1973a:171.
81. CIR, 1974:50-51 which shows that for 73% of the votes, the main unions got just 54% of the seats in 1972 while non-unionists, for 14% of the votes, got 36% of the seats. See Kendall, 1975:63 for earlier years.
82. Asplund, 1972:37, confirmed by Gallie, 1978:Chapter 7, in a firm which he nonetheless describes as having a relatively 'liberal' attitude to committees.
83. De Bellecombe, 1970:86-87; Clegg, 1960:45; Carby-Hall, 1977: 84-85 gives figures that show canteens as the number one issue followed by clubs, gardening tools etc., helping new employees adapt, apprenticeship schemes, sport and so on.
84. See e.g. Andersen, quoted in Emery & Thorsrud, 1969:6-8; Aspengren, 1974.
85. For a description see Bye & Doyle, 1977b:11; Balfour, 1973a: 203-205; Appleyard, 1971:41, 50-51.

86. Andersen, in Emery & Thorsrud, 1969:7
87. 78% of blue-collar workers and 59% of white-collar workers felt workers did not participate sufficiently in running the enterprise (p 307). Holter shows that nonetheless there was little desire for greater participation personally - this suggesting to me that a demand for representation is therefore shown. Responses on the purpose of increased participation show that only a minority (27% blue-collar, 39% white-collar) are concerned with efficiency, with greater satisfaction (39% and 37%) and increased justice (29% and 22%) figuring prominently (p 307). Holter also indicates that in the firm in the study where no production committee existed tension was higher and the demand for joint decision-making less - one implication of which (only hinted at) is that the Committees 'work'. There is, of course, an alternative view, which proved more plausible in analysing the findings in Turner et al (1977) in the last chapter - that less tension makes the appearance of co-operation more sustainable.
88. For Thorsrud's own evolutionary notions see his 1972. In this he refers to a rash of wildcat strikes throughout Scandinavia (not just in Sweden) as a source of impetus to union activity (1972:309). He is also reported to have attacked Herzberg on his fears about participation arguing that its very unpredictability was good (see Jenkins 1974:258). He appears to stand in the same broad position as Blumberg or Pateman as a participatory theorist, with a predilection at the same time for the Tavistock Institute approach.
89. Emery & Thorsrud, 1966:443; 1969:24; 1970:190.
90. See e.g. Emery & Thorsrud, 1973; 1976; Engelstad, 1970; N.Wilson, 1973; Jenkins, 1974. Consider also the earlier experiment of French, Israel & Aas (1960) on more orthodox human relations lines which failed to work in the way the classic American equivalent had supposedly done (Coch & French, 1948). Their conclusion was that Norweigan workers have higher cultural expectations of legitimate work control than Americans, and were thus unimpressed by the changes. The Oslo researchers' plans are to offer greater job control than envisaged by conventional human relations.
91. Based on a conversation with one of the researchers. This aim of some of the researchers was claimed to be worrying management as workers saw the limits and significance of their experiences. Gusatvson (1977:273) points out, however, that continued management involvement has actually tightly constrained the scope of the experiments.
92. As much is acknowledged by the Israeli Minister of Agriculture in a 1964 speech - see Hanegbi et al:16-17.
93. All of the references discussing participation give some outline of this, but Hanegbi et al, 1971 offer the clearest exposition of its significance for class consciousness.

94. The latest figure, given in Financial Times, 21.6.1977, put the Histadrut sector at 20% of industry, 40% of construction and 75% of agriculture, with 1.35 million members.
95. Tabb & Goldfarb (1970:158-159) tend to imply the latter approach, but as their own survey shows workers themselves tended to blame lack of seriousness or sincerity on the part of the Histadrut for many of the problems (1970a:193). While the latter is partly a backlash of the official ideology that participation ought to succeed (so blame becomes directed at a group rather than at the situation itself) this view still has significance for what it shows of the workers' perception of their own representatives.
96. C.f. Rosenstein, 1970. Tabb & Goldfarb actually define participation in terms of integration.
97. See reports in Guardian 1.10.1975, 9.11.1976; Times 5.11.1975. There has been a major (and controversial) campaign by private employers to encourage productivity (Guardian 12.3.1975 describes the posters).
98. Thus both Tabb & Goldfarb (1970, 1970a) and Rosenstein (1977) close their reviews with an expression of belief that 'now' the institutions may be got right, showing remarkable stamina and obstinacy in the face of their own evidence. For other, briefer, accounts of failure see Jenkins, 1974; Poole, 1975; Agassi, 1974; Fine, 1973; and Derber, 1963a (who seems to conclude, pace Blumberg, on rather Cleggian lines about the need for negotiation, not participation, to realise industrial democracy). Aaron, 1974, provides a remarkable whitewash of all problems as Secretary General of the Histadrut.
99. For the most part, the following accounts of JPCs and subsequent institutions are based on Tabb & Goldfarb (1970, 1970a) and Rosenstein (1970, 1977), the most extensive available discussions in English.
100. Agassi, 1974:74; Derber, 1963a:55, 60; Derber, 1963:50.
101. Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:173:174; 1970a:99-100, 107.
102. Rosenstein, 1970:175; 1977:59.
103. C.f. the study by Stoddart and other material cited by Rosenstein, 1977:60; 1970:176-177. Tabb & Goldfarb's later survey (1970a: Chapter 4) suggests a similar pattern.
104. Rosenstein 1970:178-179; Tabb & Goldfarb, 1970:177-178.
105. See de Willebois, 1973:70ff; Peper, 1975; CIR, 1974:Chapter 6; Bye & Doyle:1977d.
106. De Willebois, 1973:64ff; CIR, 1974:Chapter 6; Asplund, 1972:36; Kendall, 1975:274-276. For an apologia, in contrast to these accounts (and made to look foolish by their agreement) see Pels quoted in Balfour, 1973a:200).

107. Thus, employer resistance to feared encroachment on their prerogatives, ensured that both 1950 and 1971 legislation (though the latter was a relative retreat for them) limited effective rights to consultative ones oriented to the "proper performance" of the "undertaking" (see CIR, 1974:66-67).
108. This conflict of conceptions comes out in almost all of the references cited above. The failure of C.O.P. experiments is attributed in recent work to the dominance of the managerial perspective enforced by the social scientists who were drawn into the programme by the attraction of recognition and research funds. Predictably, explanations of failure were all voluntaristic (bad management, poor institutions, lack of communication) and never structural. The two accounts, on which I am drawing, by Hubert de Man and M.R. Van Fils, were presented at a seminar of the European Institute of Advanced Studies in Management, Brussels, May 1978. They recalled the pioneering criticisms of Mauk Mulder to whom I have referred earlier (see bibliography).

De Willebois, 1973, gives an account of these experiments whose genesis (and failure) recall in many ways those in Sweden. See also Daniel & McIntosh (1972:27-28) who are forced to admit, despite their general enthusiasm for job enrichment, that the Phillips case illustrates the tenuousness of management's commitment to job reform, dependent on the relative strength of competitive pressures and those appeasing the workforce; unemployment reduces the latter and increases the former, and interest in job enrichment wanes.
109. C.f. Asplund, 1972:27.
110. Commission of European Communities, 1975:50; Coates, 1971a:37-38; CIR, 1974:83; Bye & Doyle, 1977d:14; Bundervoet, 1973:38; Asplund, 1972:22, 37.
111. Commission of the European Communities, 1975:50; Janne & Spitaels, 1975:185 & 186; Gevers, 1978:2.
112. Gevers, 1978:2; Gevers research is based on a 1966-67 survey whose findings are summarised in a 1973 book. Works Councils: A Marginal Phenomenon in the Belgian Industrial Democratisation Movement (in Flemish), and an earlier report summarised also in Bundervoet, 1973:38, and CIR, 1974:85-86c. C.f. Carby-Hall, 1977:89 for research on the pattern of activity that, as in the French case, puts canteens top. Bundervoet, 1973:39 notes the overriding role of the union delegation.
113. See Gevers, 1978 who summarises the post-1967 developments, and indicates the pattern as before. For him, Mulder's hypothesis that management may increase control by 'participating' is upheld in the Belgian case, but given the unions' local organization and suspicion any consequent gains seem likely to be minimal.

114. Janne & Spitaels, 1975:173ff; Gevers, 1978:3; Coates, 1971a; Bye & Doyle, 1977d:18-21; Mandel, 1969 give details of the FGTB demands in particular on 'worker control'. A further trend needs to be noted though, and that is the growing role of the unions in national policy-setting bodies, as in so many Western countries. There is evidence that this has generated oligarchic tendencies and neglect of plant organization in the unions (see e.g. Janne & Spitaels:184; Delcourt, 1976).

It is interesting to note that despite a further wave of strikes in 1977 (Guardian, 26.2.1977) the selection of media description of works councils adopts a predictable slant - see e.g. "Strikes? Never Heard of Them", A.Hope, Guardian, 23.1.1978, on 'success' at British Leyland's Belgian plant (in contrast of course to the UK workers).
115. Bye & Doyle, 1977b:15; Commission of European Communities, 1975:15; CIR, 1974:114-115, 119.
116. Asplund describes union dissatisfaction (1972:15), while Lund (1976:3-4) reports the limited scope of the committees and the CIR (1974:19-20) provide the evidence on unsatisfactory information facilities. Management on the committees are reported to be too junior to have any significance (CIR, 1974:118).
117. See e.g. "Something flexible in the boardroom state of Denmark", H.Barnes 12.6.1978; and J.Hildreth letter to the Times on Industrial Democracy in Denmark 24.6.1977. The latter gives away a great deal about the constraints on the system because the author, Director General of the Institute of Directors in Britain, wishes to argue against any precedent for giving real policy-making powers to unions in this country.
118. C.f. "Where worker directors arouse so little passion", Financial Times 12.6.1978. See also EIRR, 45, September 1977: 2-3 for case studies, and 39, March 1977:4-6 for other information.
119. By 1978 still only 1,000 of 1,800 companies eligible had introduced the system, which relies on 50% of all the work force voting in favour. See CIR, 1974:111ff on the system; and Hildreth's letter to the Times also on this (c.f. note 76 above); Bye & Doyle, 1977b:15 represent this as a vote "against" in many cases, (in contrast to the Commission of the European Communities, 1975:55 who view it as interest in the scheme!) but a better imputation is probably plain disinterest.
120. See the Guardian 2.11.1973 for poll showing disinterest. Asplund, 1972:54-56 gives details of the union proposals, while CIR, 1974: 112-113 gives further information. The SDP have not only introduced a series of draconian incomes policy measures under ex-union leader Joergensen, but have in the latest information (Financial Times 1.9.1978) continued to reflect union calls for economic democracy.
121. See Lund, 1976; Jenkins, 1974; Financial Times 1.3.1976. Employers have also in some cases launched their own profit-sharing schemes - see EIRR 13, January 1975 and 27, March 1976.

122. See Bye & Doyle, 1977; Commission of the European Communities, 1975; 78ff; Kendall, 1975:Chapter 6; Brandini, 1975.
123. See Bye & Doyle, 1977:6-7; Commission of the European Communities, 1975:80.
124. A strategy of demanding extended co-determination bargaining rights has characterised the Italian movement in the 1970s (see Bye & Doyle, 1977:12-15). Perhaps most striking (and most publicised) has been the Fiat agreement of 1975 - see Bye & Doyle, 1977:16; Financial Times, 2.12.1974; the Times, 15.4.1976; Guardian, 24.5.1975; EIRR 12, December 1974:2-3 (and on Alfa Romeo, 54, June 1978:8).
125. Based on a discussion with Gerry Hunnius in July 1980, following a research trip by him to Norway and Sweden.

PART FIVE - THE SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

In this final part of the thesis, I shall outline and discuss the results of a survey carried out in three enterprises in the North-East of England in 1974. The survey and the associated unstructured interviews, discussions, observation and collection of published and unpublished material which inform the case studies, was motivated by the stark absence of substantive material in this area.

To some extent the survey, particularly of manual workers, is now being supplemented by more recent and extensive studies, though these in my opinion continue to lack somewhat in depth and perception in the way they approach the issues. At the time my own survey was carried out, however, there was almost no comparable material beyond a few incidental and tangential questions posed in the midst of schedules serving studies with a less specialised purpose (such as the Affluent Worker studies, or that of Blackburn and Beynon, 1972). Other than this, thinly textured opinion poll surveys, often designed to confirm a right-wing newspaper orthodoxy, were the chief source of information.

A preliminary report on the findings of the survey, published in 1976 (Ramsay, 1976), was referred to as one of the few existing sources of information in subsequent Department of Employment material, which introduced the Department's attempt to extend research in the area. Thus at the time of writing several studies examining employee attitudes to participation are due to be published shortly. I have misgivings about the value of some of these, as I noted above, but the need to avoid constant revision of my text prevents me from getting involved in what follows in reviewing the results as they are made available. At the risk of seeming to seek self-aggrandisement (a technique common to even the timid thesis writer) it is my opinion that the findings reported in Chapters 12 and 13, together with those described and discussed in Chapters 7 and 8 above, amply justify the carrying out of the survey and the length of the questionnaire. The latter was entailed by the decision to examine attitudes to participation in the context of views on political and industrial matters, and opinions on other dimensions of work experience. It is in this respect that the available information seemed most limited, as indeed it still, disappointingly, does.

The decision to explore the views of workers and managers¹ themselves on participation, and the meaning systems within which these were located and should be interpreted, contains little that is revolutionary. This was fortunate for the author, who preferred to approach a complex area in a fairly orthodox manner, particularly given the limited resources of a sole research student. The same applied to the gathering of the case study material related in Chapters 14 to 16. Nonetheless this, too, has come to seem increasingly valuable, for all its limitations, as the deficient number and poor quality of case study material has become ever more apparent in the course of my investigation of the literature. In-depth studies from independent sources are, as has been seen, remarkably thin on the ground, and little ongoing research seems directed to alleviating this deficiency.

The material for these case studies was collected in systematic but not rigorously structured and consistent ways, largely incidental to the surveys. However, if the methods were not rigorous, then supported by attitudinal material relating to each enterprise specifically, and by the relative richness of some of the recorded discussions and other sources of information and opinions, the studies which emerge are far more enlightening than I had originally dared expect. I hope the reader will concur in this judgement, and agree that watertight sophisticated methodology is not the final arbiter of usefulness where such material is concerned.

The research project entailed the selection of three enterprises in the North-East of England, in range of my base of operations at Durham University. After consideration of a number of firms in the area, three companies were selected for an initial approach. It was decided to test the strength of participation schemes on what should have been favourable ground,² in that those organizations approached had been recommended as 'progressive', with a reputation for experimentation in participative forms. Indeed, two of the organizations had been the subject of publications extolling, for the most part, their virtues, as will be seen. Thus a deliberate effort was made to avoid the examination of 'straw men'. Participation is normally treated as a matter of exemplary practice in management literature and elsewhere, so a telling study had to start from what seemed to be such cases.

Given this initial decision on selection of cases, it was decided also to

seek a fairly wide variation in the type of enterprises studied. This avoided the possibility that technological or other factors could be the dominant cause of any unity in findings, and lent more force to the general relevance of any conclusions, notwithstanding the tiny numbers involved.

Thus one firm, 'Weldrill', was engaged in metal fabrication in a company employing some 500 people, the majority concentrated in a new town site. The company was owned by a German firm, and the managing director was himself German.

The second firm, which is referred to as 'Epoch' below, was engaged in process production and was situated in a great stretch of industrial development that dominated several miles of riverside scenery near a city. The plant was part of a large multi-national company, and though it employed only around 250 operators and staff it was far bigger in area than Weldrill.

The third organization differed in two notable respects from either of the first two. It consisted of four depots which were organised into an administrative unit engaged in service work; and the enterprise of which it was part was under public ownership - hence the pseudonym 'Natco' by which it is referred to below.

For further details on these enterprises, the reader is referred to the relevant chapter on each below. It should be noted that no organization refused to allow the study to take place, and indeed the co-operation of management and unions in each case enabled the study to proceed relatively smoothly. Thus the three enterprises discussed here constitute the first choices for the study. This is not to say that there were no problems in the data collection, as will be seen, but that nonetheless it proved less problematical than might have been feared.

The chief method of data collection selected, as has already been indicated, was that of questionnaires. It was decided to limit distribution to manual workers readily accessible to the survey, and to management. The use of the questionnaire method was largely dictated by the limited resources (me) available to conduct interviews or extensive observation. It was apparent that a large amount of data could be collected in a

relatively short period by this means. It entailed, however, a heavy dependence on fixed choice questions (the response rate to the few open-ended questions in the schedule was far lower, justifying the advance judgement to rely on the fixed-choice format). This provokes consideration of the dangers of imposing a framework of response on people completing the questionnaire, though such a danger is hardly exorcised by interviews (witness the discussion of the 'football team' question in Chapters 7 and 8 above). However, no study such as this can avoid such dangers completely, and for the most part the response rate, and informal discussions with some respondents when collecting completed schedules, suggested that the approach, language etc. broadly made sense to those providing the answers.

Questionnaires were distributed in envelopes, so that they could be sealed and returned without any outward indication of the identity of the respondent. All envelopes bore a label that answers were confidential, and that neither unions nor management would have access to any individual's responses. A fuller explanation of the nature and purpose of the questionnaire was contained in a covering letter to each form handed out. Although the precise means of distribution varied according to expediency in each organization³, it seems unlikely that this will have influenced the pattern of responses, though it probably accounts for the slightly higher return at Weldrill.

Overall, the response rate⁴ seems statistically encouraging, and compares favourably with questionnaire studies generally. It is felt that the results can be treated, therefore, as an adequate basis for generalisation from the results. The consistency of the findings in many respects on both manual and management questionnaires encourages some confidence in the reliability of the findings (as well as simplifying discussion of the results).

Some further observations may be made concerning the findings and their presentation. Firstly, due to the distribution format at Natco (see fn 3) the questions towards the end of the schedule have a progressively poorer response rate; this reflects speed of schedule completion, and seems unlikely therefore to be consistently related to any other variable in replies, i.e. it is unlikely to have affected and so undermined the reliability of the results of the later questions.

Secondly, the results are presented here only as straight forward tabulations. Cross-tabulations between questions, or of various responses with face-sheet variables, are not reported. This was dictated both by simplicity and by limited resources.⁵

Thirdly, and regrettably (even reprehensibly) in retrospect, all respondents in all three firms were men. A major factor has thus been left entirely untreated by the study.

With these introductory notes to the fieldwork completed, I shall now turn to examine firstly shop floor attitudes (Chapter 12). These will then be compared to management views (Chapter 13), and thereafter consideration will be given to the experience of participation in each enterprise, and to actors' perceptions of the arrangements in each of the organizations (Chapters 14 to 16).

PART 5 - INTRODUCTION : NOTES

1. The survey also included a sample of supervisors in each organization. For simplicity, however, and because the sample is small, it has been decided to omit the results and discussion of them in the thesis.
2. The justification for such a test is suggested by the Affluent Worker study's researchers in selecting Luton as the base for their research on embourgeoisement (see Goldthorpe et al, 1968:2ff.).
3. In Weldrill, the first company where distribution took place, I was able to prepare the ground and take a fair amount of time to orient myself before questionnaires went out. I was given a pretty free hand to deliver questionnaires myself and give each person an explanation of the purpose of the survey directly, and also to collect them. The unions maintained a broadly friendly neutrality.

In Epoch, the nature of the plant made this method impossible, and after pondering the relative advantages (since both management and unions supported the survey), it was decided that distribution and collection should be left to shop stewards.

In Natco, management agreed to allow about 25 minutes, at the end of a day for those available and willing to complete the questionnaires to do so, following an introductory statement by myself. This undoubtedly increased access to respondents (though a good few were only reached indirectly by management or shop stewards giving them forms), but also resulted in a sizeable number of forms being only partially filled in, and a greater proportion of open-ended questions being left blank even than in the other organizations.

4. Precise response rates are difficult to calculate, as they depend on varying assessments of total numbers employed (and even this proved difficult to obtain concrete figures on in one case), those actually employed in the sections which the study covered (since some were inaccessible, e.g. Weldrill employees working off site on installation, or Natco men working in remote locations), and those available at the time of the distribution (affected by holidays etc.). The response rates indicated below are thus approximate, based on the best estimates informed management or others felt able to give.

	<u>Manual</u>	<u>Management</u>
Weldrill	67%	92%
Epoch	51%	40%
Natco	52%	55%

Particular doubts concerning representativeness of the samples seem likely to focus around an underrating of general apathy and cynicism in Epoch and Natco among both manual and management employees. Thus the indications were most commonly that people felt a survey on participation was a waste of time (or alternatively that they feared their superiors discovering their views despite assurances, which is little more flattering to the human relations in the plant organization). Such an interpretation remains speculative, however, as there was no means of checking the few random impressions gained. It remains doubtful, though, that the main thrust of the arguments in the following chapters would be refuted by a higher rate of response.

5. Further analysis on some of the material has been undertaken following a Nuffield Foundation grant to support coding of the results. Their grant was made on the condition that the material thus generated should not be used for a thesis financed by SSRC money. I have thus abided by this agreement in writing up. The analysis has not been subjected to interpretation systematically as yet but early indications are that it would not significantly affect the arguments advanced, though it could add greater depth to the findings.

CHAPTER 12 : THE DEMAND FOR PARTICIPATION : ON WHOSE TERMS?

IS THERE A DEMAND FOR PARTICIPATION?

This chapter focuses on shop floor views on participation. It questions some of the assumptions, implicit or explicit, which inform most discussions on the subject. At the time when it was carried out very little information was available on the subject; subsequently a little more has become accessible, though this will only be alluded to insofar as it clarifies or is otherwise relevant to an interpretation of the findings reported from my own survey.

It seems logical to start with the most general questions on the subject of desire for participation, and then to comment on their meaning in the light of other findings. Perhaps the most basic distinction on spheres of participation was that employed in the questionnaire whose findings are reported by Holter (1965). She distinguishes decisions concerning the whole company from those affecting personal work and working conditions - categories broadly conforming to the higher/lower levels distinction adopted here from Pateman. Holter reports that whilst 78% of workers felt employees in general were insufficiently involved in decisions regarding the company as a whole, only 16% of them indicated that they personally would like to participate at this level. In total, 56% wanted to participate at the job level only, the 16% above at both levels or the higher level only and 22% at neither level (5% giving no answer etc.). An Opinion Research Centre Survey reported in the Times (January 14th, 1975) confirms that aspirations focus on lower rather than higher levels.

The results from my own survey conform to the same pattern (the findings are reproduced in Appendix A, Table 1). Overall 83% desire participation at job level only, or at this and higher levels, but only 37% wish to be involved in making higher level decisions. 10% wish no participation at either level. Thus, whilst 53% want participation only at the lower level, a mere 6% are interested in higher level decisions only.

Let us pass a comment on this finding immediately. The ORC Survey was interpreted in the Times as showing a lack of demand to run the firm itself (implicitly, I think it fair to say from the tone of the comments

and of the Times editorials on participation, taken as showing a 'civility' in Almond & Verba's sense rather than just apathy.¹).

However this does not follow from the findings - nor does it make sense of the other findings reported below. Rather the distinction between personal and general participation used by Holter indicates the difference between a feeling of personal inefficacy or lack of desire to get involved and the feeling that a transformation of authority relations in the interests of workers as a whole is still required. Industrial relations are at root collective relations, and thus the findings on general demand for more say can ultimately be said to carry more significance, not less, than that for personal influence.

It is notable that when a recent survey by two members of the Society of Industrial Tutors (Farnham & Pimlott, 1977, 1977a) asked whether employees were thought to be more interested in daily decisions than policy decisions, 90% of managers, 74% of shop stewards and 70% of union officials agreed that they were. This is not surprising, but further it again says nothing about what ultimately would be the crucial issues. In Chapter 7 we discussed how consciousness could change according to immediate experience; and it is relevant if hardly innovative to observe that employees are likely to get concerned about remote levels of discussions when their efforts on them become visible and significant. A lot more remains to be investigated about concern for a say in decision-making of various possible sorts, then.

IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES

Let us proceed, therefore, by referring to information on the amount of say workers feel they have on various issues and the amount they would ideally like to have. At this stage two kinds of questions were used. At the time of formulation of the questionnaire it was felt to be important to use questions comparable with those already used by others even though this also meant accepting some of the problems these questions posed. In retrospect I am less certain that conformity with other studies was worth the sacrifice, but at least the combination of two forms of the question helps to compensate for the weaknesses of any single approach.

The first question stated a series of issues and asked respondents to indicate, under broad headings, the degree of say "they and their workmates" had, and the degree they felt they ideally should have. The aim was to create an element of collective interest whereas the previous question had concentrated on individual desire to take part in decisions. Moreover, a range of specific issues² was presented to increase the specificity of responses. The results are given in Appendix A, Table 2. They can be summarised as follows:-

1. There is a considerable gap between perceived actual and ideal say on all items, from 'very little' or no perceived say to a desire for an ideal of extensive influence in most areas.

2. If we use a crude estimate of the gap between perceived actual and ideal say, comparing the numbers under 'a great deal' and 'quite a lot' in each case, we find what may be the areas of greatest dissonance. I say this tentatively (and use such a broad summation rather than control graph alternatives) for methodological reasons discussed below. Table 12.1 below summarises this data:

TABLE 12.1 WORKERS' PERCEIVED ACTUAL AND IDEAL SAY

%s	(1)*	(2)*	(3)
	<u>Perceived Actual</u>	<u>Ideal</u>	(2) - (1)
	(A great deal/ quite a lot)	(A great deal/ quite a lot)	
(a) General Facilities	31	72	41
(b) Discipline Matters	16	46	30
(c) Who gets laid-off if redundancies necessary	18	64	46
(d) Organization of own work	14	73	59
(e) Fixing Work Standards	10	71	61
(f) Methods of Payment	13	76	63
(g) Rate of Pay	12	81	69
(h) Purchase new machinery	2	40	38
(i) Allocation of overtime	10	57	47
(j) Safety Matters	25	81	56

* Columns (1) and (2) are summations of those reporting 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of say to the respective questions.

The full wording of the questions is to be found in Appendix A.

Objections to questions of this sort stem above all from the interpretation of the levels of say in operational terms conveyed by 'some', 'quite a lot' etc. Debate on this matter of interpretation is unlikely to yield an unambiguous judgement on the problem, especially as meanings to different respondents of their responses may be quite different (one man's 'very little' is another's 'a great deal'). I am not saying no communication of relativities is possible, (that I am only presenting these results because I am stuck with them), but I am saying that only broad and tentative indications should be sought from this type of response, and that even the interpretation needs support from other attitudinal data. More of this in a moment. First, comments on Table 12.1's broad indications:

- (i) The areas of greatest interest ('ideal' say) are general facilities (a), organization of own work (d), fixing work standards (e), payment methods (f), rate of pay (g), and safety matters (j). (a) and (j) have traditionally been matters of joint consultation, though as unions have extended their role the conflicts in area (j) have become more apparent (and pressure has led to greater formal control powers through the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974). Items (d), (e), (f) and (g) are far more likely to be negotiation areas. Least demand by a clear margin is shown for disciplinary matters (b) and purchase of new machinery (h), the former showing an acquiescence which is a little surprising perhaps, the latter concomitant with limited concern on matters which seem distant from local interests and/or seem to require specialist technical know-how. It is not to be assumed of course that there is anything "natural" about such an outlook.

The figures for the firms taken separately show a generally common pattern. The sharpest variations are markedly lower expressed 'ideals' on facilities (a) and discipline (b) for Natco (59% and 37% respectively, the others being correspondingly above the 72% and 46% averages), and on purchase of machinery (h) for Epoch (23% against 40% for Weldrill, 59% for Natco). Epoch workers expressed

relatively high ideal amounts of say on organization of own work (d), fixing work standards (e) and safety matters (j), the last (at 96%) indicating a consciousness, perhaps, of the potential (literally explosive) dangers of work in a chemical plant.

- (ii) The extent of perceived actual say³ is, on all topics, low - never above 31% and as low as 2% taking 'a great deal' and 'quite a lot' together. Facilities (a) and safety (j) are the two items where greatest perceived say exists, the former also ostensibly the area most prone to triviality in decision-making terms. Purchase of new machinery(h) is clearly the area of least perceived say.

An examination of the pattern in the three firms is instructive. Although the pattern of responses is broadly similar in each organization, the figures for perceived amount of say in Welldrill are altogether higher than in Epoch or Natco (where the proportions are mostly below 10% in the highest two categories of degree in each). Thus for 'general facilities' the figure is 67% as against 11% and 19% respectively for Epoch and Natco. The other Welldrill figures are in all but one case over 20% (and average 32%). In only two instances do the proportions emerge comparable to those in Epoch and Natco - for purchase of new machinery (3% Welldrill, 0% Epoch, 3% Natco) and safety (29% Welldrill, 21% Epoch and 23% Natco). The information on the practice of participation, in Chapter 14 below, reveals no conclusive reason for seeing this disparity as being adequately explained by a difference in actual say, though Welldrill does stand apart from the other two firms in certain respects. The message is, then, that the meanings of the different phrases used to express amounts of control, particularly in the generalised, diffuse, evaluative forms used here, may be being interpreted in systematically different ways in one plant culture than in others. This is important in

reinforcing the criticisms of control-graph approaches advanced below. (The alternative interpretation, that the categories are not read differently but that there is a systematically different appearance/perception of participation in Weldrill, is less destructive for the methodology, but as damaging to their typical use of attitudes as accurate representations of reality).

- (iii) If we turn to examine the extremely crude indicator of the 'gap' between views of the status quo and aspirations, the size of this differential encompasses over half of the respondents in five of the ten items in Table 12.1: (d), (e), (f), (g) and (j). Again the first four and increasingly the fifth are usually negotiating matters, and particularly the three with the largest gap (e), (f) and (g). The gap is smallest where demand is lowest for degree of say - on items (b) and (h).

These figures are in any case understatements of the gap in Epoch and Natco, given the already observed high level of perceived actual say in Weldrill. The gap is generally higher in Epoch than elsewhere and the difference is most apparent on items (a), (b), (d) & (j) (69%, 57%, 72% and 75% respectively, being 30% greater than in Natco in the first two cases). The exception is, intriguingly, on purchase of new machinery (h), where Natco workers express the greatest disparity between ideal and perceived actual say (45% as against 22% for Epoch and 37% for Weldrill). The disparity with Epoch probably has something at least to do with the sheer massiveness and technical complexity of a typical investment at Epoch.

Overall, then we find a high level of 'ideal' say expressed in these broad, subjective categories and compared to the extremely low levels of perceived actual say. It is notable that items (d) and (e) which relate to control over the job itself - the area where the previous question discussed confirmed a high interest in participation - rate high but not highest in terms of ideal say. Issues on wages stand higher, and since these are the most central negotiating areas an

approach expressed explicitly in terms of conflict bargaining would seem to be potentially more relevant. Moreover, all of this interpretation of demands ignores one key factor in consciousness - the effects of experience in limiting felt efficacy and so demands. Such problems are compounded by the common form of presentation by use of 'control graphs'. A methodological note criticising this method is to be found at the end of this chapter.

NEGOTIATION RIGHTS?

An alternative way of approaching the subject of how much say people desire is to pose decision-making in the context of specific situations, and to propose specific strategies or procedures. Since it has been argued that a context of negotiation should be most appropriate for labour, a question which adopts this approach was used (originally in Hespe & Little, 1971), and used with little alteration to facilitate comparison of results once more.

This question again is posed for a series of issues, but this time asks whether things should be settled unilaterally by management or by unions, with a range of possible procedures between.

These options can be summarised by the terms 'consultative', 'partial negotiation' (management retaining the right to proceed in the absence of agreement) and 'full negotiation' (no move until agreement is reached). The result of the survey is a clear majority on all but issue (a), allocation of profits, for full negotiation or even for unilateral worker decision-making. The strongest demands in this respect are manifested on work study and starting and stopping times; the least on profit allocation as noted, and then on absenteeism and discipline.

If we take the results in the three firms separately (see Table 12.2) it is noticeable that demands in Weldrill and Natco are broadly similar, but those in Epoch are at a markedly higher level (except on pensions, where for no reason I am aware of Epoch demand is the lowest of the three). Nonetheless the pattern of relative levels of demand as between issues remains similar, and only item (a) falls below 50% demand for the highest two levels of worker determination in each case. Even on this

item it is worth noting that very few individuals indeed feel that workers should leave the matter entirely to management. The full negotiation alternative remains overwhelmingly the most relevant category for respondents, with those looking to unilateral worker control remaining small in number (though reaching 24% on payment methods and 29% on starting and stopping times in Epoch).

TABLE 12.2 PROPORTION OF WORKERS OPTING FOR THE FULL NEGOTIATION OR WORKER UNILATERAL DECISION-MAKING ALTERNATIVES

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
(a) Profits	38%	45%	45%	43%
(b) Working Methods	69%	91%	73%	76%
(c) Work Study	73%	99%	80%	82%
(d) Redundancy	65%	91%	75%	75%
(e) Payment Method	74%	96%	70%	79%
(f) Pensions Scheme	75%	69%	76%	74%
(g) Start/Stop Times	77%	97%	78%	82%
(h) Rules	75%	93%	74%	79%
(i) Absenteeism	54%	73%	50%	57%
(j) Discipline	63%	67%	53%	59%

(See Appendix A, Table 3 for full results and full headings/issues).

These findings appear to confirm the relevance of negotiation as the context within which employees measure their desire to exert influence on issues. Comparison with Hespe & Little's findings is unfortunately made difficult by their use of a presentational device similar to the control graph. Thus they produce a diagram presenting what they call 'average opinions' (1971:341-342), still more unfortunately giving no account of their basis of calculation. It would seem though, that they have allotted cardinal scores from 1 to 5 for the categories, starting from 'management matter'. They also comment that there is little evidence of

a strong demand for control by employees, which accords with the results of this interpretation of how the scores are calculated.

On this basis their results are in marked contrast to my own. For comparison's sake I have estimated Hepse & Little's results from their diagram, and have calculated equivalent scores from my own results (see Table 12.3). These show a similar ordering of level of demand as between the various issues, but with a consistent differential of around one point between the two sets of results.

TABLE 12.3 'AVERAGE OPINIONS': TWO SETS OF RESULTS COMPARED

	<u>Hepse & Little Scores</u>	<u>My Own Results</u>
(a) Profits	1.33	2.83
(b) Working Conditions	2.75	3.65
(c) Works Study	2.69	3.82
(d) Redundancy	2.48	3.63
(e) Payment Method	3.20	3.76
(f) Pensions Scheme	2.83	3.61
(g) Start/Stop Times	2.92	3.85
(h) Rules	2.58	3.71
(i) Absenteeism	2.04	3.18
(j) Discipline	1.56	3.22

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

It has been shown by the results of the survey presented so far that participation is a matter of interest to employees, but this interest has been expressed in the context of influence over specific issues. It has not been shown that participation itself, rather than simply an improved situation with regard to these specific issues, is the desired thing. Indeed, the relatively low expressed interest in higher level decision-making as compared with matters relating to the job itself implies that control of the immediate features of working life is more important

than participation in some more abstract sense. Since much of the literature on participation treats the main concern as a matter of feeling as if decisions are being shared, i.e. the subjective experience of participation per se (see Chapters 3 and 4) it is important to see if this view holds up under further inspection. The achievement of their own interests (not just 'involvement') in a negotiating (not harmonious) context was confirmed as relevant to respondents in the last section. It will now be necessary to see whether participation rates as an important issue in its own right as compared with other factors. It is neither surprising nor particularly informative to be told that when the question is asked whether participation is a 'good idea' in pollster fashion the response is affirmative; relative priority is another matter.

Prior to the questions reported on thus far, respondents in my survey were asked to indicate their satisfaction with various selected aspects of their job, and then asked to indicate how important these same aspects would be if they were looking for work. Three of the fifteen aspects listed (see Appendix A, Tables 4 and 5) accord in one way or another with interpretations of what 'participation' is about: 'how do you get on with management', 'the opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way', and 'the chance of a say in the running of the firm'.

Although there may be some matters of general interest to industrial sociologists in the results of these questions, it will be necessary to confine discussions here to findings bearing immediately on the participation issue. Turning first to the views expressed on satisfaction, it proves to be highest for friendliness of workmates and then fringe benefits. The findings are summarised (for highest categories of satisfaction and importance in Table 12.4:-

TABLE 12.4 SATISFACTION WITH AND IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED FACTORS

%s	<u>All</u>		<u>Weldrill</u>		<u>Epoch</u>		<u>Natco</u>	
	S*	I**	S*	I**	S*	I**	S*	I***
(i) Relations with management	53	50	73	36	26	55 (7)	53	56 (10)
(ii) Security	76	80	82	75	82	83 (26)	70	82 (30)
(iii) Interest	67	75	68	56	56	82 (20)	70	83 (23)
(iv) Fringe Benefits	79	74	83	61	74	74 (20)	79	83 (27)
(v) Friends ⁺	86	-	93	-	82	-	84	-
(vi) Autonomy	60	65	68	57	45	65 (14)	62	70 (23)
(vii) Hours	75	63	71	56	60	55 (8)	83	65 (15)
(viii) Convenience	64	55	91	51	26	55 (12)	64	57 (12)
(ix) Participation	14	32	21	26	1	22 (7)	15	40 (12)
(x) Promotion	18	54	21	38	5	64 (22)	21	59 (15)
(xi) Working Conditions	59	76	79	67	43	78 (20)	54	81 (22)
(xii) Pay	69	64	81	53	56	67 (8)	68	70 (16)
(xiii) Skill	37	90	59	84	17	95 (60)	34	92 (45)
(xiv) Trade Union	42	54	84	54	18	48 (17)	27	57 (17)
(xv) Status	42	43	62	43	19	30 (7)	41	49 (9)
Overall Satisfaction With Firm	63		78		43		62	

* 'very satisfied' and 'reasonably satisfied' from Appendix A, Table 4.

** 'absolutely crucial and decisive' plus 'very important' from Appendix A, Table 5 for Epoch and Natco; 'very satisfied' only for Weldrill⁴. The figures in parenthesis for Epoch and Natco give results for 'absolutely crucial and decisive' only.

+ Friendliness of workmates was not considered a meaningful question in advance choice of jobs, and thus was excluded from the list of factors for 'importance'.

From this it becomes clear that satisfaction with participation in the running of the firm ranks lowest of all the fifteen items (14% in the top two categories). The ranking is reproduced in all three firms, with 21% satisfied in Weldrill, 15% in Natco and just 1% in Epoch. Only promotion prospects vie for bottom place in the expression of dissatisfaction (in Banks, 1963, it may be recalled that this is taken as one definition of participation, though that definition has not been treated seriously here). Satisfaction with job autonomy runs far higher, relations with management a little below this level, though neither ranks very high in satisfaction compared with other factors. Overall satisfaction figures confirm an emergent impression that Weldrill produces the highest expressed relative contentment (insofar as the figures are open to comparison in this way) and Epoch the lowest.

It is when we turn to an examination of the relative importance of the different factors that the findings on satisfaction are put in perspective. Not surprisingly, pay comes out as clearly the most important factor, followed by job security. Autonomy rates quite highly (and job interest and skill level, both items one might expect to be related to this, both rank a little higher overall). Promotion, with which satisfaction was so low, ranks higher in terms of importance (though markedly lower in Weldrill than in the other two firms). Relations with management rank third lowest in importance, just above the status of the job. Clearly lowest of all, however, is participation in running the firm. This result is reproduced in all three firms taken separately. In this most conventional sense of participation, involving taking part with management in higher-level decision-making, it proves to be the least important of the fourteen factors.

If we look more closely at the responses indicating that a factor is regarded as 'absolutely crucial', a few interesting findings emerge. Pay and security exhibit the expected high proportion, but the proportion also seems relatively high compared to the overall total for trade union strength (i.e. for those to whom this does matter, it tends to matter a lot). The general message remains that it is matters of immediate, recognisable substance which count most for respondents. This of course proves nothing about what 'should' matter to people most in terms of 'objective' interest. It embodies ideology, i.e. what appears, in the light of people's own experience, knowledge and socialisation, to be the key factors.

Nonetheless this finding, and the other conclusions which it serves to reinforce, do have a significant implication for the practice of participation, which emerged also from earlier theoretical and empirical material. It is that while participation is usually offered not only on a common interest basis but also as something which the concessionaries imagine to be a worthwhile offer in its own right, it proves in contrast to be a relatively unimportant matter or one instrumental to other ends for the supposed beneficiaries on the shop floor. This is, then, the attitudinal context within which participation schemes in their typical forms provoke little positive response from the shop floor : hence triviality (and/or instability) becomes a typical outcome.

THE MECHANISMS FOR PARTICIPATION

It was decided to ask respondents whether the seeking of greater say in running the company was a matter which they felt unions should take on. It should be noted that although the key issues over which workers wish to have more determination are matters of negotiation, when we turn to participation in a more abstracted, conventional sense (the chance of say, which has proved of such relatively low importance in itself) there are various reasons why unions may not be considered the appropriate channel. For instance, participation may be seen as based on co-operative relations as management argue; or they may not wish the unions to become engaged in what may risk collaboration (indeed they may not see participation as desirable at all - a reaction opposite to the more co-operative oriented one). Nonetheless, the other findings do suggest a likelihood that a majority would look to the union to seek a say in decisions, with whatever degree of enthusiasm.

In the survey, a question taken from the Affluent Worker survey in Luton was used. The findings in that survey were not for the most part strongly in favour of unions going beyond their traditional role, unlike those of my own study, as Table 12.5 shows:-

TABLE 12.5 SHOP FLOOR VIEW OF UNION ROLE

	<u>Own Survey</u>				<u>Affluent Worker Study*</u>		
	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>	<u>Craftsmen</u>	<u>Process Workers</u>	<u>All</u>
"... unions should just be concerned with getting higher pay and better conditions."	39	27	47	40	37	61	52
"... unions should also try and get workers a say in management."	61	66	52	57	61	22	40
Other/d.k.	-	7	2	3	2	17	8

* Excerpted from Table 47 in Goldthorpe et al, 1968:109. The two sub-groups shown, process workers and craftsmen, represent the two extremes of response in the Luton survey.

It will be seen that the Luton workers show a clear majority in favour of unions maintaining a limited role, though this is sharply reversed in one occupational group, craftsmen. The reversal of the overall finding is made clear by comparing the results of my own survey. This is repeated for all three firms, strongest in Epoch (66% in favour of unions seeking a say for members), then Weldrill (61%) and lastly Natco (52%).

Moving on to look at attitudes to different kinds of proposed mechanisms for participation, it is noticeable that there remains a great deal of support for ideas qua ideas. In the light of earlier findings, it must be stressed that the difference may be considerable between expressed enthusiasm for an abstract idea - the sort of thing that it should be recalled the media present as a 'good thing' in many cases - and the reaction to proposals in the concrete context of their own workplace. The contrast is most striking when we look at reactions to actual

practice (see Chapters 14 to 16 on this) and indeed there are many cases of people supporting an idea when their experience of what to the observer seems a very similar arrangement generates apathy or opposition. The role of the media in influencing general attitudes to ideas will be raised again below when comment is made on surveys of opinion on worker directors after a period of sustained press attack on the notion.

Firstly, though, the results of the question on attitudes to different kinds of schemes are summarised in Table 12.6 (see Appendix A, Table 6 for a fuller presentation). Below two figures have been reproduced, to show the proportions rating a proposal in some degree a 'good idea', and those who see them as all right in theory but unworkable in practice.

TABLE 12.6 WORKERS : EVALUATIONS OF MODES OF PARTICIPATION

s Proposed Scheme	All ⁺		Weldrill		Epoch		Natco	
	v/q	gd. Imp.	v/q	gd. Imp.	v/q	gd. Imp.	v/q	gd. Imp.
Job Enrichment	75	15	67	19	79	13	77	14
Works Council	83	13	87	10	83	11	79	16
Worker Directors	54	29	53	22	43	43	61	27
Work Group Autonomy	45	32	43	27	49	35	45	33
Extend Collective Bargaining	70	7	68	9	77	1	68	8
Profit-Sharing	89	7	85	10	97	1	87	8
Sell Shares to Workers	76	9	77	11	81	7	83	10
Worker Takeover	17	43	-	-	19	44	16	43

+ Includes only Epoch and Natco. on 'worker takeover' mode, as this possibility was not included in the Weldrill questionnaire.

v/q gd. = very/quite good

Imp. = Impractical

The most popular proposals on this basis turn out to be profit-sharing and works councils, a conclusion also confirmed in each firm taken separately (57% overall thinking profit-sharing a very good idea, rising to 75% in Epoch; and 43% rating works councils likewise). Next most popular is a proposal made by the 1973 Chancellor of the Exchequer, Anthony Barber, to make it easier for share option schemes for employees to operate through tax concessions. Job enrichment follows close behind this idea.

Extension of collective bargaining gets a fair bit of approval, but is not as highly rated as the above proposals (with only 20% rating it a very good idea, the figure being similar for each plant). This indicates that traditional channels are less enthusiastically viewed for the goal of participation than are those other mechanisms more normally associated with this term. This is not inconsistent with what has been argued about negotiation as the relevant way of dealing with significant issues, partly for reasons argued above concerning the desired role of unions. Further, there is the problem that in its existing form the union may be regarded as an insufficiently representative channel to gain greater say for workers themselves. Thus only 24% felt they had 'a great deal' or a 'reasonable amount' of say in their union, and 89% felt they should have more say (see Appendix A, Tables 7 and 8).

Work group autonomy is also, it will be noted, rated markedly lower than job enrichment, with just 45% rating it a good idea (only 20% very good). What is noticeable here is that a third of the respondents feel the idea is all right but could not work in practice. This particular category was included to tap the possibility that such a response is meaningful and has a very different significance to one which rejects an idea or is indifferent. It implies a sympathy with aims which might, therefore, suggest a far greater potential for conversion if circumstances changed awareness of possibilities. This, it seems to me, is a category which may account for many apparent rejections of proposals in polls which do not offer such an alternative, and shows the tenuous nature of much ill-thought-out or presumptive questionnaire and interview surveying. It is, in this light, perhaps remarkable that in all 77% of respondents approve of at least the idea of this degree of job control.

Worker directors deserve a little more attention, since the controversy surrounding the Bullock Report has recently made them the subject of a great deal of debate and assertion. Worker directors, it should be remembered, are the epitome of higher-level participation which proved of limited personal interest to employees. Moreover, there is very little experience for employees to go on⁵ even were they to make the link from practice to general attitude, which we have seen to be problematical - and so as Chapter 7 suggested, consistent and repeated media arguments are likely to have a major impact. These arguments tend to favour the four ideas which gained the highest vote in this survey (profit-sharing, works councils, share options and job enrichment) - and which are most likely to accord with unitary notions of participation. Extension of collective bargaining is discussed far less often by the media⁶, and it is significant that it still receives as much support as it does in this relatively abstracted form. Worker directors, on the other hand, are far less popular with the press, and the idea has been particularly reviled since employers and their representative bodies openly took hostile stances in their evidence to the Bullock Committee.

If we look at the results of my own survey in 1974, we find that 54% rate worker directors a good idea (25% very good), with support lowest in the company with apparently the worst industrial relations (at least at the time of the study), Epoch. Here it seems likely that the feeling that decisions are made in a company HQ too distant to be penetrated may be a major factor in the scepticism (and so the high percentage who think the proposal impractical - 43% - rather than a good idea simpliciter). Chapters 14 to 16 will indicate the differences in experience as between the three companies. Meanwhile, it is notable that the proportion of respondents who regard this as all right but unworkable is high in the other two organizations also.

Nonetheless, it is hard to read this result as rejection of the idea of worker directors. It seems more like an unenthusiastic endorsement, if it does not suggest that worker directors are seen widely as a solution to the undemocratic nature of industrial decision-making. These observations may help to make sense of the results of polls on the worker director issue published around the time of the publication of the Bullock Report. The interpretations I shall offer also cast doubt on those advanced as unproblematical 'fact' by those producing the polls in

question (in line with the dubious interpretations of the ORC poll which were referred to at the start of this chapter). Let me first summarise the findings of the polls:-

- (1) ORC (Times 26.1.77): a majority support workers on a supervisory board as a "good idea", but there was at best "lukewarm enthusiasm" (?). Only 15% support parity on the board, and the union channel of appointment (how described/phrased?) is "firmly rejected". There is still a demand though, for a "bigger say" in areas "of direct relevance to themselves".
- (2) Market Research Society (Financial Times, 26.1.77): In response to a question as to whether worker directors were or were not a good idea, 63% of union members (and 48% of non-unionists) are reported to have approved them. But only 18% of unionists (10% of non-unionists) thought they should be introduced by law rather than voluntarily.
- (3) Survey commissioned by CBI (Times, 18.7.77): "Fewer than 10 per cent of employees strongly favour board level representation as an effective means of participation, and only a further 24 per cent 'tend' to be in favour of it". The lack of support was, interestingly, highly contingent to go by the CBI survey, since 90% wanted further consultation - the implication presumably being that demands would grow with frustrated aspirations. It also seems to be presumed in the CBI interpretation of these results that they indicate an endorsement of management reasons for disliking the idea, a supposition made to look extremely dubious by evidence presented here on competing views of the purpose of participation.
- (4) MORI (Sunday Times, 30.1.77): this is a more detailed study, which asks whether worker directors would be a good or bad thing for various entities. 77% of unionists (74% of all respondents) think them a good thing for

company employees; 68% (65%) for the company;
 68% (55%) for the unions; and 72% (64%) for the
 country. On the level of representation desired,
 65% of unionists (60% of all respondents) want
 less than half the board to be worker representatives;
 and only 23% (24%) want half or more of the board.
 Finally, 84% of unionists (87% of all respondents)
 want worker directors elected by all employees;
 and only 10% (6%) want them appointed by the unions.

This issue seems worth a little further elaboration in the light of the centrality of the worker director question in the debate on industrial democracy in the last few years. So what comments can be made? Firstly, any rejection of the worker director idea since the time of my own survey (and the contradictions between the polls and the general issue - compare approval of the idea in (4) above, and progressively less in (2) and (1), with the 'independent' survey for the CBI in (3) - which suggests problems of comparability and reliability in questions, method etc.) could be explained by the media attack. But overall the results seem not too inconsistent with my own. What I did not explore were the issues of the proportion of the board to be worker representatives, and the channel of representation, and it seems probable that respondents have been strongly influenced by the media here. Particularly strong attacks on parity and on union control (single-channel) as in the TUC recommendations of 1973, may well have influenced opinion markedly, particularly in the absence of direct experience. Moreover, rejection of the unions channel as presented in the MORI poll could be based on suspicion of unions, or quite differently upon an insistence on the rights of workers to elect board representatives themselves (apart from the other non-managerial reasons for not wanting participation via the union raised earlier). In any case, the MORI possibility is an extreme in which it appears that employees and perhaps even stewards are totally disenfranchised, which is by no means the only version of 'single-channel' representation.

Whether employees are right to want a channel validated by the influential rhetoric of bourgeois democracy is an empirical question. Earlier analysis has suggested that a consequence of accepting such an arrangement is a concomitant lack of purchase on managerial power, which leads to

either dissatisfaction by employees, or perhaps to disillusion with the whole idea. To be fair, though, we should not dismiss suspicion of union control when unions are widely experienced as undemocratic⁷ just because such a view is taken up and misrepresented by managerial or media accounts.

But we have now wandered some way from the conclusions which can be inferred from my own survey. To complete the observations, then, we find little credence is placed in the idea of workers running their own firms in Epoch or Natco (this possibility was added following the Weldrill survey). Only 7% in each firm think it a 'very good' idea, with 17% overall approving the notion. It is here, though, that we get the highest proportion, 43%, who rate the idea all right but unworkable. This means that 60% of the respondents are attracted by the concept, with the predominant reaction suggesting a sense of inefficacy or lack of feasibility (a plausible judgement in the current context). As in Chapter 7, then, we find a co-existence of embracement of ideas of managerial origin and of potentially radical ones, in this case represented respectively by the unworkability of worker control, and its enduring attractions.

CONCLUSIONS

To review briefly the main findings presented in this chapter and the inferences drawn from them:-

- (1) It is the job itself rather than higher-level participation in which individual respondents most want greater say.
- (2) Over a wide range of issues employees express a high demand for a say, but their perception of the amount of say they have falls well short of their ideal.
- (3) It would appear that when concrete decisions and strategies are involved, particularly when these allow for the key issues which are traditional areas of bargaining, then a negotiated, conflictual mechanism is most relevant to shop floor respondents.

- (4) As a goal per se participation seems far less significant to workers than other requirements they have of a job. This particularly suggests that where participation is offered as a substitute for wage increases or other substantive improvements (rather than as a channel to achieve these) this is unlikely to find much favour with employees. (The case of Chrysler in 1975 would seem to have illustrated this well.⁸)
- (5) A lack of general enthusiasm for participation as against other matters may prevail, but this seems empirically consistent with an endorsement in a more generalised context of fairly standard participation proposals. On the other hand worker directors, and still more worker takeover, seem less well supported, though nonetheless attracting perhaps a surprising amount of backing. Extension of collective bargaining is less popular in general terms than (3) above might have led one to expect, but this may be either explained in terms of the observations on consciousness in Chapter 7 (particularly the gulf between the local-context call for bargaining power and effective unionism as against the more general, media-influenced notion of unions as irresponsible, too powerful etc.); or it may reflect a lack of belief in the union as an adequate democratic channel for all negotiation. Other possible factors which might have led to a negative reaction to union entanglement in participation schemes from supporters as well as less enthusiastic observers of unions were also discussed. Nonetheless, the support for this method remains quite high.

Some further conclusions warrant drawing out before this chapter is brought to a close. Firstly, the existence of a conflict of interests was posited in earlier chapters as a starting point for an analysis which sought to make sense of existing evidence on the operation of participation. To have an effect on actions, such conflict would have to be in some way reflected in perceptions. In Chapter 7, using material from my own survey and other sources, a general description of the forms of working class ideology was constructed which indicated inter alia the co-existence

of oppositional and accommodative outlooks. One implication was that attitudes (and actions) could not only be contradictory in nature, but that also they would be likely to change according to context. The same impression is gained from an examination of the material presented in this chapter. Thus the conflictual element is indicated by the response to a negotiative strategy and for other reasons elaborated above. At the same time, the evidence on the perception of participation (see Chapter 3) and the endorsement of schemes which are usually presented in unitary terms shows an element of dominant, unitary ideology in attitudes. Which will be uppermost in determining action will, it is suggested, depend on the context; but when the key issues at work arise in reality, conflict is, it is argued, likely to predominate.

Secondly, it is apparent that questionnaires can only make an indicative attempt to illuminate the dynamics of consciousness. The weaknesses here can be illustrated by reference to the responses on the interest in affecting issues. Investment allocation came relatively low, it will be recalled, yet in the event of a crisis threatening redundancies such an issue might rapidly come to be seen as being of central importance by workers, as indeed has been the case on many occasions in recent years. Appearances may suggest investment to be a remote, insignificant issue until its importance is made visible by circumstances.

However, allowing for such weaknesses, the recognition of latent ideological elements in attitudes does make possible some plausible indications of the processes of consciousness which are likely to be involved. In other words, cohabitation of accommodative and oppositional perspectives suggests that the latter is there to be tapped and used to make sense of the situation as and when conflict becomes visible.

Thirdly, then, this enables us to add interpretive depth to the kinds of outcomes described and processes posited in Chapters 9 to 11, particularly Chapter 10. Thus a scheme may be accepted as a 'good thing' in fairly general terms, in response to the rhetoric which suffuses its introduction. Once concrete issues are being dealt with, however, the emergence of conflict and/or irrelevance (triviality) could be expected to affect attitudes in a way discordant with managerial (or certain aspects of shop floor) expectations. Thus the acceptance of ideas like works councils, or profit-sharing, or job enrichment, is likely to tell us

little about how 'participants' will react when faced with the scheme in operation, unless that acceptance is regarded critically and investigated further. This complex ambiguity of general attitudes together with the potential dynamic, it is suggested, is in line with the arguments of this thesis and at the same time lends them depth and colour.

The next stage is to examine managerial attitudes to identify how areas of apparent common ground with the shop floor can co-exist with areas of disagreement. This is the task of Chapter 13.

CHAPTER 12 : NOTES

1. See above, especially Chapter 3 where Almond & Verba's argument is criticised following Pateman (1970, 1971). To accept the 'civility' argument is to suggest that workers broadly approve of the status quo, seek little active part in it, and hope for change only at the margins, perhaps increasing job interest without challenging authority structures, for instance.
2. The issues were selected from those used in the other schedules, notably the Affluent Worker study and that of Blackburn and Beynon (1972).
3. For a discussion on the notion of perceived say, and its distinct status vis-a-vis actual and formal say, see the critical discussion of Walker in Chapter 4 (pp 79-81) and the development of these categories therefrom.
4. In the first plant studied, Weldrill, the headings used had 'very important' as the strongest alternative, followed by 'above average importance'. This was found not to differentiate adequately between the different areas, since few respondents were prepared to classify items as less than very important. The addition of the more emphatic 'absolutely crucial and decisive' in the later two studies seemed to achieve the hoped-for differentiation. The totals under the 'importance' columns in Table 12.4 seem fairly comparable as between organisations, but the totals for the highest category for Epoch and Natco have been added for comparison.
5. Thus according to one report (Financial Times, 17.3.77) an Industrial Society survey found only one company with an employee representative on the board, nor have I found reference to more than one or two isolated cases in Britain.
6. Though I have not undertaken any systematic survey of press coverage, my impressionistic account is based on the accumulation over some years of a large collection of cuttings on industrial relations in general and participation in particular.
7. For a development of this rejection of the Bullock Report from one marxist standpoint see Skillen, 1978.
8. Confronted with a strike at their Coventry plant, Chrysler produced, apparently out of the hat, a worker participation scheme as part of their settlement offer. Not surprisingly, the reaction of worker representatives was primarily suspicion, and an insistence that while participation might be considered it was a different matter from that which required settlement, i.e. wages: it was not something which could be traded off against a cash deal.

AFTERNOTE TO CHAPTER 12

CONTROL GRAPHS : A CRITICAL VIEW

The control graph method, at the instigation of Tannenbaum's work, has come to dominate a great deal of the gathering and presentation of evidence on attitudes to worker participation.* It is the view of this writer, however, that the method has serious shortcomings which deserve to be aired given its degree of influence (measured by control graph or otherwise!) in the literature. In particular, responses are generated to an abstracted set of levels of say, divorced from any concrete social context and with no indication of what is meant by the different levels. They are then analysed further, outside of their political and social context to yield the appearance of somehow 'objective' data, and presented in graph form to heighten the 'scientific' appearance. This does not mean that no useful information can be gained from such an approach (though the control graph itself is a particularly tendentious creation), but that such information must be regarded as highly contingent, and used with extreme care, preferably in combination with other methods. By and large it is not so used.

Let us examine the assumptions and problems of the method a little more closely. A glance at the question in Appendix A, Table 2 (and see Table 12.1 and the discussion thereof above) will serve to remind one of the approach used by these researchers. No specified mode of decision-making is offered, (compare the question in Appendix A, Table 3) and so what constitutes a particular degree of influence ('quite a lot', 'some' etc.) is left to the interpretation of each respondent. There is no reason to assume that different individuals will rate e.g. being able to determine a particular form of piecework calculation in the same way as others will rate it. Nor would the researcher have any grounds for judging - thus this hypothetical control of piecework payment method may be judged by the fact that it does not challenge the existence of piecework per se, or of management discipline of those whose work quality or pace they judge poor; or this wider dominance of the labour process form may be taken for granted, and the degree of say judged by how much real control there is within its terms of reference. If one adds to this

* These include a number of Yugoslav sociologists - see e.g. Rus, 1970; Obradovic, 1970; Zupanov & Tannenbaum, 1968; Kavcic et al, 1971) and other studies such as Bowen et al, 1974; Bowen, 1976; Rosner et al, 1973.

differing interpretations of the language (i.e. 'great deal' may be read as meaning extremely high influence by some, and as markedly less than this by others who would respond, say, to 'a vast amount' quite differently) then it can be seen that potentially the variation in the meaning of any response is enormous. One is far from measuring merely differing opinions on the actual amount of say judged in shared terms on the part of the respondents. In addition there are at least the major factors described above intruding on the response: degree of say relative to what? judged in which political terms? formally in theory, or in practical practice? rated how in terms of vague phrases indicating degree? The language and socio-political context issues come most strikingly to one's attention when confronted with research which purports to evaluate comparatively the degree of perceived say in different cultures which also have different languages (i.e. where approximate equivalents have to be found) - see Rosner et al (1973) for such an attempt.

These difficulties render reliance on this type of question problematical enough, and at least warrant great care and reservation in interpreting the findings in isolation from other sources, even if one allows some assumption that people will share the same broad meanings to phrases describing level of say. The problem is less severe, though, if the results are used only to indicate the ordinal ranking of degree of say as between different topics, and as a broad indicator of perceived actual influence. This makes it possible to draw some useful indications from a comparison of expressed ideal and perceived actual say on each topic also i.e. respondents can reasonably be assumed to rate 'quite a lot' above 'some' and so on, on the scale used, though one cannot say how far above.

However, this is not the approach adopted by the researchers employing control graphs. Control graphs employ cardinal ratings derived from the overall responses by allotting absolute scores to each level of response (5 to 'a great deal', 4 to 'quite a lot' and so on), and averaging the result. This is what produces the seemingly 'hard' data used to compare different factories, and even different societies with different languages. If one adds to this the tendency of the researchers to slide from perceived amounts of participation to treating these as objective measures, particularly untenable if considered in the light of discussions of ideology and consciousness (see Part 3), the reasons for speaking

against this method become plainer still.

Finally, the writers who use control graphs combine it, in almost every case, with an implicit quasi-unitary conception of industrial relations shaping their present interpretations of their findings. Thus it is assumed that all groups may have more say, management and subordinates alike, and thus that power is not necessarily a matter of conflict.

I have expressed my criticisms of this conceptual legerdemain in Chapters 5 and 6 above, and will not repeat them here. Clearly, though, perceptions (particularly assessed in this manner) are no evidence that a 'positive-sum' view of power is objectively tenable, and indeed illustrate the slippage from perceived ideal to perceived actual to objective influence on decisions noted above in these writings. Once again, the methodology camouflages the flagrant misuse of threadbare evidence.

CHAPTER 13 : MANAGERS, WORKERS AND PARTICIPATION

The previous chapter outlined the main contours of shop floor attitudes to participation. I shall now examine management responses on the same issues, and in the process I shall compare these with their manual employee counterparts. This will serve to clarify further the forms which opinions take in practice, acting as a complement to the information on the actual outcomes of schemes examined in other chapters. To achieve this, the current chapter will also elaborate upon areas of actual and apparent consensus, on the contradictions within management as well as within worker attitudes, and on the grounds for conflict between the two once the ideas are put into practice. For this, a starting point will be the analysis of management consciousness developed in Chapter 8, and the specific findings already reported in Chapter 3 on perceptions of worker participation. Before proceeding, then, it seems advisable briefly to remind ourselves of those findings. In terms of the working distinction made in Chapter 8, we are concentrating here on the attitudes of practising managers, not on management ideology as a body of legitimacy thought.

To recall the chief findings of Chapter 8, firstly, managers' attitudes were found to contrast with those on the shop floor in certain expected ways, for instance rejecting the idea that profits should go to workers rather than shareholders, and even more sharply that foremen could be displaced by workers, whilst supporting the idea that workers should put themselves out to be loyal to their firm. In this respect, then, managers are predictably liable to give more support to unitary 'enterprise-consciousness', particularly in prescriptive contexts, but also in descriptive ones (c.f. the football team question).

Secondly, predictions by some authors (e.g. Mann, 1970) would lead one to expect middle-class consciousness to be internally pretty consistent. In my own study, however, managers were found in many cases to be equivocal and at least partly affected by labourist ideology. Thus their inconsistency on the strikes/labour withdrawal questions was as great as that of workers, while a majority on the football team questions still selected the 'co-ordinative' rather than the 'harmonistic' alternative. Moreover, 87% felt unions were important for workers, though as we shall see their views of what role unions should play does not necessarily

accord with that of shop floor members themselves. Managers' backgrounds (see Chapter 8) in my own study suggested one source of contact with working class ideas (in addition to the internal contradictions of dominant rhetoric and the partial success of unions in achieving legitimacy for their existence at least). It may be hypothesised that higher and lower management echelons (a distinction not possible to pursue with my own data) will differ in attitudes, and that more careful differentiation will be necessary in future studies to identify potential differences in interests and perceptions.

Thirdly, then, these ambivalent management attitudes were carried over into those views on participation already examined. It is not accepted that participation is a 'bad thing', while advocacy of worker obedience gets a very mixed reception. This can be seen as partly a consequence of the mixed messages carried by notions of 'participation'. Thus the other studies reviewed in Chapter 3 were shown to accord with a managerial rejection of ideas containing reference to worker prerogatives (i.e. labour-oriented notions), and a favouring of more harmonistic and efficiency-oriented versions of the goals of participation schemes. The findings in my own survey, cited in Chapter 8, broadly affirmed this account. Thus the experience of labour relations and the infusion of labour ideology may help explain apparent ambiguity in managers' views of participation, but nonetheless their conceptions of its purpose remain essentially at odds with workers' own notions.

Finally, drawing on evidence from Nichols and Beynon (1977) and R.Elliott (1975) as well as my own study, it was suggested that in practice pro-management conceptions are the ones management will be constrained to try and implement. Whether this is through a commitment to ideas which justify allowing participation, or job enrichment, only within the framework of achieving management goals (Nichols), or because of division of 'idealism' from the 'force of circumstances' in some sense (c.f. Elliott) is an open question, but both clearly play a part. Thus it was noted that Watson (1977) shows that regardless of background or generally espoused values, personnel managers remained just as likely to put harsh decisions on redundancies and the like in to operation.

In the light of these findings reported to date, let us look a little more fully at managers' attitudes in comparison to those reviewed in the

previous chapter for shop floor respondents. In fact the managers' questionnaire was longer than that for shop floor workers since it sought to elicit their views not only on what say workers should have but also on their own situation and aspirations as employees. This will perhaps help to highlight some of the internal contradictions in most management positions below executive level. For the most part, however, given the limits of space I have chosen to concentrate on management views on workers' roles rather than their own.

HOW MUCH SAY FOR WORKERS?

To begin with, management views on how much say workers have and should have form an interesting basis for comparison with workers' own views on the subject.

Table 13.1 (summarising findings reproduced in full in Appendix B, Table 1) shows that management feel workers have a fair amount of say on most issues. The most notable exceptions in this respect are purchase of machinery and, more unexpectedly, organization of their (workers') own work. Table 12.1 shows that workers themselves did not rate this topic markedly lower than others, so it is interesting that management should pick it out as an area of low worker control.

TABLE 13.1 MANAGERS' PERCEPTION OF WORKERS' ACTUAL AND APPROPRIATE INFLUENCE

%s	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<u>Workers actual say</u> (<u>'a great deal' &</u> <u>'quite a lot'</u>)	<u>Workers should</u> <u>have more say</u>	<u>Workers should</u> <u>have less say</u>
(a) Facilities	66	10	2
(b) Disciplinary Matters	62	4	30
(c) Who Gets Laid Off if Redundancies	50	16	26
(d) Organization of Own Work	18	27	6
(e) Fixing Work Standards	40	25	16
(f) Method of Payment	64	12	12
(g) Rate of Pay	76	12	12
(h) Purchase of new machinery/equipment	8	25	2
(i) Allocation of overtime	30	6	21
(j) Safety Matters	70	31	2

Generally, however, it seems that managers adjudge workers to have far more say than workers themselves estimate, even allowing for all the problems of comparing the two sets of results. Although it is not directly comparable, Column (3) in Table 12.1 signalling the 'gap' between workers' perceived actual and ideal say indicates the difference of opinion between workers and management when considered along with Column (2) in Table 13.1 showing the proportions of managers feeling workers should have more say.

Amongst managers, then, it would appear that for the most part there is very much less acceptance of the desirability of workers getting greater

say on specific issues than amongst workers themselves. This, it may be suggested, reflects a tendency of managers, as compared with workers, to have both a higher assessment of existing worker influence and a lower assessment of desirable worker influence. The data cannot convincingly estimate the relative importance of these two aspects (though control-graph techniques, if adopted, might give a false impression of allowing such an estimate). It is noteworthy, however, that as Column (3) of Table 13.1 shows, there are issues - particularly disciplinary matters, who should be made redundant (c.f. the Glacier conflict on this discussed in Chapter 10 above) and allocation of overtime - where a sizeable percentage of managers feel worker influence should be reduced.

If we look a little more closely at specific issues, one area immediately stands out as a potential focus of conflict - pay. This was, it will be recalled, the most salient item in worker assessment of a job (see Table 12.4) and it was also the topic with the greatest apparent gap between workers' perceived actual and ideal degrees of influence (Table 12.1). Yet in Table 13.1 pay emerges as one of the areas where very few managers feel workers should get more say (reflecting the estimation of three-quarters of management that workers have a great deal or quite a lot of say here already). The same applies, a little less sharply, to payment methods. On the other hand, managers seem relatively keen on workers gaining more influence in an area that concerned workers themselves least: purchase of machinery (though here the implication/form of increased say need by no means necessarily be the same for the two sides¹). There is relatively high ordering of job autonomy as an area of reform by both management and workers - but this still entails only 27% of managers who feel workers should get more say. The same applies to health and safety, yet while more managers go for greater worker say here than on anything else (though they rate existing say quite highly), it is still just 13% who opt thus. Since this survey in 1974, we have seen the new Health and Safety at Work Act introduced which was heralded in some circles as a ready area of consensus on joint control with a greater role for worker representatives. But the findings of this survey suggest that conflict is as close to the surface here as elsewhere - as does any consideration of the reallocation of resources required for any but superficial changes on the health and safety front.²

It is, nonetheless, highly instructive to study the results of managers' answers to the alternative question on exercise of influence - that which poses specific procedural strategies in terms of degree of negotiation. Table 13.2 below makes it apparent that there is a fair spread of management opinion, but with a preponderance opting for the full negotiation alternative as with shop floor respondents (see Appendix B, Table 2). Certainly the proportion of management in this category is not as high as for workers in most cases, and there is practically no acceptance on any issue that unions should exercise unilateral control. Nonetheless, on six of the ten items (and almost on a seventh) a majority of management select the 'no go before negotiation is completed' alternative. Except on allocation of profits there is negligible assertion of the appropriateness of total management control and even here at least some consultation is preferred by two-thirds.

TABLE 13.2 HOW SHOULD DECISIONS BE MADE? MANAGEMENT VIEWS

%s	<u>Management Control</u>	<u>Consultation/ Part Negotiation</u>	<u>Full Negotiation</u>
(a) Profits Allocation	34	58	8
(b) Working Methods	-	40	60
(c) Work Study	4	20	76 *
(d) Redundancies	2	50	48
(e) Payment Methods	-	22	78
(f) Pension Scheme	4	28	68
(g) Start and Stop Times	-	35	65 *
(h) Rules	-	38	62
(i) Absenteeism	4	52	44
(j) Discipline	14	52	34

* including 2% (1 respondent) 'should decide'.

With the possible exception of redundancies, the items with high and low levels of appropriate say broadly correspond as between workers and managers (with absenteeism and discipline being relatively low for both, for instance). However, management and worker interpretations of the meaning of full negotiation may differ, it should be allowed. For instance, management may still hold views of what form that negotiation

should take that in theory - and especially in practice - may diverge from workers', as on differing ideas of what constitutes 'responsible' bargaining for instance, and remembering that managers are less unanimous than workers. Several comments need making here on these results nonetheless.

Firstly, they may be seen as further evidence of something observed in Chapter 8 - the strength of labourist ideology among many managers. This is particularly likely to set apart these practising managers from board room spokesmen.

Secondly, this difference may reflect a legitimization of unions (under certain constraints, at least) or it may be no more than a strategic view. Thus if the role of unions is accepted (and in the three organizations studied it should be recalled that they were well established), then the advantages of a tacit acceptance of their role may be apparent.³ Since other findings, above and below, indicate the still-powerful but contingent management attachment to consensus images, there is reason to place credibility in the notion that management confusion is playing as great a role as strategy.⁴ But this conclusion is highly tentative, and it seems that a good deal of research is needed on management attitudes to enable more reliable and accurate interpretation of them.

SATISFACTION WITH AND IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES : MANAGERS ON WORKERS

At this stage in Chapter 12 we moved on to examine worker satisfaction with various aspects of the job, and then to see what importance shop floor respondents attached to these areas of concern. In the questionnaire to management it was decided to examine manager perceptions of worker attitudes on these issues, to see how accurate an appreciation of these (at this level of analysis at least) they possessed. The results are reproduced in full in Appendix B, Tables 3 and 4, but are summarised in Table 13.3:-

TABLE 13.3 MANAGERS : PERCEPTIONS OF WORKER SATISFACTION
AND CHIEF CONCERNS

	<u>Workers</u> <u>Pretty Satisfied</u>	<u>Importance</u> <u>of Items *</u>	(Position)
(i) Relations with Management	33%	-	
(ii) Security	71%	108	(2)
(iii) Interest	40%	26	
(iv) Fringe Benefits	75%	63	(5)
(v) Friendliness of Workmates	60%	15	
(vi) Autonomy	25%	23	
(vii) Hours	49%	76	(4)
(viii) Convenience	38%	37	
(ix) Participation	18%	2	
(x) Promotion	15%	20	
(xi) Conditions	67%	92	(3)
(xii) Pay	45%	234	(1)
(xiii) Skill	59%	8	
(xiv) Trade Union	78%	27	
(xv) Prestige	23%	3	

* I have here committed a near heresy in terms of my argument in the appendix to Chapter 12 by allocating an arbitrary set of scores (5 for 'most important' down to 1 for fifth most important item). As such the findings are only broadly indicative, and have been used only for ordinal assessment, even though, for instance, pay would count far ahead of the rest on any measure.

On worker satisfaction, managers were asked only to judge between three levels, 'pretty satisfied', 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', and 'rather dissatisfied'. As the findings reported in Table 13.3 show, more managers judge workers satisfied with the union than anything else (an interesting finding in itself, again perhaps indicative of a split between plant-level, practising managers and public spokesmen who harp on the putative split between unions and membership). Large majorities also perceive worker satisfaction on fringe benefits, job security, working conditions, and less unanimously on friendliness of workmates (with which workers themselves expressed greatest satisfaction). On the other hand, few managers think workers are really satisfied with promotion, participation, prestige of their jobs, or autonomy, and only one in three think them satisfied with their relationship with management. In these last three respects, managers seem overly pessimistic when comparing their view with employees' expressed opinions.

Overall, the perceptions of management show a fair accuracy, in the sense that they correctly identify most of the areas of greatest satisfaction as perceived by employees, and the two areas of greatest expressed dissatisfaction : promotion and participation in running the firm. If anything, they tend to be a little more pessimistic than a face-value reading of the workers' responses would call for.

A final point of interest is that managers seem fairly divided on worker views of their jobs. On autonomy, prestige and interest, well under half of managers think workers are satisfied, though where skill in the job is concerned 59% of them think workers satisfied. In most cases, though, the main body of opinion is that workers are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (43% on interest, 47% on autonomy, 60% on prestige). This might be interpreted by managers as an area of latent concern or as one of little importance, either being consistent with the finding that managers also feel workers rate these areas low in priority. The relative acclaim of job enrichment by management (see below) does, however, suggest some disquiet. Even if managers do operate with a Maslovian model of man, presuming an innate need - hierarchy stimulating eventual demand for more interest and responsibility in work, they do not however seem to share with Herzberg et al the belief that lower-order needs are already satisfied (any more than do workers themselves). It seems doubtful, though, that

such a conception of the situation is present beyond, perhaps, a fear of demands from below to push back the frontiers of control.

To ascertain management ideas of the importance of issues to workers it was decided to ask them to indicate the five most important items from the list, and in order of importance. The device used to summarise the findings in Table 13.3 should be regarded with the caution advocated for such approaches in the Appendix to Chapter 12 and the full results (in Appendix B, Table 4) are also available for perusal. As an ordinal device this approach seems a reasonable one, however, and the top five placings have been indicated in the table above. Managers overwhelmingly and correctly identify pay as the most important factor. They are also in line with workers in placing job security second, and in placing working conditions and fringe benefits high. They seem to overestimate the importance of convenience of the workplace, but this is not a large error. It seems, however, to arise from the marked underestimate of the factors relating to experience of the job which were discussed above. Thus most workers attach a great deal of importance to job interest, skill and autonomy, but all of these receive scant attention from management considering their assessment of worker preferences.

Management may also underrate the importance of promotion to workers, though this is a tentative conclusion since it was not one of the five most important factors overall in the shop floor responses. Managers are correct in giving little credence to the importance of two other areas, relations with management and, of course, chance of a say in running the firm. Participation is thus recognised as a matter of low salience in its own right both by workers and by managers assessing worker views.

MANAGERS ON THEMSELVES

As indicated at the start of this chapter, it is my intention to devote most attention to management views of worker attitudes. However, it may also provide some further insights on the nature of managers themselves (and of their potential role in the employment relationship) if we pay some attention to their perceptions of their own position and their aspirations. We have after all already encountered evidence that practising managers cannot be treated merely as a reflex of management ideology.

On the evidence of this survey, managers express more interest in participation in running the company than workers, and relatively less in participation at job level (66% in each case, with 46% opting for participation at both levels and 14% with no interest in participation at either level). This may be interpreted in various ways - for example, managers may be more aware of the relevance of whole-company decisions for employees (including themselves), and/or they may be aspiring to control decisions by gaining promotion and so interested for this reason. It is easy to explain an interest in autonomy (confirmed by results presented below) but less easy, perhaps, to account for the one-third of respondents who express no interest in greater say in decisions affecting their work. It may simply be that the amount of say is considered adequate as it stands; or it may reflect an acceptance of that aspect of management ideology which prescribes roles and authority to organizational function and position in the hierarchy; or it may just be lack of interest for this group of managers. Further indications may emerge from future cross-tabulation of the results. It does appear, however, that along with an interest in more say (which may take on an added significance as many managers' positions change and attitudes to unionisation and to their employers alter) there may be an internalisation of more functional notions of the allocation of management responsibility and discretion. The contradiction may not always be readily ignored or suppressed.

Managers rate the amount of influence they have on many issues below that attributed to workers⁵ but for the most part they feel they should exert a fair measure more. (on the face of it, the 'gap' in Column 3 of Table 13.4 is less than for manual workers but we should beware of

reading too much into a comparison on this basis between the two, rather than just within each group of responses).

The full results are reproduced in Appendix B, Tables 5 and 6, but are summarised in Table 13.4 along the lines of Table 12.1 earlier.

TABLE 13.4 MANAGERS : PERCEIVED ACTUAL AND IDEAL SAY

%s	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<u>Perceived Actual</u>	<u>Ideal</u>	(2) - (1)
	(A great deal/ quite a lot)	(A great deal/ quite a lot)	
(a) Facilities	38	43	5
(b) Discipline	52	73	21
(c) Redundancies	22	67	45
(d) Autonomy	88	100	12
(e) Work Standards	42	84	42
(f) Payment Methods	18	59	41
(g) Rate of Pay	10	73	63
(h) Purchase of Equipment	36	74	38
(i) Overtime	64	73	9
(j) Safety *	36	55	19
(k) Promotion	39	74	35

* only asked to 22 respondents.

It will be seen that job autonomy stands out as the area where greatest control is perceived - and that all respondents felt it should ideally be high. This helps to confirm one interpretation of the finding that respondents who were expected (rightly it proves) to value autonomy nonetheless produced a large proportion who did not express a demand for greater participation (see above). At the same time pretty low perceived influence exists for payment matters ((g) and (f)), and the disparity between this and the ideal say on rate of pay is the greatest for any issue. The fact that job control issues ((d) and (e)) have greatest ideal levels, rather than pay as for workers, suggests again that managers attach particular conscious importance to these areas, confirming the contradictory influences hypothesised earlier. Thus, too, the relatively low perceived say on work standards contrasts with that for autonomy. There remains a clear demand in most areas for more say overall for managers.

Turning next to findings on satisfaction with and importance of job factors (see Appendix B, Tables 7 and 8 and Table 13.5 below), the importance of areas related to intrinsic job satisfaction ((iii), (vi) and (xiii) most notably) is again apparent and marks managers' own concerns off from those they attributed to workers in this respect.

TABLE 13.5 MANAGERS : SATISFACTION WITH AND IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS JOB FACTORS

%s	<u>Very/Reasonably Satisfied</u>	<u>Absolutely Crucial/Very Important</u>
(i) Relations with Superiors	82	82
(ii) Job Security	78	65
(iii) Interest	78	94
(iv) Fringe Benefits	84	51
(v) Friendliness of Colleagues	98	n.a. *
(vi) Autonomy	78	82
(vii) Hours	72	23
(viii) Convenience	64	17
(ix) Participation	46	69
(x) Promotion	44	67
(xi) Conditions	88	81
(xii) Pay	58	76
(xiii) Skill	84	83
(xiv) Prestige	64	57
Overall Satisfaction	71	

* not asked as considered not something that could be meaningfully taken into account.

These results should be read in conjunction with the full figures in Appendix B, Table 7 since the small satisfaction figures conceal certain differences that show up in there. Thus the 78% for both (ii) and (iii) conceals that 24% on (ii) but 36% on (iii) (and, incidentally, only 31% of the 84% on (iv)) express themselves 'very satisfied'. As with workers, promotion and participation are the areas of least satisfaction, though while only 6% and 10% respectively express themselves 'very satisfied' on these issues, only 4% and 28% (the largest figure by far, then, on participation) actually announce dissatisfaction. As with workers, too, pay comes next in line, with least positive satisfaction expressed. But again actual dissatisfaction is low at 4%, and so satisfaction as measured here seems markedly higher on average on many issues than for workers.

On importance of job factors, we have already noted the significance of job interest. In contrast to workers' views, two other features related to participation - relations with superiors, and say in running the firm - are reported as mattering a good deal. Markedly little importance is attached to hours or convenience of getting to work, which is in line with what one might expect. Pay, though, does matter (if less than the factors related to job interest), while interestingly prestige of the job is rated lower, with 18% (the second highest proportion) rating it 'not very important' or 'not important at all'.

This material helps paint a rather fuller picture of the managers in the three plants where the study was carried out than had been possible earlier. There is little to surprise in these findings. Managers place greater stress on participation than do workers (or do so in response to the questionnaire, though this may have elements of self-presentation, i.e. of a 'public' response). They show less concern for matters like hours of work and convenience of getting there, as a middle-class stereotype would lead one to expect. Interesting (if of no special apparent significance) is the low rating of the importance of prestige. It is clear, finally, that for most of these managers the idea of a need for a greater say in the running of the firm is a relevant one - in this, at least, they display some similarity to their subordinates in the organization.

HOW SHOULD WORKERS PARTICIPATE?

Moving on, then, to a consideration of the proposed channels for participation, let us begin by reviewing managers' views on unions. We saw in Chapter 8 that 76% of our respondents disagreed that workers needed stronger unions, but nonetheless we have seen that this does not necessarily imply a rejection of the need to accept a sizeable measure of negotiation (Table 13.2). If we consider managers' views on the importance to workers of being in a union, it emerges that 53% rate it 'very important' and 34% 'fairly important'. It seems unlikely that a survey of the members of, say, the Institute of Directors would produce such a pattern (though presumption may be foolhardy!). Two further, open-ended questions were put to managers, asking what purpose unions served, and what other purposes if any they should serve. The responses

were found to fall into categories described fully in Appendix B.⁶ Broadly, managers who replied to the questions chiefly divided between seeing unions' purpose as protecting workers (41%) and making co-ordinated, more rational bargaining possible (43%). Few saw them as having no purpose (even if all eight managers giving no reply felt this), and only one in eight saw them as helping management solve problems. However, 59% of those indicating a further purpose unions ought to be serving mentioned some means of furthering the common interest (and those who wanted them to improve communication or to help workers participate could well fall into the same category). Once again the replies are of the expected type, but not labelling these managers as anti-union in any straight-forward way.

If we now consider management views on the various proposed forms of worker participation (see Appendix B, Table 12 and Table 13.6 below) a few unsurprising findings emerge - such as the popularity of job enrichment (44% rate this 'very good') and to a lesser extent works councils, profit sharing or shares for workers. Equally expected are the unpopularity of worker directors, job control (this makes a striking contrast to views on job enrichment), extension of collective bargaining and, above all, workers running firms. At the same time the significant contingent who rate the ideas all right in some of these cases, doubting only feasibility, should not be ignored - 24% in worker directors, 34% on job control and even 26% on worker-run firms. After worker control, opposition is greatest to work group controls (34% finding it a bad or very bad idea) and to worker directors (28% likewise). On collective bargaining extension 20% express themselves indifferent (as do 18%, interestingly, on cheap shares for workers) and only 26% are actually outright opposed to the idea.

TABLE 13.6 MANAGERS ON PARTICIPATION PROPOSALS*

Items	<u>Very/Quite Good</u>	<u>Impractical</u>	<u>Bad/Very Bad</u>
	<u>Idea</u>		<u>Idea</u>
Job Enrichment	77	21	2
Works Councils	74	16	4
Worker Directors	36	24	36
Work Group Autonomy	26	34	36
Extending Collective Bargaining	32	16	46
Profit Sharing	68	14	14
Shares Sold to Workers	64	10	22
Worker Takeover **	-	26	74

* See App.B Table 12 for full results.

** N=27 - not asked in Weldrill

Managers tend thus to be relatively keen on those forms of participation which might be judged to be less concerned with the challenge to their power. To elaborate on this, it would be interesting to know whether infeasibility is seen by most managers in terms of worker inability to make use of the system or some other technical or organizational hindrance, or in terms of 'misuse' by employees. A tendency for workers to view it in the former terms and managers in the latter sense might be expected from other findings, though it would be presuming too much to do more than suggest it as a possibility here. On the question of power redistribution, workers did not necessarily prefer those schemes that would seem likely to transfer power, though it seems plausible to suggest that they may have envisaged more 'genuine' power sharing than management aspirations or an examination of real world outcomes would afford.⁷ At the same time they were far more favourably inclined than management towards schemes which seem more promising as bases of conflictual power redistribution. The competing interpretations of profit-sharing, for workers consistent with dispossessing shareholders but certainly not so for managers, further indicate the underlying conflict on participation forms. Meanwhile,

the respective responses (again see Chapters 7 and 8) on whether supervisors are unnecessary (workers divided, management emphatically rejecting such a notion) speaks volumes for the difference in reactions on work group autonomy; and so implies conflicting meanings behind the apparently mutual support for job enrichment also. This is further reflected in the findings reported in Part Three where most workers rejected and most managers endorsed the statement that 'most management have the welfare of their workers at heart'. Other conflicts over the form participation should take have more recently been outlined by Farnham & Pimlott (1977, 1977a), who show far greater management than shop steward or trade union officer support for consultation as the most desirable form of participation, and conversely greater support among the union activist sample for worker directors. Managers are also, consistently with my own earlier observations, far keener on voluntary implementation of any proposal, while the union respondents strongly favoured legislation. Thus the impressions of conflict gained from my own survey are confirmed in this more restricted study.

CONCLUSIONS

Some of these findings may be clarified in the future when further analysis is possible (particularly cross-tabulation of some of the results). One tension in the discussion may have been immediately apparent, however, since while Chapter 8 showed a clear influence of labour ideology on managers, the emphasis here has been particularly on the distinctions between the two groups, workers and managers, in their views on participation. Whilst some common ground between the two groups has also been identified, the areas of conflict discussed coincide well with those expected on the basis of arguments elsewhere in this thesis. It is contended that attention to the relationship between actions and attitudes on the one hand, or to that between interests and structural constraints of position on the other, serves to confirm the validity of the emphasis here on contrasting views. Thus even 'progressive' or 'democratic' attitudes among managers will tend to provide scope for applying participation in a way which actually fails to achieve gains for workers. Managers' rhetoric will tend to embody the presumption of the need to protect the interests of capital even where there is some real resemblance to workers' views.

Moreover, it is apparent that there is plentiful potential, regardless of general opinions, for a differing reading of circumstances and decisions from that of labour, or for 'role-distancing' (attributing actions to 'force of circumstances' or to constraints imposed from above); Watson shows this well for personnel managers (1977).

Nonetheless the fact that managers cannot be equated with top directors should not be ignored, for all the constraints upon action which exist for those who dissent from the views of public spokesmen of business. Nor do managers at this lower level form a monolithic bloc themselves in terms of their opinions, as the findings here have made clearer. While Table 13.6 testifies to the tendency of managers to shun participation schemes which might be thought to undermine the status quo of fundamental authority relationships, it also bears witness to a considerable range of attitudes.

This variation has been noted in other sources also. It emerges to an extent in the BSC study by Brannen et al,⁸ both between managers and directors and amongst managers themselves. Thus in that study, 39% saw the main reason for participation in efficiency terms, 33% as increasing worker satisfaction, 21% as a combination of these two, and 5% as a human right. Yet only 4% went beyond seeing participation as information transmission or consultation and onto perceiving bargaining and joint decision-making as being involved.⁹ More significant still, whilst managers were divided on the desirable level of worker participation on various issues,¹⁰ as in my own study, it is noticeable that the more central an issue is to business operations the less the willingness to condone even consultation rights. In respect of their overall response here, in fact, these BSC managers contrast with the noticeable degree of support for ceding negotiating rights amongst my own sample of managers, since there was no support for any more than discussion rights on any issue. At the same time, earlier discussions above of the contradictory interpretation by managers and workers of apparently similar statements is corroborated by Brannen et al's finding that managers who support the idea of participation being about human rights are less likely to endorse participation as amounting to even consultation than their colleagues. Meanwhile trade union activities (officials and stewards) advocated more participation if they viewed its role in terms of such rights.¹¹

Perhaps the most detailed study of management views on this issue is that recently published by C.W.Clegg et al (1978). They identify three 'cognitive frameworks', characterised by opposition to participation (27%), those who favour only approaches to participation which are "soft on power" (job redesign and work group discussion meetings), 34% of the total, and those who also give some credence to worker directors and/or extending collective bargaining also, again 34%. The first group were typically right-wing in their 'political' views and took the view that industrial democracy would obstruct efficiency rather than aiding it. The second group were also right-wing for the most part, but took a more 'unitary' view of the firm, stressing communication as the reason for participation and viewing this as a means to raise efficiency. The third group were more likely to describe themselves as left of centre politically and to be more in favour of a democratic, power-sharing form of participation in verbal terms at least (it is difficult to tell how deep this goes from the data in the paper).

Acknowledging these differences, however, does not necessarily lead to a conclusion that even the more democratically-inclined group will act in a way concordant with worker interests in practising participation. Thus job redesign and work group meetings, and to a lesser extent (because of lesser support for them) extending bargaining and worker directors, were seen as means to reduce conflict. This was seen by almost all managers as the goal, as it seems was efficiency.¹² So, too, was job satisfaction for workers, though this in itself says little about what are seen as conditions for its achievement, and it is to be suspected from my data that this too is heavily conditioned by attitudes concordant with management interests.¹³

In other words, to quote another study described with disappointing brevity by Guest & Fatchett:

"While they (90 practising managers) rejected the view of the manager as a profit maximizer, profitability and variability were considered to be the primary goals of the organization. Participation seemed to be viewed as an aid to management rather than as a desirable objective in its own right." (1974:94).

The conclusion thus brings us back to that which concluded Chapter 8's survey of managerial attitudes in more general terms. Clegg et al argue that while some managers did legitimate rights of labour - and my impression is that more managers in my own survey do so than in theirs - all shared a 'pragmatic' view which seems to relate to the determining role of efficiency and so of 'organizational' requirements. It is at this level that the congruence of attitudes between workers and managers in certain respects cannot be seen to offset the differences manifest in other areas. The latter, it is argued here, constitute one aspect of the competing political economies of capital and labour, and are thus the views which come to govern actions when, in a participation scheme or elsewhere, interests consequently come to conflict. The resultant outcomes have been described in earlier chapters.

CHAPTER 13 : NOTES

1. This is a general problem of comparison, as made clear in Chapter 3 above with reference to the potential differences in the meanings attached to 'increased efficiency' and the causes of it related to participation by respondents. Similarly, in Part 3 and below, I have discussed the divergent meaning of profit-sharing for workers and management. Such differences may clearly extend to other areas where competing frames of reference may be operating.
2. The consensus view is implicit in, for instance, Atherley *et al*, 1975; Howells, 1974; D.Lewis, 1974. After the Labour Government's initial legislation introducing the idea of worker safety representatives the reality of conflict was ironically highlighted firstly by the reluctance of the government to bring this section into force because of the costs involved. Some of the internal areas of conflict are shown in Beale, 1978, and Harkins, 1979. By and large these too have to do with costs; and almost all substantial improvements require the company to bear costs which may be substantial.
3. Such advantages are indicated by Nichols & Beynon, 1977, for whom management had taken the initiative in Chemco in facilitating union entry, and thereby been able to exert control over union activities. Less planned but equally relevant acceptance is indicated by the studies by McCarthy & Parker, 1968; Evans, 1973; Batstone *et al*, 1977; Hart, 1979. It makes co-ordinated handling of industrial relations more possible, particularly where an agreement can be enforced by the union organization having been struck with the employer. Thus the closed shop has many attractions, as the case of the "Ferrybridge Six" dismissed by the Electricity Generating Board illustrates well, for all the attempts in the media to pin a threat to freedom on the unions.
4. Confusion, that is, unless members are seen by management as agents of consensus themselves - which does not seem plausible from other findings here.
5. Again this may be too simple a reading. What a manager sees as 'a great deal' for a worker, for instance, may be seen as rating a lesser category for him/or her self as manager. This reveals a further potential problem of Tannenbaum-type methodology where scores based on subjective phrases are allotted a quantitative significance regardless of context.
6. For details of the three questions reported briefly here see Appendix B, Tables 9 to 11.

7. This argument is based on the discussion of 'pseudo-participation/democracy' earlier in this thesis, in train with the contrasting conceptions of participation, and the conflicting expectations and practice of participation described at length above. Although earlier discussion focused on the pseudo-democratic nature of works council-type bodies, job enrichment or profit-sharing can be subjected to a similar critique.
8. Brannen et al, 1976, See Chapter 3 above for a discussion.
9. Brannen et al, 1976:47, Table 3.2.
10. Brannen et al, 1976:50-51, Table 3.4.
11. Brannen et al, 1976:52.
12. This the researchers say was their strong impression, though they are unable to unequivocally confirm this as an error led to the omission of this item from their questionnaire.
13. C.f. the frequent reference in management pronouncements to "involvement" and to workers "feeling" that they participate as if these amounted to genuine participation - See Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 14 : WELDRILL

In this and the succeeding two chapters I shall use the information gathered from questionnaires and other sources to discuss the three organizations in which my fieldwork was conducted. These case studies seek to complement and extend the depth of the material presented in Chapter 10 above. The sources used include observation, discussions with various actors (structured in varying degrees), and reference in two of the cases to publications which deal with the performance of arrangements from managerial viewpoints. For reasons of confidentiality concerning the identity of the organizations, the published sources will not be referenced specifically in what follows.

The remainder of this chapter examines the firm I have given the pseudonym 'Weldrill', and on which there is no such published material.

THE COMPANY

This firm was situated in a new town, surrounded by an area of declining, traditional employment (mining and railway yards). It was widely acknowledged to be the local leader in terms of wages and conditions (both within and outside the firm itself), and this should be borne in mind when interpreting earlier reported findings on satisfaction. Several times I was told by workers that while they had grouses about the firm there was no doubt that it was superior to the local labour market competitors.

The company's main product required a good deal of metal fabrication work for specialist products directed at a traditional industry, but diversification had taken them into various other fields of industrial engineering. Machinery in the plant was generally very dated, and work remained in somewhat short supply. As is fairly common in such plants, the manual workforce was about evenly divided between boilermakers and engineers. Total personnel employed at the plant amounted to just under 500, with somewhat more than half being classified as works staff. The survey took in only those who worked in the main workshops at the time of the study.

The factory had been established in the mid-1950s by a German-based group of companies. It remained a subsidiary financed two-thirds by German capital, one-third British, and its managing director was German, a fact which helps to explain some of the conceptions which the firm and in particular this manager brought to the industrial relations context.

The company and unions had a solidly established machinery of negotiation, and had operated since 1965 a high day rate payment system (which was not to become more generally popular as an alternative to piece rates for some years). Subsequently the system had had to be augmented by group (workshop) bonuses, with management dissatisfaction at low productivity and shop floor desire for greater earning possibilities. The need for this change seemed to have left a residue of scepticism on all sides as to the existence of any one 'correct' payment scheme, the conclusion being that any system will eventually create discontent, and that attachment among newcomers who have not experienced the battle to replace the previous scheme and its problems will inevitably be less than among those who have done so. There was also a good deal of scepticism about management consultants, particularly among the managers to whom I spoke, partly because a well-known firm had set up the payment scheme and partly because of other apparently unpleasant experiences following from the holding of group sessions and other activities during a more recent consultancy. The employees, both staff and manual, also talked of consultants they felt had been responsible for cutting jobs in an earlier exercise seen as carried out surreptitiously.

The trade unions seemed to be accorded relatively ready access to time off to carry out union duties, and had a union office which the two unions occupied on an alternating rota for regular business. Both management and outside observers perceived the unions within the factory as very powerful vis-a-vis management, and again relative to many factories this was the case, though most of the union representatives were less complacent or secure as to their power, recognising its limits and being more aware of management's final power and the fragility of their own if a decline in employment fortunes came about. Thus there remained a degree of pugnacity about the maintenance and enforcement of the power they had seen established. At the same time there was a noticeable degree of rivalry between the two unions, and management, too, frequently distinguished between the task of dealing with the two of them, though

they tended to express it in the terms in which it manifested itself to them, as differing personal styles. Thus there was also an element of tension in the joint negotiating arrangements between the two manual unions for major bargaining with management. The group bonus payment was in fact signed in two separate agreements between management and each union, in 1971, though a joint agreement not to have the machinery of negotiation affected by the Industrial Relations Act the next year was signed by both manual organizations and the two white-collar unions.

Although there was a marked presence of conflict relations between management and both unions (and I observed or otherwise learnt of several strident arguments over fairly everyday issues in the times I visited the plant over a couple of months), it remained pretty successfully institutionalised. Two interpretations may be ventured here, though they are impressionistic: that the unions recognised that management were aware of their ability to press matters and that they had done well in local terms; and that management did indeed take a fairly pragmatic (i.e. pluralist) stance towards union activity. There had been only one dispute involving a walk-out in recent years, and that had not lasted long. Thus whatever the management frustrations at what they in some cases and at some times saw as irrational but immovable resistance to their conception of the way forward, their annoyance had been restrained for the most part from extending into attempted unilateral action. Each side had its stories of the other's intractability, incompetence or idiocy, but in relative terms industrial relations were 'good' (a term I use with self-explanatory hesitancy).

PARTICIPATION

As I have previously indicated, I was directed towards Welldrill in the first instance by discussions with industrial tutors and others who had a familiarity with the local employment scene and knew that I wanted to examine companies which had made (or at least announced with unusual stress) attempts to introduce participative forms of management. In Welldrill both the brochure describing the factory to customers and the rule book put a great deal of emphasis on very unitaristically expressed versions of this, and the General Manager in particular attached a great deal of importance to the matter.

To quote the brochure first:

[Weldrill] has, for the past 15 years, actively encouraged the involvement of all members of the production team in the identification, investigation and solution of common problems; this policy has played a major part in ensuring that the production function operated at a high level of efficiency. The Company is justifiably proud of its achievements in the field of Industrial Relations and this is reflected by customer satisfaction in quality and delivery to schedule.

And the rule book (from the opening page):

... as part of the family [of the larger German-owned group], we cherish a close and friendly relationship. Since we are also a family ourselves, it is our aim to consider each and every member as such ...

There are three essentials necessary for harmony amongst any group of people who work together as a team:

- (i) The supply of all information necessary for each to play his or her part effectively.
- (ii) Agreed basic standards of behaviour and responsibility expected by the team from each of its members, particularly in the fields of safety, integrity and the welfare of all, and
- (iii) A unity of purpose for the common interest. As in all groups of people, differences of opinion arise from time to time. This conflict of opinion is quite normal and even beneficial if faced openly and frankly ... if each of us makes the effort, improvement will inevitably continue.

The reader will probably recognise here much of the language of those management writers who fall under the common label of 'neo-human relations'. The General Manager had in fact embraced this point of view to the extent that he had himself written short articles on the subject, including one for a local newspaper, in which his extended discussion of management styles appeared to owe a great deal to the writings of Maslow, Likert, Herzberg and others. He had canvassed his views widely among other managers and had attempted in terms of his own style and in occasional attempts to introduce more systematic reform to introduce it into the culture of the plant. He was insistent in an early discussion with myself that it was not so much a system of participation in the German sense that he sought (i.e. not one based upon institutional representation) but a relationship of 'Participative Management'.

In one of my earliest visits to the plant the General Manager described the system of 'participative management' as he perceived it. Joint consultation was undertaken on, for example, when holidays would fall and similar matters. The emphasis was on making sure that the top man didn't make all the decisions. Shop stewards would seek to take a problem up the line, but the system also entailed where possible bringing in and certainly keeping informed all the levels of management in making a ruling. This amounted to a 'participative style' as opposed to an authoritarian one; participation was more a matter of attitude than anything else. As he expressed it elsewhere in writing:

I do not mean /by "Participative Management"/ that Shop Stewards sit together with top management in committee to make decisions on a parliamentary basis, but a manager sits together with his team ... This Participative Management style satisfies the need of the team members to "accomplish".

If the emphasis in this respect was on consultation and on forming co-operative 'teams', yet at the same time part and parcel of the process was the attempt to closely define duties and to elicit maximum effort. Thus the primary objective, it was stressed in the early visit referred to above, was efficiency to ensure a sufficient profit within the firm, and the fact that this had been written into a joint agreement with the unions was represented by management as something important (though it was never to my memory mentioned by the unions as being significant at all). The same document stresses "mutual trust" and the unity of interests; had such phrases been applied rigidly the consequence would surely have been instability, but as has been seen by and large pragmatism won out beyond the verbal exchanges (though note the later report on the fate of a participative committee that was attempted). The General Manager himself commented to me on one occasion that the trouble with McGregor, Likert et al was that their theories were derived from American experience, and that these could no more be straightforwardly transported into the cultural patterns and industrial relations of the UK than the Dutch or German forms of participation machinery could.

The paradox in the minds of several of the managers I spoke to, and one also raised by the stewards, was the dominant role of the General Manager himself. In one manager's words, "Mr here encourages a participative style, so we have to follow that". Among managers

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there was a mixture of muted agreement or admiration for the General Manager's approach and an element of sardonic reference to this paradox, and to his over-attention to unity and consultation. The paradox was reinforced by reported loss of temper and reversion to a more authoritarian style under pressure on occasion (the impression among managers and stewards was that the General Manager was an authoritarian at heart, and that this showed through in his imposition of participation). Among the union representatives the expression of opinions on the General Manager was predictably more cynical as to motivation and so in its interpretation of any manifest transgression of the participative philosophy. The shop floor view of him varied; for the most part he was a distant figure, of course. However, one outspoken comment made to me on my questionnaire collection rounds expressed well the more critical view:

Mr is never seen round here. If he comes round people can't speak to him - I've seen them try, and he'll stop and listen but really won't do anything as he says 'it has to go through the proper channels'. I'd like to know who really manages the firm.'s got a thick brick wall between himself and the shops; he can't know what goes on.

The results presented later (see especially Table 14.6) indicate roughly how widespread this view is. Frankly one would be surprised not to encounter a lot of such comments from managers or shop floor in any establishment unless one entered with the preconceptions offered by reading nothing other than human relations texts.

In my view the General Manager did seem to embrace the unitary assumptions which he espoused more publicly (with some frustration at the impossibility of applying them due to the residues of conflict attitudes). He was strenuously anti-left - confronting me one day with a copy of Glyn and Sutcliffe's book, British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze, which he viewed as appalling, subversive rubbish, on the subject of which he raged for some minutes (to my diplomatically silent discomfiture). But he did not, I would estimate, see himself as a manipulator seeking control or as an authoritarian seeking legitimacy of control. In other words he encompassed much of the contradictory nature of management thought described in Chapter 8, as in other ways did most of the managers I encountered during or have met since the survey. It appeared to him that profits and efficiency served all, and that human relations

management was desirable as an embodiment of these common interests.

At the time the study was carried out no special institutions existed for participation. I learned, however, that on occasions in the past consultative councils had been tried out. The exact interpretation of the experience was, unsurprisingly but significantly, different on the union and management sides, but the basic story was the same. The best remembered attempt had involved setting up a committee that would discuss all the major issues in the company. The first meeting was enthusiastic, as a whole series of comments on production blockages and areas of potential co-operation seemed to be aired. Yet the zeal foundered in the face of attempts from the union side to introduce bargaining issues as relevant to the discussions and their being ruled out of order by the management. Management viewed this as a betrayal of the conditions of co-operation; unions saw it as management's unwillingness to see things from a union point of view and so consider factors central to any discussion of work arrangements. Both came out of the meeting cynical about the other's attitudes and intentions, and the meetings reverted to trivialities in the eyes of both before lapsing altogether. To the unions this decline was imposed by management, who determined that profit-creating matters or petty matters would be the order of the day. This interpretation was voiced by non-manual as well as manual representatives. For many managers it was the inevitable fate of the General Manager's idealism and willingness "to try anything". The blame for the decay of the council lay, in their view, with the unions; as one manager put it "they were either spending all their time on deliberately frivolous things - you know, like the skin on the sausage in the canteen - or the whole thing would swing right round to issues at the other end of the spectrum, like wages ... they'd never stick to relevant issues like safety matters ...". Since the appointment of many shop stewards as safety representatives in the last year or two I have observed in other factories how issues like these, supposedly areas of 'integrative bargaining', prove to be riddled with conflicts - the relevance of which is that no such magical 'relevant', non-contentious but important matters exist. In other words, the Weldrill experience, occurring within a relatively well-institutionalised and effective industrial relations framework, nonetheless fits closely with the less optimistic prognoses for participation rehearsed in Chapter 10; the better the intent the worse may be the disappointment and consequent deterioration in relations.

MANAGEMENT ATTITUDES

The most striking thing to emerge from a review of the various comments made by managers in all three of the companies included in the study when talking about the operation of participation arrangements in their own firm is a persistent reference, wistful or annoyed, to the intractability of conflict relations. The respondents were asked firstly where they felt the power lay in the firm. Of the 19 respondents in Weldrill, 7 mentioned the General Manager, 15 the trade unions, and only 1 German management. 2 respondents felt power was broadly balanced, and another 2 placed the shop floor (once with the unions) as the most powerful.

The next question asked how far it was felt management achieved the goal, quoted earlier from the Company Rule Book, of a 'unity of purpose for the common interest'. 5% (1) thought it was achieved completely, 20% 'usually', 45% 'about half the time', 30% 'rarely'. Two respondents did not specify a level, but one said that management could never achieve the utopia of getting the respect of all workers, while the other argued that common interest couldn't be measured thus as it was an individual matter.

The next question concerned the beneficiaries of the arrangements, in Weldrill's case the management approach and philosophy. Table 14.1 collects information for the responses of managers in all three firms and will be referred to again.

TABLE 14.1 MANAGERS : WHO GAINS?

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u> ⁺	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Management & Workers equally	24%	(33%)	50%	37%
Both gain, management most	10%	-	23%	14%
Both gain, workers most	33%	(50%)	- *	29%
No difference	10%	(17%)	18%	8%
Management gain, workers lose	-	-	5%	2%
Workers gain, management lose	10%	-	-	4%
Both lose	14%	-	5%	8%
Don't know	-	-	-	-
	(N=21)	(N=6)	(N=22)	(N=49)

+ The figures for Epoch are in parenthesis because of the very low level of returns there which render the results of little significance by themselves.

* In error this option was left out of Natco management questionnaire. This is unfortunate since it otherwise seems a popular response, though no-one wrote it in, or failed to answer, or put instead that workers gain and management lose. It is possible, though, that this omission accounts for the high support for the 'both equally' option.

In Weldrill two-thirds of respondents feel that both sides gain from the management approach; and 43% of them think that workers come out of it better than management. Nonetheless a sizeable minority, one-quarter, feel that either no difference is created by the system, or that both sides lose. Those who felt both sides lost all elaborated on their view. One said both lost as the philosophy didn't work; one that there would be equal gain for both sides if it were practised sincerely; and one that workers made a gain, but only in the short-run.

Subsequently, managers were asked how they would feel if the arrangement in their establishment were to be given up. The results, once again for all three firms, are reproduced in Table 14.2:

TABLE 14.2 MANAGERS : HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF THE SYSTEM WERE DISCONTINUED?

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u> ⁺	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Very Badly	5%	(17%)	9%	8%
Quite Badly	43%	(67%)	41%	45%
Wouldn't Mind All That Much	24%	-	23%	20%
Wouldn't Mind At All	14%	(17%)	27%	20%
Would be Pleased	14%	-	-	6%
	(N=21)	(N=6)	(N=22)	(N=49)

+ See Table 14.1 for explanation

Once again there is quite a spread of opinion, though the modal response in Weldrill (and the other two firms) is that managers would feel quite badly in the event of abandonment by management of the participative system. Nonetheless only 5% show a high degree of attachment by saying they would feel very badly, and 52% all told feel little or no concern, or would actually be pleased.

Managers' views of the participative philosophy thus present a somewhat tentative and limited endorsement at Weldrill. If most of them think that some gain accrues to management and workers, nonetheless the attachment to the system is limited. A great deal of power is attributed to the unions, and for most managers the control of the system lies predominantly either with them or the General Manager (who within management certainly did seem to dominate innovation in policy whatever the feeling about the viability of his approach).

Finally we can look at the results of a question asked earlier in the schedule, on the degree to which management are felt to be in touch with the needs of the shop floor workers; Table 14.3 summarises these:

TABLE 14.3 MANAGERS : HOW CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH THE NEEDS OF WORKERS ARE MANAGEMENT?

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Very Closely	41%	(17%)	-	20%
Reasonably	50%	(83%)	73%	64%
Not Very Well	5%	-	23%	12%
Not at All	5%	-	5%	4%
	(N=22)	(N=6)	(N=22)	(N=50)

By and large, then, managers at Weldrill regard 'management' (and the respondent who said they were not in touch at all added "senior" before management) as fairly well aware of workers' needs. At least one additional comment written in by a management respondent helps to put this in some perspective, however : "well aware of what manual workers think they require, but as management do not altogether agree".

UNION AND SHOP FLOOR ATTITUDES

Once again it is possible to infer reactions to participation as it did or might exist in Weldrill both from the questionnaire findings and from informal discussion, the latter being particularly helpful where it indicates union representatives' views. These last are in turn of particular interest since these are the expressed outlook of those with the most direct contact with management and so with the nature of industrial relations; they are also likely to be the individuals who would form the basis of any future participation arrangement.

In my first meeting with the stewards, almost the last occasion on which I was to see the representatives of the two manual unions jointly rather than separately during their respective spells in the union office, I met a wry response to my proposal to come and look at participative arrangements and attitudes thereto. In short, I was told that there weren't any. Subsequent discussions reinforced this sardonic view, for

the representatives of both manual and of the two white-collar unions. Indeed, the past experience which formed an important component of this judgement was referred to a few pages back.

The strongest common theme in these accounts of shop stewards was that participation was always limited to what served management. They held the reins of any scheme and would haul to a stop any progress in an undesirable direction. Thus one manual union's stewards spoke as follows:

[The General Manager] talks about participation, but there are too many meetings where he got up and stormed out ...

If he's not getting his own way, he says we haven't got the right to question his decisions on that ...

We can suggest something on wages, but on other matters [the Works Manager] says 'I'm the boss, I'll worry about that'...

And for the other union while some legitimacy was attached to participation as a means to increase efficiency and profits, this feeling was mixed:

I used to be a big believer in participation - but from a trade union point of view we lose out. We can't win.

The attitude of white-collar representatives rings in the same key:

Works councils are a waste of time; there's nothing that can be done there that can't be done by shop stewards ...

From workers' point of view this type of participation helps the machine run efficiently - actually it's the company that benefits from this ... it's one-way participation.

The prospect of further participation being introduced thus met with little interest from the representatives of labour. For the first union above:

We know the union wants to participate, but we are dubious about the position of shop stewards afterwards - he'd be a manager himself...

We don't want to participate ... we have to get involved for our own interest in training to ensure we get the craftsmen, or we'd have no members eventually ... but in a bonus scheme, where one man's performance drops so the group is affected, at one point the foreman wasn't dealing with him, we were - we became very wary of this, it's not our job.

The term 'lip-service' came up frequently in discussion both with these stewards and those of the other manual union:

If they said they want us to participate we would accept - but if it were lip-service, we'd resist ...

It doesn't make us happy to participate; it causes difficulties.

Another theme which was elaborated by multiple example, both by shop stewards and by ordinary shop floor workers during my discussions with them was the fact that they already participated through management inadequacies. Thus failures of organization in progressing production, or more frequently still design faults from the 'experts' in the offices, coupled with what were seen as irrational orders from production managers, had to be dealt with. These stories, duplicatable from almost any factory culture, emphasise the superior knowledge of those who actually make things, the way this remains devalued by organizational superiors, and the amount of money that has been saved (or could have been if somebody had listened) for the company. As one vocal steward put it, "They effectively have to design the fucker themselves." Yet if this was done and gave a degree of satisfaction through assertion of an important token of superiority in skill, in keeping a grip on the product and in a limited way on the production process, still it also tanged strongly of the resentment which echoes through these statements. This manifested itself more concretely, too, in a suspicion that despite paying its experts better than its workers the company leaned on this worker ability to make things work; most clearly for the stewards, "by offering co-operation you get put on more". Such resentment was expressed, too, in reference to management 'fads' which had led to the purchase without consultation of expensive items which had no use nor (in the eyes of craftsmen) ever could have had. You lose if you are consulted and try to help out, and you suffer mistakes that might ultimately threaten your jobs (and certainly affect work experience) if you don't. A world of contradictions.

The experience of work is perceived and managed in varying ways, but certain themes are common to most studies of factories and were observed by myself in Weldrill (unlike the other two plants where the opportunity for such familiarisation was not available). Thus I observed both those who worked themselves into a routine to accommodate what Baldamus calls the 'traction' of the job (1961), and others who swapped jobs at their

own discretion, preferring variety to rhythm (or in jobs where rhythm is less easily attained, such as crane operating). The personal control over such arrangements (observed similarly in the Hawthorne Electric Company's Bank Wiring Room) is, I suspect, crucial; attempts to utilise variety via job rotation or enlargement epitomise the failure of management theorists to grasp the nature of work satisfaction in the context of the capitalist factory. In one shop I saw what seemed to my eyes chaotic pressure, with people shifting hurriedly from job to job. But it was observed to me by one shop steward when I remarked on this that pressure was having to stick unmovingly on one tedious task for a long time. Moving around was to be much preferred to this, regardless of the apparent effort involved.

There were workers who expressed in conversation what the questionnaires also show - that some looked to co-operation with the bosses and disliked the unions. Some liked neither, bosses or unions. But the clearest grievances were against the nature of the whole set-up, perhaps because the most articulate discussion came from those who were able to generalise their feelings. To exemplify:

"The firm for me is just this footboard - I walk up and down here looking at that bit of corner all day ... once I clock on, I feel trapped, no way out ... pay is the only real compensation ... I didn't think much of the questionnaire, these questions on how satisfied you are with things, because pay conditions all the answers. If the pay's all right you see other things in a good light, if not the rest doesn't matter ...

Participation for me is the firm finding ways to get more profits. If you say so to them, they'd say that's what they're in business for. There's a lot of lip-service. When they say, 'pull hard together, boys', it's just words. There's no team. Weldrill is one of the better places to work for, management here are probably one of the best I've ever known. But I still think management are a load of shiteholes. That's the way it's got to be. Everything's done for a return. They won't keep anyone on surplus."

One older worker, who said he preferred not to complete the questionnaire, nonetheless volunteered his views:

" I remember being interested once, and saying that a job didn't give me satisfaction. The manager told me, 'We don't pay you to have a job to satisfy yourself - we pay you to satisfy us'. I've never forgotten that."

And finally, to cite a remark which perhaps expresses the limits of dominant ideology in the face of the everyday experience of reality more clearly than any theoretical formulation:

"Suspicion ... that's what I'm talking about ... let me put it like this : where does the barbed wire all round this place stop? D'you see? The fence stops at the side of the offices, see? I'll just ask you, which is it harder to carry out of here, a typewriter or a wrench? That's what I mean. Suspicion."

With that comment, let us turn to the results of the survey as they appertain to the state of participation in the enterprise. Firstly, we can examine the responses to the question of where the power lies. In contrast to management's view, only 13% of manual replies view unions as the sole source of power, while a further 12% see it as residing with management and unions jointly. For 3% it lies on the shop floor. But it is management who are seen by the majority as being singularly in command - though interestingly only 13% see management in Germany as the controllers singly or jointly with British management.

When asked whether management achieved the 'unity of purpose for the common interest' called for in the rule book, 2% felt it was achieved completely, 42% usually, 30% about half the time, 24% rarely and 2% never. These results indicate, insofar as comparability is valid, a higher proportion of positive evaluation in this direction than among the managers themselves. The results do indicate (especially when compared with the other two firms to follow) a measure of management success, though the results must be interpreted with the same care (and probably in the same way) as those for the 'football team' question. Critical comments, where given (in answer to a subsequent open-ended question seeking views on these - 26 of 97 respondents gave an answer), tended to focus on failures of communication at the key times more than anything else. But two examples of other answers will illustrate the need for care and the possible limits to the support for management implied in the answer. For one, who thought the company 'usually' achieved the unity, "They fall down by stating policy, then disregarding it when the crunch comes". For the other, answering 'rarely' on achievement of unity, "The definition of common interest is more understood by the shop floor than management, i.e. profit at one end, payment at the other and the common interest inbetween".

The response on the question of who gains from the management approach and philosophy also indicate the tenor of the results of the previous question a little more clearly. Table 14.4 summarises the findings for all three organizations studied:

TABLE 14.4 WORKERS : WHO GAINS?

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Management & Workers Equally	21%	3%	15%	14%
Both, Management Most	47%	35%	42%	42%
Both, Workers Most	3%	-*	-*	1% *
No Difference	5%	9%	18%	12%
Management Gain, Workers Lose	10%	43%	10%	18%
Workers Gain, Management Lose	2%	1%	1%	2%
Both Lose	5%	3%	4%	4%
Don't Know	7%	7%	9%	8%
	(N=99)	(N=77)	(N=165)	(N=341)

* In error this option was omitted for the Epoch and Natco questionnaires. It does not seem likely that this substantially affects the results, however, since there is little support for the most likely substitutes (equal gain, or workers gain, management lose) in the enterprises concerned; and the firm where other results would lead one to expect the highest response in this vein, Weldrill, produces only 3% for this option.

Although 71% of Weldrill respondents are of the opinion that there is all-round gain from the management philosophy, a majority of these (57%) see management as coming out of it best. This contrasts in a predictable manner with management perceptions (see Table 14.1). At the same time Weldrill employees seem here and below to assess the approach in their organization more favourably than do those in the other organizations studied. Nonetheless management are seen as the main or sole benefactors by 57%, workers by only 5%. 10% endorse the view either that there is no effect of the scheme or that all lose.

This set of results can be further placed in perspective by examining the results of the question on how workers would feel if management decided they must give up the philosophy and approach. The results for all three organizations are again summarised below, in Table 14.5:

TABLE 14.5 WORKERS : HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF THE SYSTEM WERE DISCONTINUED?

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Very Badly	23%	1%	18%	15%
Quite Badly	24%	15%	20%	20%
Wouldn't Mind Much	31%	34%	45%	38%
Wouldn't Mind at All	17%	29%	13%	18%
Would be Pleased	5%	21%	5%	8%
	(N=93)	(N=73)	(N=154)	(N=320)

In all, 47% of those answering this question would feel badly if the Weldrill approach were discontinued, close to the 48% of management though with 23% as against 5% for management who would feel 'very badly'. The rest, 52%, would be little if at all concerned, and indeed 5% of these would be pleased. Thus a large proportion even of those who felt gain accrued to workers in some form from the system remained not very deeply attached to it. At the same time, the attachment among Weldrill employees is again markedly greater on this evidence than that in the other enterprises examined.

The limited enthusiasm for the participative form even in Weldrill is consistent both with the attenuated interest in participation in its own right described at length in Chapter 12 above, and with the consistent high level of only qualified acceptance of common interests even amongst those who will accept a 'football team image' of the firm. The former finding does raise some questions which can only be conjecturally considered with the information available, concerning the reasons for the attachment to Weldrill's arrangements among those who would have been sorry to see it abandoned. It seems plausible to argue that a predominant factor will be the positive assessment of the firm as an employer against its competitors in the local labour market, which

together with a relatively indulgent management style meant that the unitary philosophy could be associated with the economic returns which were seen as primary factors in job selection by most workers. As such, the attachment cannot be seen as implying ties to the firms for the majority of supporters which run deeper than the 'calculative' into more 'normative' forms.¹ This emerged more starkly, given the context, from the study of the John Lewis Partnership discussed in Chapter 10 above.

Finally we can look at the results of the question as to how closely in touch with their needs employees judge management to be:

TABLE 14.6 WORKERS : HOW CLOSELY IN TOUCH WITH THE NEEDS OF WORKERS ARE MANAGERS IN THIS FIRM?

	<u>Weldrill</u>	<u>Epoch</u>	<u>Natco</u>	<u>All</u>
Very Closely	14%	1%	1%	6%
Reasonably	58%	10%	35%	37%
Not Very Well	20%	47%	44%	37%
Not At All	6%	42%	21%	21%
	(N=107)	(N=74)	(N=171)	(N=352)

As before, Weldrill fares markedly better in the eyes of its workers than do the other two organizations investigated. Three-quarters of respondents feel managers are very or reasonably well in touch with their needs (which does not necessarily imply that they will willingly provide, of course) and only a quarter fall into the poorer two categories, in sharp contrast to Epoch and Natco.

If any clear picture emerges from these findings it is of a limited but definite attachment among many manual employees in Weldrill to the firm, and through this aspects of the participative philosophy. Yet attempts to set up a more formal consultative system in the past had fallen to the fate described in more general terms in Chapter 10 above. In other words, Weldrill seems a particularly well-suited ground to try out participation given the general state of industrial relations and the at the least majority non-hostile employee attitudes; yet the dynamics of the relations

yielded far less success than would be expected from orthodox business and academic presentations on participation. This observer's opinion is that the participative philosophy actually achieved little or nothing in itself, and was endorsed/survived as a consequence of other favourable aspects of the industrial relations situation. In other words its survival, which is very much at top management's discretion rather than anybody else's, is not secured by the kind of support it gets from a proportion of the workforce. As we saw in Chapter 12, when substantive issues are raised there remains a great deal of distance between the amount of say employees would like to exercise and the amount they do.

CHAPTER 14 NOTES

1. The terms are derived from, Etzioni's, (1975) typology of compliance to power - 'remunerative' power calls forth only 'calculative' commitment, whereas 'normative' power is internalised and calls forth 'moral' compliance.

CHAPTER 15 : EPOCH

THE COMPANY

This company formed part of a large multinational for which the UK was a major base, but which had still larger operations abroad. The plant concerned was a recently opened addition to the company's main process activity. As will be described below, it represented an experiment highly germane to the subject-matter of this thesis. It constituted one of the most automated plants of that time, though as will be seen assumptions should not too readily be drawn about the kind of work this entailed for employees.

There were just over 180 operators, including spares, employed in the plant, though at the time of the survey a high turnover meant that about 150 only were considered by the stewards to be able to complete the schedules; it was on this basis that the response rate reported earlier was derived. The high turnover was partly attributable to the industrial relations problems of the time described below, but it was also a feature of the saleability of the skills obtained through training for the job, and of the cosmopolitan outlook (i.e. willingness to look outside the area and even abroad for work) it induced in labour recruited locally for the most part. Thus whereas 20 years' service had been possible for the first firm, Weldrill, little more than five years was possible in Epoch, and in many cases much less service with the firm had been recorded.

The company paid high wages, a feature of capital-intensive industries, though its relative position of clear leadership in the area, used to attract labour when the plant opened, had apparently been somewhat eroded. There were major competitors in the area for labour, including one in particular which, I got the clear impression, was felt to overshadow Epoch locally by management and union representatives. I had described to me on two or three occasions how coming to work at Epoch had been an achievement, a mark of getting selected against heavy competition and being part of the labour elite locally, and how this prestige had in operators' eyes gradually faded, culminating in discontent. Nonetheless, it was added, to have worked at the plant still carried some real status in application for other jobs, i.e. despite disappointments the relative advantages of the work had not been altogether forgotten.

Operators worked a continental shift system, and were graded according to the number of skills they had acquired. Initially the idea had been to have up to seven skills per man, but there were complaints that to have been trained in this many tasks meant that by the time someone was allocated to less frequently occurring jobs they would have forgotten how to do them. Thus the maximum number of tasks in which someone could be counted as trained had been reduced to four. About 25-30% (and 32% of the sample) had reached this top grade with its attendant pay differential, while another half of all the operators were on the next grade down with three tasks. There was a joint emphasis here on variety of work and on flexibility for management to reduce the number of spares needed on a shift. But if management saw it in this light, it was by no means so straightforwardly viewed by the operators, as will be shown.

The company had also made some play of the fact that they had opted to give staff status to all employees at the new plant, replacing hourly rewards and clocks with a salary paid monthly, and with overtime compensated by time off rather than a higher rate. Yet although the book which describes this experiment (see below) claims that all conditions were identical, I found during my discussions with stewards that certain rights e.g. on pensions, were still being negotiated for six years later. It was also clear from comments and observation that two other major aspects of work experience contributed to a continuing office/operator division aside from the existence of the usual separate office block. One was the shiftwork system around which operators moved while the offices continued more 'normal' daywork; and the shift allocation, which the Agreement with the unions gave management the right to operate to aid flexibility, also constituted a marked difference in the experience of control (as, it seems likely, did the form of supervision). The second was the unionised/non-unionised dichotomy, though it was accepted that in the long run white collar staff might become unionised (though even then probably not into the TGWU which represented operators). All of this confirms the implication of the Affluent Worker study among others that mere terminological and administrative adjustments, like income, do not disturb the basic class position and labour process for employees.

During Chapter 9, it was observed that stereotypes about the nature of process industries in industrial sociology are called into question by recent observations such as those of Nichols & Beynon (1977) in 'Chemco'.

The idea that workers in this industry are either to be found in rewarding jobs and work group relations that make for better human relations, as in the Blaunerian account, or that they have access to a knowledge and skill which gives them unprecedented autonomy and power, as in some marxist accounts, rests on a mythical conception of work in chemical plants. Such scepticism seems vindicated by the observations at Epoch. For every two men working on 'process', there were three who were engaged on the same shift in 'movements' i.e. not in the control room but on site. The kind of tasks involved here were on the river unloading from tankers, or at the other end loading wagons on the rail gantry. In addition construction and other such work was sub-contracted by the company to other firms (whose conditions were generally poorer, and who did not come under the purview of the survey). For Epoch employees, there might well be a certain amount of transfer within process or movements though not, after a short time, between the two. Thus tasks experienced could vary quite considerably, and for many workers there could be experience of jobs that fit quite readily into more 'traditional' forms of labour. At the same time, operators were by and large located within one shift of four, each with its own shop steward, and it was several times indicated (though it was not tested in the questionnaires) that the different shifts would tend to develop their own distinctive cultures.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND THE BACKGROUND TO 'PARTICIPATION'

The immediate factor which drew my attention to Epoch was that the company had become known for making a certain amount of noise about a Statement of Philosophy which sought to redefine the nature of the employer-employee relationship and to create (or at least express) the grounds for solidarity between the two parties. My interest was reinforced when I discovered that the justification of this move had been written up as a glossy business text, with a claim that the success reported ranked high in the achievement of organizational effectiveness. Not only did the text (which will be quoted occasionally below but not cited for reasons of confidentiality on the identity of Epoch) give a detailed account of the successes, but it devoted particular attention to the 'Southbank' plant in which my own survey was to be carried out. This plant was represented as a unique example of advance design on Tavistock socio-technical principles to optimise relations from the start. Thus I was fortunate

enough to gain access to a case which constituted one of the more detailed of the more recent wave of participation stories, lending an added significance to the findings.

The chief concern of the text on the Epoch experiments is clear: within the company, and the country as a whole, there was a problem of "motivating people to work effectively", and this was above all true "at the shop floor level". This was particularly thought to be manifested in the escalating disputes problem of firm and nation. Within Epoch, a major source of these disputes was felt to be demarcation and other restrictive practices, which also sapped employee morale and commitment; the strategy of the company was therefore directed to coping with this problem. To this end it set up a small team of managers which diagnosed more fully the difficulties that were to be overcome. A fairly conventional form of productivity bargaining had been introduced, but continuing mistrust and opposition meant that:

Fundamentally the men are not committed to the company's objective and the most we can hope for is that they will honour the bargains they have entered into ...

We should therefore make it our long-term policy to secure a fundamental change in attitude on the part of the employees to the point where, in a climate of mutual trust and confidence between men and management, it becomes possible for them to commit themselves fully to the company objective of having its work carried out with maximum efficiency and productivity. It is undoubtedly true that only with such personal commitment to the job in hand will the full potential of a man's capability be realised...

'Realised for whom?' seems an apposite question. The conceptual and diagnostic apparatus of neo-human relations is clearly revealed here. The action proposals involved the negotiation of more comprehensive productivity bargains, whilst a longer-term "attitude change" programme was to be prepared commencing with the formulation of a statement of company objectives and management philosophy. At this stage Tavistock consultants were brought in, and their analysis of the situation concurred with that of Epoch's own team. They were subsequently involved in the drafting of the Statement of Objectives and Philosophy.

In line with what has already been argued about the conception of participation schemes by management, the Statement worked downwards from

a primary objective: profitability. All other adjustments were to be considered in relation to this. The task was then to be one of 'dissemination', i.e. gaining acceptance for the document and so legitimacy for the top management of the company. This was begun by holding discussion meetings on the document starting with plant management, and only reaching down to manual employees after a series of conferences at staff levels, and with union officials. The shop floor assault began with senior shop stewards, some of whom were reported to suspect that the lack of success in negotiating a workable flexibility deal a couple of years previously was the real reason for the proposals. We are told by our reporter, from his position as part of the management team, that such suspicions were totally dispelled by the end of the meeting in the first plant, though rather more resistance survived in another plant, where relations had been poorer from the start. The craft shop stewards at this plant saw the "whole project as a subtle attempt to 'brainwash' people into accepting further reductions in manpower and other undesirable changes".

It is hard to avoid drawing the conclusion that from a shop floor viewpoint this mistrust was well-placed, and that the suspicions in the first plant about the reasons for the proposals were also well-founded. After all, to express management's terms of reference from a non-managerial viewpoint, the basic aim was to reformulate the definition of the situation for workers in conformity with management priorities, so as to realise a capability expressed purely in terms of the utility of the workers' efforts for their employers. The programme was consistently one of engineering consent. Reports on the operation of the philosophy, through participation in planning and design by employees, better communications, greater job flexibility, extended productivity bargaining, and job enrichment, are as always difficult to assess definitively, since no alternative source of information is available on the plants where it was inaugurated. The author of the text, as someone involved in the formulation of the plans and philosophy, goes to some lengths to stress them (and indeed the whole book comes across as a testimony to them), but certain admissions of problems do enable a degree of reading between the lines to be attempted, as do the results of the experiment at the special Southbank plant described later.

A couple of examples can be given, though cursory presentation prevents

any detailed elaboration of the cases or full justification of the interpretations offered. One concerns a strike, at the first plant to be presented with the company Philosophy Statement, one year after the presentation. The book by the former manager argued that the strike was over an unconnected issue, and that managers reported that the negotiation showed "a marked increase in the ability of both sides to confront the problem openly and squarely". Yet this judgement seems implausible.¹ After all, if issues were being 'confronted openly and squarely' why should this strike, over unionisation of craft foremen, have occurred at all? Nor does the described negotiation seem to constitute any move towards the objectives stated in the company document, since there appears to be an extension, not shrinking, of the area of manifest conflict.

Other problems admitted to have arisen even during the first couple of years after the launching of the Statement seem to indicate that top management were already disillusioned. No substantial reasons are offered for this beyond a change of chief executive and the expansion of operations. Loss of other "skilled and experienced resources" in management are also bemoaned. Yet if the project were so subject to managerial whim and the presence of a few individuals, this could only exacerbate one's sense of how ephemeral it was. It is hard to credit claims of "dramatic successes" in the context of such indifference.

An alternative interpretation of events can be hypothesised, though not confirmed from available information and 'silences'. Either a lack of substantial achievements after an initial burst of enthusiasm, or a greater than admitted entrenched opposition to the objectives of the Statement leading to conflicts and breakdowns, could account for top management disaffection. Informal contacts of my own with union representatives in another plant than that where I carried out my research suggested that for them the predominant reality had been, and remained, one of authoritarian management pronouncements and actions with little or no sign of any 'participative' stance. The consequent struggles were seen as intensified by the difficulties of negotiating with a massive, multi-national organization.

The description of the goals of the 'participative' arrangement offered by the co-originator of the scheme in his book, in his own words and then those of an internal management report, makes its aims clear:

It was suggested that a more participative management style would need to be adopted if people down the line were to become more effectively motivated:

"... control through rewards or punishments is no longer appropriate or effective today since the 'punishments' available to management no longer carry any weight. Effective management in modern industry can only be practised by the consent of those managed... This requires that each boss should take his subordinates into his confidence, encourage them to contribute to and participate in any decisions which affect them or their work ... to make it possible for them, with his guidance, to commit themselves and their energies wholeheartedly to the objectives of the company in the tasks they undertake."

In short, then, the purpose was to create a consensus between management and employees which would facilitate the consolidated intensification of the labour process. However, in practice a developed bargaining structure did exist within the company, though the strength of union organization varied markedly from plant to plant. Where that organization was more militant, the plant was liable to be identified as a 'problem'. Top management's aim seems to have been unambiguously focused on the intensification of the labour process as the goal, and to have regarded doubtfully any commitment by lower management to the sorts of ideals rhetorically embraced by the company Statement.

Thus the clear impression conveyed to me in my visits to management was that by the time I arrived to do my research any signs of managerial idealism in line with the Statement had come to be seen in a poor light, as a result of disillusion engendered by 7 or 8 years' experience. I was told, further, that the author of the book, though allowed to write the experiment up as a public relations exercise, had been parted from the company because of the divergence between his own and top management's views on industrial relations strategy. I cannot vouch for the veracity of this, though it indicates the general management mood at Southbank during my study, and is consistent with other observations reported above and below.

SOUTHBANK : 'THE PHILOSOPHY IN ACTION'

It is time to look more directly at the background of industrial relations and the application of the company policy (philosophy) on participation in the context of the plant where my own study was undertaken. The plant was being designed during the period of greatest activity of the employee relations project team and Tavistock consultants. Southbank, we are told by the book on Epoch, "clearly offered a great opportunity not only to put into practice the ideas of the Philosophy Statement concerning job design, but also to establish a set of working conditions and practices which could serve as a model for the older plants to try and follow." Thus technical layout, planning of the 'social system', the selection and training of operators, were all supposedly designed on 'socio-technical' principles to create the ideal conditions for the employee relations policy to work. The six or seven levels in the hierarchy (described as typical for such plants by Woodward in 1958) was reduced to four, to improve communication and reduce distance. Both selection and training were elaborately planned, as is testified to not only by the managerial account but also as noted above, by the early pride in having been chosen for an unusually promising job from a large number of rivals cited by operators at the plant 6 years later. The emphasis was, as we have seen, on job flexibility, and so on training in a number of tasks, though the proposed seven was eventually to be reduced to four. The payment system geared to the number of tasks learned, and the introduction of staff status for operators (represented as stemming from the Philosophy) were further innovations in support of this.

It would be hard to imagine a more ideal setting for the experiment with the new Philosophy in terms of neo-human relations theories themselves. The technology was 'advanced' (to meet the criteria ignored in much human relations literature but suggested by Blauner or Woodward), even without the 'socio-technical' design. The company decided also to take the initiative on unionisation and call in the TGWU who held representation rights at their other plants. They were able to apply all the concessions achieved by productivity bargaining in other plants from the outset, and also to approach local officials to get accession to change the agreement from the national one so as to provide staff status on the basis outlined earlier. Thus, in the eyes of the published account:

"... [Southbank] had succeeded in setting up a new organization which was a practical demonstration of the value of the two lines of action embodied in the company development programme : the creation of commitment to tasks and objectives through appropriate job design; and the establishment of appropriate terms and conditions of employment".

Certain problems in the first couple of years of operation are admitted by the author, including the increasing of supervision from preliminary planned levels, and the reduction in the span of flexibility. This is related to a series of difficulties, including technical variances beyond those expected (i.e. you only remove supervision when the process is regulated enough to impose its own control?), the rise of turnover from 3% to 10% p.a., and the greater range of work owing to the assumption of control of the rail gantry. There is also a strangely convoluted claim that with the changes in other organizations towards Southbank conditions of staff status and salary levels without the same extent of flexibility, there had been pressure to reduce flexibility to a more conventional level at Southbank.

These problems actually hint at a severe failure of the supposedly meticulous socio-technical analysis, either because of unforeseen technical problems (which does not seem plausible as a full explanation), or because of certain inherent flaws in the form of the analysis itself. It is suggested below that other accounts and more recent events lead to more stress being placed on the latter, and so question the rationale and validity of almost all of this public account's basic assertions. A failure to comprehend conflicts as part of the fabric of employment relations pervades Tavistock accounts (which owing to the consultancy role of most of its exponents, bears many hallmarks of an elaborated managerial ideology). Conflicts over manning arrangements (e.g. on the rail gantry where we are told added dangers led to responsibility being removed from operators to a supervisor for safety reasons), particularly on flexibility, and over comparable rates for the job, came to predominate over those factors which the Philosophy Statement and the original management analysis, dominated by human relations notions, had believed would count for most if the integument of the past which undermined efforts at other plants were not present. These are the same beliefs that led Fords to interview candidates for work in their factories to root out 'troublemakers',² beliefs which cannot accept that conflict is structurally inherent, and that at a

basic level. This suggests, of course, that far from being plagued by unfortunate complications and adverse conditions (or, for that matter, by simple management errors or incapacities), the aspirations for the consummation of the Philosophy at Southbank were never realisable.

A review of the history of Southbank through other eyes than those of the published account referred to thus far, and taken up to the time of my own survey, reinforces this interpretation. It is clear that the initial set-up incorporated in working practices things which had had to be purchased with productivity bargaining elsewhere. Industrial conflict had been limited - in the opinion of the shop stewards this was seen as stemming from union weakness, thanks largely to the strategic skill of management in manoeuvring them into corners where they'd been forced to concede instead of calling a strike. They felt that many of the men remained attached to management. For this reason, they attached a great deal of importance to the strike (see below) which did occur, and indeed this seemed to prove them unnecessarily pessimistic about the support for union action - as in other ways does my own survey.

The management view of the conflicts presented to me treated them as much more routine and minor. There was an evident sophistication in the argument that militants could push stewards further than they wanted to go, and that management's job was sometimes to provide them with a face-saver. The stewards expressed less feelings of mutuality, and indeed it seems that at the time of my own visits management had for once failed to appreciate the depth of antagonism.

The main advantage for the company from the arrangements at this new plant was the establishment of manning and flexibility agreements described above. This was combined with staff status and forms of job enrichment which were intended to maintain the advantageous effort bargain, and if the new philosophy were to bear any credence there should have been enthusiastic acceptance. But these areas of manning and flexibility were to prove the focus of most of the disagreements.

The account which I gained from management made it clear, even without union comments, that the issue of whether an operator could be asked to train in and be able to carry out seven tasks was raised as a matter of dispute very soon after the plant came on-stream. To require this money

to be paid only once the full seven tasks were learned was seen as unreasonable and dangerous by the operators, because of the problems of forgetting how to perform jobs correctly in what was a dangerous process. Management conceded, and thereafter four became the maximum number of tasks to be mastered, while the boundaries between process and movements were established as a by-product. One management excuse for the high flexibility range originally planned was the variation and interest it would provide, so this can also be seen as an illustration of how such presentations can conceal a labour process which is experienced by workers as greater oppression - an issue which Daniel's cogent but partial account (1970, 1973) fails to come to terms with. I shall develop this comment in a moment.

From 1970-73 other specific disputes on manning arrangements culminated in an argument as to whether there was or was not an agreement on manning. Management argued there was only an arrangement but undertook to consult and formulate an agreement proper. In March 1973 the Manning Agreement was produced; it generated fresh arguments, nominally over its interpretation, but effectively constituting further efforts by the union to limit management's freedom of disposal of labour resources. Thus the word 'flexibility' itself became a matter of contention. The union read it as meaning the ability of operators to move between the areas of work in which they had been trained on a planned or emergency basis. Management maintained that it also entailed shift manager discretion to use operators on a shift flexibly, to cover areas of higher pressure by reducing areas of less immediate need, or to cover the case where a relief failed to turn up without an operator having to stay over. This would have reduced the total manning level required in the plant; the union claim was that the operator must stay in the position assumed at the start of the shift for the rest of the shift. The issue was to be taken to arbitration at the time of the study. Meanwhile, the matter had been overridden in people's minds by the question of the wage bargain which was to lead to the first strike in the plant just before the survey was carried out.

The strike in question has obvious implications for the interpretation of the survey results - regardless of the shop steward claim that the event had brought "what people really think" to the surface. At the same time it did not seem on the face of it to affect the response to the 'football team' question.³ In any case, the strike had more immediate implications.

It represented a make-or-break effort by the stewards to demonstrate to management that they could call on support despite management's efforts to maintain the loyalty of employees to the firm. Afterwards the stewards expressed surprise at the strength of the backing they did get. Not only was the strike solid, but unexpected people rallied round for picketing and the like. People who had shown no signs of militancy suddenly began to speak up and were militant. It would appear that the stewards had underestimated the strength of union support. The withdrawal of labour lasted only four days, and the sharing of burdens of lost pay between shifts (two of whom had days off in the period) was far more successful from one shift than the other. Nonetheless the limits of management's attempt to pre-empt loyalties, as with those on their effort to avoid 'restrictive' labour controls, were strikingly floodlit.

To conclude on these events then, it seems that the published account of Southbank, amid its managerial preoccupations and rationality, and its evolutionary zeal, neglects the structural conflicts which rendered the advance of the Epoch Philosophy so unimpressive. It would be difficult to see the failure here as the result of the only possible source the commentator initially imagined i.e. the incapacity of management to use the opportunities.

Before concluding this section, it will be necessary to explore three more issues. These are: the form of representative participation in the plant; the operation of the job design features; and the prior employee knowledge of either the book which proclaims so much success at the plant or of the ideas for its special arrangement.

Representative participation was not formally written into industrial relations arrangements at Epoch, but the management view was that consultation should take place on any subject where it might be considered necessary. The definition of 'necessary' appears to have been left to management, however, and most of the committees that had been set up were management-initiated. Safety committees had been the most persistent, particularly since a major fire at the plant a couple of years after start-up. Working parties were also set up to consider changes which management foresaw as creating problems, such as the question of increased automation and use of close-circuit TV monitoring to enable more men to be concentrated at the dockside to cope with increased input. Thus these

committees existed on an ad hoc basis, through which management tried to pre-empt trouble by 'involvement'. They found the problem was the slow pace of the deliberations, which meant that other changes had already intruded by the time any decision was reached. The unions regarded the whole system with considerably less favour, as will be seen later. Nor did the safety committees prevent 43% of operators feeling they had very little or no say on safety matters, while only 21% felt they had quite a lot or (1%) a great deal. Nonetheless it may have been the case that management was able to make a degree of progress in gaining acquiescence for its proposals through the committees, which would explain their relative satisfaction with the situation. They nonetheless expressed frustrations about their operation, commenting on the reluctance of the stewards to commit themselves, and of the failure of one apparently successful safety committee to disseminate its discussion so that the second working party began from the same point as the first had. (One might add that this implies nothing had been done to resolve the substantive problems perceived by operators as a result of the first, so that the issues remained unchanged). Management's success, if such it was, thus remained limited in scope and fell short of their aspirations in the face of the 'irrationality' of the material they sought to mould.

The rhetoric of job enrichment had been expressed in a highly academic fashion in the Philosophy document which was issued to employees. It spoke of the need to consider the development not only of technical but also of human resources:

To allow men at all levels to make their greatest contribution, we must be concerned with the way they are managed, the way their jobs are made up, the way they are trained and the way they are allowed to feed in their own ideas about their work.

This was expressed in terms of 'joint optimisation', getting the best from both technical resources and employees in combination (the reader will recognise the Tavistock input here). Thus all problems were to be tackled "in the light of both the technological and the human needs".

The main form in which this was supposedly embodied in the plant was the job flexibility which has already been discussed. The management view expressed to me was that management gained the flexibility, while operators gained "more interesting and rewarding jobs", and were also

able to increase their salary by their own efforts in mastering skills. The general obstacles which lay in the path of this intention have been summarised. However, a particularly interesting elaboration of the arrangements had taken place in one part of the plant, on the rail gantry. This area involved several tasks: filling the rail car after lining up the car with the filling head; shunting; maintaining the cleanliness of the floor area; and the operation of the computer which carried out the filling together with completing the invoice. The last task was traditionally a staff one, but, along with rotation between tasks, operators at the rail gantry were also given the 'enrichment' of the responsibility for this job as well. However, after an accident some miles away, resulting in a fire and traced to an insecurely fastened hatch of a Southbank car, there was pressure to bring in a supervisor to oversee the operation (indicating the fragility of management's belief in the reliability of their operators).

Nonetheless, at the time of my visits the system of enrichment still existed in its modified, supervised form. The men would decide on the allocation of jobs among themselves, though their flexibility was cut by the requirement to ensure that the supervisor was told who was doing what. They could, nevertheless, change within a shift if they so wished. In practice, I was told, they rarely did, wanting a stable job. Managers seemed to have realised that enforced rotation would cause complaints, not interest, and decided to leave well alone.

If management hoped to gain positive support and greater flexibility from their arrangements they were, however, to be disappointed. As one disgruntled management source told me, he just couldn't understand the attitudes. They'd given the men freedom, and manned to a level able to cope with more than actually had to be done at first. Now they wanted to put in a third feed-line, and had been told they couldn't unless they increased manning levels appropriately. Yet the men here weren't at all pushed. Moreover, they just didn't use their freedom in the right way. They let the railings in the gantry get filthy as soon as they were given gloves, and were generally very slack; they needed a supervisor to boot them along in the right direction. This was generalised to a statement that the Philosophy had never really got off the ground because people wouldn't help out. There was no teamwork. It had all gone sour. The men I spoke to myself on the gantry were as adamantly annoyed about management's use of the system as they saw it. "Picked the wrong place

to come and do that (look at participation). It's not too good right now. You'll hear some right language spoken."

Finally, were operators or their representatives aware of the image of Southbank that had been presented to the management world at large? Astonishingly (at the time) the participative management had never taken the trouble to tell their employees how well off they were. The shop stewards grabbed the book eagerly when I produced it, and one announced his intention to go and search for it in the library that night - "I always carry my tickets". "The trouble is", I was told, "it's hard to know how relevant it is now because it's changed so much since". (The book, published three years before my study, was reprinted for a 1978 edition). More embarrassing for me was the time I showed it to the local union official, who rang up the personnel manager at the plant on the spot, announced that I was with him and had shown him the book, and demanded that a copy be sent to him forthwith.

I asked what the representatives thought of the special design of the plant, notwithstanding their ignorance of the book. Whenever I raised this, I found myself being looked at as if I'd 'gone out'. I was told that it was hard to credit that such an effort had been made, because the plant seemed designed to obstruct good working practices and job interest. "They couldn't have designed it worse". More to the point, however, was the forceful argument that amid all this concern for participation, no effort had been made to consult those for whom the plant was supposedly being designed - the operators.

MANAGEMENT ATTITUDES

My key contacts on the management side within the Southbank plant were with the plant director and the head of personnel (apart from the latter's assistant who was a major source of factual information and my chief liaison). As the former made it clear, top management to a degree set the tone of managerial styles, though a participative style could not be guaranteed to be followed by those lower down the hierarchy.

The plant director was a chemist, and gave a clear impression of regarding this, technical, side of work organization as primary and of

being somewhat sceptical about fancy notions of employee relations policies. On discussion and consultative groups his attitude was strikingly sardonic and, in the terms of Chapter 5's analysis, pseudo-democratic. Thus he spoke of the need to have a directive manager in the group "to jolly them along and make them think properly". In this he reflected (or perhaps symbolised and led) a definitive shift away from the policy perspective implied by the Philosophy of the 60s. Another illustration is provided by his view of the experiment with democracy represented by the decision to allow operators to choose by vote their shift system a few years previously.

Many of the newly trained operators had come from a local process plant which operated a 'continental' shift system, and had clamoured for this system to be introduced in place of that planned for Epoch. Management finally acceded to a vote on the subject, and set a minimum of two-thirds in favour of the change; in the event over three-quarters voted for it. The resulting system was felt to cause problems by the plant director, and he thus concluded that he would think very carefully before allowing anything else to go to the vote. Democracy, it seems, was only desirable if it produced quiescence and the decision management considered best.

The personnel manager was rather more earnest about participation, and seemed to have had some sympathy (and involvement) with the Philosophy campaign. He regretted the suspicion which always seemed to exist between management and men. Nonetheless, he had come to the conclusion that the initial approach through socio-technical analysis had put too much emphasis on the social side of the pair. After a major accident at the plant (which also loomed large in the account of operators and put a premium on health and safety issues, I found) a move had been made to put far more stress on the technical side. Nonetheless, his orientation retained central elements of a human relations approach - "We need to get people to work together more in industry. I try to show people I'm an employee as much as they are." He was keen to describe his efforts to maintain his own contacts and channels of information in the plant to keep in touch with the men's feelings.

Both of these managers expressed frustration at the reluctance of union and other representatives to commit themselves and get fully involved in participation. The personnel manager felt that "people in trade union

office are reluctant to participate and initiate anything - if something goes wrong they don't want to be party to it - though at times they get enthusiastic and involved in something". The plant director argued that "We are very keen to consult", but similarly felt that operators were reluctant to accept joint responsibility for decisions, but would be upset if given no chance to express their views. He felt one reason for the reticence was the level of unemployment in the community, so that there was a fear of any suggestions meaning the company could make do with less men. But he also spoke of discussions with his managers about setting up a consultative body, in which they opposed the idea as by-passing them and called for consultation down the line, not joint consultation.

The predominant message from management in Epoch was, however, the disillusion with the Philosophy, and so with the official basis of the plant's initial plans for social organization, that had developed during the few years of the plant's operation. Not only was this clear in the accounts of the changes in attitudes from lessons learned by the managers with whom I discussed participation, it was also plain in the response rate of managers to the questionnaire. Thus I was told that many managers had informed the personnel manager's assistant, who was collecting their questionnaires, that they were not completing the schedule as they felt the whole question of participation was now irrelevant, having become very cynical about it. Thus those who did answer were more likely to be those who had retained an interest, since I was unable to contact and persuade the non-respondents that such attitudes were as relevant as those 'for' participation (a good example, perhaps, of the widespread assumptions that researchers only want to know what 'works').

A final point of interest here is the way in which the presentation to me of the operation of the scheme changed as my expressed desire to study the system became clear. Thus at the start of my first visit the initial message was that familiar from management's public relations account of 'their' participation schemes - a fairly uncritical account. As I proposed a study, so the accounts showed an awareness of the failings and problems on the part of the managers concerned until they came close to being completely dismissive of the scheme. This is a good illustration, then, of the problems of the usual, superficial surveys of participation in operation, as was suggested in Chapter 10.

If we turn now to the results of the questionnaire, it will be apparent that the low response rate in Epoch from managers, while it does itself constitute a datum as already indicated, means that any attempt to draw firm conclusions from the response would be risible. Of the five replies on where the power lay in the firm, for instance, it is hard to make much of the fact that four named Southbank plant management, one in combination with supervisors, and two others along with company HQ and operators/unions; while the fifth felt no one group except perhaps HQ was predominant. All one can do is state it, for what it is worth, and observe that while no-one saw the unions as having the power (compare Weldrill), local management came up in all replies and HQ in three.

The next pair of questions drew on the Company Philosophy Statement (which had been distributed for all employees to see). Two quotations describing aims of the company's policy were reproduced, and respondents were asked how far they felt these had been achieved in the Southbank plant. The first was "... creating conditions in which employees at all levels will be encouraged and enabled to develop and realise their potentialities." None of the six respondents thought it had been completely achieved, only one that it had been achieved to a very large extent, four to a 'fair extent', one not very far, none that it had not been achieved at all. Since an implication of what I was told about the disinterest in completing the questionnaire is that those who did fill it in were less disillusioned than their fellows, this does not represent a very confident result on the part of management. They are still less impressed with the company's progress on the second front: "People ... must feel that the company's objectives are worthwhile, and the sort of objectives they are willing to commit themselves to." This was intended to indicate higher-level participation in the company's terms, where the previous quotation concerns rather the job level. In this question, two respondents felt this objective had been achieved to a 'fair extent', and the other four 'not very far'. To a subsequent question about the strengths and weaknesses of the Philosophy, answers were too few to set up categories, given the variety of the six replies. Thus, for example, only one response attacked the ideas in the Philosophy itself (as "academic middle-class ideas useless for the working-class with working-class ideals"), another referred to the strengths alone, as a close working relationship of employees and management. The other four all referred to obstacles to the approach, three of them lying elsewhere in

the company (e.g. lack of Head Office support) and one in the lack of right calibre local management. Two of these four stated that they thought the ideas were good.

Five of the six managers had served on a consultative committee at the Southbank plant in the past, and all six were willing to do so in future. They were asked how adequate the amount of consultation of employees with management at Southbank was. One felt it to be 'reasonably adequate', four 'a bit inadequate', and one 'very inadequate', with no-one thinking it 'very adequate'. Once again, on this evidence even management do not rate very highly the current state of participative affairs in their plant.

Finally, we can refer back to Tables 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3. It will be seen from Table 14.1 that none of the Epoch management respondents felt management came best out of the company approach on participation. Three felt both sides gained, workers most, and two that the benefit was equal, the sixth regarding the arrangements as making no difference. Table 14.2 shows that one of the managers would feel very badly if the management decided to abandon the Philosophy, four quite badly, and one wouldn't mind at all. From Table 14.3 it emerges that one of these managers believes that management are very closely in touch with the needs of their workers, and the remaining five that they are reasonably so.

Insofar as any conclusions can be drawn for the population of management from this tiny and probably unrepresentative sample, it is that despite a lack of confidence in the achievements of the Philosophy and the management methods associated with it, they continue to show some attachment to the system, and not to see the workforce as losing by it. Despite consultation being acknowledged as attenuated, they feel that management are pretty well in touch with the operators. The next thing is to see how the operators themselves feel.

UNION AND OPERATOR ATTITUDES

The shop stewards at Southbank were sceptical about participation largely as a result of their experience of it. This was particularly noticeable on the part of the treasurer of the branch who was their most vocal spokesman and who acted as the liaison to pass the questionnaires back

to me. He was a staunch supporter of the need for industrial democracy, but had come like his fellow stewards to regard Southbank as a sham. The most striking arguments were that things had changed rapidly since the book I showed them had been written, and that in any case "when it was built they never consulted with the people who actually would work there, just consultants". There was also mention of the problem of working for a multi-national, where management were felt particularly able to make decisions without consulting if they so chose. In addition, their experience of the other local process plant, from which a large proportion of the men had been recruited, had not impressed them with the operation of works councils there either.

When the operators were asked in the questionnaire where they felt the power lay, they seemed to endorse the feelings about the distance of the control centre from the local union which the stewards had described. Thus 75% of responses put the power in the hands of a remote management body (usually company HQ in Britain or overseas), 11% with local management, 8% with a combination of local and remote management, and the remaining 6% with other combinations (including supervisors or operators). Thus the union fades into the background, in contrast to Weldrill, and reference is made on occasion in other responses to the problems of dealing with a local management who are both hamstrung by and able to hide behind policy laid down from the centre.

Moving on now to consider the results of the questions on the arrangements for participation in the Southbank plant, it becomes apparent that if the managers who completed the questionnaire did not think much of the achievements in terms of the Philosophy, then operators are still less enamoured. Table 15.1 summarises the results for the first two questions, which were the same as those put to management:

TABLE 15.1 WORKERS : HOW FAR HAVE THE PHILOSOPHY AIMS BEEN ACHIEVED?

	"... realising potentialities..."	"... company objectives worthwhile..."
Completely	-	-
Very Large Extent	1%	1%
Fair Extent	12%	10%
Not Very Far	56%	48%
Not At All	31%	40%

The predominant response is that neither in terms of the individual operator and his job (the self-actualisation aspect of the Statement of Philosophy) nor in terms of wider commitment to company objectives do the operators feel that any significant progress towards the stated goals of Epoch has been achieved. In relation to the first statement, the most frequent response on the benefits to be achieved from participation referred to the need for greater job satisfaction. This is particularly worthy of note in that it reinforces what was said earlier about the idealised picture of work and work attitudes in process plants presented by Blauner and others.

Of the responses 22% had served on one or other of the consultative committees that had existed in the plant, and despite their general disaffection with the arrangements in the plant, 82% were willing to serve on such committees in the future. The disaffection was re-emphasised, however, by the findings on satisfaction with the existing amount of consultation in the plant. Only 3% found it 'very adequate', 5% 'reasonably adequate', while 33% found it 'a bit inadequate' and 60% 'very inadequate'. (A 'don't know' alternative was provided to tap indifference - c.f. Blackburn & Beynon, 1972 - but none of the respondents either used this or failed to answer the question).

Table 14.4 presented the results of the question concerning who gains from the Epoch company approach and philosophy on participation. As with Weldrill, the view of a large proportion (78%) that management come out of the arrangements better than workers contrasts with management's own

perception. Only 3% felt that management and workers gained equally, though 38% in all felt that both sides gained to at least some extent.

Even these 38% are not for the most part very attached to the system, however. Thus when asked how they would feel if management decided to give up the existing philosophy and approach (see Table 14.5) only 1% would feel 'very' or 'quite badly'. Just over a third would be only a little put out, 29% would have no qualms, and one in five would be pleased. It is worth quoting the additional comment written by one respondent on the back of the page after the last response:

In 'ticking' the 'be pleased' I am assuming that if management did give up its present approach it would be replaced by a much more socialistic attitude and they would not carry on with this "we are the bosses you only boil oil" and "be thankful you have a job", both statements I have heard from management.

Other respondents were not necessarily so clear from the rest of their questionnaires as to whether an alternative was envisaged, but it should be borne in mind that any response reflects both the attitude to the current system and, in some cases, an idea of what might or might not replace it. (It will be recalled that I observed earlier, in referring to German workers' apparent attachment to works councils, that this did not constitute an absolute evaluation, but was made in the absence of any visible alternative representative or grievance channel).

When asked how far they thought management were in touch with the operators' needs (see Table 14.6), Epoch workers gave the most critical response of the three firms studied. Nine out of ten felt that management were 'not very well' or 'not at all' in touch with those needs. This is probably due in part at least to the crisis in industrial relations in the plant. Nonetheless, if their attitudes to management on this front were pretty united, their views of management - worker relations generally were more mixed. A question about desired improvements in the job produced responses ranging from some requesting a radical change in management through to a number of pleas for more unitary, co-operative working relations (confirming the shop stewards' view that attitudes varied widely from militant opposition to a kind of management/enterprise consciousness). Two contrasting quotations concerning the benefits expected from participation illustrate this same range of views:

Better general conditions. Management would have closer contact with workers and understand complaints and do something and not give lame reasons for not doing anything.

This again revolves around the question of who controls the economy, workers or capitalists.

For some respondents there was a voluntaristic, wishful belief that the obstacles to fairness and shared interests were only a matter of the right people, the right institutions and the right outlook. For others a more cynical and structurally deterministic outlook led either to broad rejection of the idea or to a limited aspiration for 'less supervision' or 'more money'. One respondent even expressed a desire for an improvement in his present job via "A change from the American industrial psychology the company seems to have adopted".

Another response here called for management to abandon the '(Southbank) Concept' as being outdated and providing no realistic wage payment system. A few other comments on the Philosophy, all added at the end of the questionnaire in a space provided for any additional points or remarks, varied in their allocation of blame but not on the failure of the grand scheme. Thus one of the replies observed:

Much has been said and talked about the '[Southbank] Concept'. Initially the idea was sound and had the backing and support of the workforce. But the problems which have arisen over the past 3 to 4 years are partly due to restrictions imposed by government legislation but mainly to this management's policy of sticking to the initial '[Southbank] Concept' and refusing to alter their ideas to fit in with changing policies and conditions in the local area.

Another respondent felt that the idea was fine but that it "has never been allowed to progress through exceptionally bad management". For a third, "management will have to realise that they cannot treat operators like a flock of sheep who only need a good dog to keep them moving in the right direction".

Vocal replies are, it seems probable, likely to be disaffected ones to a disproportionate extent. At a time of manifest strife the probability is increased. My own reaction to these accounts is a somewhat intuitive one (i.e. based on observations that I would be hard put to specify), but it did not seem to me that the local management were notably bad or

unusually lacking in appreciation of operators' views. Rather the policies of a large multi-national had come home to roost, and the blame had tended to be placed on an immediate target, the local managers. More relevantly for this thesis, this seems a good example of, the way 'ideas' remain relatively uncriticised where participation is concerned, again with personalities taking the stick.

These observations can, however, also be extended by noting their apparent effect on worker attitudes towards the participation scheme. This seems to have been a case where for at least some employees the high hopes engendered by the initial propaganda for the Philosophy backfired in marked bitterness when they felt let down.

I have been with [Epoch] at [Southbank] since it first started up ... and feel very disappointed at the so called [Epoch] Concept which we were all told about and how it would be implemented at our first interviews. It is quite safe to say that this firm has missed a chance in a lifetime ...

The abstract idea of participation does not have to be shattered for a particular scheme to generate worse relations than might have prevailed otherwise; at least not in the eyes of those involved in the scheme itself.

CHAPTER 15 : NOTES

1. It echoes strongly of Wilfred Brown on the Glacier Metal Co. strike in Kilmarnock - quoted in Chapter 10 above.
2. See Beynon, 1973, for one account of Ford's recruitment policies.
3. See Chapter 7, Table 7.8 for this finding.

THE ORGANIZATION

This enterprise stands apart from the other two examined in terms of its public sector status, and in the type of work which those who filled in questionnaires were engaged on. 'Enterprise' or 'firm' are not really suitable labels; this was a study in four depots which with an administrative headquarters constituted one of seven areas within a district. The district was controlled by its own board, and was a distinct financial and administrative entity, but was at the same time subordinated to the national organization of the industry. This in turn was, as with all nationalised industries, answerable to a Minister and through her/him to Parliament. In brief, the line of command was long, and the organization very large, although the part of it examined for this study did constitute an identifiable and partly autonomous unit within the whole.

The organization was the service side of a major public utility, and as such while there was quite a wide range of work (divided into three broad categories: Engineering, Commercial and Administrative) most of it involved a mobile job free from direct supervision for much of the day. Work standards and payment methods meant, however, that the job was not necessarily experienced as relatively free of regulation, as is shown by the fact that satisfaction with autonomy is not particularly high in Natco (better than that for the operators at Epoch, but marginally lower than that expressed in Weldrill - see Table 12.4 above). Moreover, the individual's personal mobility is in some ways a reflection of rationalisation. Thus productivity agreements had led to greater job flexibility, so that a craftsman would also be expected to drive, and often to do work without a mate. This had enabled a considerable reduction of staff in the industry over the years, from the mid-1960s. Productivity bargaining had had clear effects in a context where one of the first such agreements had been struck.

In the early 1960s the decision had been taken by management in the industry to undermine the "traditional division of industrial labour into two classes", by introducing elements of 'Staff Status' for manual workers. This attempt to overcome the "artificial distinction" predates most such agreements in the UK, including that at Epoch. At the same time, it

appears to have been instantly resurrected by talking instead of 'industrial' and 'non-industrial' staff - a distinction which reflects a real difference in work situation and almost certainly in self-perception by the two groups of employees. Indeed, there seems to have been a fair amount of criticism on these lines from the manual staff, emphasising social divides between staff and a lack of real equality of conditions. The programme was not carried to its full extent, though overtime was reduced and replaced by a guaranteed wage; the distinctions survived down to the time of my study. Thus there was no difficulty in identifying the manual group of workers for the questionnaire distribution.

At this point it should be said that in writing about the background of the industry as a whole a good deal of material has been gleaned from articles and a major text on the arrangements for participation and the experiments with status and productivity, all written by managers of the industry. As with the section on Epoch, these items will not be referenced by name, though quotations will be used as appropriate to indicate once again the tone of public accounts of the case (the difference being that this time the area studied is not specifically discussed). Once more, this lends added significance to the findings of the study reported here.

Turnover in the industry was reported low, and indeed many of the manual respondents had spent a long time in their employment: 7% over 25 years, 39% 10 to 25 years, 34% 3 to 10 years, and only 20% under 3 years. As in almost all parts of the public sector (and in the two private sector firms examined in the study), pretty well everybody in Natco was a union member. In this case there were four unions representing the manual staff between them, though one had a particularly strong base in the industry, and I gathered that it tended to dominate proceedings. There was no evidence of any marked inter-union rivalry such as that apparent in Weldrill, and I was told by management and workers that the unions tended to co-operate reasonably well amongst themselves.

During its history the industry had been subjected to several reorganizations, and shortly after my first approach to propose my research a further one was to be experienced by the workers in the district. They were to be remmarshalled into seven areas, and participation and administrative organization was to be rearranged accordingly. This also affected the locality in which my study was carried out, since my original contact on

the management side (a man with a reputation for a special commitment to participation) who had been in charge of one of the earlier, smaller areas had moved to be Engineering Manager (under an overall chief manager) in one of the new, larger areas further South within the district's territory. For those working in the new area, it became apparent to me that the reorganization was experienced not as rationalisation of operations but as a centralisation of decisions and administration. In conversation at one depot, a foreman (the foremen were counted as manual staff, though their results have been excluded from those given in this thesis) expressed this in a way typical of other incidental comments addressed to me on my journeys for questionnaire distribution and collection.

They've over-centralised this place ... and you just get bits of paper and spend all your time trying to make sense of it.

The building of an area HQ on a site separate from the depots, to which all management and administration was gradually being moved, thus created a distancing which it seems likely will have influenced replies; it is impossible to say, of course, whether this early reaction would be confirmed by events without the resource of a follow-up study.

The area for the new reorganized authority had been based on the new local authority boundaries. This seemed to be regarded as a somewhat arbitrary decision without any necessary logic for the industry by both managers lower down the hierarchy and manual staff I spoke to. For one respondent, it would have been as logical to use the fish-frying retailers' boundaries, to ensure there was a fish and chip shop on every round. Another story told of ructions at the centre, whereby the shift from three tiers of organization in the district (there had been an intermediate level which the centralised areas incorporated) to two had been forgotten at the District HQ, so that in staffing and organization they had remained as if three tiers existed for a while. I did not get the opportunity to check this story, but it indicates the views formed by those at a distance from the decision-making, who felt needlessly shuffled around.

The area in which the study was carried out, though it was to some extent in a state of transition, consisted of three main depots plus a section working largely as a garage and employing far fewer men. The depots were all physically separated from each other, and from the HQ, by several

miles. There was a sense in which each still had its own identity, which helped to emphasise, too, the sense of distance from the centre.

Industrial relations in the industry were highly centralised, with all the basic wages and conditions being negotiated nationally and applied locally through works committees. The latter were the third level down in the system, with intermediate negotiating bodies existing at district level. The channel for negotiation was divided into five channels for different groups of staff (industrial, building and civil engineering, engineers, clerical, and managerial grades). All the employees to whom questionnaires were distributed in this study came under the heading of the first body, for industrial staff. Clearly the separation of these channels indicates further the distance of one grade from another in the industry regardless of staff status. All employees were covered by the same consultative machinery, however, and while it will be observed that the separation of this channel from its counterparts creates the usual problems, no doubt it does have an apparent function for management of providing at least one unified forum.

The management in this industry had been forced, like their counterparts in other industries, to face a growing depth of local union organization through the shop steward system, though as with other nationalised industries it had set out to accord full recognition to central unions from the time of its passage into public ownership in the late 1940s. Public utilities have a reputation for relatively peaceful industrial relations, and both nationally and locally Natco was no exception. In terms of wages I gathered that it had slipped behind local wage leaders (such as Epoch) which had engendered some discontent, but industrial relations work was not a full-time fire-fighting task, to the extent that the responsibility for it was assumed by the engineering manager within the area.

Although it was not possible for me to investigate the changes in pressures on and operation of trade unions at the local level exerted by the introduction of productivity bargaining from the early 1960s, its effects can be seen on a national basis from other accounts. The attitude of the unions, led by one union centred in this industry and with a leadership which had been frequently characterised as 'moderate' (and that in a strenuous, actively anti-leftist manner), was not one of particular hostility to changing work practices in return for increased wages.

Management accounts have them bargaining hard (and sometimes in their view obdurately), but in a 'fair' and pragmatic manner in sharp contrast to the resistance to change found among the printing unions, for example. Clearly the changes in Natco were less of a threat to jobs, in that the industry was and would remain a key one, but nonetheless it is worth noting that a considerable reduction in manning over time has occurred as a result of agreements. Earlier we saw this in the local experience of, for instance, the loss of the craft worker's mate. Nationally it meant a drop of over one-third in the workforce in the decade 1968-1977, a process which my own study finds well underway at the time of questionnaire distribution. A 'pragmatic' union position from what is often presented as a position of considerable power appears in practice to have entailed very considerable losses for many members.

The management account of the progress of productivity bargaining reports that in some areas the manpower implications of proposals has led to a hardening of work group resistance, though the carrot of productivity awards during the period of incomes policy in the late 1960s and the relatively gradual rate of rundown in staffing had enabled management to achieve many of their goals with less opposition than might have been expected. The management version puts a great deal of emphasis on the role of communication and consultation at local and less formally at work-group level, in overcoming resistance to change and tapping a willingness to co-operate. Certainly the acquiescence seems to have been relatively high, though some areas of dissent were to be found, but evidence produced later on the basis of attitudes in the area studies casts doubt on the likely efficacy of the consultation system as a major change agent. However, this must remain contingent on the need to consider whether management in this industry were able to convince representatives of workers through the committees and so forestall an important element of opposition. If so, then a pseudo-democratic committee nonetheless brought a degree of success for the interests of management. I shall return to this issue in the next section.

I was given an account of the process by which productivity proposals were introduced locally from the management side. I was informed that the initiative was very much that of the Board (at district level), who would undertake work study and suggest areas of change. This would be presented in document form to workers' representatives, with suggestions as to the

pay/productivity relationship to be agreed, and if accepted it would then be referred to the national level to ratify conformity to the national agreement. There was little indication of a significant canvassing of suggestions from below.

The management achievements on productivity must be seen, once more, in the light of the outlook of the dominant union (whose accommodative negotiation around the rationality of management thinking echoes what is often called 'business unionism') and the non-militant traditions of their members. In return the unions were able to gain concessions from management which markedly advanced their organizational interests. In the mid-1960s a disciplinary procedure was pressed for, though agreement was delayed until 1969. The procedure took the form of a management inquiry in the first instance, and an independent body including government, union and employer nominees as a court of appeal.

More importantly, the unions were able to gain the introduction of a check-off system for dues in 1967, and subsequently (following the Donovan Commission's Report) a closed shop agreement in 1969. Union membership, estimated at over 85% already, was thus to be enhanced, though hardly with the effect of greater benefit for the membership, it may be thought. This scepticism must be tempered with the observation however, that employees in the industry generally did not exhibit a fund of militant images or a tradition of action which their union failed to represent. Had this been the case, then far more disruption might have been expected from the rise of the workplace union representatives (though such disruption was far from absent, as will be seen), and far less stability of the basic industrial relations arrangements which remain essentially unchanged since nationalisation. Chapter 7 shows that Natco workers, like their counterparts in the other two organizations, held certain potentially disruptive views, or at least ones dissenting from what Mann would call the 'dominant' ones in society, but that this opposition is also markedly attenuated. Brannen et al (1976) describe how steelworkers lack a vocabulary of radical alternative rationality of production to oppose management proposals such as plant closure - though recent years have seen that while this has hampered the battle against redundancy, workers have fought long and hard with impressive solidarity. In Natco I suspect that a further exploration of attitudes along those lines would reveal the same limits, perhaps still more so, though also many of the same possibilities. Despite reductions

in manning, however, job security for those who chose to stay was good, and the industry was not in defensive decline. There was also the effect of nationalisation on the application of industrial relations 'best practice' on an industry-wide basis which helped to limit conflict. Working for a public corporation may also have had some effect, though this should not be overplayed (as was shown in Chapter 10).

Thus 59% of Natco manual respondents agreed that 'nationalisation so far has done little to help the ordinary working man', while only 22% disagreed. Moreover, other aspects of working for a nationalised industry than those associated directly with the pervasive advance of capitalist rationalisation of the labour process were potential sources of dissatisfaction. Both an observation from outwith nationalised industry, and comments from management and workers internally, emphasised the sense of frustration and injustice at the circumstances of a publicly-owned company. On the one hand the media, largely hostile to the concept of public ownership, represent losses as inefficiency and profits as bloated prices - despite the massive strides in unit cost reduction achieved at the expense of employees. On the other, operations are continually hampered, disrupted, and careful plans made irrational by arbitrary decisions from above, particularly those associated with deflationary policy which could be applied most directly and quickly to government-directed activities, enabling these to be used as an economic regulator. Thus phasing in and out of new and obsolete equipment was subverted and projects thrown into sudden disarray. The frustration here was reinforced by a sense of powerlessness, and a confusion, predictably, in the answers to the question as to who held most power in the organization (see below).

PARTICIPATION

In Chapter 10 I discussed the prevalence of participation arrangements in nationalised concerns as compared with their private sector counterparts. In part this is explained by the generalised tendency for such organizations to be constrained to apply industrial relations 'best practice' in accord with government official views of the time. More directly, however, the nationalisation acts which established these industries placed an obligation on their management to make adequate provision for consultation

of employees, though this stipulation was immersed in an "immense vagueness".¹ The first requirement was for the new corporation to reach agreement with the appropriate trade union on negotiating rights.² Separate from this came a requirement to establish machinery to deal with safety, health, welfare, efficiency and other matters asserted to be of "mutual interest" to management and employees (Johnson, 1952:183). In Natco, while negotiating arrangements covered each group of employees separately, as we have seen the consultative machinery was established as a comprehensive one covering all grades.

The guiding principle from the start was the distinction between consultation and negotiation. The advisory committees which were to be set up had their role firmly defined, according to two senior industrial relations managers in the industry:

... to facilitate the exchange of views on matters of common interest to both groups, and more generally to provide a means through which management might gain the co-operation, understanding and participation of employees in the work of the industry.

The goals could hardly be more managerial in their orientation, regardless of the quality of intent towards labour of the writers. At the same time, the unions secured agreement that while all employees could vote, candidates for the committees would have to be union members. There was also an unsettled point at issue - unsettled, that is, except by management decree that shows the limits of the scheme itself. The unions wanted the bodies concerned to have executive authority; the board of management insisted that the responsibility for management was theirs, and so therefore would be the power.

The system of advisory committees that was set up operated (and still does operate) at three levels in the organization. The National and Local Joint Advisory Committees (NJAC and LAC) seem to have been the two relatively active levels, with the middle tier performing linking and ancillary duties and being dismissed relatively briefly in the managerial accounts of the system. Since the empirical material I have relates to the operation of the local committees, I shall concentrate for the most part on the published management accounts of the functioning of this tier. This is further justified by one of these same accounts, which describes

the LACs as "the foundation of the joint consultative system ... since it is their work which most directly and decisively affects the quality of human relations in the industry."

These committees seem to have been fairly quickly established in all parts of the industry in the period following nationalisation. They were set up usually with about fifteen members, with a third or just over nominated management representatives, and the rest drawn from the various groups of employees (with manual workers normally in the majority of these). The chairman was the local manager. This was a strategically important position in that this person effectively took on the task of ruling out of order any matter deemed not to be appropriate (i.e. not a matter of common interest), as well as in practice playing a major part in stimulating any activity (though officially the initiative for raising issues lay with the employees).

The management account of LAC operation depicts a gradual, evolutionary extension of their activities in the first ten years of their existence. According to this version, for the first year and a half or so, meetings were short, and dealt with welfare and complaints. Management felt threatened by them and restricted them tightly to terms of reference which were not felt to invade managerial prerogatives, while workers' representatives commonly "regarded the LACs as additional negotiating committees", which was "at variance with both the principles and the aims of joint consultation". Over the next three years, we are told that suspicions declined, and that the welfare issues had been joined by health and safety and to an extent efficiency matters in the discussions. (On the last of these, it seems that "Most local managers, although they did not themselves bring forward such items, encouraged employees to do so.."). Courses were run for LAC members, also to stimulate discussion of efficiency matters. It is admitted, nonetheless, that there was little discussion of management reports or offering of recommendations. A beginning was made with information meetings for all employees to communicate on the work of their local units. The impact remained limited, however: "when things were going fairly well, most employees thought very little about the LACs, but when things were going wrong they asked what the LACs were doing about it".

From the mid-1950s a further phase of development is claimed to have

occurred. Managers ceased to view LACs as a threat, and began to see them as "bodies through which human relations might be improved and employees induced to co-operate more closely with management in the development of the industry." Representatives are claimed to have responded in kind. The gains are presented predominantly in terms of management ideology: helping "employees to see more clearly how their own and other people's jobs fit into the local organization... part of the educative process..." and so forth. Thus, too, the key shift in activity is represented as an increasing number of committees "involved in the processes of technological, methodological and organizational changes which have ... been taking place rapidly in the industry". To the critical eye, the central argument for the LACs as bodies for overcoming resistance to change becomes progressively more apparent. We are told how management prefigure what they plan to do and then inform the LACs, arranging meetings of employees to explain changes. It seems that: "By consulting on changes months before they are to be introduced there is time and opportunity to discover the best methods of introduction, there is the opportunity for those affected to adjust themselves to change and there is the likelihood that the disturbance will be reduced to the absolute minimum." How far such procedures did in fact act as oil on the waters of change can only be guessed at on the basis of these management publications, but it seems to this interpreter that the exercise smacks more of pseudo-democracy than of any real change in the distribution of decision-making power. There is no indication of major decisions being altered significantly as a result of employee consultation, nor was this apparent on local changes at the time of my own research.

I shall return to the somewhat managerial ethos of the joint consultation machinery in Natco below. The impression should not be given, however, that there is no mention in management's published accounts of limitations to the operation of the machinery. Partly this is implied by the monotonically evolutionary picture which is drawn, suggesting that at each stage there is always more to be done. There are also some perhaps rather revealing remarks by the management recorders, however. Despite the developmental account of the end of the 'fifties, for instance, a few years later one of the writers is to be found commenting on the failure of the formal structure of participation to communicate to the mass of employees. The problem is, predictably, posed in just these terms, i.e. "the work of the LACs was largely unknown to most employees

and therefore of no interest to them" (my emphasis). Apathy and few nominations for elections were cited as symptoms, though half a decade earlier the promising emergence of employee meetings and other means by which "many more employees are becoming actively associated with the LACs' work" had been heralded. There was no evidence of hostility, so the account runs, but with the stabilising of the form of LAC work in the 'sixties more emphasis was put on another institution, the introduction of primary working groups. Although these meetings were by and large not so salient in the side of the industry which I was to examine (though certain moves were afoot at the time of my study to try craft group meetings to combat the size effect of reorganization - see below), they are represented for the more coherent work groups in the other side of the industry as an important link from employee to consultative machinery and local management.³

These meetings were chaired by the departmental head or equivalent, and it would be this person who set the meeting in motion by raising issues "which he thinks the group will want to hear". Wages and conditions of employment are excluded from discussion, but a wide range of other issues are reported to arise. These included safety, cleanliness of the workplace, training, equipment, work methods, and information requests. The last of these is felt to "give management an excellent opportunity to make explanations".

Management were reported to find it difficult to relate efficiency and the meetings' operation closely together, but referred to improved relations and morale. However, a major task was seen as being relieving the LACs of minor items. The groups were also a means for management to test the water of employee attitudes. LAC members were said to agree that the impact on the advisory committee is chiefly to reduce the number of trivial tasks cropping up there, and to close the employer-employee gap (an evolutionary interpretation laced with the modifying 'in some places no more than a start has been made on this'). One particularly revealing (to my eyes) comment quoted was that "I find that it is still a problem to convince certain sections that this is an LAC and not a battle between workers and management. The more informal meetings there are the better chance this attitude has of being changed." This expressed both the absorption of the representative and the subsequent confusion that members do not share that representative's 'enlightenment'.

The attitudes of the employees taking part in the meetings are described in still more revealing terms. "Very few employees seem interested in the theory behind these meetings, and the main criterion they use in assessing their worth is whether they produce quick results. By results they mean the acceptance by management of suggestions made at the meetings ..." A response means employee approval, but there seems to be a predictable problem of the need to allocate funds to implement suggested improvements. Thus a comment admitted to be common is that 'if it costs nothing we've a chance'. The employees also view the connection between meetings and efficiency as tenuous. The group meetings are liked if they 'get things done', which the managerial commentator suggests may be the same thing, but which my own findings imply will be rather different for employees than the 'things' which management look to achieve.

The persistent evolutionism in the management accounts that I have sought to summarise here is striking, particularly when considered against the background of the broader historical trends described in Chapter 9. It is, nonetheless, a common feature of post hoc management accounts in industries which have maintained participation schemes (as in ICI, or as in other nationalised industries required to continue consultation by their establishing legislation). It would be hard to credit that such a progressive advancement had gone on from a more detached view of the employee situation and industrial relations in these situations, though for Natco confirmation in terms of a longitudinal, independent study of the content, contributions and implementation of advisory committee meetings is unfortunately not available. For this purpose the overall impression, reading between the lines above, and the information on current attitudes to the participation schemes discussed below, must suffice to form one's judgement.

The extension of LAC activity and its subsequent supplementation by the primary working groups is developed further by the emergence of productivity bargaining in the 1960s according to later management accounts. It is admitted that the LACs did not change markedly in this period, nor is any evidence of development in the working groups advanced in the later discussion, so productivity bargaining becomes the central rationale for substantial change being claimed. With the agreements of the late 1960s came the setting up of joint productivity panels at the various tiers,

to consider improvement of efficient working practices, redeployment of staff where possible, and to communicate information widely where it might facilitate such ends. The role of these bodies is consultative - the agreements affirm union acceptance that management have the right to allocate labour and reorganize as they see fit, within the terms of the national negotiated conditions. Nonetheless, this arena of consultation-within-negotiation affects the role of the LACs. Management would still notify the LAC of any major plans for change, and it is admitted that there is occasionally outright refusal to co-operate, and more often at least a degree of opposition (though 'constructive' discussion is claimed to be the norm). There would still be some discussion of the issues involved, then, but it became likely that these would be referred to the shop stewards or works committees at an earlier stage, and to productivity panels within these, as well as to the working groups, whose existence is formally recognised within the 1968 agreement on local productivity schemes.

In the previous section it was suggested that the rosy picture of productivity, manpower cuts and union-management collaboration can be seen from a more critical perspective as undermining many of the conditions of the employee in Natco. An alternative account of the developments of the 'sixties and early 'seventies provides an interpretation which supports this. There is clear evidence that management in this industry were, in Marxist terms, very successful at ceding wage increases at or below the norm in the economy, and then only with the concession of wide-ranging managerial powers to utilise labour, and of extensive working practice and manning changes to raise productivity. The staff status move, presented as a social evolution by management (designed to dismantle class barriers by benevolence), is far more plausibly interpreted, on this account, as a means to pave the way for productivity agreements. Thus a confidential management document was reported by a rank and file paper, and quoted as seeing a major management goal from the change as acceptance by workers of "the normal give-and-take of working arrangements, which is intended to ensure that work in hand is completed without too rigid adherence to finishing time". Overtime was to be pared to the bone in the ensuing years.

It is a common media message that 'moderate' union leaders can reach an agreement with management as good as or better than that of more radical

counterparts. Seeing management's viewpoint need not, it is argued, preclude militant non-acceptance thereof. As has been indicated, the most powerful union in Natco was in many ways aggressively on the right of the union movement. Despite this, management accounts refer to them as tough, if fair, bargainers. Unfortunately, such a judgement is hardly to be regarded as an objective one. The fact that management feel (or say they feel) they have been driven to hard but nonetheless reasonable bargains may, rather, be regarded by the bargaining strategist (not just the radical critic) as signalling that capital has done pretty well out of the deal. Seen in a light other than that cast by these same management commentators, the negotiations of the 'sixties and 'seventies have already been noted to have cost employees a great deal for little if any gain relative to other sections of labour who were making nothing like the same concessions. In many ways this experience confirms another aspect of the paradox observed by Hobsbawm, that revolutionaries have castigated unionism as narrowly economistic in consciousness but have at the same time made a "disproportionately large contribution" to its development, precisely because:

... a lack of commitment to the status quo (including that in 'moderate' unions) has made them, in their industrial capacity, better at winning concessions. (1979:8).

Thus the acceptance by the unions in Natco of key elements of managerial rationality led them to concede to productivity bargaining, and to a tacit approval of management efforts to enlist and incorporate employees in the goals of capital, made explicit from the early 1960s with a 'Joint Statement on Employee Co-operation'. On successive occasions, it has been argued, the unions "nowhere even questioned the principle of the employers' proposals, restricting themselves to objections on the size of the cash compensation". With the introduction of work study, de-manning, and the use of consultative and negotiating machinery by management to seek acquiescence to these changes, as described through management eyes and commented on above, the employees in the industry were effectively subordinated to the political economy of capital under the rubric of productivity bargaining. The process seems to have been far more successful in achieving real gains for management than in most parts of British industry. In many ways, the manner in which the agreements left the employers "to make any changes [they] think necessary in the organization, the methods, the supervision, the materials and the equipment required

to carry out work, and to apply the results of using work study and other techniques", is reminiscent of the Swedish situation endorsed until recently by Article 32 of the Basic Agreement (see Chapter 11 above).

This raises the question of rank and file reaction. I have mentioned the limits of this already, but it was far from non-existent at certain junctures. There were areas, isolated but significant, in which marked resistance from stewards and industrial staff hampered the enforcement of the new system. As much was admitted by the management accounts I have reviewed, though they took predictable care to emphasise the exceptional nature of such reactions. Their response was to adhere determinedly to centralised control of all bargains (local incentive schemes to enlist support/buy off resistance had at the same time to be vetted and approved nationally), and to engineer and rely on official union support. In this way, Natco were able to turn a bargaining relationship with the unions into one which created enforcement bonds between themselves and their 'opponents'. Not only does this indicate the limits of the conflict/consensus distinction drawn in Chapter 5, revealing how negotiation is not per se a foolproof protection against incorporation by any means; it also reinforces an awareness of the limits of 'moderate' unionism which internalises key elements of managerial rationality.

There are, however, limits to such union non-responsiveness to the full interests of membership, precipitated by intensifying rank and file experience of deteriorating conditions without corresponding instrumental gains. The pressure became hard to bear at the end of the 'sixties, with the organization of unofficial conferences of workers calling for action to get due desserts for that which had been extracted from them. Finally, unofficial strike action in 1969 was followed by an official dispute in 1970, forced on the unions by the unrest amongst their members. The dispute was highly effective, demonstrated the control of production the workers could exert, and attracted a massive barrage of opprobrium in the media. The unions finally capitulated and accepted a Court of Inquiry (heavily weighted against the union in personnel) and subsequently the findings of that Court; the lack of coherent and enduring rank and file organization was apparent in the failure of adequate resistance to continue at grass roots level. Moreover, management adopted skilful tactics to incorporate or undermine local resistance. Firstly they organized a conference of national and intermediate level negotiating bodies together

with elected local works committee members. This conference was designed to "isolate the unofficial groups in the industry", according to a senior industrial relations manager; it seemed to bow to pressure for decentralisation yet conceded no official bargaining rights to such a body or to any local organization. The same manager condemned the union decision to strike, and insisted that the activists were not works committee members by and large - hence the willingness to take representatives from here for the conference, though this begs outrageously the question of how these people were able to exert such influence on an unresponsive, 'moderate' union from outside the supposedly excellent official industrial relations machinery in the industry. Thus the viability of such managerial accounts as objective sources is cast further in doubt.

The next step was for local management to be instructed to organize meetings of workers, each receiving his own copy of the agreement, to explain the 'lead-in' payments recommended by the Court of Inquiry to promote acceptance of further productivity and manning changes and so pay for proposed increases in wages. Managers would explain the rationale of the agreement, and any resistance would depend on the presence of a local activist prepared to stick his neck out and knowing how to respond in debate. It also split those groups to be less effected by the changes from others. Acceptance was consequently the reluctant norm, though in some areas there was quite widespread resistance. Both sides of the coin must be borne in mind, then: the extent of co-operation, of management acceptance of unionism, and the lack of radical opposition; and the limits of acceptance (clarified by the results to be summarised below), the doubtful role of the unions as representatives of industrial staff interests, and a sufficient degree of rank and file obduracy to irritate management.⁴ Although there followed a period of relative quiescence, the same issues were to be resurrected six years later (and three years after the study reported below). The chief union's leader attested that discontent was greater than at the start of the 'seventies, demarcation disputes were pursued locally, and widespread unofficial disruption took place. Management ordered local engineers and managers to man the necessary equipment, and in the process may well have laid the foundation of grievances in the future. An unofficial shop stewards conference seemed likely to become an institution, motivated explicitly by the inadequacy of the traditional union and bargaining structure to provide

adequate representation. The timing of my own study is thus located in a deceptively quiet period during which there were coming to maturity long-term problems with the very system which management in the industry have exerted so much effort to praise publicly.

I shall return to these issues below, but firstly let us review some of the results of the questionnaire study itself in Natco.

SHOP FLOOR AND UNION VIEWS

It seems logical in this instance to look first at the attitudes expressed by shop floor respondents, and to return subsequently to managerial accounts, since some time has already been spent rendering top management public statements on the subject in hand.

Questionnaire distribution in Natco took place during a short period at the end of a working day, and the opportunity to talk at length to respondents, including stewards, was quite limited. Nonetheless, some comments were made to me which help lend depth to responses, and I shall discuss these at appropriate points below.

In Natco there was little deviation from the view that management were the real source of power. Only 5% failed to mention management as a power centre (1% manual staff, 2% unions, 2% supervisors), while another 2% put unions and management together. For the rest there was, however, disagreement over the location of power within the management structure. Broadly, 17% placed it locally, 22% at the district level, and 44% at more remote (national/government) levels above that. For many workers, then, decisions were taken at a level which made it most unlikely that they would be able to participate in them, either through consultative or bargaining machinery. This seems likely to be reinforced by the centralised and apparently unresponsive nature of the union organization, as the survey confirms.

Questions were then asked to ascertain views of the effectiveness of the works committee and advisory committee systems. The results are summarised in Table 16.1:

TABLE 16.1 INDUSTRIAL STAFF : HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU THINK
THE EXISTING

	<u>Advisory Committee</u> system is in dealing with 'matters of common interest'?	<u>Works Committee</u> system (i.e. local negotiating machinery) is in dealing with 'matters for negotiation'?
Very Effective	2%	2%
Reasonably Effective	30%	30%
Not Very Effective	46%	45%
Not Effective At All	16%	18%
Don't Know	7%	6%
	(N=165)	(N=164)

Neither of these branches of employee relations is given an impressive rating by these respondents. Only about a third in each case adjudge them very or reasonably effective. The IACs seemed, from my conversation, to be frequently matters of ignorance rather than provoking strong feelings of rejection; many respondents hardly knew of their existence, or particularly of the Annual Conference held under their auspices.

It cannot be said that the works committee, the negotiating body, is any better in its assigned role than the advisory committee in manual respondents eyes, a finding which seems likely to reflect the national bargaining system, and to be reflected in low attendance at union branch meetings also (64% report they 'rarely' or 'never' attend such meetings, a far higher figure than in Epoch or Weldrill - See Appendix A, Table 9). This may also have attenuated views of the importance of the works committees vis-a-vis the advisory committees, though the former are still seen as the more important of the two by 42% of respondents (39% saying the two were equally important, 4% that the advisory committees mattered more, and 15% saying they did not know).⁵

It seems clear from these findings that the enthusiastic public management reports on the attitudes of employees to the working of the participation system in its earlier stages, combined with their presumption of evolution to higher effectiveness and popularity, must be regarded with considerable scepticism. Moreover, one wonders what evidence these reports chose to ignore in their public relations exercise. As part of my preliminary contacts, in gaining access to carry out my study in Natco, I had an interview with one of the senior managers dealing with industrial relations at the district level for the Board within which lay that area of Natco I was to study. I shall refer back to this interview later, but one particularly germane piece of information was forthcoming from the discussion. This person had himself organized a questionnaire to elicit views of industrial staff in a different aspect of the industry's work from that with which I was concerned (this side of the work was where the primary work groups discussed earlier were largely used, for instance). I could not obtain the full results (though I ascertained that questions were asked such as whether people knew who their representative was, whether they had seen him in the last one or two months etc.), but it was indicated that most men were not involved at all. A lot of them did not know there was any consultative machinery at all, and there was little knowledge of who one's representative was, or of means of access to information or raising issues. The local management were, it seems, sharply disillusioned, and the survey was criticised by superiors as having asked the wrong questions - one manager near the apex of the organization announced that he 'could've got much better answers'. Not only does this buttress my own findings; it also indicates the nature of managerial attitudes to employee satisfaction which feed into the official, published versions.

One issue which had arisen recurrently in internal discussions of the operation of participation machinery followed from the decision to follow the standard procedure in setting up joint consultation and specify two separate areas: those of common and conflicting interests. The consequences of this separation have been discussed at various points in this thesis, and broadly it has been suggested that the distinction is an inherently problematical one. At one level, that of the structural labour-capital relationship, this is a truism in that all matters are areas of conflict, and this is the essential reason for expecting that in practice the separation will have various unexpected and potentially unmanageable

consequences. In the day-to-day experience of industrial relations, nonetheless, it is of course true that an appearance of varying degrees of possible antagonism or co-operation may present itself, to participants and often to observers. These appearances are not unreal, but they are nonetheless misleading (see Chapter 6).

Despite this surface plausibility of the distinction between common interest and conflict matters (which is so pervasive as to be found in most European legal stipulations of works council business, and indeed as to make the subject matter of this thesis identifiable), I have argued that the contradiction it attempts to paper over will tend to generate continual problems for its operation. Thus it was suggested (in Chapter 5) that either the consultative or other participation machinery will be liable to become trivial and insignificant, or it will be unable to exclude conflict matters and will change status or become unstable: a further possibility, that management may successfully dispense their illusion of common interests by persuasion through the machinery was seen as a feasible but not very likely outcome to any extensive degree.

The most favourable circumstances for the survival, at least, of participation machinery have been argued to be those of a relatively stable distribution of power in industrial relations, and in Chapter 10 it was argued that certain empirical findings bear out this conclusion. In Natco we are confronted with a system stipulated in law, and one which has at least survived for over three decades (if not, perhaps, thriving in the manner management account would have us believe). Throughout that period, as has been seen, the distinction between common and conflicting interests has been steadfastly maintained by management. We have no empirical evidence to test the reality of this (such as that which cast some doubt on its reality for the coal industry, as reviewed in Chapter 10), but the limited outwards signs of breakdown suggest that at least instability has not massively invaded LAC proceedings; the impression was far more strongly one of enduring marginality and triviality. The strongly centralised and relatively stable pattern of industrial relations in the industry seems well in accord with this as a feasible outcome.

A prominent industrial relations commentator, in a foreword to the book which forms the most recent of the management material discussed thus far, observes that the separation of consultation and negotiation came under

particular pressure when management sought at the same time to institute a joint problem-solving approach to accompany productivity bargaining. Here the aim would be to combine elements of negotiation with co-operation and consultation. Such a pluralistic solution is viewed, in this thesis, as a possibly viable one, though it stems from an analysis which cannot comprehend the political economy of the dilemmas it seeks to evade. This limitation of analysis is evident in this case also. Thus it is observed later in the commentary on Natco that "the line of demarcation between negotiation and consultation has ceased to be accepted in common", and that shop stewards have progressively by-passed some of the official channels. This is interesting and relevant information, but the author is hard put to understand the perseverance with the distinction or the stability of the arrangement. As for the management authors themselves, they reject proposals to combine the two functions in any degree, giving as their official reason at least that to introduce sectional interests from the start would interfere with the possibility of management as an 'organic structure' consulting employees on a wide range of issues.

In short, management preferred to retain its prerogatives of final imposition of decisions over a wide range of workplace issues, which we saw were crucial to their ability to direct work and raise productivity. In a sense they have come as near as is likely to be practicable to a form of 'joint problem-solving' that suits them, through their relations with and the space given them by the unions in the industry. Contrary to pluralist idealism, it suits management (given the limited practical chances of incorporating labour successfully) to retain consultative committees as largely trivial bodies which carry few if any threats but may on occasion serve as a persuasion channel. Participation is, we have seen, something which for management is to be justified by managerial objectives and their furtherance. In this light, the opinions of management can be prised apart for their significance. One further point may also be borne in mind. For worker representatives there may be some protection in being able to get issues raised and put informal pressure on for concessions in a body where decisions are in no way binding on them due to the rights of decision formally retained by management. This will be the case above all where shop steward power is still limited or its bearers are uncertain of their position. How far this is the case in Natco I cannot do more than guess, but it suggests how effective blurring can occur as with that described earlier within a formally rigid system. Nonetheless, the chief

impression, to repeat, is that the consequence of the separation is above all triviality, though with a tendency to favour management implementation.

The contradictory pressures for both sides help to explain attitudes on this issue of separation. As we saw, manual staff are somewhat divided on the relative importance to the pursuit of their interests of the advisory and works committees, the negotiating body emerging as the more important, but not emphatically so. The respondents were next asked whether the two committees, and so the areas they covered, should be merged or kept separate. The results are given in Table 16.2:

TABLE 16.2 : INDUSTRIAL STAFF : RELATION OF ADVISORY AND WORKS COMMITTEES

The Two should be Merged	34%
The Two should be kept Separate	43%
Don't Now	23%
(N=166)	

The division is fairly even, with a large number of abstainers amongst those answering the question.

Another test of the relevance of the committees and of general interest in the representative system is willingness to serve on the bodies in question. Of all respondents, 11% had had experience of serving on an advisory committee, 13% on a works committee, and 12% as shop stewards. It may be recalled that at Epoch, despite dissatisfaction with the consultative system, over four-fifths expressed themselves willing to serve on a consultation committee. In contrast, only 38% of Natco respondents were prepared to serve on an advisory committee, only 45% on a works committee, and 32% as shop stewards. (This does not mean that union representation counts for less than consultation; it also reflects the more onerous task involved in being a shop steward. Thus 75% of respondents would feel very or quite badly if the union were forced to withdraw from the company, in contrast to the result for advisory committees given below).

The views on the accrual of benefits from the joint consultation system in Natco are given in Table 14.4 above. Both sides are seen as gaining by just over half the respondents, but 52% see management as coming best out of the arrangements while a further 18% feel it makes no difference, and for 4% both lose. Thus when asked how they would feel if the system of advisory committees was discontinued, 38% only would feel very or quite badly, 58% would mind little or not at all, and 5% would be pleased (see Table 14.5). It would appear, then, that despite all the claims that have been made for the operation of joint consultation in Natco, employees are not greatly impressed. Nor did these employees feel that management were very well in touch with their needs (see Table 14.6). Only 1% thought them very closely in touch with workers, and 35% reasonably well, leaving 65% who thought them not very well or not at all in touch.

Indeed, even a manager, echoing a comment quoted earlier from a published account, admitted that consultations that were taking place over proposed reorganization changes might be participation in management's view to some extent, but not to the employees themselves.

They don't think it's participation, because they don't get their ideas adopted, they feel no participation. In fact, their suggestions are very useful even if we reject them, but Joe Bloggs on the shop floor doesn't see it that way ...

There is one other source, somewhat limited but amenable to reading between the lines, which provides clues on the operation of the participation machinery in Natco and raises issues about the future. These are the proceedings of the annual conference of LACs for the year preceding my study, for which the topic had fortuitously been 'How The Existing Joint Consultation Machinery Could Be Improved'. Thus the first question raised by one LAC concerned the need to leave LACs to deal with safety, health and welfare, and to deal with negotiating matters elsewhere. The chief manager had to explain that the LAC did not deal with negotiating matters. Clearly, it seems, the employee representatives on that LAC felt that it did, bearing witness to the blurring of boundaries in practice mentioned earlier. A white-collar representative approved of consultation's existence, but in a way which also threatened the boundaries - "some matters must be the subject of consultation because there was no bargaining right in them" - and set clearly the confines as "matters which affected individuals without reflecting on their pocket." The

union district negotiating committee secretary on the industrial staff side argued that progressively more and more areas should become the province of negotiation "thus slowly doing away with the present consultation terms of reference". Still another union representative saw consultation merely as an intermediate process, following management drawing up proposals and preceding negotiation. And finally, LAC representatives from the area covered by my own study had concluded that the two parts of the machinery should be joined, at least at the District level above the LACs.

One other issue is worth raising before we conclude this section on the union view of participation in Natco. At the conference referred to above, some discussion was held of the idea of worker directors, and the response from the union side seemed notably cool (though 62% thought it a very or quite good idea according to my survey of employees). One commented that "workers when co-operating as worker directors would lose touch with the rank and file members on the shop floor". For another, unions had first to encompass far more workers and extend collective bargaining: "To bring in worker directors at this stage would be placing a man in an impossible situation".

This doubt about the desirability of representation on the Board of Natco reflects to some extent the attitudes of the unions nationally. Of the four manual unions, one fully supported the idea of workers on the board, one was more equivocal in advocating extended bargaining as an alternative, and a third disapproved of them in the private sector though it did endorse the idea for public corporations. The most powerful of the unions had declared itself much more strenuously as opposed, however, and their General Secretary served on a government Committee (see later) which examined the industry's structure and also rejected the idea. As with many relatively right-wing unions, the limited notion of even broader social-democratic ends to be achieved by union action (which would be 'political') leads to an emphasis on the strictly 'economic representational' aspects of unionism, and so to an element of agreement with the radical left in the union on the dangers of 'collaboration'. This opposition was also found amongst the most vociferous of the white-collar unions in the industry, representing engineers. In 1975, when the TUC gave evidence to the government committee mentioned above, in which it advocated worker directors, there was an attack on their proposals by the head of this

union, including the telling argument that the TUC itself had not consulted the industry's unions on whether they wanted such an arrangement. This led to a joint statement by manual and white-collar unions rejecting the TUC line, and insisting that they would decide the matter for themselves. Two years later, after the publication of the Bullock Report, all but the most pro-worker director union objected publicly to a proposal to move towards some public sector experimentation with the idea through Natco. Instead, the unions pressed ahead with proposals for the reform of consultative machinery, which I shall discuss in my conclusions to the section on Natco.

MANAGEMENT VIEWS

In effect, managerial accounts and opinions of the operation of the participation machinery in Natco have already been given an extensive airing in my review of published material. However, public statements by top management are not necessarily representative of the attitudes of local management, as was argued in Chapter 8. In this section I shall employ information from both my survey and my contact with management, together with the statements by managers at the LACs' Annual Conference referred to in the previous section, and finally some of the conclusions drawn by the articles and book discussed earlier.

It was made clear to me in my conversations and fuller interviews with management that they recognised at least some of the shortcomings of the consultative system, particularly under the stress of reorganization, though not, I think, as clearly and extensively as was implied by the questionnaire findings among manual workers. To an extent this follows from predictable differences in perspective. Thus I was told that a task of the chairman (a manager, it will be recalled) was to rule matters out of order as negotiation issues, implying a good deal of power to regulate meetings in the hands of this person; and that the advisory nature of the proceedings was vital, as the system could be "abused" if it were to challenge the Board's authority. The training of a representative, and subsequent attendance at Spring or Summer training schools, were seen as being about getting "a feel for the problems of the industry".

Nonetheless, I was told that representatives on works and advisory committees might be and often were the same people, which gives further

reason to expect some de facto overlap of the functions. Another, more junior manager told me that one of the problems in getting life into the LACs was that the local manager, as chairman, could rule out of order any question he didn't want raised. At the same time I was told there were 'still' some of the 'old guard' (of militant, oppositional shop stewards) who made life difficult; it seems significant that such people should be seen as outdated by management.

Generally communication was acknowledged to be wanting where LAC business was concerned, and as we saw knowledge of LAC meetings was minimal among those staff I was able to talk to. It was also recognised, by the senior manager concerned with industrial relations, that:

... people are actually not all that interested in the really general information, more in things affecting themselves.
[Shows me a copy of the Board accounts]. The Board management always say 'It's all in there, as naked as can be, all the faults etc. - it shows what you need and need not worry about. What more could they want?' But of course, although they all have access to this no-one really looks at it. It just doesn't bother them.

These views largely extend the managerial accounts of those at the head of the industry, whilst giving a little more insight into the local operation of the LACs. It is noticeable that when we move on to look at the questionnaire responses of local management, however, the story ceases to be so neat. The question on the location of power shows a considerable variety of responses, though it is notable that the government figures in 13 out of 21 replies. The trade unions appear in 8 replies (though only once as having sole possession of the 'real power'). The Board level of management is seen by 4 as having the power, and by another 3 as sharing it with government and unions; national-level management are mentioned 3 times; and local management once only. Manual staff are seen as sharing the real power in 2 cases. Only the perceived role of government emerges strongly from all this.

Whilst management overall express a higher opinion of the effectiveness of both advisory and works committees than do manual staff (compare Table 16.1 above with 16.3 below), particularly in the case of the consultative machinery, the difference is not as great as might have been expected:

TABLE 16.3 : MANAGERS : HOW EFFECTIVE AT THEIR RESPECTIVE TASKS* ARE:

	<u>Advisory Committees</u>	<u>Works Committees</u>
Very	9%	5%
Reasonably	36%	57%
Not Very	36%	29%
Not At All	14%	5%
Don't Know	5%	5%
	(N=22)	(N=21)

* See Table 16.1 for full wording

Managers are pretty evenly split on the question of whether advisory committees perform their task in dealing with matters of common interest at least reasonably effectively, whereas for works committees twice as many rate them this effective as rate them lower.

Managers concur with the view of manual staff in placing greater importance for the interests of those staff in the works committees. Thus although 14% rated advisory committees the more important body (as compared with 4% of manual staff themselves), 29% rated them equally important (as against 39%) and 57% judged works committees to count for most (43%). It could not be said, then, that these managers (many of whom, it is perhaps worth noting, may be unionised in the active representative body which recruits within the industry) are inclined to think manual staff interests are more centrally served by a unitary body than the workers themselves.

On the question of proposals to merge or to keep separate the two bodies, the findings shown in Table 16.4 may be compared to those for manual employees in Table 16.2 in the light of the discussion preceding that table:

TABLE 16.4 MANAGERS : RELATION OF ADVISORY AND WORKS COMMITTEES

Should Be Merged	33%
Should Be Kept Separate	52%
Don't Know	14%
	(N=21)

The result shows a somewhat more emphatic majority in favour of retaining separation of functions than amongst manual staff, but the difference is not great between the two sets of responses (though the reasons for opinions may be quite different, of course), and managers are clearly quite divided on the issue.

Most of the managers who completed questionnaires (59%) had served on an advisory committee in the past, though only one-third had served on a works committee. 73% and 61% respectively were prepared to do so at a future date if necessary, rather higher than for manual staff in each case.

Natco managers' judgement as to the benefactors of the advisory committee system is to be found in Table 14.1. Both sides are seen as gaining in some measure by almost three-quarters (73%). Unlike the other two organizations' managers, no respondent thinks workers come out best on these findings (though due to a questionnaire error this observation may be disputable).⁶ For 17% the system makes no difference, and for one respondent, interestingly, management gain at the expense of workers, while for another both lose.

Half of the Natco managers would feel very or quite badly if the advisory committee system were discontinued (see Table 14.2), the other half would mind little or not at all - though in this case no-one says they would actually be pleased. The pattern is not far out of line with that in Weldrill amongst managers, and shows a rather higher degree of attachment to the committees than that expressed by manual workers (see Table 14.5). The differences between managers in their commitment to the system are again noteworthy, however.

None of the Natco managers thought that management were 'very closely' in touch with workers' needs (see Table 14.3), though three-quarters thought them 'reasonably' in touch. There remain 23% who felt they were 'not very

well' in touch, however, and 5% who opined that they were not in touch at all. This rating is, as might be expected, higher than that given by the manual staff themselves (see Table 14.6), but it nonetheless indicates an apparent awareness of relational problems on the part of Natco management. This is not to say that Natco management are in fact less in touch, of course - it may for instance indicate rather a greater sensitivity to problems than in other firms - but when considered along with the information about industrial relations in Natco given earlier, it does imply that certain real and recognised difficulties do exist.

The questionnaire findings leave one with a sense of local, lower management critical awareness of at least some of the shortcomings of participative arrangements in Natco. This appears as a clear contrast with the presentations of higher level management, locally and in particular nationally. The Annual LACs' Conference discussed earlier is a good illustration of more senior management's approach. The entire conference was focussed on participative machinery, and the official approach taken is that an opportunity is being presented for wide-ranging reform proposals. Yet each management contribution seems to revolve around the defence of existing arrangements or the diversion of discussion towards minimal changes. Thus one management representative:

... would not want to push the LAC to one side because it was a way of making sure that the job was done in a disciplined way.

For another manager criticisms brought forth the response that he:

... was pleased that people were talking about LACs in terms of complete perfection.

Finally, the senior manager for the entire Board not only distributed notes for discussion in advance of the conference which quickly rejected as irrelevant the worker director notion and turned to marginal reforms in the consultative system (to give an 'improved flow of information from management', and proposing smaller and less formal LACs). He also argued that talk of improvement should be based on the satisfactory nature of existing arrangements, and claimed there was "a high degree of consensus on main objectives throughout the industry". And if this does not seem an ideal open-ended basis for a meaningful debate on the successes and

failings of the consultative machinery, then his rounding off of that discussion not only neglects any alternative proposals that had been made, but stamps the process firmly with other management boundaries:

... what were the responsibilities of management? There were two relevant to the Conference. One was that management should provide leadership and the other the responsibility of the Board to seek, as far as possible, unity of purpose and good fellowship within all branches of its staff ...

... the Board had given a tremendous amount of thought to the whole joint consultation procedure /with respect to reorganization/...

Whilst a lot had been said about the limitations of what could or had been done by the LACs, it should be remembered that the LACs did make a massive contribution to this exercise and there had been a reference to the very considerable volume, and also the quality of what the LACs provided.

This is hardly a manifesto for change. It rings particularly ironically on reorganization, where we are told that speed and consultation had to be balanced to minimise uncertainty for staff. The experiences of this change cited earlier do not bear out the public management self-judgement.

NATCO : CONCLUSIONS

Once again a striking gap emerges between public descriptions of the success of a participation scheme and the local assessment not only of manual workers but also of managers. These attitudes confirm the suspicions of the effectiveness of the participative machinery in democratic terms which arise from a critical reading of management accounts. From the earliest days after nationalisation, the statement of intent of the head of the industry (a prominent ex-trade unionist) hinted at pseudo-democratic participation in the very terms of its concern. "Happier workers are more efficient workers" was the message, and one means to create them was to be the creation of consultation where little had existed. Yet consultation was no substitute for human relations techniques of leadership, and moreover "giving orders is not the same thing as consulting their subordinates". Management should give an example and "be the true leaders in this sphere as in others."

This theme lies close to the surface in subsequent managerial prescriptions and judgements. Thus in the article published at the end of the 1950s by two chief managers to which I have referred before, it is argued that:

To be effective, decisions must be understood and accepted by those who have to carry them out and it is here that joint consultation is of the greatest value to management ...

Both joint consultation and machines are investments in indirect means of production ... one must consider the return from joint consultation, just as one considers the return from machines.

In this scenario management strengthen rather than weaken their hand by consulting, and retain the right to make final decisions "where the joint consultative committees have misunderstood their frame of reference". In the book, ten years later, and following on the "new urgency" of participation in the authors' eyes generated by productivity bargaining, the line remains little changed nonetheless:

We stand by our views that management must itself take the major decisions and the responsibilities that flow from them. But we think it all to the good that, before these decisions are taken, employees should be informed and consulted.

It is claimed that this has happened through the application of productivity negotiations at local level (though the consequences may seem to us more like pseudo-democracy), and moreover that the limit has been reached if unions are to remain independent. The frontiers marked by management are clear and enclose few apparent (and even fewer real) concessions to the shop floor. And the unitary, problem-communicating view of participation continues to be stressed in the 1977 description of 'understanding meetings' in a region other than that in which my study took place:

The purpose of the meetings is to improve staff's understanding of management intentions and policies and, equally, to provide management with an insight into the feelings and reactions of staff.

The use of localised, work-group meetings is a practice which has been revived in various forms and on differing constituent bases in one part or another at Natco. They are claimed to have become more important during the 1960s, until they had brought to the shop floor many of the important problems that would otherwise go through LACs. In fact, the

tone seems very much to be that of communication (downwards) bodies, with a strong admixture of human relations. It would seem that immediately before reorganization in the area I was to study, no particular such groups met in the part of the industry with which I was concerned, though whether they had lapsed or not I cannot say. I was, however, informed of an innovation establishing such informal meetings at the depot most distant from the new HQ during my investigation. The intention was to recreate involvement by having supervisor and workers deal with "down-to-earth", immediate problems; thus conflicts are ignored, or seen as secondary to this need for involvement in a common enterprise. Whilst local management placed some hope in this scheme, its lack of novelty and its evident structural shortcomings must make its viability as a solution to management (or shop floor) problems doubtful.

Finally, the same applies to the recommendations of a recent Committee of Inquiry set up to examine the administration of the entire industry. The views adopted by this Committee were sharply at odds with the conclusions of the Bullock Committee which it preceded, and indeed had a great deal more in common with the minority report of the Committee of Industrial Democracy. This should be less surprising when it is considered that the committee examining Natco consisted of a manager in the industry, a right-wing union leader known to oppose union involvement at board level, two business academics, and two managers at the head of large corporations (one of these being the committee chairman).

This body rejected the TUC argument for a new board to run the industry including independent, union-appointed representatives as half its number. The reasons given for this are not those of unions wary of incorporation; indeed the central criticism of the TUC submission is that it would undermine the collective, unitary responsibility of the union side at least of the board.

We do not believe such a body could have a common purpose or could work together to secure the overall good management of the industry. We fear that ... the Board would merely be the forum for endless negotiations...

The report rejects the idea of a universal form of participation suitable for all industries.⁷ The preferred channel of participation is consistent with managerial ideology also:

We believe that employee representation must therefore be built up from the bottom within the industry. The first priority must be continued effort to revitalise the industry's machinery for consultation.

The purpose of consultation is, along with good communications, to stimulate a "progressive attitude" among workers, which means, it seems, "pride in the good running of the industry".

It emerges that evidence on the operation of the LACs and higher levels of the participation machinery acknowledged that the machinery was now too cumbersome, and had to be 'simplified and updated'. Just what lies behind this rhetoric is, unsurprisingly, left undeveloped. The revealing aspect of this part of the report is the apparent emergence of a consensus, a couple of years after my own study, that the LACs were not such exemplary participation channels as had been claimed.

The findings of this study suggest that the Natco unions and the Committee of Inquiry are correct about the insubstantiality of any likely democratic gains from worker directors, though (particularly in the case of the Committee) for erroneous reasons. The TUC safeguards against attaching responsibility to union representatives would provide the best basis for some real decision-making influence independent of the rationality of capital, but that best would be far from acceptable in this writer's view. In the event the Minister's inclination was towards the creation of a new top board with union representation in some form, but any plans to implement such proposals remained unpublished during the Labour Government's lifetime.

Other moves have been afoot in Natco, in conformity with the promise given to the Committee to reform the consultative system. The advisory system was superseded in 1977 by a new National Joint Co-ordinating Council; which it was claimed would discuss far more issues than its predecessor could. The body remains non-executive, and while it is claimed that nonetheless its decisions will be felt to impose certain obligations on both sides, the terms of reference make it difficult to believe that such an institutional rejigging will transform the decision-making process in a way favourable to labour. The national, and proposed local bodies in no way challenge the official separation of negotiation and consultation matters, and the latter will still be aimed at "joint consideration of

matters of common concern or interest". However, it seems that some of the difficulties arising from the delimitation of negotiation have been partially recognised through a move to make the consultative body representatives the appointees of the works committee/unions rather than directly elected, thus facilitating transfer of issues from one channel to the other.

This reform may or may not resolve the problems it at last partially acknowledges. In practice the smoother running of the arrangements, and the greater substance of business for the successors to LACs, will depend on the degree to which management are prepared to allow de facto bargaining where it is demanded by employee representatives. It will also be a matter for conjecture whether the application of the new proposals will lend more power to local shop stewards or to the official, centralised union organization. The latter, on past records, will seem preferable to management, but might well obstruct the meeting of local employee demands. In short, the institutions themselves may operate in a variety of ways, and the vague rhetoric of the Committee of Inquiry into the management of the industry or of internal reformers will count for little alongside practice.

CONCLUSIONS OVERALL

It would be superfluous to offer more than the most summary final remarks encompassing the three case studies of attitudes to participation schemes related in this and the previous two chapters. Each account speaks for itself, and each accords well with and lends depth to the analysis abstractly presented in Chapter 5 and empirically reinforced in Chapters 9, 10 and 11. A few points seem worth particular emphasis, however:

1. Here are reviewed three schemes, the two more formal of which have received extensive national publicity and so constitute a significant proportion of the general mythology of participation. Yet all three failed to attract much interest from the shop floor (a point reinforced by the evidence presented in Chapter 12), and thus seem to belong to the category of 'triviality'.

2. As an addendum to this, it is perhaps noteworthy that the strongest feelings of support were for the relatively unpublicised and informal style adopted in Weldrill. The best explanation for this seems to lie in the relatively good conditions and pay in this firm by comparison with its competitors - an advantage which is in fact more readily attributable to union organization within the company. Certainly it would be difficult to say that this was a more 'developed' participative arrangement as such a term might conventionally be used.
3. The public relations image in the other two cases tended to evaporate as investigation proceeded, particularly in Epoch. Thus top management accounts came to recognise problems; though there remained a pattern broadly common to all three companies that 'official' accounts were less critical than face-to-face top management accounts, which were less critical than the wider management opinion presented in survey responses, which in turn were less critical than the views of those supposedly the main benefactors of participation, the manual staff. The notions of what participation was about, and what it should aim to achieve, varied in the same manner and in line with the interest and ideological differences identified in Chapter 3, and in Chapters 7, 8, 12 and 13.
4. In all three cases the unions were fairly well established in the organizations. This created the conditions for a decline into triviality of any arrangement designed to deal with matters of 'common interest', since bargaining procedures were quite well developed. Nonetheless, there was evidence of past disappointment and bitterness, i.e. elements of instability, when the participative arrangements failed to live up to expectations (engendered, for workers, by the rhetoric of management). In Natco the scheme was too old to leave any remnants on an extensive basis of such disappointment, but there was resentment over the way in which reorganization had been instituted without, in many opinions, adequate consideration of employee views or interests. In Weldrill and Epoch there was more direct indication of disappointment at the shortfall of existing or past schemes.

CHAPTER 16 : NOTES

1. The Economist magazine, quoted Johnson, 1952:181.
2. The statutory form adopted referred to "any organization appearing to the corporation to be appropriate" (Johnson, 1952:185).
3. The key, and the most effective institution according to the book on Natco.
4. This troublesome militancy, at least as perceived by management, was subsequently confirmed by an ex-manager from another area of Natco in an interview held in another context some years after my study.
5. These were the proportions for the 158 replies given from 182 questionnaires. The 24 respondents who did not answer imply a further possible reservoir of effective 'don't knows', though a good number of those giving no response probably simply did not get this far through the questionnaire.
6. The important category of 'both gain, workers most' was omitted from Natco management questionnaires in error. This may explain the high (30%) proportion who endorse the equal gain category, though it is worth noting that no-one wrote in the missing alternative.
7. See Chapter 3 above for a discussion of how this superficially reasonable stance serves a managerial orientation, translating as an effort to protect managers' powers by granting them jurisdiction to regulate the introduction and form of schemes unhindered by legislative obligations.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION:

WHOSE PARTICIPATION, WHOSE DEMOCRACY?

To give control or participation without the workers . being subject to the same kind of financial responsibility forced on shareholders, whose funds were at risk, would be a form of 'institutionalized theft'....(report of views of Selsdon Group of the Conservative Party, Times 19.7.76).

Property is theft. (Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Qu'est-ce que la propriete, 1840).

This thesis has addressed itself to an analysis of the nature of workers' participation in management in capitalist societies, and particularly in Britain. It has sought to examine how participation relates to the attainment of democracy in industry, though this in turn required the clarification of the analysis of 'democracy' presented in the first two chapters. There the key questions about democracy were identified as "who takes decisions, by what means, and in whose interests." In political and industrial terms, it was argued, this entailed decisions being taken by the people, through mechanisms and processes involving them directly, which served their interests. Participation schemes which served other purposes, such as the maintenance of an exploitative status quo, did not serve democracy on this argument. Further, since it was argued that social relations in industry are fundamentally conflictual in capitalism, then any scheme which purported to serve common interests of capital and labour would seek to operate in this system-maintaining fashion; it would thus merit the label 'pseudo-democratic'.

The remainder of the thesis has therefore been an investigation of the political economy of participation, to determine for whom it works: for workers' interests, or for those of capital. In order to carry out this investigation, it was argued that certain requirements of analysis had to be met, including particularly:

1. Making the underlying theoretical precepts of the analysis explicit.
2. Being concerned with the operation of participation in the real world (rather than in the abstract or in some ideal, imagined realm).
3. Being able to account for the existence and nature of other explanations, and so to show the superior explanatory scope of one's own account.
4. Developing certain working categories within which to organise one's account, on an heuristic basis.

THE CRITIQUE OF PLURALISM

The first and third of these together constitute the starting point for identification and discussion of the issues. Something else also was entailed here, however: the delineation of any orthodoxy, the demonstration of its basic tenets and delineation of any inadequacy as an analytical approach. In the event, many of the basic arguments of the Marxist approach applied in this thesis were elaborated in and through a debate with the managerial (unitary) view and far more importantly the variants of pluralist analyses which constitute the conventional wisdom on participation (and other industrial relations issues). A major proportion of the first three parts of the thesis revolved around a critical examination of pluralist accounts, scrutinising the analytical anaemia such accounts display, and also what was argued to be a powerful bias towards the protection of the interests of capital disguised by the banner of neutral pragmatism. Pluralism, it was argued, cannot answer the question posed by this thesis's title, because it remains quintessentially blind to class and power. In Chapter Four, the shortcomings of a selected group of influential pluralist analyses of participation were subjected to a close interrogation which demonstrated the working out of these broad problems in detail.

It will be recalled that one of the most typical features of pluralist academic treatments of participation was to adopt the

'systems' form of analysis more generally characterised by the work of J.T. Dunlop. This approach compounded the more general faults of pluralist analysis with a reinforced tendency to advance arbitrary (and professedly neutral but implicitly loaded) categories qua theory, and to reduce reality to superficial (for the most part formal, institutional) phenomena. I must resist the ever-present temptation to indulge at length in further pursuit of this quarry, but I am strengthened in my conviction of the need for thoroughgoing criticism of the pluralist orthodoxy by the recent publication at the time I write this of its latest, most elaborate and grandest incarnation. I refer to the two-volume report by the professorially-inundated 'Industrial Democracy in Europe International Research Group' (IDE, 1981,1981a). This work reports and codifies into a variety of familiar categories and continua material on twelve countries, all of it carefully interpreted through the quasi-neutral (excluding alternatives by silence) prism of pluralist methodology. To this end it employs a combination of a face-value analysis of labour participation through formal machinery, and the Tannenbaum-type investigation of actors' perceptions (criticised in the Appendix to Ch 12 above). So it is that on participative provision Britain and Italy rate bottom, Germany and Sweden top (with Yugoslavia, once again included by that convenient reduction of 'socialism' to a matter of mere system label difference, as it was so often in the approaches dissected in Ch Four) - although if shop floor worker power were considered the positions might well be reversed. With this passing observation that the pluralist orthodoxy is alive, as well-funded and unreflexive as ever, and so still in need of direct and detailed confrontation and refutation, I shall move on.

MAKING THEORY EXPLICIT

In order to meet the first stipulation of an adequate analysis, I sought to make explicit my presuppositions and prejudices in the Introduction. The underlying assumptions of my approach were stated to be Marxist ones. Given the still vast lack of definition this leaves, (reflected in major differences with other accounts claiming Marxist heritage at a number of subsequent junctures, and again below), an attempt was

made to indicate in outline the position adopted on certain key issues. Thus whilst the continuity of the basic features of capitalism, including a fundamental class conflict between capital and labour expressed in the workplace as the struggle over the use of employed labour power to transform materials into commodities (the labour process), could be regarded as by and large non-controversial within Marxism, the same was not true for other matters. It proved necessary to clarify my position on the nature of the State, for example, to argue what I called a 'relational' view. Other points were made in some depth in the text, notably the discussion of 'democracy' in Ch. One, and the discussion of power and ideology (and the rejection of the 'base/superstructure' Marxist orthodoxy) in Ch. Six. These are not minor disputations, mere academic niceties, since they form the basis of major differences of interpretation and proposals concerning worker participation with other Marxists, a fact brought out at various points during the thesis and confronted once more later in this conclusion. At this point, let me note only that I argued from the Introduction that the determination of the origins, nature and consequences of participation schemes under capitalism could not be deduced a priori from more general precepts but had to be subjected to empirical investigation. Just how important this was has hopefully been made clear by the empirical material presented, which shows for instance, that it cannot be taken for granted that participation will successfully lure labour representatives like flies onto the managerial web. At the same time, while I hope I have not prejudged my findings or achieved them by selection, I admitted that my stance did engender at least a cynical predisposition towards the 'success' of participation as conventionally represented in the literature.

As we have seen, the third enumerated requirement was effectively identified as calling for an exegesis of orthodox accounts, particularly pluralist ones, and exposing their ideological nature (and the interests they thereby served) as stemming both from their admitted philosophy and from their epistemology. They were also found to be restrictive in that they excluded from the purview of their analysis many aspects of social relations which I argued must be seen as integral to those 'industrial relations' of which participation schemes are one feature.

DEVELOPING CATEGORIES AND CONCEPTS

In connection with this last point, the major part of Parts One to Three of the thesis was engaged in the examination of certain key concepts, developing and justifying a distinctive Marxist approach to democracy, industrial democracy, participation and power, at the same time as identifying the often unspoken pluralist notions on the same areas and subjecting them to criticism. It is this breadth of scope, required by the logic of my own arguments against existing approaches to the subject which has entailed the unwieldy length of the final product of this thesis.

As the analysis proposed in this thesis developed in opposition to pluralist credenda, the need for certain specific conceptual tools to inform the discussion became apparent. Chapter Five undertook the task of pulling together the points made in Parts One and Two to form the basis of an evaluation of participation and, one could say, to advance certain hypotheses for testing in later chapters (though in fact I am as sceptical as Baldamus¹ of the pretentious and post hoc nature of such a self-justification). In the process, a classificatory framework was suggested drawing on a number of sources. This was the process described in the fourth of the requirements of analysis, the formulation of heuristic categories, and in line with the argument advanced on this it was stipulated that the categories themselves should in no way be regarded as theory, but rather used or discarded insofar as they offered a means of organising observations which helped to make sense of the real world in a manner consistent with the facts (rather than bending them to fit its frame) and with the theoretical account thereof being developed. Obviously one cannot pretend to be unaffected by such categories in perceiving the world, but I feel it is possible to retain a sceptical regard for them and to try constantly to challenge them oneself to put on trial their robustness.

I have sought to be both self-critical in this fashion, and to face up to difficulties observed by others in analysing certain material. Thus, as I shall observe later, recent research has led me to modify at least one aspect of the description of the pattern of outcomes of

participation schemes ventured in Chapter 10 (see Fig.10.1). I am nowadays also inclined to elaborate a little on the typology of participation schemes proposed in Chapter 5 (see Fig.5.1), identifying three levels rather than two at which participation may take place. These are job level (as before), middle management level (which covers joint consultation and the like), and top management level (which covers worker directors in particular). This distinguishes top level representation, which is the particular attraction of worker directors (but not joint consultation) over orthodox collective bargaining. This further distinction also accords roughly with the categories of decisions identified by Fox (1973a - see Ch5): 'social' and 'personnel' matters usually being negotiated or consulted over at the middle level, along with some 'technical' issues, while 'business' matters are settled at the top, out of reach of these arrangements (though often in management committees and out of reach of boardroom representatives in practice as well, as the experience reviewed in Chs 10 and 11 have shown). This modification helps clarify the analysis, but does not substantially alter any of the arguments advanced.

Another area which I feel in retrospect may have deserved more discussion is the sharp distinction made (again see Fig.5.1) between consensus and conflict-oriented approaches operating within the status quo. This led to a suggestion that collective bargaining offered a more viable form of relationship, adapted to the reality of conflict, than most forms of 'participation' which adopted a consensus outlook; thus a 'change of committee status' towards de facto bargaining was seen as a pragmatic adjustment likely to bear at least some fruit in establishing workable and meaningful exchange between management and the representatives of labour. I would still claim that there is an important and qualitative difference between a bargaining and a unitary, co-operative basis to employer-employee relations. But as we saw in the case of Natco, a 'moderate' union may concur in management

ideology to a degree which entails that it strikes bargains which seem to cede all rights but unilateral control of the wage-effort bargain to management. Moreover, as has also been observed, a bargain is both a compromise and something which the union must try to discipline its members to work to once agreed. Unions may become control agents within this context, acting to staunch rank and file protests which disrupt the agreement, for instance. A hard and fast separation of bargaining and collaboration is thus an arbitrary imposition on the facts. The relevant analogy is, of course, the distinction between pluralist and unitary approaches to analysing industrial relations: the pluralist view is more workable, and perhaps less oppressive (and at least likely to be experienced as such). The acknowledgement of conflict is not a trivial step, but neither does it alter the basic exploitative nature of the employment relationship, nor the ideological concealment of that basic nature.

I would not, therefore, accept the simple endorsement of bargaining which accompanies the rejection of 'participation' by some union commentators (including, on the Marxist left Arthur Scargill). This will attract further comment below. The distinction I made is an heuristic one only, and becomes misleading if regarded as one between 'pure' consensus and bargaining. This said, when buttressed with the observation of the source of initiative in advocating the two, consensus and bargaining relationships, the fact that management tend to inaugurate the former and the representatives of labour the latter confirms that a real difference does exist, and observations on the workability of the two forms seem to me to endorse this.

THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS

Having offered these qualifications, it remains my feeling that the analysis and categories laid out in Chapter Five and subsequently have stood the test of application stoutly, and offer a basis for understanding the nature and consequences of participation schemes not provided in any existing accounts of which I am aware, particularly those informed by pluralist precepts. Following on from the Marxist

foundations proposed for the analysis, a number of contentions were developed in the first eight chapters of the thesis, of which I shall attempt to summarise only the major points.

Firstly, the distinctive conclusions concerning 'democracy' and so 'industrial democracy' which followed from the Marxist view adopted were indicated in contradistinction to their pluralist (institutionalist and participatory) counterparts. The differences hinged around the importance of class analysis of 'political' and 'industrial' relations; and the problematical individualism, reformism and idealism of even 'radical' pluralism. At heart, the differences sprang from the different conceptions of interests, and of the relationship between interests and forms of representation.

From a Marxist viewpoint, the political economy of decision-making is constrained by the rationality which governs the system of production, and no representative arrangements can transform this of themselves. The elaboration of these points in fact requires the investigation of the nature of power which was to follow in Chapter Six. Finally, it was observed that under no meaningful usage of the term could 'democracy' in polity or industry embrace the policies of managerialist unitarism, to which it is nonetheless often applied by proponents from this tradition of job enrichment schemes and the like.

'Participation', on the other hand, could be interpreted as sharing in decision-making (i.e. as a feature of democracy) or merely as being a part, as feeling involved in the enterprise. The latter interpretation concurs with unitary perceptions of the firm, but if a conflictual view of relations in the firm is adopted (Marxist or pluralist) it recasts such an effect as incorporation, as a false consciousness of identity, and so as antagonistic to democracy. Even if the effect is superficial, it clearly does not amount to democracy in any meaningful sense of the term.

'Participation' in any democratic tradition thus refers to some genuine share in decision-making. The view taken of worker participation schemes in any given analysis of industrial relations will be a function of the conceptualisation of the nature of the employment relationship, the associated conception of power (see below), and the role worker participation is seen as playing (involvement in common interests or sharing in decision-making). For many pluralists it was observed that this area was blurred, reflecting the tension between the recognition of conflict and the underlying affinity with consensus formulations in their accounts. This was compounded by their uncertainty about the nature of the role to be played by participation in the above terms. Thus even Clegg or Dahrendorf, at one time at least consistent to their perception of essential conflict at work and of participation as a unitary, managerial conception, and so opposing participation schemes, were later to soften or reverse their analyses faced by the contradictions of their pluralist outlook and of the capitalist market economy it was ultimately committed to support.

For the Marxist perspective adopted by this writer, any form of participation which entails taking part in running the existing system must be suspect. Even a nominal share in decision-making within the system would amount to the participation in the process of the worker's own exploitation (just as 'bourgeois democracy' is seen as being), an argument which is best elaborated in terms of the different epistemology and substantive analysis of power appropriate to Marxism on which some time was spent later. Participation could only be seen as presentable in Marxist terms if it contained loopholes from a capitalist point of view, having unintended consequences advancing the cause of genuine social transformation.

Following the critical scrutiny in Chapter Four of existing, pluralist analytical treatments, Chapter Five sought to develop an alternative approach, combining arguments derived from the Marxist critique of pluralism with what were felt to be useful heuristic distinctions. I have already mentioned certain of these, and commented on certain

modifications or qualifications which I feel would sharpen the analysis a little. By and large, however, the main contentions developed in Chapter Five stand. Let us recall the chief arguments advanced there, to be assessed against the evidence in the latter half of the thesis.

Firstly, it was argued that participation schemes, in the sense of schemes which in some way purported to bring workers or their representatives into the decision-making machinery, could usefully be regarded as being based on consensus or conflict between labour and management, and as taking place either directly for the worker, at the job level, or at a higher level. It was noted that in Britain the term 'participation' conventionally refers to schemes outwith the normal rubric of collective bargaining, and typically to representative rather than job-level reforms. Joint consultation is the characteristic model.

Proposals such as these were argued to reflect largely the management conception of the purpose of participation (see below) as aimed at the achievement of co-operative relations and greater efficiency. Thus although the demand for some kind of reform might well have originated with labour, and perhaps even the initial proposals could conceivably come from that source, the schemes which actually come into existence are shaped or at least constrained by management to accord with their goals. The specific schemes in operation were expected (and the evidence was to confirm this emphatically) to be management initiatives on these grounds.

A number of things followed from this. If participation in practice is indeed established by management, on management's largely unitaristic terms, then given the foregoing arguments about democracy and interests they could also be expected to be 'pseudo-democratic', i.e. to purport to share power while in fact operating according to the political economy of capital argued to be antagonistic to that of labour. If participation were successful in the terms management sought, it would be seen as reducing the power of labour relative to management in terms of the analysis advanced here.

However, when the analysis proceeded to map out the logical possibilities for the outcomes of participation schemes, certain predictions were made as to the model results which were at odds not only with conventional, managerial and (most) pluralist expectations, but also with many Marxist forecasts. The reason for these differences has its roots in the differing analyses of power, ideology and consciousness recalled below. The joint success of management and labour proclaimed as the goal of participation was seen as a promise that it could not fulfil if the nature of social relations in industry was in accordance with that argued to prevail by this thesis. Rather, success would entail the achievement by either management or labour of their interests through the arrangement. The latter of these was seen as highly unlikely, and in contrast to pessimistic Marxist fears of incorporation an outright victory for management was also regarded as a small probability. Most likely was a trivial scheme, either because its agenda was restricted or because it was unable to make any headway outside of relatively petty matters. This seemed likely where management were committed to a unitary ideology and were faced by a weak labour organisation unable to contest their definition, or where a bargaining channel existed to absorb all of the most important and so contentious issues. Other possibilities considered reasonably likely were instability and a shift of committee status to a bargaining role. The former was predicted to arise particularly when management refused to concede bargaining rights in the face of a powerful labour organisation, leaving the consultative channel to bear the weight of conflicts it could not accommodate. The change of status seemed most likely in the face of a pragmatic management prepared to concede at least de facto the need to negotiate, whatever the official constitution of the scheme.

In addition to this, evidence which has been published in the fairly recent past indicates that in the 1970s there has been a markedly greater tendency for participation committees to accept the role of the union, and often to make the union representatives in the plant ex officio members of the committee. In these circumstances, it is suggested, the committee may take on the role of a kind of pre-bargaining forum.² This entails a small modification to Fig.10.1 and

the accompanying analysis, but the difference seems marginal. After all, such a concession by management in the interests of lubricating the conflict resolution machinery is hardly one on any matter of principle, and it is readily reversible if the need to accommodate labour declines. Participation remains as much as ever a reflection rather than a transformation of the employment relationship. Indeed, as long as participation is proposed as an enhancement of the existing system, by creating co-operation in the pursuit of its aims, it will always in practice be unable to deliver, since the logic of that system with its primary concern for efficiency and profits must always dictate participation's impotence.

It had become clear by the end of Chapter Five that almost the entire debate concerning the nature and effect of participation turned on the analysis of power. Chapter Six was thus devoted to an extended exposition of the concept, proceeding once again from a critical view of the analysis embedded in pluralist accounts, but also establishing a clear distance between the approach adopted for my own interpretation and those found in many other Marxist discussions. The pluralist outlook on power was found to neglect all but the surface, 'manifest' features of its exercise. It examined only visible influence on decisions, blind to the 'mobilisation of bias' which entailed many issues being excluded from the agenda for any discussion, and above all to the roots of collective, class power which drew their sustenance from the dominance of certain values in society.

This invisibility of power within pluralist accounts helps a good deal to make sense of their analysis of participation. This revolves around an examination of reforms which also operate and are evaluated at the level of manifest power only. The critique of their method of investigation and of the theory that informs it is thus intimately linked with a critique of these proposals for reform which by their nature do not confront the 'deeper' springs from which power wells. The targets for such re-evaluation will be readily

apparent; representation through fresh institutions or on existing power-wielding bodies, above all the board of directors; consultation and communication; information disclosure³ - all of them powerless, though sometimes deceptive in appearance, to affect the political economy of capital which pervades decisions.

By exploring the analysis of ideology which Marxist approaches in particular (though not exclusively) import to the dissection of power, the issue of the nature of working class consciousness (and that of managers) became of central concern. At this stage certain arguments were taken up at a theoretical level, to be affirmed and elaborated by empirical observation in Chapters Seven and Eight. These concerned the inadequacy of many Marxist dissertations on the subject, particularly those which read from Marx a simple analysis of 'incorporation' of labour into ruling class ways of seeing, presenting this as a reflex of economic control achieved through the imposition by persuasion of bourgeois ideas. An alternative approach, rejecting the 'base/superstructure' analysis implicit in almost all Marxist accounts, proceeded instead by seeing ideas as originating in the appearance presented by reality, and viewed consciousness as a matter of the experience and perception of that representation. This perspective drew on the emphasis on the actor's definition of the situation found in sociological 'action' analyses, but recast this as being a perception of something which has a reality rather than being purely a matter of definition. In Thompson's terms,⁴ a distinction needs to be drawn between two uses of the term 'experience' which may clarify what I mean. There is 'lived experience' which is affected by social being (the reality as it affects people's conditions of life in my terms), and there is 'perceived experience'. As Thompson argues in this illuminating passage, sociological social action approaches read only the latter into the term experience, but the relationship between this (which Marx called 'social consciousness' and gave a collective dimension unlike most sociologists) and 'lived experience' is less direct in materialist analysis. 'Lived experiences' arising from material changes "do not instantly break through as 'reflections'

into experience[perceived]', but their "pressure upon the whole field of consciousness cannot be indefinitely diverted, postponed, falsified or suppressed by ideology." Actually the last point is one for empirical investigation, but the spirit of Thompson's elucidation is in many ways very close to what I was trying to argue, though as ever far more eloquent.

The consequence for the evaluation of participation of these comments is the matter that concerns this thesis. It was argued that the use of the base/superstructure formulation accompanies a curious couplet of distortions, seemingly opposites and yet almost invariably found together. These are economism and voluntarism; for instance, the economistic deduction that participation schemes are merely reflexes of some movement in the economic base often accompanies the voluntaristic analysis of working class consciousness as simply manipulated by the propaganda machine of the bourgeoisie. Nonetheless we can identify Marxist analyses which can be characterised as predominantly voluntarist - and here I refer to those which stress the possibility of using schemes to workers' advantage, implying their 'relative autonomy'. These approaches bear more than incidental similarity to reformist views of the State, for they often form part of a common statement of strategy, as we shall see. Likewise, another set of Marxist views can be referred to as chiefly economistic - those which, for the most part, emphasise the ineluctably incorporative nature of all such schemes, and which therefore dismiss the possibility of contradictions or indeterminacy in the relations they constitute.⁵ For my own part, I have argued that only an empirical investigation can confirm the tensions in and constraints on participation schemes, and that the dogmatic opposition of these two views is sterile and reflects poorly on the quality of materialist analysis.

This issue seems to me most germane to the conclusion of a work such as this, and I shall return to the debate. At this juncture it seems worthwhile to try and pull together the relationship between participation and the distribution of power in different approaches, as outlined in Chapter Five, and the differing concepts of power and

its operation itself, as discussed in Chapter Six. The scheme in Fig. 1 below tries to set out these features. In dealing with the relationship between participation and power, it is thereby addressing the link with industrial democracy, and so indicates who is served by participation and how in the eyes of each perspective. It will be apparent that the overall conclusion to stem from this figure, and from Chapters One to Six, is that analyses of the nature of this relationship operate with a variety of conceptualisations, all of them inadequate in some way including the Marxist variants.

ACCOUNTING FOR THE REAL WORLD

A good deal of effort and space was devoted in the thesis to satisfying requirements 1,3 and 4 for an adequate analysis of the subject, to provide an appreciation of the treatment of the subject areas in the literature and to construct the necessary conceptual platform from which to proceed. But the main task, indicated once again at the right-hand foot of Fig.1, remained to be tackled. This entailed the examination of empirical evidence, to see if the concepts and tentative predictions of earlier discussion could make coherent sense of it.

In the Introduction to the thesis it was argued that three approaches to an empirical investigation are needed in assessing the practice of participation: observation, an account of the perceptions of the actors involved, and an analysis of the role played by participation located within the structural context of social relations. The last of these is clearly the most difficult, since it requires an indirect approach by the very definition of concepts such as 'power' and the 'political economy of capital/labour' advocated here. To a large extent it follows from the first two aspects of inquiry, and from the existence of social class which is assumed rather than

CONCLUSION: FIG.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION AND POWER IN DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Perspective on Employment Relationship	Concept of 'power'	Relationship between Participation and Power
UNITARIST e.g. Human Relations (Likert, McGregor etc)	System attribute in controlling environment - 'power to' not 'power over'	Participation is not about raising the relative power of one party but the united power of all via integration
UNITARY - PLURALIST e.g. Tannenbaum, Lammers	'Positive-sum' view of power shifts from 'power over' to 'power to...'	Participation can increase power of both management and labour despite persistence of some conflicts, by making the 'cake' bigger
INSTITUTIONALIST PLURALIST e.g. Clegg, Dahrendorf, Flanders, McCarthy	'Zero-sum' power ('power over') within existing system and so rules. Manifest concept only, and within formalised relations	Participation will reduce the power of labour vis-a-vis management if it creates an illusion of shared interests; or it may provide an ancillary channel to bargaining
PARTICIPATORY PLURALIST e.g. Blumberg, Pateman	Little analysis - vary between zero-sum and positive-sum elements, with slippage between the two. Manifest concept only but stressing qualitative rather than formal influence	Participation presumed to increase labour's power but whether at management's expense or not is unclear. Danger of effective slippage to unitary-pluralist view

FIG. 1 (continued)

MARXIST: I VOLUNTARISTIC e.g. Institute for Workers' Control, Hirst II ECONOMICIST T. Clarke, Hyman, Mandel (see text on Poole variant) III RELATIONAL This thesis	Power is class power- includes structural/ ideological dimension Power is vested in institutions and can be 'seized' Power and ideology are reflexes of capitalist ownership and the system's political economy. They cannot be influenced by tactics aimed at control of 'superstructure' of polity or industry Power is embedded in social relations which are contradictory. It is not an object	Participation on management's terms would reinforce the subordination of labour to capital Labour may be able to wrest some substantive power from capital by taking initiative via participation Participation can only lead to incorporation of labour Participation cannot seize power, but the limits and nature of its impact, while predicted to be narrow for labour, must be empirically ascertained

demonstrated in this thesis. Let us look at the way the evidence presented in the preceding pages matches these requirements, and summarise the results.

Observation: This entailed examining the operation of participation schemes, to see what institutional form they took, how their role was defined, and what role they actually played. Finally, it was necessary to discover what the outcomes of the schemes were, in terms of the interests served and the fate of the scheme itself.

This part of the investigation was carried out in Part Four, and augmented by the case studies in Chapters 14-16 of Part Five. Chapter Nine demonstrated the 'cyclical' pattern of interest in participation on the part of management. Their concern to introduce schemes was found to follow the development of a challenge to their control in the enterprise, particularly through an assault on their legitimacy, and it sought both to conciliate such pressures and at the same time to offer something which would harness the worker to the benefit of the enterprise. Their interest faded when that pressure was eased, and so participation schemes tended to decline in number, or where they continued formally they played an insignificant role. Chapter 11 confirmed this cyclical pattern though without any great depth of inquiry, for a number of other countries.

It was also necessary to look at the nature and outcomes of participation schemes, and so to see whether the provisional analysis and categories of Chapter Five stood up to comparison with reality. Chapter Nine suggested that participation schemes did indeed tend to be managerial initiatives, that they took a consensual form consistent with management ideology, and that most receded into triviality or, the best survival adaptation, became effectively bargaining bodies. Chapter 11 amplified and confirmed these observations internationally. The detailed demonstration of the validity of the approach rested above all on the detailed case studies of Chapter 10, drawing on the scant literature which offered in-depth

independent accounts of schemes and showing that they made far more coherent sense within the framework of analysis of this thesis than they did in analytical isolation. Thus the John Lewis Partnership and the NHS, with unitaristic schemes and relatively weak labour organisation, exhibited triviality (though as union strength and rank and file militancy has grown in the NHS in recent years there is a drift towards instability). Triviality was the chief consequence, too, in the better organised cases of the NCB and BSC (and could be argued for a large number of private sector cases given time and space). In the Glacier Metal and Linwood examples, management's determination to see their unitary beliefs through in the face of organised workforces had the predicted consequence of instability, while at Renold's a contrasting pragmatism brought a stable body which had changed status into a bargaining body.

Finally, we have the three case studies generated by my own fieldwork. In each organization labour was well established, though plant-level organisation was autonomously strongest at Weldrill and weakest in Natco. In all three, participation schemes were a disappointment to both sides, and seemed to play at most a marginal role in regulating management-employee relations. Triviality was thus uppermost in all three. In practice, however, the management in Weldrill operated an informal but careful consultative system in which they tested the water with the unions before acting, suggesting that in this case a kind of undercover 'pre-bargaining' was at work in the name of differently-articulated 'participative management'. Notably, too, in the case of Epoch and Natco, and of each of the case studies in Chapter 10, a widely disseminated image of harmonistic success for participation prevailed publicly, and the findings of this study had to dispel these images in order to establish the validity of the analysis proposed here. This, I would contend, the results of the investigation emphatically achieved.

Perceptions: The material pertaining to this aspect of the investigation was chiefly located in Part Five of the thesis, but it drew on evidence and interpretation advanced earlier in Chapters Seven and Eight.

In Chapter Three the statements of managerial and trade union spokesmen were compared, and indicated differences in their conceptions of the nature, purpose and desirability of participation in industry which accorded with the conflicting interests of capital and labour. Evidence from surveys of practising managers and union officials confirmed this contrast, in which for management the purpose of participation had to be enhanced efficiency and profitability, and for unions it entailed the attainment of industrial democracy in the sense of the power of labour to affect decisions, if necessary at the expense of capital's interests. Findings from my own survey also attested to this difference. This survey also supported and extended the findings of Brannen *et al* that in BSC the workers themselves are more pragmatic about the purpose they see in participation, to be judged by concrete change in their experience of the work. Subsequently in Chapter 12 it was found that shop floor respondents saw participation as a means to an end, as this suggests, and approved of it if it brought substantive benefits from greater control in areas of negotiation, for example over wages, job security and the like.

Chapter Seven explored the attitudes of employees in relation to the discussion of ideology and consciousness in Chapter Six. From a number of surveys including my own it was discovered that internalisation of bourgeois ideology on general issues, encouraged by media coverage, led to expressions of belief such as that in the too powerful nature of the unions. However, this was combined with a widespread acceptance of ideas of a populist or labour-oriented nature, and a particular tendency to reject ruling class ideas when they clashed with lived experience, though the extent to which this resulted in coherently integrated perceptions of a radical nature was highly problematical.

Chapter Eight distinguished between management thought, a broadly coherent body of ideas justifying the interests and responsibility of capital, and the ideas of practising managers. Notwithstanding the earlier reported finding that managers broadly affirm the purpose of participation presented by national spokesmen, it was argued that ordinary managers' beliefs are likely to reflect the contradictions of their own life experience and their contact with competing ideologies, and so potentially to exhibit internal inconsistency and division. This proved to be the case, with managers, like workers, being influenced in their response to statements by whether a management or labour-oriented rhetoric was employed, for instance. Nonetheless, it was suggested that the constraints of their occupational role were likely to compel managers to apply policies in accordance with the interests of capital, however they might 'manage' or role distance themselves from any misgivings.

The implications of these contours of general beliefs and attitudes for the perception of participation schemes were considerable, and helped to put in perspective the findings concerning attitudes to participation itself reported in Chapters 12 and 13. The two can be put together to yield conclusions which are consistent with and add depth to the material on the practice and results of participation schemes summarised above.

Shop floor respondents expressed a desire for far more influence than they felt they had over the whole range of issues examined, although in terms of personal engagement in participation most looked to a say in their own job rather than in company-level decisions. The topics where influence was most wanted were those generally considered matters for negotiation, and indeed there proved to be a strong sympathy with a strategy for participation expressed in negotiative terms. Further, participation in itself was found to be an area of low expressed satisfaction but also low salience, suggesting that it was assessed as a means to an end, of affecting matters of a less philosophical genre, rather than as an end in itself or a way to further 'enterprise' goals. Nonetheless, apparent enthusiasm could

exist for forms of participation expressed in general terms, yet while this seemed to show agreement with management, this could conceal profound differences in the meanings attached to such support, as contrasting views of profits going to workers instead of shareholders between the two sets of respondents showed.

When these findings are linked to those in Chapter Seven, further inferences can be drawn. In response to general questions, employees may endorse seemingly harmonistic images of the company and proposals for reform. Any scheme established on such a basis must contend with the treacherous terrain of these views, however. The immediate priorities of employees, and the likelihood that their reactions to local, direct experience may diverge from those expressed in the rhetoric of dominant ideology about firms in general, make cynicism or disappointment with any operative scheme apparently consistent with those general ideas seem more than possible. At the same time criticism may well remain focussed on the local context of the individual firm/management/scheme, rather than being generalised to capitalism or participation as a whole. The limited hold of those ideas which legitimate management has as its counterpart the absence, in Britain at least, of any widespread adherence to a coherent leftist alternative frame of reference.

The inchoate nature of those perceptions amongst workers which are inimical to harmonistic participation schemes suggests a further reason why apathy, or rejection in the absence of any thoroughgoing criticism of schemes, are likely to be predominant outcomes, along with the potential for a change to negotiating status where management are sensitive to shop floor demands for real gains involving bargaining.

If we turn to managers' attitudes, we find that although they are predictably more likely to endorse unitary descriptions and prescriptions for the enterprise, many of them were ambivalent in their view of the legitimacy of the aims and raison d'etre of the labour movement. Managers at lower levels could not be lumped together with directors, and a significant proportion gave credence

to the rights of workers to share in power in industry. There was widespread recognition of workers' chief demands (though this is not the same as empathy), but apparently a higher evaluation than that made by workers themselves of the amount of say they already have, particularly considered next to what is 'desirable'. Most of these practising managers in my own survey seemed sceptical rather than idealistic about the likely responsiveness of workers to participation, though they rated participation for themselves far more highly in importance. A large proportion accepted the relevance of unions, and also of a negotiating basis for the exertion of worker influence. Nonetheless they seem far keener on schemes 'soft' on power such as job enrichment or profit sharing (as they see it) than on more solid-seeming concessions on the control frontier such as worker directors, extended collective bargaining or work group autonomy. Despite fairly widespread realism of a sort amongst managers, and a recognition of the validity of labour's need to defend itself against management, there remains, then, an ultimate adherence to the interests of capital. It would be surprising were it otherwise. Its complexity explains the variety of real world management proposals for participation schemes, and of their reactions to union and worker responses. But the underlying theme of their outlook accounts for the validity of the basic analysis and consequent results of participation recounted in this thesis.

Finally, the common and, more significantly, the disputed ground between management and labour perspectives on the operation of participation was confirmed by the findings reported in the case studies of Chapters 14-16. The two sides disagreed on the chief beneficiaries of the arrangement in their establishment, and from workers in particular an overwhelming critical indifference to the schemes was discovered. Between the priorities and perceptions of workers and the observed nature of the schemes, the forces impelling and processes leading to the trivial outcomes of these schemes can be far more readily comprehended.

The Structural Context: It has been one of the founding arguments of this thesis that neither perceptions nor observation can be taken simply at face value. Since participation is so much tied up with power, the problematical nature of power itself revealed this all the more clearly. If 'structural context' were merely a matter of charting a readily visible setting for participation, describable as institutions and wider socio-cultural values simpliciter, the task would be the straightforward one of pluralist methodology, placing the 'subsystem' in the milieu of the 'system' as a whole. For us, though, it is something which invests the very substance of participation itself, in a strictly metaphorical sense 'underlying' it. As I indicated earlier, the ultimate demonstration of the importance of and nature of structural aspects of the account is a task largely beyond the confines of these pages, entering as assumptions about class, capitalism and so forth, and also as an epistemological justification for a particular approach to power and ideology. That approach is the method of critique, and its necessity has been argued in terms of its ability to account for phenomena in ways other methods cannot. Within this thesis, then, I must rely mainly on the explanatory strength of the resulting observations.

In a limited sense, what has been offered is a critique of the phenomena of the observations and perceptions outlined above, though in no consistent way properly deserving of the label. In the language of this method, it could be said that what is required is, on discovering the inability of existing theories to make sense of the phenomena, to offer an account which deciphers the conditions of existence of those phenomena. Less pretentiously, I think I can claim to have applied the general approach described by Keat & Urry as 'realism' (quoted early in the Introduction), if without following the stricter method developed by Marx and imposed post hoc above. In short, the structural account in the analysis of participation is what gives that analysis any superior integrity and plausibility over its competitors that it may possess.

The structural element of the argument suffuses the analysis, as I have observed, but the insights it offers become particularly apparent (or in other words, structure 'peeks through' more clearly) at certain points in the discussion. It is seen in the contradictions of attitudes and beliefs recalled above from the account in Chapters Seven and Eight and then on the subject of participation itself in Part Five. It comes through, too, in the discovery and interpretation of the historical 'cycles' of interest in participation in Chapter Nine. And inclusive of all of these, it makes sense of the way participation does not cause or form part of an 'evolution' to a new social system, but instead comes as a response to and echoes the developments within the fundamental conflicts of the existing, capitalist mode of production. In this sense participation is profoundly pseudo-democratic: it attempts to forestall the creation of a new democratic order, and founders on the consequences of the absence of democracy in the old.

OF PRESCRIPTIONS AND PROSCRIPTIONS (OR WHAT IS TO BE DONE?)

If all that has gone before is accepted, there would still be many questions to be answered. Many areas of empirical investigation, to reveal the nuances and full morphology of attitudes to participation in its various forms, and to illuminate the interstices of the complex of different forms of conflict, remain to be explored. Little has been said, for instance, of the effect on the nature and impact of participation of differing trade union structures (the whole question of internal union democracy and its significance has been neglected), of the sexual division of labour, of differences in size of organisation⁶ or in technology⁷ - these and a series of other factors are in urgent need of informed survey and case study inquiry. For all the importance of these matters, a question of greater significance still remains to be addressed: where does the analysis of this thesis lead where strategy is concerned?

To an extent an evasion of this question as beyond the scope of a work such as this aimed at academic qualification might be exonerated. But though I cannot tackle the question as comprehensively as it deserves, I cannot bring myself to retreat from it completely either. What I shall do is return to the existing views of Marxist writers on the topic, and pass comment on these in the light of my own findings. Nonetheless let me say before I embark on this final task that it is at this point one has to confront the limitations of one's efforts, since the translation from analysis to policy recommendation is the most difficult of all.

I argued above that although most Marxist accounts were flawed by elements of voluntarism and economism in combination, it was possible to identify two broad strands, and to label one approach broadly 'voluntaristic' and another 'economistic' (Fig.1). The former is inclined to argue for using participative reform as an avenue for grasping some advantage from management, insisting that for all the dangers in such a strategy, if labour does not take the initiative it will be taken from them. Participation schemes do contain potential contradictions which can be exploited, or else by opening up the area of decision-making for debate they provide an opportunity for workers to take the issue up and turn it against management. If there is some possibility that labour's representatives will need to compromise or in some senses collaborate in order to gain access, then this is in the nature of any relations with management other than untrammelled hostility. As representatives of this view we can take the major theorists of the Institute of Workers' Control (Ken Coates, Tony Topham, Michael Barratt Brown) and the recent contribution of Paul Hirst⁸. This is not to say that their positions are identical (nor are those within the other groups to be identified), but that they adopt a theoretical perspective with the same key characteristics, so that their major differences are tactical.

The economic approach generated severe criticism of any reformist tactics. It proceeds from the view that the power of capital and the structure of relations in the enterprise is derivative of the mode of production, and that the outcome of involvement in any participation scheme must be to incorporate labour's representatives, defuse opposition, and make room for the tightening of management's subordination of labour to the requirements of valorization. There are, however, major differences in analysis and proposals between these critics which largely follow their different locations on the political front. One group, represented here by Ramelson and Scargill,⁹ argues for adherence to the traditional oppositional approach to management through collective bargaining (though Ramelson is prepared to consider participation in the public sector, which Scargill utterly rejects).¹⁰ Another line is taken by a group of writers who I shall take the risk of referring to as Trotskyist, including Mandel, Hyman and Clarke.¹¹ These writers place far more emphasis on the need for new and more revolutionary tactics in the workplace, though on a basis rejecting any association with management. Hyman particularly is critical of traditional channels of conflict, including the unions and collective bargaining, because these, too, express a major degree of accommodation to capitalism and stifle alternatives. The chief source of advance is felt to be new, radical perspectives on capitalism and alternative strategies originating in rank and file movements which challenge the existing order as the unions will not since it is their raison d'être. A final version of an economic approach is that of Poole, which sees participation as purely epiphenomenal, a mere echo of changes in the balance of power at a more 'basic' level. I have commented on the inadequacies of this formulation in Chapter Six, and in Chapter 11 with reference to his analysis of Israel, and I shall not devote further space to it here.

The pervasive suspicion of participation conveyed by both the Ramelson/Scargill view and that of Hyman et al might seem at first

glance closest to the negative arguments as to its pseudo-democratic nature advanced here. In other ways, though, the arguments of the IWC seem far less mechanical or formula-ridden. Against the Ramelson support for traditional collective bargaining they contend convincingly that such strategies are inherently defensive, and are inadequate at a time when management are trying fresh initiatives. In the face of the new offensive, the answer must be either to counter with real alternatives that will win broad support amongst labour or to shun this and lose for certain. They reject participation itself, in the form taken by management proposals, but feel there is at least some hope that to propose 'control' demands establishing an element of dual power between capital and labour will redefine the entire process. They do not suggest that this will itself transform the basis of relations, but that it may be the foundation for a campaign which will generate a mass socialist understanding of the possibilities and of that which resists their realisation. This at least has the merit of being a positive strategy, where their opponents offer only abstension and resistance to change.

In Topham's reply to Arthur Scargill (1981) many of these earlier points are restated, and a telling additional argument is mounted (and echoed, notably, in Hirst's contribution). Collective bargaining, Topham observes, is far from being the pure oppositional alternative Scargill seems to see in it. On the contrary, it is the classic method for resolving or containing conflict, and once an agreement is made its enforcement requires co-operation with the employer. Indeed, the whole exercise involves reciprocation and collaboration as well as conflict. Nor is the confrontation tactic of an all-out dispute anything like the typical form taken. Elaborating a little on Topham's views, and following from observations earlier in this conclusion, we can note that bargaining restricts itself largely to economic issues immediately related to the effort bargain. As he himself notes, it encourages sectionalism and limits class consciousness as well as being a major form of collective action. For Topham, the conclusion is that collective bargaining has a dual nature, and that control demands to pre-empt participation schemes from management are no more compromised by nature.

To judge by his attack on the IWC (1974), Hyman would readily acknowledge this problem, for he argues that the dangers of incorporation inherent in trying to turn management proposals into something different are compounded by the reliance on the official, bureaucratic union apparatus already accommodated to capital. For Hyman the attempt to challenge management to concede areas of 'control' to labour will in practice threaten a loss of power through the 'officialization',¹² of already-existing controls into something visible and formally regulated, thereby imposing new responsibilities on labour and making managerial surveillance far more possible. This seems a powerful point, though it should be noted that it seems to rule out almost all recognised forms of working class power short of revolution.

In Hyman's scenario, any form of co-operation with management, however attenuated, and any dalliance with reformism (both the IWC and Scargill see the Labour Party as the political channel for change) or with the existing accommodative labour organisations, is doomed to become ensnared by the web of ideological hegemony and the repression of the State. His alternative is an independent and highly politicised and militant rank and file movement fuelled by the subversion of a genuinely revolutionary party.

The IWC (Barratt Brown et al, 1975) are understandably sceptical of Hyman's criticisms. They are scornful of the 'truly revolutionary' nature of the Socialist Workers' Party and of its ability to gain any widespread credibility on the shop floor. They fail to see any indication from Hyman of the process by which the 'rank and file' movement he proposes would lead to demands for transcending capitalism in ways their own strategy would not. Once again, they insist that while they acknowledge and have themselves detailed the kind of risks identified by Hyman, the alternative is passivity.

The IWC position is, I think, quite an appealing one in its openness and its leftist pragmatism. It remains rather spongy and ill-specified, though, for it acknowledges all the problems at a simple level of analysis yet lays itself open to the constant renewal of the attacks from either economic position, by failing to examine them closely enough or to provide an adequate theoretical base from which to develop its own policies. As a result it seems eclectic and inclined to somewhat ad hoc judgements, which in terms of the analysis offered earlier can be seen to stem from its very voluntarism and pragmatism. The flag is clearly and explicitly pinned to the cause of reformism, which they insist has a lot to offer provided there are no illusions about its ultimate limitations¹³ (again the assertion seems simultaneously 'hard' yet vague).

In the end, we need rather more than we are offered by either the IWC or its critics. To recognise officialization as a danger is not to exorcise it, for instance. But nor should the identification of such a danger automatically preclude the adoption of a strategy, for as the IWC indicate there is no magically untainted and incorruptible method or channel for achieving labour's ends. As Cressey and MacInnes (1980) have argued, the debate between what they call 'incorporation' and 'advance of labour' approaches is sterile; though their own contribution, it must be said, fails to indicate how one adjudicates between existing strategies or finds an alternative.¹⁴ Their observations remain valuable, however. They show that for Marx labour had a dual nature, both subjected to the production of value for capital and yet seeking to exercise control over aspects of the work. From this they argue that control through participation has a dual nature also, seeking to offload problems of capital onto labour and yet also thereby creating space for struggle for new forms of control at the workplace. In these circumstances, they argue that the simple refusal to get involved proposed in the

'incorporationist' (economistic) approach achieves little and at the same time seems to concede the legitimacy of management's right to manage. Participation offers signify the employer's strength, but are also a symptom of weakness; to abstain is a weak response from labour.

The first implication which I would draw from the Cressey/MacInnes analysis is that one cannot judge the correct labour response to a period which generates managerial initiatives on participation a priori. With this I would concur. However, their own argument seems to stop short at a level which constitutes, on reflection, a theoretical legitimization of the IWC line. With this I am much less happy. In order to go forward from here, the chief requirement in terms of the approach I have adopted myself is an empirical investigation informed by an adequate theory and methodology, which has been part of the aim of this thesis. Before applying the findings of this investigation, however, it will be useful to make one further detour.

An alternative theoretical justification for the voluntarist (or 'advance of labour') approach has been advanced by Paul Hirst, as has been noted. Hirst's judgement (notably on the Bullock Report¹⁵) diverges somewhat from the IWC's, but his overall inclination remains broadly akin to theirs. By examining his analysis a number of points may be illustrated: firstly, it shows the path trodden by the logic of voluntarism; secondly, it makes explicit certain key assumptions of this perspective where others fail to confront them; thirdly, it shows that what I have termed voluntarist analysis is intimately linked with particular forms of economism.

Hirst argues firstly that any government, socialist or not, must face up to the need to control inflation, and that for this some kind of incomes policy is indispensable. Moreover, such a policy designed for specifically socialist aims could tackle the structural inequalities in the current wage system. There would be another effect of such a

policy, however: the weakening of the role of the shop steward system in bargaining at the enterprise level. There is thus a need to provide a new channel to develop and utilise the struggle for socialism in the enterprise. For all its faults, the Bullock Report offered an opportunity to create just such a channel.

The Bullock proposals, says Hirst, represented the advanced elements in the labour movement,¹⁶ but were frustrated by opposition from left and right in the movement. The latter was understandable as a fear of 'politics' entering the scene, but the former was untenable. The alternative posed by the left, extended collective bargaining, was not different in nature from Bullock at all; both required increased information disclosure by management, and if there is an element of co-operation and commitment in having unionists on the board, so there is (as has already been argued here) in bargaining. Bullock retained important elements of conflict and struggle in its majority proposals, notably in the single, union channel, and the intended Joint Representative Committee which would be effectively a combine committee in the enterprise ideal for the purposes Hirst feels will need to be fulfilled. Thus the demobilisation of the steward movement need not take place, and given the limitations of the official union movement it must not if genuinely transformative demands are to be generated and sustained.

To clinch the argument, Hirst confronts three tenets which he says lead Marxists to reject enterprise-based struggles as being of critical importance. Firstly, he objects to a belief in the 'despotism of capital', which presumes that private ownership rights secure control for the capitalist. This economistic view he replaces with a voluntaristic alternative, that legislative changes in company law can make real inroads into the sovereignty of shareholder rights.

Secondly, Hirst demurs from the idea that because Kautsky argued that unions are restricted by their nature to an economistic consciousness, and this is partly acknowledged by Lenin, does not mean this analysis is flawless. Lenin said economism was one form of politics in the

labour movement, but far from necessarily the sole possibility; in many ways circumstances drive the labour movement beyond economism.

Thirdly, Hirst agrees that enterprise level action in itself cannot change society, but this does not mean it is irrelevant. Nor need struggles be economistic or sectional because they occur at the factory level. It is not inevitable that such movements will be detached from politics or offer no political leadership, as the examples of Lucas Aerospace shop stewards' Alternative Plans or the impact of UCS show.

These explicit repudiations perform a valuable service. Hirst has identified the mechanical nature of the underlying premisses of that Marxism which automatically rejects participation, and has revealed the alternative assumptions which, on reflection can be seen as implicit in the IWC approach also. We can now examine the roots of these arguments, for Paul Hirst has written extensively on Marxist theory and his position on participation follows from his more general position. Rather than offer a review myself, I shall comment very selectively on certain aspects of Hirst's arguments and how they relate to the specific position with which we are concerned, leaning heavily on a commentary which makes use in turn of work in which I have been directly involved.¹⁷

The position with which Hirst has associated himself¹⁸ seeks to attack what are felt to be dogmas of Marxist orthodoxy, in order to generate an analysis which can then be applied to contemporary reality so as to indicate appropriate forms of left intervention. The very ordering of this project is highly significant; it regards the first step as the intellectual distillation of conceptual discourse. Analysis precedes examination of the real world, and produces a priori the means to understand it. History is "not only scientifically but also politically valueless" (Hindess & Hirst, 1975:312). This approach, of a type Marx attacked as metaphysics, preserves all theoretical activity for intellectuals, and protects

the theorist from the interference of the inconvenient, empirical world other than to convey the truth to its occupants as tablets of political wisdom. It reconstitutes many features of mechanical determinism, even if the conclusions are different.

One result of these intellectual labours for Hirst et al is a rejection of any determined relationship between economic 'base' and political 'superstructure'. A feature of their formulations which Corrigan & Sayer note is their tendency to talk in absolutes - in this case, if economic determination does not hold, it follows for them that political events and ideologies are autonomous, that there is no necessary correspondence between politics and economics at all. For Hirst this entails:

...abandoning the evolution of political forces in terms of correspondence, and evaluating them instead relative to one's conception of socialist organisation and ideology. (1977:206)

This reads like a formula for being able to say whatever suits the speaker. Socialism now becomes a goal to be achieved by gradually building the required economic and political conditions. The "dichotomy between reform and revolution must collapse" (Cutler et al, 1977:317). They accept the constraints of the 'national economy' (Cutler et al, 1978:243f), an acceptance echoed in Hirst's advocacy of incomes policy noted earlier. Production has thus been reduced to a matter of economic policy - a characteristic of what can only be called economism. It is this which makes possible the voluntaristic notion of politics and the State and the enterprise that informs Hirst's judgement on Bullock. Reformism and the 'capture' of the State have been restored to this revisionist agenda.

Hopefully this highly terse and somewhat allusive rendering of the connections from Hirst's grander theoretical ponderings to his judgements on worker participation gives sufficient insight to the way such an approach reproduces the errors of its incorporationist or economistic counterpart in the midst of its very counterpositioning.

The base/superstructure distinction is merely reformulated as a non-deterministic one, the separation and its analytical effects surviving intact. From this comes the possibility of ignoring the pervasive impact of the political economy of capital through all the social relations of the mode of production, and hence the optimism about turning the government, of capitalist firm or capitalist State, to the service of the worker. From this, too, comes the juridical illusion which envisages legal changes in company constitution that are sufficient to nullify the constraints imposed by the conditions of reproduction and accumulation of capital.

Where, then, does all this leave us? Who does participation serve? Can it be seen, in any form or through the use of any tactics, as of potential value to labour? My own argument has been that, whatever the doubts that participation can serve labour left by a discussion of the general idea, as in the early chapters of this thesis, the issue can only be decided by reference to the facts. In order to satisfy the aims of a Marxist, it would seem that participation must be shown to have one or more potentials:

- to provide a 'space for struggle' which the absence of any concession on worker rights would preclude.
- to provide an opportunity to propose alternatives which, if they are conceded to any degree, do afford such a space.
- to show, by their inadequacy in terms of what they promised, the inability of management under capitalism to allow genuine industrial democracy, and so raise oppositional consciousness.
- to reveal, by workers' presence on decision-making bodies, the reality behind the mythology of management as a science.
- to show the innate superiority of nationalised industry by its relative efficacy there as a new basis for labour-management relations in a socialised environment.

The last of these, implied by Ramelson's (CPGB) line, can quickly be rejected on the basis of the findings of Chapter 10. The rest

may seem more plausible, and with them so may the proposals of the IWC and other voluntarist approaches. The findings presented in this thesis cast severe doubt on all of them, however.

To consider the first possibility raised above, the experience of participation schemes shows that they are initiated by management on their terms. If they fail to achieve managerial goals, the result is that they are abandoned or in the resulting impasse they drift into triviality. The instability created by different demands from organised labour reveals little sign of being a basis for some kind of advance. Finally, should management concede de facto negotiating status to labour through a nominally unitary body, the result amounts to collective bargaining, and is no more of an advance than is that arrangement. Nor is there any sign that the presence of worker representatives in the halls of management power either leads to the dissipation of management mystique, or causes a more aware and hostile labour reaction when no real power is ceded.

This leaves us with the possibility of posing counter demands to management proposals of participation. It certainly seems to follow from the investigation of participation schemes conducted here that only a proposal embedded in the political economy of labour can be expected to yield any gain for labour (and even then its incorruptibility is highly suspect without a high degree of generalised class consciousness to back it). My own judgement would be that to put these forward as reactive responses to management initiatives, while it may seem a natural opportunity, is likely in practice to mean discussing the schemes in compromise ground and to a large extent still on management terrain.

If these conclusions seem somewhat negative, that is a fair reflection of the pessimism with which I am left. Participation, I am convinced, will serve management if it serves anybody, with the

leavening observation from the viewpoint of industrial democracy that it is unlikely to achieve a great deal for them either in the face of the resistance it meets. This should not be taken to mean that there is nothing to be done. Initiatives within the labour movement are still possible, and the minute but growing contribution of trade union research centres set up by sympathetic academics and others provides a good example of areas where real possibilities exist to help the cause. These are on a very different terrain to participation, and amid the prolific contradictions that make strategies so elusive even these may be far from straightforwardly positive in their contribution. This I can testify to from my own experience.¹⁹ But that experience can be learned from, to create something with at least the potential of working for those whose labour power has been used to build that which oppresses them. One thing is clear, that little will come from only observing and theorising. To conclude with a comment from the source of the quotation at the front of this thesis which describes another sort of participation:

If you want to know a certain thing or certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality.... only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them....If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself....If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. (Mao Tse-tung, 1937:299-300).

NOTES: CONCLUSION

1. See Baldamus, 1969.
2. See inter alia, Cuthbert & Whitaker, 1977; Hawes and Brookes, 1980; Nicholson, 1978; Cressey et al, 1981; Marchington & Armstrong, 1981.
3. On the problems embedded deep in the nature of information disclosure, and the 'shopping-list' approach to the question on the part of the TUC which epitomises the powerlessness and purblindness, see Gold et al, 1979, which summarises a number of more detailed unpublished papers from the studies at Ruskin College.
4. E.P. Thompson, 1981:406.
5. Poole's alternative variant of economism is not included here for the sake of simplicity.
6. Ingham's study suggests workers in small companies will be more inclined to experience and respond to close relations with employers. The observed far lower incidence of formal participation in small companies would reflect the superfluity of such an institution. However, Curran and Stanworth's (1979,1981) criticisms of Ingham suggest that the effect of size is very much less straightforward.
7. The discussion in Chapter 9, of the likelihood that high technology 'frontier' industries and those traditional and highly unionised sectors trying to manage decline may be the most likely contenders for setting up schemes is not only tentative but only scratches the surface.
8. A glance at the contributions by Coates and Topham in the bibliography will save repeating their main works here. In many ways the clearest and most effective statements of their position is to be found in their defence of their position in debate - see Coates & Topham, 1968; Barratt Brown et al, 1975; Coates, 1977; Topham, 1981. Hirst's paper, advocating the value of the Bullock Report, was widely circulated in mimeograph form from 1978, but in 1981 appeared in print with a postscript.
9. Ramelson, 1968. Scargill, in Scargill, 1978 (and in a 1977 article in The Times); Scargill & Kahn, 1980.
10. Ramelson's position here shows the problems in producing any neat classification of views. It puts him much closer to the arguments of Prior and Purdy (1979) that the public sector is an advance feature of a different mode of production to capitalism, and thereby links him to Paul Hirst's line in certain respects. It thereby also shows the continual combination and joint effect of economic and voluntaristic distortions in Marxist analysis, for all their seeming antithesis.

11. Mandel, 1969; Hyman, 1975; T. Clarke, 1977. In some key respects, their analysis is shared by Skillen, 1978. Mandel's line is actually far closer to the IWC's than this classification allows. He attacks participation as proposed by the Christian union confederation, but gives support to the 'workers' control' demands of the socialist FGTB (Mandel, 1969:356) whose programme is similarly approved by the IWC, as witness their publication (Coates, 1971a) of a later version. Mandel goes on, however, to attack the practice of collaboration by the FGTB which he argues demeans their rhetorical stand (1969:361ff).
12. Hyman takes this term from Herding (1972).
13. Barratt Brown et al, 1975:298.
14. My remarks are based on discussions with the authors, who I think would acknowledge that while clarifying the opposition between the two approaches, they have not thereby enabled us to judge right or wrong the specific proposals of either group. Their argument that the 'advance of labour' view neglects the capitalist context and "collapses socialism into job control" (p6) is also questionable; the IWC are certainly not advocates of such a reduction.
15. Coates and Topham (1977) are highly critical of Bullock, whilst Hirst sees it as about as good as could be achieved in the circumstances. Coates and Topham nonetheless characteristically see Bullock as a basis for more challenging demands, indicating their filial affinity with Hirst's orientation.
16. Hirst here expresses the view of an important reformist tendency within the Communist Party of Great Britain as expressed by Prior and Purdy (1979), who see the Bullock Report as the 'culmination' of the movement begun by UCS and other working class challenges to the existing order (p89).
17. I am referring to Corrigan and Sayer, 1978, which draws on the arguments developed in their other work including Corrigan, Ramsey, Sayer et al, 1978.
18. In a large number of publications jointly or individually produced - see in particular Hirst, 1977, 1979; Hindess & Hirst, 1975, 1977; Cutler et al, 1977, 1978.
19. This comment arises from an evaluation of work in which I was involved, at the behest of the Scottish TUC, in helping the unions at Massey-Ferguson, Kilmarnock resist management plans for closure. Our joint experiences as a research team are described in one section of Baldry et al, 1981.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
AJS	American Journal of Sociology
ASBSBSW	Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers
ASQ	Administrative Science Quarterly
ASR	American Sociological Review
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs
AUEW	Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers
BDA	West German Employers' Association
BJIR	British Journal of Industrial Relations
BJS	British Journal of Sociology
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CFDT	French Democratic Federation of Labour
CGIL	Italian General Confederation of Labour
CGT	General Confederation of Labour (France)
CNPF	General Confederation of French Employers
CNV	Dutch Christian Trade Union Confederation (Protestant)
CONSE	Confederation of Health Service Employees
DGB	West German Trade Union Confederation
EEC	European Economic Community
EEPTU (ETU)	Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (formerly Electrical Trades Union)
EGOS	European Group for Organisational Studies
ETASM	European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management
EIRR	European Industrial Relations Review
f.	following (pages)
FT	'The Financial Times'
G	'The Guardian'
G&MWU	General and Municipal Workers' Union
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
IILS	International Institute for Labour Studies
ILO	International Labour Office
ILR	International Labour Review

ILRR	Industrial and Labour Relations Review
IPM	Institute of Personnel Management
IR	Industrial- Relations
IRJ	Industrial Relations Journal
IRRA	Industrial Relations Research Association
Int.Rev.Soc. Hist.	International Review of Social History
INC	Institute for Workers' Control
J of IR	Journal of Industrial Relations
JMS	Journal of Management Studies
KPD	Communist Party of Germany
LO	Trade Union Confederation (Denmark, Norway, Sweden)
MESW	Marx-Engels Selected Works
n	footnote
NAF	Norwegian Employers' Federation
NALGO	National Association of Local Government Officers
NEDO	National Economic Development Organisation
NIIP	National Institute of Industrial Psychology
NLR	New Left Review
NSIB	National Swedish Industrial Board
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
NVV	Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions
Obs	'The Observer'
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PEP	Political and Economic Planning
PP	pages
SAF	Swedish Employers' Federation
Soc.Rev.	Sociological Review
STUR	Scottish Trades Union Review
ST	'The Sunday Times'
T	'The Times'
TCO	Swedish White Collar Union Confederation
T&GUE	Transport and General Workers' Union
THC	Trades Union Congress
UCATT	Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians

APPENDICES

A P P E N D I X 'A'

SHOP FLOOR RESPONSES :

Tables of additional and detailed results

TABLE 1

Do you feel that you personally have enough say in decisions made at your place of work, or would you like to have more say in some way?

%s

	Weldrill*	Epoch	Natco	All
I would like to have more say <u>ONLY</u> in decisions that directly concern <u>my own work and working conditions</u>	58	47	53	53
I would like to have more say in decisions that concern <u>ONLY</u> the <u>management of the company as a whole</u>	12	7	3	6
I would like to have more say at <u>BOTH levels</u> (on my work <u>and</u> at the whole company level)	13	45	35	30
I have no special interest in more say at <u>either</u> level	18	1	10	10

(N=103)

(N=75)

(N=167)

(N=345)

- * The Weldrill respondents were asked this question in an earlier form, which offered three possibilities - more say in own work and working conditions, more say in running the whole company, neither - and asked respondents to tick both the first two if both were wanted. This probably accounts for the considerable divergence of Weldrill results (notably on those wanting more say at both levels) from Epoch and Natco - suspicion that the instructions with the question were not being followed leading to the subsequent change in question layout. However, the figure for lack of interest in neither level is also notably higher in Weldrill than elsewhere, and this seems unlikely to have been affected in so strong a manner by the change of question. Nonetheless, these findings should be interpreted with care, as probably markedly understating demand for more say at both levels in Weldrill; it should also act as a salutary warning of the pitfalls of survey methods, and their sensitivity to the precise form of question.

TABLE 2 (A)

How much influence do you feel you and your workmates have in this firm over:

%s

	A Great Deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very Little	None	
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social clubs, etc)	10	21	28	26	15	(N=348)
(b) Disciplinary matters	3	13	25	29	31	(N=347)
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	8	9	23	23	37	(N=340)
(d) Organisation of your own work	2	12	30	31	24	(N=341)
(e) Fixing of work standards (by job evaluation, etc)	2	9	24	28	38	(N=346)
(f) Methods of payment (e.g. piece rates or day rates, bonuses etc)	4	8	20	23	44	(N=338)
(g) Rate of Pay	4	8	23	26	40	(N=349)
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment	1	2	13	19	67	(N=349)
(i) Allocation of overtime	3	7	16	21	52	(N=343)
(j) Safety Matters	7	18	36	21	19	(N=346)

TABLE 2 (B)

How much influence would you and your workmates ideally like to have in this firm over:

%s

	A Great Deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very Little	None	
(a) General facilities	36	36	26	2	1	(N=337)
(b) Disciplinary Matters	17	29	44	4	5	(N=339)
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	35	29	27	3	6	(N=337)
(d) Organisation of your own work	28	45	25	2	0	(N=339)
(e) Fixing of work standards	34	37	27	0	2	(N=333)
(f) Methods of payment	44	32	23	1	1	(N=336)
(g) Rate of Pay	51	31	17	1	1	(N=339)
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment	18	22	42	10	7	(N=337)
(i) Allocation of overtime	28	28	36	3	5	(N=335)
(j) Safety Matters	54	27	19	0	0	(N=318)

TABLE 3 (A) - WELDRILL

Could you indicate how you think the following sorts of decisions should be taken if they arose?

85

	This is a management matter	We should be asked our views, but it is up to management	There should be negotiations but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead	There should be negotiations - no action till agreement	This is a matter on which management should accept what we say	
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	20	32	11	38	0	(N=95)
To introduce new working methods	2	18	11	63	6	(N=99)
To introduce work study methods	7	12	7	62	11	(N=98)
To discharge workers no longer needed	5	25	5	59	6	(N=97)
To change the method of payment	2	9	9	70	9	(N=96)
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	7	13	5	65	10	(N=94)
To alter starting and stopping times	6	9	8	61	15	(N=98)
To alter works rules so as to change disciplinary proceedings	4	8	12	68	7	(N=97)
To set up new procedures to deal with absenteeism	13	22	11	51	3	(N=97)
To dismiss an individual or group for disciplinary reasons	10	22	5	60	3	(N=97)

TABLE 3 (B) - EPOCH

8s

	This is a management matter	We should be asked our views, but it is up to management	There should be negotiations but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead	There should be negotiations - no action till agreement	This is a matter on which management should accept what we say	
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	5	35	15	44	1	(N=75)
To introduce new working methods	0	7	3	84	7	(N=75)
To introduce work study methods	0	1	0	84	15	(N=75)
To discharge workers no longer needed	1	7	1	73	17	(N=75)
To change the method of payment	0	3	1	72	24	(N=75)
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	3	16	12	61	8	(N=75)
To alter starting and stopping times	1	0	1	68	29	(N=75)
To alter works rules so as to change disciplinary proceedings	1	4	1	85	8	(N=75)
To set up new procedures to deal with absenteeism	9	9	8	71	3	(N=75)
To dismiss an individual or group for disciplinary reasons	9	15	9	65	1	(N=75)

TABLE 3 (C) - NATCO

85

	This is a management matter	We should be asked our views, but it is up to management	There should be negotiations but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead	There should be negotiations - no action till agreement	This is a matter on which management should accept what we say	
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	17	29	9	44	1	(N=153)
To introduce new working methods	3	17	8	62	10	(N=156)
To introduce work study methods	2	11	7	62	18	(N=153)
To discharge workers no longer needed	5	12	9	64	11	(N=153)
To change the method of payment	8	15	7	55	15	(N=152)
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	4	11	9	66	10	(N=153)
To alter starting and stopping times	3	11	7	65	14	(N=152)
To alter works rules so as to change disciplinary proceedings	3	15	8	63	11	(N=152)
To set up new procedures to deal with absenteeism	14	20	16	43	7	(N=153)
To dismiss an individual or group for disciplinary reasons	12	20	15	49	4	(N=152)

TABLE 3 (D) - TOTALS

35

	This is a management matter	We should be asked our views, but it is up to management	There should be negotiations but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead	There should be negotiations - no action till agreement	This is a matter on which management should accept what we say	
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	15	31	11	43	1	(N=323)
To introduce new working methods	2	15	8	67	8	(N=330)
To introduce work study methods	3	9	6	67	15	(N=326)
To discharge workers no longer needed	4	15	6	65	11	(N=325)
To change the method of payment	4	10	7	64	16	(N=323)
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	5	13	9	65	9	(N=322)
To alter starting and stopping times	4	8	6	64	18	(N=325)
To alter works rules so as to change disciplinary proceedings	3	11	8	69	9	(N=324)
To set up new procedures to deal with absenteeism	13	18	13	52	5	(N=325)
To dismiss an individual or group for disciplinary reasons	11	19	11	56	3	(N=324)

TABLE 4 (A) - WELDRILL

We'd like to find out how satisfied you are with the following aspects of your present job. Could you please think about each one and put a tick in the box which best expresses your feeling on that particular matter?

ts

	Very Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Rather Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
How you get on with management	21	52	19	8	0	(N=105)
Job Security	24	58	8	9	2	(N=104)
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	14	54	24	8	0	(N=104)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pension, social facilities, etc)	45	38	10	4	4	(N=104)
The friendliness of the people you work with	54	39	3	4	0	(N=104)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	26	42	17	9	6	(N=104)
The Hours of work	33	38	13	11	5	(N=105)
Convenience for getting to work	58	34	3	5	1	(N=104)
The chance of a say in running the firm	2	19	42	14	24	(N=101)
Promotion chances	4	17	32	23	24	(N=100)
Working conditions	34	45	8	11	3	(N=104)
Pay	13	46	18	16	8	(N=102)
The skill needed in the job	31	50	12	6	1	(N=102)
Trade Union effectiveness	36	48	10	3	4	(N=103)
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	17	46	28	2	8	(N=103)
Overall satisfaction with your job	20	59	10	11	1	(N=102)

TABLE 4 (B). - EPOCH

8s

	Very Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Rather Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
How you get on with management	4	22	25	29	20	(N=76)
Job Security	26	55	15	1	3	(N=76)
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	5	51	21	16	7	(N=75)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pension, social facilities, etc)	25	49	11	8	8	(N=76)
The friendliness of the people you work with	42	40	15	3	1	(N=76)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	9	36	21	28	7	(N=76)
The Hours of work	7	53	12	19	9	(N=75)
Convenience for getting to work	4	22	9	29	36	(N=76)
The chance of a say in running the firm	0	1	26	28	45	(N=76)
Promotion chances	0	5	19	35	41	(N=75)
Working conditions	3	41	16	25	16	(N=76)
Pay	0	17	12	37	34	(N=76)
The skill needed in the job	4	52	28	12	4	(N=75)
Trade Union effectiveness	1	17	28	30	24	(N=76)
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	3	16	44	20	17	(N=75)
Overall satisfaction with your job	1	42	10	34	13	(N=77)

TABLE 4 (C) - NATCO

38

	Very Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Rather Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
How you get on with management	9	44	29	12	6	(N=179)
Job Security	18	53	13	9	8	(N=176)
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	16	54	19	9	3	(N=173)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pension, social facilities, etc)	28	51	10	6	6	(N=175)
The friendliness of the people you work with	47	37	13	3	0	(N=177)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	21	40	17	15	6	(N=178)
The Hours of work	34	49	10	4	3	(N=177)
Convenience for getting to work	30	34	15	14	8	(N=178)
The chance of a say in running the firm	2	12	34	25	27	(N=170)
Promotion chances	4	17	31	19	29	(N=171)
Working conditions	11	43	25	13	8	(N=177)
Pay	5	29	20	26	21	(N=178)
The skill needed in the job	13	55	21	9	2	(N=165)
Trade Union effectiveness	5	22	23	17	33	(N=169)
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	8	33	34	16	10	(N=173)
Overall satisfaction with your job	6	56	22	14	2	(N=176)

TABLE 5 (A) - WELDRILL

Now we'd like you to imagine that you are looking for a job. If you were in that position, and were trying to weigh up a job, how important would the things listed below be to you in making the decision on whether to take the job or not?

85

	Very Important	Above Average Importance	Average Importance	Below Average Importance	Not Important At All	
How you get on with management	36	21	37	2	4	(N=102)
Job Security	75	18	8	0	0	(N=102)
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	56	26	18	0	0	(N=103)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc)	61	28	10	1	0	(N=102)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	57	27	14	1	1	(N=101)
The hours of work	56	26	17	0	1	(N=103)
Convenience for getting to work	51	23	22	2	2	(N=103)
The chance of a say in running the firm	26	18	36	10	10	(N=100)
Promotion chances	38	24	25	4	9	(N=100)
Working conditions	67	20	12	0	1	(N=103)
Pay	84	9	7	1	0	(N=103)
The skill needed in the job	53	31	15	1	0	(N=104)
Trade Union effectiveness	54	21	19	1	4	(N=103)
The standing or prestige of the job	43	29	24	1	4	(N=103)

TABLE 5 (B) - EPOCH

ts

	Absolutely Crucial and Decisive	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not All That Important	Not Important At All	
How you would get on with management	7	48	38	8	0	(N=77)
Job Security	26	57	17	0	0	(N=77)
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	20	62	17	1	0	(N=77)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc)	20	55	26	0	0	(N=77)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	14	51	35	0	0	(N=77)
The hours of work	8	47	37	8	0	(N=75)
Convenience for getting to work	12	43	36	9	0	(N=77)
The chance of a say in running the firm	7	16	57	18	3	(N=77)
Promotion chances	22	42	29	8	0	(N=77)
Working conditions	20	58	21	1	0	(N=77)
Pay	60	35	5	0	0	(N=77)
The skill needed in the job	8	60	30	3	0	(N=77)
Trade Union effectiveness	17	31	38	12	3	(N=77)
The standing or prestige of the job	7	23	40	21	9	(N=77)

TABLE 5 (C) - NATCO

ts

	Absolutely Crucial and Decisive	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not All That Important	Not Important At All	
How you would get on with management	10	45	36	6	2	(N=174)
Job security	30	53	16	2	0	(N=171)
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	23	60	15	2	0	(N=169)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc)	27	56	16	2	0	(N=172)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	23	47	27	3	0	(N=171)
The hours of work	15	49	27	7	1	(N=175)
Convenience for getting to work	12	45	33	9	1	(N=171)
The chance of a say in running the organisation	12	28	44	14	2	(N=169)
Promotion chances	15	45	28	9	3	(N=170)
Working conditions	22	60	17	1	1	(N=172)
Pay	44	47	8	1	0	(N=174)
The skill needed in the job	16	54	26	3	2	(N=172)
Trade Union effectiveness	17	40	31	9	3	(N=170)
The standing or prestige of the job	9	40	35	12	4	(N=169)

TABLE 6 (A) - WELDRILL *

There are lots of different ways which people have suggested for giving workers some sort of say in what goes on in their job or workplace. Please could you indicate what you think of each of these.

%s

	Very Good Idea	Quite a good Idea	The idea's all right but it wouldn't work	In-different	Bad idea	Very bad idea	
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	30	37	19	13	0	1	(N=91)
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management	48	39	7	1	0	2	(N=94)
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	27	26	22	14	9	3	(N=93)
Allowing you and your workmates to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst yourselves	19	23	27	5	16	10	(N=94)
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	22	46	9	21	2	0	(N=91)
Workers sharing in profits	53	32	10	4	0	0	(N=96)
The Budget this year proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	43	34	11	9	2	2	(N=94)

* The Weldrill questionnaire did not include the possibility of workers' takeover.

TABLE 6 (B) - EPOCH

85

	Very Good Idea	Quite a good Idea	The idea's all right but it wouldn't work	In-different	Bad idea	Very bad idea	
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	42	38	13	8	0	0	(N=72)
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management	53	31	11	4	0	1	(N=72)
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	18	25	43	8	1	6	(N=73)
Allowing you and your workmates to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst yourselves	26	22	35	4	10	3	(N=72)
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	25	52	1	18	0	4	(N=73)
Workers sharing in profits	75	22	1	1	0	0	(N=73)
The Budget in 1973 proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	55	26	7	8	0	4	(N=73)
Workers taking over firms and running them themselves	8	11	44	6	15	16	(N=73)

TABLE 6 (C) - NATCO

88

	Very Good Idea	Quite a good Idea	The idea's all right but it wouldn't work	In-different	Bad idea	Very bad idea	
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	32	45	14	9	0	0	(N=153)
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management	36	44	16	5	1	0	(N=155)
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	26	35	27	7	4	1	(N=152)
Allowing you and your workmates to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst yourselves	18	27	33	8	12	1	(N=154)
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	17	51	8	20	4	1	(N=148)
Workers sharing in profits	51	36	8	3	1	0	(N=154)
The Budget in 1973 proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	38	35	10	15	1	2	(N=154)
Workers taking over firms and running them themselves	7	9	43	8	19	14	(N=153)

TABLE 6 (D) - TOTALS

85

	Very Good Idea	Quite a good idea	The idea's all right but it wouldn't work	In-different	Bad idea	Very bad idea	
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	34	41	15	10	0	0	(N=316)
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management	43	40	13	3	0	1	(N=321)
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	25	30	29	9	5	3	(N=318)
Allowing you and your workmates to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst yourselves.	20	25	32	7	13	4	(N=320)
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	20	50	7	20	2	1	(N=312)
Workers sharing in profits	57	32	7	3	1	0	(N=323)
The Budget in 1973 proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	43	33	9	12	1	3	(N=321)
Workers taking over firms and running them themselves	7	10	43	7	18	15	(N=226)

TABLE 7

How much say do you feel you and your fellow workers have in important national level decisions made by your Trade Union.

%s

	Weldrill	Epoch	Natco	Total
A Great Deal	15	4	6	7
A Reasonable Amount	30	12	11	14
Some	23	14	17	18
Not Much	23	29	37	32
None	9	42	29	29

(N=47)

(N=77)

(N=161)

(N=285)

TABLE 8

Do you feel you should have more say in Union national decisions?

%s

	Weldrill	Epoch	Natco	Total
Yes	78	87	94	89
No	22	13	7	11

(N=45)

(N=71)

(N=138)

(N=254)

TABLE 9

How often do you attend branch meetings?

ts

	Weldrill	Epoch	Natco	Total
Always/Pretty Regularly	26	51	6	21
Sometimes	43	46	30	36
Rarely/Never	32	4	64	43

(N=47)

(N=77)

(N=161)

(N=285)

TABLE 10

How would you feel if the Union was unable to continue in this company?

ts

	Weldrill	Epoch	Natco	Total
Very Badly	72	51	45	51
Quite Badly	17	25	30	27
Wouldn't Mind All That Much	9	15	18	16
Wouldn't Mind At All	0	3	6	4
Would be Pleased	2	7	1	2

(N=47)

(N=76)

(N=163)

(N=286)

TABLE 11

With what group or groups do you feel the real power lies in this firm?

%s

	Weldrill	Epoch	Natco	Total
(1) Shop Floor	3	0	1	1
(2) Trade Union	13	0	2	4
(3) Supervisors	3	0	2	2
(4) Local Management	42	11	17	21
(5) National/Regional Management	5	0	23	13
(6) Overseas Management *	10	75	39	42
(7) Management and Trade Union	12	0	2	4
(8) (5) and (6) jointly	3	8	5	6
(9) Other Combinations	9	6	10	8

(N=67)

(N=73)

(N=133)

(N=273)

* Government in the case of Natco.

TABLE 12Length of employment.(A) WELDRILL - How long have you been here (in Weldrill)?

Under one year	5
1 - 5 years	29
6 - 10 years	34
Over 10 years	33
	(N=104)

(B) EPOCH - How long have you been working in this refinery?

Under one year	7
1 - 3 years	16
Over 3 years	78
	(N=76)

(C) NATCO - How long have you been working in this industry?

Under 3 years	20
3 - 10 years	34
10 - 25 years	39
Over 25 years	7
	(N=180)

A P P E N D I X 'B'

MANAGEMENT RESPONSES :

Tables of additional and detailed results

TABLE 1 (A)

How much influence do you think the operators (as a group or through their Trade Union branch) have over the following issues?

%s

	A Great Deal	Quite A Lot	Some	Very Little	None	
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club etc.)	24	42	28	6	0	(N=50)
(b) Disciplinary matters	14	48	22	12	4	(N=50)
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	24	26	28	16	6	(N=50)
(d) Organisation of their own work	4	14	42	22	18	(N=50)
(e) Fixing of work standards, flexibility etc.	8	32	30	20	10	(N=50)
(f) Methods of payment	16	48	22	10	4	(N=50)
(g) Rate of Pay	24	52	14	8	2	(N=50)
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment	4	4	20	50	22	(N=50)
(i) Allocation of overtime	8	22	34	24	12	(N=50)
(j) Safety matters	22	48	22	8	0	(N=50)

TABLE 1 (B)

Are there any issues on which you think the operators should have more, or less, influence?

%s

	They should have more influence over	They should have less influence over	They should keep about the same amount of influence	
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)	10	88	2	(N=49)
(b) Disciplinary matters	4	30	66	(N=50)
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	16	26	58	(N=50)
(d) Organisation of their own work	27	6	67	(N=49)
(e) Fixing of work standards, flexibility etc.	25	16	59	(N=49)
(f) Methods of payment	12	12	76	(N=49)
(g) Rate of pay	6	12	82	(N=49)
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment	25	74	2	(N=49)
(i) Allocation of overtime	6	21	73	(N=48)
(j) Safety matters	31	2	67	(N=49)

TABLE 2

Could you indicate how you think the following sorts of decisions should be taken if they arose?

%s

	This is a management matter.	The Unions should be asked their views, but it is up to management.	There should be negotiations but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead	There should be negotiations - no action till agreement.	This is a matter on which management should accept what the Unions say.	
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	34	48	10	8	0	(N=50)
To introduce new working methods	0	12	28	60	0	(N=50)
To introduce work study methods	4	4	16	74	2	(N=50)
To discharge workers no longer needed	2	14	36	48	0	(N=50)
To change the method of payment	0	10	12	78	0	(N=50)
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	4	12	16	68	0	(N=50)
To alter starting and stopping times	0	8	27	63	2	(N=49)
To alter works rules so as to change disciplinary proceedings	0	10	28	62	0	(N=50)
To set up new procedures to deal with absenteeism	4	24	28	44	0	(N=50)
To dismiss an individual or group for disciplinary reasons	14	28	24	34	0	(N=50)

TABLE 3 (A)

Please could you indicate whether you think operators are 'pretty satisfied', 'rather dissatisfied' or 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with each of the items below?

%s

	Operators pretty satisfied with	Operators rather dissatisfied with	Operators neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	
How they get on with management	33	31	35	(N=48)
Job security	71	6	22	(N=49)
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	40	17	43	(N=47)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc.)	75	8	17	(N=48)
The friendliness of the people they work with	60	4	35	(N=48)
The opportunity to get on with their own work in their own way	25	29	47	(N=49)
The hours of work	49	8	43	(N=49)
Convenience for getting to work	38	19	43	(N=47)
The chance of a say in running the firm	18	51	31	(N=49)
Promotion chances	15	31	54	(N=48)
Working conditions	67	6	27	(N=49)
Pay	45	27	29	(N=49)
The skill needed in the job	59	6	35	(N=49)
Trade Union effectiveness	78	6	16	(N=49)
The standing or prestige of the job they are doing	23	17	60	(N= 48)

TABLE 3 (B)

Overall then, how satisfied would you say they are with their present jobs?

%s

Very Satisfied	2
Reasonably Satisfied	65
Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied	22
Rather dissatisfied	10
Very dissatisfied	0

(N=49)

TABLE 4

We'd like you to try and pick out from the following list of items those which you think would be most important to operators in general if they were weighing up a job elsewhere to decide on whether to take it or not. Indicate by putting '1' next to the item you think would be most important to them, '2' beside the second most important, and so on up to 5 items only

number of mentions

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice	5th choice
How they would get on with management					
Job security	2	15	6	7	6
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	1	1	4	1	3
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc.)	1	8	4	5	4
The friendliness of the people they work with		1	1	3	2
The opportunity to get on with their own work in their own way		2	1	4	4
The hours of work		7	9	8	5
Convenience for getting to work			7	6	4
The chance of a say in running the firm					2
Promotion chances			3	4	3
Working conditions	1	11	8	4	11
Pay	44	2	2		
The skill needed in the job			1	2	1
Trade Union effectiveness		2	2	4	3
The standing or prestige of the job they would be doing			1		

(N=49) (N=49) (N=49) (N=48) (N=48)

TABLE 5

How much influence do you feel you and people at your level or grade in the company have over the following issues:

%s

	A Great Deal	Quite a Lot	Some	Very Little	None	
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club etc)	14	24	30	30	2	(N=50)
(b) Disciplinary matters	14	38	28	18	2	(N=50)
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	6	16	16	32	28	(N=49)
(d) Organisation of your own work	40	48	12	0	0	(N=50)
(e) Job evaluation	12	30	36	12	10	(N=50)
(f) Methods of payment	2	16	16	32	34	(N=50)
(g) Rate of pay	0	10	26	24	40	(N=50)
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment	12	24	42	14	8	(N=50)
(i) Decisions on Promotions *	21	18	25	18	18	(N=28)

*This option was omitted from the Weldrill questionnaire.

TABLE 6

How much influence would you and people at your level or grade in the company ideally like to have over these issues?

%s

	A Great Deal	Quite A Lot	Some	Very Little	None	
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)	16	27	51	4	2	(N=49)
(b) Disciplinary matters	22	51	22	4	0	(N=49)
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	22	45	27	4	2	(N=49)
(d) Organisation of your own work	67	33	0	0	0	(N=49)
(e) Job evaluation	41	43	14	0	2	(N=49)
(f) Methods of payment	22	37	27	8	6	(N=49)
(g) Rate of pay	27	47	18	4	4	(N=49)
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment	29	45	25	2	0	(N=49)
(i) Decisions on Promotions*	26	48	26	0	0	(N=27)

* This option was omitted from the Weldrill questionnaire.

TABLE 7

We'd like to find out how satisfied you are with the following aspects of your present job. Could you please think about each one and put a tick in the box which best expresses your feeling on that particular matter?

%s

	Very Satisfied	Reasonably Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Rather Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
How you get on with your superiors	35	47	12	6	0	(N=49)
Job security	24	54	16	6	0	(N=50)
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	36	42	14	8	0	(N=50)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities, etc.)	31	53	10	6	0	(N=49)
The friendliness of the people you work with	54	44	0	2	0	(N=50)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	30	48	10	12	0	(N=50)
The hours of work	42	30	24	4	0	(N=50)
Convenience for getting to work	40	24	24	12	0	(N=50)
The chance of a say in running the firm	10	36	26	28	0	(N=50)
Promotion chances	6	38	26	26	4	(N=50)
Working conditions	36	52	10	2	0	(N=50)
Pay	16	42	16	22	4	(N=50)
The skill needed in the job	25	49	20	6	0	(N=49)
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	22	42	34	0	2	(N=50)
Overall satisfaction with your job	20	51	14	14	0	(N=49)

TABLE 8

Now we'd like you to image that you are looking for a job. If you were in that position, and were trying to weigh up a job, how important would the things listed below be to you in making the decision on whether to take the job or not?

%s

	Absolutely Crucial and Decisive	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not All That Important	Not Important At All	
How would you get on with your superiors	22	59	14	4	0	(N=49)
Job security	20	45	35	0	0	(N=49)
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	49	45	6	0	0	(N=49)
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities, etc.)	8	43	49	0	0	(N=49)
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	33	49	18	0	0	(N=49)
The hours of work	8	14	47	25	6	(N=49)
Convenience for getting to work	6	10	67	12	4	(N=48)
The chance of a say in running the firm	33	37	25	6	0	(N=49)
Promotion chances	31	37	25	8	0	(N=49)
Working conditions	16	35	45	4	0	(N=49)
Pay	31	45	25	0	0	(N=49)
The skill needed in the job	31	52	17	0	0	(N=48)
The standing or prestige of the job you'd be doing	18	39	25	18	0	(N=49)

TABLE 9

How important do you think it is for a worker to be a member of a Trade Union?

%s	Very Important	53
	Fairly Important	34
	Not Very Important	13
	Not Important At All	0
		(N=47)

TABLE 10

What useful purposes, if any, do you think Trade Unions serve?

%s	None	4
	To Protect Workers	34
	To Enable Co-ordinated Negotiation	36
	To Help Management Communicate/ Solve Problems	10
	No Answer	16
		(N=50)

TABLE 11

What other purposes do you think Trade Unions could and should serve, if any?

%s	None	12
	Be More Constructive/Serve National Or Company Interest/Be Less Selfish	38
	Communicate To/Help Control Workers	2
	Aid Worker Participation	2
	Further Workers' Interests	10
	No Answer	36
		(N=50)

TABLE 12

There are lots of different ways which people have suggested for giving workers some sort of say in what goes on in their job or workplace. Please could you indicate what you think of each of these.

%s

	Very Good Idea	Quite a Good Idea	The Idea's all right but it wouldn't work	Indifferent	Bad Idea	Very Bad Idea	
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	44	33	21	2	0	0	(N=48)
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management	26	48	16	0	4	0	(N=50)
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	8	28	24	8	22	6	(N=50)
Allowing operators to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst themselves	8	18	34	2	22	12	(N=50)
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	6	26	16	20	22	4	(N=50)
Workers sharing in profits	22	46	14	6	8	0	(N=50)
The Budget in 1973 proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	22	42	10	18	4	0	(N=50)
Workers taking over firms and running them themselves *	0	0	14	4	16	20	(N=50)

* This option was not included in Weldrill.

TABLE 13

With what group or groups do you feel the real power lies in this organisation?

%s

(1) Shop Floor	5
(2) Trade Union	16
(3) Local Management	4
(4) National/Regional Management	9
(5) Remote Management/Government	11
(6) Management and Trade Union Jointly	11
(7) (4) and (5) Jointly	4
(8) Other Combinations	40
	(N=45)

TABLE 14

Do you feel that you personally have enough say in decisions made at your place of work, or would you like to have more say in some way?

%s

I would like to have more say ONLY in decisions concerning <u>my own work and working conditions</u> .	20
I would like to have more say ONLY in decisions concerning the management of the company as a whole.	20
I would like to have more say at <u>BOTH levels</u> (on my work <u>and</u> at the whole-company level).	46
I have no special interest in more say at <u>either level</u> .	14
	(N=50)

APPENDIX C

MANUAL QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE*

*This schedule is a composite of those used in the three different organizations. Where questions used differ significantly I have included the different versions and indicated by use of letters in the margin in which organization the question was used:

W = Welldrill

E = Epoch

N = Natco

Where no letter appears, the same question was used in all three.

NOTE: AS THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPOSITE, NUMBERS OF QUESTIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS SEQUENTIAL

1 - BACKGROUND

1. Were you born in this area (i.e. Co. Durham, Teesside, or Newcastle)?

YES

☐

PLEASE

NO

☐

TICK

2. How far away from work do you live?

Within 2 miles

☐

2 - 10 miles

☐

PLEASE

Over 10 miles

☐

TICK

3. Age

25 or less

☐

26-40

☐

PLEASE

41-55

☐

TICK

56 or over

☐

4. Marital Status:

Single

☐

Married

☐

PLEASE

Separated or Widowed or Divorced

☐

TICK

5. How many (if any) children do you have?

What ages?

6. How old were you when you left full-time education?

7. Have you completed an apprenticeship? YES

NO

☐

PLEASE

☐

TICK

If 'YES', what in?

8. Have you attended any other sort of educational or training courses since you left full-time education? (e.g. Government Re-training centres, night school etc)

YES

☐

PLEASE

NO

☐

TICK

If 'YES', what, if any, qualifications did you get from the course(s)?

.....

.....

9. What sort of work does your father do/did he last do (if retired or deceased)?

Was this his usual type of work? YES ☐ PLEASE
NO ☐ TICK

If 'NO', What sort of work is/was he generally engaged on? -----

II - YOUR JOB

10. What is the trade classification of the job you now have? _____

W
—

10. What operator classification are you in at the present time?

E
—

On Recruitment

☐

Qualified in 1 job

☐

Qualified in 2 jobs

☐

Qualified in 3 jobs

☐

Qualified in 4 jobs

☐

PLEASE TICK

11. Do you work in process or movements?

E
—

Process

☐

Movements

☐

PLEASE TICK

10. If you are NEITHER a foreman NOR a chargehand, which trade group do you normally work in?

N
—

Engineering

Jointing

☐

Cable-laying

☐

Full-time Driving

☐

Garages

☐

Civil Trades

☐

Depot & Site
Services

☐

Sub-station
fitting

☐

Overhead Lines

☐

Painting

☐

Commercial

Contracting

☐

Installation,
Inspection &
Meter Fitting

☐

Appliance Repair
& Emergency
Service

☐

Appliance Delivery

☐

Administration

Meter Reading

☐

Storekeeping

☐

PLEASE
TICK

11. Is your job skilled, semi-skilled or are you on an apprenticeship?

N

skilled (e.g. joiner, electrician)

☐

semi-skilled (e.g. craftsman's mate,
driver, meter reader)

☐

PLEASE
TICK

unskilled (e.g. labourer)

☐

apprentice

☐

11. How long have you been here
in Weldrill?

W

Under 1 year

☐

1-5 years

☐

PLEASE
TICK

6-10 years

☐

Over 10 years

☐

12. How long have you been working in Epoch
Riverside Refinery?

E

Under 1 year

☐

1 - 3 years

☐

PLEASE TICK

Over 3 years

☐

12. How long have you been working in the Natco industry? -

N

under 3 years

☐

3-10 years

☐

10-25 years

☐

PLEASE
TICK

over 25 years

☐

12. We'd like to find out how satisfied you are with the following aspects of your present job. Could you please think about each one and put a tick in the box which best expresses your feeling on that particular matter?

	Very satisfied	Reason- ably satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dis- satisfied	Rather dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied
How you get on with management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job Security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pension, social facilities, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The friendliness of the people you work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The hours of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Convenience for getting to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade union effectiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Overall then, how satisfied would you say you are with your present job?

	Very satisfied	Reason- ably satisfied	Neither nor dis- satisfied	Rather dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied
PLEASE TICK	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Now we'd like you to imagine that you are looking around for a job. If you were in that position, and were trying to weigh up a job, how important would the things listed below be to you in making the decision on whether to take the job or not? (As in Q.12, please tick for each thing - 'How you get on with management', 'Job security', etc. - in the column with the heading which best expresses your view).

	Very impor- -tant	Above average impor- -tance	Average impor- -tance	Below average impor- -tance	Not impor- -tant at all
How you get on with management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The hours of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Convenience of getting to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade union effectiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you think there is something of importance to you missed out of this list, please say what it is: _____

14.	Absolutely crucial & decisive	Very impor- tant	Fairly impor- tant	Not all that impor- tant	Not impor- tant at all
How you would get on with management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pen- sions, social facilities etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<u>E</u> The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<u>&</u> The hours of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<u>N</u> Convenience of getting to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trade union effectiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you think there is something of importance to you missed out of this list,
please say what it is:

.....

15. What, if any, improvements would you like to see in your present job?

16. How do you think this firm rates as an employer, compared with others in the area?

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

One of the best
in the area

☐

Above
average

☐

Average

☐

Below
average

☐

One of the worst
in the area

☐

17. How far do you think the management in S***** are in touch with the needs of the workers?

Very closely in touch

☐

Reasonably in touch

☐

Not very well in touch

☐

Not in touch at all

☐

PLEASE TICK

III - GENERAL OPINIONS

18. Here are some statements which have been made about industry. Please tick the appropriate column for each statement, to indicate how far you agree or disagree with it.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Most decisions taken by foremen and supervisors would be better taken by the workers themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most management have the welfare of their workers at heart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Managers know what's best for the firm, and workers should do just what they are told	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Giving workers more say in the running of their firms would only make things worse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Industry should pay its profits to workers and not to shareholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strikes are irresponsible and against the national interest, and all efforts must be made to put a stop to them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The worker should always be loyal to his firm, even if this means putting himself out quite a bit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Now some statements about the position of people like yourself in the country as a whole. Once again, please tick the column which indicates best how far you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In this country there is not enough opportunity for people like me to get promoted and get ahead.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workers like me need stronger trade unions to fight for their interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Management should let people like me organise our own work in our own way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People like me have no opportunity to use their real abilities at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To get a decent wage you have to ruin your social life by working much too long on overtime or shifts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nowadays managements treat people like me just as numbers and never as human beings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working men should always have the right to withdraw their labour, as it's sometimes the only way they can get a fair deal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nationalisation so far has done nothing to help the ordinary working man	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Would you please indicate which of the following statements you agree with closest?

- (1) No one group really runs things in this country. Important decisions about national policy are made by a lot of little groups (such as unions, business, religious and educational groups etc.). These groups influence both parties but no single group can dictate to the others.

☐

- (2) A small group of men at the top really runs the government in this country. They are the heads of the biggest business corporations, the top civil servants and the top men of the party in power.

☐

- (3) It's really big business that runs the government in this country. It controls the policies of both parties.

☐

- (4) The trade unions are the group with the most power in this country.

☐

- (5) The ordinary people have the real power because the leaders have to answer to them in the end.

☐

PLEASE
TICK

If you can't agree with any of these choices, then please describe in the space below the people who you think run the country. (If you think that it's some combination of the choices given, then describe your view, even if you have ticked against one of the statements as the one you are in closest agreement with.)

21. Productivity bargaining seems to have become one of the key phrases in negotiations for wages in the last few years. Who do you think benefits on the whole from productivity agreements?

- Company only ☐
- Worker only ☐
- Both, but company most ☐
- Both, but worker most ☐
- Both equally ☐
- Nobody ☐

PLEASE
TICK

22. 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

☐

PLEASE
TICK

Agree because managers and men have the same interests in everything that matters

☐

Disagree, because workers and managers are basically on opposite sides

☐

IV - INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

23. 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?

24. Do you feel that you personally have enough say in decisions made at your place of work, or would you like to have more say in them? (Please tick where appropriate. If you would like to have more say at both levels described, please put a tick against both.)

W

I would like to have more say in decisions that directly concern my own work and working conditions.

☐

I would like to have more say in decisions that concern the management of the whole company.

☐

I have no special interest in more say at either level

☐

25. Do you feel that you personally have enough say in decisions made at your place of work, or would you like to have more say in some way?

E I would like to have more say ONLY in decisions concerning my own work and working conditions ☐

& I would like to have more say ONLY in decisions concerning the management of the company as a whole ☐

N I would like to have more say at BOTH levels (on my work and at the whole-company level) ☐

I have no special interest in more say at either level ☐

PLEASE
TICK
ONE BOX

NOW WE'D LIKE TO FIND OUT IN MORE DETAIL HOW MUCH SAY YOU FEEL YOU HAVE IN CERTAIN MATTERS.

25. How much influence do you feel you and your workmates have in this firm over:

	PLEASE TICK	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Disciplinary matters		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) Organisation of your own work		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) Fixing of work standards (by job evaluation etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) Methods of payment (e.g. piece rates or day rates, bonuses, etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g) Rate of pay		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(i) Allocation of overtime		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(j) Safety matters		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. How much influence would you and your workmates ideally like to have in this firm over:

	PLEASE TICK	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Disciplinary matters		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) Organisation of your own work		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) Fixing of work standards (by job evaluation etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) Methods of payment (e.g. piece rates, or day rates, bonuses, etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g) Rate of pay		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h) Purchase of new machinery or equipment		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(i) Allocation of overtime		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(j) Safety matters		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

27. What important benefits, if any, do you think workers could gain by having more say in things?

28. Where do you feel the power lies in this firm?

(Examples of groups given in E & N).

29. ~~Weldrill~~ ~~*****~~ Company philosophy is that one essential necessity for the running of the firm is 'a unity of purpose for the common interest' (Company Rule Book). How far do you think the way management acts here achieves this unity?

It achieves it completely	It usually achieves it	It achieves it about $\frac{1}{2}$ the time	It rarely achieves it	It never achieves it	PLEASE TICK
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

If you think it doesn't achieve it completely, in what areas, and in what ways, does it fail?

30. What do you think are the results of this management approach and philosophy? In other words, who gains from it, if anybody?

Both management and workers gain equally	☐
Both gain, but management most	☐
Both gain, but workers most	☐
Makes no difference	☐
Management gain, workers lose	☐
Workers gain, management lose	☐
Both lose	☐
Don't know	☐

PLEASE TICK

31. How would you feel if the management decided to give up its present philosophy and approach as described in the rule book?

Very badly

☐

Quite badly

☐

Wouldn't mind all that much

☐

Wouldn't mind at all

☐

Be pleased

☐

PLEASE TICK

30. An Epoch company philosophy was drawn up in the 1960s, based on 'joint optimisation' (which means that for all problems the best result will be achieved by a balanced solution to both technological and human needs). It involves various aims, including the two quoted below. We'd like you to tell us how far you think each of these aims has been achieved in Riverside (The quotes are from Company philosophy statements.)

- (a) One aim is '... creating conditions in which employees at all levels will be encouraged and enabled to develop and to realise their potentialities ...'

How far do you think this has been achieved?

E

Completely

☐

To a very large extent

☐

To a fair extent

☐

Not very far

☐

Not at all

☐

PLEASE
TICK

- (b) 'People ... must feel that the company's objectives are worthwhile, and the sort of objectives they are willing to commit themselves to.'

How far do you think this has been achieved?

E

Completely

☐

To a very large extent

☐

To a fair extent

☐

Not very far

☐

Not at all

☐

PLEASE
TICK

31. Consultation

- (a) Have you ever served on any of the consultative committees (on safety or particular issues)?

E

YES

☐

PLEASE

NO

☐

TICK

- (b) Would you be willing to serve on any such committees in the future?

E

YES

☐

PLEASE

NO

☐

TICK

- (c) How adequate do you think the amount of consultation by management with employees is at ~~Southbank~~?

Very Adequate

☐

Reasonably adequate

☐

A bit inadequate

☐

Very inadequate

☐

Don't know

☐PLEASE
TICK

32. What do you think are the results of the Epoch company approach and philosophy on participation? In other words, who gains from it, if anybody?

Both management and workers gain equally

☐

Both gain, but management most

☐

Makes no difference

☐

Management gain, workers lose

☐

Workers gain, management lose

☐

Both lose

☐

Don't know

☐

33. How would you feel if the management decided to give up its present philosophy and approach (as described in the Company Statement of Objectives and Philosophy)?

E

Very badly	☐
Quite badly	☐
Wouldn't mind all that much	☐
Wouldn't mind at all	☐
Be pleased	☐

30. How effective do you think the existing advisory committee system is in dealing with 'matters of common interest'?

N

Very effective	☐
reasonably effective	☐
not very effective	☐
not effective at all	☐
don't know	☐

PLEASE
TICK

31. How effective do you think the existing works committee system (i.e. the local negotiating machinery) is in dealing with matters for negotiation?

N

very effective	☐
reasonably effective	☐
not very effective	☐
not effective at all	☐
don't know	☐

PLEASE
TICK

32. Which do you think is the most important for the interests of manual staff; the advisory (consultative) committees, or the works (negotiating) committees?

N

advisory committees	☐
works committees	☐
they're equally important	☐
don't know	☐

PLEASE
TICK

33. One issue which has been under consideration for a long time is whether the advisory and works committees should be kept separate (dealing with areas of common and conflicting interest respectively) or whether they should be merged. What do you think?

N

the two should be merged	☐	PLEASE TICK
the two should be kept separate	☐	
don't know	☐	

34. During the time you've worked in the Natco industry have you ever served:

N

on a District advisory committee?	YES	☐	NO	☐
on the works committee?	YES	☐	NO	☐
as shop steward?	YES	☐	NO	☐

35. If the circumstances arose, would you be willing to serve in any of these capacities in the future?

on the District advisory committee	YES	☐	NO	☐
on the works committee	YES	☐	NO	☐
as shop steward	YES	☐	NO	☐

36. What do you think are the results of the present system of advisory committees and policy of joint consultation? In other words, who gains from it, if anybody?

Both management and workers gain equally	☐
Both gain, but management most	☐
Makes no difference	☐
Management gain, workers lose	☐
Workers gain, management lose	☐
Both lose	☐
Don't know	☐

37. How would you feel if the Board decided to give up its present system of consultation through advisory committees?

Very badly.

☐

Quite badly

☐

Wouldn't mind all that much

☐

Wouldn't mind at all

☐

Be pleased

☐

38. How long have you been a member of your union? _____

34. Could you indicate how you think the following sorts of decisions should be taken if they arose?

PLEASE TICK

	This is a management matter	We should be asked our views, but it is up to management.	There should be negotia- tions but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead.	There should be negotia- tions - no action till agreement.	This is a matter on which man- agement should ac- cept what we say.
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To introduce new working methods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To introduce work study methods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To discharge workers no longer needed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To change the method of payment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To alter starting and stopping times	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To alter works rules so as to change dis- ciplinary proceedings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To set up new pro- cedures to deal with absenteeism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To dismiss an indi- vidual or group for disciplinary reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

41. There are lots of different ways which people have suggested for giving workers some sort of say in what goes on in their job or workplace. Please could you indicate what you think of each of these.

PLEASE TICK

	Very good idea	Quite a good idea	The idea's all right but it wouldn't work	In- different	Bad idea	Very bad idea
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Allowing you and your workmates to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst yourselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workers sharing in profits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Budget in 1973 proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workers taking over firms and running them themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

E
S
N

C/25

Thank you very much for your help in filling in this questionnaire. If there are any comments you would like to add, on the questionnaire itself or on any of the issues it covers, we would be grateful if you would write them below.

APPENDIX D

MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE*

*This schedule is a composite of those used in the three different organizations. Where questions used differ significantly I have included the different versions and indicated by use of letters in the margin in which organization the question was used:

W = Weldrill

E = Epoch

N = Natco

Where no letter appears, the same question was used in all three.

NOTE:

AS THE FOLLOWING IS A COMPOSITE, NUMBERS OF QUESTIONS ARE NOT ALWAYS SEQUENTIAL

D/2

I - BACKGROUND

1. Were you born in this area (i.e. Co. Durham, or Teesside Region)?

YES

☐

PLEASE

NO

☐

TICK

2. How far away from work do you live?

Within 2 miles

☐

2 - 10 miles

☐

Over 10 miles

☐

PLEASE

TICK

3. Age

25 or less

☐

26-40

☐

41-55

☐

56 or over

☐

PLEASE

TICK

4. Marital Status:

Single

☐

Married

☐

PLEASE

Separated or Widowed or Divorced

☐

TICK

5. How many (if any) children do you have that are still dependents
(i.e. they haven't started work yet, so you still have to support them)? _____

6. How old were you when you left full-time education? _____

7. Please detail any qualifications held (including numbers only of 'O' level or equivalent and 'A' level or equivalent; and any professional qualifications, degree etc.).

8. Have you attended any other sort of educational or training courses since you left full-time education? (e.g. Government Re-training centres, night school etc)

YES ☐ PLEASE
NO ☐ TICK

If 'YES', what, if any, qualifications did you get from the course(s)?

9. Please could you briefly describe what other sorts of work you've done before you started this job?

10. What sort of work does your father do/did he last do (if retired or deceased)?

Was this his usual type of work? YES ☐ PLEASE
NO ☐ TICK

If 'NO', What sort of work is/was he generally engaged on? -----

II - YOUR OWN JOB

11. What is the official title of the job you now have? _____

W

12. How long have you been here
 (in Weldrill)?

Under 1 year ☐
 1-5 years ☐
 6-10 years ☐
 Over 10 years ☐

PLEASE
 TICK

W

12. How long have you been with
 Epoch?

under 1 year ☐
 1 - 5 years ☐
 6 - 10 years ☐
 11 - 20 years ☐
 over 20 years ☐

PLEASE
 TICK

E

11. How long have you been working in the Natco industry?

under 3 years

☐

3-10 years

☐

10-25 years

☐

over 25 years

☐

PLEASE
 TICK

N

13. We'd like to find out how satisfied you are with the following aspects of your present job. Could you please think about each one and put a tick in the box which best expresses your feeling on that particular matter?

	Very satisfied	Reason- ably satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dis- satisfied	Rather dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied
How you get on with your superiors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job Security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pen- sion, social facilities, etc)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The friendliness of the people you work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The hours of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Convenience for getting to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Overall then, how satisfied would you say you are with your present job?

	Very satisfied	Reason- ably satisfied	Neither nor dis- satisfied	Rather dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied
PLEASE TICK	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. Now we'd like you to imagine that you are looking around for a job. If you were in that position, and were trying to weigh up a job, how important would the things listed below be to you in making the decision on whether to take the job or not? (As in Q.12, please tick for each thing - 'How you get on with your superiors', 'Job security', etc. - in the column with the heading which best expresses your view).

W

	Very impor- -tant	Above average impor- -tance	Average impor- -tance	Below average impor- -tance	Not impor- -tant at all
How you get on with your superiors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pensions, social facilities etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The hours of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Convenience of getting to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job you're doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you think there is something of importance to you missed out of this list, please say what it is: _____

	Absolutely crucial & decisive	Very impor- tant	Fairly impor- tant	Not all that impor- tant	Not im- portant at all
How you would get on with your superiors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
E Fringe benefits (sick pay, pen- sions, social facilities etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
& The opportunity to get on with your own work in your own way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
N The hours of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Convenience of getting to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job you'd be doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

If you think there is something of importance to you missed out of this list,
please say what it is: _____

16. What, if any, improvements would you like to see in your present job?

17(a) How do you think this firm rates as an employer for people of your grade compared with others in the area?

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

One of the best
in the area

☐

Above
average

☐

Average

☐

Below
average

☐

One of the worst
in the area

☐

(b) Possibly you may regard other firms in this industry as a more relevant comparison for you. How would you say EPOCH rate in this respect?

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

E

One of the best
in the industry

☐

Above
average

☐

Average

☐

Below
average

☐

One of the worst
in the industry

☐

III-YOUR THOUGHTS ON OPERATORS' JOBS

Now we'd like to ask you some questions about what you think the position of operators is at Southbank in relation to their jobs.

18. Firstly, please could you indicate whether you think operators are 'pretty satisfied', 'rather dissatisfied' or 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with each of the items below?

	Operators pretty satis- fied with	Operators rather dis- satisfied with	Operators neither satis- fied nor dis- satisfied
How they get on with management	☐	☐	☐
Job security	☐	☐	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job is	☐	☐	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pen- sion, social facilities, etc)	☐	☐	☐
The friendliness of the people they work with	☐	☐	☐
The opportunity to get on with their own work in their own way	☐	☐	☐
The hours of work	☐	☐	☐
Convenience for getting to work	☐	☐	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐	☐	☐
Promotion chances	☐	☐	☐
Working conditions	☐	☐	☐
Pay	☐	☐	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐	☐	☐
Trade union effectiveness	☐	☐	☐
The standing or prestige of the job they are doing	☐	☐	☐

(The term 'operators' was specific to Epoch. For Weldrill and Natco read 'manual workers').

19. We'd like you to try and pick out from the following list of items those which you think would be most important to operators in general if they were weighing up a job elsewhere to decide on whether to take it or not. Indicate by putting '1' next to the item you think would be most important to them, '2' beside the second most important, and so on up to 5 items only.

How they would get on with management	☐
Job security	☐
How interesting and worthwhile the job would be	☐
Fringe benefits (sick pay, pension, social facilities, etc.)	☐
The friendliness of the people they work with	☐
The opportunity to get on with their own work in their own way	☐
The hours of work	☐
Convenience for getting to work	☐
The chance of a say in running the firm	☐
Promotion chances	☐
Working conditions	☐
Pay	☐
The skill needed in the job	☐
Trade union effectiveness	☐
The standing or prestige of the job they would be doing	☐

20. Overall then, how satisfied would you say they are with their present jobs?

	Very satisfied	Reason- ably satisfied	Neither nor dis- satisfied	Rather dis- satisfied	Very dis- satisfied
PLEASE TICK	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. How do you think this firm rates as an employer for operators compared with others in the area?

(For Weldrill and Natco read 'manual workers')

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

One of the best in the area	Above average	Average	Below average	One of the worst in the area
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. How far do you think the*management at ***** are in touch with the needs of the operators?

Very closely in touch ☐

Reasonably in touch ☐

Not very well in touch ☐

Not in touch at all ☐

PLEASE TICK

* (For N read "management in this area")

IV - GENERAL OPINIONS

23. Here are some statements which have been made about industry. Please tick the appropriate column for each statement, to indicate how far you agree or disagree with it.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Most decisions taken by foremen and supervisors would be better taken by the workers themselves .	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Most management have the welfare of their workers at heart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Managers know what's best for the firm, and workers should do just what they are told	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Giving workers more say in the running of their firms would only make things worse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Industry should pay its profits to workers and not to shareholders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strikes are irresponsible and against the national interest, and all efforts must be made to put a stop to them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The worker should always be loyal to his firm, even if this means putting himself out quite a bit.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. Now some statements about the position of operators and shop floor employees in the country as a whole. Once again, please tick the column which indicates how far you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
In this country there is not enough opportunity for people from the shop floor to get promoted and get ahead.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workers need stronger trade unions to fight for their interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Management should let people organise their own work in their own way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People on the shop floor have no opportunity to use their real abilities at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To get a decent wage, workers have to ruin their social life by working much too long on overtime or shifts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nowadays managements treat people just as numbers and never as human beings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working men should always have the right to withdraw their labour, as it's sometimes the only way they can get a fair deal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. Would you please indicate which of the following statements you agree with closest?

- (1) No one group really runs things in this country. Important decisions about national policy are made by a lot of little groups (such as unions, business, religious and educational groups etc.). These groups influence both parties but no single group can dictate to the others. ☐
- (2) A small group of men at the top really runs the government in this country. They are the heads of the biggest business corporations, the top civil servants and the top men of the party in power. ☐
- (3) It's really big business that runs the government in this country. It controls the policies of both parties. ☐
- (4) The trade unions are the group with the most power in this country. ☐
- (5) The ordinary people have the real power because the leaders have to answer to them in the end. ☐

PLEASE
TICK

If you can't agree with any of these choices, then please describe in the space below the people who you think run the country. (If you think that it's some combination of the choices given, then describe your view, even if you have ticked against one of the statements as the one you are in closest agreement with.)

26. Productivity bargaining seems to have become one of the key phrases in negotiations for wages in the last few years. Who do you think benefits on the whole from productivity agreements?

- Company only ☐
- Worker only ☐
- Both, but company most ☐
- Both, but worker most ☐
- Both equally ☐
- Nobody ☐

PLEASE
TICK

27. 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

☐

PLEASE
TICK

Agree because managers and men have the same interests in everything that matters

☐

Disagree, because workers and managers are basically on opposite sides

☐

V - INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY

28. 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?

29. Do you feel that you personally have enough say in decisions made at your place of work, or would you like to have more say in them? (Please tick where appropriate. If you would like to have more say at both levels described, please put a tick against both.)

W

I would like to have more say in decisions
that directly concern my own work and
working conditions.

☐

I would like to have more say in decisions
that concern the management of the whole
company.

☐

I have no special interest in more say
at either level

☐

Any further or more detailed comment:

29. Do you feel that you personally have enough say in decisions made at your place of work, or would you like to have more say in some way?

I would like to have more say ONLY in decisions concerning my own work and working conditions

☐

I would like to have more say ONLY in decisions concerning the management of the company as a whole

☐

I would like to have more say at BOTH levels (on my work and at the whole-company level)

☐

I have no special interest in more say at either level

☐

PLEASE
TICK
ONE BOX

E
&
N

HOW WE'D LIKE TO FIND OUT IN MORE DETAIL HOW MUCH SAY YOU FEEL YOU HAVE IN CERTAIN MATTERS.

30. How much influence do you feel you and people at your level or grade in the company have in ***** over the following issues:

	PLEASE TICK	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None
(a)	General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b)	Disciplinary matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c)	Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d)	Organisation of your own work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e)	Job evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f)	Methods of payment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g)	Rate of pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h)	Purchases of new machinery or equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(i)	Decisions on Promotions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

31. How much influence would you and people at your level or grade in the company ideally like to have over these issues?

	PLEASE TICK	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None
(a)	General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b)	Disciplinary matters	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c)	Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d)	Organisation of your own work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e)	Job evaluation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f)	Methods of payment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g)	Rate of pay	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h)	Purchase of new machinery or equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(i)	Decisions on Promotions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

32. How much influence do you think the operators (as a group or through their Trade Union branch) have over the following issues?

	PLEASE TICK	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Very little	None
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Disciplinary matters		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) Organisation of their own work		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) Fixing of work standards, flexibility etc.		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) Methods of payment (e.g. T.O.I.L./ paid overtime; monthly or weekly payment etc.)		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g) Rate of pay		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h) Purchases of new machinery or equipment		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(i) Allocation of overtime		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(j) Safety matters		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

(For questions 32 and 33 please note that for 'operators' (Epoch) read 'manual workers' (Weldrill, Natco), and on item (f) other examples of payment systems given for Weldrill and Natco)

33. Are there any issues on which you think the operators should have more, or less, influence?

	PLEASE TICK	They should have more influence over	They should have less influence over	They should keep about the same amount of influence
(a) General facilities (canteens, toilets, social club, etc.)		☐	☐	☐
(b) Disciplinary matters		☐	☐	☐
(c) Who gets laid off if redundancies are necessary		☐	☐	☐
(d) Organisation of their own work		☐	☐	☐
(e) Fixing of work standards, flexibility etc.		☐	☐	☐
(f) Methods of payment (e.g. T.O.I.L./paid overtime; monthly or weekly payment etc.)		☐	☐	☐
(g) Rate of pay		☐	☐	☐
(h) Purchase of new machinery or equipment		☐	☐	☐
(i) Allocation of overtime		☐	☐	☐
(j) Safety matters		☐	☐	☐

34. With what group or groups do you feel the real power lies in Southbank ... with Epoch HQ, Southbank management, the unions, supervisors, operators, or where?

(W- no examples of groups given)-----

(N- different groups identified including 'government')-----

35. Weld-all company philosophy is that one essential necessity for the running of the firm is 'a unity of purpose for the common interest' (Company Rule Book). How far do you think the way management acts here achieves this unity?

	It achieves it completely	It usually achieves it	It achieves it about $\frac{1}{2}$ the time	It rarely achieves it	It never achieves it	PLEASE TICK
W	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	

If you think it doesn't achieve it completely, in what areas, and in what ways, does it fail?

36. Could you please try to explain in more detail what you think the company's philosophy is, and indicate what you think are its strengths and weaknesses?

W

37. What do you think are the results of this management approach and philosophy?
In other words, who gains from it, if anybody?

W

Both management and workers gain equally

☐

Both gain, but management most

☐

Both gain, but workers most

☐

Makes no difference

☐

Management gain, workers lose

☐

Workers gain, management lose

☐

Both lose

☐

Don't know

☐

PLEASE TICK

38. How would you feel if the management decided to give up its present philosophy and approach as described in the rule book?

W

Very badly

☐

Quite badly

☐

Wouldn't mind all that much

☐

Wouldn't mind at all

☐

Be pleased

☐

PLEASE TICK

35. An Epoch company philosophy was drawn up in the 1960s, based on 'joint optimisation' (which means that for all problems the best result will be achieved by a balanced solution to both technological and human needs). It involves various aims, including the two quoted below. We'd like you to tell us how far you think each of these aims has been achieved in Riverside. (The quotes are from Company philosophy statements.)

- (a) One aim is '... creating conditions in which employees at all levels will be encouraged and enabled to develop and to realise their potentialities ...'

How far do you think this has been achieved?

Completely	☐
To a very large extent	☐
To a fair extent	☐
Not very far	☐
Not at all	☐

PLEASE
TICK

- (b) 'People ... must feel that the company's objectives are worthwhile, and the sort of objectives they are willing to commit themselves to.'

How far do you think this has been achieved?

Completely	☐
To a very large extent	☐
To a fair extent	☐
Not very far	☐
Not at all	☐

36. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the company philosophy?

Consultation

37. (a) Have you ever served on any of the consultative committees at Southbank
(on safety or particular issues)?

E. YES ☐ PLEASE
NO ☐ TICK

(b) Would you be happy to serve on any such committees in the future?

YES ☐ PLEASE
NO ☐ TICK

(c) How adequate do you think the amount of consultation by management
with employees is at Southbank?

Very adequate ☐
Reasonably adequate ☐ PLEASE
A bit inadequate ☐ TICK
Very inadequate ☐
Don't know ☐

38. What do you think are generally the results of the Shell company approach
on participation? In other words, who gains from it, if anybody?

E. Both management and workers gain equally ☐
Both gain, but management most ☐
Both gain, but workers most ☐
Makes no difference ☐
Management gain, workers lose ☐
Workers gain, management lose ☐
Both lose ☐
Don't know ☐

39. How would you feel if the management decided to give up its present philosophy and approach (as described in the Company Statement of Objectives and Philosophy)?

	Very badly	☐	
	Quite badly	☐	
<u>E</u>	Wouldn't mind all that much	☐	PLEASE
	Wouldn't mind at all	☐	TICK
	Be pleased	☐	

35. How effective do you think the existing advisory committee system is in dealing with 'matters of common interest'?

	Very effective	☐	
	reasonably effective	☐	
<u>N</u>	not very effective	☐	PLEASE
	not effective at all	☐	TICK
	don't know	☐	

36. How effective do you think the existing works committee system (i.e. the local negotiating machinery) is in dealing with matters for negotiation?

	very effective	☐	
	reasonably effective	☐	
<u>N</u>	not very effective	☐	PLEASE
	not effective at all	☐	TICK
	don't know	☐	

37. Which do you think is the most important for the interests of manual staff; the advisory (consultative) committees, or the works (negotiating) committees?

	advisory committees	☐	
<u>N</u>	works committees	☐	PLEASE
	they're equally important	☐	TICK
	don't know	☐	

38. One issue which has been under consideration for a long time is whether the advisory and works committees should be kept separate (dealing with areas of common and conflicting interest respectively) or whether they should be merged. What do you think?

N the two should be merged ☐

 the two should be kept separate ☐ PLEASE

 don't know ☐ TICK

39. During the time you've worked in the Natco Industry, have you ever served:

N On a District Advisory committee? YES ☐ NO ☐ PLEASE

 on the works committee? YES ☐ NO ☐ TICK

40. If the circumstances arose, would you be happy to serve in any of these capacities in the future?

N on the District advisory committee YES ☐ NO ☐ PLEASE

 on the works committee YES ☐ NO ☐ TICK

41. What do you think are the results of the present system of advisory committees and policy of joint consultation? In other words, who gains from it, if anybody?

N Both management and workers gain equally ☐

 Both gain, but management most ☐

 Makes no difference ☐

 Management gain, workers lose ☐ PLEASE

 Workers gain, management lose ☐ TICK

 Both lose ☐

 Don't know ☐

42. How would you feel if the Board decided to give up its present system of consultation, through advisory committees?

N

Very badly

☐

Quite badly

☐

Wouldn't mind all that much

☐

Wouldn't mind at all

☐

Be pleased

☐

40. How important do you think it is for a worker to be a member of a trade union?

Very important

☐

Fairly important

☐

Not very important

☐

Not important at all

☐

PLEASE
TICK

41. What useful purposes, if any, do you think Trade Unions serve?

What other purposes do you think they could and should serve, if any?

0/27

42. Could you indicate how you think the following sorts of decisions should be taken if they arose?

PLEASE TICK

	This is a management matter	The unions should be asked their views, but, it is up to manage- ment.	There should be negotia- tions but if no agreement is reached, management should go ahead.	There should be negotia- tions - no action till agreement.	This is a matter on which man- agement should ac- cept what the unions say.
To allocate profits between investments, dividends, reserves, wages, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To introduce new working methods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To introduce work study methods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To discharge workers no longer needed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To change the method of payment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To introduce a pension scheme or modify existing scheme	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To alter starting and stopping times	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To alter works rules so as to change dis- ciplinary proceedings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To set up new pro- cedures to deal with absenteeism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To dismiss an indi- vidual or group for disciplinary reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

43. There are lots of different ways which people have suggested for giving workers some sort of say in what goes on in their job or workplace. Please could you indicate what you think of each of these.

PLEASE TICK

	Very good idea	Quite a good idea	The idea's all right but it wouldn't work	In- different	Bad idea	Very bad idea
'Job enrichment' - restructuring jobs to make them more challenging and satisfying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having elected representatives on a works council which can discuss decisions with management.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having elected representatives on the Board of Directors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Allowing operators to decide how to do things, and who does which particular job, amongst themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Extending present collective bargaining machinery to cover more and more issues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workers sharing in profits	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Budget in 1973 proposed a scheme of enabling workers to buy shares at less than their full price. The Chancellor said this would enable "all employees to acquire a real stake in their company". What do you think of that idea?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Workers taking over firms and running them themselves.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you very much for your help in filling in this questionnaire. If there are any comments you would like to add, on the questionnaire itself or on any of the issues it covers, we would be grateful if you would write them below.

