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Character and Work in America*

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What is the relationship between our work and the kind of people we are becoming? How can work be reconstructed to further healthy character development in America today?

Theory and Concepts

Work, as experienced by the worker, is not merely a specific task or set of tasks, nor is it merely a role to be acted out. Both task and role help define, constrain, and stimulate the worker's participa-

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tion in the work-place subculture, with its particular traditions, rules, and rights. In the cultural system of each work place, work must be described in terms of the worker's relationship to technology, authority, coworkers, capital, profit, and product. These relationships are mainly influenced by the nature of the social system and the market in which the work culture is embedded, and by the type of product made.

At one extreme of work cultures is the hierarchically and mechanically organized factory or office where the work system has been constructed to maximize job simplicity and minimize the worker's freedom to make decisions, thus making him a replaceable standardized part in a machine. Furthermore, his rights to free speech and privacy are limited and in a dispute with management, he is considered guilty until proved innocent. In this cultural system, authority commands and subordinates are expected to obey. Even the work pace may be so controlled that workers must obey the dictates of machines. Relations to coworkers are largely determined by technical demands programmed into the division of labor. Typically, on the lower levels a worker does not control or own any part of the capital; only on the managerial levels do some workers own stock and share in the profits and decisions affecting their work. Few, if any, workers have a say in how profits will be used and for what purpose, and the workers have no influence in determining the kinds of products they make.

At the other extreme of American work cultures is the self-employed craftsman or professional owning his own time and with greater freedom to develop his own projects within the limitations set by the market on the one hand, and his talents and entrepreneurial skills on the other. The self-employed worker must relate to others—buyers, sellers, subcontractors, etc.—in ways that require shrewdness and skill and cannot be programmed. He typically owns his own capital (tools, equipment, etc.) although he may also rent and have to shoulder debts. If there are profits, he decides how they will be used and to what end. He can decide what products he will or will not make and what services he will or will



not perform. Thus, while the self-employed individual might perform some of the same tasks as the employee of an organization, in the larger sense of the work culture, his work is different.

These differences are particularly important for individual psychology, or *character*, which refers to emotional attitudes or deep-rooted impulses that determine what deeply satisfies or annoys an individual; what he finds attractive, exciting, or frustrating; and how he relates to himself and to others. Character is expressed in behavior; however, very similar behavior may be rooted in different character traits. For example, two individuals refuse to work at a certain mechanized job. On the surface, they seem alike, but underneath they are very different. One person may be passive and self-indulgent; he lacks interest in work in general. The second is a craftsman and an independent person. His refusal to work comes from a deep resentment at being forced into a mold and treated as a machine part. To the outside observer, the behavior of both men may seem the same. But the similarity of their behavior conceals the underlying difference in the character systems of the two men, a difference which is significant for analyzing and responding to problems of work in America.

In considering questions of work and character in terms of large groups rather than individuals, we use the concept of *social character*, that is, the character structure common to most members of groups or even classes in a given society.¹ Social character does not refer to the complete, and highly individualized, in fact, unique, character structure as it exists in an *individual*, but to a "character matrix," a syndrome of character traits shared by a particular group and usually adapted to their common economic, social, and cultural conditions.² Indeed, some idea of social character has long been pointed to in the popular American belief about farmers, that the organization of the family and the work that is done on family farms tends to develop a

1. The concept of *social character* was developed by Erich Fromm in a number of books. See, for example, *The Sane Society* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1955).

2. The social character may not be adaptive when conditions change rapidly, causing a "character lag."

rooted, responsible, and craftsmanlike character who is not afraid to stand up for his convictions. However, it is not so commonly understood that *all* types of work stimulate or reinforce character traits and often play a decisive role in molding individual and social character, for better or worse.³

To understand how the modern work place with its complicated division of labor selects and molds character, we use the concept of *psychostructure*. Psychostructural analysis focuses on the interrelationship between work and character in an organization. It describes the character types required on different levels by a particular work structure, for example, what kind of people make it to the top and what kind stay on the bottom. Thus, large organizations or bureaucracies tend to select and develop different character types for lower-level workers, middle managers, and top executives.⁴ The psychostructure itself may be either pyramidal and authoritarian, or more egalitarian and participative; its shape is determined by a combination of factors, particularly the type of product produced, the method of production, and the kinds of rights and responsibilities built into the structure.

The kind of work a person does may fit his character and thus be satisfying or it may clash with character, thus causing dissatisfaction and suffering.⁵ What happens when character is *maladapted* to

3. Of course, the mode of work is not the only important cultural influence in character formation. History, climate, ideals, traditions, schooling, current prestigious models as shown in the media, and family all play important roles. Still, several factors point to modes of work as the decisive influence on character development even before individuals enter the work force. For a discussion of these factors, see Erich Fromm and Michael Maccoby, *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

4. For example, see M. Maccoby's description of the different roles for "craftsmen," "company men," "gamesmen," and "jungle fighters" in electronics corporations (" 'Winning' and 'Losing' at Work," *Spectrum*, July 1973).

5. While some individuals may be satisfied merely by earning a decent income at work, for others work must fulfill the need for the exercise of special abilities or the realization of a vocation, and it must contribute to maintaining and/or enhancing life in the community. Thus "job satisfaction" occurs when the worker's character fits the requirements of his work. "Satisfaction," therefore, says nothing either about the intrinsic nature of the work nor its long-term effects on the worker's health and emotional development.



work? There is abundant evidence that the loss of "satisfying" work may result in emotional and/or physical symptoms of illness, particularly depression. This phenomenon can occur on the level of a whole society, when many people lose satisfying work.⁶ How many Americans with the character of craftsmen, farmers, or small shopkeepers suffer such a fate today, lacking a fit between their needs and the available work? Although there is no census data to answer this question, many workers testify to the depressing loss of farm and craft work and the forced acceptance of more mechanized work.

This conceptual framework prepares us to ask more specific questions about work and character in America.

1. What kinds of character traits are being selected and developed by the work people do in America today? How are the economy and job market changing? What are the dominant psychostructures, and what character types are they developing?

2. Is the character of the work force in tune with the requirements of the available work; that is, do the workers want to do what they have to do to keep the institutions of work running smoothly? Or does their character conflict with the requirements of work as it is now organized in many companies? To put it another way, given the prevalent work structures, does the psychology of the workers constitute social cement or social dynamite?

To study these questions fully would require detailed strategic research on social character and social organization in a number of key industries.⁷ Lacking such knowledge, we must depend on

6. Erik Erikson has described how the Sioux Indian lost his sense of identity and dignity as first a hunter and then a rancher. He writes that once the Sioux' cattle were taken from him, "He could become a sedentary farmer, only at the price of being a sick man, on bad land" (Erik A. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* [2nd ed.; New York: Norton, 1963], p. 154). Having lost the chance for work that he was raised to do and which fit his character, the result was illness and deep resentment against the society which deprived him of work which he could do wholeheartedly. The will to work also disappeared in the East African Bemba when they were forbidden by the British to continue hunting and warfare. See Audrey I. Richards, *Land, Labor, and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (London, Oxford Press, 1939).

7. Such studies might be based on the social psychoanalytic theory of character as developed by Erich Fromm and methods of understanding social character as developed by Fromm and Maccoby (*Social Character in a Mexican Village*, Englewood

observations, reports, census data, and other statistics for useful information on certain trends in the workforce that are likely to have a direct relationship to the character traits required by work.

The Independent Character

The relation of work and character in America also offers rich possibilities for studying many different character types, focusing on regional and cultural differences. Given requirements of space, we have chosen to limit our discussion and to concentrate first on the character trait of independence. Since any character trait is fully understood only in its structural relationships, a discussion of independence also requires consideration of other character traits. Even so, there are three reasons why we choose to concentrate on independence. First, independence of mind and heart is a sign of general health and activeness. Second, the majority of Americans have long valued independence, at least in part because the colonists and pioneers had to be relatively independent people, to tear up their roots and face the unknown, and start new settlements in the frontier.⁸ Third, we believe that a just society requires people who are both cooperative and independent, and we are concerned that present-day work institutions tend to form egocentric and dependent people who are neither emotionally healthy nor good citizens.

Americans like to think of themselves as an independent people self-reliant, individualistic, and to a degree anarchistic. The republic was founded by farmers, craftsmen, proprietors, and professionals, and our form of democracy is rooted in the belief that there are

Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970). A group of us, directed by Maccoby, are now doing a study of work in corporations at the forefront of advanced technology, and of workers in an auto parts factory, developing methods of understanding workplace psychostructures that can then be applied to other industries and occupational sectors. See Michael Maccoby et al., *The Corporate Individual* (in preparation); see also his "Winning' and 'Losing' at Work," *Spectrum*, July 1973.

8. This was not the case for blacks brought to this country as slaves.



enough independent Americans to stand up against demagogues and would-be dictators. Even though this belief has been battered by recent social psychology, from *White Collar* and *The Same Society* to *The Lonely Crowd* and *The Organization Man*,⁹ and shaken by increasing submissiveness by Americans to the state and large corporations, the value is so strong that it sometimes spurs us to reaffirm our independence.

Before analyzing the social basis of independence, we should stop and consider the various meanings of the concept in the American past and present. Like any character trait, the meanings of "independence" may vary according to the total character structure of an individual, and these meanings imply different social outcomes. For the crusty farmer or backwoodsman, independence meant obstinacy, suspiciousness, and uncooperativeness as well as self-reliance. For the promoters and hustlers, "independence" meant being a lone wolf with the freedom to exploit others. As David Riesman points out in *The Lonely Crowd*, many Americans of the nineteenth century were independent of pressure from others because they obeyed the internalized dictates of idealized parents. Such individuals were likely to be emotionally childish and rigidly authoritarian. Thus, their independence was bought at the expense of compulsive submission to the past and resulted in limiting the independence of others under them. Moving to the present, "independence" for the organizational careerist means absence of loyalty and willingness to sell oneself to the highest bidder, but it seldom means critical thought or courage in opposing irrational power. The careerist is likely to ingratiate himself with the boss or hide from moral questions by stressing that his knowledge is limited to technical questions, or that he is not responsible for the policies of his organization or superiors, which he is bound to follow.

9. See David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950); Fromm, *The Same Society*; William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956); and C. W. Mills, *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951).

In contrast, there were more attractive types of American "individualists": the responsible businessmen-entrepreneurs who created new industry on the basis of ingenuity and paternalistic principles; the craftsmen who struggled against the growing power of large industry as late as the 1880s, so that they could continue to organize their own work, promotions, wages, and contracts;¹⁰ and the naturalists like Thoreau and Rachel Carson whose nonconforming independence was combined with a reverence for life.

Today, longings for an ideal of independence persist in fantasies, movies, and fiction, and may emotionally support jungle-fighting careerism rather than healthier forms of independence. For example, many detectives on TV—such as Mannix, Cannon and Banacek—express the public's longing for independence as private operatives rather than employees of an agency. The desire for independence is also projected in the image of the astronaut, the newest model for the young. In an attempt to assimilate him to the old heroic mold, schoolteachers often compare the spaceman to earlier explorers such as Columbus and Magellan. Although both twentieth-century astronaut and fifteenth-century seafarer share traits of competence and courage, structurally they are poles apart. The early explorers were rugged individualists who overcame superstition, setting out in largely untested craft to confront unforeseen weather conditions and unknown cultures. There was no Mission Control back in Madrid. The astronauts are parts of a highly technological, intricate, and centrally controlled machine. The fewer the unknowns and the less decisions they have to make, the more successful the project for the team as a whole.

The popularity of the best-selling *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*¹¹ also attests to the American longing for independence. In this story, the nonconformist seagull gives up the flock's philosophy of life—that

10. See David Montgomery, "Trade Union Practice and the Origins of Syndicalist Theory in the United States" (unpublished paper, Columbia University seminar on American civilization, 1972).

11. Richard Bach, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull, a Story* (New York: Macmillan, 1970). This book also appeals to a longing for more spiritual development, but in fact supports the illusion that technical proficiency leads to a greater capacity for love.



life and flight serve only to find food—in favor of perfecting his ability to fly. His flight is a symbol of freedom for many people, although ironically, the model of virtue presented by the book, that is, to develop one's technical abilities to the fullest and then teach others, is a philosophy most appropriate not to the self-employed, but to professors in large universities and managers of high-technology corporations.

Psychological independence in all but the most exceptional cases requires roots in one's way of making a living. The traditional material basis of independence in America has been ownership of property or of skills that made a person self-supporting. The farmer, small shopkeeper, or craftsman could speak his mind, hold his ground, and even choose dignity over profit because he had no boss to threaten him.¹² So attractive is the ideal of self-employment as a basis for independence that many Americans cling to the belief that the hardworking individual, if he has a little capital or a craft, can always make a go of it in business by himself. According to this view, if one feels locked into an organization it is due to his lack of get-up-and-go. This belief soothes the conscience of those who see no need to improve the quality of work in organizations, and it also sustains workers who accept unfulfilling work because they hope someday to set up their own shops.

Do people really enjoy their independence, or is it merely the idea that is attractive? To answer this question, we examined a detailed analysis of the 1969 national *Survey of Working Conditions* in terms of the relationship between self-employment and job satisfaction. Here we found that self-employed individuals were much more satisfied with their work than were wage-and-salary workers, in

12. Many small shopkeepers seek profit as the first priority, but this may in part be due to the extreme competition from chain stores, so that the small businessman must struggle to stay solvent. In less industrialized countries, such as Mexico, where there is less of such pressure, small shopkeepers sometimes take pleasure in refusing to sell their goods to rude or overbearing clients. Sometimes this attitude is abused, by its justification of racial discrimination. However, it contrasts sharply with the employee of a large chain—such as Sears or Safeway—who is paid to maximize profit, not to exercise his sense of dignity.

terms of four factors: the opportunity to develop their special abilities; the freedom to decide how to do their work; the opportunity to see the results of their work; and the chance to do work they found interesting.¹³

In view of the value placed on independence and the greater work satisfaction of the self-employed, it is important to examine the prevalent belief in the possibility of self-employment and determine whether it is based on reality or wish-fulfillment. How possible is it for people to be self-employed in America today?

Statistics on the Work Force and the Economy

What do the statistics tell us about the possibilities for independence in work in America today?¹⁴ The available data shed light on this question in two ways: First, there are figures on *self-employment* vs. wage-and-salary employment. These data will

13. It might be argued that such satisfaction is really the result of higher income, since the self-employed tend to be richer than wage and salary workers, and we know that income is positively correlated with job satisfaction. To test this hypothesis, we statistically separated the factor of income from employment status. The results of this analysis, done for us by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan, showed that job satisfaction, in terms of the four items mentioned above, is almost as much a result of self-employment as it is of income. The small independent plumber or storekeeper is thus more likely to be satisfied with his work than the corporate manager or government employee making the same amount of money.

A dramatic example of men who prefer self-employment to increased income is a group of southwestern ranchers who refuse to sell out to rich businessmen looking for an attractive tax loss. Even when these ranchers are offered sums that could earn them annual interest higher than their average income, they still turn down the deal. See Thomas J. Mahoney, "The Past as Future, or The View from Marlboro Country" (Paper presented at CIDOC, Cuernavaca, Mexico, 1972. mimeographed).

14. When we began, we thought that statistics would be available from the census and other sources to study how much independence and autonomy is generally possible in work for Americans today and how this has changed over the years. To study this we hoped to compare various occupations in terms of whether people in these occupations work mainly in small or in large establishments. Unfortunately, such precise statistics do not yet exist. We have, therefore, had to use less exact figures, which in some cases are more suggestive than conclusive, but which nonetheless indicate certain tendencies.



tell us something about the degree of autonomy and independence available today because a self-employed person has no boss to account to, and is in that sense free to work when and how he sees fit, and he cannot be fired. Second, there are figures on the employee *size of establishment* in various industry sectors. These data show more directly the degree of bureaucratization likely in the work place, since a large enterprise has more need for coordination and tends to develop standardized procedures and paperwork, which can often restrict individual autonomy and initiative.

Looking at the figures on self-employment, we see that by 1950 only 18 percent of all employed persons were self-employed. This shrunk to 14 percent in 1960 and to 9 percent in 1970. In contrast, considering persons receiving a wage or salary from all sources, private or governmental, we find that in 1950, 80 percent of all employed persons were wage-and-salary workers. By 1960 this proportion increased to 84 percent and in 1970 to 90 percent.¹⁵ In the early nineteenth century, it was only about 20 percent.¹⁶

Considering the work force from the point of view of different occupational categories,¹⁷ we can see the same trend operating for 1950 and 1960. Self-employed farmers and farm managers dropped from 7.7 percent of employed persons in 1950 to only 3.0 percent in 1960, as farming has become a high-technology business. Managers, officials, and proprietors, the only other large occupational group that was predominantly self-employed in 1950, declined in its percentage of self-employed persons,¹⁸ from 50 percent self-employed in 1950 to only 37 percent self-employed in 1960. These two groups, self-employed farmers and proprietors, in the recent past stood at the center of our economic and social life, and provided leadership for the

15. "Employment and Earnings," U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, vol. 18, no. 8 (February 1972): 48, 150, 162-64.

16. These trends began in the 1800s and were documented and discussed by Mills in *White Collar*.

17. Figures in this section are taken from the Census of Population, "Occupational Characteristics," 1950 and 1960.

18. This shift from self-employed to salaried managers also indicates the increase in bureaucratic and corporate institutions that employ managers.

nation. Today we see them declining as a proportion of the labor force and increasingly becoming employees. It is also striking to note that by 1950, 84 percent of the nation's "craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers" were wage-and-salary workers. Together with the independent farmers and proprietors, the independent craftsmen were at the foundation of this country.

Thus, the numbers of small entrepreneurs, farmers, and independent professionals have been shrinking over the decades. More and more people have become salaried employees dependent on available jobs for their living and subject to their employers for the quality of their working life. This is a very discouraging trend if self-employment is a necessary condition for independence in work.¹⁹ What replaces self-employment? In general, the answer is increasingly: the large organization.

Industry Sectors

It is a popular conception that work in large organizations does not allow much independence and autonomy, although this is not necessarily the case. Before considering the relation between corporate size and independence, however, we need some idea of the extent of employment in large vs. small organizations.

Census of Business figures show that in the larger sectors of the work force there has been a trend toward domination of the market by an increasing number of larger establishments, corporations, and chains.

The retail trades provide an example of this trend, which is also operating in the service, wholesale, and manufacturing sectors. In retailing, the majority of establishments are still small (with 0-3 paid

19. It is becoming apparent to young people that medicine is one field in which a gifted person can still be independent, make a good living, and feel one is helping other people. Between 1961 and 1971, the number of applicants to U.S. medical schools doubled, while places for medical students increased only 50 percent. Of 29,172 candidates in 1971, only 12,361 were admitted to a medical school. David Cohen, "Pre-Med," *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, May 1973.

employees); however, the trend is toward larger businesses.²⁰ This means that small businesses become less secure. To document the degree of financial insecurity of small businesses, we tried to find exact statistics on the percentage of small businesses each year which succeed or fail. These precise figures are not available, but the Office for Planning, Research and Analysis at the Small Business Administration reports that for every nine or ten businesses that open each year, about eight go out of business. This is a discontinuance rate of about 80–90 percent and includes *small* businesses almost exclusively. One source attributed this high failure rate largely to mismanagement and inexperience in business.²¹ However, another source at the SBA reported that many proprietors go out of business in order to earn better livings as salaried employees. This seems to us the more likely reason to close down shop because today, even with experience and good management, a small retail business will succeed against the competition of chain stores only if it is particularly favored in location or if the entrepreneur is exceptionally innovative. Even then, he may be stymied by other factors.²²

20. The smallest retail businesses (1–19 paid employees) hired a lower percentage of the retail-trade work force in 1967 than it did in 1963, 1958, or 1954, while larger establishments (with 20 or more paid employees) increased in the percentage they employed, from about 44 percent in 1954 to about 51 percent in 1967. The largest establishments (50 or more paid employees) also increased in the percentage of retail trade workers they employed, from 26 percent in 1954 to 29 percent in 1967. *1963 Census of Business, Retail Trade, Summary Statistics*, vol. 1, pt. 1, table 1, pp. 3-1–3-9; and *1967 Census of Business, Retail Trade, Subject Reports*, vol. 1, table 1, pp. xxii, 3-1.

21. Dun & Bradstreet cites similar causes for failures of businesses in general, regardless of size. Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., *The Failure Record Through 1970* (New York: Dun & Bradstreet, 1971), pp. 11–12.

22. In "Main Street Goes Private," *The Nation*, 18 December 1972, Rose De Wolf describes these factors:

"First, center location is more expensive—particularly in an enclosed mall, where the merchants not only pay the costs of maintaining their own property, but share the cost of the parking lot, the clean-up, the security, the decorations, the care of the foliage, etc., for the mall.

"Further, most mall managements charge independent merchants higher rents—sometimes twice as much per square foot—as the chain stores pay. Managements prefer the chains because they advertise heavily and are thought to attract customers just by their names."

Census figures document this growing domination of the retail trade market by corporations and chain stores.²³ Other statistics indicate that *larger* businesses are increasing their share of the retail market.²⁴ And data on multiunits (chains) and single units reflect a similar trend, showing that a very small group of large chains takes a large and growing share of the retail trade market.²⁵

This trend implies that it is harder and harder for an individual entrepreneur to prosper. Although some opportunities still remain, such as in advanced technology, special services, or the leisure industries, the competition is tough. The scientist-engineer must have a brilliant idea, be able to raise enough capital, and learn how to market his product; the restaurant owner needs a special attraction or elegance, since new "greasy spoons" cannot compete with the Marriott Corporation's "Hot Shoppes."

Furthermore, character traits that used to serve a certain type of independent small businessman in the market are no longer so adaptive when he has to compete with large corporations. The willingness to work long hours and keep the store open on Sundays and holidays used to contribute to success. But what is the use of such sacrifice and durability when large chains such as Safeway decide to remain open on Sundays? In this market, self-employment becomes a realistic possibility only for the very brilliant, lucky, or entrepreneurial person, not for the average American whose work future more often centers in a large organization.

23. Between 1958 and 1963 the percentage of retail trade establishments classified as "individual proprietorships" decreased by about 5.5 percent, while "corporations" increased by about 5.5 percent. Moreover, receipts from sales of corporations were in 1963 almost 2.3 times greater than those from individual proprietorships. *1963 Census of Business, Retail Trade Summary Statistics*, pt. 1.

24. Although establishments with 50 or more paid employees comprised only .8 percent of retail establishments in 1958 and 1.2 percent in 1967, these large establishments earned 18.4 percent of retail sales in 1958 and 25.2 percent in 1967. Establishments with 100 or more paid employees comprised only .2 percent of retail trade establishments in 1958 and .36 percent in 1967, but earned 10.3 percent of total retail sales in 1958 and 13.9 percent in 1967. *1967 Census of Business, Retail Trade Subject Reports*, vol. 1, p. XXI.

25. *1963 Census of Business, Retail Trade Summary Statistics*, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 4-246; and *1967 Census of Business, Retail Trade Subject Reports*, vol. 1, p. 4-257.

The statistics testify to a domination of the market by a growing number of large corporations and fading opportunities for self-employment. If we are concerned about preserving or developing the independent character, we must face the fact that its basis in self-employment is fast disappearing, forcing many people who would prefer to be their own boss into large corporations or government bureaucracies.

These findings suggest a number of questions.

1. Presumably, people raised in families of independent farmers or craftsmen will have difficulty adapting to the organizational world. What happens when they are forced into large organizations? Is there a clash between character and work for these people?

2. Since self-employment has been disappearing for over a century, has the character of Americans been changing gradually? If so, what character type or types are being formed? Is there any hope for an independent character in a large organization?

To answer these questions, it is useful to consider the dominant types of organization in terms of their effect on character.

Character Requirements of Corporations

Modern students of organizations are paying increasing attention to objective variables that describe aspects of work structures and worker satisfaction. These variables, such as "complexity," "centralization," "span of control," "mechanization," as well as sheer size, are useful to distinguish elements of a psychostructure, but taken together they do not add up to a cultural system. To understand more fully the demands made on personality by a work organization, we must begin with more global typologies based on sociopolitical concepts.

Some of the earliest work organizations, such as galley ships, were run on the basis of naked coercion, and the earliest factories were not much better. In such organizations, an independent attitude

was a liability, and the bosses tried to break the spirit of independent workers. Even today, for many workers, factory work is coercive, experienced as the only alternative to make a decent living. Like conscripts in the army, as opposed to career soldiers, work for many workers is close to a prisonlike existence, and results in a broken spirit or alternatively, a detached attitude that helps to freeze impotent rage.

This is not the case for all workers, nor for all work organizations. One type of work organization which has been most successful in attracting a certain type of worker and gaining his loyalty is the *paternalistic* firm run by the founder or his family. In this type of firm, authority is personalized in owners who want the workers to consider themselves part of a "family" where they will be taken care of as long as they work responsibly. This type of organization appeals to character types in which the need for security is greater than the need for independence. Two subtypes of paternalism can be distinguished, positive paternalism which is relatively benevolent, and exploitative paternalism, which is not. The latter includes plantations, mines, or industries where the company provides housing and owns the store, and where the worker becomes locked in by his indebtedness.²⁶ In such organizations, little or no concern is shown for the workers' well-being, although there may be an ideology stressing the patron's interest in them. Such a psychostructure requires authoritarian and exploitative bosses and submissive, spiritually broken workers. It is noteworthy that some unions in the United States developed to protect the worker against such exploitative paternalism, one of the most recent being Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers.

Positive paternalism requires managers with a responsible and more productive character such as Robert Owen in England and P. B. Noyes in the United States. Such a psychostructure has aspects of neofeudalism. The top managers are paternalistic and responsibly

26. For an account of such a company and the workers' reaction to it, see Leon Stein and Philip Taft, *Massacre at Ludlow: Four Reports, 1914-1915* (New York: Arno Press, 1971).

concerned about the material well-being of the workers. Some of their practices are in large part determined by religious convictions.²⁷ Relationships are often personal between management and workers; the manager will listen sympathetically to the worker's problems, personally reward him for successes and punish him for "misdeeds." In contrast, the structure requires workers to be submissive and receptive, to seek security in the corporation at the expense of individual rights and personal development. Nevertheless, such security can be extremely comforting when, in times of recession or depression, paternalistic managers make every effort to keep employees on the payroll and sometimes cut their own salaries to make this possible.

While the paternalistic model is today denigrated because it maintains traditional authority and the infantilization of the many by the few, its positive aspects, contrasted to impersonal bureaucracies, are often overlooked.²⁸ For some workers as well as managers, the neofeudal roles are satisfying, since authority is personalized rather than anonymous; someone takes responsibility for decisions and their effects on people, rather than blaming the rules or the system. Furthermore, some semipaternalistic companies more than other types have been able to give a greater say in decision making to the

27. Of course, religious convictions also justified oppression of workers, meddling in their lives, firing them for smoking or drinking, even off the job.

28. For example, a Pittsburgh factory employing six hundred women in the beginning of the twentieth century was described as follows: "clean, well-ventilated, well-constructed. The stairways are marble, and on the walls are engravings of action and battle and plunging horses. . . . The girls are often summoned to the auditorium at noon to hear an address by some visitor or to sing; in this case they have an hour's recess, instead of half an hour. [Other amenities included a] roof garden for summer use . . . a natatorium, with schedule so arranged that . . . the girls may . . . swim once or twice a week after hours . . . beautifully kept dressing rooms, and a lunch room with pictures on the walls and a piano in one corner" (Elizabeth B. Butler, *Women and the Trades, Pittsburgh, 1907-1908*, The Pittsburgh Survey [New York, 1911], p. 314. Cited in Robert W. Smuts, *Women and Work in America* [New York: Schocken Books, 1971], pp. 78-79)

Another example cited by Smuts is the Willimantic (Connecticut) Thread Company. In the 1880s this company operated a clean, glass-roofed mill planted with flowers. It was set in an attractive mill village with a library for the employees' use, as well as a "mission woman" whose duties included counselling and visiting the sick, while evaluating (in order to report to the President) the condition of the employees' cottages and gardens to see whether they were being kept up to the mill's standards.

workers, because the chief executive is free to act on his humanistic inclinations and can develop a personal sense of trust with workers.²⁹ In contrast, the chief executive of a less paternalistic company must answer to directors. Since his tenure depends on his performance, personal relationships he has built up last only as long as he does. Since he does not own or control the company, the workers may well question how long that will be.³⁰

Although many old-style paternalistic companies are disappearing, some swallowed up by larger corporations and conglomerates, some newer ones still manage to survive and sometimes grow. This is

29. See the description of the American Velvet Company in Fred K. Foulkes, *Creating More Meaningful Work* (New York: American Management Association, 1969). It is notable that in companies like LaPointe and Stromberg, the Scanlon Plan of profit sharing and group decision making only lasted while owner-entrepreneurs remained in charge.

30. An exceptional example of a paternalistic corporation that has endured is Oneida, Ltd. still run by descendants of the leaders of the Oneida Community. The concern of the managers for the workers' well-being (including profit sharing, grants for building their houses, consultative management) was such that the then Metal Polishers, Buffers, Platers Brass and Silver Workers' Union of North America gave up trying to organize the workers in 1916, and the organizer wrote the following report:

"I have investigated the Oneida Community, Limited, Silverware factory with the following results: I find this company is perfectly independent of any affiliation with any of the manufacturers' organizations either in their own line or any other. They work the men short hours, give them good pay, and treat them like human beings. Consequently there is the best of good will between employer and employee. . . .

"The employees seem to be perfectly satisfied with things as they are in the factory. Therefore, I do not believe that any successful organization could be formed among them. . . .

"In fact, the company makes a study of its employees in order to give them every opportunity of having good, clean amusements and all kinds of athletics, picture shows, lectures, bowling, baseball, football, and, in fact, all kinds of outside and inside athletics and amusements that are good for any normal person.

"These are a few of the reasons for the contentment of the employees of this company. I could go on and enumerate many more, but I believe enough has been said to convince you that this company is different from any company you have ever heard of in their treatment of their employees. It is not done for advertising purposes, as a great many of our corporations do, but is simply a business policy carried out by men who put the man and woman ahead of the dollar" (Walter D. Edmonds, *The First Hundred Years, 1848-1948* [Kenwood, N.Y.: Oneida, Ltd., 1958]).

Today, the company is still run according to these principles. In contrast the Hershey Company changed radically when the owner-manager was replaced by professional management.



remarkable in itself, when we consider that for every nine or ten new businesses each year, eight others go out of business. How do a few of these manage to survive and become large corporations? The founders of successful companies are often complex men. They may be a combination of exploitative empire builder and productive builder of new products. What distinguishes them from other entrepreneurs is that they have adopted *principles* which define for themselves and others what they will do and what they will not do. These principles generally have to do with fairness, respect for individual rights, and responsiveness to the needs of those who work for them and are thus part of the "family." (Such concern, of course, does not generally encompass those outside the "family.") Such principles determine conduct in such a way that others can call these men to task if the principles are contradicted by their actions. In contrast to some more modern managers, who treat employees as objects to be used, a principled entrepreneur is able to build up trust with the workers because they can count on his principles. This results in gaining both loyalty and full productive cooperation from the workers and, naturally, it is a key element in developing a successful business.

Such paternalism becomes rarer as the large corporation takes over the market and there are fewer successful entrepreneurs. The dominant type of industrial organization is the *industrial machine*, run on mechanical principles of "efficiency," with the goal of constant growth and increasing profit. Direct authority does not reside in an owner entrepreneur or his family, but in professional managers, bureaucrats, or the representatives of capital who attempt to make the rules of authority as anonymous as possible.³¹ Their decisions are mainly based not on their own principles but on professional judgment according to diagnosis of market positions and fixed goals to optimize profit. Frederick W. Taylor's "scientific management" fits neatly into such a culture, where the goal is to so fragment and

31. Some companies are best described as mixed types, e.g., The Polaroid Corporation, built on the principles of an owner-entrepreneur, but increasingly run by professional managers.

simplify the task that the worker becomes an easily replaceable part of the machine.

In some ways, the industrial machine appears to be an advance over paternalism, since it may be more meritocratic, i.e., rules for advancement are laid down on the basis of merit and achievement rather than the favor of the boss. (Indeed, Taylor believed that his rules would be fairer than autocratic management.) On the other hand, the twin goals of efficiency and profit are ruthless to those who do not perform according to this standard, and the principle of the machine is to use up human energy, and replace the tired and the old with younger, smarter, fresher parts. This is as true for white-collar as for blue-collar workers, and the machinelike work place would be unbearable if it were not for the efforts of unions to guarantee some security for older workers and defend all workers from extreme injustice.

In industrial bureaucratic organizations, where over a long period the product does not change appreciably, a relatively static machine can be run by authoritarian autocrats on a more or less military model. The ambitious new managers coming up the ranks are likely to be domineering to subordinates and submissive to superiors. They know their duty and their place. They accept orders and occasional humiliation as the price for eventually gaining command. This role is filled best by individuals with an "authoritarian character," who admire the powerful and are contemptuous of the powerless. As Fromm has described it, the authoritarian feels that he is worthless unless he feels part of and protected by a powerful organization which gives him power over others.

In such a psychostructure, a lower-level worker who is an independent craftsman will fight the system, because it robs him of dignity and authority. (Montgomery notes that in 1905, Taylor called on employers "to wrest control of their factories away from workmen.") The greater the fragmentation achieved through "scientific management," the more the worker was expected to be dull, submissive, and insensitive, if not when he began the job, then

certainly after some time on it. Taylor, starting his experiments in scientific management wrote that, "One of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig iron as a regular occupation is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles an ox than any other type." Earlier, Adam Smith foresaw this effect of the division of labor when he wrote: "The understandings of the greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose life is spent in performing a few simple operations . . . has no occasion to exert his understanding. . . . He generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become."³² Smith worried about the effects of this process on the body politic. Although this understanding did not move him to oppose the division of labor, he urged semipublic education for the workers as a compensation for such dull work.

Today, industrial jobs require more intelligence and responsibility than Taylor's pig-iron lifting. Even the assembly-line worker studies a computer printout to determine the special, customized spot weld he must make on the next car down the line. But he or she is still a replaceable part in a machine, obeying the computer's orders, unable even to determine one's own rhythm or exercise craftsmanlike concern for the quality of the jobs that go by every minute. Such work does not call for independent, nor even particularly submissive individuals, who obey a boss, but rather, robotlike workers, who fit themselves into the machine.³³

The division of labor and work is not limited to the production level. Many white-collar jobs have also become mechanized. Designers in the auto industry report that a generation ago they would work on a whole car, but now they're forced to specialize on fenders or grillwork. Accountants who used to organize an office and relate to

32. *The Wealth of Nations* (New York: Modern Library, 1937), quoted by Daniel Bell, *Work and Its Discontents* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956).

33. For a discussion of the possible emotional effects of mechanized work, see M. Maccoby, "Emotional Attitudes and Political Choices," *Politics and Society* 2, no 2 (Winter 1972): 209-39. Mechanized work is likely to mold antilife emotional attitudes and political viewpoints.

people and problems are increasingly appendages of the computer.³⁴ Engineers in aerospace and computer design are limited to highly formatted and specialized tasks that use a small fraction of their knowledge; becoming so specialized, such workers are also left less employable if they lose their jobs.

Some service industries today are similar to the industrial machine in their organization and demands on workers. For example, a few years ago, a private research firm advised AT&T that from the company's point of view, the *successful* employee is "one dependent upon and yielding to authority rather than autonomous; socially unobtrusive rather than exhibitionistic; persistent and enduring in her approach to work; and conservative in her life-style, more conforming than innovative or rebellious."³⁵

Other service industries, particularly in the government, have more elements in common with *bureaucracies*. In a bureaucracy, the job requires that the worker perform a role in a hierarchy in which the official work task is but a part. The bureaucrat can get ahead and achieve security, by following the rules and pleasing his superiors.³⁶ To maintain, much less to develop, independence of character in a

34. In October 1972 Maccoby spoke at the annual meeting of the UAW Technical, Office and Professional workers and took part in workshops on the humanization of work. Members testified to the depressive consequences of these changes in their work.

35. Cited by Harold L. Sheppard in "A Simple Simon's Partial List of Issues About the Current Controversies Surrounding the Quality of Working Life" (Paper presented at the twenty-fifth Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association, Toronto, December 28, 1972). Sheppard goes on to quote a statement of Robert Ford of AT&T who said, "We have run out of dumb people to handle those dumb jobs. So we have to rethink what we're doing."

36. "The bureaucrat's official life is planned for him in terms of a graded career through the organizational devices of promotion by seniority, pensions, incremental salaries, etc., all of which are designed to provide incentives for disciplined action and conformity to the official regulations. The official is tacitly expected to and largely does adapt his thoughts, feelings, and action to the prospect of this career. But *these very devices* which increase the probability of conformance also lead to an over-concern with strict adherence to regulations which induces timidity, conservatism, and technicism. Displacement of sentiments from goals onto means is fostered by the tremendous symbolic significance of the means [rules]" (Robert K. Merton, "Bureaucratic Structures and Personality," in Merton et al. *Reader in Bureaucracy* [Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1965], p. 367).



bureaucratic setting requires extraordinary qualities, although some bureaucrats maintain their independence by using the rigid regulations as a protection against demands by superiors on the one hand and the public on the other. Such independence is defensive rather than creative, since it also blocks the bureaucrat from any positive action.³⁷ Increasingly, however, those who apply, are selected, and get ahead in bureaucracies are the alienated, marketing characters whose only form of independence is their dedication to developing those aspects of the self that are useful for their careers. A number of jobs in large corporations, particularly in sales, marketing, and service, are of this bureaucratic type.

On the level of factory operative and increasingly of service employees, the machine model is preferred to paternalism or bureaucracy when it promises to be most efficient and profitable. However, the machine model of industry is efficient *if and only if* two conditions are met. First, the industry must produce relatively standardized products (like model-T Fords) and second, it must be able to enlist workers with character types to fit this psychostructure; that is, the machine needs human energy. In the modern market of goods and services, there is evidence that both of these conditions are disappearing. Constant model changes and new technology require flexibility and fewer workers will adapt to mechanized work.

A New Social Character?

Is worker discontent due to a change in their social character? The answer to this question is by no means simple. Lacking systematic comparative or longitudinal data, it is hard to *prove* that the social character of workers today, particularly younger workers, has become less submissive and more self-affirmative. Although such a conclusion is strongly suggested both by analysis of trends in the twentieth century and by recent surveys relating to job satisfaction,

³⁷ See Michael Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964)

the truth may be more complicated. Consider the likelihood of two main character types in factories and service jobs. One is the more independent farmer or craftsman, who is forced into the organization because he can no longer make a living working for himself. The second type is the child of employees who is brought up in an "organizational culture" and presumably expects to work in an organization.

Type one, the craftsman or farmer, has never adapted easily to the mechanized organization. When F. W. Taylor started out to mechanize industrial work, he met fierce resistance from many independent craftsmen who understood the threat to their autonomy and dignity.³⁸ While it was not so easy to find unionized workers or craftsmen willing to fit themselves into a mechanized psychostructure, industry was able from the turn of the century until the present to recruit workers from immigrant or village backgrounds. In 1946, Peter Drucker wrote that the GM workers in Michigan were "largely first or second generation immigrants from eastern or southern Europe, recent arrivals from the West Virginia and Tennessee hill country, or Negroes," while most managers were "old stock" midwesterners.³⁹ As we have noted, before 1880, there was a movement to democratize the work place in America. The influx of immigrants combined with the principles of scientific management have up until now muted that movement, although it has never been totally destroyed. Immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe were forced to accept any decent job they could find, and the traditional, submissive, fatalistic strands of peasant character

³⁸ Samuel Gompers spoke against Taylorism in 1911: "So there you are, wage-workers in general, mere machines—considered industrially, of course. Hence, why should you not be standardized and your motion-power brought up to the highest possible perfection in all respects, including speeds? Not only your length, breadth, and thickness as a machine, but your grade of hardness, malleability, tractability, and general serviceability, can be ascertained, registered, and then employed as desirable. Science would thus get the most out of you before you are sent to the junkpile." Quoted in Sudhir Kakar, *Frederick Taylor: A Study in Personality and Innovation* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 183. See also Milton J. Nadworny, *Scientific Management and the Unions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955)

³⁹ Peter F. Drucker, *The Concept of the Corporation* (New York: New American Library, 1946), p. 150.



eased the transition into the mechanized industrial psychostructure. Furthermore, they were more willing to accept their lot in the factory because there were compensations in the home where the worker was unchallenged head of the family, a respected *pater familias*, and in the community where traditional religion and folk customs enriched his life.

The present generation of workers from working-class and white-collar backgrounds no longer finds its satisfactions in an ethnic subculture. Brought up and educated in the mainstreams of American values and strivings, younger workers are less fatalistic and authoritarian, more ambitious and self-affirmative than their fathers. Not expecting great respect from their children, they are also less willing to sacrifice themselves for them. Unlike workers from self-employed backgrounds, they do not object to organizational work per se, but to the dehumanizing aspects of it. Some of the younger production workers such as those who led the 1972 strike against GMAD at Lordstown are sons of workers who sound no different from young managers in their level of reasoning and their attitude to work.⁴⁰

In part this is the result of education. Critics of schooling have rightly denounced the factorylike organization of schools, the conventionality and abstractification of what is learned, and the boring, nonproductive atmosphere of many schools. These criticisms make sense when the actual is contrasted to the ideal. However, this is not the case for the whole country.⁴¹ For many young Americans, particularly those from blue-collar backgrounds, the atmosphere of local schools is both more stimulating and democratic than either the home or work place.

Harold Sheppard's studies show that for white male blue-collar

40. In contrast, many workers in a southern rural factory we are studying would prefer to work on a farm if they could make a living at it. Their goal is not career advancement but the chance for greater autonomy and craftsmanship.

41. A recent census study reported that the percentage of Americans with a high school diploma has almost doubled from 38 percent in 1940 to 75 percent in 1970. The percent with college degrees has gone from 6 to 16 percent; the proportion of those with one or more years of college has gone from 13 to 31 percent in the same thirty-year period. See Jack Rosenthal, "Census Study Finds an 'Education Gap,'" *New York Times*, 4 February 1971, p. 1.

workers, years of schooling are positively correlated with democratic attitudes, while workers with less schooling tend to be more submissive to authoritarian structures.⁴² This finding is consistent with the phenomenon that young workers with high school diplomas are more likely than the older generation to find assembly work oppressive and to rebel against it. When young people compare this mechanized organization of work with their other experiences, the contrast fuels frustration and anger.

Traditional authoritarian submissiveness in the society as a whole has also been undermined by movements of civil rights and war protest. In the 1960s, the twentieth-century challenge to traditional authority reached a crest, and while only a minority of the young believe that all authority should be discredited, a large percent has become more critical of authority based on force rather than competence and leadership. The challenge to traditional authority appears a shared trait of the young throughout the industrialized world. It goes together with new values of self-fulfillment and the disintegration of the extended family.⁴³ Today, students throughout the United States have begun to question the knowledge of teachers. The *pater familias* can no longer demand respect, but must earn it. Black Americans have rejected the servile role. Women have opposed inequality and lack of opportunity. These challenges to authority have sometimes been harsh and bitter, expressing resentment and revenge. But they have also reaffirmed the humanistic and democratic principles of the American Revolution submerged during the period of rapid industrial growth and immigration.

Thus, the survey data on worker attitudes may reflect the views of different character types struggling with the organizational society. Since these surveys lack data to distinguish social characters,

42. H. Sheppard and N. Herrick, *Where Have All the Robots Gone?* (New York: Free Press, 1972).

43. For an analysis of survey data supporting this same conclusion in Japan, see Shin-ichi Takezawa, "Changing Worker Values, and Their Policy Implications in Japan" (Paper presented to the International Conference on the Quality of Working Life, Arden House, New York, September 1972).



we cannot explore whether different types give similar responses for different reasons. For example, both type one and type two workers may object to mechanized work, but their dissatisfaction has different meanings. The craftsman longs for self-employment while the modern self-affirmative organization man wants more opportunity to develop himself and further his career. In general, however, surveys indicate growing worker concern for the quality of work, although a large percentage of workers appear to be adapted to the mechanized organization. The latter is not surprising, since if *most* workers were not adapted to the organizations, these could not function at all. From our point of view, one of the basic problems in our society is exactly that so many Americans are adapted to mechanized work at the cost of devitalization.

Notwithstanding, the University of Michigan *Survey of Working Conditions*, sampling workers in all occupations and on all levels, found new priorities in what workers value and want in their work. Of some twenty-five aspects of work (such as pay, working conditions, and relations with coworkers), good pay, considered by conventional wisdom to be the workers' main priority, was ranked fifth by the sample taken as a whole. Above pay, workers placed interesting work, enough help and equipment, enough information, and enough authority to do the job. Opportunity to develop one's special abilities was ranked sixth.⁴⁴

New goals and attitudes to work become clearer when we examine the responses of particular groups of workers, rather than taking the sample as a whole. Looking at occupational groups, clerical workers, service workers, professionals, sales workers, farm workers, and managers and proprietors, all rated interesting work as more important to them than good pay. In addition, six out of eleven occupational groups—clerical workers, service workers, household workers, professionals, operatives, and craftsmen and foremen—expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the *opportunity to develop*

44. For a review of the findings of the Michigan Survey, see Neal Q. Herrick, "Who's Unhappy at Work and Why," *Manpower* 1, no. 1 (January 1972): 2-7.

their special abilities in their work.⁴⁵ Lack of *interesting work* is a cause for discontent among clerical and service workers, as well as laborers (including farm laborers). And clerical workers, service workers, operatives, and farm laborers want more *freedom to decide* how to do their work than they have on their own jobs.

Differences between the young and the old in the work force also suggest a trend, although one must note that the majority of all workers are concerned about the quality of work. Thus, 78.5 percent of workers under thirty years old, as opposed to 70.8 percent of those thirty and older, say it is "very important" to them to have interesting work. 68.7 percent of workers under thirty vs. 61 percent of those thirty and over say it is "very important" for them to have the opportunity to develop their special abilities at work. The alternative explanation of age differences is, of course, that the demands of younger workers do not imply the development of a different character type in the young, but rather that they will give up their demands as they get older and adapt to the system. While this may be true in some instances, where workers are broken by the organization and lose hope, this explanation is at best a partial one, since it does not explain all the data nor make sense of the changing social trends which influence the development of different character traits.

Surveys conducted by Daniel Yankelovich reveal further evidence of changing attitudes to work on the part of the young. He found that college students rank "the opportunity to make a contribution," "job challenge," and "self-expression" at the top of the list of influences on their career choice.⁴⁶ A 1970 survey of high

45. Almost 32 percent of clerical workers and of service workers, 27 percent of household workers, 19 percent of professionals, and 17 percent of operatives, craftsmen, and foremen find it is more often "very important" to them to have the opportunity to develop their special abilities at work than "very true" of their own jobs. Sales workers also show dissatisfaction, although less, with their ability to develop themselves at work.

46. Daniel Yankelovich, *The Changing Values on Campus: Political and Personal Attitudes on Campus* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1972), cited in U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Work in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973).

school students found they valued "freedom to make my own decisions" and "work that seems important to me" much higher than in the 1960 survey, which stressed job security and opportunity for promotion.⁴⁷ Studies also show that financial success is becoming less important.⁴⁸ For example, one survey of high school students shows a dramatic shift away from financial considerations as the determining factors in choosing a career. In this survey, students were asked whether they would join an all-volunteer army if salaries were increased. Of 1970-71 students, 43 percent said yes; but by January 1973, only 27 percent said yes.⁴⁹ This refusal to join the military suggests that good pay is less frequently able to compensate for authoritarian working conditions to young people who are unwilling to accept such conditions.

Increasingly, such new attitudes toward work mean that people become dissatisfied with the way work is now organized suggesting that it no longer fits their character. The Michigan survey suggests that American workers taken as a whole are most dissatisfied with their jobs when they do not provide interesting work, opportunity for self-development, and resources to carry out the job, as well as the more traditional problems of inadequate pay, fringe benefits, and job security.⁵⁰

47. American Institute for Research, "Project Talent Progress in Education, A Sample Survey," 1971, cited in *Work in America*.

48. American Council on Education, survey based on interviews with 185,848 college freshmen in the fall of 1967 and on follow-up interviews with 63,570 of them in July 1971. This survey also sheds light on the effects of education on students' attitudes, since it polled the same students at the beginning and end of their college years.

49. Based on nationwide polls conducted by the National Institute of Student Opinion in 1972-73, 1971-72, and 1970-71, and published in *Senior Scholastic*, 12 March 1973.

50. We arrived at this conclusion by taking the Michigan Survey's list of job attributes and calculating the discrepancy between what the worker considers important and desirable job attributes, and what he reports as actually existing on his job. In this way we found the greatest discrepancies in: interesting work; opportunity to develop one's special abilities; a chance to do the things one does best, enough time to get the job done; enough help and equipment to get the job done, good pay, good job security; and good fringe benefits. Smaller discrepancies were found for: enough information to get the job done, supervisor competent in doing his job, and the

What are the human consequences if the dissatisfied individual stays at mechanized work? Arthur Kornhauser's study of the mental health of auto workers shows depression and apathy on the part of many who work on the line.⁵¹ Recent factory interviews by Jim Wright expose a direct connection between boring work and alcoholism or, drug taking. Workers report taking amphetamines to keep up with the speed of the line and off the line they escape into alcohol or television.

Industrial Responses

One result of work dissatisfaction has been apathy and low productivity. Some industries have recently responded by trying to modify or restructure the machine organization, to make it more satisfying for workers.

Most leaders in this field are companies in a competitive international market which demands innovation and constantly changing products, such as companies developing advanced technology. Continual design and development of new products cannot be achieved in a rigid, hierarchical authoritarian structure, but rather requires a more flexible team where authority is more evenly distributed, particularly for engineers and technicians, but also, in many cases, blue-collar workers.⁵²

freedom to decide how to do the job. For factory operatives, clerical workers, service workers, sales workers, and farm laborers, there is a more sizable discrepancy in having freedom to decide how to do the job.

51. Arthur Kornhauser, *Mental Health of the Industrial Worker* (New York: John Wiley, 1965).

52. See P. Lawrence and J. Lorsch, *Organization and Environment. Managing Differentiation and Integration* (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, 1969). Also Burns and Stalker, *The Management of Innovation* (London: Tavistock, 1961). This was one reason that Olivetti replaced traditional assembly-line operations to manufacture its office machines with a more flexible team structure. According to *Business Week*, 9 September 1972, the new structure "has given Olivetti great flexibility in a high-technology field that involved frequent changes in the product. Under the traditional assembly-line system it took months to introduce innovations. Partly finished machines were stacked up in warehouses, and workers, accustomed to performing single operations, were difficult to retrain."



In such a technostructure, *motivation* becomes an even more serious problem than in the mechanized hierarchy. It is easier to secure *compliance* for mechanized tasks than to gain *full cooperation* from technical workers so that they are motivated to contribute ideas and criticisms—in other words, their minds as well as their muscles—for developing new products.

One solution has been an appeal to thwarted needs for self-affirmation by allowing more autonomy either to individuals or to flexible teams stressing concepts such as participative management, goal sharing, and an emphasis on rewards rather than controls in the technostructure. A well-known example of such a company is Texas Instruments,⁵³ where a project-team structure allows engineers freedom in choosing the project they will work on and provides them the opportunity to propose new projects. The idea here is presumably an appeal to the thwarted independent spirit of employees. TI also applies this concept to maintenance crews.⁵⁴

Another solution in the chain-restaurant business appeals more to the ex-proprietor's frustrated yearning for independence. Most chain restaurants are organized on the bureaucratic-machine model, a central unit controlling purchasing, restaurant decor, and the dress and behavior standards of the employees. In these firms, the franchisee is more like a salaried manager in a large company than an independent entrepreneur.⁵⁵ In contrast, an article in the *Wall Street*

53. See Charles L. Hughes, *Goal Setting: Key to Individual and Organizational Effectiveness* (New York: American Management Association, 1965).

54. At Texas Instruments, cleaning service teams of 19 people each were set up with the freedom to plan and carry out their jobs according to their own strategies and schedules. Studies were done to find better work methods and the employees received training prior to the formation of the teams, and were taught how to measure their own performance. They were paid more per hour and given better fringe benefits (including profit sharing) than the contracted janitorial crews who had previously done the job. As a result of this restructuring into autonomous teams the cleanliness rating increased from 65 percent to 85 percent; quarterly turnover dropped from 100 percent to 98 percent; and cost savings for the entire site averaged \$103,000 per annum. See Harold M. F. Rush, *Job Design for Motivation*, Conference Board Report 515 (New York: Conference Board, 1971).

55. Franchisees, who aspire to be small independent businessmen in an era of conglomerates and decreasing self-employment, are now protesting against franchisors such as the founder of International House of Pancakes, who said, "That independent

Journal (May 8, 1972) describes how a group of people forced the Mr. Donut Company to give those individuals with franchises more say in operating their shops and selecting their suppliers. In those few cases where the individual franchisee has more freedom to decide how to do things, satisfaction is reported greater, and the businesses are more profitable.

Even the auto industry, the classic model of hierarchical-machine organization, so suffers from dissatisfied young managers that they have tried to move toward greater sharing of authority. But older, more authoritarian managers struggle to reassert autocratic control. In this, they are aided by the structure of control which keeps continual pressure from the top down. For example, the General Motors Assembly Division includes twenty plants. Each week computers print out the standings of the plants in terms of productivity and efficiency. When a plant falls behind, the screws are tightened all the way down the line. Everyone's primary goal is to be number one, and the only team spirit possible is within an authoritarian context similar to that of a professional football team. In such a situation of constant crisis, increased autonomy for both management and workers is hard to achieve. The Swedish auto companies, Volvo and Saab, seem better able to modify the most mechanized aspects of auto assembly, although their reforms are far from making the work fully autonomous. Greater autonomy is easier to achieve where highly automated factory technology creates interdependent jobs requiring more educated workers. This is the case with continuous process technology in refineries and food or soap processing plants. Also in jobs that involve working with computers or computerized machines where the pace of work is not fully determined by the machine, where workers are expected to make judgments and decisions.⁵⁶

businessman idea is misunderstood. Maybe in Samoa you can find one. A man becomes a franchisee because he wants to belong. If he tells me he wants a pancake house because he doesn't like to take orders, I don't care if he's President Nixon's brother in Whittier; I won't sign him on." Charles G. Burck, "Franchising's Troubled Dream World," *Fortune*, March 1970, pp. 116 ff.

⁵⁶ It may be that the increased demand for educated workers in government offices, and advanced technology has been a key factor in raising the educational level

One of the most advanced models is the now well-known Pet Food plant in Topeka, Kansas. In an attempt to increase both productivity and work satisfaction, work was designed to maximize autonomy, variety, and possibilities for learning and advancement. Workers are now assigned to groups which set their own schedules and trade-off jobs. Supervision is minimal by "team leaders." Furthermore, the rules for compensation are designed to encourage learning and security. Raises in pay are based on the number of jobs mastered, and workers are guaranteed fifty weeks of work.

The Pet Food plant cannot be easily duplicated in other industries. It was built from scratch and it uses an advanced continuous process technology. It selected an elite group of intelligent workmen to man the factory. And it is nonunion. Despite its limited applicability, the factory is an example of considering the well-being of workers as an important factor in designing work.

So far, we have been considering large corporations where possibilities for worker autonomy can be increased but are constrained by a structure based on centralized control over decision making and planning. Another model which goes far beyond the semiautonomous work group in maximizing worker autonomy and strengthening worker independence is *the cooperative*.

Among the relatively few examples are the plywood cooperatives in the Northwest where the workers own the stock and set company policy.⁵⁷ Companies such as Puget Sound Plywood, Inc. and others (for example, the recent worker takeover at the Lipp factory in France) demonstrate that workers can run companies. The

of the workforce as a whole. Since the more educated workers do not function efficiently in mechanical jobs, there is a further pressure to restructure work to fit the needs of these workers.

It may also be the case that the efficiency of workers in mechanized jobs was never very high. (Industrial efficiency is generally overestimated by those outside industry who are unaware of the amount of "goldbricking" and output restriction.) Today, worker demands for higher incomes combined with the increasing pressure of international competition require higher levels of efficiency. If workers are to produce more efficiently, they will require work that is more satisfying as well as financially rewarding.

57. See Daniel Zwerdling, "Where the Workers Run the Show," *Washington Post*, 2 September 1973, pp. D4, D5.

cooperative model is both extremely satisfying and stimulates the highest level of productive activeness among workers. However, the examples are all relatively small firms that function in a competitive market (as contrasted to oligarchic or monopolistic markets). The cooperative model runs up against problems when applied to large corporations and advanced technology, with its large capital needs, centralized hierarchy, and highly technical decisions.

Possibly we may someday arrive at the point where American industry is so decentralized and technically simplified to allow an economy of worker cooperatives. But this unlikely possibility does not negate the need to restructure work at the present, since even a society of smaller firms would require models of restructured technology and organization.

Problems in Restructuring Organizations

The Pet Food factory, together with a number of other examples of designing work to maximize worker satisfaction, were pioneered by exceptionally idealistic and courageous managers who in practically every case had to struggle with their organizations in order to construct the new model. They exemplify cases of independence in large organizations leading to improving conditions of work for others.

Such models are rare, however, even though they generally prove profitable to the company in terms of increased quality, less absenteeism and turnover, and overall increased productivity. These alternatives to the machine model are resisted by management for two reasons: the character of authoritarian managers, and more important, the goals and structures of the machinelike organizations. In regard to the first reason, some managers feel comfortable only in an ordered, hierarchical structure where they can maximize control and predictability. Even when the efficiency of such a system is proved wanting, such a manager feels that any alternative would mean chaos. At least, in the machine structure, he feels he can



pinpoint the weak links (workers) and has the power to discipline or replace them. When jobs can no longer be simplified, timed, and otherwise controlled, the worker must be treated more as an independent craftsman. Once the worker has more responsibility and work is shared with semiautonomous groups, each worker becomes more valuable, and it is much harder to replace and control him. Furthermore, as the workers become more aware of alternatives to the technology and organization of work, they tend to become more demanding and often more militant. Other more progressive managers would welcome these changes and would be happier in a more challenging and democratic atmosphere, but such changes clash with a machinelike structure built on the principle of maximal growth and profit. In such a system, each manager must keep running or fall behind. Although progressive managers would support efforts to humanize work, few would take the risk to initiate such programs, and in fact their efforts might be futile, unless systemic organizational changes were made.

One reason why the Pet Food plant can exist within a large modern corporation like General Foods is that it was built from scratch and that it is far enough away from corporate headquarters so that executives do not constantly meddle. In contrast, a very creative program for machinists instituted at Polaroid a decade ago did not survive, exactly because the organization was not prepared to adapt to it. This experimental program restructured machinists' work, so that supervisors were removed and each machinist shared supervisory and quality-control functions. Each worker was also given one hour of classes each day on company time teaching him further skills so that he could move up in the company. From the point of view of both workers and productivity, the experiment was a success, and practically all the workers moved up into higher positions. However, the program was discontinued, and managers at Polaroid have cited two reasons. First, while the program sparked demands for changes in other parts of the organization, there was no one either willing or capable or with a mission to expand the program. Second, the

workers involved in the program became more militant and demanded further changes in the direction of greater participation in decision making. This also scared some managers. Indeed, one might say that such projects may stimulate new independence within the organization which is not prepared for it. Some of the Polaroid managers associated with Project 60 (P-60) summarized points to be kept in mind in planning new projects.⁵⁸ One of them noted, "Before we continue the education of people, we must understand that the result of education is a freer man and not a more controllable man. Until everyone understands this, we will continue to be surprised by the unexpected actions of the men."

Principles for Reconstruction

Given this all too brief overview of industrial psychostructures we turn to a final question: How can institutions of work throughout America be reconstructed to stimulate rather than cripple independence? First, we must recognize that the kind of independence that can be developed in a large organization will not be the traditional concept of "individualism" based on the hoarding, obstinate property owner, but it can allow autonomy and individuated development of craftsmanlike abilities in a cooperative framework. This message

58. 1. Any efforts at broadening traditional work will not be readily accepted by the rest of the organization.

2. The whole organization must understand the project or experiment and its meaning, if it is to have any chance for success.

3. To alter traditional thinking in an organization is a big job and it should not be imposed on the part of the organization that is working on product development. It should start with a part of the organization where the work is going to remain more or less the same for a long period of time.

The managers also noted that the educational part of the program was extremely important. Where it worked best, it was because the teachers were particularly effective and took time to help the students. Furthermore, they helped the student integrate his educational experience in terms of the whole job and to develop critical thinking in order to overcome the tendency of being submissive to superiors and being fearful to make a decision by oneself. However, the managers also expressed a caveat that the organization had better expect workers who go through such a program to be different from before.

needs to be made to resentful ex-proprietors and craftsmen who are in no mood to support social welfare programs but do want a greater say in work decisions.⁵⁹ We believe that a program to reconstruct the work place, to establish principles allowing greater independence and self-development, could forge a new progressive alliance in America between the old self-employed and the newly self-affirmative. Such a program would sharply contrast to alternatives where the politics of workers are motivated by resentment, or apathetic despair. Today, both the thwarted self-employed and the self-affirmative organization men can start off by recognizing that the only property they have is themselves, and the basic kind of property right to be recognized is the need to protect and develop the self in order to experience one's dignity in an organizational society. For most of us, the old basis of individualism is not possible, nor does the traditional hoarding-independent character fit the requirements of a highly interdependent technological society. What is required are responsible (in the sense of able to respond emotionally as well as intellectually) and cooperative individuals who are secure enough to develop their spiritual capacities, including conscience, so they are not afraid to speak out against organizational practices and products that are harmful to themselves, their coworkers, or the public, and who have the independence necessary to struggle for continued progressive change.

Organizational changes must be conceived in terms of inter-related principles if they are to support a new independence. There are two reasons why this is so. First, it is important to emphasize the fact that many attempts for change are made in the erroneous belief that certain symptoms have a single cause, and if one changes the cause one cures the symptom. This kind of thinking is based on a mechanical model of cause and effect, which does not take into account the fact that individuals live in systems. In a social system each structural principle is related to every other principle. If you change one principle, the others tend to be affected

59. Data supporting this assertion have been gathered by us and others in factory interviews

Second, given the fact that the large corporations are increasingly ruled by anonymous authority based on principles of profit and growth alone, human principles that establish human rights are necessary as one counterbalance.⁶⁰ Though these principles have elements in common with those of some benevolent paternalists, they go beyond these to establish the rights of free workers who should not be locked in to any organization. In the day of the benevolent paternalist, individual loyalty was established on the basis of personal relationships. In those days, workers might also have trusted that the organization would be loyal to the community as well as to the worker. In the modern world of the multinational corporation, managers move factories when they are not profitable, even though the whole community suffers and such moves are not in the national interest. Workers can no longer depend on the principles of goodwill of an individual or a family who own the business and live in the community. Neofeudalism will not work. The principles that can protect workers today must be established as rights and must be responsive to the social and economic changes that have taken place over the past few decades.

Maccoby and Neal Q. Herrick have proposed four general principles as a basis for constructing a system which will not be destructive to the worker's character, but will create a framework in which he can develop himself productively. They were formulated after studying those models of work organization in both the United States and other countries which have proved workable and have led to positive results for both the worker and productivity.⁶¹ These principles are security, equity, individuation, and democracy (see Appendix).

The first principle is *security*. The worker needs to be free from

60. The other constraint on corporations must be social—laws that place limits on technology, products harmful to health, advertising which manipulates. This important issue is not dealt with here.

61. Neal Q. Herrick and Michael Maccoby, "Humanizing Work: A Priority Goal of the 1970s" (Paper presented at the Quality of Working Life Conference, New York, September 1972. Printed in U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower and Poverty), *Hearings on the Worker Alienation Act*, 25–26 July 1972. pp 293–302.



fear and anxiety concerning his health and safety, his income and future employment. One cannot expect workers to cooperate wholeheartedly at work when physical conditions are unhealthy and debilitating. Insecurity about health or economic want naturally provokes fear and anger in workers. Unless security is guaranteed, workers will be suspicious about any changes in the structure of work.

In a society as rich as ours, no individual, particularly one who is willing to work, should have to fear that he will lack the basic necessities of life. Since 1938, the year of the Fair Labor Standards Act, it has been generally accepted that employers should pay no less than a certain minimum wage per hour to their workers. But much has changed since 1938. Our notions of an acceptable standard of living have increased. Changes in the consumer credit structure have made an annual income rather than an hourly wage the measure of security.

Social and historical changes have eroded other guarantees of security. The family no longer meets the needs for insurance against economic hardship, and individuals must turn elsewhere for help in time of need. Mobility and changes in plant location mean that one cannot count on traditional community relationships.

The shift away from self-employment and toward large organizations has had a twofold effect on security. On the one hand, it has lessened the availability of self-employed work, which in the past was more secure than working for someone else because (1) no one could fire you, (2) competition was not so ruthless as it is today against the big chains, and (3) in your old age your children (to whom you passed on your business) provided for you. On the other hand, self-employment itself (what little remains) is today much less secure than in the past. We have seen how hard it is to be self-employed successfully. Some of those who fail at their own businesses end up worse off than those hired employees who have pensions. Indeed, today, with the increase in security for salaried and wage workers (largely due to the efforts of unions), these workers are often better off in terms of security than independent businessmen or craftsmen

In the organizational society, security must be provided by companies and/or the federal government. To provide this security, it might be possible in some industries to guarantee both work and pensions. While government and large corporations may be the only organizations with the resources to guarantee fifty weeks of work a year, federal insurance could make it possible for smaller companies as well. In a market economy, however, security cannot be solely an employer responsibility. A guaranteed minimal income financed through the tax system would provide the necessary floor.

The worker also needs to be secure about his long-range future. Workmen's compensation to protect the income of those who through accident or illness are unable to work must be adequate. Besides social security, the worker needs protection for his retirement benefits. This means immediate vesting and/or portability so these benefits are not lost if he wants to change his job.

Finally, the worker needs security vis-à-vis the restructuring of work itself and the adoption of new technology. When such changes result in the need for fewer workers, any reduction of jobs should be accomplished on the basis of attrition. Security is the keystone to restructuring work, since any changes which do not protect the worker will rightly be resisted by unions as a new form of exploitation.

The second principle is *equity*. Workers should receive fair compensation commensurate to their contribution to the value of the service or product. Lack of equity (e.g., huge differences in income between bosses and workers and lack of sharing in profits) stimulates envy and resentment leading to hostility. This is particularly a danger when workers are asked to contribute more to the enterprise with changes of technology or job structuring.

It is seldom easy to work out equity, to determine the fair share of each participant in the productive process. In practice, it requires searching for methods of evaluating individual contributions that are considered just by those involved. Because there is no mechanical measure of equity, collective bargaining has proved necessary to approximate it. Nevertheless, once a principle of equity is adopted

and directs the process of dialogue and bargaining, increased responsibility and concern for fairness in both work and other relationships will be encouraged.

Serious consideration might also be given to the adoption of national maximum (as well as minimum) wage guidelines. The present gap between the lowest-paid members of the employed labor force and the highest-paid members is too large and cannot be justified in terms of ownership or creation of the enterprise on the part of professional managers. The maximum wage should not be expressed in dollar terms, but in terms of the appropriate ratio between the highest and lowest salaries in an establishment. It could apply to the professional managerial class, but not to entrepreneurs, and could recognize the effect of the size of the corporation upon appropriate maximum salaries. For example, the difference between the lowest-paid person and the highest-paid person at the General Motors Corporation is now about a multiple of 80. In Belgium, the standard difference is 7 to 1, which seems to us more equitable.

The principle of equity should also include profit sharing. Workers in an organization should be contractually assured a specified percentage of the profits (over and above assured salary and benefits) that are based in part on their work. To work, profit sharing and incentive programs require a high level of trust between workers and management, including open books. In some cases of restructured work, a specified share of profits might be divided among democratic work groups, taking into account the contributions of each group toward increased productivity. In some cases, the group might award exceptional individuals. In large corporations, it is often difficult to determine individual contributions, but once the principle is accepted, it has been possible in some companies to develop equitable profit sharing plans with positive results for both the worker and the company.

The third principle is *individuation* (craftsmanship, autonomy, and learning). Work should stimulate the development of the individual's unique abilities and capacity for craftsmanship rather than force him into a mechanized role. It should stimulate learning

rather than cause boredom, stagnation, and eventually hopelessness. The principle of individuation, if taken seriously, establishes a nonbureaucratic spirit in which each worker is treated as an individual with different needs and abilities. Eventually this spirit should encourage workers to develop themselves and to learn as much as they wish about the industry as a whole so that they have the knowledge to participate in making complicated decisions.

In contrast, the worker who is denied a job which stimulates craftsmanship, continued learning, and the development of his abilities is likely to become either an automaton or an angry person. Individuation involves reversing scientific management to reestablish craftsmanship at work. It implies that workers should have a maximal autonomy in determining the rhythms of their work and planning how it should be done. The instinct for workmanship, as Thorstein Veblen called it, is one of the deep strengths of the American character, which, if systematically weakened, undermines our society.

The principle of *democracy* is essential to improving the quality of work, but by no means a solution in itself. Studies in Yugoslavian factories have shown that democracy without individuation does not overcome the worker's alienation, and may in fact lead to a new cynicism. Democracy implies activeness, cooperation, and responsibility rather than passiveness, egocentrism, and withdrawal from responsibility on the part of the worker.

How can responsibility be instituted in industry? As Robert Dahl points out in his book *After the Revolution*,⁶² there are natural constraints to maximal democracy. Full democracy is limited by the amount of time it takes, the degree of competence it requires, and the size of the group involved. Even optimal participant and representative democracy without security, equity, and the chance for craftsmanlike work is liable to become an empty form. What is the use of a say in decisions if one lacks knowledge to change dehumanizing technology? Once these other principles are estab-

62. Robert Dahl, *After the Revolution: Authority in a Good Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970)



lished, however, workers should control their own work and participate in setting work processes, hours, "hiring" and firing, etc. Only in this way can one expect activeness and responsibility on the part of the worker. In a pyramidal, authoritarian organization, it is natural for the worker to do only what he is told, and to take no responsibility for correcting errors and thinking of new ways to do things.

The concept of democracy also includes the protection of citizenship within the work place. This includes free speech and the right to be considered innocent until proven guilty on questions of discipline.

Based on democratic work groups and humanized factory technology, there are further steps toward an optimal industrial democracy. In the industrial world today, degrees of democracy in the work place range from participatory management (where the workers' views are listened to and taken into account in decision making) to systems of workers' control where the workers' authority and responsibility are institutionalized, as in Yugoslavia. In West Germany there is representative democracy, where workers' representatives serve on the board of directors. In a full workers' democracy, workers as well as consumers would have the institutionalized power to decide on all major issues of policy for the large corporations, but a workable model of such a system in the highly industrialized society still needs to be created.

Support for Restructuring Work

Who will support these principles? Given that there are more humane and healthful ways of organizing work and structuring technology,⁶³ how will such restructuring be achieved? The social

63 For examples of restructured technology in factories, see the work of the new socio-technical theorists such as Eric Trist and Einar Thorsrud E. Trist, "A Socio-Technical Critique of Scientific Management" (Paper presented at the Edinburgh Conference on the Impact of Science and Technology, Edinburgh University, May 1970).

scientists and industrial engineers who pioneered in restructuring work are for the most part management consultants. Their experience of working for the progressive manager leads them naturally to believe that progress will be achieved only by gaining access to the benign prince in the guise of the corporation president. In a paternalistic organization, progress might be made in this way, but only up to the point where paternalism itself is threatened. We have seen that some of the best working conditions and participative managements exist in paternalistic companies like Oneida Ltd. or American Velvet. But fewer and fewer companies today are paternalistic.

The modern corporation which controls more and more of the economy is constructed on the machinelike principles of anonymous authority. In such organizations, changing the structure of work in any significant way requires the collaboration of both progressive managers and workers concerned with health and well-being more than the maximization of growth and profit. They are faced with the problem of changing a system, which requires political struggle, tradeoffs and compromises, as well as creative experimentation to provide concrete alternatives. Unions, which have achieved so much for workers in terms of security and equity, must enlarge their goals to include changing working conditions. These changes cannot take place unless unions work for them.

Is it realistic to believe that progressive managers will participate in restructuring work according to these principles? A number of them may join this movement for two reasons. First, many managers are dissatisfied with their own work, because it lacks security, equity, chances for personal development, and a responsible role in decision making. A recent poll of the American Management Association shows "there is overwhelming agreement among surveyed middle managers and personnel executives alike that managerial frustration and discontent with corporate life are increasing."⁶⁴

64 The authors of the report state that "Today's manager is deeply concerned about what he regards as an increasing tendency toward greater responsibility without a corresponding increase in authority. Today's manager reports that his opportunities



As a result of this discontent, the authors report that, "Nearly half the middle managers surveyed favor a change in current labor laws which would compel employers to recognize and bargain with manager unions in business organizations where managers elected to organize." In other words, managers may unionize during the next decade, in large part because they suffer from mechanized work.

The second reason for thinking that some managers will join this movement is that so far the progressive new work projects in the United States have been developed by managers, not by unions or production workers. Moreover, based on our observation and interviewing of managers, we believe that the impulse to humanize work appeals to the most progressive side of the managerial character. Many managers are indifferent to other social issues that might concern them—such as the effects of what they produce on the environment and the public, the quality of life in their communities, military and foreign policy. But they are concerned with the quality of work, since work is vitally important to their own experience of well-being and self-realization. Since they desire secure, equitable, craftsmanslike, and responsible work for themselves, they can see the importance of such work for others.

for direct participation in the decision-making process seem to be rapidly decreasing in the highly bureaucratic and authoritarian structure of the techno-corporation of the 1970s." Specifically, the frustrating conditions most frequently mentioned can be grouped in terms of security, equity, individuation, and democracy, as follows.

- Security:** Gains secured by blue-collar unions outpacing gains of management employees (215 mentions)
Growing uncertainty about job security (150 mentions)
- Equity:** Low salaries or salary inequities (192 mentions)
Long hours without extra compensation (94 mentions)
- Democracy:** (and Equity:) Feeling of not being involved in decision-making process (128 mentions)
(and Equity:) Increased responsibility without increased authority (125 mentions)
- Individuation:** Little feeling of personal reward and achievement (111 mentions)
Lack of top management responsiveness to new ideas, improved methods (91 mentions)

(Alfred T. DeMaria, Dale Tarnowski, and Richard Gurman, *Manager Unions? An AMA Research Report* [New York: American Management Association, 1972]). These findings may be biased in favor of the discontented since only 1,108 of the 3,000 managers surveyed responded to the questionnaire.

A movement to reconstruct the work place will seek to influence public policy.⁶⁵ Guaranteed income, portable pensions, and improved occupational health and safety legislation will help to establish security. (For these purposes, the concept of health needs to be expanded to include emotional as well as physical well-being.) In the area of equity, legislation can establish maximum as well as minimum wages. Furthermore, government can support efforts to restructure work by giving tax credit to companies that experiment according to the four principles we have outlined. As suggested by the proposed Worker Alienation Act, funds can also be allocated for experimentation and evaluation of model projects along these lines.⁶⁶

If such a movement to restructure the work place according to principles of security, equity, individuation, and democracy develops, what results can we expect? Ideally, as it gains momentum, it may spark the hope and liberate the energy necessary to confront other problems of postindustrial society, by demonstrating that technology can be redesigned in terms of more just and humane values.

65. See Herrick and Maccoby, "Humanizing Work."

66. U.S. Senate, *Hearings on the Worker Alienation Act*, July 1972

Appendix

Individuation (vs. the boredom and hopelessness of being made a standardized part of the machine)

craftsmanship—autonomy

continual education

opportunity to develop skills and abilities

nonbureaucratic treatment of individual—respect for individual needs

Democracy (vs. the passiveness and sadomasochism of authoritarian organization)

participative management

self-management

autonomous work groups

participation in hiring coworkers and choosing supervisors

representative democracy

free speech in the work place

Socio-Psychological
Principles for
Reconstructing
the Work Place

Michael Maccoby

Neal Q. Herrick

Security (vs. the fear and suspiciousness of insecurity)

health and safety

guaranteed work

guaranteed income

portable pension

reducing jobs by attrition, not firing

Equity (vs. the envy and resentment of inequity)

fair pay differentials

profit sharing

more responsible work adequately rewarded

fair promotions and job assignments

