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**A Critical Evaluation of
Ethical Justifications
For Workplace Democracy**

by

C. Dale Komanchuk, B.A.

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of**

Masters of Arts

Department of Philosophy

**Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 26, 1992
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ISBN 0-315-79834-3

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**"A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ETHICAL JUSTIFICATIONS
FOR WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY"**

submitted by C. Dale Komanchuk
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

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September 1992

Abstract

This thesis introduces the reader to a variety of theoretical and practical problems facing consequentialist and rights-based arguments for *workplace democracy*. A detailed exegesis and critique of the arguments of Robert Dahl, Carole Pateman, Ronald Mason, Carol Gould and Mihailo Markovic is provided, and it is shown that each author confronts the problems remaining from the previous one. The conclusion summarizes the challenges facing those who wish to construct ethical justifications for institutionalizing workplace democracy.

Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to Jay for his gentle guidance, to Lisa for her endless patience and support, and to Stuart for helping me understand the concrete issues and problems facing extensions of democracy to the workplace.

And many thanks to Elaine, Tom, Jacquie, Heather, Keith, Peter, my mother, and anyone else who had to put up with me during this process.

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Introduction

In this paper, I will investigate a variety of consequentialist and rights-based arguments for workplace democracy. Although posing my topic in this way may seem to unjustifiably direct or restrict the analysis from the start (for reasons which will become more apparent as we move into the body of the work) it is nevertheless necessary to find some term which encapsulates the essential commonalities between the many positions referred to in this paper. The authors I will be considering offer very divergent conceptions of acceptable workplace relations (e.g. "self-governed enterprises", "participatory workplaces", "worker participation", "worker democracy" and "worker self-management") and each particular term implies very different institutional arrangements when applied in practice. However, because each argument essentially supports changes within workplaces to allow "the workers" to "rule" (to varying degrees), it therefore seems that the intended meaning of each author can be accurately captured in a sufficiently general way under the rubric of "workplace democracy".

In my detailed exegesis of the arguments of Robert Dahl, Carole Pateman, Ronald Mason, Carol Gould and Mihailo Markovic, I will show how the positions put forth by each of these authors clearly follows an analytic progression, in which many of the problems raised by one argument are

confronted by the next (and in some cases tentatively resolved). The ethical foundations of each particular argument will be thoroughly assessed on the basis of a variety of theoretical considerations, and on its particular merit in providing an adequate basis for effectively dealing with many of the practical difficulties relating to institutionalized forms of workplace democracy.

However, as the title intimates, this project is ultimately intended as an introduction to future arguments for an ethically defensible concept of workplace democracy. This intention will therefore limit the scope of my particular project, and I will seek only to point out some of the general difficulties facing such arguments, in the hope of creating more clarity of understanding in this area.

Section I: Robert Dahl

In *A Preface to Economic Democracy*¹, Robert Dahl analyses the basic principles which he thinks support political democracy, and argues that those same principles will support his case for democratizing the workplace. His argument for "*self-governing enterprises*" is therefore an analogical one:

If democracy is justified in governing the state, then it is also justified in governing economic enterprises. What is more, if it cannot be justified in governing economic enterprises, we do not quite see how it can be justified in governing the state. (Dahl 135)

To show that the antecedent of the first proposition is true, Dahl argues that a particular *democratic process* ultimately follows from commonly accepted American assumptions². It is the awareness of these assumptions, he argues, which grounds the right of Americans to live in a "democracy". With this description and justification of political democracy in place, Dahl then asserts that justice, understood in the Aristotelian sense of treating like cases alike, requires that the democratic process must also be applied to the workplace. In this transferral of his justificatory principles from the political to the economic sphere, Dahl attempts to show that

¹ Dahl, Robert. *A Preface to Economic Democracy*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985. This book will be cited as "Dahl", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

² Dahl is concerned only with persuading an American audience to adopt his system of democracy within economic enterprises.

the two spheres are sufficiently similar, and that the apparent dissimilarities are negligible. He then concludes that the democratic process, operative in the American system of government, should be applied to the workplace as a matter of right.

At every important juncture in his book, Robert Dahl defends his arguments on the basis of a *primary* assumption that he takes to be commonly accepted by his American readers. This assumption is that every American individual has an "*inalienable* right to self-government". In Dahl's words, this

...right to self-government through the democratic process is itself one of the most fundamental rights that a person can possess. Indeed, if any rights can be said to be inalienable, surely this must be among them. (Dahl 25)

As we will soon see, implicit in Dahl's notion of "self-government" is a particular conception of the "self"--a conception which I argue is ultimately flawed. Though this view of selfhood is never explicitly stated by him, it is revealed when one considers his acceptance of (what he takes to be) the historical roots of the American political system. In his lengthy review of the debates which led to that system, Dahl argues that the intent of American democracy was to set out a due process through which the many and varied interests of equally self-sufficient and self-governing citizens could

somehow be aggregated, in order to decide on appropriate, legitimate, and singular courses of action for particular governmental decisions. One can infer from this description of democracy an acceptance of a rather Lockean view of persons which sees human individuals as separate and distinct bundles of desires who must develop some sovereign authority to mediate and aggregate their individual differences, in order to preserve each individual's sphere of liberty.

Dahl's implicit acceptance of this view of human nature becomes even more apparent when one considers the fundamental assumptions which are said to ground the *inalienable* right to self-governance. The first such assumption is what he calls a "*weak principle of equality*", and it requires the good of each person to be "*equally considered*". The second assumption is a "*principle of liberty*", which asserts that each adult is the final judge of his or her own interests. The third assumption is a "*strong principle of equality*", which asserts that all adult members are "*roughly equally well qualified*" to decide what matters require binding collective decisions. And finally, Dahl's fourth assumption is an "*elementary principle of fairness*", in which "*fairness*" is interpreted in the following way: a) if needs or desert are unequal, then there should be an unequal distribution; b) "*in some circumstances*" fairness requires equal distribution or equal chance; and c) when claims are "*equally valid*", each person gets an equal share, or, if the object is indivisible, an "*equal chance*" to

obtain it.

When considered together, these assumptions imply a particular (Lockean) view of the individual. For example, "the good" of each person is to be equally considered, he says, but the concrete details of this principle are never clearly laid out. When considered in the light of the other two principles, however, it appears that this "good" does not refer to general human interests, since each individual must singularly arrive at her or his own choices and decisions. What Dahl fails to analyze, therefore, is the similarities between one's social group(s) and the "decisions" they arrive at. If he were to do this, he would see that, rather than the aggregation of *individual* desires, democracy could just as easily be interpreted as various interest groups with differing and relative degrees of political, social or economic power, vying to have their particular group interests met.

Dahl's view appears to be that individuals can arrive at their own conception of "the good", independent of the "interference" of others. However, this appears to be (at best) only a partial description of one's process of desire-formation. As a communitarian critic of Dahl might say, living in a human community means that we are necessarily tied to others; our actions, feelings, values and thoughts are *developed* in our relations with others, whether in the language we use, our scientific and theological understanding of the world, the values or standards by which we assesses our

choices, and our understanding of ourselves and how we are to relate with others³.

We therefore see that Dahl's abstract view of individuals appears to be incomplete, because it fails to adequately capture the nature of real, existing individuals living in a context of social and historical determinations which may limit or shape the choices, goals and actions open to them. So even if one accepts Dahl's claim that Americans have a right to self-government, the understanding one has of that right is very much shaped by their assumptions about the "self" which is to "govern". Because one's concept of individuals and the nature of relations between persons has such pervasive effects on her or his accepted views of freedom, equality, justice, autonomy, democracy, etc., it is therefore a glaring omission on the part of Dahl to simply assume that his readers will accept his views unchallenged. However, because this particular discussion about individuality and social determinations is one thread which weaves throughout the remainder of my project, I will suspend discussion of it for now and return to Dahl's argument for self-governing enterprises.

³ For example, communitarian critics such as Alasdair MacIntyre (After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory. London: Duckworth, 1981) and Michael Sandel (Liberalism and the Limits of Justice. London: Cambridge University Press, 1982) have argued that the individual has essentially no content outside of a social context. As we will see in later sections of this paper, this particular criticism will play a large role in formulating alternate views of workplace democracy.

In any of their political associations, "a people" who accept these assumptions (as Dahl has defined them) would therefore "rationally" accept only that decision-making process which meets three formal requirements. The first requirement is that this system must somehow mediate the individual liberty of each citizen with her or his political equality, in order to arrive at binding decisions to which a person could owe some allegiance. Secondly, these decisions would themselves have to be sorted from non-binding ones, in order to preserve each individual's liberty.⁴ Finally, because these decisions must be made by a group of self-governing associates, Dahl tells us that such binding decisions would therefore only be justifiably made by the members of the association themselves, and not by some external authority, since "laws cannot rightfully be imposed on others by persons who are not themselves obliged to obey those laws". (Dahl 57) Thus, anyone accepting the fundamental assumptions would only rationally choose to partake in those political associations which met the following necessary and sufficient conditions: there must be equal votes, taking the individual preferences of each person equally into account; *effective participation* or "an adequate and equal opportunity" for expressing one's

⁴ Dahl's idea here is that without this constraint, a benevolent dictator (or company boss) could control the agenda, and allow the citizens (or employees) to vote only on issues of little actual import. It would therefore seem that, rather than preserving liberty, this constraint is more intended to enhance self-determination. This point will become more obvious in later sections of this paper.

preference is required; *enlightened understanding* among the voters is needed⁵; a *final control of agenda by the members* is also necessary (to allow persons to decide what decisions should be made collectively); and finally, there must be *inclusiveness* (i.e. "all" adult members of an association must be included in the decision-making process⁶). The form of association which includes all five of these necessary and sufficient conditions, says Dahl, is a "democratic" one⁷. In his own words:

These five criteria, I believe, fully specify the democratic process, for I am unable to see in what respects a process meeting these criteria would not be democratic, or how any process that failed to satisfy one or more of the criteria could be regarded as fully democratic. (Dahl 60)⁸

⁵ This is said to result from the adequate and equal opportunity to discover and validate the grounding for one's own preferences on the matter at hand.

⁶ "...except transients and persons proven to be mentally defective" (Dahl, p. 60.). While one can see why he might bar "mentally defective" persons on the basis of the criteria he provides, Dahl does not provide the reader with any reason for excluding transient persons. Moreover, his reasons for only including adults are given an equally vague justification.

⁷ Despite the fact that most of these conditions are arguably lacking in American democracy, Dahl has the annoying habit of contradicting his own necessary and sufficient conditions to assume that there in fact is what he calls democracy or self-government in America. This seems to signal that his conceptions of "effective participation", "enlightened understanding" and "final control of the agenda" which are to be transferred to the workplace will lead to an equally ineffectual form of "democracy" in that sphere as well.

⁸ Dahl recognizes that this does not justify applying the *democratic process* to every context: "a claim to democracy as a matter of right [is justified] in any association of any kind for which the assumptions are valid." (Dahl 61)

Accepting, for now, that Dahl has correctly identified what a "truly democratic process" would entail, we will consider why he thinks that (most) adult (American) citizens have a right to live in a democracy. Unfortunately, this point is given only a brief "defence", again by referring to the four fundamental assumptions that we saw above:

Members of any association for whom the assumptions of the democratic process are valid have a right to govern themselves by means of the democratic process. If, as we believe, those assumptions hold among us... then we have a right to govern ourselves democratically. (Dahl 135)

One assumes, therefore, that his argument for a right to democracy follows from the fundamental importance that this particular "human association" places on the four assumptions. Because he says that the only decision-making process which is rationally consistent with these four (moral) assumptions is his "democratic process"⁹, this process would therefore be morally obligatory for this particular community, so each individual in this association can therefore claim a right to the various opportunities offered by this decision-making process. As opposed to a concept of "natural" rights, Dahl's "alternative way" of thinking about fundamental political rights therefore rejects the view that one can have prior

⁹ Any "rational belief in democracy", he says, must entail the belief that "in a certain kind of human association, the process of government should as far as possible meet democratic criteria, because people in this kind of association possess a right, an inalienable right to govern themselves by the democratic process". (Dahl 57-58)

rights which are exercised "against" the political process.¹⁰ Instead, the only morally legitimate right is one which conforms to the fundamental moral assumptions of a particular community. And because the particular assumptions listed earlier are said to ground a right to the democratic process, any people who share the assumptions are therefore morally "entitled to all the rights that are necessary for them to govern themselves--that is, all the rights necessary to the democratic process".¹¹ (Dahl 62)

Let us accept, again, that Dahl's democratic process defines the only free, equal and fair and (thus) democratic way of aggregating the interests of individuals as he defines them. On pain of contradiction, he says, Americans should therefore have democratic input into all of the binding decisions of any associations to which they belong¹². And because the democratic process *should* prevail in *all* such associations, it should therefore prevail in the workplace. So it is the very principles which justify the democratic process in the state that Dahl concludes will justify it in the

¹⁰ The notion of prior rights, he says, is that certain rights "possess a moral existence, a standing, an ontological basis... altogether independent of democracy and democratic processes". (Dahl 61)

¹¹ These rights, for Dahl, include civil liberties, a right to private property, and a right to education and healthcare.

¹² Since it is the same agents, carrying the same fundamental assumptions and values into each and every association to which they belong.

workplace. Says Dahl:

...my argument is that self-government in work need not be justified entirely by its consequences, for, as in the state, it is justified as a matter of right. (Dahl 153)

However, is it correct for Dahl to assume that the workplace is an analogous, binding association to which Americans belong as a matter of right? While we may draw the inference that it is the same (adult American) individuals with the same fundamental assumptions who spend their time in the workplace so the same assumptions should therefore apply to that sphere of activity, Dahl spends very little time showing relevant, concrete similarities between the workplace and government. The most he explicitly says about this issue occurs in a brief discussion of how the decisions reached in both spheres are similarly binding. The decisions made in an economic enterprise, he says, effect the employees in equally important ways as decisions reached by the state (or perhaps even more), because it is the very livelihood of the employees which is at stake. Moreover, as it is in the state, workers are compelled to follow the decisions reached through the decision-making process in an enterprise (on pain of becoming socially displaced and losing their livelihood).

Dahl's strongest (negative) defence of the analogy between these two spheres occurs in his reply to the following common objection:

...if, on the contrary, private ownership is a natural and inalienable right, then conceivably that right might be *superior* to the right to self-government, and a people might not be entitled to infringe that right even through

the democratic process. (Dahl 64)

Clearly, such a conflict in values would make the two spheres critically disanalogous, and therefore effectively dissolve his argument for self-government in the workplace. However, even though this conflict between the relative priority of democracy and property rights has been around since the beginning of the United States, Dahl points out that there has also been a concurrent "background of agreement, an agreement that arose early and entered deeply into the American consciousness". (Dahl 65) This agreement, he says, is that there is a natural right to private property which ought to be protected by government. And since ancient times, he says, it has been recognized that property and democracy will only come into conflict when there is an unequal distribution of property. From one perspective, democracy or the political equality of citizens is seen as a threat to a natural right to property. From another perspective, the threat is reversed. So, in their adoption of the "classical republican solution", Dahl argues that the founders of America sought to ensure that economic resources were somehow evenly distributed. Thus, he says, the underlying basis and origin for the so-called "natural right" to private property was intended from the beginning to be somewhat constrained, and was therefore never considered a *prior right*.

However, while the predominantly agrarian economy that existed at the formation of the United States may have

provided for this necessary degree of "equality of condition" among white American males¹³, Dahl tells us that this "historically rare and probably unique" situation did not last long. In its stead, a "revolutionary transformation" in ownership and control of the economy occurred with the introduction of "commercial and industrial capitalism", and the resulting lack of resources among some of the citizens tended to create significant inequalities in their capacities and opportunities to participate as political equals in the governance of both the state and economic enterprises. Over time, these inequalities resulted in vast differences of wealth, income, status, skills, information, control of information and propaganda, access to political leaders:

...and, on the average, predictable life chances, not only for mature adults, but also for the unborn, infants, and children. (Dahl 55)

The reason this occurred, he says, is that the property rights which were intended to ensure adequate personal property and thus protect individuals from the democratic incursions of a majority were transferred to the new corporate "citizens". Ironically, these subsidiary rights that were originally intended to protect and further the democratic process therefore came to produce the opposite effect. Instead of protecting individuals from the collective, the right to private property has therefore meant that individual

¹³ He might want to add western European, propertied and un-indentured to this list.

capitalists came to control vast numbers of citizens by constraining their political freedom to make certain (often very necessary) choices.

As we saw earlier, political equality, for Dahl, is intrinsic to the democratic ideal because it is only as a "self-sufficient equal" that one can forcefully assert her or his own individual self-interests in a political competition with others. In fact, he says, the democratic criteria listed above "fully specify" what he means by the term political equality, "for political equals would surely be persons among whom the criteria are met". (Dahl 60)¹⁴ So, because political equality is necessary for a "just" democratic process, and because "we insist that our economic order must help to bring about these values, or at the very least not impair them", (Dahl 84) Dahl therefore argues that the property rights of capitalists which have stood in the way of political equality need to be reconceptualized and changed.

It is only through the creation of a "self-regulating egalitarian order" of social ownership and control of enterprises, he argues, that Americans will be able to "generate a greater equality of condition" required to overcome "the opposition of a powerful, well-entrenched

¹⁴ Because this "equality of political resources" is said to include a limited re-distribution of income, wealth, and status, political equality is intended to ensure that no individual is subject to overt, economic and social coercion by others, thus preserving the Lockean ideal of self-government.

minority in a polarized national conflict". Until this is done, Dahl argues that American democracy will continue to be undemocratic and unjust. Thus, a major justification for self-governing enterprises, for Dahl, is the

...contribution they might make to the values of justice and democracy. If they were about as efficient as present firms, if they did not diminish fundamental liberties, and if at the same time they were superior in their consequences for democracy and justice, then they would be definitely better. (Dahl 93)

Although this quotation may appear to reintroduce the debate over the value of democracy in comparison with an alleged "fundamental liberty" to possess private property, Dahl openly rejects the possibility that the "private ownership of corporate enterprise [is] a fundamental moral right" (Dahl 74), so it cannot possibly even be in competition with the value of democracy. Even if we accept that everyone has a moral right to economic liberty¹⁵, he says, this will not secure a natural right to private ownership of corporations:

We cannot leap from my entitlement to secure possession of the shirt on my back or the cash in my pocket to a fundamental moral right to acquire shares in IBM and therewith the standard rights of ownership that shareholdings legally convey. (Dahl 75)

One reason we cannot make such a leap, he argues, is that a

¹⁵ That is, even if we agree (as Dahl does) with the claim that the exercise of political liberties requires "sure and protected access" to some "resources" as a necessary condition, this would in no way support the private ownership of economic enterprises. In fact, says Dahl, it would only justify access to a minimum of resources, and "not the right to acquire an indefinitely large supply of resources" (Dahl 82).

"property right"--as it is legally defined--is not a single right which can be compared to the right to democracy, because it includes many different rights, such as rights to use, to manage, to consume, to waste, to modify or destroy, etc. So, if a right to private property is intended to include all of these various sub-rights (or obligations), then "we should have to conclude that no legal system has ever fully sustained the claim of a natural right to property" (Dahl 76), since a good deal of what is normally considered as private property cannot possibly fit the legal definition. Conversely, because one aspect of the legal definition prohibits the harmful use of one's property, Dahl says that this criteria could be so broadly interpreted that it would essentially make a claim to property meaningless.

Dahl concludes that the onus is therefore on the supporter of a natural right to private property to describe that right and to show how it allegedly justifies the ownership of economic enterprises. Robert Nozick's *entitlement theory* cannot fit this bill, argues Dahl, because corporate property could not possibly pass the test of Nozick's two principles of justice.¹⁶ Similarly, a labour theory of

¹⁶ The first principle is that the property must have been "justly acquired" originally and the second is that it must have been justly transferred from someone who was originally entitled to hold the property. Says Dahl:

...no one with the barest knowledge of the history of economic enterprises in this country, and probably any other, would want to contend... that corporate holdings meet Nozick's rigorous requirements. Nor does Nozick himself advance such a claim. (Dahl 77)

property acquisition and entitlement is simultaneously too narrow and too broad. Locke, for example, required that no one take more than they could use and leave "enough and as good" for everyone else. This clearly does not match any conceivable corporate *mission statement*. Moreover, Locke's requirement that one's property be "marked by the work of his [sic] hands" hardly provides a useful justification of the distant interventions of many individuals within the realm of corporate capitalism. Finally, with respect to possible utilitarian arguments that the private ownership of corporations is somehow necessary for a "greater good", Dahl says that such arguments:

...can never establish a right as natural, inalienable, or indefeasible. For a right that may be justified as useful given one set of facts will have to be condemned as harmful given another set. (Dahl 82)

Because any conscientious utilitarian must also weigh the effects of this right on such things as the viability of the political process, equality, justice, efficiency, economic freedom and other important values, Dahl thinks that any legitimate notion of the greater good would easily fall on the side of caution and place the value of democracy well above that of private property for corporations.

Because corporate property rights cannot supersede democratic rights, Dahl concludes that there is no strong disanalogy between the government and economic enterprises. If the fundamental American values are to be consistently applied, then the democratic process must be applied to

transform American workplaces into a system of "self-governed enterprises". This economic system, he says:

...is a system of economic enterprises collectively owned and democratically governed by all the people who work in them. By democratically governed, I mean that within each enterprise decision making would be designed so far as possible to satisfy the criteria for the democratic process..., and thereby to achieve political equality and the protection of primary political rights within the firm. (Dahl 91)

With a democratisation of ownership and control over enterprises, argues Dahl, Americans will return to the basic political equality that existed at the beginning of the United States, and reflect a truer vision of democracy than is available at present¹⁷.

In Dahl's argument, one finds the seeds of an interesting justification for workplace democracy. This germane argument may be summed up as follows: if one thinks that some form of democratic control is justified in the political sphere, then she or he must provide some convincing reason to think that it is inappropriate to apply democracy to the workplace. Why, in other words, accept democracy in one's political system and aristocracy in the economic one? Dahl's reply to the answer that a right to property somehow supersedes democratic rights

¹⁷ This argument seems to posit a stronger conclusion than its premises allow for. At best, democracy may be improved for those who are not excluded from working.

in the workplace leaves the supporters of traditional management arrangements scrambling for a consistent argument to support their contention.

However, although this seed is there, Dahl's underlying assumptions about individuals tend to uproot this fledgling sprout by disallowing the possibility of a sustainable democratic system. These unexamined assumptions leads him to see persons as entirely separate beings with separate bundles of interests and desires. He appears to mainly ignore the many plausible social and historical determinations of the choices and actions of individuals which have been pointed to by communitarian critics, and relations between persons, for him, appear to be purely instrumental and usually harmful (unless kept in close check by a mutually agreed upon controlling procedure). Given this, Dahl's democratic argument cannot even germinate within the constraints he has laid out, because his implicit model of human nature appears to be at odds with the type of democratic character required for a sustainable political system. There are a variety of other-regarding values which seem to be required to promote and reinforce the degrees of social cooperation needed to sustain a viable democratic system. If the only motivations available to persons are based on pure self-interest, then the possibility of there being anything like the degree of social cohesion, cooperation and tolerance required for a viable democratic

system would appear to be very remote.¹⁸ Moreover, because Dahl regards individuals as isolated and unaffected by social determinations, he cannot (and does not¹⁹) argue that the democratic process will develop conditions in which other-regarding values will be created. Says Dahl:

A system of self-governing enterprises would not, of course, eliminate conflicting interests, goals, perspectives, and ideologies among citizens. (Dahl 110)

On the other hand, even if one neglects these problems and the seed of Dahl's argument does manage to "grow", when applied in practice it will result in a rather bitter fruit. His failure to adequately address the social influences on one's choices and actions appears to lead Dahl to ignore much of the manipulation of the electorate and blatant disinformation that typifies the present American political system. And because he wishes to extend this political process

¹⁸ In fact, one wonders why powerful individuals would even choose to become democratically involved? If self-interest is the only motivation, then one with sufficient resources would have few reasons to voluntarily submit to democratic constraints.

¹⁹ It appears that Dahl contradicts himself on this point. In one place, he seems to unwittingly admit that one's social institutions can have a formative effect on her or his values. Self-governing workplaces, he says:

...would tend to reduce the conflict of interests, give all citizens a more nearly equal stake in maintaining political equality and democratic institutions in the government of the state, and facilitate the development of a stronger consensus on standards of fairness. (Dahl 110)

This resulting increase in "enlightened understanding" seems to contradict his underlying view of the nature of individuals as purely self-interested, and it signals a contradiction of his assumption that individuals develop their desires and values fully independent of the influence of others.

to economic enterprises, the result will simply be to import all of the problems endemic to that system into the sphere of the workplace. For instance, when applying his abstract criterion of "effective participation" to the "self-governed enterprises", it is unclear whether or not Dahl intends to transfer the corresponding massive voter disaffection and an embarrassingly low voter turnout as well. And Dahl fails to elaborate on how "effective" each "voter" in a workplace will be if the present systemic social inequalities between citizens (e.g. as women, racial and ethnic minorities, disabled persons, etc.) lead to a situation in which certain members of effectively disenfranchised social groups are manipulated or controlled by others who are from more dominant social groups.²⁰ Finally, it is unclear what Dahl means when he argues for extending the "final control of the agenda" to "voters" in the workplace, especially in light of the fact that he accepts the transference of the *rule of experts* to economic enterprises:

No doubt executives, because of their special skills and opportunities, would tend to exercise more influence on many matters than rank-and-file members, and to this extent self-governing firms would violate strict criteria of political equality and the democratic process. But then so too do all other democratic organizations, and there is no reason to think that self-governing enterprises would satisfy democratic criteria less than other organizations, including local and national

²⁰ Because overcoming these systemic inequalities appears (at least in good part) to require individuals to develop new moral conceptions of others, it is unclear how Dahl can deal with these problems without providing some conception of how persons can come to develop other-regarding values.

governments. (Dahl 154)

So, while Dahl may be right that simply transferring the democratic process to the workplace would not be any worse than existing political democracy, it appears that he has done little to show that this extension would be much better. Though his attempt to justify workplace democracy as a matter of right does have some value as a plausible argument for workplace democracy, Dahl's argument therefore stumbles on his inconsistent or incomplete view of the individual. Because democracy ultimately means the rule of the *demos*, it would therefore appear that any argument for expanding worker participation and control which rests on the value of democracy but fails to fully investigate the nature of persons will ultimately fail, because it will simply transfer the problems and biases of existing political democracy to the workplace.

Section II: Carole Pateman

In her book *Participation and Democratic Theory*²¹, Carole Pateman offers her readers a consequentialist argument for "participatory workplace democracy" in which she argues that it is participation in democratic decision-making which will most efficiently provide individual citizens with the necessary conditions required for effective participation in the political sphere. At the most general level, her argument is that if *democracy* (i.e. participatory political democracy) is valuable, then anything that contributes to democracy is also to be valued. So, because greater participation by workers in economic enterprises is the best way of limiting economic coercion and teaching the necessary democratic skills, values and attitudes required for a *sustainable* democratic system, it is therefore instrumentally justified by the intrinsic value of political democracy.

Like we saw above with Dahl, to fill in her argument Pateman first establishes what she thinks democracy *is* and why it is valuable. However, unlike Dahl, Pateman's conception of

²¹ Pateman, Carole. Participation and Democratic Theory, London: Cambridge University Press, 1970. This book will be cited as "Pateman", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

democracy is not merely a procedure for representing, aggregating, or calculating individual interests. It is also the means by which individuals (can) come to consciously develop certain latent capacities and modes of cooperation that are sustainable and supportive of further democratic participation. Following Rousseau, Pateman argues that the psychological qualities, attitudes and values of individuals are formed in the context of the institutions and authority structures in which they are immersed. In the present socio-political context, Pateman argues that what is called "democracy" is actually undemocratic, because most individuals have being "trained for subservience" through a lack of critical education, access to basic needs, education in group decision-making, etc., so they are incapable of ruling themselves. Thus, to consider democracy as a mere aggregation of individual interests or desires is in no way to develop a political system which represents "the people" as they actually are, since a part of what a person is is developed as a result of the particular social structures and institutions in which she or he is immersed. Because people are (at least partially) determined in this way, for individuals to be truly self-governing or self-directing requires that they have effective participation in the organization and regulation of the institutions and associations by which they are effected. The institutional form of democracy which adequately recognizes this fact, according to Pateman, is therefore a

participatory one in which the people participate in governing every level of their own affairs.²²

Like Dahl's recommended democratic process, this political system would have to incorporate a protective function²³, to ensure that no individual would be unduly subjected to the desires and actions of another. And because mere participation in a decision is not the same as having sufficient power to control the outcome of the decision-making process, Pateman agrees with Rousseau that an enhancement of this protective function is required, in order to include a guarantee that each person will have an equal access to at least her or his minimum *basic human needs*. Without this provision, the withholding of one's most essential needs could be used as leverage by those with ample resources to exact certain kinds of "choices" out of those who lack them²⁴. A second benefit that would follow is an *equalizing function*,

²² As we will see further below, rather than simply reifying the present values that individuals hold, as Dahl seemed to do, Pateman therefore argues that democracy can serve as a means of changing those very values, so that they may eventually create a more sustainable democratic system by producing the necessary other-regarding values that eluded Dahl.

²³ For Dahl, this function is fulfilled mainly by constraints of inclusiveness, fairness and equal liberty. Concrete protection, for him, appear at most to take the form of an enhanced system of welfare.

²⁴ Pateman does not only include corporations in the category of "those with ample resources". For example, a wealthy landowner could exact agreement or subservience out of landless individuals by blocking access to the means of subsistence.

according to Pateman, which would allow for a greater degree of *legitimation* of the decisions which are arrived at. Because of the widespread political equality (ensured by a more concrete conception of economic equality), citizens would likely be more ready to accept decisions which they have played an effective part in making.²⁵ Finally, Pateman accepts a last democratic safeguard suggested by Rousseau, which seeks to maintain equal degrees of power between whatever social groups or associations which may arise, so that no one group or cartel can gain effective political control over another.²⁶

Beyond these instrumental benefits of democratic

²⁵ Perhaps this is what Dahl had in mind when he wrote that "laws cannot rightfully be imposed on others by persons who are not themselves obliged to obey those laws" (Dahl 57). Considering this point as a concretely legitimating factor rather than a merely abstract assumption seems to carry us much closer to an effective argument for a more (concretely) sustainable democratic process.

²⁶ This signals a further practical problem which I failed to mention above in the section on Dahl. He recognizes that the existence of "market forces" between enterprises will have potentially damaging effects on political equality:

...interfirm... differentials would create differences in personal resources that conceivably might be large enough to have adverse effects both on political equality and on our standards of fairness. (Dahl 108)

Certain enterprises, for whatever reason, will inevitably be more profitable than others, and this might ultimately lead to the economic manipulation of one enterprise by another. However, although he seems to recognize this, Dahl fails to offer any resolution to this problem, and simply tells his readers that:

...it would be foolish for me to try to prescribe here the specific solutions a country ought to adopt, much less to predict the pragmatic solutions it would be likely to adopt. (Dahl 139)

Pateman seems to at least point us in the direction of a resolution here by suggesting a redistribution or limitation of wealth among economic enterprises as well as individuals.

participation, Pateman suggests that the greatest inherent value of the participatory democratic process is what I call its "developmental function". Mere participation among economic and political equals will in no way guarantee smooth and sustainable decision-making. In order for social decision-making process to be cohesive rather than fractured, Pateman agrees with Rousseau that the most important function of a political system is its tendency "to develop responsible individual social and political action". (Pateman 24-25) Participatory democracy, in her view, will create such individuals from among our presently fractured and self-interested citizenry. Besides "teaching" individuals the technical details required to work within a democratic group process, participating in a democratic association--on a more equal economic footing with others--also provides a much deeper kind of social development or education. First, she says, individuals will be "forced" to learn or develop cooperative relations with others in order to satisfy their own individual needs. Under such conditions of social and economic equality, no one will be able to control individuals access to their basic needs, so all participants are on an equal footing in the struggle to gain the necessary social cooperation required to fulfil their own interests (beyond a bare minimum). Thus, individuals will come to develop a view of each other as beings with equally valid interests which must be taken into consideration. And because this required

degree of cooperation cannot be found if a decision is not also in the interests of the others, coercion will therefore tend to decline, and social cooperation will tend to increase. In this way, individuals will come to automatically mediate their particular desires according to a sense of justice or fairness that develops as they begin to take into consideration the interests of everyone else.

This fundamental social development, therefore, will lead individuals to consider how their own individual interests are mediated or determined in a directly experienced way, and this will become universalized as individuals come to see the many other social determinations and considerations related to the wider socio-historical context. Moreover, effective participation in an association can also help to develop the personal qualities and attitudes which are necessary for social cooperation and participation to work. For instance, such a system would functionally require agents who feel competent in their abilities and politically efficacious in their actions. Through experiencing that she or he can effectively work with others to reach concretely valuable decisions, a participatory democratic system, once instituted, will therefore tend to "feed" itself, since it will tend to create the kind of individual feelings of efficacy required to make it function in a self-promoting and self-sustaining way. The more the system promotes these traits, the greater the integrity of the "feedback loop". Such functional soundness

would therefore provide for a high degree of social participation and dynamism, while at the same time ensuring self-sustainability (by maintaining a high degree of social cooperation, legitimation, and personal satisfaction). A political system which would produce these necessary conditions for its perpetual renewal, says Pateman, would indeed be an intrinsically valuable accomplishment. So, rather than justifying the value of democracy on the basis of common assumptions about what is right--as Dahl has done--Pateman instead argues that the ultimate justification for participatory democracy lies in its potential for *developing* the kinds of individuals required for a functionally integral or self-sustaining political system.

Having established the value of political democracy in terms of this functional sustainability, Pateman then moves to the next step in her argument. It is clear to her that the high degree of cooperation required for an effective democratic process is sorely lacking in western, capitalist countries. In order to start the "feedback loop" moving, Pateman therefore urges that we find a way to begin a *developmental process* which will create the necessary social and individual attributes required for effective democratic participation in one's political system. In arriving at her suggestion of how this can be done, Pateman turns to the writings of J.S. Mill, who tells us that:

A political act, to be done only once in a few years, and for which nothing in the daily habits of the citizen has

prepared him [sic], leaves his [sic] intellect and his [sic] moral dispositions very much as it found them. (J.S. Mill, quoted in Pateman 30)

Pateman agrees with Mill, and argues that adequate preparation for political participation at a national level will therefore require regular and consistent participatory "training" at a more local level. Moreover, she says, Mill argues for a version of the *developmental function* of political participation in at least two ways: first, Mill says that the particular benefits of participating in collective decision-making at a local level (i.e. municipal politics, for Mill) are that the individual will learn to develop "a public spirit" by dealing with issues with which she or he was intimately familiar and directly effected by the outcome. Secondly, at this level of participation, the individual could potentially become elected to serve as a political representative on a local body and thus become prepared for acting in a truly representative manner at a wider political level.²⁷ However, Pateman argues that Mill did not think that

²⁷ Pateman points out that Mill's actual support for participatory democracy is much less than it should have been. Mill, by calling for a system of weighted voting in which the wealthy were given more votes than workers, therefore actually attacked rather than enhanced the very political equality he intended to create through this form of *political education*. The result of any such system of weighted voting, argues Pateman, is that the majority of citizens would be disinterested in participating in a process in which they felt completely ineffectual because they lacked control. So, because the developmental effects of Mill's system of democracy would therefore be lost on the majority of the citizens, Pateman considers Mill's prescriptions to be ultimately self-contradictory.

participation at a "lower level" of politics alone would provide a sufficient "education" for quality participation by citizens at a national level. What is instead required, for Mill, is a greater degree of participation in the decisions made in the individuals workplace:

Just as participation in the government of the collective interest in local politics educates the individual in social responsibility so participation in the management of the collective interest of an industrial organization fosters and develops the qualities in the individual that he [sic] needs for public activities. (J.S. Mill, quoted in Pateman 34)

This workplace democratization, in Mill's view, would allow the necessary "hands-on" experience among workers who spend a great deal of their lives together, working on common projects with which they are intimately acquainted. Pateman generalizes this thesis, and argues that participation in decision making among persons with adequate degrees of equality and shared goals will mean that certain participatory skills and dispositions are developed, and these skills and dispositions will then be transferred to the political realm.

Pateman goes to great lengths to provide her readers with empirical evidence to show that these democratic dispositions or "feelings" of "political efficacy"²⁸ will result from participating in decisions in one's workplace. Because an individual knows the environment, understands the essential tasks, and realizes the part that one's co-workers contribute

²⁸ Political efficacy is defined by Pateman as a feeling of confidence in one's ability to effectively or usefully participate in decisions.

to the completion of that task, she or he is therefore in a much better position to develop the required democratic skills and genuine willingness to cooperate with others. However, she cautions that simply developing this *feeling* that one's participation is effective is clearly not enough. The evidence also shows, on her reading, that the developmental effects of participation are maximized under conditions in which people have access to all the relevant information required to make a decision, and an "equality of independence" to determine the outcome of the group's decisions. This "equality of independence", she says, requires that each participant has an equal "power" to influence the decisions in the association. As mentioned earlier, this requires certain civil liberties and an equal access to a critical education and the necessary economic needs required to limit political coercion by those with a greater share of the resources.²⁹ And, in addition to addressing past inequalities of opportunity and security, Pateman argues that the workplace is also the best place to confront the inequalities of social status that seemed to

²⁹ In asserting this, Pateman denies Rousseau's assumption that the political equality of citizens can be protected by ensuring small land-holdings for everyone. Instead, borrowing from the ideas of G.D.F. Cole, she states that in a twentieth century context, a peasant's subsistence would have little value in protecting a person from "political intimidation", since our needs have expanded to a degree that can no longer be satisfied by subsistence farming. Instead, we need to learn the valuable lessons of working with others in a political context in which we are all aware of the shared goals and purposes of the association.

confound Dahl.³⁰ Thus, by "equality of independence", Pateman also means that all of the participants can not be limited in their powers to "set the agenda" and form all the decisions of the group.

Because it is these potential benefits that provide the basis of Pateman's support for workplace democracy, the question seems to arise as to whether these preconditions for a better political democracy could be produced more efficiently by some other means. Pateman thinks not. Her reasons for choosing the workplace as the best location for developing greater equality and a sense of political efficacy, as we saw above, are therefore threefold: first, it is the most efficient way of eliminating economic coercion of political decisions, by ensuring a fair and equitable access to basic needs within the context of the productive capacity

³⁰ The particular problem referred to by Pateman is the potential that status differences between workers and managers may thwart the beneficial psychological effects of participation by keeping the workers in a subservient frame of mind. Though she thinks that some form of representation will be required in modern mass industry, Pateman argues that those with authority will not develop a relative autonomy because their role will be defined in terms of their functional relation to the purposes of a politically empowered guild in a workplace. The "iron rule of oligarchy" will be circumvented, she argues, because the high feelings of efficacy among employees will allow them to feel confident about recalling a representative, and the representative will come to see themselves in terms of their role within the enterprise and recognize the harm that will arise if that role is left unfulfilled. Because this representative will know the group better, and those who appoint her or him are more intimately acquainted with the organization's needs, everyone will come to make more responsible and well-informed choices, and oligarchy will be averted.

of each workplace; second, the goals of a particular enterprise are fairly straight-forward, so the people working together in an enterprise are intimately aware of the practical operations and the purpose of their association to such a degree that they could easily learn to manage the direction of their firm within the guidelines of those goals; and finally, Pateman argues that, because industry, next to the state, is the greatest area of superior/subordinate relations where "workers are trained for subservience", those who seek to improve democracy should focus a good deal of their attention on the kind of individual development that occurs there.³¹

The system which Pateman proposes for economic enterprises is a form of "guild-socialism", in which each person's political equality would be ensured by their guild. By allowing for more participation in a workplace where political equality is ensured, workers will learn to overcome their "training for subservience" by coming to feel more effective in governing their own collective affairs. In turn, she says, these feelings of empowerment should lead workers to demand more control in the other areas of their lives (i.e.

³¹ One thing that Pateman fails to see is that not everyone has a job. Because of that, many of the democratic benefits which are to accrue to workers as a result of workplace participation would be lost on scores of unemployed people.

especially in the political sphere)³².

In sum, then, by fostering a working environment in which employees are not only encouraged but also required to take control of their own destiny in cooperation with others, Pateman argues that it is far more likely that the degree and kind of democratic education which is required to enhance participation in the management of a whole country will result.

As opposed to the one offered by Dahl above, Pateman's argument for the value of democracy is not established as much on the basis of commonly accepted values as on the potential of democratic participation to produce or develop the kinds of social and individual skills and character traits required to make a democratic system functionally stable or self-sustaining. And because this potential is assumed to be universally applicable to all humans, Pateman's argument for

³² Moreover, following G.D.F. Cole's suggestions, Pateman argues for a formal structure between guilds through the institutionalization of geographical and industrial-based worker's councils, similar to the system that was most recently seen in (what was once) Yugoslavia. These worker's councils would not only mediate the difficulties associated with "stronger enterprises" overshadowing "weaker" ones, but would also provide for the wider political education that Mill thought would arise in municipal politics, by teaching rank and file employees the intricacies of mediating the particular interests of their enterprise with the wider interests of other groups of workers with whom they must cooperate in order to meet larger, collectively-defined goals.

democracy can therefore be acceptable to anyone, and not just to those Americans who share Dahl's particular set of values. Moreover, by inference we see that Pateman's view of the individual proves to be an important advancement over the one assumed by Dahl, because it brings us closer to a clearer understanding of the kinds of social and economic factors which shape the persons who are to democratically rule. Though both authors express an interest in democracy (as a form of *self-government*), Pateman's understanding of the "self" seems to be more robust, and begins to reveal how it is that one's values, desires and interests are necessarily shaped by the form of social relations which one has with others. Because particular forms of social decision-making in a particular system tend to change the nature of the persons who are immersed in them in particular ways, Pateman says that a supporter of democracy therefore cannot simply understand this process as representing persons as they "are", but instead must operate with a *vision* of persons as they have the potential to become. Pateman's particular "vision" is that, through promoting the conditions necessary for all individuals to participate in the decisions which effect them, this will promote higher levels of social (and moral) cohesion and thus greater democratic sustainability. The democratic system, for Pateman, therefore exists not merely to aggregate atomistic interests and desires, but instead as a means of forging *legitimate* cohesion through mass participation in shaping

those institutions which tend to shape us.

At the same time, however, Pateman's argument is not without its own flaws. Because she establishes the intrinsic value of democracy on the basis of its functional sustainability--i.e. on its tendency to create the kind of democratic characteristics in the citizens that are required for the political system to be stable--what she has failed to do is to show where the value of this functional integrity stands in relation to other important values. If one were able to show, for example, that economic efficiency would suffer because of her form of guild socialism, the onus would clearly shift to Pateman to show that a functional democratic system is of a sufficiently higher value than efficiency³³ to justify overriding these concerns.

Related to this criticism is a second point: even if we accept that particular institutional practices *necessarily* create certain democratic virtues or characteristics, other than her argument that these virtues will provide a functionally stable political system, Pateman appears to provide no independent argument whatsoever for promoting these particular virtues. If sustainability is the ultimate value to be achieved, then perhaps this same argument could equally justify a slightly adjusted form of fascism. In the name of an abstract interest in a functionally sustainable participatory

³³ Though Pateman argues that efficiency or productivity would in fact increase, she does not tell us why she thinks this.

political system, Pateman's recommended social engineering could therefore have the potential danger of leading one down a dangerous path which would seriously conflict with other highly valued ideals of personal freedom and autonomy.³⁴

A further difficulty faces Pateman's particular argument when her model of workplace democracy is applied in practice. Since her book was published, it has been shown that social status differences between the workers in an enterprise will effect the amount of political control and (therefore) real input that particular workers will have in that workplace. For instance, in studies of self-managed industries in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, it was found that white collar workers tended to make the majority of the higher-level decisions, while blue collar workers tended only to deal with lower-level, 'shop-floor' decisions.³⁵ So if Pateman intends workplace democracy to effectively train all workers to be

³⁴ Although I cannot go into it at this early point in the paper, accepting a strong view that social institutions or relations "socially determine" what an individual can choose or value can steer one into another messy set of problems. For example, if one's social and material relations make up or cause everything a person is, then how can it be possible to make the kind of autonomous decision required to begin our social or moral "re-construction project"? And is it possible to develop standards to decide how we wish to develop which are not heteronomously given by our social, historical or biological circumstances? These criticisms will be developed in greater depth later in the sections on Carol Gould and Mihailo Markovic.

³⁵ See Verba, Sidney, Norman Nie, and Kim Jae-on. Participation and Political Equality. London: Cambridge University Press, 1978, pp. 57-79, 292-93 for a discussion of studies which reached this conclusion.

equally adept at democratic participation, then differences in social status will clearly mean that this result will not be achieved for many of the less privileged workers.³⁶

A third (and very serious) difficulty with Pateman's argument has to do with the conditional nature of her argument for accepting workplace democracy. Because her argument is that this will create the kind of economic equality, sense of justice and personal characteristics needed for a functionally self-sustaining political democracy, if it could be shown that a society's basic needs could be provided for and the various political virtues could be created in some way other than workplace democracy,³⁷ then it would appear that the whole

³⁶ In her (much later) article entitled "Some Reflections on Participation and Democratic Theory" (Organizational Democracy and Political Processes. Eds. C. Crouch and F. Heller. London: John Wiley and Sons, 1983, pp.108-120), Pateman herself admits to having missed this more general point. Referring to the secondary status of women workers, Pateman says that:

Some very large questions arise, but have not yet been recognized by writers on workplace participation, about how workers of secondary status, who do two shifts, can take their place as equal participants and full members of democratic workplaces. (Reflections 117)

"If 'democracy' is truly to mean the active participation of all the people", she says, then the "democratization of power structures and redistribution of economic resources" is clearly not enough. There must also be "social changes that ensure that those people, especially women, at present confined to the periphery of political and organisational life become full and equal members". (Reflections 110) Thus, the extension of democracy which Pateman had earlier argued would result from the introduction of participatory workplaces clearly requires far more significant social changes in other areas if it is to be effective.

³⁷ Perhaps through some combination of guaranteed annual income and educational reforms.

foundation of her argument for workplace democracy would crumble.

Even without this plausible counterfactual, there are other glaring problems with this aspect of her argument. First, what evidence is there that simply creating a "feeling of efficacy" in employees will even result in real, effective control by all the workers in an enterprise? Though she has argued that anything less than "full control" would constitute a "pseudo-democracy", one can look at cases in which employees have appeared (at least to themselves) to have had effective control within a company--through "job enlargement", "job enrichment" and "quality of work" initiatives--yet in reality the agenda has been subtly "fixed" by management-heavy committees before the employee's input has ever been allowed.³⁸ In such cases, a good deal of the necessary objective conditions and all of the subjective conditions that Pateman said were required for the consequential benefits of workplace democracy to accrue appear to be present, even though the particular workplace has not actually been controlled by the workers themselves. So maybe feelings of political efficacy can be had even within a "pseudo-

³⁸ In "Reflections", Pateman notes this point: An emphasis on psychology is not necessarily connected to an interest in democratization. Rather it lends itself very readily to advocacy of a wide variety of schemes that fall into my category of pseudo-participation, i.e. 'participation' that leaves the structure of power intact but enables management to obtain the collaboration of workers in making changes. (Reflections 110-11)

democratic" workplace, thus weakening her proffered model for economic enterprises.

On the other hand, the evidence that persons with *feelings of efficacy* will become more politically involved appears to be sketchy, at best. Firstly, the evidence to prove that these character traits even develop at all is somewhat contradictory.³⁹ Secondly, the evidence for the hypothesis that developing these character traits will necessarily transfer to other areas of one's life is also somewhat mixed.⁴⁰ Finally, it is not at all clear, for example, that the introduction of worker self-managed industries in (what was formerly) Yugoslavia led to a rush of newly politicized workers into political activism, agitation, or even participation.⁴¹ In fact, one could argue the opposite, by saying that it is plausible that a good deal of workers time and energy would be diverted to committee work within the

³⁹ In his article entitled "Industrial Self-Management and Political Attitudes" (American Political Science Review 75, 1978, pp. 29-42), Edward Greenberg concludes from a study of plywood cooperatives in the American Pacific Northwest that the workers showed no increase in "feelings of cooperation, equality, generosity and self-confidence". On the plus side, however, in his article "Political Efficacy at Work" (American Political Science Review 75, 1978 pp. 43-58) John Elden concludes from a study of an American west coast paper plant that workplace participation *did* lead to an increase in satisfaction and personal growth which resulted in increased feelings of political efficacy.

⁴⁰ Again, for example, see the different conclusions reached by Edward Greenberg and John Elden in their studies listed above.

⁴¹ For evidence of this, see the study by Sidney Verba, et. al.

workplace, so this could actually result in reduced worker militancy or activism outside the workplace (due to a lack of time or energy).⁴²

At the end of it all, it therefore appears that, like Dahl, what Pateman ultimately relies on is an analogy between the workplace and the political realm. The difference, of course, is that she requires this analogy to show how the kinds of lesson and dispositions developed in the workplace will necessarily transfer to one's political participation, even though there may be dramatic differences between the two spheres. Unfortunately, though, Pateman spends no time dealing directly with this analogy by revealing the salient similarities and dismissing unimportant differences. In fact, she even neglects to show how it is that the attitudinal changes and skills that are said to result from workplace participation are even relevant to the political sphere. Clearly, to make her case, this "analogical gap" between the workplace and the political sphere must be closed if she wishes to argue that the experiences gleaned in one sphere will necessarily transfer to the other. It is in this connection that I now turn to the work of Ronald Mason.

⁴² In News From Somewhere (Conneticut: Greenwood Press, 1986, pp. 140-41), Gary Lewis shows empirical evidence that mere satisfaction with one's work can actually have a "demobilizing effect" on worker's political activities outside the workplace.

Section III: Ronald Mason

The argument for "workplace participation" put forward by Ronald Mason⁴³ can be seen as an elaboration and refinement of Pateman's work⁴⁴. He too begins by setting out and defending a conception of democracy, and suggests that because workplace democracy will provide the best "training ground" for improving democratic (i.e. governmental) participation, an increase in participation by workers in economic enterprises is therefore justified. However, he diverges from Pateman in a few crucial places: first, his definition of democracy, he says, is "analytically sharpened" to make *political participation*⁴⁵ the essential meaning of the term. This move allows him to formulate an ideal of democracy against which various models of decision-making in various kinds of communities can be assessed. Secondly, by synthesizing twelve years of empirical research that followed her book, Mason expands Pateman's argument about the developmental effects of workplace participation to say that any political

⁴³ Mason, Ronald. Participatory and Workplace Democracy. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982. This book will be cited as "Mason", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

⁴⁴ This fact is somewhat belatedly admitted to by Mason at the end of his book (see Mason 233-34).

⁴⁵ As we will see, "political participation", for Mason, refers to participating in the common decisions reached by any decision-making association which one is immersed in.

participation by any individual in any community will tend to increase the overall levels of political participation in all areas of an individual's life (and hence throughout the entire community, including the government). In doing this, he attempts to resolve the problem of transferability that Pateman had left open between the lessons of the workplace and resulting actions in the political sphere.

However, because his attempt to firmly establish this transferability by making any kind of "political" participation lead to further participation, as we will see, threatens to defeat his argument for workplace participation in particular, Mason re-opens the "analogical gap" by saying that the workplace constitutes the most efficient form of community participation for enhancing democratic participation in government. Though he is forced to revert to her argument, Mason nevertheless takes us beyond Pateman by approaching the analogy between the workplace and government head-on, and provides extensive reasons to think that the experiences learned in the workplace are most likely to transfer to governmental participation.

Where Dahl and Pateman have provided what might be called

a stipulative conception of democracy⁴⁶, Ronald Mason attempts a procedural one which, he argues, considers only the "essential element" of political participation and does not make any reference to specific institutions, rights, or values, such as the "opportunity to participate, civil rights and civil liberties." (Mason 233) By "analytically sharpening" his conception of democracy in this way, Mason thinks it will be easier to arrive at standards by which to compare the decision-making procedures used in different kinds of communities, to see which procedure comes closer to an acceptable democratic ideal. This procedural definition of democracy is derived from the etymology of democracy (i.e. "demos" or "the people" and "kratia" or "to rule") and neither of these roots, says Mason, can possibly "address directly or immediately the topic of what the people decide". (Mason 25) All that can be inferred from these root concepts, he says, is that "the people rule", and what they rule over, how they rule, and the kinds of decisions which are appropriate are all left undetermined. As a result, Mason is much less willing to stipulate any necessary conditions for democracy.

This means that Mason is in disagreement with Pateman's argument that there must be a certain "equality of condition" for participatory democracy to be effective. Though he does say that there must be a civil freedom to participate, and "a

⁴⁶ Because, as we saw above, they both tend to list the conditions necessary for a democratic system to be a true one.

modicum of equality of opportunity to be influential" (Mason 32), Mason's conceptions of freedom and equality seem only to consist in access to information and communication, and not the availability of basic human needs as Pateman had argued. Instead of stipulating any concrete conditions required for democracy, Mason attempts to retain the "semantic precision" of the concept which, he says, as "a system of participatory community decision-making... [which] is congruent with certain types of life":

All of these conditions [e.g. freedom and equality] will constitute the foundations for certain ways of life, but it is important not to confuse the phenomenon, democracy, with its preconditions or concomitant conditions, democracy-related phenomena... In this manner *democracy* retains its semantic and conceptual precision, while remaining sufficiently flexible in usage that democratic theory does not become stilted and reductionistic. (Mason 32-33)

As we will see later on, this "analytical precision" may actually cloak the fact that Mason is actually promoting a rather ineffectual form of democracy by dismissing any concerns about the necessary material conditions for a concretely viable democratic system. However, disregarding this point for now, we will turn to Mason's project of fusing the loose ends of Pateman's argument together.

If we can agree with him that a political act is "an activity that is related to group decision making" (Mason 67-68), then it seems that Mason is justified in concluding that his concept of democracy (as participation in decision making, *simpliciter*) can be used to analyze the political activities

occurring within any community. In other words, if democracy essentially means the collective "rule by the people", then it can apply to the political activities through which any *community*⁴⁷ of persons "rule". Contrary to what his detractors may think, democracy is therefore not a system for choosing from among competing political elites, and it is not only a way to aggregate individual desires within governments (as Dahl would have us believe). Says Mason:

...unlike liberal democrats, participatory democrats reject the notion that [democracy] is a process of interest representation; instead they see it as a process of participatory decision making. (Mason 185)

This process of decision-making can therefore occur among any group of persons who are conscious of a shared aim or purpose.

If we accept this as an accurate definition of democracy, Mason then argues that the fundamental elements implied in this definition are the *degree*⁴⁸ and the *effectiveness* of participation in any *community*. It is therefore these elements which determine the extent to which a particular model, setting or practice is democratic, and not the existence of concrete pre-conditions, the kinds of decisions reached, and the values or principles expressed.⁴⁹ So, contrary to both

⁴⁷ Mason defines a community as "a group of people who are bound into a self-conscious unit by common interests, concerns, and problems". (Mason 31)

⁴⁸ That is, how "widespread" the participation is.

⁴⁹ That this is true, he says, is evidenced by the fact that both a democracy and a dictatorship can pursue the same specific policies, even though they radically differ in the degree and effectiveness of participation which occurs.

Dahl and Pateman, Mason argues that we cannot dilute the true, analytic nature of democracy by conflating it with or reducing it to other values (e.g. equality or self-government or determination), or practices (e.g. voting). Democracy, to put it simply, *is political participation*.

The degree and effectiveness of participation required for a particular practice to be deemed "democratic", for Mason, is therefore measured along five "dimensions of participation" which are said to apply to the actions of any community. The first such dimension is the "scope" of community participation, and is related to the number of issues which the members can or do participate in; the second dimension of "extensity" refers to the proportion and number of political participants involved in the community; the third is the specific form or "mode" of participation⁵⁰; fourth is the "intensity" or "psychological involvement" of the individual in the act of participating⁵¹; and finally, the fifth dimension measures the "quality" or effectiveness of one's participation in their community. If one considers an "ideal" level of participation along all five of these vectors, says Mason, then she or he will arrive at what he calls the "ideal of democracy":

... the purest imaginable democracy would entail all people intensely, involved and effectively participating

⁵⁰ For example, selecting a decision-maker vs. being a decision-maker.

⁵¹ For example, civic habit vs. serious commitment.

through sophisticated modes of participation in all the issues that effect their lives. (Mason 29)

It is this ideal which Mason thinks will provide a standard by which to decide how democratic a particular community is in relation to another. Because of the relative nature of democracy, all one therefore needs to know to determine whether something is democratic, he says, is the nature of the activity involved, the group who (ideally) is to participate, and the kinds and importance of the issues being decided in the community.

In Mason's usage of the term, political participation or participation in the decision-making of a community provides many of the same instrumental benefits mentioned by Pateman. It allows individuals to develop a sense of a community, to learn to expand their interests to incorporate those of their community, and to come to accept the range of values, attitudes, beliefs and actions required for participating in a particular community⁵². These attitudes or dispositions toward social cooperation, he says, lie latent in individuals, and are necessary for "*full human development*" (and not simply for better democratic participation, as Pateman had argued). These dispositions simply need to be fostered in an appropriate environment:

Involvement in the processes by which communities rule themselves is an essential part of the development of individuals. Without that involvement, an individual

⁵² Mason lists only tolerance, empathy and understanding as the necessary virtues.

cannot move beyond the possessive individualism of liberal man [sic] and cannot relate to other human beings except as they are instrumental to achieving his [sic] values. With that involvement, the individual develops an outlook and sentiment in ways that make possible the achievement of community and community values. (Mason 44-45)⁵³

An individual therefore benefits by participating in political decision making by developing their "unique human capacities"--which, as we just saw, are similar to the cognitive, analytical, evaluative, and articulatory democratic skills that Pateman argued for--and these skills are said to

⁵³ In borrowing this conception of a teleology of "natural" human development from humanist psychologists (e.g. Argyris's "dynamic personality model" and Maslow's "hierarchy of human needs"), Mason immediately raises some doubts as to his own intentions for supporting workplace democracy. Such suspicions arise from the fact that most arguments which begin from the premise that workers "deserve" more participatory workplaces because this arrangement corresponds with the conditions required for natural or "full human development" are most often put forward by "managerialists" whose very limited support for increased worker participation is ultimately limited by their intentions to increase profits and limit worker's control. For example, in his book Worker Participation: Prescription for Social Change (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1980), Frank Anton begins with this kind of humanist theory, arguing that human maturation must necessarily move through various stages of passivity to activity, dependence to independence, limited behaviours to multiple behaviours, short-term perspectives to long-term ones, subordinate positions to equality, and non awareness to self-control. He then asserts that, by promoting fragmentation, specialization and subordination, modern industrial work therefore "retards" [sic] workers by blocking their "full human development". However, in his concluding section it becomes apparent that Anton's bottom line is that introduction of weak, ineffectual forms of worker participation will reduce employee resentment, absenteeism and sabotage, and thus increase the profit margins of an enterprise. So, although managerialists like Anton appear to place a high value on "natural human development", more often than not this value is dwarfed by a bottom line of increased worker productivity and marginal return on an investment.

develop as a consequence of a process of discussion and informed debate of the salient issues in any political community.

In addition, Mason agrees with Pateman that democratic participation has the unique tendency of developing a certain type of character in an individual, and this particular mindset may lead that individual to participate even further. However, one important place where Mason diverges from Pateman is in arguing that this "*participatory persuasion*" contains not only a "sense of political efficacy", as she had argued, but instead a whole cluster of personality traits. Mason distills this set of traits by combining the efforts of twelve years of research on the psychological consequences of participation which followed Pateman's book. The result of that synthesis is his conclusion that this cluster of personal characteristics resulting from political participation therefore includes "such traits as social interests, concerns, gregariousness, sociability, efficacy, and internal locus of control". (Mason 60) However, even though the conclusions of these researchers had tended to be that greater "social participation" leads to greater "political participation", they had continued to leave the "analogical gap" wide open by failing to show how it is that participation in one sphere could be transferred to another. The reason they left this gap open, according to Mason, was that the researchers were fixated on a "liberal bias" of thinking there is a clear

dichotomy between the social and political spheres. However, if one considers individuals as "composite wholes" whose experiences in one "analytic area of life" will necessarily effect the others⁴, then she or he will see that no one can experience a world which is clearly divided along such lines. And because the "experience" of participation remains with a person wherever she or he may go, this allows Mason to posit a unique synthesis of many disparate research projects which had concluded that various psychological traits lead persons to greater participation rates in various kinds of groups or associations. Thus, Mason arrives at a more general conclusion that *political participation, per se*, leads to the development of an overall "participatory persuasion", and that any individual with this "persuasion" is *likely* to eventually seek "a participatory response" in each and every political community to which she or he belongs.⁵

We therefore see that, in addition to making it easier to provide criteria to democratically compare various organizational arrangements and communities, a second beneficial result of not wedding the concept of *democracy* to any particular institutional or valuational arrangement, in

⁴ This view of individuals follows from what he calls the "transferability assumption", which says that the development of a participatory persuasion will have "spillover" effects into one's family life, personal relations, work relations, political involvement, etc.

⁵ Since, in the various research projects, individuals who developed the particular traits tended towards particular increases in participation rates.

Mason's view, is that the beneficial psychological effects of participation that Pateman thought would develop in a democratic workplace will therefore be necessarily carried over into the political realm, thus bridging the "analogy gap" once and for all. In other words, Mason is arguing that any psychological "developments" resulting from political participation in the workplace do not have to be linked to political democracy by analogy, because the experiences of participation in any community are immediately available to the worker/citizen as an intrinsic part of who they are (or, more correctly, who they come to be as a result of politically participating in any community).

Instead of arguing that the value of workplace participation is its tendency to produce higher quantity and quality of participation in political democracy, Mason therefore brings us to a more general conclusion that any political participation in any community will tend to have the aforementioned developmental effects on individuals, which will then lead to a "participatory response". By extending the breadth of the term *political*, the argument therefore moves from Pateman's idea that 'workplace democracy breeds political democracy' to Mason's argument that "participation thus breeds participation". (Mason 60) And because a "feedback loop" is therefore created by any form of political participation, it appears to be participation itself--and not merely one particular mode of it (e.g. Pateman's participatory political

democracy)--which makes workplace participation *intrinsically* valuable (because of Pateman's argument from functional sustainability). Says Mason:

Though the participatory democrats realize that participation will potentially lead to a plethora of benefits... by and large, [they] want little more of participation than more participation. Democracy conceived in terms of participation comes close to *defining the good life*. (Mason 182, italics added)

The practical result of all of this, for one who seeks to achieve a more participatory government, is that the developmental potential of all communities needs to be utilized in the creation of the required individual participatory persuasions.

However, by utilizing this more generalized form of Pateman's developmental argument to subvert the transferability problem between different political "communities", Mason seems to leave himself wide open to an obvious criticism. Because the value of participation appears to be tied to the creation of a functionally self-sustaining system in which "participation breeds participation", this seems to provide little specific support for workplace democracy, even though that is the project which Mason is intending to justify. A second problem, seen above in the section on Pateman, is that even if Mason is able to use the intrinsic value of participation to justify workplace democracy, he must somehow find a way to show that the intrinsic value of the functional sustainability of such participation sits well above other competing values (e.g.

liberty, equality). Mason seems to recognize this latter point, and notes the difficulty in establishing the comparative value of democratic participation in the workplace:

The most democratic of all *imaginable* workplaces would be one in which all of the workers participate in the most direct fashion, with full intensity, in all of the workplace decisions, having a full impact upon those decisions. This situation, however, would be no more possible than it would be desirable. It illustrates clearly why *democracy cannot be equated with what is good*; no matter how desirable democracy may appear, there are always other values to consider. (Mason 156, italics added)

Mason needs to somehow overcome this impasse. If democracy is not the highest value, then it will be perpetually confronted by other conflicting values. And whenever the relative value of democracy (as participation) is challenged, the foundations for Mason's workplace democracy will be severely weakened.

Mason's solution to this problem is mainly a practical one, and begins from Pateman's argument that the developmental process of participation must begin somewhere, and the workplace is the most "efficient means to generate greater participation within government". (Mason 136) One assumes that what he has in mind here is that the breadth of issues dealt with in governmental participation means that it is only in that forum that the comparative worth of competing values can be assessed. Though Mason never says this is his intention, this reading seems to follow from two "assumptions" he lists near the beginning of his book. His "assumption of autonomy" is that each individual person is the best judge of what is in

her or his best interest. The second is an "assumption of improvability", which is the view that with practice and experience an ordinary person will come to understand and articulate her or his interests more effectively. Because individuals are autonomous and improvable, they therefore require the necessary critical skills and access to a forum in which they can express their autonomous desires and values, in order to dialogically arrive at some consensus about the relative standing of various important values. In other words, it is therefore necessary for the citizens of such a participatory system to develop the required skills, in order to have the maximum possible participation in governmental democracy.

In bidding this hasty retreat to Pateman's argument that workplace democracy--rather than being justified by the intrinsic value of political participation--is a means to the end of improving governmental democracy, Mason seeks to expand on her reasons for thinking that the workplace is more effective than other communities (e.g. the family, academic institutions, or other voluntary social organizations) for extending more effective participation to government "and to other communities that are approximate to participation in the workplace". (192) To establish this link, Mason relies on what he calls a "proximity hypothesis", which says that:

...the closer two experiences approximate each other, the more likely that there will be a transference from one experience to the other. (Mason 70)

What this therefore means, says Mason, is that:

...the type of phenomena that should have the most impact on participation in government would be participation (similar in mode, intensity, and quality) of adults motivated to participate for the same basic reasons, within organized social settings characterized by a high degree of formal interaction, concerning similar types of issues. (Mason 78)

As we see in this quote, the main criteria used to decide whether one community is sufficiently similar to another for the experiences gleaned in one to efficiently "transfer" to another *distinct* community includes the criteria we saw Mason provide earlier for the comparison of different models of political participation⁶. However, in addition to these five vectors, Mason's proximity hypothesis adds two more considerations which are intended to relate more clearly to the individual psychology of the participants. The sixth such vector measures the "*relative degree of impact*" the issues will have in a member's life; and the seventh is concerned with the "*temporal proximity*" between the experiences (which Mason says will tend to determine the likelihood of the one's experiences transferring to another sphere). On the basis of sufficient similarities along all seven of these vectors of comparison, Mason argues that the strength of the analogy

⁶ To review: the first vector was the *mode* of participation (i.e. the given model of decision-making); the second was the *intensity* or "*proximity of individual motivation*" (i.e. the degree of "psychological involvement" of the participating individual); third was the *quality* (i.e. effectiveness) of participation; fourth was the *extensity* or "*setting*" of the participation (i.e. the proportion and number of individuals involved in decision-making); and fifth was the *scope* of issues dealt with.

between the experiences of two political communities can be established, and the probability of transference can be assessed.

Using these seven criteria, Mason therefore excludes the family as a good analogue for the transference of participatory experiences to the state, because the family has a more informal setting, the issues decided do not adequately approximate those of government, and the motivation for participating differs dramatically. Academic institutions are also excluded as proximate training grounds, because the quality of participation differs dramatically and the students do not have as many civil liberties, so "it would be difficult for student participation to be instrumental in motivation". (Mason 80)⁵⁷ Moreover, not only is one's academic participation too temporally removed from most governmental participation, he says, but the actual issues faced in schools differ dramatically in importance from those in government, because the effect of those issues on the students is much less direct.

Voluntary social organizations are likewise disanalogous in many of the same ways. Even though the experiences gleaned in these communities are largely adult experiences and the group structure is often similar to that in a government, the kinds of issues considered are not always analogous to

⁵⁷ Obviously, Mason feels that the motivation for governmental participation is purely (or at least mainly) instrumental.

governmental ones, and the mode of interaction between the participants tends to vary dramatically. It is therefore the workplace, says Mason, that is the sphere of political participation which is most analogous to the experiences required for participation in a democratic government:

...participation in the workplace is likely to approximate participation in government in terms of the mode, quality, and even intensity of participation. Proximity in the intensity of participation is tied closely to the parallel that exists in the importance of the issues considered in the workplace and in government. (Mason 84-85)

Because adults tend to spend a great deal of their lives in the workplace, where the decision-making process is said to closely approximate that in government, the two spheres are seen to be at least formally analogous. And because the decisions in the workplace have a similar *"scope"* and *"relative degree of impact"* (because the decisions reached have enormous effects on the provision of one's basic needs and the determination of her or his status), Mason concludes that the *"proximity of individual motivation"* for participating in the two spheres are clearly analogous. In sum, then, Mason urges that these two spheres are sufficiently proximate for the experiences gleaned in one to carry over to the other, so the workplace, more than any other community, is the most efficient location for the developmental *"seed"* of political participation to take root, in order to eventually improve political participation in government:

Although opportunities to participate in government may be seen as good, with a participatory persuasion

developed in the workplace, those opportunities will be made actual, and the demand for more participation will become greater... Through the experience of participation in the workplace, the least participatory members of our society will receive training in participation, training they do not receive elsewhere. As a consequence, they will be mobilized to participate and send a message to government different from the one it is accustomed to hearing. (Mason 192)

For these reasons, a dramatic increase in the participation of workers in economic enterprises is required as the most efficient way for individuals to develop the right skills, traits and mindset required for an advance in the quantity and quality of democratic participation in government.

In assessing his work, one sees the improvement resulting from Mason's synthesis of a diverse body of empirical evidence. This research appears to support the thesis that any political participation will tend to produce the skills and attitudes required to expand participation generally. The resulting "participatory persuasion", as we saw, is psychologically internalized and therefore carried with an individual to any participatory activity in which she or he engages. This move clearly allows Mason to sidestep the necessity of showing, as Pateman failed to, just how it is that the lessons learned in one sphere can transfer to another.

However, in attempting to show that workplace

participation (in particular) is justified, we saw that Mason was forced away from the view that this participation is intrinsically justified (by the value of participation), and is instead justified by its instrumental benefits for governmental participation. The result of this appeared to be that Mason was ultimately faced with the same problem as both Dahl and Pateman: reverting to an analogical argument seemed to re-confirm the separation of the spheres he had attempted to synthesize. However, with the criteria provided in his "proximity hypothesis", Mason offered some fairly good reasons to think that there are important enough similarities between the workplace and government, such that the experiences in one sphere will likely transfer to the other. And if I have correctly understood his intent to provide a missing premise which assumes that the reason for improving governmental participation is that it is the sphere in which value-conflicts *must* be resolved, then it appears that Mason provides a fairly good argument for the necessity of enhancing governmental participation and thus of instituting enhanced forms of workplace participation.

Though it has gone unmentioned until now, there is a noteworthy shift in the normative reasons offered by Dahl, Pateman and Mason for adopting workplace democracy. For Dahl, choices can only be based purely on *self-interest*, so workplace democracy could only be valued as long as it served to effectively aggregate everyone's self-interest. As we saw,

this assumption led Dahl into difficulties in establishing a sustainable political system, because such a system seemed to require the adoption of (at least some) other-regarding values. In contrast, Pateman's offered quasi-Kantian reasons for democratizing the workplace. On the basis of a *disinterested choice*, she said, individuals should choose to implement a participatory workplace, because it will instill the solidarity⁵⁸ or other-regarding values which are required for a sustainable political system. However, because Pateman urged disinterested choices, her failure to rationally justify the relative value of a self-sustaining system led us to conclude that her argument was ultimately flawed.⁵⁹ Mason, it seems, is offering an argument for democratizing the workplace which is again based on *self-interest*. In his argument, enhancing overall political participation meets everyone's self-interests, because it will create a democratic forum in

⁵⁸ A choice made in "solidarity" with others is a choice made in the interests of all, or at least all the members of one's group.

⁵⁹ It may appear that this point is being mentioned for the first time. However, this same criticism was made in a slightly different way in my previous critique of Pateman. Because the essential support she offered for the value of democracy had to do with its self-sustainability, and because this value was not shown to be intrinsically superior to other competing values, I concluded that her argument, based on this disinterested stance, left us with no rational grounds to assert the necessary superiority of democracy over other competing values, and therefore could not be sustained from objections based on the importance of other values.

which disputes over values can be mediated and overcome.⁶⁰ And once individuals agree-on the basis enlightened self-interest-to begin the developmental process, this will lead to the same consequences that Pateman had argued, and individuals will come to develop more solidarity. Becoming involved in participatory self-government, as we saw previously, is "an essential part of the development of individuals":

Without that involvement, an individual cannot move beyond the possessive individualism of liberal man [sic] and cannot relate to other human beings except as they are instrumental to achieving his [sic] values. With that involvement, the individual develops an outlook and sentiment in ways that make possible the achievement of community and community values. (Mason 44-45)

However, Mason's analysis begins to unravel at this point. Previously, we saw that for Pateman, workplace democracy is required not only to provide the skills and solidarity required for a sustainable political system, but also to address the subtle coercion which results from individuals lacking basic needs. In his promotion of the "semantic precision" of democracy, Mason neglects to include any consideration of the practical conditions which are necessary for making one's life *more democratic* (i.e. by making one's participation *more effective*). For instance, in

⁶⁰ As I noted above, because his "assumption of autonomy" is that each individual person is the best judge of what is in her or his best interest, and his "assumption of improvability" is that, with practice and experience, an ordinary person will come to understand and articulate her or his interests more effectively, Mason therefore appears to promote enhanced governmental participation as a way for individuals to resolve disputes over conflicting values.

his assessment of what makes a community "more democratic", Mason considers only the abstract features of "participation", and the potential coercive effects of social and economic inequalities on the kinds of choices individuals will make (including the choice to seek more participation) are neglected. Instead, the development of an adequate "participatory persuasion" appears to be the only sufficient condition required for enhancing democracy. So all those effectively disenfranchised social groups (e.g. women, racial and ethnic minorities, disabled persons) who presently are not "participating" simply need to overcome their ignorance by developing the proper attitude, and this will allow them the necessary experience "to participate and send a message to government different from the one it is accustomed to hearing". (Mason 192)

This voluntaristic assumption therefore opens up Mason to a version of the same "sustainability problem" which previously defeated Dahl's argument. Where Dahl neglected the necessity of providing the conditions required to promote other-regarding values, Mason's democratic system--when applied in practice--would likely have similar problems sustaining itself. Mason is willing to consider only "a modicum of equality of opportunity to be influential"⁶¹ (Mason 32) as a necessary condition for enhancing democratic

⁶¹ Remember that this "modicum", for him, consists in the right to participate and an adequate access to relevant information.

participation. Surely a political system which ignores the systemic inequalities that allow for the coercion of many of it's citizens would fail to be sufficiently self-sustaining.⁶² As we saw in Pateman's argument above, providing every individual with the minimal basic needs will ensure that no one can withhold access to these needs in order to exact agreement. Any system which failed to provide this minimal degree of control to each individual over the decisions she or he makes, she said, would be a mere "pseudo-democracy", and would fail to sustain itself for any appreciable length of time.

Ultimately, Mason's argument for democracy therefore has less to do with devising a self-sustaining system than it does with promoting the overly abstract value of "participation for participation's sake".⁶³ Concrete, participatory effectiveness, as we have just seen, appears therefore to slide by the wayside, and any of the benefits of enhanced equality, legitimacy, or moral development are at best secondary concerns. So when he tells us that "basic change is possible within our political culture, and with it a virtual revolution in our communal existence" (Mason 93), Mason does not appear to be seeking a "revolution" which enhances social

⁶² In fact, this very problem has often been posited as the root cause of all important political upheavals.

⁶³ "The participatory democrats", says Mason, "by and large, want little more of participation than more participation". (Mason 182)

solidarity and economic redistribution and control as much as he wishes to achieve--"through an evolutionary manner"--a rather weak enhancement of liberal democracy in which enhanced participation suffices for real democratic control by all of the demos.

Not surprisingly, this concern for participation as the highest value tends to shape Mason's view of workplace democracy. Although he never explicitly states the kind of decision-making structure he prefers for the workplace, we see in his scathing (ad hominem) critique of an article by Leo Panitch⁶⁴ that Mason finds worker participation far superior to worker ownership or control. Painting Panitch as some sort of Stalinist, Mason says that a "dedication to revolution" (i.e. to importantly different forms of property ownership and control) will eventually lead to limitations of worker participation. This is because "worker control", in Mason's mind, means the "dictatorship of the proletariat", and this, he argues, has historically meant "democracy for the people" rather than "by the people". Mason therefore concludes that, if it could be shown that workers were becoming satisfied by reforms in their workplace, then whatever minimal support for worker participation was posited by "marxists" like Panitch would seriously wane.

This argument is not only fallacious, but false. *Even if*

⁶⁴ Mason, Ronald. "The Importance of Worker's Control for Democratic Change" Monthly Review 29, 1978, pp. 37-48.

it is true that "marxists" have historically interpreted "worker's control" as providing a license for bureaucratic state control of economic enterprises, there is no reason to think that the advocacy of worker ownership necessarily makes one a "marxist",⁶⁵ or that such forms of ownership will necessarily lead to an overbearing Stalinist political-economic structure. One can list a long litany of union-owned, worker-owned, co-operatively owned and state-owned enterprises throughout the world (including in each of the *Group of Seven* countries) in which the employees not only participate in but effectively control the enterprise. Few (if any) of these enterprises are controlled by a statist "dictatorship" over the employees which disregards their "participation".

If I am correct in my assumptions about Mason's intended democratic goals, then one could easily imagine his underlying principles and assumptions leading to little more than co-management or self-determination schemes, many of which have been shown to sacrifice effective worker control to ineffective forms of participation which make workers "feel good" while retaining or enhancing the profits for the owners of the enterprise⁶⁶. This would seem to shed more light on a quotation which was considered above:

⁶⁵ If this were the case, then Mason would be forced to paint a clearly liberal writer like Robert Dahl as a "marxist", since Dahl also recommends a weak form of social ownership of enterprises.

⁶⁶ In their study referenced above, Sidney Verba et. al. show instances of this occurring.

The most democratic of all imaginable workplaces would be one in which all of the workers participate in the most direct fashion, with full intensity, in all of the workplace decisions, having a full impact upon those decisions. *This situation, however, would be no more possible than it would be desirable.* (Mason 156, italics added)

It therefore appears that Mason is far less concerned with control than he is with "participation", and hence it becomes difficult to distinguish his support for workplace democracy from those "managerialists" who support initiatives couched in terms of workplace democracy only as long as there is a profitable return on their "investment".

Even if we ignore Mason's intentions about the institutional structures of worker participation, one sees that his argument suffers the same fundamental flaws that we found in Pateman's argument above. When he tells us that "democracy cannot be equated with what is good; no matter how desirable democracy may appear, there are always other values to consider" (Mason 156), Mason reveals the necessity of weighing the value of participation against other competing values. However, if "participation comes close to defining the good life" (Mason 182), and it is the furtherance of the "good life" which underpins his argument for expanding participation, then it would seem that Mason has left us with a rather weak argument, because any competing value (e.g. efficiency) could conceivably defeat it. Moreover, if Mason's argument for workplace participation, in particular, is that it will serve as the most efficient means to the end of

enhancing governmental participation by creating the required "participatory persuasion", then his argument will suffer any time other, more efficient means are suggested or discovered. For example, it may be discovered that participating in the local *Optimist Club* is actually more efficient than workplace democracy for creating the sufficient psychological conditions required for a "participatory response". With these new means available, participating in the decisions made in one's workplace would cease to be of any higher priority than fireside chats and good deeds at a local club (and possibly even less valuable).

Ultimately, this potential signals a problem for all conditional arguments for workplace democracy, because any attempt to justify something on the basis of its use as an instrumental means to some higher end, it seems, will always suffer from the potential threat of the discovery of a better means. If we wish to arrive at a stronger argument for workplace democracy which can withstand these kinds of contingencies, it therefore appears that we must return to where we began with Dahl, and consider arguments for democratizing the workplace which draw their support directly from the same principles used to justify democracy as the appropriate form of decision-making in our political affairs. This conception of democracy, and the relative value we attribute to it must be sufficient to withstand the challenges of other competing values, such economic efficiency and

individual liberty.

Carol Gould develops such an argument, and asserts that any person, when acting in common with others, has a fundamental *right* to effectively participate in the decisions made in any common associations. The argument for this right, as we will soon see, tends to overcome some of the problems of sustainability that we encountered in the section on Dahl, by providing a more comprehensive understanding of individuals and the conditions they require to be self-governing. It is therefore to Gould's project that we now turn.

Section IV: Carol Gould

In *Rethinking Democracy*⁶⁷, Carol Gould re-interprets the traditional ethical foundations of democracy, in order to show that a valid justification of democracy will necessarily extend to the realm of the workplace. In contrast to the classical liberal view of freedom, Gould posits a conception of human agency which clearly recognizes the interconnections between persons and their community, and shows how these interconnections must be concretely recognized in order to create a sustainable democratic system. Although she seeks this sustainability by providing access to the same necessary conditions which Pateman has argued for, Gould takes us far beyond Pateman's analysis by tempering the drive for functional sustainability with individual rights and protections against social domination. Democracy, for Gould, therefore cannot aim solely for self-sustainability; it must also safeguard the equal freedom of each person.

What is presently hindering the achievement of a more sustainable democracy, for Gould, is therefore not simply the clash of individual interests (as Pateman seems to have it), but rather the social relations of domination in which some persons control the access of others to the conditions

⁶⁷ Gould, Carol. *Rethinking Democracy*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1988. This book will be cited as "Gould", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

required to fulfil their purposes or goals. The intent or aim of democracy is therefore to enhance the control people have in formulating their own purposes (without the undue interference of others), and to ensure access to the conditions required to act on those purposes. Because it is a sphere of common activity based on shared purposes, we will see that Gould thinks that workplace democracy is justified as a matter of *right*, on the basis of the "preeminent" value of human freedom or self-development.

Gould's book opens with an investigation into assumptions about freedom which underlie conceptions of democracy. Within this conception, she says, freedom has been conceived negatively, "in terms of the liberty of individuals to do as they choose without any external constraint"⁶⁸ (Gould 31). Democracy is therefore seen as that form of government which maximizes this freedom or self-determination, because within that system the only legitimate constraints on a person's actions are those which are self-imposed by the consent of the

⁶⁸ The conception of negative freedom was popularized by Isaiah Berlin in his famous paper entitled "Two Concepts of Liberty" (Four Essays on Liberty. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). Put simply, negative freedom is understood as freedom from something, and does not stipulate what persons can or should do. It merely describes freedom as the sphere of human activity within which persons can act without external constraint.

individual members of the system.

However, an "essential presupposition" about freedom which is contained in this view is flawed, according to Gould. Under this conception, human freedom is considered only as the capacity to freely choose among alternatives in the absence of direct, coercive actions by others. This, she says, is overly abstract because it fails to consider the many additional social and material obstacles which may block an agent's choice of actions, such as natural impediments or the lack of the necessary material means required for one to have real, concrete alternatives to choose among.⁶⁹ And because one's capacity for free choice cannot be "distinguished from the actual exercise of that capacity in making specific choices under given conditions":

...concrete freedom requires not only the absence of external constraint but also the availability of the objective conditions that are necessary if choices are to be effected. (Gould 36-7)

Because choice necessarily entails action, a more accurate conception of freedom must therefore include both the *negative* or abstract capacity to make choices and *positive* or concrete alternatives from which to choose. And, because freedom

⁶⁹ For example, says Gould, her "freedom" to travel to China remains purely abstract and *formal* if she lacks the necessary resources to do so (e.g. the necessary financial resources, a lack of intimidation about travelling alone as a woman, etc.).

entails choosing among alternatives,⁷⁰ the more concrete alternatives available to choose among, the more free we become:

...the concept of positive freedom that I propose here emphasizes that in order to effect such choices concretely a wide range of actual options need to be available to people. (Gould 41)

This view of freedom as an expansion of alternatives involves providing the necessary conditions for individuals to "develop" whatever capacities they may choose, in order to become the kind of person they wish to be through their

⁷⁰ "Choice", says Gould, "is a constitutive feature of action which is manifest in the intentionality or purposiveness of such action." :

...Thus, what marks off human actions from mere bodily motions or causally determined responses is that they are consciously oriented to some end or goal or express some intended meaning. Such actions are understood in terms of reasons that people have for acting as they do, rather than in terms of physical or physiological causes... Moreover, this intentionality or purposiveness is what individuates or identifies an action as being the action it is. (Gould 45)

This universal capacity for choice is therefore entailed in any (non-reflex) action, because all human activity implicitly involves a (manifest or latent) intention to choose one particular alternative over another. This, she says, can be "empirically shown" in all of our everyday, mundane experiences and "phenomenologically shown" by the fact that human intentionality or choice is a necessary feature of any human symbolic or social structure. When, for example, one reflects on the ability to distinguish an upheld hand signalling them to stop from one that is requesting them to come forward, it becomes apparent that we necessarily understand each other's actions as entailing a tacit choice or intention to convey one particular meaning rather than another. Hence freedom or choice, for Gould:

...is in the first place the activity of choosing or purposive activity... [It] is not merely an assumption nor is it a transcendental postulate necessary for the argument. Rather, I would argue that the fact of choice is empirically shown and is experienced phenomenologically. (Gould 129)

actions. As "self-development", she says, freedom:

...consists in the formation of new capacities and in the elaboration or enrichment of existing ones. In this process, individuals may be said to widen their range of actions and social interactions and intensify or improve the quality of particular modes of action or social relations. (Gould 47)

This self-development, however, is more than simply individual "self-improvement", because the development of "intellectual, moral, or artistic capacities, or of practical and technical skills, as well as the cultivation of forms of social relationships such as friendship and cooperation" (Gould 47) involved in self-development have wider social consequences than simply the "self-improvement" of the agent. Moreover, because one's self-development often requires working on common projects (i.e. common activities that have common purposes) with others, and such projects involve making objective changes to the world, this therefore extends one's self-development beyond their own subjective self-improvement. Finally, self-development does not involve the sense of overcoming that is entailed by the concept of self-improvement, because the particular development sought could simply be the coherent development of the person as a whole (e.g. consistency of character).⁷¹ Thus, in adding new capacities and elaborating or enriching existing ones, one necessarily moves beyond themselves by enhancing the "range of

⁷¹ In the process of self-development, says Gould, there can be "a supervening feature of coherence that marks such processes. That is the development of the person as a whole." (Gould 48)

actions and social interactions" available to others. Hence, an individual's self-development often serves as a necessary condition for the self-development of everyone else. In her own words, Gould says that:

...individuals are not isolated, but rather are social individuals. That is, they express who they are and become who they want to be in large part through their relations with others. Moreover, many of their actions are such that they are essentially social; that is, they are joint actions which could not be carried out by individuals alone. To this degree, their own self-development depends on these social relations and... on the extent to which these others are themselves self-developing. (Gould 49)

However, contrary to Dahl's assumptions about persons, Gould argues that our connections with others means that many of the short-term choices we make will be shaped by our social and material relations. According to her "social ontology", the self which "makes" choices is something with no essential human content--a human is an "individual-in-relation", and only *develops* in a concrete context of the particular beliefs and alternatives for action which are opened up as a result of one's material and social relations with others. For example, one's choices and alternatives can be *materially determined* by the necessity of meeting one's basic needs (e.g. the means of subsistence and the means for labour and leisure). And as we saw above, when seeking to act on our choices, we usually must act in common with others (sometimes consciously, sometimes not) who share common purposes with us (e.g. as citizens,

friends, producers, teammates, family members, etc.)⁷². At a deeper level however, one's *social conditions* shape the kinds of choices she or he can make, because they provide the "backdrop" of beliefs and understandings against which certain sets of options come to be concretely viable. For instance, every human action requires a complex social background of linguistic and other symbols, shared knowledge and theories, joint technical and artistic skills and various other shared techniques. And even one's individual goals or projects require the recognition and support of those around us⁷³. In sum, then, because a person is therefore simply an "individual in relations", her or his own self-development is reflexively related to that of others. So any rational conception of freedom (as self-development), for Gould, must necessarily include a consideration of the outcome of one's actions on others through the development of longer-term purposes which recognize that fact⁷⁴. Individual self-development therefore has a normative dimension, because it:

...provides some constraint on those courses of action that would be destructive of the possibilities of social

⁷² "Common activity", says Gould, is defined as "an activity in which a number of individuals join together to effect a given end." (Gould 78)

⁷³ This is so, both in terms of recognizing the value of our aims or goals (e.g. art), or in terms of lending support or encouragement for our struggles (e.g. friendship, love, or comradeship).

⁷⁴ Long-term goals, one infers, must include a critical understanding of one's interrelations with and effects upon others.

interaction. For if one pursued some course of action that harmed or alienated others, then one would be denied the support and cooperation that these others could otherwise provide for one's own self-development. (Gould 52)

It must be made clear here that Gould is not intending to support a communitarian argument in which everything an individual *is* can be attributed to their environment; instead, as an "individual-in-relations", each person possesses a capacity to choose the long-range purposes or goals which will guide her or his actions. So "freedom as self-development" is the "process of concretely becoming the person one chooses to be through carrying out those actions that express one's own purposes and needs" (Gould 47), and describes that "human activity that aims at the achievement of fully chosen purposes". (Gould 57)

To "fully choose" one's own purposes, Gould argues that each person must not only be protected from the undue limitations of their actions by others, but must also be free from other forms of interference which will inhibit one from being able to choose the goals or purposes by which they guide their actions. Thus, in full agreement with Dahl, Gould says that one must be protected from the "constraining conditions of action" (i.e. the overt coercive actions of others) through the provision of basic civil liberties. And, in extending the breadth of what is understood as coercive "actions" by others to include the withholding of the material conditions required to act (i.e. the economic conditions required for alternatives

to be concretely available), Gould also agrees with Pateman that there must be a basic equality of subsistence, healthcare, etc. between persons so that one with excess resources cannot constrain the choices of others by "forcing" them to act in certain ways to meet their subsistence.⁷⁵ Where Gould moves beyond both Dahl and Pateman, however, is in her inclusion of *domination* as one of the *constraining conditions* of action. "Domination", for her, is defined as:

...a relation in which one agent or group of agents controls the direction or range of actions of another agent or group of agents by means of control over the conditions that the others require for activity and in such a way as to deny or inhibit the equal freedom of these others. Depending on the conditions that are thus controlled, domination may take psychological or

⁷⁵ Freedom as self-development, it must be pointed out, is not simply a melding of traditional positive and negative conceptions of freedom. Her synthesis of the two concepts, she says, surpasses those previous attempts which have maintained the view that freedom is simply an absence of (an expanded scope of) external constraints. For instance, Gerald McCallum ("Negative and Positive Freedom" Philosophical Review 76, 1967, pp. 312-334) has argued that freedom is a triadic relation, in which both the elements of "positive" freedom (freedom to...) and "negative" (freedom from...) are present. For him, freedom is therefore of the form:

X is (is not) free from Y to do (not do/become/not become) Z

In this formulation, McCallum argues that the barriers to freedom include not only the coercive actions of others, but also the absence of the necessary conditions required to realize one's choices. Gould objects, saying that McCallum's idea of freedom is "at best, an oblique and strained way of referring to the positive conditions", because it fails to distinguish the forbearance of others from interfering with the provision of the necessary conditions for realizing one's purposes. Thus, forbearance from action becomes conflated with action. To put it more concretely, even if we extend the kinds of impediments of negative freedom to include such things as exploitation and domination (as C.B. MacPherson has done), Gould says that this does not allow for the availability of the enabling conditions of action which a person requires to act on a choice she or he has made.

cultural, as well as economic, social, or political forms. (Gould 77-78)

As we saw in our critique of the concrete recommendations for workplace democracy brought forth by the previous three authors, social differences between individuals can often lead some persons to make certain "choices" which may reaffirm or perpetuate social relations in which another person or group of persons controls access to the (subjective and objective) conditions required to make truly self-developing choices. An example of such domination occurs whenever an individual is unable to "choose" the alternative of following a certain career path, because she or he has been raised in a social environment which raises all sorts of objective and subjective obstacles to doing so.⁷⁶

In order to overcome these obstacles to one's self-development, Gould argues that there are therefore two basic requirements needed: first, every individual must have the concrete ability to direct the goals or purposes of those common activities in which she or he is involved. Expanding on

⁷⁶ For instance, rather than it simply being a "fact" that e.g. few natives "choose" to be doctors, Gould is suggesting that we look to the structural conditions which tend to limit this group from making this particular "choice" (i.e. a severe lack of role models, lack of financial resources for post-graduate education, traditional value-systems which may eschew so-called "scientific medicine", a lengthy history of social oppression which robs one of the necessary confidence and skills, etc.). Another example may be that a battered woman who "chooses" to stay with her abusive partner, because years of psychological and physical degradation, a lack of financial resources, or a lack of social and emotional support leaves her with no other real alternative.

Pateman's thesis, Gould argues that, because one's actions essentially determine what one is or can become⁷⁷, one should therefore have the ability to direct their actions according to their chosen (non-fleeting) purposes or goals. But because many of the conditions required for one's own self-development requires acting in common with others, to be truly self-developing one must also have an equal amount of control in determining the goals or purposes which direct their common actions with others. Secondly, overcoming the problems of domination requires the development of a particular "relation of reciprocity" between persons. Whenever any particular group of persons cooperate to achieve a common purpose, says Gould, this necessarily requires each agent to "freely agree (tacitly or explicitly) to regard each other's actions as equivalent in some relevant dimension (of quality, quantity, benefit, etc.)". (Gould 76) Although there are various possible forms of reciprocity⁷⁸, it is hardly surprising that the particular

⁷⁷ For instance, Gould tells us that a teacher is a "teacher" because of their actions, and their relation to others who are "students". So, because "what a person is" is intrinsically related to the recognition of others, when one is forced to "choose" certain kinds of actions, this shapes the kind of recognition they will receive, and hence the self-identity they will internalize. If one is to be truly self-developing, she or he must therefore choose her or his shared actions, in order to become the person they wish to be.

⁷⁸ In a relation of "customary reciprocity", tradition or habit provides this understanding. In "formally reciprocal" relations, individuals are understood to be cooperating by free agreement. And "instrumentally reciprocal" relations, for Gould, are those relations in which individuals agree to cooperate only to achieve their own self-interested ends.

relation of "social reciprocity" which Gould thinks is required for a society of truly self-developing individuals is one in which each individual, in her or his common actions with others, understands those around them as free and equally capable of self-development. In such a situation, she says, "agents [will] take each other's aims as worthy of respect in their own right" (Gould 75) because each person's interests are deemed to have an equal, independent value.⁷⁹

While it might be clear how this understanding of persons will dramatically reduce the effects of social domination, it is much less clear why one should believe that each individual's interests are equally valuable. In its briefest form, Gould's answer is that if one values her or his own capacity to make a free choice then she or he must also value the free choices of others. This is so because "free choice", for Gould:

...is not simply a descriptive characteristic of human action, but is also what gives such action its normative value, and is itself the ground of other values. For... the act of choice posits its own value reflexively, that is, choosing is valuing or endowing with value. (Gould 58)

⁷⁹ *Mutuality*, or "full reciprocity" is one step beyond social reciprocity. It requires not only that each agent recognize the other as free and capable of self-development and that each agent enhance the other's self-development, but also that the agents in this relation "take such mutual enhancement of each other's agency as a conscious aim". (Gould 77) Such mutuality, says Gould, therefore:

...goes beyond what is required for democracy but remains as a norm for personal relations among individuals and for some forms of voluntary association (such as groups set up for purposes of cultural, intellectual, or athletic improvement and advancement). (Gould 77)

She is therefore arguing that the source of human values is ultimately individual actions which "endow" certain objects, practices or relations with value. Value is not something which is transcendental or predetermined, for Gould; instead it evolves as a result of the choices made throughout human history. And once one recognizes that the ultimate source of value is the choices made by individuals, then each person will come to be recognized as an equal source of value.⁸⁰ In her own words, Gould says that:

...the recognition of free choice is a normative recognition of its value and therefore of the imperative to realize it in the activity of self-development... To recognize someone as human in this sense, therefore, is to recognize the value of his or her humanity in his or her free activity. (Gould 63)

As a basic, constitutive feature of humans, the capacity for self-development is therefore equally valuable in all human agents. But, as we saw previously, acting on one's own free choices requires freedom from the constraining conditions and access to the enabling social and material conditions of action. So the force of any individual's claim to the enabling

⁸⁰ That each person has this capacity to be self-developing, says Gould, "arises out of the very nature of human activity itself, namely, out of the fact that people normally tend to act in the pursuit of their goals and to some degree toward the achievement of long-range plans". Therefore:

...inasmuch as all human beings (with some rare exceptions) develop such fundamental capacities as the acquisition of language, sociability, basic skills, and a measure of common sense, simply in order to get along in the world, and also pursue some long-range plans, they may be said to be self-developing to a degree. They have acquired the elements of freedom through their activity, though not necessarily the fuller realization of it. (Gould 55-56)

conditions to exercise the capacity for self-development derives from an "imperative" of freedom that applies to all agents equally. Because it is grounded on "the ontological features of agency or what makes agents what they are" (Gould 70), one would "fail to be rationally consistent" if she or he refused to extend this valid claim to others. And because "a valid claim is what we mean by a right", Gould concludes that every agent therefore has a *prima facie* equal right to the "enabling conditions of self-development":

I propose that the ground of rights or their justification, instead of emerging as a dialectical consequence of an individual's recognition of what is rationally entailed by the pursuit of his or her own interests, is inherent in the identifying feature of this individuality itself, that is, freedom. (Gould 70)

An individual is therefore entitled, as a matter of right, to a (*prima facie*) equal access to all of the conditions required for their self-development. But, because there are many projects that can only be realized through cooperation with others, such projects "constitute an essential part of what human beings require for meeting their life needs and for their self-development" (Gould 79). Hence, the right to the conditions required for self-development therefore also entails an equal right to participate in determining the course of one's common activities with others. In other words, the choice of the goals or projects which direct the activities of such a group must be decided by the members of that group if the activity is to be self-developing for everyone. Says Gould:

...if engaging in common activity is one of the necessary conditions for an individual's self-development (where self-development, and not agency alone, is the meaning of concrete freedom), then it follows that there is an equal right to participate in determining the course of such common activity. For if an individual were to take part in common activity without having any role in making decisions about it and under the direction of another, then this would not be an activity of self-development, since such self-development requires determining the course of one's activity. (Gould 84-85)

However, as we saw above, social domination will tend to undercut or destroy the self-development of some members in a common activity, so Gould argues that each person should take other's aims or goals "as worthy of respect in their own right". (Gould 75) To fully address human freedom, individuals in common associations should therefore adopt the norm of social reciprocity. As a social condition for self-development, says Gould, this norm will allow individuals to "meet each other's needs in a noncoercive way by voluntary cooperation" by providing the resources and support that each individual requires to achieve their own joint purposes without having "to divert much of their energy and attention to coercing the others to provide the needed cooperation". (Gould 73) So, where people like Dahl have viewed persons as mere instruments for realizing one's own purposes or ends, Gould argues that a "reciprocity of respect"--in which the interests of persons are regarded as valuable in their own right--constitutes a more adequate reflection of our human agency, and therefore a better manifestation of self-development.

Clearly, these views will have a direct import for Gould's conception of democracy. The traditional liberal conception of democracy, as we saw, is critically flawed when it is considered in actuality.⁸¹ In practice, the equal rights and liberties promoted in this conception have remained mainly abstract or formal, because many people have lacked the political or institutional means to exercise these rights effectively, and this lack of effectiveness has been continually expressed in voter apathy and feelings of powerlessness among many citizens. Moreover, economic and social inequalities (e.g. poverty, discrimination in educational or job opportunities, unemployment, social domination, etc.) has not been adequately addressed by traditional liberal democratic theories, because within them, the scope of democratic considerations is limited to the purely political sphere of voting and representation, and tends to ignore the effect that such "external" inequalities have in the exclusive jurisdiction of the political sphere. Therefore, liberal democracy fails to protect the very political equality that it enunciates in its principles.

This failure, as we saw, is argued to be a consequence of the underlying liberal presupposition that negative freedom (which "disregards the social and economic conditions for freedom as well as for the exercise of equal rights"⁸²) fully

⁸¹ As opposed to theory, that is.

⁸² Gould 83.

describes human freedom. In contrast, Gould's conception of freedom as self-development includes negative freedom as a necessary condition but goes beyond it to include positive freedom (which requires access to material and social conditions of one's activity). Moreover, her conception of equality extends beyond the conception of (abstract) political equality in traditional liberal theory to include *prima facie* rights to the social and economic conditions required for self-development. So, rather than rejecting these traditional forms of political democracy, Gould's model subsumes them, and extends democracy to other contexts. This *principle of democracy* is therefore that:

...every person who engages in a common activity with others has an equal right to participate in making decisions concerning such activity... The scope of such decision-making includes both the determination of ends of the common activity and the ways in which it is to be carried out. (Gould 84)

The argument for this principle begins from the premise that freedom as self-development is grounded in the capacity for choice, and can only be attained through activities that individuals freely determine. Because all persons are equally agents in this sense, each therefore has an equal right to the exercise of this capacity and a *prima facie* right to the conditions necessary for its exercise. And--since it provides a social context for reciprocity and makes possible the achievement of self-developing ends that could not be achieved by the individual alone--joint activity is a condition for self-development. So if persons have an equal right to

determine their own actions, and engaging in common activity is necessary for self-development, there is therefore an equal right to participate in determining the course of such common activity. In other words, since there is an equal right to the conditions of self-development, there is an equal (democratic) right to make decisions regarding ones common activity. But the decision-making in these activities, as we have seen, cannot be a mere aggregation of individual desires:

...as joint activity defined by common purposes, it requires a [particular] form of participation in the common decisions which bind all the members of the group... [This] appropriate form is codetermination or shared decision-making among equals. (Gould 85)

This normative requirement for the right to democratic participation in decision-making in all contexts of joint activity therefore means that democracy, under this conception, extends beyond political life and applies to the decision-making in all other joint social and economic activities. An adequate conception of democracy is therefore a decision-making process in which every individual who works towards joint purposes with others can participate in determining those purposes in a setting where their interests are seen as valuable in their own right. Thus, as opposed to the views of Dahl, democracy is a forum in which individuals can come to develop common aims without the influences of social domination.

Because this extension of democracy to include the necessary social and material means to act on one's choices

therefore implies a democratic right to control the common purposes in every joint activity, this democratic right therefore extends to the workplace. Hence, Gould recommends setting up democratic structures in every workplace, in which the conditions required for social reciprocity will be nurtured. And by developing these productive relations with the required recognition of the interdependence of one's self-development with that of others, it is Gould's expectation that this will tend to overcome the problems of social inequalities between the members of a workplace which were (mostly) neglected by the previous three authors. By fostering a climate of equal respect for the self-development others, Gould's form of workplace (and other) democracy therefore seeks to dissolve not only economic exploitation, but also the social *domination* which presently limits the alternatives among which individuals are concretely able to choose.

In this section, we have seen Carol Gould provide an argument for workplace democracy which is a valuable contribution to the main issues we have been discussing above. She has shown how the "self" is dramatically misunderstood when it is considered as an isolated, atomistic entity which always acts under its own volition. Because one's beliefs and alternatives for action are necessarily shaped by their

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community, democracy therefore cannot represent people as they actually are by merely aggregating individual desires. Instead, it must include the provision of the necessary social and material conditions required for individuals to be free from the domination of others, and to effectively control the purposes and goals which guide individual and joint actions (which in turn shape their beliefs and limit or expand their alternatives). This analysis, as we saw, therefore brings us beyond Pateman and Mason, by showing how one's choices can be determined by the full context of social and material relations, and the degree of control one has in determining those relations. The problem is not simply that disenfranchised people need to develop the right "feeling of efficacy" or "participatory persuasion"; the problem is that control over the purposes for which one acts must remain with individuals if they are to develop a democratic system which is more cooperative, and hence more sustainable in practice.

Another benefit of Gould's argument for workplace democracy, in particular, is related to her use of the "preeminent" value of freedom (which is seen as the source of all values). If it is true that freedom (expressed concretely as self-development) requires effective participation in choosing the purposes for which one acts, then it would appear that workplace democracy--as a necessary condition for human

freedom--can sustain challenges from other competing values.⁸³ And, as the intrinsic nature of each individual, free self-development must be allowed to flourish in all actions of an agent, she says, whether in politics, at work, or at play. Thus, the problem of transferring the experiences from one realm to another, and the concomitant difficulty of establishing the strength of the analogy between the workplace and government appear to be overcome. Workplace democracy is no more or no less a means to political democracy than political democracy is to a democratized workplace, so there is no need to think of the two as distinct spheres. Individuals merely have the right to the social and material conditions required to maintain effective control over the purposes of all their actions, no matter where they are carried out.

However, when considered in the light of the problems which befell the previous sections, we see that Gould falls into some of the same traps. Firstly, Gould's support for workplace democracy appears to ultimately be a conditional argument, because workplace democracy is intended to serve the value of self-development. But, as Gould willingly admits, freedom is also used to justify enhanced control in every other realm of common activity in which an individual is

⁸³ Although we must remember that the right to the enabling conditions is merely *prima facie*, and therefore may be limited by considerations of other values such as efficiency or just distribution.

engaged. So it might therefore be possible (as we noted above in the critique of Mason) that individuals can enjoy a far greater degree of self-development in other spheres (e.g. their local *Optimist Club*) than is possible as a result of democratizing their workplace. Or it could be found that a democratized workplace is so inefficient that it will hinder the fulfilment of the prima facie equal rights.⁸⁴ So, without somehow showing that a democratized workplace is more important than effective participation in a social club, or that it will not harm access to positive rights, Gould's quasi-conditional argument therefore appears to be weakened.

A second problem has to do with Gould's assumption that her democratic system will be more self-sustaining because domination or manipulation will be overcome by adopting the other-regarding norm of "social reciprocity". Though this assumption is likely correct, it remains essentially unclear--in the context of her whole argument--where or how she thinks a person will come to adopt this alternative normative stance. Is it ultimately a matter of "choice" or is it "developed" as a consequence of certain kinds of institutional relations? How, in other words, can the required degree of solidarity arise in our present socio-economic context which arguably seems to only promote the development of self-interested values?

⁸⁴ For instance, because it would be so inefficient it would result in such poor production levels that basic needs could not be supplied to everyone.

Either Gould thinks that these values will eventually develop as a result of acting in common with others--in which case she needs to provide her readers with empirical evidence to support this thesis--or she thinks we can somehow "choose" to adopt this normative standpoint, in which case she appears to be ignoring what she has argued about the effects of one's social and historical conditions on the choices they will make. So, unless she can somehow overcome this hurdle, the model of democracy she has put forward will fail to be self-sustaining.⁸⁵

Because of the close interrelation between the choices one makes and her or his social and material determinations, it is therefore unclear where Gould places the lines between the "self" and "development". Without some conception of a self which has the means of determining what social, historical, economic, etc. structures are dominating them, and the means of critically evaluating their present situation, then "self-development" becomes a rather empty concept because it would simply be a complex description of our determinations. To simply argue that we must expand our alternatives seems to tell us little about how this is

⁸⁵ If we remember from previous discussions, without this particular normative stance there cannot be a sustainable democratic system, because the social domination of some individuals (e.g. women, racial minorities, disabled persons, etc.) will continue to mean that they will engage in common activities whose purposes or goals continue to thwart their chosen purposes. In other words, a stable system cannot result from a situation in which a sizeable proportion of people are consistently disempowered and lack control over their actions.

possible, or whether it is or can be under our control. If human nature is simply a ship, cut loose on a sea of social and material forces, then any would-be captain will require some perspective of the situation--some sort of map of the obstacles and the proposed destination--in order to decide what direction to take the vessel. It's not all that clear that Gould has provided any such map. Certainly, she seems to show good reasons why everyone *should* have their hands on the rudder, but without providing clear and concrete guidelines which point out the practical obstacles her position appears to ultimately be a form of voluntarism. To put it differently: unless she carries out a more detailed analysis of the technical limitations a market economy places on the possibility of worker controlled and owned enterprises, all that is left of her argument is an abstract prescription for individuals to make a "choice" which is potentially unlikely to work in action.

In the next section, I will turn to the writings of Mihailo Markovic, who offers a model which is strikingly similar to Gould's, though he underpins it with a normative ideal of an optimal human nature and social ideals, and a critical theory which helps to identify the various social and material conditions which presently thwart the development of these.

Section V: Mihailo Markovic

Humans, says Mihailo Markovic⁸⁶, have no essential nature, but are instead beings with a capacity to consciously choose to enhance particular *latent dispositions* at the expense of others, in order to overcome presently perceived limitations. This "praxis-potential", however, is limited by an existing configuration of social and historical determinants which make the success of some choices far more likely to succeed than others. By studying the prevailing human conditions in their totality, says Markovic, a social theorist can come to see what present values or ideals are *contradicting* existing practices, and--in the light of a consistent theory about human history--she or he can offer extrapolations of different possible futures which will arise, depending on how people react toward the prevailing conditions. Once these concrete possibilities are mapped out, what is then required, he argues, is a normative ideal of human nature (i.e. an ideal configuration of dispositions) which corresponds with presently accepted values. With this normative or *utopic* vision of the *good life* in place, one can develop "social ideals" which reflect that vision, and reveal which of the prevailing conditions are thwarting the

⁸⁶ Because I will be referring to a variety of texts by this author, each will be footnoted as they appear in this section.

actualization of those ideals. Once this vision of the future is shown to be concretely achievable and more consistent with our highest held values and ideals than our present practices, Markovic argues that this will provide the necessary motivation to overthrow the presently stultifying social practices.

Markovic's proposed concrete solution is a "praxis society" in which each person willingly cooperates with others, under conditions of economic and social equality, to enhance her or his highest potentials and ideals. This praxis society, he argues, would entail "*worker self-management*" as a necessary (though insufficient) condition for the achievement of these ideals. Thus, worker self-management is justified on the grounds that it more adequately matches our highest held values than our presently existing practices and institutions are able to.

Rather than being some end point of an individual's development, freedom, for Markovic, is a collective human process which evolves over time, and waxes and wanes, depending on the nature of the prevailing "limiting conditions". No one is ever free to do whatever they choose: just as Gould has argued, Markovic asserts that natural, social and historical impediments will block many of the

choices one may wish to make. "Our picture of the universe", he says "is contingent upon our sensory powers, language, capacities of thinking and imagination, and instruments and habits of our practical activity" (DS 4)⁸⁷, and each of these is conditioned by one's social relations with others:

No matter how individualistic and how isolated he [sic] is from the social problems of his [sic] time, a man [sic] can hardly escape acting as a social being: he [sic] starts with experiences acquired in a community, he [sic] inevitably inherits from the preceding generations certain general beliefs and continues a certain tradition, often without being aware of all his [sic] assumptions. After all, he [sic] expresses his [sic] thoughts in a symbolic medium, language, which is the final product of a long social evolution and which already contains in itself a whole *Weltanschauung*. (AP 6)⁸⁸

Because so much of what we are is subject to our social and historical conditions, Markovic says that:

The level of freedom depends on the extent to which we control various limiting conditions of the system, and according to how well we are able to realize those real possibilities which (no matter how probable they might be) best correspond to our needs. (CM 127)⁸⁹

And because the particular point at which humans sit on a continuum between freedom and determinism will define (at

⁸⁷ Markovic, Mihailo. Democratic Socialism: Theory and Practice. Britain: Harvester Press, 1982. This book will be cited as "DS", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

⁸⁸ Markovic, Mihailo. From Affluence to Praxis: Philosophy and Social Criticism. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1974. This book will be cited as "AP", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

⁸⁹ Markovic, Mihailo. The Contemporary Marx: Essays on Humanist Communism. Britain: Spokesman Books, 1974. This book will be cited as "CM", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

least in part) what the nature of a person is, Markovic argues that it is therefore impossible to describe a particular human nature. Against what he has seen as Marx's overly romantic view of humanity,⁹⁰ Markovic therefore asserts that humans have a fundamental, universal nature, but that fundamental nature, he says, is merely a polarity between different and opposed sets of tendencies or *dispositions*:

Human nature is a structure of conflicting dispositions that evolve in time and may be manifested, suppressed, or modified in various ways in appropriate historical conditions. (CM 158-59)⁹¹

So the "aggressiveness, egoistic acquisitiveness, will to power, and the destructive drives" which many (quietist) behaviourists argue are natural in advanced capitalist societies are in fact the result of our present social and historical conditions. For instance, in such societies, he says, people are manipulated by other groups through coercion

⁹⁰ Markovic arrives at Marx's view of human nature by considering the contraposition of what humans are like when alienated in class society. This view is that, outside of class society, we will be creative, reasonable, communicative, and sociable.

⁹¹ And even though it may be possible to identify opposing pairs of dispositions that may appear to be transhistorical, Markovic's view remains explicitly anti-essentialist because he says that under particular continuing and pervasive social and historical conditions, some potential human dispositions can be severely suppressed to the point where they are altogether extinguished. So, when one argues that particular human potentialities are "natural", Markovic would say that they are merely "reifying" the present social and historical determinations.

or education and propaganda⁹²; the economic and social conditions tend to promote the isolation and disorganization of individuals; and people tend to be governed by blind economic forces or laws of great numbers. But, because these conditions have not always existed, there is no reason to think they will necessarily exist at some point in the future.

Hence:

It is of essential importance to make a distinction between what man [sic] appears to be and what he [sic] is able to be, between the actuality and potentiality of the human being. A social philosophy which fails to make this distinction, which assumes that man [sic] is what prevails in his [sic] actual existence is condemned to end as an ultimate ideological justification of the existing social order. (AP 12)

According to the theory of dialectics to which Markovic subscribes, "the dynamic character of each system is primarily the result of the internal conflict of opposite forces" (AP 34), so one must therefore fully investigate the human dispositions which presently oppose the dominant dispositions if she or he wishes to have a clearer picture of human potentials. On investigation, he says, one discovers hints of opposed human dispositions to be creative, reasonable, and sociable; to work together on projects and formulate common goals; to name the world and cooperatively teach each other

⁹² Because "the accumulated wisdom of preceding generations, transmitted to the individual in the course of education and learning, constitutes a very important part of the background against which everything that happens will be interpreted and evaluated" (AP 10-11), there must be a wide control of this "accumulated wisdom". Without such control, there is merely a complicated form of manipulation.

the names. And because the existence of such opposed tendencies or "contradictions" within a system means the existence of a potential that people will act differently in the future, this therefore implies different "possible futures" for that system. Thus, says Markovic, one must investigate:

...the determining factors of the given historical situation in order to find out which possibilities are really open and which human projects are really feasible, not just in order to conform to what is most probable. (CM 112)

Upon identifying these possible futures, one "has to evaluate the character of the forces in conflict and to establish which ones are positive, progressive, and which are negative, conservative, and regressive".⁹³ (AP 34) In other words, because human nature is transformed as a result of the interplay between opposed dispositions and historical possibilities, these possible futures must be ranked to determine which future is optimal from the perspective of the enquirer. Thus, taking his cue from Marx's views on

⁹³ This is because the "main idea" of *dialectics*, for Markovic,

...is to discover hidden contradictions in order to resolve them, in order to supersede critically the present state of the theory (and of the given social reality). Precisely in this sense the principle of contradiction is a dynamic principle of thinking. (AP 32) So the prime mover (so to speak) of theories and actions is the existence of internal contradictions, and each apparently stable object (e.g. a social system) can only be fully understood in the light of its origin and its future possibilities.

alienation⁹⁴, Markovic concludes that the critical social theorist must seek to discover the specific social institutions and structures which "cripple" [sic] humans, and arrest their continued development by blocking the resolution of the contradictions between the opposed dispositions.⁹⁵

In order to have some standard to assess whether or not humans are being "crippled" (sic), a social theorist must provide some basis for determining an *optimal human future* by explicitly articulating and defending a particular set of *optimal human dispositions* (i.e. a conception of the good life, or description of "genuine human needs"). A thorough study of human history, says Markovic, reveals that "development in history is continuous":

...a translation and incorporation of former practical products and experiences into the latter remains possible and there are transepochal invariants. Therefore there are good reasons to argue that, in spite of all discontinuities between particular epochs and civilizations, there is one universal human knowledge, there is one material and spiritual culture that grows,

⁹⁴ These views are contained in the early sections of the 1844 Manuscripts.

⁹⁵ This critique, as we will see below, therefore does not seek the "abstract negation" (i.e. total destruction) of the entire social order. Instead, it seeks a "concrete negation" (Aufhebung) which aims at the abolition of only those features of the society which constitute its essential limitations, while preserving all the other features which constitute necessary conditions for the development of the desired dispositions. This tends to mean that Markovic is unwilling to support bloody, protracted and vindictive revolutions which seek the "abstract negation" of a particular class, but instead supports smaller scale dialogical and practical methods of either bringing these people 'on side' or convincing a sufficient number of others that these people are mistaken.

one human species-being that evolves through the life of all various individuals and particular communal beings. (HP 41)⁹⁶

To describe the nature of this transepochal "species-being", Markovic frames his answer as a response to the following question: "What are the objective conditions necessary for survival and development of man [sic], not as a mere living organism, but as a *distinctly human being*?" (HP 39) His answer to this question appears to be a quasi-transcendental argument that "what made human history possible and indeed unique... was a specifically human activity--*praxis*." (HP 39) Praxis, he says, is the:

...permanent potential capacity of man [sic] to act in an imaginative, creative way, to produce ever new objects and forms of social life, and so change not only his [sic] environment but to evolve himself [sic]. (DS 11)

Praxis, it seems, is therefore just a short-hand way of referring to universal human potentialities to act purposefully with others⁹⁷, to be *self-determining*⁹⁸, to be *rational, creative, cumulative, and self-creative*.⁹⁹ Though

⁹⁶ Markovic, Mihailo. "Historical Praxis as the Ground of Morality" Humanist Ethics: Dialogue on Basics. Ed. Morris Storer. New York: Prometheus Books, 1980. This book will be cited as "HP", followed by the appropriate page number(s).

⁹⁷ This involves the ability to harmonize our interests, drives and aspirations with others.

⁹⁸ That is: the ability to discriminate, assess, and choose among alternative possibilities.

⁹⁹ For example, after being exposed to an increasing wealth of information and new environmental challenges, Markovic argues that one can develop new faculties and new needs.

these dispositions can be suppressed under certain historical conditions, they will ultimately:

...reappear and [become] actualized at a mass scale as soon as conditions improve. They flourish in the life of individuals under favourable conditions of relative abundance, security, freedom, and social solidarity. (AP 12)

"This", he says, "is [therefore] precisely what happens at the mass scale during the periods of great revolutionary change." (AP 15)¹⁰⁰ During those periods, conditions were such that large numbers of people were able to harmonize their interests, drives and aspirations, and to discriminate, assess, and choose among alternative possibilities in a rational and creative (and self-creative) way. The fact that these optimal capacities have been exhibited during these watershed periods in human history lends further evidence, according to Markovic, to the claim that praxis "was and remains the necessary and sufficient condition of human history". (DS 11)

However, it should be obvious to the reader that Markovic cannot derive an idea of optimal human dispositions from an analysis of what "is" any more than from what "has to be", since historical processes are neither inevitable nor necessarily progressive. Hence, although the term appears--on first reading--to be intended to describe the optimal dispositions, Markovic instead says that praxis should be

¹⁰⁰ In light of the circumstances surrounding, for e.g., the Terror of the French Revolution, it seems Markovic could be challenged on this point.

understood as a *normative* concept which refers to an ideal form of human activity which is good because it realizes--in actions--one's optimal dispositions.¹⁰¹ The fact that humans are intentional beings means that human progress must be evaluated by real, existing humans. If a better future is not inevitably the outcome of past and present conditions but depends to some extent on free human action, then this future must be shown to be preferable to the past and the present.

¹⁰¹ Although it may appear that this list of "optimal dispositions" is somewhat arbitrary, the relationship between these optimal dispositions and the actions required to develop them tends to clear this up. This list, he says:

...is 'arbitrary' to some extent if we take this term to embrace whatever is not demonstrated or even demonstrable. Principles in general, and ontological assumptions in particular, are postulates and cannot be derived from any higher-level statements. (AP 15)

The reason this particular list is not fully arbitrary is that they can be tested in an analogous way to the testing of factual theories in the scientific method. With a "fairly adequate knowledge of the historical situation and a correct estimate of the realm of really open historical possibilities..., [and] a critical awareness of the existing social reality and its limitations" (CM 120), hypothesized social consequences can be checked against empirical experience for a correspondence. The reason for such empirical testing, says Markovic, is that:

Human potential is not a part of directly observed empirical existence but it belongs to the reality of a person or community, and is empirically testable. Far from being a vague metaphysical concept, the notion of a potential capacity or of a disposition can be operationalized by stating explicitly the conditions under which it would be manifested (provided that those conditions can be produced in specified ways, and the reality of the dispositions tested). (HP 41)

Therefore, before setting out on a massive program of social reconstruction, Markovic suggests that there are various safeguards which may be used. As it is in hard science, he says, these hypotheses can be subjected to role-playing and thought experiments to check for unexpected or unacceptable outcomes before attempting a specific experiment.

So, although his analysis of the conditions required for praxis entails the identification of the elements of an existing social formation (i.e. system of human actions) which are system-maintaining, and which "embryonic achievements" are system-challenging¹⁰², Markovic thinks that one must construct an ideal society as a model or standard of comparison, because "activistic philosophy [must] not only ask what possibilities are given but also what new possibilities can be created by suitable action".¹⁰³ (CM 112) As a normative description of our "genuine human goals and needs", praxis is therefore a normative description of potential dispositions which are in contradiction with our present social and historical conditions. By finding the "essential limitations" in those conditions, and "concretely negating them", these historical contradiction can be overcome and history can move on.¹⁰⁴

So praxis is therefore more than merely a standard of optimal individual virtues or excellence: it is also a

¹⁰² This involves an analysis of any limitations inherent in a system beyond which that system cannot change without becoming an essentially different kind of system.

¹⁰³ And action which is related to our praxis disposition, as we have noted above, is the result of a contradiction between our ideals and our concrete conditions.

¹⁰⁴ Though one is never really sure how seriously he means it, in "Historical Praxis as the Ground of Morality" (cited above), Markovic says that history---when looked at as a whole---has what objects lack: "a primary project" or a final cause. This goal is not only life or mere survival, but rather the "survival and development of man [sic], not as a mere living organism, but as a distinctly human being". (HP 38) And "praxis", as he says on the next page, "is a new high-level form of the human species." (HP 39)

principle for social critique and construction:

Once we have established what constitutes the specific nature of human being and his [sic] history our next step is to project an ideal community in which praxis would be a universal principle. (HP 42)

Because all humans are *potential* beings of praxis, this norm must be universalized to all humans in all contexts. This society must therefore promote the conditions and values required for praxis, and it must exemplify social principles which are derived from praxis as a norm. The practical goal of one who supports praxis is therefore:

...to project an ideal community in which praxis would be a universal principle, that is, in which each individual would have equal opportunities to act in a purposeful, self-determining, rational, creative way. (HP 42)

The social ideals and individual virtues entailed by praxis, argues Markovic, can therefore flourish only in a social order in which these ideals effectively guide social theory and action toward a clearly articulated revolutionary goal.

These praxis ideals, says Markovic, must be justified on the basis of presently accepted norms, because it is "our values (needs, aspirations, goals) [which] constitute the criterion of evaluation of the whole set and its component parts". (AP 33) Although the precise means by which this occurs is somewhat difficult to decipher, Markovic's method of justification for these ideals appears to be a form of "reflective equilibrium".¹⁰⁵ At any point in natural science,

¹⁰⁵ Here I am following the analysis of David Crocker, from his book Praxis and Democratic Socialism (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1983).

he says, there may be one theory which more adequately expresses the accumulated wisdom, "that already achieved wealth of human being", better than any other past or present theory. Though the theory may need revision at some point in the future, he says, at present there can be sufficiently good reasons to hold this view to be more true than others. What ultimately decides the matter, one way or the other, is whether the view incorporates all past theories and all present understandings. Ethics, in Markovic's view, operates in an analogous way:

...ethics may be regarded as a superior expression of a historically already achieved possibility of the good life, of social harmony and solidarity, in other words: of moral praxis. While refusing to claim its absolute validity, such an ethics may indeed demonstrate that it transcends the limitations of all preceding ethical theories and thus incorporates them as its special cases. (HP 41-2)

Moral evaluation is therefore not an entirely *subjective* matter for Markovic. Because a person "invariably makes a moral judgement as a member of a community in which he [sic] was socialized", that person can provide reasons for accepting her or his view, using "objective logical rules for deriving it from certain general moral norms". (HP 49) "In each historical epoch", he says,

...there is a general structure which is a crystallization of the whole past history of human praxis. The structure is a concrete dynamic totality which underlies all more specific determinants--those of class, race, nation, religion, profession, and individual character. (AP 34)

This "crystallization", for Markovic, seems to be a general

ethical agreement on the relationship between certain principles and certain judgements. Through a rational dialogue with others, we can encounter differences between judgements and principles, and attempt to resolve those disputes. Logic is useful in gaining acceptance of a principle, he says, because such acceptance usually occurs when one party in an ethical dispute can be shown to have made a logical mistake in their practical reasoning, thereby showing that their "judgement is wrong from the very standpoint of the system to which it belongs". (HP 50) Moreover, where people share basic common needs, the same cultural heritage, or the same interest against third parties, it is often discovered--through a process of rational debate, discussion and eventual agreement--that some particular ethical theory is more general and contains the others, or old ethical views can be synthesized into a new, more general value principle. Finally, it may be decided, as a result of such dialogue, that one party must jettison her or his value or principle, because it does not sufficiently deal with some practical problem. In this way, he says, the kinds of "general norms" which will be acceptable at a certain time may be agreed upon.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Markovic rejects any view that an agreement will always be reached under a socially reflective equilibrium. He supports ethical pluralism, arguing that people who hold different "attitudes" toward history (as the progressive concrete negation of limitations) will never agree on matters of principle. Ultimately, Markovic thinks that one must convince enough people that one moral vision is more correct than another. Such a moral vision, he says, must therefore effectively encompass all values which are presently accepted.

Thus, Markovic intends praxis not only as a description of our *optimal individual dispositions*, but also as a normative principle or axiom which incorporates all of our presently accepted values or "social ideals", as Markovic calls them. At the most general level, these social ideals, he says, include *freedom* (as a wealth of available opportunities, including all the opportunities required for "critical self-consciousness" and "optimal self-fulfilment"¹⁰⁷), *equality* (as potential beings of praxis, everyone has a *right* to the conditions required for praxis, including basic biological needs, child and health care, and effective control over one's economic, political and cultural institutions), *distributive justice*, and *community* (which requires equal social status, powers to control public decision-making, and control over all aspects of the production process). Though there is a great deal of overlap between each of these ideals, Markovic argues that all of them can be effectively incorporated under the umbrella axiom of praxis. Thus, because it encapsulates all of our important values, support for these values therefore requires one to adopt the maxim that "praxis is the highest intrinsic good". In this way, what ultimately comes to define us--as human agents--is therefore not only the various

¹⁰⁷ This includes the requirement of a critical education, which maximizes one's professional, leisure and social role options; teaches one new skills and competencies; promotes critical self-consciousness and autonomy; and allows one the freedom to discover their personally optimal dispositions. It also requires one to have effective control in all social, political, economic, and cultural spheres of one's life.

determinations over our possible actions (as Pateman would seem to have it) but also our *normative* conception of ourselves--of what we *ought* to be. Such a conception, as we saw earlier, will allow us an ideal which challenges our present determinations in a fundamental way, and thus carry human history forward.

Because of the intrinsic connection between our choices and actions, adopting the maxim that "praxis is the highest good" therefore requires that we act to create a "praxis society" in which the conditions required for the ideals contained within that maxim--and hence the individual virtues listed earlier--can flourish. Such a "praxis society", says Markovic, will therefore require certain concrete preconditions. First, there must be sufficiently advanced technology incorporated into the production of commodities, so that automation will dissolve the differences between blue and white collar workers by allowing for greater job rotation. In this way, the technological conditions of production can begin to break down the social status divisions between workers, and help them to become more competent for a wider role in *managing* the whole society. A second concrete precondition is that there must be a "self-managed society", which would ensure that basic needs are being satisfied, and that there are adequate civil rights:

In order to protect the rights of each individual there must be some democratically established rules of communal life... [including] a minimum of basic needs that society must recognize and protect independently of

individual initiatives. (HP 43)

These rights would provide workers/citizens¹⁰⁸ with the sufficient means to choose their workplace, and to challenge the policies of that workplace without fear of economic reprisals. Such a society would also be sufficiently affluent to offer more leisure time to workers, and more access to cultural activities (both of which are necessary for praxis). Thirdly, there are political preconditions for the development of a praxis society, which involve the "vigorous, critical discussion of public issues and policy". This, says Markovic, therefore requires sufficient access for each individual to the self-managing organs of government and the mass media,¹⁰⁹ and the absence of political parties as they are presently manifested¹¹⁰. Finally, a praxis society requires a well informed citizenry, with a "critical, humanist intelligence". Such "intelligence" requires a diverse understanding of the available options, the efficient means and worthy (praxis) ends.

Markovic argues that workplace democracy--which he calls

¹⁰⁸ In a "self-managed society", everyone works (to some degree), so the two titles are inseparable.

¹⁰⁹ The mass media, says Markovic, should be publicly funded, yet entirely independent of influence over workplaces, politics or cultural organs of the society.

¹¹⁰ While Markovic does allow for *ad hoc* political associations, these associations can be allowed no political power, no control over the self-managing organs (i.e. state, economic or cultural), and they cannot force their members to adopt their decisions. This is because "hierarchy and authoritarian rule are foreign to praxis".

"worker self-management"--will therefore serve both as a necessary means to this praxis society, and as a partial reflection (or "organ") of that end in itself (i.e. praxis). For all the same kinds of reasons we have seen offered by the authors we have considered in previous sections of this paper¹¹¹, Markovic thinks that workplace democracy will foster the conditions required for the achievement of praxis. For instance, the degree of material abundance and just distribution required by a praxis society requires worker owned and controlled enterprises.¹¹² Moreover, as a result of their contributions to the concrete "negation" of the essential limitations present in advanced capitalist and state socialist societies, the essential organs of worker self-management will allow for the necessary means for workers to interact *purposefully* with each other, and to be *self-determining, rational, creative, cumulative, and (ultimately) self-creative*. They will overcome their isolation and disorganization, and will choose to engage in work, rather

¹¹¹ It would take us too far astray at this point to list all the instrumental benefits of workplace democracy that we have seen above.

¹¹² Borrowing from Marx's view of the *alienation* of workers, Markovic argues that under alienating conditions of production, workers will tend to be servile and unlikely to organize with others. In a self-managing society, there are parallel economic and political structures with equal powers at the local, regional and national levels. Workers will therefore need all of the "lessons" that we saw most explicitly in Pateman and Mason, not only because of their required involvement in the political sphere, but also because they must have effective control within the economy as well.

than being coerced by a lack of basic needs or domination by others. The education and propaganda that worker/citizens receive will be of their own making, because they will have the economic freedom required as a precondition to exert more control in every other sphere of their social, political, economic and cultural lives.

However, as should be obvious, Markovic clearly does not think that worker self-management alone is a sufficient condition for a "praxis society":

To be sure, participation in a private enterprise is at best, a palliative measure. Self-management within scattered, atomized, disintegrated enterprises, still subordinated to bureaucratic structures at the level of the global society, must be taken as only the first important step in the process of workers' emancipation. If this first step is not followed by further ones, if the permanently developing, integrating system of self-management does not gradually replace the organs of the State and professional politics, the principle itself might be compromised and reduced to one more of the sweet nothings of contemporary life. (DS 6)

Although it is an intrinsically valuable expression of praxis, workplace democracy is therefore insufficient to bring us beyond the present set of limitations to the conditions required for full praxis. Worker self-management--as one element in the radical democratization of the whole economic system--therefore cannot be the sole end of one's emancipatory activity if she or he wishes to truly re-shape the overall system of social and historical determinations. It must instead be merely one step in the total, concrete democratization of the whole society.

That being said, however, Markovic nevertheless seems to

escape the difficulties which beset the supporters of consequentialist arguments, because he thinks that workplace democracy is justified not only as a means but also as one particular expression of the end (i.e. the good life). So it is not only the development of the skills, traits or virtues which must be transferred to another (more highly valued) sphere that justifies a democratized workplace. Because "moral self-determination [i.e. praxis] is more than a mere freedom of will", it therefore "involves the moral right of the individual to go beyond social constraints and create new possibilities". (DS 44) Thus, acting to achieve a praxis society (and hence enjoying effective control in a democratic workplace) is justified as a moral right (on the basis of the supreme or all-encompassing value of praxis).¹¹³ So workplace democracy, as a necessary condition for a "self-managed society", is critically necessary for a world in which there will be a far greater degree of freedom (i.e. "self-determinism"¹¹⁴), equality, justice and community than there is at present. And once all of the organs of a praxis society are in place:

¹¹³ Moreover, he continues, moral self-determination also "involves not only an autonomous act of choice but also action according to choice." (HP 47) Thus, workplace democracy is further justified on the basis of a right to access of the same "enabling conditions" that Gould thought were required to ensure concrete equality.

¹¹⁴ "Full freedom", says Markovic, "is the ability for self-determination and for changing the very conditions of a deterministic system". (CM 112)

...a new quality of social determinism emerges: highly creative, rational, and intense practices of sufficiently well-organized social collectives makes possible departures from the middle roads of history to highly risky, but also much faster and radical paths... In such a case it is possible to speak about a discontinuity within social determinism. Man [sic] becomes free in a new, hitherto unknown sense. This is no longer freedom only with respect to certain laws which are completely independent of the human will... [A] human community which takes the risk and far exceeds the usual patterns of behaviour, is able to transform the *conditions under which certain laws hold*. (CM 121)

We are now in a position to see how Markovic has dealt with the problems discovered in the previous sections of this paper. First, the problem of establishing the supremacy of workplace democracy (or democracy in general) over other values that we saw in Pateman, Mason and Gould is not a problem for Markovic, because democracy is a necessary condition for praxis, and praxis, he says, embraces all social ideals or values and individual virtues. Secondly, we saw that the problem of *transferability* did not effect Markovic's argument, because he seeks not only to improve spheres outside of the workplace, but also posits worker self-management as a right in itself because it promotes and exemplifies individual virtues and social ideals that are valuable in themselves (as reflections of praxis).

As a third contribution to this discussion, Markovic brings us closer to the eventual resolution of some of the

problems we found in Gould. By the end of her analysis, it was unclear where the "self" in her world of actualized "self-development" was situated. If most of what one *is*--including one's beliefs, choices and actions--is determined by the prevailing social and economic conditions, as she seemed to say, then it was unclear that Gould had left any "space" for a *self* which would be able to transcend it's conditions and "choose" to institute workplace democracy. Thus, in her argument for workplace democracy Gould seemed ultimately to promote a form of voluntarism, because her proposed solution seemed to neglect a consideration of how the prevailing determinations (e.g. technical limitations of a market economy) will tend to mediate against individuals merely "choosing" to implement the institution of workplace democracy.

Although he agrees that "human individuals do not often behave as free agents against the overwhelming pressure of natural or alienated social forces" because they are "manipulated and compelled to accept definite goals and value-orientations" (AP 8), Markovic nevertheless thinks that conscious *self-determination* is possible. Human history, says Markovic, is ultimately a product of the actions of human agents:

...history is made by man [sic] and... even blind, impersonal social forces are ultimately the mean values of individual human actions (which are to a certain extent free and unpredictable). (CM 116)

Our potential to learn from our experiences or the experience

of other cultures and historical periods, along with our potential to act unpredictably at times means that our socio-historical determinations are therefore never strictly determining:

For a natural object the past is dead: there is nothing in the past which has not already been crystallized in the present form and which can play any important role in the future. For a social being a constant recurrence to the past is characteristic: the reinterpretation and re-evaluation of past experiences and tradition play an important role in all subsequent life, and only in the future will there be realized some consequences of and reactions to past events. (CM 117)

What is therefore required, as we saw, is a clearly articulated understanding of our implicit ideals, and the development of empirical hypotheses--grounded on accumulated historical experience--about the nature of the limitations which thwart or hinder the actualization of those ideals, and the ways of overcoming those limitations. Through a dialogical process or a process of socially "reflective equilibrium" these ideals, as we saw, can be effectively summarized or encapsulated by a higher order ideal (i.e. praxis), and this ideal allows us to project a future which is grounded in the concrete possibilities contained within the present conditions.

So, because "the individual agent is a conscious being who is able to choose among various possibilities of his [sic] action, and who is able to behave in a quite extraordinary, unpredictable way, overcoming the limits of his [sic] character and his [sic] habits, abandoning tradition, or

rebellling against external social coercion" (CM 119-20), rather than being an end-state, freedom is therefore always a matter of degrees. To be human is to have at least a minimal capacity for freedom¹¹⁵, and this freedom, says Markovic, can be enhanced in several ways: first, the variety and number of possibilities can increase as the range and variety of compulsions and preventative factors decrease; second, an individual's freedom can increase if there is an increase in the number and variation of possible desires; third, it increases when one's choices are made on the basis of "critical consciousness"; and finally, to be achieved in the fullest sense, freedom requires self-realization, and this involves choosing actions or criteria for actions that realize or exemplify the optimal (praxis) dispositions. So, as the "highest historically possible level of freedom", a praxis society would effectively fulfil the "fundamental human needs which have been developed during the preceding history and which constitute the necessary basis for future self-production of men" (sic):

This level can be attained only when associated individuals by their co-ordinated efforts succeed in fully superseding the unsatisfactory existing system and create conditions for a new one, in which different laws and limiting conditions will hold and which opens a larger field for human praxis. (CM 127)

So the individual self is always free, to some degree or other, and can become more free through one or all of the four

¹¹⁵ Otherwise, argues Markovic, there would be no basis for holding persons responsible for their actions.

means just listed. Once one is aware of this fact, says Markovic, this provides the necessary motivation to seek to overthrow the presently limiting conditions:

...awareness of implicit ideals makes us aware of the limitations of the present. The present mode becomes perceived as limiting and narrowing, so we rebel against the present, in the light of an ideal [which is] a developed consciousness about the future [that] directs man [sic] in his [sic] critique of the present. (AP 5)¹¹⁶

This kind of "new morality", he says, can live "for some time only in the praxis of the most developed individuals or in the form of ethical theory" (HP 46), but it nevertheless entails an imperative for the individual to do whatever is practicable to create the social and historical conditions which will be amenable to the acceptance of her or his alternate moral vision. When one "builds up a selective *normative* concept of human nature", asserts Markovic:

...he [sic] implicitly commits himself [sic] to a way of life, to the creation of those life conditions under which certain desirable (positive) latent dispositions, entering his [sic] normative concept, may prevail, while certain undesirable (negative) dispositions would be blocked or slowly modified so as to assume socially

¹¹⁶ This analysis is consistent with Markovic's use of the traditional theory of dialectics (as he understands it). In his own words:

For every practical activity a theory can be formulated which lays down general structural features of this activity and invariant standards of its evolution. The theory helps to bring to consciousness what one is in the habit of doing unconsciously. If the theory is valid it increases our knowledge about ourselves and our doing, it enables us to control our own powers, to reflect about them critically and rationally, and to improve our future ways of acting. If it is true that we follow certain rules whenever our activity is well organized and directed toward some goal, then ignorance of these rules is a specific form of *alienation*. (AP 23)

acceptable forms. ¹¹⁷

By acting to develop the necessary *groundwork* now--through engaging in discussions of ethical values and judgements, working towards the actualization of the (praxis) social ideals, and living an individual life of praxis, an alternate moral vision can ultimately prevail as it "begins to be lived by large masses of people in the times of profound social crisis when the social fabric and the official ideology of the ruling elites collapses and the need for social restructuring is felt irresistibly." (HP 46) Therefore:

To commit oneself to increasing creativity in history, to *praxis* as the basic axiological principle, means to assert that it *ought* to be universally accessible, that it ought to become a norm of everybody's life. (HP 39)

If one has what they deem to be a better normative model, then they must take a *risk*, and act to create the objective social and historical conditions in which others will also find their view acceptable¹¹⁸. As a view of the "good life", the praxis

¹¹⁷ Markovic, Mihailo, and G. Petrovic eds. Praxis: Yugoslav Essays in the Philosophy and Methodology of the Social Sciences. Holland: D. Reidel Publishing, 1979, p. xxiv (emphasis added).

¹¹⁸ Even though praxis is "universally valid", Markovic does not support a totalitarian morality. Instead, his support for this "universal validity" is grounded on the following: ...there cannot be any tolerant ethical dialogue unless opponents have genuine convictions. There cannot be ethical pluralism without those conflicting claims to universal validity. A situation in which each group would consider its values as bad for others should be described as lack of morality rather than moral pluralism. The latter is the case when various groups or individuals have genuine moral convictions with implicit claims to universal validity--- but these convictions are different or even incompatible. (HP 55)

norm therefore serves both as a guideline for social change, and a model of virtue for individuals. Hence:

...from such an ethical standpoint personal integrity is placed very highly at the scale of moral values---in contrast to duplicity of bourgeois morality which divorces thought, will and action... An individual must take the risk and live his moral philosophy--only then will he satisfy his genuine need for harmony between his beliefs, verbal utterances, and overt acts. (HP 47)

So we see that Markovic therefore leaves open a "space" for the individual that appeared lost in Gould's argument. One can develop a "critical awareness" of their situation through working with others to understand history, one's implicit values and the present limitations to those values being actualized. In other words, because ethical "truth" is impossible for him, Markovic thinks that we must therefore put forward ethical visions, and test them dialogically, empirically, and personally in order to begin creating the socio-economic conditions required for a praxis society.

Even though this clearly leaves him open to the charge of voluntarism, Markovic limits this danger by arguing that one's choices will always be limited by their conditions, so it will not be possible to institute workplace democracy simply by an act of will. It instead requires the various preconditions listed above, and a great deal of active, concerted struggle and dialogical effort to convince others that the conditions which exist in economic enterprises are in contradiction with their implicitly-held values (and that they can be overcome, given the potentials which presently exist). The ultimate goal

is therefore to attempt to bring ideals and actions closer together, by producing a socio-political-economic system which will (in the long run) be far more self-sustaining than the present one.

One last problem I will note here has to do with Markovic's vague provisions for individual moral rights. Although it seems that--because worker self-management is intended not only as a means to a praxis society but also as a reflection of the praxis virtues--manipulation in the workplace should not be the kind of problem for Markovic as it was for Dahl, Pateman, Mason and (perhaps) Gould, as David Crocker notes, although "deontological space is cleared within the sociality component of praxis":

...this space needs to be filled in a more determinate way. Prohibitions, protections, requirements, and permissibilities need to be specified as each person harmonized his or her praxis with the like efforts of others, as each seeks to become and help the other become a being of praxis.¹¹⁹

Unless Markovic more clearly spells out these individual rights against coercion and domination by others, there is a danger that these problems could seep into the model of workplace democracy he has put forward, and therefore subvert the kind of self-sustaining system towards which he aspires. What I have in mind here is the following: in history, there has been many attempts to build better societies which conform to some model of the good life. And often these ideals have

¹¹⁹ This point is raised--albeit in a rather different context--in various sections of his book e.g. (Crocker 114).

been widely accepted (subject, of course to varying degrees of public reflective equilibrium). However, even if Markovic is right, and the actions resulting from the contradiction between these ideals and the present limiting conditions is the *motive force* behind human history, history has not always been the bed of roses that Markovic (with his Hegellian influences) seems to think. One need only consider the wide degree of public acceptance of Naziism in Germany in the earlier part of this century (or the growing acceptance of a "New World Order" in the present context) to see that we must use extreme caution when acting on our principles, no matter how acceptable they may be. Because roses also have thorns, we must take great care when positing ideal worlds to not ignore the fact that our human world continues to require human beings.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have gone through five separate arguments for workplace democracy in a detailed way. In doing this, the reader has been exposed to a fairly broad set of problems which will need to be considered by anyone who wishes to construct an ethically-justified argument for workplace democracy at some point in the future.

In Robert Dahl's argument for "self-governing enterprises", for instance, I noted that even though there is a certain intuitive charm to the argument that whatever reasons ground our support for political democracy should extend to the realm of the workplace, I argued that any argument for workplace democracy which relies on the value of democracy must clearly spell out both the meaning of the term, and the conditions required for the concept to be effective when actualized in practice. To be self-sustaining, I said, any theory of democracy must somehow account for the existence of social solidarity or other-regarding values (or it must at least show how such values will be created, and point to possible reasons why this development would come about).

A second general problem which was noted in my critique of Dahl was that we must have a clear understanding of the wider social determinations on the choices and actions of individuals if we are to avert importing the existing problems of liberal democracies into workplaces. In particular, I

showed how Dahl neglected to notice that problems of manipulation, disinformation and elitism will be transposed to the sphere of the workplace if his theory were accepted as it stands.

Moving to Carole Pateman, I commended her for clearly elaborating some of the conditions required for developing a self-sustaining democratic system, but noted how her consequentialist argument for workplace democracy as a necessary means for a better political democracy fails for several reasons because: firstly, potential challenges from competing values may undercut one's conditional support for democratizing the workplace; second, manipulation will continue to occur in Pateman's workplace, because of an initial lack of solidarity among the workers; third, it was unclear that the "lessons" learned in the workplace could not be better learned elsewhere, thus undercutting her support for workplace democracy (in particular); and finally, I showed that the empirical evidence to prove that simply creating "feelings of efficacy" will lead to greater participation levels is sketchy, and these feelings may actually serve to disempower rather than empower workers. Even if one accepts her argument that this *will* occur (and *will* empower workers to participate elsewhere) without somehow showing that the experiences learned in one sphere (the workplace) will necessarily transfer to another (politics), Pateman's argument appeared to be critically flawed.

With this latter criticism in mind, I turned to Ronald Mason, whose argument was taken to be an attempt to shore up Pateman's problems with proving this necessary transference. Mason developed a "procedural" conception of democracy which allowed him to compare different kinds of "communities" or associations, and to ultimately determine which communities were sufficiently similar for the learned experiences to be transferred between them. But when this conception of democracy is applied in practice, I said, it will turn out to be rather empty. Without access to basic needs and the existence of a sufficient level of solidarity between persons, workplace democracy in particular, and participatory democracy in general will fail because it will not be self-sustaining, and it will not allow for the full control of the citizen/workers (due to the problems of economic manipulation that Pateman had addressed). Moreover, we saw that Mason's overall position was essentially a voluntaristic one, because he failed to consider how any of the prevailing social or historical conditions would either enhance or hinder the possibility of institutionalizing workplace democracy at this point in time. By utilizing an argument which considered democracy only in abstract terms of "participation", I argued that Mason seemed to want more participation rather than control in the workplace, and this appeared to put him into the "managerialist" camp (i.e. those who support initiatives couched in terms of workplace democracy only as long as there

is a profitable return).

I concluded at this point that conditional arguments will seem to always remain open to most of these problems, and turned to Carol Gould for her argument that workplace democracy is justified as a moral right. I argued that Gould brought us significantly beyond Dahl's position, because she included a thorough consideration of the social and historical determinations of one's choices and actions. Moreover, her analysis of domination, I said, provided a far better explanation of the conditions required to address the problems of manipulation than the solutions recommended by both Pateman and Mason. Where both of these authors appeared to be satisfied (mainly) with the creation of "feelings" in workers that their participation was effective, Gould argued that addressing domination or manipulation requires everyone to have effective control over the purposes which direct their common activities, and that relations of respect or "social reciprocity" must somehow be included as an initial condition for a workplace in which those persons who are from dominant social groups will not dominate others who are not.

However, I showed how Gould's argument for democratizing workplaces seemed ultimately to be a consequentialist one. For this reason, it appeared that she did not effectively counter the objection that freedom can be better enhanced outside of the workplace (and that workplace democracy may in fact harm the equal right to the conditions required for freedom).

Moreover, I found that Gould seemed to leave no means open for explaining where the other-regarding values required for a sustainable democratic system would arise from (in a present context which appears to only promote "possessive individualism"). If she thought they would be the result of workplace democracy, then she needed to provide empirical evidence for such a thesis. Moreover, if that was her intent, I argued that she needed to show where the individual motivation could arise from to begin this process. This latter problem became most acute, because it appeared as though Gould had failed to offer any clear explanation of the "self" who is supposed to start this process, and how it is to have a perspective about where to go if it is as completely immersed in social and economic determinations as she said. At the end of it all, it therefore appeared that Gould was also promoting a form of voluntarism, because she failed to analyze where the individual motivations to institutionalize workplace democracy could arise and, moreover, how successful workplace democracy can be in the present context of advanced industrial capitalism.¹²⁰

Keeping these problems in mind, I finally turned to the voluminous writings of Mihailo Markovic. Writing from the perspective of the critical social theory put forth by the (what was once) *Yugoslavian Praxis School*, Markovic provided

¹²⁰ Or, perhaps more accurately (because of present trends of a globalization of the economy) *de-industrial*, "service-oriented" capitalism.

interesting answers to some of these difficulties. Human nature (and hence human freedom), for Markovic, is best considered as one possible manifestation of a wide variety of potential clusters of "dispositions". Because these clusters transform as a result of changes in our social and historical conditions, the historically evolving understanding of these changes allows us to construct critical conceptions of what the particular conditions are which limit the flourishing of particular capacities. And because of our ability to engage in a dialogical process or a "socially reflective equilibrium", humans can discuss and arrive at agreement of principles which incorporate their implicitly (and presently) held values. The resulting norm therefore can be used as a maxim to decide what kind of society will develop the dispositions that are optimal (based on our accepted values). This maxim, in other words, allows us an ideal standard by which to decide what sort of society will best correspond with our highest (accepted) ideals. And, as we saw, one necessary organ or element in such a society, for Markovic, is an institutionalized system of workplace democracies.

For these reasons just listed, Markovic therefore thinks that individuals can develop a critical perspective--even when immersed in a "reified" society--which will allow them to choose a useful and legitimate direction for human development. The self, rather than referring to some reified, abstract chooser, is instead merely a potential being which

can act more or less freely, depending on the current conditions. Our critical capacity to understand from past experiences allows us to have a glimpse at our present ones, and to formulate utopias which reflect the possibilities inherent within the present context.

In this way, Markovic brings us beyond Gould by showing (at least) the possibility that workplace democracy can eventually succeed with enough concerted effort, and that anyone who supports workplace democracy as a matter of right has a moral obligation (in a loose sense) to act on those convictions to bring about the conditions required to actualize their vision.

However, in my closing paragraphs of the section on Markovic, I noted that he has failed to draw up clear ontological constraints on the actions of individuals who seek to institute their vision of the good. Even if he is right, and such actions have been the *motive force* behind all past human history, we must remember that all of history is not the pretty picture he paints. Time and time again, many atrocities have been committed in the name of grand visions of "the good" which were widely accepted.

At the end of it all, though, I think that Markovic *does* offer some hope to those of us who wish for a better world. Although it may ultimately come down to a form of Pascal's wager--in which attempting to do something is better than simply giving up--perhaps this is the best that applied

ethical theories can offer to those who spend their time slogging through the mire of practical, day-to-day human problems.

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