

# Participation, worker's control and self - management

## Summary

Participation of the workers in management is one of the issues that has been extensively discussed in industrialized countries. Many experiments on participation have been achieved throughout the century. Participation is currently at the heart of interest and discussions in these countries. Surprisingly despite this importance it is almost unknown in the third world, especially in Arab countries which gives the present article a particular importance. I hope readers and researchers in these countries will find in it a source of information about this topic.

The article puts a particular emphasis on the conceptual discussion of the terms of participation, workers' control and self-management, and shows that these concepts present also differences in methods and scope of research. Experiments on workers' participation which have been successively carried out since the turn of the century, show the extent of the generalization of industrial democracy and the efficiency of participation in solving many of the problems faced by the enterprises in achieving their tasks. Finally the article analyses the idea of those opposing workers participation and the excuses they advance in refusing this type of workers-management relations.

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## ملخص

على الرغم من أن موضوع المشاركة العمالية في اتخاذ القرارات من المواضيع التي أسالت الكثير من الحبر في الدول الصناعية، وخضعت للكثير من التجارب على مدى نصف قرن من الزمن تقريبا؛ وهي اليوم في قلب الحوار الجاري في هذه المجتمعات، إلا أنها تكاد تكون مجهولة في العالم الثالث عامة وفي الوطن العربي على وجه الخصوص؛ وهذا

The theme of workers' participation is not a new issue but it is only in recent times that it has acquired such a considerable importance and became a dominant one in a wide variety of circles. It has become the concern of many organizations and individuals in the society many of whom are not usually known to have a strong commitment to democratic principles and practices. Industrial relations specialists, sociologists, trade unionists, political scientists, etc. have all stood in one way or another for support of the principle of giving the workers some sort of involvement in decision-making in affairs and activities which directly concern them on the basis

ما يعطي أهمية كبرى للمقال الذي بين أيدينا في تعريف الباحثين في هذه الدول على أدبيات موضوع جدير حقا بالدراسة.

ويركز المقال بالخصوص على المعالجة المفاهيمية لمصطلحات المشاركة، الرقابة العمالية والتنسيق الذاتي، نظرا لما تطرحه الاختلافات بينها من تباين في المناهج وصورات البحث. كما أن التجارب التي أجريت حول المشاركة في اتخاذ القرارات تحت أية صيغة كانت تعبر عن مدى ما وصل إليه تعميم الديمقراطية الصناعية في المؤسسات الصناعية الغربية من جهة وبين فعالية المشاركة في التغلب على الكثير من الصعوبات التي تواجه هذه المؤسسات في أداء مهامها؛ ويخلص المقال في الأخير إلى تحليل رأي المعارضين لفكرة المشاركة العمالية وحجج هؤلاء في رفضهم لهذا الأسلوب من التعامل بين الإدارة والعمال كما تطرحه بعض المدارس المنادية بضرورة تطبيق المشاركة العمالية كتكملة للديمقراطية في مجال العمل.

that "authoritarian conditions of work are inconsistent with the philosophy and operation of a society based on democratic ideals. for a society to be thriving towards democracy , it is necessary that as many social institutions as possible also operate as democratically as possible. Therefore , industrial democracy is a logical extension of social democracy and just as a social democracy is believed to be a better type of society , then industrial democracy is believed to be a better type of organization of work life (1).

#### I- THE ROOTS OF WORKERS' PARTICIPATION

The demand for workers' participation which has become the subject of large public debates especially in the west over the last four decades did not arise in a vacuum nor did it happen over night. Historical analysis shows that its roots can be found in two main areas. although distinct , one of them can be considered as a result of the development of the other. The first is concerned with the development of human institutions throughout the historical process of human society and the citizens' struggle to have more say over decisions that concern their lives and achieve democratization. The second which can be considered a developed or rather an advanced stage in this long lasting struggle is related to workers' participation .

Although the second is an emulation of the first there is a big distinction between participation of the people in the political life of the society under political democracy and the participation of the workers in the management of their affairs under what is known as industrial democracy .

Certainly no-one claim that political participation has been fully achieved even in western democracies it has nonetheless been extensively discussed ; workers' participation on other hand is a far less developed subject especially in the developing countries.

Workers' participation is the outcome of accumulation of a long process of struggle to overthrow the imbalance between labour and capital in which capital has always dominated and consequently controlled labour in the various stages of the development of their relationship. Major difficulties have arisen from this imbalance, and the demand for workers' participation is a further step towards solving many of these difficulties. It has become widely argued that the rapid growth of workers' participation as D.Jenkins pointed out "is not only desirable and necessary but very probably inevitable.(2) This

statement by Jenkins seems perhaps too optimistic, since there are not really obvious signs that it will be inevitable but considering that the struggle between capital and labour is not yet solved, there is reason to believe that it might well be inevitable. However, one has to bear in mind that the outcome of this struggle is not easily predictable since the capitalist system has always succeeded in finding ways to contain this struggle and escape facing its destruction by the overt challenge of labour. Like political democracy, workers' participation was not a ready made phenomenon, it has come out in many respects as a necessity to solve the difficulties created by capital domination and its control over labour at least since the industrial revolution and the social and technological changes that this latter has produced in human society. As Alexander Heron wrote in his book "Why men work" in 1948:

*"We cannot have a really healthy industrial organization, if it is composed of distinct groups of workers and planners. We cannot expect a team spirit among 90 per cent of our personnel if we keep on telling them that their function is to work and ours is to think"(3).*

Workers' participation in its old version appeared, though not explicitly, in the claims of the early utopian socialists who called for the humanization of the working lives of the labourers and in their condemnation of the impact of the industrial revolution. By the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century these ideas started taking a clearer shape and the call for more workers' say in the conditions in which they were employed were made more explicit. One of the most prominent defenders of this argument was G.D.H Cole, the British Guild socialist who argued that responsibility and control must be given to the workers to express their personality in work. He also insisted that industrial democracy was an essential component part of political democracy. Therefore "...political democracy must be completed by democracy in the workshop"(4).

Dorow explains the demand for increased participation within the general ideals of democratization of society and related institutions "...This demand is at least in western Europe, part of a wider movement, the aim of which is participative democracy in every area of societal life (5).

## **II- CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION**

### **1- Participation**

It is rather difficult to give a precise definition of participation; on the one hand because the difficulty is inherent in most social science concepts, on the other, the term participation itself has come to mean different things to different people and therefore raises many conceptual controversies. A French man, for example, would be inclined to limit the meaning of participation to co-operation and collaboration between management and workers. "Autogestion" is the most current concept. In ex-Yugoslavia they used the term self-management to designate a system in which the workers' have full control over the already socialised means of production. Very few people if any at all, have given a straightforward definition of participation without referring to the

difficulties that this definition involves in trying to give a precise meaning to the concept

The close link between the term participation and other concepts raises difficulties not only in defining the meaning of each term but also in distinguishing between them .

Ernie Roberts has expressed this in the following words :

*"Participation or control ? Well, I don't like to see the juxtaposition of these two phrases because, I don't want the movement again to develop into a discussion on the basis of semantics, as to what one word means and what the other word means. It really means precisely what the workers that use it mean and is determined by what they are demanding"(6).*

J.M. Clerc on the other hand pointed out that the term "participation" evokes deeply sensitive reactions , that is why I believe most writers start usually by giving their own definitions of how they would use term in order to avoid confusion. Clerc went on to say:

*"In fact, I wonder if the expression" participation in management which we often use because it is handy and easy, is not responsible for some of the misleading interpretations. To participate is theoretically a neutral word but it has probably a slightly positive meaning; of course when you participate in a debate you can adopt a contradictory position to other "participants" but we must admit we often use the word "to participate" in everyday conversation in the sense of "to co-operate with "that is why Yves Delamote uses the term "conflictual participation" to indicate that there is a kind of participation which includes conflicts and negotiations ."(7)*

A broad definition was given by K. Davis as "The mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation which encourages him to contribute to group goals and share responsibilities in them ."(8)

That it is not limited to any particularly defined setting . it can, therefore , be applied to any group of people involved in a participatory situation . It is based on three essential elements which constitute the core of the meaning of participation :

- 1 - The mental and emotional involvement of the individual .
- 2 - His contribution to the group's goals .
- 3 - His willingness to share tasks and responsibilities .

First, the mutual and emotional involvement which constitute the basic link between the individual and the group of which he is a component and a member . In this respect the mental involvement is based on the conscious thinking of the mind which serves to rationalise the group's attitude. Meanwhile the emotional involvement consists of reciprocity of feelings of love and respect among the individuals in the group. These two essential mental and emotional linkings are components without there can hardly be any real participation .

The second is the expression of the individual's belonging and involvement through his contribution within the group . This element of contribution plays a major role in the distinction between positive participation based on the individual's actual

involvement and contribution on the one hand and the negative or passive participation in which the individual remains distant from action and gives only his opinion of approval or disapproval of what the group decides .

The third component emphasises the self realisation and consciousness of the individual and his conviction of the necessity to fulfil his tasks within the group as well as sharing the responsibilities in its goals. Participation becomes a social and moral responsibility of which the individual is conscious and aware . This leads us to conclude that in addition to Davis's definition, participation is a conscious behaviour and a rational conduct which stems from a philosophy in which the individual believes as much as he believes in his own group .

Finally within the sphere of Davis's definition we can conceive a continuum of management relationship, workers' control, joint management, joint consultation , workplace consultation, management supremacy . In this continuum workers' control represents one extreme which suggests concentration of all power in the workers and management supremacy represents the other extreme , which implies a zealous defence of managerial prerogatives.(9)

One of the earliest definitions of participation was given by J.R.P. French Jnr . who stated that it

*"refers to a process in which two or more parties influence each other in making certain plans, policies and decision . It is restricted to decisions that have further effects on all those making the decision and on those represented by them."*(10)

French's definition also has a number of virtues one of which is that it confirms the idea set forth earlier by Clec about our common understanding of the term . On the other hand it suggests a process of joint decision between two or more parties. This definition does not, however , explain the degree of workers' involvement in the process of decision making. It is limited to a share of power among parties involved in the process. One perhaps very important element in French's definition is the effects of participation on those making decision and those represented by them .

There are many other definitions of workers' participation all of which describe it as process of involvement in decision making and thus a sharing of power in upward direction within the organisational hierarchy . One of these definitions stated that

*"participation is any or all of the process by which employees other than managers contribute positively toward the reaching of managerial decisions which effect their work".*(11)

An other definition stated that participation in decision making is

*"the totality of such forms of upward exertions of power by subordinates in legitimate by themselves and their superiors organisations as are perceived to be"*(12)

Mc Gregor also defined it within this trend of employees influencing decision made by a:

*"higher authority and he regarded participation as "a special case of delegation in which the subordinate gains greater control, greater freedom of choice with respect to his own responsibilities . The term participation usually applied to the subordinate's greater influence over matters within the superior's responsibilities ."(13)*

While most definitions of workers' participation were limited to the process of influencing decisions and sharing power within the organisational structures, others looked at workers' participation in the wider context of the society as a process in which workers' participation is used by different socio-political forces for the transformation or the consolidation of a given social order and consequently workers' participation is regarded as a factor which modifies the distribution of power between social classes . In this context Stephens argued that :

"The introduction of workers' participation is a profoundly political problem because it modifies the distribution of power between social classes at least marginally. Workers' participation can be defined as the exercise of certain decision making rights in the process of production on the basis of the contribution of labour power as opposed to the contribution of capital, It necessarily transfers power from owners to non owners of capital and thus effects class relations in society. Consequently , the introduction and development of workers' participation has to be understood in the framework of the changing distribution of power among socio-political forces."(14)

For Micheal Poole in "the mode of industry today is still incompatible with a condition in which man is reconciled with himself through his work , from which he derives a meaning and purpose , and through which he begins to " regain control over essentially man-made institutions and historical situation " he proposes a three-equation model which summarize the key independent and dependent variables involved in the development of workers' participation and control

$$P = f(L,V)L = g(E,T)V = h(P,L,G,I).$$

where P = workers participation and control, L = Latenet power V = values; E = Economic factors, T = Technological factors , G = government action, I= more general ideologies (15) .

Borrowing from Robert K.Merton his two famous concept of manifest and latent power, he uses the first equation to summarise the basic argument of his study "...that workers' participation and control are functions of the latent power of particular industrial classes, parties or groups and value "climate" which may or may not be favourable to participation experiments. These values thus form an important mediating influence between certain structural factors associated with latent power and their realization in the form of workers' participation and control " (16). participation is sometimes used to mean certain psychological involvement, mutuality and co-operation . \* In this respect it shares some common meaning with other concepts like workers' control or self management which also imply mutuality co-

operation and psychological involvement, but participation does not mean any of them. To participate is simply to take part. That is; taking part in an activity which exists already and which has its own pre-established structures and objectives.

"The participant is involved quasi-individually into a pre-existing group, he is joined to the other, collaborate with them but he has no initiative, he only gives his support and contribution" (17).

However, participation of the workers' in an organisational hierarchy does not necessarily produce a co-operative commitment to the enterprise or a sharing of power and status between the managers and the workers. This is one of the areas where there is likely to be much controversy. However it is important to note as professor Henneth F. Walker suggested that workers' participation in management may run counter to the intentions and interests of management as well as in their favour. (18)

The impact and meaning of participation depends to a large extent on its objectives and cannot be isolated from the socio-economic system within which the process of workers' participation is carried out as well as the socio-political forces which surround its existence.

As I have mentioned earlier, the introduction of workers' participation schemes under the capitalist mode of production can only mean another indicator in the imbalance of power between labour and capital these schemes are not intended to redress the balance of power between workers and employers but rather to strengthen the control of capital over labour and find ways to escape the effects of labour unrest. The introduction of workers' participation in the capitalist enterprise is seen by the advocates of workers' control as a means of co-optation and sell out of the working class:

"There is a fundamental and, in finality, irreconcilable conflict between capital and labour ... workers' participation" is in my view, the greatest bulwark for preserving a free enterprise society. It does not seek to change, it seeks to perpetuate. It seeks to create the idea that there is not a fundamental difference between us" (19).

Participation may take various forms depending on degree and level of involvement of the participants within the organisational hierarchy. Here again there is no shortage of closely related concepts related to the same phenomenon and the same situation. Professor Kenneth F. Walker (20) for example distinguished between two forms of participation what he called "descending" and "ascending" participation. In the same way G. Strauss and E. Rosentein (21) used the terms "immediate" and "distant" participation.

Immediate or descending participation refers to workers' involvement in decisions made at lower level within the organized hierarchy. In this respect the workers are given power to plan and make decision about their own work. This form of participation which usually involves work supervisors, foremen, and first line managers originates from the Hawthorne studies in the 1930s and most research and experiments which have followed this tradition ever since have focused on the effects of the styles of the supervisor, types of leadership and on decisions which are made within a small group and concern usually decisions related to day to day work activities within a limited sphere.

Distant or ascending participation refers to workers' involvement in higher levels of organizational decision-making when the workers are able to influence management

decisions which are of concern to the organization as a whole. Such kinds of decisions are usually made at the top level management . The latter type of participation is carried out through different forms of representation such as election of workers representatives to work councils or delegates to the board of the enterprise. But which regard to the forms as well as the content of workers' participation , they differ from one country to another . They may range from very limited forms , of workers' representation through their delegates or representatives to self-management in which the workers are the masters of their own enterprises. In this context several forms of workers' participation have been developed in different countries all over the world. Despite major differences in forms, degree and extent of workers' involvement in the process of decision making , the idea seems to be expanding rapidly in different places at national as well as local levels. Systems such as "joint consultation " in Britain, workers' self management in Yugoslavia, co-determination in west Germany and many other forms of workers' councils now in practice in different parts of the world are clear indications that the process of giving more voice to the workers on matters which concern them is likely to continue.

## **2- Workers' control**

The concept of workers' control is more explicit and more clear cut when compared with that of workers' participation . While workers' participation is very often preferred in capitalist circles not only for its vagueness but also for its easier manipulation , workers' control is mostly used by socialist thinkers and advocate of workers' participation not merely as a form of consultation about issues of secondary importance but in the workers' involvement in decision making at all levels.

The term "workers' control " is commonly used to cover two quite distinct concepts. One maintains ... That "control over production signifies the management of the industries by the workers", and usually appears in discussion as an attempt to outline an ideal norm of administration for socialized industries. In this tradition , one finds that in Britain , throughout the nineteen -thirties, speakers in TUC. debates on the popular administration of nationalized industries almost invariably used the term in this sense . But another tradition has evolved a quite different concept which speaks of "workers' control .. in those .contexts where militant trade union have been able to wrest some, or most, of the prerogatives of management from the unilateral disposition of managers (22).

In the history of the workers' struggles the concept of workers' control has been used to mean the overthrow of capitalism and achieve the ideal of replacing " the capitalist industrial system by a new industrial order in which the industries of the country will be controlled (partially or completely) by associations of the workers employed in those industries (23).

This definition clearly excludes all possibilities of compromise between capital and labour. A new social order means the complete destruction of the capitalist system . In the eyes of the traditionalist revolutionaries this is the only way by which the workers can assume control and achieve social transformation of the society and suggestions for joint control would be regarded as a collaboration between classes which would benefit

the capitalist owners of the means of production and lead to the sell out of the working class.

For Gerry Hunnius and G. David Garson and John Case, workers' control means democratizing the workplace : the office, the factory , the shop, the company or institution . It means that a firm's management should be accountable to its employees. And it means, conversely, that the workers'...should bear the responsibility for running the enterprise's operations. Workers' control suggests both an ultimate goal - of a self-managing, publicly responsible economy- and a strategy for reaching that goal (24). This approach is closer to workers' self management than what is advocated nowadays as workers' control . However workers' control can be accepted as an advanced stage towards self management but it is not self management. Far from being the actual realisation of workers' self management , "workers' control " as Coates and Topham argued:

"emphasises tat the purpose of the policy and strategy should be to establish control by the workers, over the hitherto unfettered decisions of the ruling party in industry, namely the employers and their managers. In this sense...the germs of workers' control exist in greater or lesser degree wherever strong independent trade-union and shop-floor powers act to restrain employers in the exercise of their so called "prerogatives"(25). In this sense workers' control always exists in a conflicting situation but overall it means that the workers' influence and action are rather limited to certain specific points such as

" When shop stewards operate their own overtime roster or when they regulate , however informally , the speed of work, or when shop-floor strength and action prevent the carrying out of an arbitrary dismissal ; then workers' control is being exercised" (26). Workers' control in this sense does not question the structure of the whole organisation and the authority of the employers over the process of production nor does it aim at the complete overthrow of the system or the elimination of the existing antagonism between capital and labour . Within this perspective, workers' control constitutes a conflictual action , especially in term of strikes , to obtain concessions from the employers so long as the question of the ownership of the means of social production is not solved.

### **3- Workers' self-management**

Workers' self-management is maybe the most comprehensive system of workers' participation. Theoretically it is founded on the prior abolition of classes by means of the expropriation of individual capital holdings .(27) In the society at large self-management or self-government extends democracy to all fields and domains of the society and attempts to generate this process through direct participation. But since representation cannot be completely eliminated at all levels, for particle reasons, it is reduced and minimised as much as possible in order to give greater opportunity to the participants to influence and decide by themselves and directly rather than through channelled delegation. In the industrial organisation workers' self-management, unlike other systems of workers' participation, does not provide simply for a degree of consultation with the workers' or for their partial involvement in policy and decision making at different levels in the organisational hierarchy of the enterprise but bestows

upon the workers themselves the right and duty to manage the enterprise they work in (28).

In short:

" self-management or self-government " means a direct comprehensive democracy which encourages democracy in the economic political and cultural sub-system and which affords to all participants in the production process democratic representation for participation"(29).

However , it should be noted that as I stated earlier participation and self management are not identical ; though they share some common components and characteristics. A generalised outline on the difference between participation and self management is given by Emirik Blum who stated that

" the basic and essential difference is that we have participation where capital or the means of production are firmly in private hands, in the grip of those who do not take direct part in the production process, whereas self management as a social relationship can exist only in socialist societies where participants in the production process hold in their hands all categories of the means of production where they make independent and sovereign decision as to what is to be done with the fruits of their labour" (30).

### **III - EXPERIMENTS ON PARTICIPATION**

Studies and experimental researches concerning participation were not limited only to workers' directly engaged in the process of production , they have been extended to reach a wide range of organisational settings and concerned a great variety of people. The findings of many of these researches seemed to suggest the need if not the necessity for greater participation in modern society . They also confirmed the positive effects of participation of the workers not only in the industrial organization but also in the individuals outside the industrial organization as well as the society as a whole.

The many researches on the workers' participation since the Hawthorne's experiments have been heavily concerned with its relationship with job satisfaction. Most of the experiments conducted in work organisations within this context showed that workers' participation is an important determinant of job satisfaction.

From an extensive review of the literature on workers' participation Paul Blumberg concluded that

" There is hardly a study in the entire literature which fails to demonstrate that satisfaction in work is enhanced or that generally acknowledged benefits accrue from a genuine increase in workers' decision making power. Such consistency I submit is rare in social research"(31).

This is undoubtedly true but one has to bear in mind within the general context of workers' participation, that its final aim is to eliminate the existing antagonism of labour / capital conflicts by the overthrow of capitalism. These studies and researches have less ambitious aims. One argument is that much of this research is management inspired and intended to protect capitalism rather than replace it . In the following few pages I will attempt to summarise two of these experiments. The first one deals with influence of the leadership style on the behaviour of the group in a non-industrial setting and the second

deals with effects of workers' involvement in the process of decision making on job satisfaction.

One of the earliest and most well know studies demonstrated the influence of the type of leadership on the behaviour of the group was conducted in the late 1930s under the direction of Kurt Lewin (32).

This was one of a series of studies which used small groups of eleven year old boys. All boys were members of four different after school clubs engaged in various art and craft activities. Three types of leadership style were assigned to direct the boys in their activities. The first type of leadership was termed "authoritarian", the second "democratic" and the third "laissez faire".

In the authoritarian groups the leaders had a superior authority over the members of the group and were to remain distant from the rest of the group. They were also to determine the policies, tasks and activities and mostly used either direct or indirect orders in supervising the group's activities. The boys in the group were instructed to depend solely on their leader for guidance.

Under democratic leadership the leaders were to be involved with their groups, offering guidance, suggestions, supplying technical advice and encouraging the boys. Their relationship with the other members of the group was egalitarian rather than superior. As for the policies, they were determined by a group participation, discussion and decision.

In the third group the leaders were to supply knowledge to the group members but they were not to be emotionally involved and participate very little in the activities of their groups.

The objective of the experiment was to study the effects of different "social climates" on the behaviour of the group's individual members and how they responded to different situations, as when the leaders were present in comparison to when they were made to leave the rooms for short periods.

Great differences were found in the boys' behaviour. The proportion of time spent in work by the groups under the authoritarian leadership varied very considerably between when the leaders were in the rooms and when they left.

Meanwhile under the democratic leadership the proportion of work performed by members of the group was unaffected by the presence or absence of their leaders. In one of these groups this proportion fell by a mere 4 per cent as compared to a drop of 45 per cent and 36 per cent in two other groups under the authoritarian leadership.

Although the groups under democratic leadership produced less than those under the authoritarian leadership the quality of their products was considered to be higher than all other groups.

As for the interpersonal relations between members of the groups and their leaders the experimenters found two types of reaction on the part of the groups under the authoritarian leadership. Both types of the reaction were considered negative. The "aggressive reaction" was of a rebellious character. There was more expression of hostility towards their leaders than in the groups under democratic leadership. While the aggressively reacting children engaged in scapegoating of other members in their groups, such behaviour was hardly recorded in the democratic group. The "submissive reaction" was a character of permissiveness, the boys tended to be less critical of the leader when

their authoritarian leaders were changed to democratic ones as the boys were exposed to different patterns of authority, the submissive children were involved in a great outburst of horseplay emotional release.

In the "Laissez faire" groups the boys showed a high level of frustration, little independence from the leaders, their level of group co-operation was low and their product was considered to be the poorest. The findings of this experiment clearly show that what was really important was not total permissiveness or laissez faire nor rigid control and authoritarianism but rather democratic interpersonal behaviour between the leaders and the groups' members.

But can these findings be regarded as universal or be applicable to industrial organisation regardless of the workers' backgrounds, their socio-economic conditions and cultural values? Taking into consideration these factors the findings of the experiment can be regarded as rather debatable. For example, "working in a city in northern India; Meade found that authoritarian leadership at work might even be functional. Democratically led groups showed greater absenteeism and tardiness at work while under authoritarian leadership they showed higher quality of work, greater group attraction and even preference for leadership"(33).

Field experiments in industrial organisations also showed the great positive effects of workers' participation in decision making. In this respect many have been conducted since the Hawthorne's test room experiments in the 1930s and most have concluded that there was a strong relationship between job satisfaction and improvement of rates of production.

One of the earliest and most distinguished of these field experiments was carried by Coch and French in the Harwood Corporation in the 1940s (35).

The Harwood Manufacturing corporation was being run generally speaking on liberal, but autocratic lines. Changes in the methods of production had to be continually introduced in order to meet the requirements and needs of a highly competitive industry but the management of the company found that there was a severe workers' resistance to any kind of change in methods of worker for improvement in the production of pyjamas. Part of this resistance was that since the workers' wages were paid according to the amount of production it was obvious therefore, that the introduction of new methods of work would need a new session of retraining which would result in lower production and consequently lower wages. In an attempt to overcome this problem the management guaranteed that the workers' wages would not drop during the period in which they had to learn the new skills. But this did not solve the problem of resistance to change as the workers who had to be transferred to new jobs continued to show their hostility to the management, a high rate of turnover, low rate of output, lack of co-operation with supervisors and engineers of the new methods of production etc.

Cosh and French's study was to evaluate the effects of participation upon productivity and workers' resistant to change imposed from above "they believed that part of the workers' resistance was due to their frustration at having to abandon a job which they had already mastered to learn a new job in addition to the natural resistance of workers to any change in their work habits not only as individuals but as groups as well. To test their hypothesis, the researchers conducted two experiments. In the first experiment they selected three groups involving twenty eight workers.

The groups were chosen on the basis of the similarity of group cohesiveness, efficiency and the amount of training the job required. For each group some minor but similar changes were introduced in the work jobs. Difference between groups included only the ways in which the changes were made.

The first group was termed "no participation". The changes for the introduction of new methods of workers were made in the usual way by the management. The department of production made the customary procedures of changes. The workers in the group were given no details or specification of the changes. they were only called together, informed of the changes in brief meeting and the meeting adjourned.

In the second group the workers were informed by the management of the needs for the changes and details of what would be involved. A certain form of workers' participation was adopted as the workers were asked to select their representatives to help set up the necessary training programme for the group. This was participation through representation.

In the third group the workers were also informed of the changes and given reasons for the necessity of their introduction. But instead of delegating authority to some representatives, each individual in the group was given the chance to participate in helping to redesign and plan the new jobs as well as the retraining programme. this was called a "total participation" group.

The results of the experiment were very significant and clearly showed that the two groups (the second and third) which had participated in redesigning the new jobs and planning the retraining programmes adjusted more quickly to change than the first group which did not participate.

In the first forty days the researchers found that in the no participation group the moral of the workers was low, 17 per cent of the workers left their jobs, many of those who remained made complaints about their new job, expressed hostility towards the management, showed lack of co-operation with their superiors and the rate of their output was lower than before the introduction of the changes.

In the other groups which had the opportunity to participate the picture was completely different, the workers' moral was high, there were virtually no records of turnover or grievances, attitude towards the supervisors and staff were co-operative and the rate of output was considerably higher than the pre-change levels. Although in both the second and third groups the workers did very well, the total participation group did slightly better than the group in which participation was through representation.

When the first experiment was ended the first group was dissolved and the workers who composed it distributed throughout the factory. Several months later Coch and French did a follow up study with the no participation group. The same workers of the group were brought back together again. But this time they were given the chance to participate in a programme similar to that of the "total participation" group. This time the workers showed the successful adaptation to change which was manifested in the increase of production, high satisfaction, low rates of turnover and very good co-operation with the supervisors, staff and engineers of the methods of production. The results recorded for this group in the second experiment convinced the researchers that the workers' maladjustment in the first experiment was not due to personality factors among the members of the group. Thus Coch and French concluded that in the first

experiment the rate of output was directly proportional to the amount of participation meanwhile the rates of turnover and aggression were inversely proportional to the amount of participation . In the second experiment they believed that the successful results depended on the experimental treatment rather than personality factors. They finally concluded that total participation had the same effects as participation through representatives but suggested that the former has a stronger influence. More empirical studies and field research have been conducted ever since and their results seem to confirm the findings of the classical studies on the benefits of participation. One of these empirical studies was conducted by Tarrab and d'Argon in Quebec and Antario in Canada . Their findings clearly consolidate the participation claims of better working conditions and more overall satisfaction for both management and workers. They found "that participative companies employees have (1) more positive attitudes;(2) greater work satisfaction;(3) better attitudes toward supervisors and managers ; (4) lesser feeling of alienation ; (5) greater influence on decision-making ; (6) lesser feelings of being watched and supervised; (7) more satisfying inter-group relations ; (9) better self-assessment and greater self-esteem " They conclude: "such a method tends to minimize to a great extent workers / management differences. In the present day context of labour relations it is possible that participative methods, Would facilitate the reconciliation of workers / management interests"(34).

#### **IV- OPPOSITION TO WORKERS' PARTICIPATION : THE CASE OF CLEGG (36)**

Despite all the findings of research , theoretical studies and field experiments on the positive effects of workers' participation for the individual worker as well as for the organisation in the industrial sphere as whole, there are nonetheless those who have stood against participation" in management by the workers. This implies that the issue of workers' participation is more complex than one might estimate . It also indicate that the issue is still at the centre of controversies and that debates on the forms, degree and extent of "workers' control" , "workers' management" , "workers' participation" and such like terms will continue for some time to come.

Writers who have opposed workers' participation have expressed a rather different opinion on the notion of power sharing not only in the industrial setting but in society at large. Although most writers who have in one way or another opposed workers' participation have shown rather sympathetic views on power sharing in general they have nonetheless expressed doubts if not hostility towards the possible applicability of workers' participation.

One of the most influential and sophisticated theoretical critiques of workers participation was advanced by one of Britain's leading experts in industrial relations professor Hugh Clegg . The importance of Clegg's theory on industrial democracy does not seem to be limited to the British industrial scene but embraces all countries with similar capitalist intitution wich hence gave it an almost universal applicability. His main argument on industrial democracy were based on the analogy between political democracy and industrial democracy . According to Clegg the essence of political democracy whether under socialism or capitalism is the right of opposition to government . He said that:

" democracy is not only a matter of choosing who shall govern, it is a matter of making that choice more than formal by allowing opposition between parties so that the electorate may choose between men and parties" (37).

He believed that to achieve genuine democracy opposition becomes a necessity in order to create a balance of power between this opposition and the government and most importantly to eliminate the dangers of power which are according to Clegg so great "that even when a socialist government is in office every opportunity must be given to its opponents to bring about its defeat, so long as they use democratic methods (38).

Clegg applied the same argument to the industrial sphere. Although he was dealing with two different settings, he nonetheless transported the terms of political democracy to the industrial sphere. Therefore for industrial democracy to be achieved there must exist a strong and independent body of opposition within the industrial sphere to the prevailing power of management . In this respect trade unions which, according to Clegg, should constitute the oppositional body play a role equivalent to the opposition of political party, Meanwhile the management role is equivalent to that of the government in power.

Industrial democracy in the theory of Clegg depends primarily and partly on the existence of a strong union which has the capability to oppose the management or to use Clegg's expression "the employer" on the one hand and on the management's acceptance of this trade union and its willingness to compromise with this latter and work together towards a common purpose(39) for the interests of industrial harmony and unity on the other hand .Clegg's arguments on industrial democracy put much emphasis on the necessity of understanding between management and workers or their representatives who should work together towards a common purpose in order to achieve industrial democracy or workers' participation . Clegg put a particular stress on the role of trade union which he argued must only remain that of vigorous opposition to management. Trade union should not , therefore , attempt to share management responsibilities or its job . Clegg's opposition to trade unions' sharing the management responsibilities was based on two arguments : one of which was similar to the justification advanced by the Algerian state in its restriction of workers' participation in Algeria's socialist management of enterprises.

The first argument against extending the power of trade unions into management of industry was Clegg's doubts about the technical ability of trade unions to carry out the role of management in running large scale industries because he argued that planning in the industry requires a high degree of technical knowledge or briefing by technical experts (40) and these trade unions do not have .

The second argument was related to his basic thesis on democracy and its achievement through opposition . Here Clegg argued , the role of the trade union is to oppose the management, it should not , therefore, become the organ of industrial management because if it did there would be no-one to oppose the management and this would consequently jeopardise any hope for democracy . industrial democracy can only be with unions in the opposition and not in any way a part of the management. In short , Clegg summarised the principle of industrial democracy in the following point :

"The first is that trade unions must be independent both of the state and management. the second is that only the unions can represent the industrial interests of workers. The third is that ownership of industry is irrelevant to good industrial relations" (41). It is perhaps worth mentioning here that in his first work, industrial democracy and Nationalisation, Clegg was not explicit on whether there was any relationship between the nature of ownership and the possibility of achieving industrial democracy. But as he formulated his theory on industrial democracy mainly on the basis of the opposition of trade unions to the management it seemed logical that his arguments implicitly dismissed the notion of ownership from contributing in any way to industrial democracy. For Clegg, however, public ownership may have profound effects on the management of industry, but if the essence of democracy is opposition, then changes in management cannot be of primary importance to industrial democracy (42). According to Clegg, industrial democracy can therefore be achieved in private as well as in public sectors so long as there is a strong union which constitutes the opposition body to the management or employer. And since this opposition already exists in the British industrial sphere there is a strong assumption to suggest that industrial democracy has already been achieved (43).

### CONCLUSION

The theme of people's right to have some say over decisions that concern their lives is as old as man lived in society. The organizational aspects of human institutions regardless of the form of the civilization whether modern or primitive are obvious manifestations of the actual existence of these rights which are shaped and coloured by the influence of the governing systems, the socio-economic environment of the people as well as the historical period of the development of each society and each civilization.

In this respect workers' participation which is associated with the modern industrialized society constitutes the need to extend democracy to all areas of life. As workers' participation achieved prominence it has come to mean different things to different people. Generally speaking it was defined as a process of involvement in decision making and thus a sharing of power in management by the workers.

While most definitions of workers' participation were limited to the process of influencing decisions within the hierarchical structure of the industrial organisation, there are those who looked at it within the wider context of the society as a process in which workers' participation is used by different socio-political forces for the transformation or the consolidation of a given social order and consequently workers' participation is regarded as a factor which modifies the distribution of power between social classes.

Although the concept of participation shares some common meaning with workers' control and workers' self management in terms of the involvement of the workers' in management and the lesser or greater influence over the process of decision making, it means neither of these concepts. To participate is simply to take part in an activity which exists already and which has its own pre-established structures and objectives.

However, it is noted that the workers' participation in an organisational hierarchy does not necessarily produce co-operative commitment to the enterprise or a sharing of power and status between the managers and the workers such as in the case of workers' self management. In addition, the workers' participation is not always for the exclusive advantage of the management since it may counter the intentions and interests of the management as well acting in their favour.

In this respect it was argued that the impact and even the meaning of participation depend to a large extent on its objectives and cannot therefore be isolated from the socio-economic system within the process of workers' participation is carried out as well as the socio-political, forces which surround its existence. The introduction of workers' participation schemes under the capitalist mode of production are not and have never been intended to redress the balance of power between workers and employers nor for the elimination of class antagonism but rather to strengthen the control of capital over labour, provide ways and methods to control and confront labour unrest and finally leads to the co-optation and sell out of the working class.

The concept of workers' control has the advantage of being more explicit and clear cut when compared to that of participation.

Although workers' control is an advanced stage towards self management it is not actually self-management. Under workers' control the workers' influence and action are rather limited to certain specific points but it does not question the structure of the whole organisation and the authority of the employers over the process of production. Within this perspective workers' control constitute only a conflictual situation, especially in terms of strikes, in order to obtain concessions from the employers so long as the question of ownership of the means of production remains unresolved. In the definition of the traditional revolutionaries what is nowadays accept and called workers' control is rather a manifestation of collaboration of classes, since workers' control for them was a means by which the workers' could achieve the goal of replacing the existing industrial order under capitalism by a new social order in which the workers' assume power and control the production. This approach is closer to workers' self management than to what is presented as workers' control under the capitalist mode of production.

Workers' self management is the most sophisticated system of workers' participation. It is founded on the prior abolition of classes by means of the expropriation of individual capital holdings. It does not simply provide for workers' consultation but gives them the right to manage their enterprise by themselves.

Although the many researches and experimental studies on participation have shown its positive effects on job satisfaction, much of these researches especially those which concentrated on study of small groups in industrial settings were management inspired and are therefore regarded as a continuation to the capitalist participatory systems. Finally, despite all the findings of research, theoretical studies and field experiments on the positive effects of workers' participation for the individual worker as well as the industrial organisation there are nonetheless those who have stood against workers' participation in management.

This opposition implies that the issue of workers' participation is more complex than one might estimate. It also indicates that the issue is still at the centre of controversies and that debates on the forms, degree and extent of "workers' control", "workers'

management" , " workers' participation" , "industrial democracy" and such like concepts will certainly continue for some time to come.

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