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THE ROLE OF WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT IN SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMINATION OF WORKERS' COUNCILS IN POLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA

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THE ROLE OF WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT IN SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMINATION OF WORKERS' COUNCILS IN POLAND AND YUGLOSLAVIA

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT
IN SOCIALIST DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMINATION
OF WORKERS' COUNCILS IN POLAND AND YUGOSLAVIA

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This paper examines both theoretically and empirically, the role of workers' self-management in socialist development. Marx's concepts of alienation and human nature are used to develop a framework to examine data provided by existing studies of workers' councils in Poland and Yugoslavia.

The major findings of this study are while the legislative role of workers' councils in both countries appear to promote socialist goals, this premise is not upheld in the actual functioning of the councils. The viability of Polish workers' councils has been successfully mitigated, and Yugoslav councils are controlled by management.

This paper concludes that in order for actual control by the producers to be realized, future forms of self-management must not solely attempt to integrate workers into existing managerial forms of organizational control, but must challenge and restructure the underlying production process.

Implications for further research are explored.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is a substantial body of Marxist literature[1] which identifies workers' self-management as a potential vehicle under socialism for challenging the dehabilitating social relations that have been established by capitalism. Predicted benefits of workers' self-management range from "the withering away of the state"[2] and the end of alienation[3] to the more modest claim of providing channels of worker input into the production process. In addition to these theoretically oriented treatises, there exists a number of studies which by survey or observation discuss the structure and functioning of existing forms of socialist self-management. A majority of these studies depict workers' councils as a model of socialist participation.

Very few attempts have been made to integrate the two bodies of literature.[4] The theoretical predictions are sparsely grounded in concrete conditions and the studies of participation are largely unconnected to any theoretical orientation. As a result, the theoretical assertions remain speculative and the empirical studies provide little insight into the impact of these structures.

A number of questions can be raised by looking closely at workers' councils. In particular, do workers' councils provide an alternative to capitalist relations of production? What new avenues of input or access to control do workers' councils provide? Is there some basis for the theoretical predictions? In other words, what changes do workers' councils bring about in the structure of work? In workers' control

over their own lives? And what implications do these changes have for the theoretical postulates? These questions delineate the concerns of this paper.

By clarifying the theoretical basis of socialist self-management and then using the resulting framework to examine the structure and functioning of workers' councils in two socialist countries, an attempt will be made to gain insight into the role of workers' councils in the process of socialist transformation.

The focus of analysis is Poland and Yugoslavia. The well-publicized Yugoslav system of workers' self-management and the less familiar Polish experience with workers' councils will be examined. These two socialist countries have some basic similarities that facilitate analysis, yet retain sufficient differences to provide comparisons.[5]

II. THEORETICAL GOALS OF SOCIALIST WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT

Before we can begin to examine the role of workers' councils in the socialist development of Poland and Yugoslavia, the term "socialist development" must be clarified. What are the criteria for socialist development? What are the goals and the tasks for this process?

Attempts to answer these queries have produced many different responses with a wide range of basic premises. These premises range from how the communists achieved power, i.e., was there a workers' revolution,[6] to what form of government is present, i.e., centralized vs. decentralized.[7] These criteria each have some useful points to offer, but as

a whole, provide little insight to the problem of developing a framework from which to judge the impact or importance of new forms of social organization. A more useful approach is outlined by Braverman.[8] Instead of delineating sets of criteria with which to judge the validity of a particular country's claim to socialism, Braverman maintains that socialism should be considered as a process which begins at the inception of communist rise to power and evolves into new structures and forms of social organization.[9] By utilizing the idea of socialism as a process, as a proposed transition from capitalist forms of organization toward the development of socialist forms of organization, or the development of social institutions which promote communist goals, the problem of defining socialism can be translated into theoretically delineating the processes involved and examining the related structures and processes within each country that is attempting the transformation. Under this approach, identifying which countries are "socialist" becomes relatively unimportant. Any country which proclaims itself as socialist can thus be considered. The important focus becomes that of identifying which processes within each country are developing toward the goals of socialism, and which processes are contradicting these goals.[10]

To begin the examination of the processes involved in the development of socialism, we must have some understanding of what is meant by socialist goals. This is a task that can not be fully delineated here. However, certain themes in Marx's writings can be identified which provide a sufficient

framework for the purposes at hand.

The theme of human development can be found throughout the works of Marx. To him, a person's development of his/her potential is structured by the predominant social relations which are created by the existing organization of production. Under capitalism, Marx documents conditions which restrict or even negate the possibility of anything but segmented and stunted personal development.[11] Thus, socialism represents an attempt to change these limiting structures, to create a system under which individual potentials can be more fully realized.

Few attempts have been made to elaborate the goals of socialism beyond this basic human development orientation. The most recent discussions of socialism focus on "is this country still socialist" debates,[12] i.e., is the U.S.S.R. actually state-capitalism? Out of these debates, Gordon,[13] in his article "Capitalist Efficiency and Socialist Efficiency," has crystalized two underlying basic orientations toward socialist transition:

> ". . . two main logical conceptions have dominated traditional Marxian views of socialist transition . . . Each of those conceptions corresponds to a different vision of the ultimate communist objective."[14]

In other words, throughout Marxian literature, two pictures of future communist society have been developed. Assumptions about socialist goals are implicitly contained within these orientations.[15]

The simplest of these two views is the 'free labor' concept. This version of communism is that of a society free

from want and much of the drudgery of labor. This type of communist society would be identified by a minimum of socially necessary labor time equally divided among all members of society. This means that the total amount of work needed to produce a high standard of living for all the members of the society would be negligible. This work would be equally shared by all those in the society. To reach this goal, the task of socialism would be to develop the productive forces[16] in order to reduce the labor time necessary to fulfill the needs of society and to develop mechanisms which would ensure the equal distribution of both socially necessary labor time and newly liberated free time.

Insignificant socially necessary labor time is also an important feature of the second orientation, the 'collective labor' view of communism. As in the free labor view, this labor would be distributed equally among all members of the society. But in addition to these characteristics, dramatic changes would be seen in the social relations of society. The organization of society would promote shared collective or co-operative relationships through which everyone is equally free and responsible. This focus on social relations complicates the task of social transformation. Not only must the productive forces of society be developed and expanded, but two additional tasks must be undertaken in the socialist transformation to achieve the communism pictured in the collective labor conception. The relations of production must continually be developed in a manner that increases

avenues for workers' participation in collective and responsible social relations. Secondly, mechanisms must be created to ensure that both the work to be done and the new co-operative relations are equally distributed among all members of the society.

Support, in the form of selected quotations, for both these conceptions can be found in the works of Marx, Mao, and Lenin. Rather than engage in a futile attempt to discern what these monumental thinkers really meant, it is perhaps more useful to subject each perspective to a test in the context of the focus of this paper.[17] What tools does each view give us to understand the development of contemporary socialism; to evaluate the experience of existing socialist countries?

By these criteria, the fundamental differences between the two conceptions become clear. Both conceptions stress the need for continually developing and expanding the productive forces of the society during socialist transition.[18] However, the free labor view of communism focuses almost exclusively on peoples' fight to master nature, or the struggle to develop means to provide all people with the material requisites of life. Through this focus, the interdependent character of relations between people is ignored. The social relations of production are of concern only to the extent necessary to determine the distribution of the work load. Without an emphasis on the social character of production, this view gives us no framework from which to understand the human dynamics of the system; how the people of

the society are to be involved in the process, both in terms of developing their potentials and in terms of their political power. A logical, albeit extreme extension of the free labor view would be a technological or economic deterministic approach to the tasks of the socialist transition. One would look for increases in the productive capacities and the standard of living in a country, along with trends toward a more equitable distribution of wealth as indicators of advances in socialist development.[19] Development of technology, not people, would be the path to communism.

In contrast, within the collective labor view, the social character of production is central. Therefore, from this perspective, a society would be seen as moving along the path to communism if, in addition to developing the forces of production, the relations of production were organized in such a way as to both maximize the ability of the working class to increase its control over the means of production and the society as a whole and to promote the development of human potential. This emphasis provides an important starting point in the examination of the social dynamics of existing socialist countries. Changes in the relations of production, as well as in the amount of work, become important elements to examine. Thus, an understanding of the role of workers' self-management is crucial in evaluating existing socialist countries within this view.

However, this orientation, as presented, lacks development. Before we can critically analyze the functioning of

existing forms of workers' self-management, two aspects must be clarified. How would this focus on social relations be developed? And what changes would be made in a society's structure to facilitate this aim?

To answer these questions, a twofold process must be undertaken; first, we must have an understanding of what is meant by human development, and secondly, an understanding of the structural constraints which hinder this development under capitalism. By looking at Marx's concept of alienation we can begin to gain insight into these issues. Marx discusses the negative effects capitalist organization has on human development through prevalent social relations by elaborating a theory of alienation. Alienation can be examined both in terms of Marx's formulation of human nature[20] and the interrelation of social organization and human development potentials.

For Marx, as with his other concepts and indeed his entire analysis, human nature is not a final and unchanging phenomenon. Instead, human nature is a dynamic social process within which certain potentialities or capabilities of people are either given expression or are thwarted. As Israel explains, for Marx:

> "Man is the totality of social relations seen in a historical perspective. His social relations are changed through the development of the productive forces, which alter the existing structure of a society, which in turn changes his social relations."[21]

This unique interactive definition stems from two central assumptions Marx makes about the nature of people: 1) people are active social beings, and 2) people relate to nature

through their activities.

First among all things for Marx is the belief that people are social beings. A person lives in relation to other people and is a product of this interaction. In this way, Marx's definition of human nature is a sociological definition, he views humankind not as individuals but rather in the context of all people.[22] Thus, an understanding of the nature of people can not be separated from the social setting.[23] An important part of this social setting is the labor process. The distinctive characteristic of human work for Marx is that this labor is conscious and purposeful.[24] It is through the interaction of their labor and the social environment that people are able to create products to satisfy their needs. Human labor is a conscious and active process.

> "By this acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature."[25]

For Marx, people are active, creative beings. Through a unified labor process, a person creates mechanisms to satisfy his/her needs and in turn his/her potentials are developed.

But it is precisely within these processes that the phenomenon of alienation arises. For example, the unity of conception and execution in labor is an essential component in the creative development of people. However, this unity is not inviolable. It is possible within the labor process for a division to occur; for one person to conceive of a project while another executes the task. The social relations which develop from this and other separations are both the

process and results of alienation.

For Marx, capitalism epitomizes this process of segmentation and separation. Under capitalism, all traits by which Marx distinguished humans from other organisms have been severed. Thus, alienation is the disruption of the basic relations of people; a person's relation to his/her activity, the product of that activity, other people, and human species being.[26] This disruption must be analyzed in the context of the social structure under which it occurs, capitalism.

This point raises questions about the source of alienation. As Novack has suggested:

> "The alienation of the worker and his labor means that something has basically changed in the life of the worker. What is it? Normally, everyone has some creative capabilities, certain talents lodged in him, untapped potentialities for human development which should be expressed in his labor activity. However, once the institution of wage-labor is prevalent, these possibilities become nullified."[27]

In other words, a starting point for understanding the sources of alienation lies in the wage labor-system. Let us focus on what is meant by wage-labor, and by what processes this institution has evolved.

Labor under capitalism is wage-labor, a contractual agreement under which one person sells his/her labor power, his/her ability to do work, to another. The essential factor in this process is the transfer of control. A person no longer may claim responsibility for his/her labor or the product of that labor, they are now controlled by the capitalist. Marx discusses three conditions within the productive

forces of capitalist society which create and in turn are strengthened by this fundamental change in the labor process. They are: 1) the development of private ownership of the means of production, i.e., private property under capitalism, 2) the evolution of the division of labor, and 3) the relationships created by the reduction of labor to a commodity. These three characteristics are not totally separate facets of capitalist production systems, but are interrelated phenomena within the overall market structure of capitalism. In combination, these characteristics result in the subordination of labor to capital.[28]

The relationship of the capitalist private property system of ownership to alienation is probably the clearest to discern. Under capitalism, the means of production, the tools and technology needed to produce, are owned by individuals. This separation of the means of subsistence from those who produce creates the basis for wage-labor. Now those who do not own must enter into an agreement with those who own the means of production in order to survive. People must sell their labor power for a wage. As the institution of private property becomes widespread, it leads to both the process of alienation (people are separated from the mechanisms of productions and must enter into a wage-labor contract) and a product of alienation (the objects people create do not belong to them, but are added to the capitalists' storehouse).

The second condition through which labor is alienated under capitalism, division of labor, is closely related to

the concept of private property. While the institution of private ownership of the means of production underlines the social relationship between the individual and the tools and products of production, the division of labor emphasizes the connections between the individual and the organization of the production process.

An important distinction must be made when discussing the division of labor. In all societies, there exists some division of the tasks necessary to the maintenance of that society. Each individual alone could not possibly provide him/herself with more than the bare means of subsistence. It is only through this social division of labor, the breakdown of tasks into occupations or branches or production, that society as a whole is able to develop and progress. On the other hand, the manufacturing division of labor, which exists within the capitalist labor process,[29] is the division of the processes involved in making a product into many separate tasks done by different workers. This breakdown denies the worker any connection with the finished product of his/her activity. The worker acquires only the knowledge required to perform one small part of the product's manufacture. S/he is no longer aware of the entire process, the product does not appear as a direct result of his/her work, severing the essential creative unity between conception and execution. In this divided production, the individual is given a limited role, and only a fraction of his/her knowledge and capabilities are brought to use. People are alienated from their potentialities and from the possibility of

full human development.

It is through the expansion of capitalist private property and the increased segmentation of the production process within the manufacturing division of labor that labor becomes a commodity. A commodity is a product which is related to other products through an exchange value. Within capitalism, this exchange value is not based upon intrinsic human needs nor societal use, but merely upon equivalent exchanges of these products' most common denominator: money. In the capitalist market, ten dollars of gold and ten dollars of grain are of equal value, no matter how many people are hungry. Ten dollars of labor power may be exchanged for ten dollars of equivalent worth in any product, no more or no less. This places the mechanism of human survival, labor, squarely within the vagarities of the market. If the supply of labor power is large, wages are reduced. If technological advances increase productivity, labor power loses exchange value.

Labor as a commodity is something to be disposed of, to be bought and sold. Accordingly, workers begin to view their labor power as an object, a thing they own which must be bartered for survival. People must compete with other people for the beneficial sale of their work capability. People become things to other people. The social base of this process becomes masked by the appearance of these commodity relations between things.

In summary, in the Marxian perspective, alienation is the result of specific historical conditions organized in a

definite mode of production. It is these facets of social organization which limit the development of collective social relations, and therefore, are the focus of change under the collective labor model of socialist transformation. The planners of socialist countries must consciously develop mechanisms which contradict these processes and develop new bases for collective social relations.

Within socialist countries, insofar as the institution of capitalist private property has been abolished, and insofar as the means of production are collectively owned by the people through the state, this condition of alienation has been reduced. Profit no longer falls into the hands of private individuals but belongs to the society as a whole. In both Poland and Yugoslavia, only a small portion of industry remains in private hands.[30] Therefore, this structural component of alienation has little importance in our study of socialist development.

However, developed forms of both division of labor and commodity relations are still very much present in the structure of most socialist countries. Under capitalism, mental work is divided from manual work, responsibility and authority are hierarchically distributed, and the production process is segmentalized into minute and meaningless tasks. All these mechanisms serve to take responsibility for and control of the labor process away from the worker. These limiting structures are also found in the industrial concerns of Poland and Yugoslavia.

Although the economies of socialist countries have been

dramatically restructured, labor as a commodity relations prevail. Workers must still sell their labor power under market-like conditions. A worker's well-being depends upon selling his/her labor power. Competition between workers for material rewards abounds, and in many instances, is encouraged by incentive programs.[31]

The presence of these restrictive structures within a socialist country in no way negates the feasibility of the socialist goal of new forms of social relations. Only a simplistic application of the Marxian theory of historical development would imply that the mere abolition of private property systems of capitalism would totally negate the existence of capitalistic social and economic relations. Rather, as Braverman points out in his introduction to Labor and Monopoly Capital, Marx's analysis of historical development indicates:

> ". . .that the same productive forces that are characteristic of the close of one epoch are also characteristic of the opening of the succeeding epoch; indeed how could it be otherwise, since political and social revolutions, . . ., do not on the morrow provide a society with a brand new technology."[32]

Therefore, when attempting to gain an understanding of socialist countries, the problem is not one of merely documenting how far short these countries fall of their communist ideal or how closely they resemble capitalism. Rather, the challenge lies in attempting to identify, given the continued existence of forms of capitalist social and economic relations, the trends and processes within these countries which represent changes in these limiting structures.

The direction of our examination of workers' councils is now clear. Workers' councils, in order to play a part in the building of collective social relations, must function in such a way as to challenge the position of labor as a commodity, and begin to restructure the manufacturing division of labor within the work process.

III. THE HISTORY OF POLISH AND YUGOSLAV WORKERS' COUNCILS

To what extent do the workers' councils in Yugoslavia and Poland aid in the accomplishment of these aims? A brief examination of the history of workers' councils in each of these countries is a useful point of departure in answering this question.

As previously noted, tensions between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union culminated in a breach of all relations between the two countries in 1948. Up until this time, Yugoslav economic development closely followed the Soviet model. Workers' participation was limited to membership on committees called workers' representative councils. The function of these committees was largely advisory.[33] Cut off by the breach from all former trade partners, technical advisors, and external sources of investment, the centralized economy of Yugoslavia faltered. Major economic reforms oriented toward decentralizing economic control were introduced in 1950. An important facet of this decentralization process was the LAW OF WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT OF 26 JUNE, 1950. Through this legislation, the rights of management were given to workers' councils. In general, workers' councils

exercise these rights by:

1) Approving the basic plans and final accounting of the enterprise;

2) Making decisions for the management of the enterprise and fulfillment of the economic plan;

3) Electing the management committee;

4) Making enterprise regulations, subject to the approval of the management committee of the regional association of the enterprise;

5) Evaluating the work of management;

6) Distributing that part of the enterprise's profit which remains after taxes.[34]

This 1950 law constitutes the formal basis for self-management. Subsequent legislation has further strengthened and clarified the position of workers' councils. In 1957, revisions were made which gave workers' councils more control over the distribution of income within the enterprise. Wages fixed by the state were abolished and each enterprise was left free to develop its own basis for the distribution of net income after taxes between capital, wages, and welfare allocations.[35] From 1965 on, legislation has emphasized the concept of enterprises as free associations of work partners and has strengthened the independent responsibility of the enterprises.

The system of workers' self-management through workers' councils is entrenched in the Yugoslav economy,[36] having been established and promoted by those in power.[37]

The origin and subsequent development of workers' councils in the Polish People's Republic provides a vivid contrast. In comparison to the Yugoslav system, Polish workers'

councils are the product of a far more spontaneous process.

During the twenty year span of the Polish Republic, labor unions flourished.[38] After World War II, union leaders resumed their activities in socialist Poland. Their independence was not challenged until the forced merger of the Polish Socialist Party with the Polish Communist Party (PRR) in 1949. The PRR consolidated its control with the LABOR DISCIPLINE LAW OF 1950.[39] Unions were no longer autonomous organizations. Instead, their newly legislated function was to support the government policies by mobilizing the work force to meet production quotas and discipline the labor force. Management authority was highly centralized and state appointed. Wages were tied to the meeting of production quotas, and strikes were outlawed. Labor unions became a social branch of management. A Six Year Plan for economic development was instituted. The percentage of national income used for reinvestment was increased,[40] and as a result, consumption levels failed to keep pace with the increased production. Public discontent with these developments culminated in 1955 at the end of the Six Year Plan, when worker unrest resulted in numerous strikes and acts of sabotage.[41] Technical workers campaigned against the inefficiency and waste of the system and demanded more autonomy. These acts of resistance paved the way for the return to power of Gomulka and promises of liberalization. Some of the more restrictive labor laws were repealed. Workers' councils, many of which had been formed by the striking workers, were institutionalized. The WORKERS' COUNCIL LAW OF NOVEMBER,

1956 allowed for the establishment of workers' councils in manufacturing, agricultural, and construction industries, provided that the majority of workers voted for them. Similar to the Yugoslav system, the councils' authority extended to the following functions:

1) Determining the organization and regulation of the enterprise;

2) Advising on improvements in production;

3) Determining production norms, wage schedules, and within set limits, the distribution of end of year bonuses;

4) Expressing opinions on the activity of the enterprise and approving the final balance sheet.[42]

The popularity of these councils was immense, and by 1958, all major production units had established them.[43] However, the period in which the councils functioned effectively was very brief.[44] The conflicts inherent between party appointed directors, state-mandated plans, and workers' management became manifest.[45] The PRR reacted to these tensions by introducing a new form of self-management, a Conference of Workers Self-Government.[46] These Conferences were composed of members of existing workers' councils, the union shop committee, and the party committee.[47] The executive committee of the worker's councils was enlarged to include the director of the plant, the chairperson of the union committee, and a party representative. The function of workers' participation was changed from managerial to advisory. Under this system, the workers' councils were charged with the execution of the Conference decisions. The

parallels to the earlier subordination of labor unions are clear. By 1960, Polish Workers' Councils were dominated by the state apparatus. However, the permanence of this subordination should not be overestimated. Strikes and demonstrations by workers continually challenge these restrictions.[48]

Several tenative observations can be drawn about the impact of workers' councils on socialist development from the preceding historical background material. While little insight can be gained about changes in the manufacturing division of labor from these legislative accounts, the structural changes in the position of labor should be noted. Under both systems, workers were given control over wage issues, both in establishing wage schedules and distributing portions of the enterprise's profits. Although workers must still enter into labor contracts, the exchange conditions of this contract may now be set by the workers. The emphasis in the Yugoslav laws of 1965 upon the free association of partners within an enterprise highlights the potential for co-operative social relations inherent in this change. The provisions which give workers' council the responsibility for determining the rules and regulations of the enterprise further return control over labor power to the worker, within a collective framework.

IV. THE FUNCTIONING OF POLISH AND YUGOSLAV WORKERS' COUNCILS

However, the enactment of these potentials into legislation does not guarantee their successful application.

Rather, the actual functioning of workers' councils in both Poland and Yugoslavia must be examined in order to determine to what extent these dimensions are manifest in reality.

Although there are many studies which examine the functioning of workers' councils in Yugoslavia, little information is available about the Polish system.[49] Most of the studies accessible to Western scholars document the political history of the Polish councils. The remaining few which examine the actual workings of the councils are based on field observations, and are primarily descriptive presentations of personalities, work settings, and reports of meetings. As a result, the following discussion will primarily focus on data obtained from the Yugoslav system, supplemented with excerpts from accounts of the Polish councils.

The legislation structuring workers' councils in both Poland and Yugoslavia gives the councils authority to determine regulations and wage schedules and to approve financial plans and balance sheets. Consequently, in terms of legal authority, workers' councils are the major decision making bodies of the production enterprises. But, do workers in practice actually exercise their power? To what extent is workers' council's dominance reflected in enterprise affairs?

These questions can be answered by examining the influence structure within enterprises. If workers' councils do indeed fully exercise their legislated power, we would expect councils to be perceived as more influential than management.

However, this proposition is not supported by the data.[50] In study after study, Yugoslav workers perceive the enterprise's top management personnel as wielding the most influence. In addition, the professional staff and middle management are also seen to possess more influence than the plant workers' council (see Table 1). Observations in a Polish factory report a similar situation. When asked about the strength of the workers' council in his factory, an ex-union member observed:

> "We saw that during the workers' council's presidium meetings, management sought to use the new organizations in the same way in which it had been using labor unions, i.e., to communicate with and to control workers."[51]

Further documentation of management's controlling position can be found in a study in which workers' council members were asked about the distribution of influence within the council itself. Management was perceived as having the most influence within workers' councils, and semi-skilled and unskilled workers were thought to have the least influence. Table 2 lists the rank order derived from this study.

However, the weight of these observations should not be accepted merely at face value. Workers' councils in both Poland and Yugoslavia were given the power to censure management proposals and decisions.[52] Does this perceived difference of the top management reflect tacit approval of their programs by the councils? Is the director carrying out schemes or programs promoted by the workers? Or is management calling the shots?

Table 1.* PERCEIVED INFLUENCE

Group	Average Rank Order
Top Management	1
Professional Staff	2
Middle Management	3
Workers's Councils	4.5
Board of Management#	4.5
Supervisors	6
The Party	7
Highly Skilled and Skilled Workers	8
Semi and Unskilled Workers	9

*This table was compiled from findings reported by V. Rus, "Influence Structure in Yugoslav Enterprises," Industrial Relations, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1970 and "Workers' Participation in Management in Yugoslavia," International Institute for Labor Studies Bulletin, No. 9, 1972, p. 129-172.

#The Board of Management consists of the director, and officials of the Workers' Council, trade union, and Party cell.

Table 2.* INFLUENCE WITHIN WORKERS' COUNCILS

Group	Rank Order
Top Management	1
Professional Staff	2
Middle Management	3
Supervisors	4
Highly Skilled and Skilled Workers	5
Semi and Unskilled Workers	6

*Source: V. Rus, op. cit.

Observational studies of Yugoslav workers' council meetings provide some answers to these questions. As seen in Table 3, the first proposition is supported. Not only do management personnel participate twice as much as non-management personnel in the meetings, but accepted proposals or suggestions were three times more likely to have been advanced by management personnel.

Meeting control by management was also observed by Kolaja in his study of a Polish factory:

> "We have observed in, that as soon as the plant director entered the scene, he began to dominate it with his verbal pronouncements, while members of the weaving department workers' council kept silent. The same observation can be made concerning the meetings of the other two large bodies."[53]

The stratified nature of this participation is further illuminated by looking at the composition of the workers' councils. There is a disproportionate representation of both managerial, personnel, and white collar workers on the Yugoslav councils. Unskilled workers are sparsely represented within council ranks, yet this group composes over a quarter of the total work force (see Table 4). This trend is accentuated in the composition of the Managing Boards.[54]

There also appears to be a managerial/worker division based upon topic of discussion. Workers in both Poland and Yugoslavia were more likely to take part in discussions when issues of the distribution of wages, bonuses, or benefits, i.e., housing or vacations, were raised.[55] Although it must be noted, management participation did not drop off in these

Table 3.* PARTICIPATION AND ACCEPTED SUGGESTIONS AT YUGOSLAV WORKERS' COUNCIL MEETINGS (in percentages)

	KOLAJA (1959)		OBRADOVIC (1966)	
	Management Personnel	Non-managerial Personnel	Management Personnel	Non-managerial Personnel
Participation	66	34	65	35
Accepted Suggestions	73	27	81	19

*This table was compiled from data presented by J. Obradovic, "Participation and Work Attitudes in Yugoslavia," Industrial Relations, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1970, and the previously cited Kolaja Study.

Table 4.* CHARACTERISTICS OF YUGOSLAV WORKERS' COUNCIL MEMBERS# (in percentages)

	KOLAJA (1959)	VUSKOVIC (1965)	% of all employed (1965)	Ratio
Managerial and White Collar	29	23	15	1.5
Highly Skilled Workers	17	20	11	1.8
Semi and Skilled Workers	54	49	45	1.01
Unskilled Workers	0	8	29	.27
	100	100	100	

*This table was compiled from findings presented in the following two studies: Kolaja, Workers' Councils: The Yugoslav Experience, p. 17, and Vuskovic, "Social Inequality in Yugoslavia," p. 40, a paper presented to the Conference of the Croatian Communist Alliance, January 1973.

#It should be noted that due to different classification schemes, the two years of data are only roughly comparable.

instances.

V. DISCUSSION

As seen in the above data, the actual functioning of workers' councils does not appear to utilize the authority legislated to the councils. Rather, the councils are dominated by managerial and white collar personnel. From these data, we may conclude that in reality, workers' councils do not provide mechanisms for workers to collectively control their labor or represent their interests. Instead, the self-management systems of Poland and Yugoslavia, while providing formalized channels of worker input, were transformed into mechanisms through which staff and managerial policies are transmitted.

Some tentative conclusions can be made in regard to the role of these existing forms of workers' councils in socialist development. The trend indicated a continued domination of the labor process by those in managerial and professional occupations. Thus, workers' councils return little control to the immediate producers. This trend strengthens the separation of conception and execution within the labor processes. It is interesting to note that in no reports were issues relating to the manufacturing division of labor noted. Issues involving the work process, when they were mentioned at all in the recordings of workers' council meetings, were limited to discussions of hours, production efficiency or waste, and machine safety. In light of the stratified composition and participation within workers' councils, one would

expect this absence to continue. Changes in the organization of work would directly challenge those occupations which now dominate the direction of the workers' councils.

While the position of labor as a commodity is lessened in the legislative form of the self-managment systems, there is little evidence to suggest this is paralleled in the day-to-day functioning of the councils.

These observations raise the question of whether the shortcomings of the self-management systems are a matter of education, i.e., do workers have the skills to effectively utilize workers' councils, or form, i.e., is there something about the structure of workers' councils which negates the possibility of effective utilization? This question can not be definitely answered here. There are limitations inherent within this examination of the actual functioning of the Yugoslav and Polish workers's councils. The data available do not necessarily cover all areas pertinent to the theorectical concerns, nor are they of sufficient depth to provide some important connections. To fully gauge the impact of workers' councils on both the manufacturing division of labor and labor as a commodity relations, more information and study is warranted.

An important facet in mitigating labor as a commodity relations is workers' control over the conditions of their employment. We saw that workers' councils in both countries had the authority, within limits, to set wage schedules. To ascertain the reality of this proposition, we need studies which focus on how this authority is utilized, both in terms

of the process involved and the resulting distribution of wages.

The decentralized character of Yugoslav enterprises pinpoints another important element in regard to labor as a commodity relations. If workers in one firm act to maximize their own profit, what consequences does this have for other workers and for the society as a whole? The continual presence of inflation and unemployment in the Yugoslav economy underscores the importance of further study of this question.

As mentioned previously, little attention has been given in studies of workers' councils to issues of work organization. Therefore, changes in the manufacturing division of labor are difficult to discern. We need more detailed information on both the organization of production in these countries and an expanded account of issues related to production that are raised in workers' council meetings. However, although Poland and Yugoslavia have dramatic differences in their economic organization, the structure and roles of both countries' workers' councils are remarkably similar. This similarity suggests the need to look at technology. The issue of technology must be addressed both theoretically, i.e., the relationship of technology to capitalism and to work organization, and empirically, i.e., where does the technology in each of these countries come from. If the technology used in Yugoslavia comes from capitalist nations and Poland's technology from the bureaucratically

organized Soviet Union, we would expect the relations of production in Poland and Yugoslavia to mirror the organization in each of the respective countries. This possibility further underscores the need to examine the organization of work in Poland and Yugoslavia.

However, while these limitations represent important considerations, some general observations about Polish and Yugoslav workers' councils' role in socialist development can be made. The goals of socialism imply not only changes in power relations, but also changes in social relations. The existing workers' councils in Poland and Yugoslavia appear to be attempts to involve workers in the management process without attention to the underlying process. No attempt has been made within these existing structures to create new organizations of the productive process which might negate the dehabilitating effects of the manufacturing division of labor. The knowledge and skills of the labor process remain divided. Without this important component, few changes in other social relations can be predicted.

VI. CONCLUSION

In summary, the findings of the paper are as follows. The viability of Polish workers' councils has been successfully mitigated. The control of Yugoslav workers' councils is held by the managers. Prospects for the development of collective, co-operative social relations through these organizations are dim. In light of these experiences, it would seem that in order for workers' councils to promote actual

control by the producers, future forms of self-management must not solely attempt to integrate workers into existing managerial forms of organizational control, but must challenge and restructure the underlying production process.

More work, along the lines previously mentioned, must be done both in the area of theoretical analysis and in the area of concrete examination of existing forms of social organization, before the potential role of worker self-management can be fully understood.

NOTES

1. Representative of this body of literature are: Mandel and Novack, The Marxist Theory of Alienation, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976, and P. Vranicki's essay, "On Alienation," in E. Fromm, Socialist Humanism, Garden City, New York: Double Day Press, 1965.

2. This theme is elaborated in Workers Manage Factories in Yugoslavia, by Marshall Tito, Beograde, 1950.

3. "Overcoming alienation ... begins with the emancipation of the working class, the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and ends with the realization of social self-management in its most complete form." Mandel and Novak, 1976, p. 34.

4. Attempts to integrate the theory and the praxis of workers' councils are largely limited to the development of economic models. The work of Benjamin Ward and Wlodimierz Brus provide good examples of this type of study. Also see H. Watchel, Workers' Management and Workers' Wages in Yugoslavia; the Theory and Practice of Participatory Socialism, Ithaca, 1973.

5. Prior to the inception of socialism, both Yugloslavia and Poland had largely agriculturally based economies. Poland had pockets of industrial development in the North, while Yugoslavia's industrial development was limited to the large cities and seaport regions. Although both countries' experience with socialism began at the end of World War II as members of the Soviet bloc, there were differences in each country's communists' ascension to power. Polish communists were installed by the Red Army, while Yugoslav communists in a coalition with nationalist partisans, fought and took control of the country with little outside help. The economic organization of each country provides, perhaps, the most vivid contrast. In 1949, Yugoslav-Soviet relations were severed. (For a developed discussion of this breach, see: Claudin, The Communist Movement: From Comintern to Cominform, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975, Vol. 2, Chapter 7.) Shortly after, Yugoslav communists opted to decentralize the country's economic and political systems. Results of this program included the establishment of workers' councils, an influx of western capitalist investments, and the setting up of trade relations with the capitalist world system. On the other hand, Polish communists continued to develop Poland's economy along the lines of the highly centralized Soviet model.

6. This position is most often held by sectarian political groups. See: The Peoples' Democracies: Are They Socialist States? by Viox Ouvriere, 1966, a SPARK pamphlet.

7. M. Lavigne in The Socialist Economies of the Soviet Union and Europe, London; M. Robertson, 1974, presents a clear summary of the various classification schemes purposed.

8. This is expanded in both the introduction and concluding chapter of Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.

9. These points can also be found in Critique of the Gotha Programme by Marx and State and Revolution by Lenin.

10. This perspective in no way implies the inevitability of unidirectional development; that socialist countries could never revert to capitalism. "Peaceful Transition from Socialism to Capitalism?" Monthly Review, 15, 11, 1964, p. 569-590, discusses this possibility.

11. "Labor becomes external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; ... in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content, but unhappy and does not freely develop his mind and physical energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind." Karl Marx, Early Writings, (translated and edited by T.B. Bottomore), New York: Pathfinder Press, 1964, p. 125.

12. For a discussion of this type see either R. Garundy, The Crisis in Communism: The Turning Point of Socialism, New York: Grove Press, 1970, or the July-August 1975 special issue of Monthly Review.

13. David M. Gordon, "Capitalist Efficiency and Socialist Efficiency," Monthly Review, 3, 19, 1976, p. 19-39.

14. D. Gordon, 1976, p. 27.

15. This presentation of the 'Free Labor'/'Collective Labor' dichotomy is simplified for reasons of clarity. Although not self-identified as such, the article "On the Nature of the Soviet State" by Ernest Mandel (New Left Review, 108, p. 23-47) could be seen as an example of the 'free labor' view of communism. The work of Charles Bettlehiem provides a clear elaboration of the 'collective labor' orientation.

16. There are many important elements involved in increasing the level of the development of the forces of production. However, increasing automation of the production process is often stressed in the 'free labor' view as a crucial element in reducing socially necessary labor time.

17. An alternative understanding of the apparent fluctuations

in the writings of Marx, Mao, and Lenin might be found by tracing the development of these ideas in the context of the writers' political struggles. A project of this type, though beyond the scope of this paper, could provide valuable insights into the historical origins of these two views.

18. Evaluation of the economic models of development under socialism is beyond the scope of this paper. Again, see the work of B. Ward or W. Brus for development of this subject.

19. See Sweezy's articles "Socialism in Poor Countries," Monthly Review, Vol. 28, No. 5, October 1976, p. 1-13, for a summary and critique of this approach.

20. The concept of human nature is given only a cursory treatment in this paper. For a more developed presentation of Marx's concept of human nature and a discussion of the resulting transformation under capitalism, see B. Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Concept of Man in Capitalist Society, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

21. Joachim Israel, Alienation: From Marx to Modern Sociology, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971, p. 57.

22. "The real essence of man is not an abstraction inherent in each particular individual. The real nature of man is the totality of social relations." (Marx, 1964, p. 45)

23. "The production of life, both of one's own labor and of fresh life in procreation now appears as a double relationship: on one hand as a natural, on the other as a social relationship. By social we understand the cooperation of several individuals no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end ... Thus it is quite obvious from the start there exists a materialistic connection of man with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production, and one which is as old as men themselves." (Marx, 1964, p. 50)

24. "We presuppose labor in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. ... But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of the bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labor process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will." (Marx, Capital, Vol. I., New York: Charles Kerr and Co., 1926, p. 18)

25. Karl Marx, 1926, Vol. I, p. 173.

26. For further elaboration of this separation process, see Ollman, Alienation, especially pages 133 and 134.

27. Mandel and Novack, 1976, p. 22.

28. Credit must be given here to Joachim Israel. In his book, Alienation: From Marx to Modern Sociology, he clarifies the structural processes of alienation.

29. A quote from Braverman underlines the importance of this distinction: "While the social division of labor subdivides society, the detailed (manufacturing) division of labor subdivides humans, and while the subdivision of society may enhance the individual and the species, the subdivision of the individual, when carried on without regard to human capabilities and needs, is a crime against the person and against humanity." (Braverman, 1974, p. 73)

30. By 1971 approximately 85% of all productive capital was state owned in Poland. (Mesa-Lago, Comparative Socialist Systems, Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1975, p. 408) In 1964, 90% of all Yugoslave industry was socialized. (Staar, Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977, p. 185) Admittedly, a large portion of the agricultural sector of the economies in both the countries remains in private hands, but for the purposes at hand this sector is relatively unimportant.

31. Although the threat of being out of work is minimized in Poland, workers still compete for higher paying jobs. Unemployment is ever present in Yugoslavia. In addition, both Poland and Yugoslavia utilize material incentive programs.

32. Braverman, 1974, p. 19.

33. Zukin, Beyond Marx and Tito: Theory and Practice in Yugoslav Socialism, London: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 56.

34. These functions are paraphrased from the Fundamental Principles of the 1950 Law found in Workers Manage Factories in Yugoslavia, by Marshall Tito, p. 47-55.

35. H. Watchell examines the results of this legislation in Workers' Management and Workers Wages in Yugoslavia.

36. The extent that workers participate in these structures is considerable. In 1968, roughly 6% of the people working in enterprises of more than 70 people were members of workers' councils. (International Institute

for Labor Studies Bulletin, No. 9, 1972, p. 144).

37. Why did Yugoslav communists undertake this decentralization process? Three sets of explanantions have been suggested in answer to this question. The official pronouncements underline decentralization as an important element in the road to communism; as a first step toward the withering away of the state. Political historians emphasize decentralization as a way rival political factions were placated enabling Yugoslav communists to maintain power without Soviet support. The third set of explanations centers around the need for investment capital Yugoslavia faced after breaking from the Soviet Union. It is argued that the economic decentralization process was undertaken to attract capital from the capitalist world. In all probability, a combination of these rationals was considered by the Yugoslav communists in their decision to decentralize the economy.

38. It is estimated that during this period, 25% of the Polish industrial labor force were members of a union. (Kolaja, A Polish Factory, University of Kentucky Press, 1960, p. 2).

39. Sturmthal, "The Workers' Council in Poland," Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, April 1961, p. 380-81.

40. In 1953, 40% of the national income was allotted to accumulation. (Sturmthal, p. 381).

41. The incidents at Poznan and the Zeran automobile plant are perhaps the most well known examples of these strikes.

42. Sturmthal, p. 386.

43. The number of active workers' councils in 1957 exceeded 5,600 (Statistical Yearbook, 1959, p. 393).

44. As early as 1958, Communist party leaders were making distinctions in their speeches between supervision and administration by the workers.

45. For a discussion of some of these conflicts see: Rawin, "Social Values and Managerial Structure: The Case of Yugoslavia and Poland," Journal of Comparative Administration, 2 No. 2, August 1970, p. 131-160.

46. "The New Law on Workers' Controls," Polish Perspectives, No. 3, 11, March 1959, outlines this new formation.

47. After the passage of this law, no new workers' councils were formed.

48. For example, the workers' riots of 1970 helped oust Gomulka from power and install Gierek. For more recent accounts, see: David Lascelles, "Poland," Financial Times Survey, Friday, December 5, 1975, p. 33 and Flora Lewis, "Many Poles Term Unrest Far Deeper Than Economic," The New York Times, Wednesday, January 26, 1977.

49. This is not surprising considering both the short period of their independent existence and the stringent information controls present in the Soviet Bloc during this period.

50. The only exception to this statement is reported in a study by J. Kolaja, who found workers' councils to be perceived as the most influencial by 57% of the workers queried, with the director perceived as most influencial by only 35% of the workers surveyed. (Kolaja, 1965, p. 34).

51. Kolaja, 1960, p. 109.

52. In fact, in Yugoslavia, workers' councils play an important part in the selection of the director and may also vote on the renewal of the director's contract.

53. Kolaja, 1960, p. 108.

54. Managerial and white collar personnel accounted for 37% of these Boards in Kolaja's study. (Kolaja, 1965, p. 17).

55. The data for this observation are found in the descriptive accounts written by Kolaja on both countries.

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