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A la recherche des certitudes perdues ... Anthropologie du travail et des affaires dans une Europe en mutation

Birgit Müller

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LES TRAVAUX DU
CENTRE MARC BLOCH

**A la recherche des certitudes
perdues ...**

Anthropologie du travail et des affaires dans une Europe en mutation

sous la direction de

Birgit Müller

Berlin 1996

EUROPE EN MUTATION



ANTHROPOLOGIE DES SOCIÉTÉS
INDUSTRIELLES

A la recherche des certitudes perdues ...

Anthropologie du travail et des affaires dans une Europe en mutation

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Birgit Müller



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Introduction

The Quest for Certainties

“Transition” from planned to market economy or “transformation” of planned into market economies is the subject most written about in social and economic sciences since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Most writings departed from a clear-cut opposition of “plan” to “market” or from the assumption of a simple linear evolution of the first into the latter. Underlying these writings was the idea of a binary opposition and a clearcut difference between societies with functioning market economies in the West and societies aspiring to market economies in the East.

The lecture series in the autumn and winter of 1994/95 at the Centre Marc Bloch brought to Berlin social researchers from Eastern and Western Europe who were questioning precisely these opposites. They had all done longterm qualitative research in factories and among entrepreneurs and managers in Eastern and Western Europe. Their research challenges the view en vogue since 1989 of market economy as a coherent attainable aim that follows clearly defined predictable laws. They criticize existing theories that failed to study the changes in Eastern Europe as a political process with an economic dimension that had its own sui generis dynamics (for example Burawoy). The papers show that labour relations in the market economies of East and West

undergo similar developments. The papers on labour relations in the West analyse in a historical perspective the profound changes by which these relations were affected in the last thirty years. These are shown to have been inextricably linked to politics (for example Beynon, Pialoux). The papers giving a detailed account of relations on the shopfloor in Eastern Europe point to the continuities in mechanisms of social interaction in the face of a radical change in the economic framework (for example Clémens, Müller) and to the growth of existential uncertainties.

Some of the papers discussing the impact of Western management consultancy and expertise in Eastern Europe analyse the Western market economic models as an ideology or even religion linked to the exercise of power and control (for example Kostera, Müller). Others look at the mechanisms of assimilation and resistance to these models (for example Zaleska). Others analyse how political positions, networks and cultural patterns from the past influence the economic and social positions of managers and entrepreneurs of the new private enterprises in Eastern Europe (for example Chmatko, Sampson). This view is complemented by Ray Pahl's paper demystifying the idealized image of happy progressive managers in the West.

Michael Burawoy's papers draws theoretical conclusions from the extensive fieldwork he undertook recently together with Pavel Krotov in the timber and mining industry in Russia and from the research he has undertaken since long before 1989 in various factories in Hungary. He analyses the transition processes in Eastern Europe and especially in Russia as "industrial involution" as an antithesis to evolution and development. His point is that the rapid introduction of market mechanisms drained resources from the productive industry to transform them into merchant capital which is hardly reinvested. The big "privatized" Russian industry survives on an extremely low level of productivity and capitalisation only thanks to continuing links with the state. Attempts of the state to tighten budget constraints on

industry leads to a move of growing sectors of the economy into the shadow and to increasing regionalisation.

Based on extensive interviews with small and large entrepreneurs in Russia Natacha Chmatko's paper distinguishes between those new entrepreneurs who had an important economic position in the past and those who were dominated in the past and who now try to make a fortune in the new system. The first mostly control large enterprises and openly emphasize their economic activities, often combining a public position with a private entrepreneurial activity. The latter owning mostly small businesses don't make their activities public, hiding them from tax obligations and state control. Operating in an isolated way they do not profit from joint business activities and from government programmes. To their different ways of operating their businesses correspond different consumption patterns and ways of socialising. Economic capital, Chmatko shows is strongly linked to the possession of social and cultural capital.

The same distinction between state bureaucrats becoming entrepreneurs- he calls them "parachutists" - and those who can not draw on positions in the former system - he calls them "freelancers" - is made by Steven Sampson. In his research in Romania he saw these two groups of *nouveaux riches* in competition not only for economic success but also for "the right to be rich", justified by "good taste". Sampson claims the rich search the company of those who have culture, so that the "magic dust" of culture would rub off on them. Especially the "parachutists" talk about converting money into culture by starting a foundation, restoring old buildings and the like. Owners of economic capital, Sampson demonstrates, try to distinguish themselves from the non-owners by acquiring cultural capital.

"Shadowing" British managers Ray Pahl found out a change in attitude toward work since the 1960s. While managers in the 1960s appeared to have internalized an ideology of self-coercion, in the 1970s there were growing reservations to total commitment among British

managers. Success appeared to be short lived and uncertain. While management textbooks suggested that failure to succeed was self-made, managers started to internalize this view and to show signs of fatalism, alienation and anomie.

An optimistic reading of Western managers offers Krystyna Joanna Zaleskas paper. She maintains that American managers introduce an optimistic and trusting view of human nature into the old Polish system. She opposes American management behaviour to the Polish one. Polish managers, she says, need formal rules and guidelines and emphasize the dignity of their position of authority. From the old days they are used to look for problems and to think in a negative pessimistic way. American corporate culture, on the contrary, creates a sense of obligation while emphasizing informality. It meshes the need for results with the concern for the individual thereby creating strong psychological links with the firm and with the working team.

This view is opposed by Monika Kostera. In her ironical essay she makes the uncritical acceptance of the Western ideology of economic rationality responsible for the loss of values and meaning in contemporary Polish society. In a biting critique of Western economic consultancy agencies she draws parallels between their teachings and the discourses of Christian missions supporting Western colonization throughout the world. The communication between East and West, Kostera claims, is not a “conversation” but a “sermon” delivered by the Westerners who claim that “salvation will be possible” through hard work, free market and economizing. In the face of a growing loss of meaning and certainties, the consultants - she calls them “missionaries of management” - promote rational economic organisations as offering their participants rewards also of an existential and perhaps spiritual nature.

The confrontation and coexistence of the economic rationality of market economy with the worldviews and practices of the planned economy inside a Moscow joint venture is the research Birgit Müller

undertook together with her Russian colleagues Elena Mechtcherkina, Kirill Levinson and Andrej Onikienko and her French colleague Isabelle Cribier. At the time of the research in 1993 the Russian workers and employees of the joint venture were still unaware of mechanisms of profit accumulation in the enterprise. For them an increase in individual productivity meant to have the right to a proportional increase in pay. The enterprise was seen as a “pot for all” that should care and provide for all its members. The authors analyse the strategy of the international combine to accompany the introduction of market economic structures by an intensive effort at convincing the workforce and especially the management of the principles of performance and profit and they describe in detail the mechanisms of resistance to and reinterpretation of the message the Westerners wish to convey.

A pessimistic account of the loss of meaning and cultural identity gives Huy Beynon describing the process of decay of the British mining industry. As a nationalized industry the mines were an important stronghold of the labour movement and the miner represented the image of the powerful heroic worker for the British Left. The collaboration of management and syndicates of the mine industry in the 1960 together with an evocative productivist language remind the discourses and practices of the planned economy. Because of its left wing political tradition and the low level of productivity the conservative political forces came to see the mining industry as “the internal enemy of the state”. With the unsuccessful strikes against the Thatcherite politics of privatization that ultimately brought the end of the British mining industry the British Left not only lost an economically motivated struggle but also part of a political and cultural identity.

Work as meaning of life, is the topic of Petra Clemens paper about a cloth industry in an East German mining district. She presents two labour biographies of women who linked their lives closely to the work in the factory. The workplace is presented as a place of dense social interaction where the women find support and recognition and

where they found a security which is now endangered by the introduction of market economy.

Loss of securities, the feeling of vulnerability and the fear to fail are the feelings that move the workers of the modernized workshops of the Peugeot factory that Michel Pialoux presents in his paper. Pialoux analyses the failed attempt by management to introduce a Japanese model of work organization into modernized workshops with high technology and to promote a new culture of work. The attempts fail because the workers refuse to be separated from their established workteams and to adapt to a new code of behaviour. However, the fear of an uncertain future remains and the workers oscillate between two temptations: to play the game of the enterprise and to accept the new competitive individualized identity or to fall back on the old models of workers resistance and to turn back to the tradeunion delegates who have lost much of their symbolique authority since the 1980s.

In the papers presented here not much is to be felt of the optimism that the political changes of 1989 arose in East and West. The changes in Eastern Europe that should bring about a new era of wealth and prosperity recall on the shopfloor the industrial decline in the West. The problems encountered by managers and workers in Eastern Europe are not the problems of transition but the problems of liberal market economy itself. It is the strength of the social anthropological approach to be able to question the idea of unilinear economic and social progress by resituating the economic in its cultural and social context.

Birgit Müller

*Industrial Involution: the Russian Road to Capitalism**

Michael Burawoy

For the second time this century Russia is being subjected to utopian experiment. Compared to the conditions for the transition to socialism after the October Revolution which could not have been more unfavorable — a raging civil war in a largely peasant society, encircled by enemies from a hostile capitalist world — the conditions for the transition to capitalism seventy four years later are auspicious. The majority of Soviet citizens have been happy to leave socialism behind, the capitalist world embraced Russia in its new garb of democracy and markets, and the economy was much more developed. Nevertheless, the first three years of the post-Soviet era have witnessed a precipitous decline in GNP, industrial output, and investment. Inflation although it has fallen remains high (table 1). How can we explain this headlong descent and will it continue?

*This paper is based on research from 1991 to 1994, conducted in the Russian Republic of Komi in collaboration with Pavel Krotov and financed by the MacArthur and National Science Foundations. I have learnt much from Zsuzsa Gille, Patrick Heller, Suava Salameh and David Woodruff. After Erik Wright had revealed my real argument, Peter Evans and Mark Gould pointed to its flaws. This version of the paper is a response to their comments. Thanks to the participants at the SSRC Workshop on Rational Choice Theory and Post-Soviet Studies held at Harriman Institute and to the participants at the seminar organized by Birgit Muller at the **Centre Marc Bloch** in Berlin.

TABLE I: MACRO-ECONOMIC DATA FOR RUSSIA*

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994**
%CHANGE IN GNP	3.0	-2.1	-12.9	-18.5	-12.0	-17.0
%CHANGE IN INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT	2.0	-2.2	-8.0	-18.8	-16.2	-21.0
%INFLATION IN CONSUMER PRICES	4.0	5.0	92.6	1,354	880	180
%CHANGE IN FIXED INVESTMENT	4.0	0.1	-15.5	-39.7	-15	-25

*Sources: The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report, Russia, 3rd.Quarter, 1994; Economic Survey of Europe, 1993-94 (Secretariat of the Economic Commission);Izvestia

**Data for 1994 estimated

There are, in fact, quite a number of theories that purport to explain these figures. For political theorists who regard the collapse of the Soviet Union as the collapse of a totalitarian order, the disintegration had to be total and the destruction of the economy inevitable. Only out of the rubble could a new order be created. Neo-liberal economists, who prescribed shock therapy to destroy the old economy, are rubbing their hands in self-congratulation. In their view recovery depended on the rapid, surgical removal of all its cancerous organs. The figures suggest that the operation was successful even if the patient is barely surviving. Where totalitarian theory conspires with neo-liberal orthodoxy to celebrate revolutionary rejection of the past, evolutionary theory looks askance at the attempt to demolish everything Soviet. For these more cautious pundits the economic nose dive is the product of

irresponsible policies. Finally, for those who instead of total collapse see institutional legacies, decline is the result of rearguard resistance from unextinguished forces in civil society.

For all their differences, and we shall examine them in greater detail below, these four theories share two assumptions: a faith in the virtues of a market economy and the attribution of present malaise to defects of the Soviet order. The theory I propose in this paper takes the opposite view: that markets can, and in Russia do, accelerate the decline of an economy by siphoning resources from the sphere of production into the sphere of exchange, leaving the former structurally unchanged and quantitatively diminished. Therefore, instead of revolution or evolution I propose a theory of industrial involution¹ — an economic “regression” which is not preparatory for a future resurgence but is chronic and persistent. We are not witnessing a “transformational recession” (Kornai, 1994), that is an interlude of anomie between socialism and capitalism, but systemic underdevelopment.

The economic indicators are consistent with the euphoric view that the quicker the Russian economy “bottoms out” the better, as well as with the pessimistic view that sustained recovery will be problematic. Macro statistics cannot discriminate between these two views since economic indicators conceal the variegated and uneven processes of which they are the effects. Nor can we distill these underlying processes from political crisis and economic propaganda, which again are only the tip of the iceberg. Instead, we must leave the helter skelter of Moscow and St. Petersburg and venture into the regions, studying the noisy sphere of trade and finance but also entering the hidden abode of production. I do not apologize, therefore, for taking industrial case material from one of the most northerly regions of European Russia — the Komi Republic — where together with Pavel Krotov I have been conducting research since 1991.

With the land size of California and a population of two million, Komi is known for its raw materials and for its long history of labor

camps that stretches back into the last century. I propose to focus on the fortunes of two of Komi's main industries: the timber industry which spreads throughout the territory but has its headquarters in Syktyvkar and the coal industry which is concentrated in the most northerly part of the Republic, beyond the Arctic Circle in and around the city of Vorkuta. Any theory of transition must not only explain the macro indicators but also the combined and uneven character of the transition as, for example, displayed in these two industries.

1. Combined Involution. The effects of market forces cannot be understood outside the pre-existing social and economic relations that receive them. The result is a transition that so far can be divided into three successive phases: disintegration of the party state when barter flourishes; economic reform when inter-enterprise relations are monetized; further regression when barter is restored.

2. Uneven Involution. Economic decline works itself out differently in different sectors. Although the demand for timber is much greater than the demand for coal, and the costs of timber production less than those of coal, the timber industry has collapsed much more rapidly than coal. Moreover, the collapse occurs not with the disintegration of the party state but with the onset of economic reforms.

I shall argue that these features of the transition can only be comprehended by (1) viewing the transition as a path dependent process in the sense that one phase sets limits on the possibilities of the next; (2) comparing both the political implications of economic differences and the economic implications of political differences between sectors and (3) examining the relationship between exchange and production. In the next part of the paper I consider the failure of conventional models to fulfil these three requirements while in the second part I develop an alternative theory of industrial involution.

I: Models of Transition

When Hungarians joke that the worst thing about communism is post-communism, they are, of course, not joking. They are saying that the communist past has an iron grip on the present, choking off the radiant future. This is particularly surprising since, of all the former communist countries, Hungary was the best equipped, institutionally, to take off into capitalism. During the thirty years before the collapse of communism Hungarians dismantled physical planning, promoted a thriving and legal second economy, lifted price controls and opened up a market in consumer goods. They are now mocking their immediate post-communist illusions that the past can be wiped out and a Western market economy installed overnight. With their eyes rivetted on the capitalist peaks that seemed so close, they didn't realize they were already stumbling into the valley of post-communist depression. Still, they have no doubt that Hungary's present malaise is due to the legacies of communism and not to the defects of an already arrived capitalism. As they wade through the undergrowth, they retain their faith in a capitalist utopia, at present, beyond their reach.

Theories of the transition from socialism to capitalism diverge in many respects but they are all caught on the horns of the Hungarian dilemma — between visions of a capitalist future that cannot be realized and of a socialist past that cannot be overcome. In approaching the transition either from the standpoint of its origins or from the standpoint of its futures they cannot comprehend the transition as sui generis process that takes off in one direction, reverses and takes off in another direction. Nor can they explain the unevenness of changes as between regions or within regions between sectors of the economy.

Moreover, appearances to the contrary, debates about the future are not about feasible scenarios but about the virtues of capitalism just as debates about the past concentrate on the political defects of the former Soviet Union. Russia is measured against stereotypes of Western liberal capitalism. Instead of empirically examining what it is and where

it might be going, instead of endowing it with theoretical and analytical integrity of its own, too often Russia becomes “Other” — a mirror to celebrate our own imagined distinction.

Thus, capitalism by design has two models. The first is based on a neoclassical model of markets in which state socialism becomes an irrational system cursed by allocational inefficiency. The appropriate recipe, therefore, is a sufficiently big shock that shatters the remnants of the old order. Into the vacuum would rush new market institutions. The second model is based on the new evolutionary economics which criticizes neoclassical representations of capitalism for their static character. Instead of allocational inefficiency the real shortcoming of the Soviet economy was its dynamic inefficiency, its inability to continually reconstitute itself. In this view stable external institutions are necessary to create the framework for dynamic capitalism and the appropriate recipe for transition is not shock therapy but piecemeal social engineering.

Arguments about the hold of the past also revolve around two models of political liberalism. In the first model of “polyarchy” the virtues of the West are reduced to electoral democracy so that the Soviet Union is condemned as totalitarian. The second model challenges the totalitarian perspective by arguing that the stability of any political order — Soviet or capitalist — depends on an autonomous civil society. In this view the domination of the party state was far from complete — it both created and depended on spontaneous organization outside its control. The collapse of the party state left behind institutions of society. Instead of “aftermath” and “collapse” we have “legacies” of the past.

We can present these four approaches to the transition as dominant and challenger theories within origin and destination driven perspectives, but they can also be distinguished by their understanding of the relation between politics and economics. In rejecting the past and embracing the future, totalitarian and neoliberal models separate

politics from economics whereas the challenger models focus on continuity with the past or evolution into the future and therefore tend not to differentiate between politics and economics.

TABLE II: MODELS OF TRANSITION

Orientation		
	<u>Origins</u>	<u>Destination</u>
	Political/Societal Models of Communism	Economic Models of Capitalism
<u>Separation</u>	TOTALITARIAN Collapse	NEOLIBERAL Shock Therapy
Relation of Politics to Economics		
<u>Inter- Penetration</u>	SOCIETY CENTERED Legacies	EVOLUTIONARY Two tracks

While all these theories can explain Russia's unilinear decline to-date they have much greater difficulty grasping the combined and uneven character of the transition. Crude political theories of total collapse are all thumbs, while neo-liberal economic theories of shock therapy are handicapped by unexplicated relations between markets and production as well as a primitive understanding of politics as deus ex machina. Evolutionary theories are better because in condemning shock therapy they give credence to the peculiarities of the old regime

but they too concentrate on equally untenable prescriptions at the expense of understanding the rhythm of change and variation. Only the society centered models which eschew normative solutions and have a sufficiently nuanced grasp of the old order come near to regarding the transition as a *sui generis* process. But in succumbing to the burdens of the past, they overlook the simultaneous constitution of the new. It is the distinctive combination of old and new that gives rise to the ziz-zags of successive phases and to the divergent paths of different sectors of the economy. For this we need a model of involution.

1. Totalitarian Models

In the unrevised totalitarian model the party state or what Martin Malia (1994) calls the “ideocratic partocracy” swallowed up the entire life of the nation and when it disappeared the entire social order turned to rubble. The trajectory of the Soviet Union began with the original sin of the Bolshevik seizure of power. It was an attempt to coerce history into the impossible task of “building socialism”. From the beginning communism was inscribed with a genetic code that entailed its inevitable demise. “If in the end Communism collapsed like a house of cards, it was because it had always been a house of cards” (p.496). “After the Soviet deluge there was only a void.” (p.497).

No less sweeping in his indictment of communism, Richard Pipes (1994) is nevertheless more optimistic about the future. Whereas the Bolsheviks exploited the past — “the country’s patrimonial culture with its acceptance of unlimited state powers, animosity to private property ... and disrespect for the law” — postcommunist Russia shows signs of renouncing the past — its claims to uniqueness, its missionary zeal, its resort to violent solutions of political crises and above all its patrimonial heritage (Pipes, 1994: 19; 49-52). Their differences notwithstanding, for both Malia and Pipes, there is no transition —

only a thick line between the collapse of the old and the construction of the new.²

Writing in the same genre Ken Jowitt (1992) also dispenses with “transition” in favor of the biological metaphors of extinction and genesis. The Leninist extinction creates chaos and disorder on the one side and possibilities for something entirely new on the other. “The truly remarkable feature of turbulent, dislocating, traumatic Genesis environments is the dissolution of boundaries and related identities and the corresponding potential to generate novel ways of life” (p.266). Pulling back from radical discontinuity, however, Jowitt appeals to a Leninist legacy, “understood as the impact of Party organization, practice, and ethos, and the initial charismatic ethical opposition to it [which] favor an authoritarian, not a liberal democratic capitalist, way of life” (p.293). In short, the collapse of the old order created an institutional vacuum bridged by cultural legacies. Such a perspective explains discontinuity and continuity separately but not in that complicated combination that lends distinctiveness to the transition.

For these commentators “collapse of communism” is a platform for their philosophies of history. None of them pay much attention to what is going on in Russia today. Bunce and Csanadi (1993) are different. They give more substance to the state of flux and fluidity that engulfs communist societies caught between the aftermath of collapse and aspirations for revolutionary transition to capitalism and liberal democracy. They operate with a Western accounting system — the economic and political monopoly of the party creates “deficits” in private property, a bourgeoisie, organized interest groups, political parties, unions, and informal associations and organizations (pp.246-7). The transition, therefore, is replete with “contradictions, weak and partial institutions, poorly defined interests and considerable levels of uncertainty” (p.242). We need a special social science of liminality in which “idiosyncratic factors” play a powerful role, “everyone feels bereft of defenses and therefore bombarded by the environment,” and “strategic behavior” is difficult. Simply put, there can be no logic to

the transition because the old order has collapsed and the new one has yet to be born. These societies are in a state of anomie.³

As scholars follow transitions over time, as they examine the regions as well as the center, subordinate as well as dominant groups, it becomes obvious that the party did not hold the central place political scientists accorded to it. The continuity of social order points to realms beyond the party or only weakly controlled by the party — realms which at least partially shape trajectories into the future. As we shall see these moves toward a societal perspective, like the “totalitarian” models to which they are a response, overlook the specificity of the economic. Let us turn, then, to economic formulations of the transition.

2. Neoliberal Theory

On the face of it, totalitarian theory’s account of total collapse is the natural bedfellow of neoliberal theory’s promise of immediate reconstruction through shock therapy. The miracle of the market turns ashes to gold. According to totalitarian theory, “it was only to be expected that a total system should collapse totally, and hence leave behind a total problem ... to climb out from under this universal ‘rubble,’ to use Solzhenitsyn’s metaphor, everything would have to be done at once, thus creating an impossible situation where everything, logically, had to be done first” (Malia, p.506). Neoliberals take over the baton of history: “Both economic logic and political situation argue for a rapid and comprehensive process of transition. History in Eastern Europe has taught the profound shortcomings of a piecemeal approach, and economic logic suggests the feasibility of a rapid transition.” (Lipton and Sachs, 1990: 99. Emphasis added.)

What is this compelling economic logic? Lipton and Sachs itemize the Stalinist legacies which have to be superseded — state ownership of economic enterprises; state regulation of prices, taxes, investment, and interest rates; restricted private sector; distorted prices;

over-investment in heavy industry, absence of small to medium sized firms; central regulation of entry and exit of enterprises; excess demand which creates barriers to private enterprise and leads to backward integration into supply. These defects are the product of the shortage economy whose source is soft budget constraints and whose remedy lies in deregulating prices, tightening credit and monetary supply, introducing bankruptcy laws, privatizing state enterprises and liberalizing trade. It must all happen at once, “the transition process is a seamless web”(99).

If economic logic calls for comprehensive and radical change, why does the political situation require it? Here Lipton and Sachs identify two barriers to the transition: populist upheaval against inevitable economic deterioration of standards of living and bureaucratic inertia from officials who were accustomed to running the old command economy. So new governments should cash in on their legitimacy by undertaking as much as possible as quickly as possible. In this way political dissent, whether from bureaucrats or populists, will mount their challenge only when it is too late.

According to Lipton and Sach’s analysis of 1992, the prospects for the Russian reforms depends on the balance between on the one side ex-communists and the industrial lobby (as organized political forces) and on the other side the government’s will and capacity to introduce reforms despite resistance. Anders Aslund extends this manichean view of the political world by scripting all actors as carriers either of good or of evil, favoring or obstructing progress. The forces of light are “...the bright young Russian economists who have assumed major government responsibilities and Western economists anxious to support the development of democracy, market economy and private ownership in Russia, that will eventually lead to the kind of social and economic welfare that we are used to in the West” (Aslund and Layard, 1993: xiii). Arrayed against them are the forces of darkness: “...the Russian state directors seem to have all the characteristics that we would like to avoid: they have little knowledge of economics; they are firmly

molded by the old Soviet command economy; they know nothing of the outside world; their purpose for coming to power is to gain wealth for themselves and their narrow constituency. It is difficult to imagine any grouping that would be less suitable for governing a country in transition, and it is strange that these obvious arguments have not won the Russian debate” (Aslund, 1993:33).⁴

This Moscow-centric caricature of the field of political forces reflects the moment of extrication from the past, the struggle between defenders of the old order and protagonists of the new. It does not tap the complex set of interests that emerge once opposition to the old order no longer binds actors together. Adam Przeworski (1991: chapter 4) offers a more nuanced analysis of the political dynamics of the transition. He defends shock therapy on the grounds that it will advance further than gradual strategies, given the opposition that mounts with the reforms’ negative effects. Tracing the trajectory of popular opinion as the reforms in Poland unfolded, Przeworski (1993: chapter 3) concludes that the transition to a market economy will be a protracted process, easily threatened by fears of unemployment, particularly when social services are crumbling. Support for the reforms was eroded not only by the social dislocation they create but also by the aggressive, anti-democratic manner in which they were pushed through parliament. The reforms were designed with insufficient attention to political factors. “Economic blueprints that treat politics as nothing but an extraneous nuisance are just bad economics” (p.134).

For all his interest in political dynamics his is still a limited purview, confined to the strategic interplay of technocrats, politicians in power and the population. He ignores the formation of actors and interests within the economy itself — the fluctuating and intricate constellation of forces among conglomerates, enterprises, trade unions, and local government as well as their relation to the central state. Not only does he view politics as external to economics, he also has an abstract notion of the economy. In both respects he is like the neo-liberals he criticizes (Przeworski, 1992). If he is more modest than

neo-liberals when it comes to predicting economic recovery, this only underlines his failure to study the real effects of markets rather than than their refracted effects in public opinion. We need an analysis of the political constitution of markets and the conditions under which they promote growth. We need to go beyond neo-liberal economics.

3. Evolutionary Theory

Neoliberal calls for radical and incisive surgery conjure up the communist blue-prints for change, its attempt to fashion society anew and from above. They conceive of the transition as a sequence of programmatic stages and ignore the real consequences of one stage for the realization of the next. Theorists of shock therapy stand accused of a utopianism that pays too little attention to real political forces. Their practitioners end up forcing reforms through the Congress of Deputies or the State Duma, or circumventing the democratic process altogether. They come up against a contradiction. As they celebrate the eclipse of the communist order and the disintegration of the party state, they are also losing the administrative levers necessary to impose their will on a recalcitrant society. As their policies shipwreck on the sands of a weak state, they give ammunition to those who propose a more piecemeal approach to reform which would forge compromises with society and the economy. Evolutionary theory paints shock therapists in the same colors as the Bolsheviks. They stand guilty of trying to do the impossible — redesigning society from above. While evolutionary theory is as committed to capitalism as the neoliberals, it pursues the same end by different and more gentle means.

Such strategic and philosophical divergences between evolutionists and neoliberals are based in profound theoretical differences. Evolutionists join the mounting chorus of criticism of neoclassical economics (the theoretical foundation of shock therapy) for its assumptions of complete information, frictionless transactions, unambiguous property rights, profit maximizing actors, and market

equilibria. Real markets don't guarantee static or allocational efficiency, let alone promote dynamic or adaptive efficiency. If neoclassical assumptions are not operative under normal conditions of capitalism, they are all the more irrelevant in transitional economies. According to Douglass North (1990) improving economic performance depends on learning and accumulating knowledge over time and on the growth of institutions that structure incentives. Indeed, in his Nobel Laureate lecture North (1994) concludes that Russia's economic growth depends more on building appropriate political institutions than on privatization. In a similar vein, Nelson and Winter (1982) replace static neoclassical economics with evolutionary economics based on firms that follow "routines," while "searching" for new strategies in a "selective environment."

Neo-classical equilibrium theory cannot see economies as evolving dynamically. It rests on diminishing returns to scale whereas recent theories of path dependency (Arthur, 1990, Arthur et al., 1987) and endogenous growth (Romer, 1986, 1994) demonstrate the importance of positive feedback and increasing returns to knowledge. In this view there is no guarantee that the particular economic outcome will be the "best." Once an economy is locked into a particular trajectory there may be no way of escaping regardless of the benefits of alternatives. Path dependency opens up the possibility of involution as opposed to evolution.

These debates are not merely academic. They are struggles over the source of capitalism's "success" with very different implications for countries seeking to emulate that success. How economists understand the dynamism of capitalism has implications for how they understand the failure of state socialism. Lipton and Sachs focus on the distributional irrationalities of the shortage economy that would be repaired by market forces. But Peter Murrell (1991) argues from empirical data that state socialism was no less efficient in allocating resources than capitalist societies. Where it lagged was not in allocational efficiency but in dynamic efficiency, in its capacity to

promote innovation and technical change. What becomes important, therefore, is an institutional environment that encourages risk taking, that guarantees contracts, that promotes stability and confidence in the future. Murrell (1993) claims that the success of “shock therapy” in Poland was due to reformers’ willingness to forge compromises with society. In this way they elicited the support of key actors, namely Solidarity and the Church. In Russia, by contrast, the reformers confronted society as their enemy and sought to wipe out Stalinist legacies. There, they generated stern resistance to their surgery to the point of being forced out of office.

Evolutionary theory, therefore, proposes to compromise with the old while creating the new. This two track strategy, whose leading advocates are Kornai (1990, 1992), Poznanski (1993) and Murrell (1991, 1992a, 1992b, 1993), Goldman (1994) involves channelling resources into an emergent private sector while trying to harden the budget constraints of the state sector. It is better to promote independent entrepreneurship than rapid privatization of the state sector. However, the two are not so independent. On the one hand, the state sector shapes and impedes the expansion of the private sector in the transitional economy no less than under the shortage economy. On the other hand, those private sectors that are expanding, namely commerce and finance, sap industrial enterprises of resources, driving down the economy as a whole. Instead of evolutionary theory we need involutionary theory.⁵

Advocates of evolutionary change often take China as their exemplary success case where decollectivization led to a booming small scale industry alongside the state sector (Murrell, 1992b; McKinnon, 1994; Goldman, 1994). Sachs and Woo (1994) retort that such a strategy can only work in an underdeveloped agrarian society that has still to undergo industrialization. It could not work in an industrialized society like Russia where restructuring sclerotic state enterprises requires much tougher medicine. This may be true but shock therapy comes up against its own limits when it destroys the very institutions that are necessary to apply the medicine. Thus, McKinnon (1992) shows how financial

deregulation and decentralization disable the very central controls, necessary for the transition to a market economy.

Given that in Hungary guarded reforms has led to poor performance, China's lesson is not so much one of gradualism but of the necessity of the party state to engineer the socialist transition to a market economy (Shirk, 1993). As studies of the development of capitalism within socialist Hungary (Szelenyi, 1988; Lampland, forthcoming) and Poland (Salameh, forthcoming; Nagengast, 1991; Poznanski, 1993), the party state can decentralize property rights, promote competition and create markets. In China the party state has orchestrated "local corporatism" (Oi, 1994; Nee, 1992; Nee and Su, 1993) which advanced economic growth through "flexible budget constraints" (Cui, 1994a, 1994b; Walder, 1994a, 1994b) or what Evans (1995) has called "embedded autonomy." The local state is a residual claimant and has an incentive to maximize local economic growth rather than bargain with the center for more resources (Nolan and Xiaofeng, 1992; Walder, 1994b). All of which suggests that evolutionary theory should pay more attention to the political organization of the local economy and its relation to the center (Bates, 1989). By invoking institutions, evolutionary theory moves toward an analysis of the actual processes of transition, but in dwelling on the form of those processes, namely their gradualism, it directs attention away from their political and economic content.

4. Society Centered Models

Neoclassical economics deals in the currency of equilibria. It therefore thinks of the transition in terms of a leap from an old equilibrium to a new one. When the experiments don't work, they invoke an arbitrary list of obstructions — from Stalinist legacies to the IMF. History is an afterthought, conjured up to explain failure. By contrast evolutionary theory builds history directly into its models of

path dependency. Even if there is no space for theorizing economic transitions as a *sui generis* process, they do at least recognize the lasting impact of origins. In this respect they are similar to the theories of social legacies which emerge from the critique of totalitarian theory.

The reigning totalitarian modes of Soviet history have long been challenged by social historians who insisted on the limits of the party state. Influenced by the political struggles of the 1920s, both Stephen Cohen (1985) and Moshe Lewin (1985, 1991, 1994) drew broader conclusions that the Soviet order not only created a realm of spontaneous social organization but required such society for its effective functioning. The illegal, second economy, informal bartering, self-organization on the shop floor and the like were simultaneously modes of resistance and incorporation into party rule. When the Soviet state collapsed these social legacies would lend historical continuity to a process which totalitarian theory saw only as collapse and vacuum.

These legacies of the old order come in different stripes. As in the case of failed modernization projects in the Third World, there is a strong temptation to invoke cultural legacies to explain continuing backwardness. It is in this vein that Marshal Goldman concludes his study of failed economic reforms: “Centuries of czarism and seventy years of communism have created a combination of obstacles that makes Russia a special case and its reform effort unusually difficult. They have also created a citizenry conditioned to wait for action initiated at the center, not at the periphery by individuals” (1994: 256). Cultural stereotypes, such as *Homo Sovieticus* who is bereft of initiative, dependent on the state, resents inequality, and is hostile to private property and private enterprise are regularly and arbitrarily deployed to explain deformations of the market economy.

More serious are the attempts to establish the continuity of attitudes based on opinion poll research. Thus, for example, James Millar (1994) compares the results of emigre and more recent surveys to conclude that among the legacies of communism are belief that the

government is responsible for assuring prosperity, employment and welfare, that public institutions are officials are not to be trusted, that crime is part of daily life. Even if we accept the dubious practice of comparing results from very different survey contexts, it is not clear that continuity is a legacy rather than rational evaluation of an unchanging situation. Would US citizens respond any differently? To take a case in point, in their 1990 survey of attitudes toward markets among New Yorkers and Muscovites, Shiller, Boycko and Korobov (1991) did find Russians to be somewhat more hostile to private business and monetization of relations but they were no more concerned than Americans with fairness of prices, or with income inequality and they showed an even stronger support for economic incentives. Although surveys of attitudes are notoriously difficult to interpret, this study shows how easily we stereotype others on the basis of false presumptions about ourselves. It warns against identifying attitudes with cultural legacies, when they can be readily explained as rational responses to situational constraints.

A second legacy is that of personnel. Much has been written about the reproduction of elites through the transformation of political into economic capital (Stark, 1990; Hankiss, 1990; Staniszkis, 1991) — how party bosses reappear as economic managers, or how in the Russian case the legislature is made up of “ex-communists.” Szelenyi, Szelenyi and Kovacs (1994) have examined these claims empirically for Hungary and conclude that whereas political elites have changed, economic and cultural elites have remained the same. Interestingly, their results are at odds with Szelenyi’s (1988) thesis that socialism was an interlude of interrupted embourgeoisement. His prediction of the re-emergence of the pre-socialist bourgeoisie in the post-socialist phase is belied by the continuity of economic elites. These studies of the circulation or reproduction of elites often miss the economic and political processes that give rise to the outcomes.

A third legacy is institutional. If under the umbrella of the party state different countries developed different institutional

complexes, then once the party state disintegrates their divergent paths should become transparent. This is the argument behind David Stark's (1992) attribution of different privatization strategies (how assets are valued, which actors are targeted to acquire assets, what resources are used to acquire assets) to their different paths of extrication in Poland (compromise), Czechoslovakia (capitulation), Hungary (electoral competition) and Germany (unification). Stark claims to formulate the emergence of outcomes as a process, contingent on its origins. Unfortunately, he promises more than he delivers. He fails to delineate the processes that connect the patterns of extrication backwards to their antecedent "social structure and political organization" or forwards to privatization strategies. His rejection of "transition" as a teleological construct in favor of the "transformation" turns out to be an arbitrary reduction of outcomes to origins. Such a descriptive account of "transformation" is not a substitute for an analysis of the process of transition. That would require going beyond formulating the transformation in more than negative terms — it is not collapse, it is not designer capitalism — and building a positive theory of combined and uneven change. It would, for example, involve delving beneath formal privatization programs to the concrete struggles over ownership, or discovering the new forms of market embeddedness.

Not surprisingly, when it comes to such analyses of micro processes anthropologists are leading the way. Caroline Humphrey (1991) describes the maize of new relations around local suzerainties, barter and mafia that engulfed Russia even before the formal collapse of the Soviet Union. Developing these ideas and applying them to Romania, Katherine Verdery (1992) analogizes the transition from state socialism as a transition to "feudalism," understood as the parcellization of sovereignty. As she says this is only a metaphor designed to emphasize the inadequacy of such concepts as "democracy" and "capitalism" to capture the unique processes of decomposition and reconstitution of politics and economics in the post-socialist order. More recently, in her analysis of the rise and fall of the Romanian pyramid

scheme, Caritas, Verdery (1994) shows how political interests masquerade behind the expanding money economy, drawing a desperate population into a vortex of speculation.

Just as evolutionary economics is a powerful antidote to neoliberal theory, so refocusing on society provides a corrective to totalitarian models. These challenging perspectives, particularly those informed by ethnographic accounts, lay the basis for theories of transition, understood as a delimited, *sui generis*, politically constituted process. What they still fail to do, however, is to turn their insights into a theory of economic trajectories, and how markets do or do not promote economic growth.

II: Combined and Uneven Involution

The transformation of the state socialist economy is conventionally understood as a transition from plan to market. The conventional view, therefore, leaves out any explicit consideration of “production” and focuses on “exchange.” Indeed, economists assume that once market institutions are in place, together with private property, then the transformation of production will follow automatically. The debate between neoliberals and evolutionists is about the speed and manner of establishing market institutions. It is not a dispute about the effects of markets.

The thesis of “industrial involution,” on the other hand, claims that market exchange does not necessarily promote the expansion or transformation of production. To put it crudely, history suggests two alternatives.

First, and this is a unique feature of modern capitalism, markets promote production. Through competition they stimulate the pursuit of profit by transforming work, incorporating technical progress. Markets and production are locked in a virtuous cycle.

Second, and more usually, markets leave production structurally unchanged. Profit is pursued through the expansion of trade, through selling dear and buying cheap. When market institutions are growing they deflect resources from production but even when they are stable they do not impart any dynamism to production. Production and exchange partake in vicious rather than a virtuous cycle. This is merchant capital.

I have already tried to demonstrate the weakness of the theories that depend on the first alternative and my intent now is to defend the second alternative and specifically the theory of combined and uneven involution. I will pursue three theses.

I. State socialism is the incubator of capitalism of a more or less primitive character depending on the length of incubation. In the Soviet Union markets were slow to develop but nevertheless the disintegration of the party state released tendencies toward merchant capital (section 1 below).

II. The particular form of capitalism that is liberated by the disintegration of the party state, shapes its subsequent trajectory. Industrial involution results from the combination of market forces with existing institutions. Each phase of the transition sets limits on the next phase and in this sense development is path dependent (sections 2,3,4,5).

III. This combined involution entails uneven involution as specific economic and political attributes of different sectors combine with market forces to produce divergent outcomes (section 6).

1. Administered Economy

State socialism is based on the central appropriation and redistribution of surplus (Konrad and Szelenyi, 1979). The party state

which runs the central planning apparatus seeks to maximize what it appropriates from and minimize what it redistributes to economic units. Enterprises have the opposite set of interests, maximizing what is redistributed to them and minimizing what they give up. The relations of appropriation and redistribution work through a system of bargaining — more or less coercive — conducted in the idiom of planning. Three features of this administered economy are important for our discussion.

In order for planning to work at all, centrally devised goals become specified through a system of delegation to ministries, then to conglomerates and finally to enterprises. This gives the economy a monopolistic character since production of the same goods and services by many different enterprises is more difficult to coordinate. Duplication is viewed as wasteful. Monopolies are further consolidated by the emergent system of hierarchical bargaining over targets, success indicators, and resources. Enterprises seek to increase their power with the center through expansion and the monopoly of the production of scarce goods and services.⁶

In the absence of hard budget constraints defining economic failure, the compulsion to expand leads to an insatiable appetite for resources and thus a shortage economy. Each enterprise faces constraints from the side of supply rather than, as is usually the case with a capitalist enterprise, from the side of demand. Enterprises, therefore, seek to incorporate the production of inputs into their structure and circumvent the command economy by entering into informal relations with their suppliers. This semi-legal system of lateral barter relations is organized by party and *tolkachi*.

Within the framework of an administered economy workers exercise considerable control over the shop floor for two reasons. On the one hand, under a regime of shortage effective work organization requires flexible adaptation to uncertainty of inputs, of machinery and of raw materials. On the other hand, together with policies of full employment, shortages of labor give workers the power to resist

managerial encroachments on their autonomy. The result is a compromise in which workers try to realize the plan so long as managers provide the conditions for its fulfillment and a minimal standard of living. The enterprise presents a united front in bargaining for the loosest plan.

2. Phase I: Unfettering Merchant Capital

What happens to an administered economy when the party disintegrates and the center no longer commands? Far from collapsing, preexisting monopolies are strengthened. No longer subject to control either from the party or ministries, their monopolistic tendencies are unfettered. Based on interviews with managers in 1990 and 1991, Simon Johnson and Heidi Kroll (1991) note that many enterprises responded to being cut off from ministries by creating “new vertical organizations [of their own] from below,” and by consolidating or even extending their monopolistic positions. Local conglomerates which protect the interests of enterprises in a given industry act like huge trading companies with a monopoly over specific resources and products.

At the same time the break-down of the command economy led to an increase in lateral exchanges which previously had been strictly controlled by ministry and party. In a shortage economy where money is of limited value trade between enterprises increasingly took the form of barter. A given enterprise was, therefore, the stronger the more universally desired and therefore the more barterable were its products (Burawoy and Krotov, 1992). Johnson and Kroll also observed backward integration into the production of supplies — the extension of an old strategy that dealt with shortages created by the command economy.

The third dimension of our model of state socialism concerns the political regime of the firm. The decomposition of central planning

gives enterprises considerable autonomy to deal with an increasingly uncertain environment. The common interest which bound together different groups within the enterprise against the central planning apparatus evaporates and in its stead different fractions of management enter into battles over economic strategies. In this process workers continue to be without effective representation, but each managerial group presents its strategy in terms of the interests of all employees (Burawoy and Hendley, 1992). Seeking the support of workers is more than a tactic in a political struggle, it is a particularly pressing need since workers assume even greater control of the shop floor. Under the Soviet order workers already possessed considerable control over the production process due to social guarantees which gave them power, due to the autonomous work organization necessary for adapting to shortages, and due to management's interest in plan bargaining and obtaining supplies rather than regulating work. With the collapse of the party, supervision at the workplace became even weaker and managers even more attentive to problems of supply and barter. The result was the expansion of worker control over production.

On the one hand, these three sets of changes can be seen as deepening distinctive features of the old order. On the other hand, they can be seen as the rise of merchant capital, since the driving force behind the strategies of enterprises and conglomerates is the maximization of profit through trade, by selling dear and buying cheap. Merchant capital does not have its own distinctive system of production but grafts itself onto preexisting systems without altering them. Work is "put out" to the shop floor where reward is based on meeting monthly and annual planning targets. Directors use their inherited ties to governmental organs to protect their subsidies, credits, export licenses and at the same time stifle independent capital accumulation.

In this first phase of the transition managers are challenged neither from below by workers nor from the competition of other modes of production. However, what happens to monopoly, barter and worker control when the government introduces its economic reforms? This is the question of the next section.

3. Phase II: Monetization⁷

In January 1992 the Russian government launched its shock therapy with price liberalization. After the initial sharp increase in prices, inflation levelled off at between 20% and 30% a month. According to the reform program stabilization would follow hardening budget constraints and forcing enterprises to compete or dissolve. But the political instruments for such regulation simply did not exist: the state had disintegrated at the same time that the economy assumed greater autonomy. The only way the state could maintain any directive economic role was to extend credits — effectively undermining the program of shock therapy. The state's fiscal levers were being used to uphold political control and thereby reproduced soft budget constraints.

Nevertheless, important changes were afoot and none more important than the monetization of the economy. Although high inflation retarded the move away from barter, still enterprises increasingly paid their bills in rubles, beginning in the second half of 1992. This gave a new role to financial intermediaries, particularly the banking industry which took off with extraordinary vigor. Following the reforms of 1988, the old mono-banking system was divided into five specialist banks and then as part of Russia's political strategy to break away from the Soviet union, it decreed the independence of all banks in 1991 (Hellman, 1993, chs.3-5). Banks had either to dissolve or reconstitute themselves as private entities. Most pursued the latter alternative in the only way feasible, that is by transforming a bank's major clients into its shareholders. At the same time conglomerates and enterprise alliances spun off new "pocket" banks. Resources — personnel, material as well as financial — poured into the banking sector. Rather than sink funds into their declining enterprises, directors channelled surplus into banks where returns were quicker and often personal.⁸ The banking sector's dramatic expansion came at the cost of industrial involution.

As industrial enterprises reproduced themselves at a lower scale, the banks transformed their operation. Under the Soviet regime banks had been passive registers of material transactions. When an enterprise needed resources of whatever kind it did not consult its bank account but bargained with its conglomerate or if it was particularly large it might appeal directly to the ministry. It might use party connections to strike a barter deal with a supplying enterprise. As the economy became monetized so banks exercised much greater control over enterprises by limiting the withdrawal of cash and monitoring non-cash transactions.⁹ Where before party, conglomerates and ministries regulated inter-enterprise transactions, now this function was increasingly assumed by banks.

Of course, banks were not independent actors. They were owned by their clients who were often desperate for short term loans to cover working capital, and in particular wages. Struggles ensued between the interests of the owners as agents of their failing enterprises and their interest in the success of the bank based on profitable investment. The resolution of this dilemma depended upon the alliances among the owners, and between the owners and the bank managers. Often, but by no means always, owners of the bank would get preferential treatment, whether in the form of cheap credits or aid in bargaining for credits from the Central Bank. For that reason enterprises tried to become a major shareholder in a number of banks.

Insofar as banks were able to pursue independent strategies, they were cautious in extending credits to their industrial owners. When inflation is running at 20% a month and interest rates are very high but nevertheless still negative, then banks lend money for only short periods (maximum of three months). They can only issue credits to enterprises with rapid turnover, namely those operating in the sphere of trade — an interesting case of adverse selection (Stiglitz and Weiss, 1981). The ascendancy of banks, therefore, once more fuelled the expansion of merchant capital again at the expense of industrial capital.

Central Bank. Second, there are static measures of a bank's activities based on prudential norms. But third, there is also the more important dynamic control of a bank's liquidity. Each bank has to hold a correspondent account, carefully monitored by the Central Bank for suspicious activity and to assure overall solvency. Violation of acceptable practices can incur fines, or increases in the reserve ratio above 20% (the proportion of its deposits each bank has to hold in the Central Bank) or, in some cases, the Central Bank can close down a bank.

In short, during 1993, the Central Bank strove to impose hard budget constraints on commercial banks which in turn tried to transfer those constraints to their clients. But the impact was a drop in the ocean, given the escalating inter-enterprise debt and the credits issued by the Central Bank itself. Instead of party, conglomerate and ministry involved in a complex exchange of material goods and services, now the government and the Central Bank handed out financial credits to those with the political influence to obtain them. Paradoxically, monetization of the economy simply rationalized the system of soft budget constraints.

4. Phase II: Privatization

Economic reforms introduced a money economy, promoted the expansion of banking which drew off resources from industry but without subjecting enterprises to hard budget constraints. While monetization and banking were accelerating industrial involution, how was privatization affecting the internal organization of enterprises? As Kabalina et al. (1994) and Poznanski (1993: 417) argue, privatization has conventionally followed restructuring while in Russia the order is reversed. According to neoliberal theory privatization was expected to turn loss making enterprises into profitable ones.¹¹ What have been the actual effects of privatization?

Learning from Eastern Europe, reformers quickly realized that finding outside buyers for Soviet enterprises would be impossible. If privatization was to occur, enterprises would have to be given away. But to whom? Beginning in August 1992, all citizens of Russia were given privatization vouchers worth 10,000 rubles. These were to be used to purchase shares of companies directly or invested in some mutual investment fund. Enterprises had to draw up privatization plans based on one of three variants. By far the most popular was the second variant in which employees purchased 51% of their enterprise, with the remainder reverting to the state and to be auctioned off at a later date. There was no realistic way of evaluating enterprises. They were often given a price that the employees together could afford if each used four vouchers. Employees assumed 51% ownership at little cost to themselves. Shares were distributed in a relatively egalitarian manner, usually in relation to seniority and income. However, top managers often secured a disproportionate number of shares.

The effect of this voucher privatization was to give juridical status to a process of prior decentralization. We noted earlier that the disintegration of the party state had already given enterprises the autonomy to pursue their own strategies in an increasingly uncertain political and economic environment. As the economic recession deepened, as working capital became unobtainable except by going even further into debt, managers' time horizons became even shorter and they began stripping their enterprises of assets, often for personal gain. This occurred irrespective of whether the enterprise was "efficient" or "inefficient," potentially "profitable" or not. Privatization accelerated an indiscriminate industrial involution.

If public bodies do not have the capacity or the interest to halt the destruction of the economy, the labor collective can still restrain cannibalization when it comes out of workers' pockets. If privatization gives managers the opportunity to channel investment into commercial and speculative ventures, at the same time they become increasingly beholden to their employees. First, as they become embroiled in the

search for materials and credits, managers become increasingly dependent on workers who control the shop floor. Given the idiosyncratic character of socialist production workers monopolize enterprise specific skills and knowledge and they are not easily replaced.

Second, directors know that so long as they don't have a controlling package of shares, employees can always remove them. When the furniture factory, where I worked in 1991, was privatized (end of 1992) the labor collective ejected the incumbent managerial team. It had been one of the highest paying factories in Syktyvkar but at the time of privatization wages were already slipping behind other enterprises. Employees used the occasion of privatization to elect a new director. Conscious of his precarious position the new director did everything he could to appease the labor collective but in the process drove the enterprise further into debt, so much so that it became effectively bankrupt. So he too was ejected at a shareholders' meeting a year and half into his tenure when the factory was virtually at a standstill. Privatization was the lightning rod for struggles in other enterprises, including the largest and richest mine in Vorkuta. Workers may be able to limit managerial pillaging, but they cannot compel managers to adopt longer time horizons, particularly as the very existence of enterprises is hanging by a thin thread.

Managers seek the support of their labor collective for a third reason. When it comes to extracting government credits, wielding the labor collective as a threat can still be a powerful bargaining chip. In the coal industry, for example, management frequently used, and therefore encouraged, strikes to wring material concessions from government. The director of the Russian Central Bank in Komi is inundated with telegrams, phone calls, delegations from enterprise directors appealing for funds that would save an entire community from destitution.

We see, therefore, that privatization along with market forces, far from transforming enterprises, have been an effective vehicle for

their conservation, for cementing the old alliance between managers and workers. On occasion workers can act as a restraint on managerial pillaging because they have interests in the survival of the enterprise and because they have the capacity to enforce their will. More usually, workers rapidly become disillusioned with their bosses and turn to their own form of pillage, stealing raw materials, finished products, and tools from “their” factory. Each side becomes trapped in a downward spiral of ever shorter time horizons. Privatization has proven to be the very opposite of an elixir — indeed has spread the malignancy of industrial involution.

5. Phase III: Mafia and the Restoration of Barter

The second phase of monetization and privatization can be regarded as period of easy credits that are dispensed on the basis of political influence to now independent enterprises. In the third phase, which begins in 1994 inflation falls, interest rates become positive and central credits are increasingly scarce. In other words budget constraints become harder but rather than leading to capital accumulation and investment, rather than promoting efficiency and productivity, the economy is driven backwards to barter and forwards into the claws of the mafia.

Enterprises continue to chalk up increasing debts with each other. Since most monetary transactions between enterprises are conducted in the non-cash form (*beznaichny*) which is not convertible into cash (*naichny*), since any non-cash transaction has to pass through banks, and since banks are effectively monitored and forced to operate under hard budget constraints, the result is that bank accounts are frozen or impounded. Enterprises have no interest in monetary transactions since any money entering their accounts is immediately siphoned off to the state in taxes or utility bills. Increasingly, enterprises operate outside the banking circuit through barter or, if they are lucky, through

direct cash transactions. An increasing proportion of the economy moves into the shadows.

The restoration of barter and of the second economy more generally is not a legacy of the past but created anew by centralized attempts to impose hard budget constraints. This also has the consequence of increasing the operations of the mafia. When the state is neither able to enforce contracts nor able to compensate non-compliance with credits, creditors seek other extra-legal means of appropriating what is their's. When the political weakness of the state is compounded by fiscal restraint, then enterprises increasingly enlist criminal gangs to enforce contracts. This tendency is reinforcing since refusal to fulfil obligations can also be sustained by access to extra-legal force. The survival of any enterprise depends upon engaging an effective security service which further eats away at productive investment. Protection rackets spread uncontrollably to form the basis of a shadow, privatized state which employs soldiers, police, secret police, security police from the official state but now in second higher paying jobs. Again the greatest profits are to be found in the sphere of circulation and come at the expense of production.

How is the timber industry affected by this third phase? Since wood has multiple purposes and is always in wide demand, the disintegration of industry has spurred the increase of barter. But now it is the barter of bankruptcy rather than the barter of success. In 1991, the furniture factory we studied was bartering its wall units for all sorts of scarce goods, from sugar to places in children's summer camp, from mirrors to textile paper. Today it is bankrupt, indebted to the tune of a million dollars, bereft of working capital, and unable to sell its products. The only way it can maintain any production at all is to barter its wall units for raw materials, pay the few employees that still work at low wages, on an irregular basis and often in kind. Its second new director is hoping to find some foreign investor or somehow obtain a credit from a bank or government. Both strategies are long shots.

The coal industry has not experienced such a precipitous decline. In 1992 foreign barter was at its height and Western consumer goods flooded into the make-shift kiosks that lined the streets. Since then export of coal has fallen from over 17% to 10% of output. Increasing costs, particularly freight charges but also the chain of pay-offs to trading enterprises have cut profit margins so that export is barely worthwhile. Although the mines are heavily in debt, still there is more room for manoeuvre because the conglomerate jointly controls their accounts. The conglomerate acts on behalf of all the mines to extract payments from the steel industry. Still, the mining industry is only too aware of the rapid fall in its bargaining power with the Russian government. It is, therefore, beginning to turn to the regional Komi government which can more effectively use its regional monopoly over scarce resources to blackmail the center.

David Woodruff (1994) has studied analogous moves around electric power companies in three very different regions — Krasnoyarsk, Vladivostok and Samara. In each region barter has been restored as a mode of exchange as enterprises are forced to operate outside the monetary sphere controlled by banks. Even more interesting, however, is the way inter-enterprise arrears have migrated to the electricity generating companies because they have the greatest influence and leverage with Moscow. Tightening credit supplies is consolidating bargaining with the center.

The resurrection of barter and the escalation of freight charges threatens to balkanize Russia into more cohesive regional units. Trade relations intensify within regions and diminish between regions. What holds Russia together is no longer any political force or relations in economic interdependence but the fraying thread of financial transactions between center and region. As the cheap central credits of the second phase dry up so regions exhibit declining allegiance to the center.

6. Uneven Involution: Timber versus Coal

So far I have argued that the three phases — disintegration, monetization and privatization and regression — have combined to accelerate economic involution. Rather than the absence of market forces it is their presence which has propelled Russia into an economic quagmire. One might expect, therefore, that involution is less or more rapid depending on the capacity of economic sector or region to resist market forces. This is born out in the comparison of timber and coal industries within Komi. While both industries have declined, the collapse has been much more rapid in timber than in coal. Thus coal output has fallen by only 25% between 1990 and 1994 whereas the production of raw timber fell by 44% between 1990 and 1993 and a further 42% in the first six months of 1994. Why? The answer is tied to the survival of the conglomerate: in the timber industry it has disintegrated while in the coal industry it continues to be effective.

The timber industry lost the coordinating center which controlled the commodity chain linking lumber camps to the timber farms and from their to the processing plants, furniture factories and paper mill. The conglomerate organized the distribution of timber; it provided transportation, professional and technical services; it was responsible for allocating supplies — from machinery to food. It disintegrated because lumber camps and timber enterprises resented the directing arm of the conglomerate which unilaterally dictated the terms of exchange between their timber on the side and supplies, wages, machinery etc. on the other side. The lumber camps saw themselves as subsidizing the factories further up-stream — the processing plants, the furniture factories, the paper mill. While they were immersed in a shortage economy it appeared that the demand for timber was inexhaustible. Only the iron grip of the conglomerate lay between them and riches. Therefore, with the price liberalization and privatization, they declared independence and sought out their own buyers and suppliers.

Freed from the monopsony of the conglomerate they assumed they could sell their wood for higher prices. However, they quickly discovered first, that they were not the only ones to increase prices. Their own suppliers were doing the same. Second, their customers, the processing plants, further up the timber chain could not pay their bills, not least because they no longer received their customary subsidies from the conglomerate. They turned to other buyers outside the territory but the rising cost of freight made their timber prohibitively expensive. As a result the timber industry took a nose dive.

The situation in the coal industry was very different. The mines were not links in an interdependent chain. The conglomerate was not involved in organizing relations of economic dependence among the mines. It was a center for dispensing services, defining prices, and most important for distributing quotas for exports and subsidies from the state. By contrast the timber conglomerate had no monopoly over export quotas nor did it have access to subsidies whether from republican or federal governments. It had to rely on internal redistribution — taking from the lumber camps and giving to the processing and manufacturing plants. The centrifugal forces were much greater in timber than in coal.

So long as the coal conglomerate had monopoly access to enormous resources from the state, mines had every interest in belonging to the conglomerate. However, even here the richest mine defected at the end of 1991 to avoid subsidizing the poorer mines. It struck up its own relation to the Ministry of Fuel and Energy. Its defection encouraged other mines to plan their own break away and form a conglomerate of their own — one that would not be weighed down by costs of running the social sphere. Defection rumors were at their height in 1992 but by 1994 all the mines had regrouped behind the conglomerate as their only hope for survival. In the face of falling subsidies, escalating freight charges and impending closures the mines had lost any illusions that life would be better outside the conglomerate.

In other words, the hierarchical chain of the timber industry fostered fantasies of independence. Each calculated the benefits of defection without taking into account the effects of other defections.¹² Universal defection led to the conglomerate's disintegration precisely in an industry where such a coordinating center was essential. Where the timber conglomerate was necessary for economic integration, the coal conglomerate was necessary for political unity in bargaining for concessions from the federal government. To this end it was able to take advantage of the concentration of the coal industry in two neighboring cities, particularly the city of Vorkuta, as well as of the political influence of miners. In 1989 and again in 1991 the miners of Vorkuta had been the most militant and radical in demanding the transformation of the old order. On their shoulders and those of the miners of the Kuzbass and Donbass, Yeltsin had come to power in 1991 in what was then the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union. At least in 1992 and 1993 this legacy and the threat of further disruption gave the conglomerate greater bargaining power with Moscow. By 1994 the political power of the miners had waned as the government began to ignore striking miners. Increasingly defenseless against government plans for drastic cuts in coal production, they could only benefit from rallying behind the conglomerate (Burawoy and Krotov, 1993, 1995).

This comparison shows how the politics of a given industry, shaped by ownership relations on the one side and economic structure on the other, determine its fate. It also suggests that hanging on to institutions from the past may be the most rational strategy for survival during the transition to a market economy. In the above portrait the timber industry suffered from its short sighted embrace of individualistic strategies while the resuscitated coal conglomerate attempts to cut losses by a rational coordination of the industry in face of market challenges.

III: Overdeveloped Markets and Underdeveloped Economy

Contrast the analysis above with Aslund's:

The Russia emerging today is very different from what pessimists have prophesied. It is not falling apart but coming together. The new political institutions function. Strikes are rare, and no serious social unrest is on the horizon. Incredibly, most of the Russian economy, measured by either employment or output, has been privatized in just two years. Russia has already become a market economy, but one in the midst of a long-overdue and massive restructuring. In short, Russia has undergone fundamental changes and appears to be on the right track. (Aslund, 1994:58).

One does not have to disagree with the facts in order to come to very different conclusions. Russia may not be falling apart as the pessimists prophesied but it is held together by an ever more slender thread. The new political institutions do function but they are impotent and largely irrelevant. There may be no serious unrest but individual survival strategies are making it more difficult for the majority to survive — now and in the future. Most of Russian industry is indeed privatized but that has only accelerated industrial decline. Finally, Russia has become a market economy but one that devours its material base as it expands. According to Aslund the quicker production falls the sooner it will “bottom out” and therefore, the closer the arrival of the radiant future. Neoliberals are giving new meaning to an old socialist slogan: “the worse the better.”

Aslund is optimistic because the Russian government has followed his advice. The elements of shock therapy are all in place: price liberalization and privatization followed by stabilization. By definition this must spell success just as the propagandists of state ownership claimed that planning ipso facto would spell the success of socialism. Aslund is living in a never never world. Capitalism was not allowed to incubate within the socialist economy, and a series of path

dependent paradoxes emerged. In phase I, disintegration of the party state led to the strengthening of features of the old Soviet order — monopolies, barter and worker control. A market appeared but one in which enterprises sought profits from trade. In phase II price liberalization and privatization led to the monetization of the economy. Resources were channelled from industry into banking where returns were greater and more rapid. With ever shorter time horizons bank credits fuelled the expansion of trade at the expense of industry. On the other hand, in order to maintain national political integrity, state loans were distributed on the basis of need and influence. Economic reform rationalized soft budget constraints rather than abolishing them. Phase III saw the hardening of budget constraints but instead of promoting economic growth it now led to regression. Transactions moved back from the monetary sphere to barter while the mafia took over regulation from the state. Exchange continued to sap production of what little energy it retained. Those industries which successfully clung to old relations were able to limit involution.

It is a premise of the neo-classical faith that markets lead to economic development. When they don't it is because the markets are "abnormal." In this case the downward economic spiral is a function of a "transformational recession" — a problem of transition that will give way to economic expansion once markets have settled own. Alternatively, the markets themselves are deformed, "backward" or "primitive," and so they have pathological consequences. I have tried to show that it is not the abnormal features of the market but their true essence that generates involution. Rather than the underdevelopment of markets it is their overdevelopment that has bled the productive economy of resources, capital, investment. There is no market road to a modern market economy.

This is an old story. Studying the transition to modern capitalism Marx and Weber agree on one point, that the real revolution comes not with the rise of markets but with what Weber calls "the rational organization of formally free labor." This is what distinguishes

modern capitalism from the capitalism of promoters, speculators, adventurers, concession hunters, in short, merchant capitalism. There is nothing automatic or necessary about the transition from this merchant capital to what Weber calls modern, Western, rational bourgeois capitalism. Just as in Europe merchant capital most usually reinforced pre-capitalist production, so in Russia the expansion of trade and commerce has conserved rather than transformed the Soviet enterprise (Clarke et al., 1993). The only difference is that the world context has changed. Whereas merchant capital was once the leading edge of economic development now it is associated with underdevelopment (Kay, 1975). Reproduction without technical progress is much more costly in a world dominated by advanced capitalism than in a world dominated by trading companies.

The administered economy had its defects but to reduce the failure of reform to the “legacies” of communism is to assume that once the past is cleared away Russia will return to “normality” and its economy expand. This ignores the dynamics of the transition itself as well as the international context of advanced capitalism. Once these factors are taken into account, involution rather than revolution or evolution is Russia’s destiny for the foreseeable future. Social scientists have demonstrated many negative features about communism, but they have overlooked one of the most menacing — the illusions it creates about capitalism.

Notes

¹I take the idea of involution from Clifford Geertz, *Agrarian Involution*: There is involution when “the economy functions much less effectively but (or more exactly, because) it is the same economy” (Geertz, 1963: 125).

²Pipes (1994: 49) does acknowledge that Russia continues to suffer from the absence of public spirit and from weakness of patriotic sentiments — cultural-psychological problems lodged in the nation’s collective memory.

³Bunce (1993) denies the relevance to post-Soviet states of the literature on the transition from bureaucratic authoritarianism in Latin America and Southern Europe. She writes that O’Donnell and Schmitter’s (1986) framework is future oriented and belittles the importance of the socialist past. Still Bunce and Csanadi follow O’Donnell and Schmitter in two important respects: first, they take the standpoint of elites and second, they focus on the uncertainty of the transition to democracy. If they do differ from O’Donnell and Schmitter it is in regarding elite actors as hapless victims of liminality rather than strategic players in a “multi-layered chess game.” Recent writings by Schmitter (1994) and O’Donnell (1993) go beyond their early interest in transition to the study of the consolidation and institutionalization of democracy. Here they explicitly seek to incorporate the experience of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and meet some of Bunce’s criticisms. From a focus on strategic elites, acting without reference to the previous order, they emphasize social legacies inherited from earlier regimes and in this way give credence to the Soviet past.

⁴In a curious about turn Aslund (1994) embraces the replacement of “bright young economists” (Gaidar and Fyodorov) by gray apparatchiks (Chernomyrdin) in 1994 as a sign of the success of the reforms. Russia has entered “the stage of ordinary politics, when interests are more important than ideas” (1994: 70). Visionaries have fulfilled their mission and they must hand over power to pragmatic, consensus building politicians. All this is supposed to have happened within a year.

⁵Reflecting on Hungary’s poor economic performance, including falling productivity, declining output and rates of investment, Kornai (1994) begins to question whether spontaneous market forces will lead to economic growth. Departing from his life-long opposition to state involvement in the economy, he now makes a half U-turn ~~advocating state~~ led investment. To be sure the

“transformational recession” is an artifact of the uncertainty and fluidity in which market institutions have not developed. There is no suggestion of any permanent industrial involution. It is ironic that while Hungary’s Minister of Finance in the new socialist government is a devotee of neo-liberalism, Kornai, Hungary’s leading neoliberal economist, should be turning back to the state.

⁶In a fascinating comparative study of industrial concentration, Brown, Ickes, and Ryterman (1993), conclude that the Soviet economy possessed neither the very small but also neither the very large enterprises found in the US. Monopoly emerged from segmented and regionally defined markets.

⁷This section is based on research into banking in Komi from January to July, 1993.

⁸Hellman (1993) presents the best analysis of the evolution of the commercial banks in Russia, showing how pocket banks grow out of their pockets to challenge their owners.

⁹One of the legacies of Soviet banking is the non convertability between cash (nalichny) and non-cash (beznalichny) money.

¹⁰There are also banks that are essentially pocket banks of the regional governments which are forced to assume bad loans.

¹¹Cui (1994a) has argued that neoclassical economics is an economics of barter and, ironically enough, underestimates the significance of money. Including money as a factor in its own right, he shows how privatization in the conditions of economic recession in postsocialism cannot have the intended consequences of hardening budget constraints. His theoretical analysis dovetails well with my empirical observations.

¹²This is an example of what Elster calls the fallacy of composition in which: “..economic agents tend to generalize locally valid views into invalid global statements, because of a failure to perceive that causal relations that obtain ceteris paribus may not hold unrestrictedly” (1985:19; 487-490). Or more succinctly: “the belief that causal mechanism valid for any particular member of a set in isolation must also be valid for all members taken as a whole” (1983:143)

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Comment devient-on entrepreneur en Russie

Natacha Chmatko

*L'Espace de l'économie privée: la structure et les oppositions.*¹

Bien que l'espace de l'économie non étatique ait commencé à se constituer depuis huit ans déjà, il est très difficile de dégager sa structure d'une façon claire, à l'exception de la classification ordinaire utilisée par la statistique. Cet espace est toujours en train de se transformer; comme le montre l'évolution du secteur de propriété collective/coopérative, qui, très petit à ses début, s'agrandit chaque jour grâce, notamment, à la privatisation, mais aussi grâce à la croyance, de plus en plus forte avec le temps, dans l'irréversibilité de ces transformations. La division classique de l'espace économique entre industrie, commerce, communication, finances, services, etc. reste valable seulement dans le cadre d'une analyse synchronique, mais l'approche diachronique dévoile des rapports complexes entre ces grands secteurs et leur relatif déséquilibre interne. C'est pourquoi dans notre recherche nous avons tâché de recourir à ces deux démarches: diachronique, pour observer la genèse de la propriété privée et du patronat en Russie, et synchronique, pour analyser les positions des patrons dans l'espace de l'économie privée.

L'espace de l'économie privée s'est constitué progressivement de telle façon qu'on peut faire ressortir plusieurs étapes dans son histoire:

celle des coopératives, celle des petites entreprises (semi-étatiques); celle des bourses; celle des banques et des sociétés d'investissement, celle des grandes entreprises industrielles privatisées. Chacune de ces étapes a connu un énorme développement ("boom") sur un temps plus ou moins court et a été suivie de faillites en nombre relativement important. Il est difficile de citer des chiffres exacts, car les statistiques à ce propos sont très fragmentaires ; cependant on peut trouver dans la presse des publications sur les échecs les plus scandaleux (par exemple, la fameuse société d'investissement "MMM"). Ainsi, en 1994, environ 40 banques ont été fermées après avoir connu une faillite épouvantable qui a également frappé leur clientèle. Actuellement, après l'adoption d'une loi sur les faillites, on s'attend à de nombreuses faillites des entreprises industrielles qui souffrent beaucoup de la crise économique avec une chute de leur production qui peut atteindre 25 à 60% durant les deux dernières années, soit en moyenne environ 50% par rapport à 1989. Selon les données de Goscomstat la productivité dans les entreprises privatisées a également subi une forte baisse, quoique un peu moins que dans les entreprises étatiques (d'environ 40%).

Les mouvements qui s'observent dans la structure de l'économie privée consistent parfois dans l'abandon assez fréquent d'une production pour une autre, mais aussi dans le changement de statut juridique pour les entreprises déjà situées dans ce secteur. On voit, par exemple, qu' à Moscou le nombre d'entreprises en location a fortement diminué l'année dernière: de 11585 en 1991, puis 6671 en 1992, il est passé à 1246 en 1993. Par contre le nombre de sociétés et de compagnonnies par actions, ainsi que de sociétés mixtes, s'est beaucoup développé. On peut supposer, à partir des données du Comité de statistique de Moscou, que ces entreprises en location, soit ont changé de statut juridique, soit ont été fermées.

L'analyse rétrospective de la constitution de l'espace économique privé et, notamment, des mécanismes d'organisation des entreprises privées fait apparaître une dimension fondamentale qui structure cet espace: la proximité des entreprises privées par rapport à l'Etat. Ainsi,

le premier pôle est constitué par les organismes privés qui sont proches de l'Etat, notamment ceux qui sont historiquement créés auprès des entreprises étatiques ou sur leur base (entreprises-satellites, banques, associations, fondation, entreprises privatisées), mais aussi ceux qui ont été créés par d'anciens fonctionnaires d'Etat (différentes sociétés privées). L'autre pôle s'organise autour des entreprises situées loin de l'Etat et regroupe principalement des petites entreprises créées par des entrepreneurs "nouveaux venus" ou par les "gens des affaires" (économie de l'ombre). La classification selon ce principe renvoie également à différentes stratégies de développement de l'entreprise (que nous observerons plus en détail ultérieurement), à savoir une politique de réinvestissement des plus-values, une orientation vers l'économie extérieure ou nationale, une politique fiscale, une sélection des cadres d'entreprise, et ainsi de suite.

L'espace des entreprises privées

A partir des informations recueillies grâce aux interviews approfondies de patrons et grâce au dépouillement de documents publiés (revues, journaux), on a essayé de construire de façon provisoire et méthodique cet espace des entrepreneurs privés. Les entretiens avec des patrons d'entreprises et des présidents d'associations ont porté sur leurs trajectoires sociales et professionnelles ainsi que sur les formes de capitaux, culturel, social, économique, dont les patrons sont dotés, avant et après leur accès à l'activité d'entrepreneur. L'examen des positions hiérarchiques (dominants/dominés) qu'occupent dans l'espace de l'économie non étatique les patrons interrogés confirme l'influence primordiale du capital bureaucratique, c'est-à-dire d'une espèce spécifique de capital lié à l'expérience qu'un patron a accumulée durant son temps d'exercice à un poste auprès du pouvoir étatique et aussi le pouvoir actuellement délégué à ce patron par le gouvernement ou les organisations publiques.

L'espace des entreprises non étatiques, qui s'organise selon un axe public/privé, révèle deux stratégies différentes de la part des entreprises situées à des pôles opposés. Ainsi, au pôle public se trouvent premièrement les entreprises privatisées dont la direction reste d'abord entre les mains des anciens directeurs (c'est-à-dire ce pôle se définit selon le facteur de l'appartenance du patron au corps social) et deuxièmement les entreprises dont le statut juridique de société par actions est associé à la proximité par rapport au pôle public. On y trouve aussi des banques (surtout les anciennes banques "de branche"), dont l'existence et la prospérité dépendent directement des crédits accordés par l'Etat à leurs entreprises clientes.

Les stratégies de développement des entreprises situées près du pôle public résident souvent dans des actions de pression systématiques auprès des organismes gouvernementaux ("lobbysme") pour obtenir des crédits d'Etat ou des facilités. Dans ce cas les directeurs ou les banquiers, en tant que corps sociaux déjà constitués, jouent sur leurs relations personnelles avec les autorités de différents niveaux.

L'autre groupe principal d'entreprises proches du pôle public se compose de petites entreprises privées créées principalement par des gens qui exerçaient auparavant une activité intellectuelle: chercheurs, professeurs, journalistes, juristes. Ce sont les gens qui se sont lancés dans la création d'une entreprise personnelle dans un but d' "auto-réalisation", c'est-à-dire avec l'intention de renouveler leur activité professionnelle. C'est le cas, par exemple, des maisons d'édition, des créations de journaux ou de show-business, dont les patrons tiennent à cumuler le capital spécifique de reconnaissance du public et du milieu professionnel. La politique de recrutement des cadres pour ces entreprises est marquée par une sélection de spécialistes ayant une expérience dans un domaine donné et par la création d'équipes, politique qu'on définit parfois comme "rationnelle" ou "occidentale".

D'une manière générale, les entreprises situées vers le pôle public manifestent une attitude d'ouverture. Ils acceptent les entretiens avec

des sociologues et des journalistes, la publication des interviews dans la presse (qui ont souvent pour eux une fonction publicitaire indirecte).

Le pôle privé regroupe des entreprises bien différentes: d'un côté, des petites entreprises dont les patrons n'ont pas de relations avec les structures étatiques, qui sous-traitent souvent, mais dont l'activité est légale; de l'autre, des entreprises dont le fonctionnement est lié à des affaires en marge de la loi, c'est-à-dire, on peut trouver ici des entreprises qui ne sont pas enregistrées juridiquement, soit parce que leurs activités ne sont pas autorisées (par exemple, absence de licence), soit parce que leurs affaires elles-mêmes sont délictueuses. Le capital économique de ces entreprises est très inégal, mais elles ont toutes en commun d'être passées dans un secteur complètement privé et d'avoir abandonné le public. L'abandon du secteur public se manifeste, par exemple, dans le fait que leurs emprunts ne reposent presque jamais sur les crédits bancaires, mais sur les réseaux d'amitié ou de solidarité. Les patrons de ces entreprises préfèrent aussi n'adhérer à aucune association ou aucun parti politique regroupant des entrepreneurs. De même leur politique d'embauche privilégie le recrutement souvent sans contrat précis de gens qu'ils connaissent bien et avec qui ils entretiennent des relations informelles, de confiance², ce qui, dans un grand nombre de cas, entraîne malentendus et ruptures des relations amicales aussi bien que d'affaires.

Autre différence importante entre les patrons d'entreprises: leur emploi du temps. Si les patrons des entreprises proches du pôle public consacrent une grande partie de leur temps de travail et en dehors du travail à des rencontres, réunions, séminaires, soirées et réceptions plus ou moins officielles, où ils accroissent ou consolident le cercle de leurs relations utiles, les patrons des entreprises proches du pôle privé consacrent une part essentielle de leur temps à des rencontres privées avec leurs partenaires et passent leur temps libre en restant dans une sphère exclusivement privée, en famille ou en compagnie de leurs amis ou encore dans l'anonymat des casinos et des bars.

La deuxième opposition observable dans l'espace de l'économie privée, l'opposition "intérieur /extérieur", divise les entreprises selon leur orientation générale sur le marché national ou sur le marché international. Cette opposition se manifeste immédiatement à travers l'opposition entre production des biens et distribution des marchandises, c'est-à-dire dans le sens économique traditionnel de l'opposition "export - import" ; mais cette opposition n'est pas purement économique; elle se révèle aussi dans les rapports sociaux. Ainsi, l'analyse des entretiens de patrons montre qu'ils ont des stratégies opposées par rapport au placement des bénéfices: les patrons dotés d'un important capital économique et relativement pauvres en capital culturel donnent la priorité au placement de leurs bénéfices hors du pays (dépôt de leur argent dans les banques étrangères; achat d'immeubles à l'étranger, investissement dans des entreprises étrangères ou création de petites entreprises à l'étranger), tandis que les patrons des entreprises dotés de plus de capital culturel qu'économique s'orientent, pour la majorité des cas, vers le marché intérieur (réinvestissement des bénéfices dans leur entreprise ou participation à des entreprises nationales, efforts, pour attirer les investissements étrangers dans les entreprises nationales, recherche d'une position stable et de la reconnaissance à l'intérieur du pays). Ce facteur marque aussi une opposition entre le capital industriel ou financier (et, du même coup, les patrons des entreprises industrielles ou des banquiers) et le capital de marchandises (les commerçants). Ces stratégies d'investissement renvoient à des prises de position différentes par rapport à l'avenir du pays et à son développement, mais aussi par rapport à sa propre position dans la société et, en fin de compte, par rapport à une émigration possible: partir ou rester. Elles sont aussi des prises de position politique puisqu'elles mettent en jeu la confiance des nouveaux entrepreneurs dans le régime actuel.

Les ressources au fondement de la construction des entreprises privées

L'analyse des entretiens recueillis lors de cette recherche³ nous montre que l'importance relative des différentes espèces de ressources qui peuvent être investies dans une entreprise privée n'est pas identique aux différentes phases de la constitution du secteur économique. Le capital économique qui doit être, semble-t-il, fondamental dans la constitution d'une entreprise ou d'une société joue en fait un rôle de second plan dans nombre de cas. Ce fait paradoxal s'est manifesté d'abord dans la période de création des petites entreprises de type NTTM (1986-1990), mais il s'est produit aussi dans la période de privatisation et d'actionnarisation des entreprises étatiques avec le mécanisme de privatisation par vouchers (1992-1993). Ainsi, dans le cas des NTTM, on a remarqué que la base matérielle (machines, location, etc.) de ces petites entreprises leur a été cédée au début par des comités de Komsomol et du P.C. C'est aussi le cas des petites entreprises-satellites créées auprès des grandes entreprises qui ont obtenu de leur entreprise-mère une grande partie de leur base matérielle; cela est vrai dans le cas de la privatisation des entreprises étatiques (y compris des grandes) fondées sur les chèques de privatisation, surtout quand la part de propriété cédée en échange des vouchers est assez importante (de 15 à 50%); et cela est également vrai pour nombre de banques qui ont été "rebaptisées" après la réforme du système bancaire en 1990/91 et sont devenues des sociétés par actions. Dans tous ces cas, les nouveaux propriétaires n'ont pas eu (ou presque) à investir de capital économique dans la création de leur entreprise et ce sont d'autres espèces de ressources qui ont joué le rôle primordial dans ce processus. Cela dit, on peut découvrir que l'importance et le volume du capital économique investi sont différents dans le cas de dirigeants d'organismes étatiques reconvertis en patrons privés et dans le cas d'entrepreneurs venus dans le secteur de l'économie privée à partir de positions dominées.

D'une façon générale il faut remarquer que toutes les études sur les entrepreneurs et les élites économiques en Russie rencontrent d'énormes difficultés dans la collecte de données sur le volume du capital économique d'un patron quel qu'il soit ou même d'une entreprise. Il est pratiquement impossible de connaître le volume général des ressources financières (en argent) dont dispose un patron, ou son revenu annuel ou la valeur exacte de ses propriétés; on ne peut donc se servir que d'indices indirects pour classer les patrons selon leur volume de capital économique. Ensuite, il est presque impossible de comparer les entreprises entre elles, qu'il s'agisse de leur capital initial ou de leur chiffre d'affaires annuel en raison de l'inflation qui rend difficile la comparaison d'entreprises fondées en différentes années. L'absence de données exactes nous oblige à considérer tous les classements des businessmen les plus importants de Russie qui sont parfois publiés dans la presse comme autant de photographies du champ économique. Généralement ces classements se basent sur les résultats des enquêtes menées auprès des observateurs économiques des mass media, des économistes-analystes de différents centres d'études sur le marché et des associations commerciales, qui classent les hommes d'affaires d'après leurs propres représentations et impressions. Ces classements contribuent ainsi d'une certaine façon à la construction d'une image légitime de l'élite économique actuelle.

N'ayant pas la possibilité de disposer de données statistiques exactes sur les revenus et les chiffres annuels des entreprises du secteur privé, nous avons tout de même tâché pendant les entretiens de recueillir des indices sur le capital économique de chaque patron interrogé. C'est ainsi que nous avons fait porter nos questions à la fois sur le nombre d'entreprises en sa possession, sur le capital initial de l'entreprise, le revenu par unité de temps (an/mois), les effectifs de l'entreprise (à temps plein, à mi-temps), la participation à d'autres entreprises (actions, taux d'intérêt, etc.), les revenus personnels et l'appréciation de ses propres revenus, la propriété privée (personnelle, familiale) du patron (appartement, maison, résidence secondaire, etc.). En outre, pour mieux

situer un patron et son entreprise dans le champ de l'économie privée, nous avons pris en compte le statut juridique de la propriété de (des) l'entreprise(s) : privée, collective (coopérative, société à responsabilité limitée, société anonyme, société par action), mixte, la spécialisation de l'entreprise (domaine de production, de service, etc.), la date de création de l'entreprise.

L'analyse des entretiens montre que le capital économique personnel du patron est important pour l'organisation des sociétés privées (sous forme de S.A.R.L., S.A., en nom propre) en particulier lorsque le patron est en situation de "nouveau venu" (ou encore de "parvenu") dans le champ économique: lorsqu' un nouvel agent veut intervenir dans le champ économique ou sur un secteur du marché déjà plus ou moins structuré et entrer ainsi en concurrence avec d'autres agents, il doit posséder un "titre d'entrée", c'est-à-dire du capital qu'il puisse investir dans le jeu économique. (* Voir Tableau n° 1 sur les anciens postes des patrons). Quand il s'agit des anciens agents comme les directeurs des entreprises étatiques, les fonctionnaires du Parti et du Komsomol, etc., qui ont déjà eu d'une façon directe ou indirecte une entreprise en leur possession ou/et contrôle, c'est le capital social et le capital bureaucratique (les relations, les positions et les expériences institutionnelles) qui servent de "titre d'entrée", mais lorsqu'il s'agit de nouveaux venus, c'est plutôt le capital économique lui-même (argent) qui commence à jouer. On peut alors dégager deux types de patrons russes: ceux qui sont proches de l'Etat (anciens dirigeants et hauts fonctionnaires) et ceux qui se situent dans le secteur privé (surtout les "nouveaux venus")⁴. Et cette distinction se manifeste non seulement par rapport au capital économique et à son rôle dans la création de l'entreprise personnelle mais aussi par rapport aux autres facteurs de constitution du patronat russe, à savoir les stratégies de développement de l'entreprise, les investissements, les styles de vie, les stratégies éducatives des enfants, etc.

Dans notre enquête qui inclut 12 patrons de grandes entreprises, 6 sont des anciens directeurs d'usines et de fabriques privatisées qui

gardent toujours leur poste de directeur, mais qui entretemps (après reconversion de leurs entreprises en sociétés par actions) sont devenus propriétaires ; 3 sont d'anciens dirigeants de banques étatiques transformées en sociétés par actions; 3 sont reconvertis de l'ancienne nomenclatura et sont maintenant des présidents d'associations d'entrepreneurs. Ainsi, tous ont occupé des positions dominantes bien avant la constitution du secteur privé.

L'économie russe a été et reste encore très monopolisée, on assiste également à une domination de l'industrie lourde et de l'industrie de transformation. Les positions-clés dans l'industrie sont occupées par les dirigeants des entreprises dans le domaine de l'extraction du pétrole, du gaz et d'autres matières primaires, ainsi que dans la construction automobile et quelques autres entreprises monopolistes de construction industrielle et de traitement chimique. Le supergérant "GAZPROM", protégé par Victor Tchernomyrdin, son ancien dirigeant, aujourd'hui premier ministre, a pu bénéficier de tous les profits de cette position ministérielle: privatisation des entreprises les plus rentables, crédits à long terme à des conditions avantageuses, autorisations de vendre sa production (pétrole, gaz) à des prix libres et sur le marché libre. Cela dit, les nouveaux patrons des entreprises de "GAZPROM" (qui sont en même temps ses anciens directeurs) ont occupé quasi automatiquement les positions dominantes dans le champ de l'économie privée sans y avoir investi leurs propres capitaux financiers. On peut citer des cas de privatisation scandaleuse de géants de la construction automobile comme "GAZ" (Niznyi Novgorod) et "ZIL" (Moscou), révélés par les mass media qui ont découvert qu'un énorme "paquet" d'actions était passé aux mains des directeurs de ces entreprises au lieu d'être cédé aux collectifs de travailleurs.

A titre d'exemple de reconversion réussie d'un fonctionnaire d'Etat en patron privé, mais restant très proche de l'Etat et des organismes publics, on peut citer le cas d'un président de banque commerciale (dont on ne peut pas donner le nom). En 1990 avant la réforme des banques, le directeur d'un département d'une des grandes

ont occupé une position dominée dans des univers plutôt sélectifs (ingénieurs, chercheurs). Et si ces derniers disposent essentiellement de ressources de nature sociale et culturelle comme les diplômés, les patentes, mais aussi des projets plus ou moins élaborés, des connaissances professionnelles plutôt élevées, etc., avec lesquelles ils peuvent monnayer leur insertion dans le monde économique, les premiers, qui sont démunis de ces ressources, ont besoin de ressources matérielles et financières.

Pour se procurer l'argent nécessaire à la création d'entreprise, les personnes démunies de capitaux recourent souvent à l'aide de proches et d'amis tout en essayant de ne pas se lier à des banques, car il est assez compliqué de constituer un dossier, de fournir les recommandations et les garanties d'usage et de payer des intérêts. Le tout-petit commerce ("tchelnok") est souvent un moyen d'accumuler le capital initial⁵. Ainsi, une jeune femme-commerçante, qui avait perdu son poste de directrice de cantine, nous a décrit ses débuts dans le commerce. Son histoire comme celle d'un certain nombre de personnes qui n'ont pu, comme elle, continuer à travailler dans le secteur étatique pour des raisons diverses, dont l'insuffisance du salaire, montre que leur passage dans le secteur privé est lié au petit commerce de marchandises qu'ils ont fait venir des pays étrangers:

"...En 1990, je suis restée sans travail. A ce moment-là tout le monde faisait "tchelnok". Moi aussi, j'ai décidé d'aller en Pologne avec 200 dollars et j'ai fait mes premiers 600 dollars, puis encore 600 et encore 600 et puis 1200 dollars. C'est comme ça que tout a commencé. Et puis en Chine, Turquie, Belgique. Nous avons travaillé ensemble avec mon mari: lui ici et moi à l'étranger. En 1993 je suis allée en Allemagne et j'ai trouvé le partenaire avec lequel j'ai fondé une société commerciale: achat-vente..."

(Femme-commerçante, 35 ans; non diplômée)

Quant aux ex-chercheurs, que nous avons interrogés sur l'histoire de la création de leur entreprise et sur les moyens dont ils disposaient alors, nous n'avons pas enregistré un seul cas d'accumulation de capital

initial par ce moyen. C'est plutôt leurs relations qui leur ont permis d'obtenir les emprunts nécessaires à la fondation de leur entreprise ou encore le concours d'une organisation-cofondatrice (par exemple, pour les sociétés à responsabilité limitée).

"Lorsque nous avons décidé de lancer notre petite société, nous n'avons pas eu de capital initial. On était tous sans moyens et d'ailleurs c'est pour ça qu'on a décidé d'entreprendre quelque chose. Nous avons emprunté une somme assez importante en échange de notre parole d'honneur et le petit pour cent d'intérêt à nos amis qui ont déjà travaillé dans le business privé. Et aussi notre directeur commercial a emprunté de l'argent à ses parents. Nous avons racheté une société qui existait déjà et de cette façon nous avons pris la succession."

(Commerçant, homme, 30 ans, ancien ingénieur-chercheur; commerce de matériel informatique)

Tableau n° 1.

Les postes anciens des entrepreneurs de différents secteurs économiques

Secteur d'activité du patron				
ancien poste du patron ⁶	production industrie	commerce	service	Total ⁷
sans emploi	-	6	-	6
ouvrier	-	2	-	2
employé dans le commerce	-	1	-	1
employé, cadre moyen	-	1	3	4
technicien	-	-	-	-
ingénieur	1	1	-	2
chercheur	4	4	2	10
dirigeant dans l'entreprise	-	2	1	3
fonctionnaire du Komsomol	5	1	1	7
fonctionnaire du Parti	1	-	-	1

fonctionnaire du Ministère ou de Commission d'Etat	1	1	1	3
profession libérale	-	-	1	1
Total	12	19	9	40

En examinant le cas du patron d'une société commerciale de matériel informatique, fondée en 1991, -période où commençait à se constituer le réseau commercial extérieur (avec des sociétés étrangères) en Russie- par un ingénieur-chercheur "nouveau-venu" dans le monde du commerce, on peut voir les difficultés qu'entraîne le manque de capital financier, surtout dans la période de lancement de l'affaire: recherche de partenariat, achat des premières machines, location de bureau, publicité, etc. Faute d'emprunt important, l'affaire n'a pas pu aboutir et pourtant les loyers n'étaient pas chers en cette période où le marché des bâtiments commerciaux n'était pas encore saturé et où il était, en outre, légalement possible (ce qui n'est plus le cas maintenant) d'installer des bureaux dans les appartements réservés au logement et bénéficiant de loyers extrêmement bas. Au fur et à mesure de la constitution du marché immobilier, la très forte croissance des loyers professionnels les a rendus prohibitifs pour nombre de petits patrons. De même, avec le développement de la législation sur le commerce, les dépenses de fonctionnement liées à l'achat de plusieurs autorisations, licences, certificats, tarifs douaniers, etc., ont considérablement augmenté. Les entreprises commerciales, qui sont orientées surtout vers le marché extérieur, se sont trouvées dans une situation de dépendance absolue à l'égard des échanges monétaires et du cours flottant du rouble.

La majorité des patrons étudiés possèdent plusieurs petites entreprises qui ont une activité identique ou voisine. Dans nombre de cas la possession de plusieurs entreprises est destinée à permettre aux patrons de répartir entre elles les bénéfices et d'échapper au fisc, mais parfois elle correspond à des stratégies d'agrandissement de l'affaire,

visant à couvrir un plus grand secteur du marché afin de minimiser les risques de faillite. La période initiale de constitution du secteur privé (1989-1992) a connu un développement énorme des petites entreprises accentué par un mouvement d'abandon du secteur étatique de la part des agents qui quittaient des positions dominées, pour devenir dirigeants et travailler à leur propre compte. Les petites entreprises ainsi créées étaient le produit d'une association entre membres de la même famille ou entre amis. Parfois il suffisait d'avoir un projet plus ou moins rentable pour pouvoir profiter de la position assez solide de quelques amis dans les affaires et créer sa propre entreprise en liaison avec la leur et avec leur concours. On peut illustrer ce cas par un extrait d'entretien avec un patron, copropriétaire d'environ 20 entreprises:

"...Il [une de mes connaissances] vient et me dit: j'ai un projet, j'ai besoin d'argent. Je lui dis: O.K., pour ce que tu me demandes, nous nous mettons d'accord sur le profit, sur la firme dans le cadre de laquelle il va travailler, etc. Je ne m'inquiète plus de rien. Il embauche lui-même les gens, il cherche lui-même les locaux, il achète lui-même l'équipement et il répond de tout. Je m'informe du résultat: 6 mois ont passé, tu as promis 50% de profit, où est-il? - Il me dit: ça n'a pas réussi. Je lui dis: comment ça n'a pas réussi? Regardons le point n°2: si ça n'a pas réussi, alors pour chaque mois de retard on doit payer tant pour-cent.

Quand il vient, il demande: et quel sera mon poste? - Et lequel veux-tu? - Je ne sais pas. - Je ne le sais pas non plus. De quoi vas-tu t'occuper? - De la construction d'une usine de briques. - Alors faisons de toi le directeur de la construction. Ce poste t'arrange-t-il? - Cela m'arrange. Voilà tout. Il reçoit le poste de directeur. ...Mais avant de lui donner de l'argent, je veux être informé de tout. Il doit me prouver, pour que je le croie entièrement, que tout est en règle: Sur simple parole je ne donne pas d'argent. Enfin, je donne parfois, mais pas de telles sommes. C'est-à-dire qu'à certaines personnes parfois je fais des cadeaux."
(Commerçant, homme, 30 ans, non diplômé).

La stratégie de multiplication des entreprises typique de la période 1990-1993 n'était évidemment pas liée au simple désir des gens de

"faire des cadeaux" à leurs amis, mais elle était surtout un effet du régime fiscal (les petites entreprises bénéficient d'avantages fiscaux pendant leur première année d'activité). Actuellement on assiste à l'apparition d'une nouvelle tendance des petites sociétés à s'associer pour former des compagnies et des unions, cette tendance, bien qu'on n'ait pu encore observer tous ses effets, tend à produire, semble-t-il, une répartition plus équilibrée du contrôle sur le marché. D'ailleurs il faut remarquer la généralisation de la tendance des petites et moyennes entreprises à répartir leur activité entre production, commerce et services, toutes ou presque toutes les petites entreprises industrielles/productives faisant à l'heure actuelle du commerce ou proposant des services. Par exemple, ceux qui travaillent dans l'électronique proposent également le service d'entretien des micro-ordinateurs, ou vendent des micro-ordinateurs ou du matériel bureautique ou électronique. Cette situation a rendu caduque la distinction que nous avons introduite au départ et qui faisait que, lors des entretiens, on demandait à chaque entrepreneur de citer d'abord toutes les entreprises dont il était propriétaire ou copropriétaire pour définir ensuite son activité principale et parler avant tout de l'entreprise correspondant à cette activité. Dans notre échantillon de 40 patrons (excluant les grandes entreprises et les associations) le nombre d'entreprises possédées (ou contrôlées) varie entre 1 (dix cas) et 20 (un cas).

L'importance du capital culturel

Les résultats des enquêtes menées sur les entrepreneurs en Russie⁸ comme ceux de notre recherche montrent que la majorité des patrons des entreprises non étatiques sont des gens diplômés. Cette observation qui est particulièrement vraie pour les grandes entreprises reste valable pour les entreprises petites et moyennes. Ainsi, l'enquête réalisée en Biélorussie⁹ (307 entrepreneurs soit 10% des patrons des entreprises privées de différents statuts juridiques et situées en Biélorussie) montre que 70% des répondants ont un diplôme

d'enseignement supérieur et 6% sont des docteurs en sciences. Dans l'échantillon (constitué en dehors de toute représentativité) 27,7% des répondants ont été des ingénieurs, 13% des dirigeants d'entreprises, 5,5% des chercheurs; 4,9% des professeurs ; 5,2% des économistes; 3,9% des cadres dirigeants moyens; 2,6% des membres des professions libérales; 2,3% des informaticiens; 3,9% des étudiants; 5,2% des ouvriers. Ce qui permet d'affirmer que les entrepreneurs, en Biélorussie aussi bien qu'en Russie, se recrutent essentiellement parmi les gens diplômés.

Afin de mesurer le volume du capital culturel des entrepreneurs, nous avons pris pour critère de notre analyse non seulement le fait de posséder un diplôme d'enseignement supérieur mais aussi d'autres indicateurs comme la formation générale (scolarisation dans le cycle secondaire général ou spécialisé; études universitaires dans une école centrale prestigieuse ou périphérique, sans prestige; cours de langues étrangères, etc.), la formation artistique (école de musique, de peinture ou autre art), la formation sportive (activité sportive pendant la scolarité et actuellement), la formation professionnelle (études post-universitaires, cours professionnels ou de management, d'affaires, etc.), la possession d'une bibliothèque (collection de livres) et d'objets d'art au domicile privé (chez les parents et chez le patron lui-même), d'antiquités, les pratiques culturelles pendant les années de formation et actuellement.

L'analyse de ces variables présentée dans le tableau n°1 ("La formation des patrons des entreprises de différents secteurs de l'économie") montre premièrement que la part des patrons diplômés est très élevée, et surtout que le taux de patrons passés par les différentes formations est quasiment égal pour le secteur de la production, du commerce (à l'exception des tout petits commerçants) et des services. Nous n'avons pas trouvé, par exemple, de grande différence sous le rapport des études dans des écoles secondaires spéciales de langues étrangères ou de la formation artistique. Il n'y a pas, semble-t-il, de corrélation directe entre le volume du capital culturel et la position du

patron dans le champ économique. Cependant, des différences apparaissent si l'on compare les patrons sous le rapport de cette autre composante du capital culturel que sont la formation et l'expérience professionnelles.

Ainsi, parmi les 40 patrons de P.M.E. que nous avons interrogés, 33 ont des diplômes d'enseignement supérieur: universités, écoles supérieures techniques ou de sciences de la nature. Il faut remarquer par ailleurs que tous les patrons du secteur de la production et de l'industrie sont diplômés et quatre sur douze ont effectué des études post-universitaires. Ils sont tous venus des entreprises étatiques au secteur privé et ils ont une formation adaptée au travail dans le secteur d'Etat. (cf. tableau n°3). Les patrons (petits et moyens) de ce secteur de l'économie sont plus riches en capital professionnel que les patrons des autres secteurs étudiés et, en particulier, les petits commerçants.

On peut notamment observer l'importance de la formation professionnelle et de l'expérience acquise dans les institutions d'Etat dans le cas des anciens chercheurs de différentes disciplines devenus petits patrons par la création de leur propre entreprise dans la période 1990-1993. Notre échantillon en compte dix et quatre d'entre eux dirigent actuellement des petites sociétés de production dans un domaine à haute technologie (optique à laser; électronique; production des corps conducteurs lumineux; nouvelle technologie de production de l'hydrogène). Quatre autres font du commerce dont trois ont commencé par être chef d'entreprise industrielle, avant de pratiquer exclusivement le commerce.

La différenciation des patrons sous le rapport de l'importance du capital culturel détenu commence à apparaître lorsqu'on entreprend l'analyse détaillée des entretiens de patrons occupant différentes positions dans le champ économique. C'est d'abord la manière de parler, le vocabulaire, donc, la culture générale du patron et éventuellement le type de famille dans laquelle il a été socialisé qui frappent le lecteur ou, mieux, l'auditeur des entretiens enregistrés. La culture générale du

patron qui se mesure aussi par des indices comme la lecture, l'amour des livres, le type d'éducation reçue dans l'enfance, etc., n'est pas sans influencer sa position économique, un patron restant d'autant plus fidèle au domaine d'activité choisi au début de sa vie professionnelle et se livrant d'autant plus rarement au commerce pur (à l'exception du commerce du livre) qu'il a une grande culture.

Tableau N° 2.

La formation des entrepreneurs des entreprises de différents secteurs de l'économie

	Production industrie	Commerce finance	Services	Total
Ecole supérieure: Université, Grandes Ecoles	2	7	4	13
Ecole supérieure technique, sciences de la nature (sauf Grandes Ecoles)	10	5	5	20
Etudes post-universitaires, doctorales (y compris Académie du Commerce Extérieur)	4 (1)	5 (2)	1	10 (3)
Etudes commerciales, dans le business (cours, stage)	-	1	3	4
Ecole secondaire spéciale (langue, science)	3	4	2	9
Etudes de musique et de beaux arts (dans l'enfance)	4	6	1	11
Autres formations	2	3	2	7
Non diplômé ¹⁰	-	7	-	7

Plusieurs patrons ont insisté, au cours de l'entretien, sur l'importance des études et des principes moraux qui s'y acquièrent.

"Mon éducation et les principes que j'ai acquis durant mes études me gênent dans certaines transactions faisant intervenir le risque ou certains passe-droits. Je ne suis pas un entrepreneur. Je ne sais pas qui je suis. Mais être entrepreneur aujourd'hui cela veut dire avoir le culot de ne pas connaître beaucoup de choses, cela veut dire ne pas avoir de principes, cela veut dire savoir se ficher des autres et même les écraser".

(Patron d'une société de construction et d'entretien de micro-ordinateurs; homme, 37 ans, diplômé de l'Académie du Commerce Extérieur)

Le manque de culture générale s'observe dans le cas des boutiquiers qui n'ont généralement pas de diplômes d'enseignement supérieur (quelques-uns parmi eux se disent étudiants d'écoles supérieures) et qui ont un rapport ambivalent à l'égard des gens diplômés, ayant d'un côté beaucoup d'estime pour les diplômes universitaires, mais se moquant d'un autre côté de ceux qui "perdent" leur temps avec les livres et ne savent pas gagner de l'argent. La langue de ces boutiquiers est émaillée de mots d'argot qui reviennent sans cesse, leurs phrases sont courtes et inachevées, ils aiment truffer leurs phrases de mots anglais (américains) pour "faire très moderne, cosmopolite". Dans la majorité des cas ces boutiquiers ont connu des difficultés pendant leurs études secondaires, comme l'avoue cet interviewé qui est très représentatif des gens de sa catégorie:

"...[A l'école] j'étudiais passablement. J'avais toujours "trois"¹¹. Je me souviens du professeur d'histoire.. Il y avait franchement beaucoup de mauvais professeurs. Le professeur d'histoire était seul à se distinguer de manière positive. Et les autres - une masse grise, rien d'extraordinaire. Non, ils n'avaient pas d'antipathie pour moi, mais... D'abord [à l'école primaire] si je n'avais pas tous les 5, c'étaient au moins tous les 4. Après la troisième-quatrième¹²: les amis, les bonnes bouffes, les filles... C'est, bien sûr, une plaisanterie. On peut dire que le manque de

contrôle de la part de mes parents a joué son rôle. Et sans y prendre garde j'ai perdu pied".

(Boutiquier, petit commerce de produits alimentaires et de tabac, 24 ans)

Il faut noter que l'importance du capital culturel autant que du capital économique augmente au fur et à mesure de la constitution du champ de l'économie privée. Aujourd'hui le capital culturel, en particulier sous sa forme spécifique qu'est le capital professionnel (formation spécialisée et le diplôme d'une école supérieure), devient vraiment nécessaire dans le cas des entreprises mixtes (avec une participation étrangère) et des sociétés à 100 % de capital étranger situées en Russie, ainsi que dans le cas des banques. Si dans les premières les compétences les plus demandées consistent en la connaissance des langues étrangères à quoi s'ajoute l'expérience du travail dans les nouvelles structures de l'économie "libre", les qualités les plus indispensables pour obtenir les plus hauts postes dans les banques commerciales (non étatiques) sont par contre l'expérience du travail dans l'ancien système bancaire et le diplôme d'une école supérieure reconnue dans ces milieux. Ces conditions ne sont pas en contradiction avec nos observations précédentes, car elles concernent l'embauche du personnel de ces entreprises et non celles de leurs patrons qui ont accédé à leurs postes selon d'autres principes de sélection.

Le rôle de la famille dans la création des entreprises personnelles

En examinant les principales caractéristiques des patrons interrogés dans notre étude, on remarque une certaine dépendance entre la position des patrons et leur situation familiale. Si dans certains cas, le poste anciennement occupé par le propriétaire lui-même a une influence sur le poste actuel, le plus souvent intervient la position sociale de la famille dans son ensemble : la position de chacun de ses membres,

le capital de relations sociales accumulées, ce que l'on peut désigner comme le capital social de la famille qui ne se réduit pas au simple jeu des relations de piston, même si ce système est très développé. Ce peut être parfois le nom de famille ou la mention de l'établissement où travaille l'un des parents ou encore, mais plus rarement, la mention du club ou de l'association d'appartenance qui joue un rôle important dans les transactions économiques.

Afin de reconstituer le capital social des patrons nous les avons interrogés sur leur famille (lieu où travaillaient leurs parents, leur profession et formation) et sur leur propre trajectoire professionnelle (ancien lieu où ils travaillaient et dernier poste occupé dans le secteur d'Etat, adhésion à un parti politique et à une association d'entrepreneurs ou professionnelle).

L'analyse de l'origine sociale des entrepreneurs et, en particulier, des catégories socio-professionnelles de leurs pères nous permet de tracer du point de vue de l'origine sociale une frontière entre les patrons qui travaillent dans la production et ceux qui travaillent dans le commerce et les services. Ainsi, nous pouvons voir que l'origine sociale la plus modeste caractérise les commerçants et les patrons des entreprises de services, les patrons des entreprises de production comptant seulement deux fils d'ouvriers et un fils de technicien. Tandis que six fils de cadres dirigeants d'entreprises (sur un total de 12) dirigent eux-mêmes leurs entreprises de production, on ne trouve qu'un seul fils de dirigeant faisant du commerce. On peut supposer une certaine influence de la position du père sur le choix du secteur d'activité du fils. Il ne s'agit pas de succession professionnelle à proprement parler (nous n'avons trouvé aucun lien direct entre profession du père et profession du fils) mais plutôt de dispositions familiales par rapport au travail.

Cette recherche faisait l'hypothèse que la création des petites entreprises reposait essentiellement sur l'utilisation de la solidarité familiale, l'ensemble des membres de la famille étant regroupés et

mobilisés par l'un des leurs autour d'une affaire commune, c'est-à-dire que la petite entreprise était en fait, dans certaine mesure, une entreprise familiale. Cependant les entretiens avec les patrons ainsi qu'un certain nombre de témoignages nous ont montré qu'en réalité les stratégies des patrons sont construites selon d'autres principes.

Ainsi, on peut décrire deux stratégies principales:

- 1) l'entreprise est une affaire qui appartient à un seul membre de la famille (dans la majorité des cas - le chef de famille) et les autres membres ne s'en mêlent pas et sont même peu au courant de son activité;
- 2) la création d'une entreprise par un membre de la famille incite d'autres membres à en créer une à leur tour ou tout simplement à quitter le secteur d'Etat pour travailler dans le secteur non étatique.

Le deuxième cas est d'autant plus important qu'il correspond assez souvent à des situations de corruption et de mafia. On peut l'observer par exemple lorsque les anciens dirigeants de grandes entreprises industrielles d'Etat tiennent à garder leur position de monopole sur le marché libre. Ils développent alors la stratégie suivante: le directeur d'une entreprise industrielle d'Etat (*témoignage d'un patron de petite entreprise à Smolensk) transforme "son" entreprise en une société fermée par actions¹³ et il garde le contrôle des actions. Parallèlement il entreprend de créer des entreprises-satellites dans le même domaine à la tête desquelles il place des membres de sa famille (frères, femme, enfants, etc.).

Dans d'autres cas on peut découvrir que les proches parents travaillent dans diverses entreprises non étatiques des différentes branches de l'économie sans qu'il existe de relations très étroites entre eux. On peut citer l'interview d'un des patrons:

"L'entreprise de mon père fait pratiquement la même chose que la mienne, mais lui, il a beaucoup plus de soutien de la part de

l'industrie militaire. Cependant moi, je suis mieux informé sur les affaires et j'ai plus d'expérience car j'ai lancé mon affaire un an plus tôt que lui. Il reste que nous ne discutons presque jamais de nos affaires. Mes conseils ne sont pas nécessaires et bien au contraire ils sont négligés... Nul n'est prophète en son pays... Mais moi, je ne m'impose pas."

(Homme, 30 ans, patron d'entreprise de production d'équipement à laser)

Pour le moment il est difficile de parler avec certitude de la participation des femmes aux entreprises de leurs maris, mais il apparaît immédiatement que lorsque commence le commerce "sérieux" les femmes ne sont plus là. Les hommes représentent la majorité écrasante des patrons des petites et moyennes entreprises et 100% des patrons des grandes entreprises (parmi les 52 entrepreneurs que nous avons interrogés il y a 5 femmes, propriétaires de toutes petites entreprises). D'une façon générale, les femmes-entrepreneurs occupent dans l'espace de l'économie non étatique des positions dominées, notamment dans le domaine des services médicaux, de la cosmétique, de la couture, du show-business. Ajoutons que même dans ces domaines elles ne constituent pas la majorité des patrons.

A l'appui de l'hypothèse relative à l' "effet d'épidémie familiale", il faut noter que les femmes entreprennent généralement de créer leur propre affaire sous l'influence de leur époux et postérieurement à eux.

"Lorsque mon mari a lancé son affaire en 1988, il s'est heurté tout de suite au manque de secrétaire qualifiée. Ses difficultés m'ont fait penser qu'il nous manquait à Moscou un système de formation de cadres qualifiés pour ce travail dans les entreprises non étatiques. En 1989 je me suis décidée à ouvrir une Ecole de formation des secrétaires. Je recrute mes étudiantes parmi les femmes diplômées, ayant une connaissance bonne ou moyenne des langues étrangères".

L'espace des styles de vie

Les styles de vie des patrons sont très diversifiés et leurs oppositions deviennent de plus en plus marquées, bien que le groupe des patrons en soit encore à une étape de sa formation telle qu'il est difficile de le considérer comme un groupe social au sens strict. Il faut souligner que ce sont les nouveaux propriétaires qui cherchent à se distinguer des autres catégories sociales, moins fortunées qu'eux, par des signes visibles de l'extérieur et bien ciblés comme voiture, maison, vêtement, etc. Cette recherche de la distinction est déjà assez poussée, le goût du luxe étant peut-être la première nouveauté qui s'enracine dans l'esprit des entrepreneurs russes. Compte tenu de la crise économique et du désarroi qui sont présents en Russie aujourd'hui, l'ensemble des styles de vie adoptés par les nouveaux entrepreneurs est digne d'être examiné même si nos données ne sont pas encore assez systématiques.

Moscou aujourd'hui représente (bien évidemment après les grandes capitales occidentales) un réservoir de produits de luxe où s'approvisionnent les "nouveaux Russes". De nombreux grands magasins comme le GUM, le CUM, le Passage, mais aussi de petits magasins se sont transformés en galeries abritant des grandes marques reconnues en Europe: telles Cartier, Christian Dior, Ester Lauder, Lancôme, Yves Rochas, Valentino, Pierre Cardin, Galeries Lafayette. Ces galeries sont situées dans une portion de la rue Tverskaya, au centre de Moscou. Le commerce de luxe permet, dans la période actuelle (et ce n'est pas uniquement le cas de la Russie, on l'a observé aussi dans les pays occidentaux ruinés après la guerre), un très grand et très rapide bénéfice¹⁴.

Il faut mentionner encore les nombreux salons de voitures aux marques prestigieuses (BMW, Mercedes, Cadillac, Porsche, Lincoln Continental, Rolls Royce, etc.), sans compter les marques japonaises et françaises qui ont beaucoup moins de prestige. Si, en 1990, la voiture étrangère était une rareté à Moscou, déjà à la fin de 1992, 36 748 voitures

Les deuxièmes sont des clubs dont la fonction principale est l'organisation de communications informelles entre les entrepreneurs et des représentants du pouvoir étatique (hommes politiques, membres du gouvernement) pour l'élaboration d'une stratégie commune, la conciliation des intérêts et l'exercice de pressions sur le Parlement et les instances gouvernementales. Ces clubs sont fermés, le nombre de leurs membres (grands entrepreneurs et parfois hommes politiques et journalistes des journaux influents) est limité et les relations entre leurs membres sont plutôt personnalisées. Les clubs de ce type ont leurs statuts et des règles de comportement pour leurs membres. Il est intéressant de citer quelques-uns de ces clubs et surtout les noms de leurs présidents: on retiendra le Club de commerce de Moscou: président - Nicolai Rijkov (ex-premier ministre sous Gorbatchev); le Club des directeurs: président - Abel Aganbegian (académicien, économiste; ex-ministre du commerce extérieur sous Gorbatchev); le VIP-club: président - Ivan Kivelidi ("Vnecheconomcooperatcia", Société économique du commerce extérieur) le PROFI-club: président Victor Macarov (patron d'une grande société de l'industrie chimique).

Le troisième type de clubs est constitué par les clubs qui ont été créés sur la base des clubs politiques, mais qui ont évolué dans la direction des business-clubs. Au début ces clubs rassemblaient des hommes politiques et des militants, puis ils ont recruté de grands entrepreneurs. Ces clubs ont pour objectif l'élaboration et la réalisation de projets politiques dans la gestion macro-économique. La sélection des entrepreneurs qui ont adhéré à ces clubs ne s'est pas faite selon des principes précis, mais plutôt grâce au rôle de "porte-monnaie" qu'ils jouent pour ces clubs en les dotant des subventions dont ils ont besoin. Parmi cette catégorie de clubs, il faut mentionner d'abord le Club "Realisty" ("Les réalistes") présidé par Youri Petrov, qui est également le président de la Corporation d'investissement de l'Etat et ensuite le Réforme-club "Vsaimodeistvie" ("Interaction") dont le président est Egor Gaïdar (ex- premier ministre sous Eltsin).

Le public des deux derniers types de clubs, se compose de patrons qui possèdent une certaine autorité dans le milieu des entreprises en même temps que des relations avec les structures du pouvoir et qui sont riches, aussi bien en capital économique qu'en capital politique ou bureaucratique, qu'ils maintiennent et consolident grâce à leur appartenance au club. Ces clubs forment des structures très proches de l'Etat, qui peuvent même parfois faire partie de lui.

Nous ne disposons pas pour le moment des informations suffisantes pour une analyse détaillée des business-clubs (bien que cette analyse nous semble importante pour l'étude de la constitution du patronat en Russie), mais il n'est pas sans intérêt de présenter les premières observations que nous avons pu faire concernant leur fonctionnement. On a pu observer ainsi que les entrepreneurs qui fréquentent ces clubs doivent se conformer à certaines règles non écrites de conduite comme, par exemple, le fait de porter des costumes signés de grands couturiers européens ou de se présenter en compagnie d'une femme (une maîtresse "officielle"). Quant aux clubs du premier type, ils ont leur propre réseau de femmes qui travaillent pour ces clubs et qui sont en général des prostituées. Dans leur ensemble, les grands entrepreneurs russes portent des costumes et des cravates semblables à ceux que portent les hommes d'affaires européens qui leur servent de modèles (avec évidemment quelques variantes spécifiques): la règle, pour les hommes d'affaires russes, est de porter les articles les plus coûteux, qu'il s'agisse des costumes, des chemises, des cravates, des chaussures, etc., leur prix élevé étant, pour eux, un critère essentiel d'appréciation. Mais il existe toutefois certains signes privilégiés de la distinction, tels la cravate "Hermès" (marque peu répandue et la plus chère) que se doivent de porter les grands financiers ou les grands banquiers tandis que les gros commerçants choisiront de porter plutôt une cravate "Christian Dior" ou "Yves Saint Laurent". Si les nouveaux entrepreneurs qui occupent des positions assez stables sur le marché russe et qui ont des relations à l'étranger copient les modèles de leurs partenaires occidentaux, il existe pour les "nouveaux venus" tout un

"système de formation du bon goût" qui s' est constitué à travers les revues spécialisées pour businessmen: "*Commerçant*", "*Domovoi*", "*Delovie ludi*", "*Delovoï mir/Business World*", "*Inostranetc*", etc., qui expliquent comment il faut s'habiller, comment il faut aménager son intérieur, quelles sont les voitures les plus prestigieuses, comment on doit se comporter à l'étranger, etc.

Pour ce qui est des membres de l'ancienne nomenklatura reconvertie en businessmen, ils préfèrent conserver les règles de comportement et un mode de vie "à l'ancienne" ; ils possèdent, en effet, déjà leurs habitudes : leurs restaurants "fermés" à l'abri des regards curieux, leurs tailleurs, leurs maisons de repos, etc. Cette façon particulière de se conduire est bien connue de leurs partenaires occidentaux¹⁷ qui sont sensibles à leur rigidité, à leur tendance à la morosité et à la fierté excessive qui caractérise ce type de "nouveaux" patrons.

* * *

On a pu tirer de nos observations la conclusion que l'aptitude à bien se présenter (bureau, personnel, tenue, etc.) correspond étroitement à une expérience bureaucratique, mais elle est aussi un indice de la stratégie économique du patron, orientée soit vers la recherche d'une position dominante dans l'espace socio-économique, soit vers l'accumulation personnelle de richesses liée le plus souvent à l'occupation d'une position dominée. On peut ainsi constater qu'il existe une certaine homologie entre les positions sociales autrefois occupées dans le champ de l'économie étatique et les positions actuelles dans le champ de l'économie privée : à une position dominante dans le passé est associée la tendance à avoir une grande entreprise, à afficher publiquement ses activités, à participer à des expositions, à faire de larges publicités pour les produits; la majorité de ces patrons tendent à insérer leur activité dans les structures officielles. A l'inverse, à la

position plutôt dominée dans le passé liée à l'absence de participation aux structures économiques étatiques et au défaut d'expérience sont associées une disposition à s'orienter vers de petites entreprises, une faible présence ou un renoncement à la publicité; une moindre participation aux associations, une politique de dissimulation, etc.

L'examen des positions dans le champ de l'économie non étatique révèle que c'est seulement au niveau des positions dominantes que s'observe un véritable processus de formation d'un corps d'entrepreneurs - le patronat: seuls les patrons situés dans le quadrant I constituent un groupe qu'on peut au vu de l'ensemble des caractéristiques fondamentales de ses membres appeler un "corps". Ces patrons se sont d'ailleurs organisés en clubs, associations, etc. grâce auxquels ils se reconnaissent mutuellement, adoptent des stratégies communes, ont des pratiques culturelles voisines ; échangent des informations utiles, etc. (Tel est le cas de VIP - club des plus hautes personnalités du monde des affaires, présidé par un grand entrepreneur, I.Kiwelidi. VIP tient des réunions chaque mois où se discutent les problèmes urgents en présence d'hommes politiques et de fonctionnaires d'Etat intéressés qui y sont invités, une grande partie des négociations et des contrats passe entre les membres du club se faisant au cours de ces réunions).

Les patrons occupant les positions dominantes associent fréquemment l'activité d'entrepreneur privé à l'activité politique/publique; en utilisant au profit de la première activité toutes les possibilités que leur offre la seconde; ils occupent des postes dans les deux secteurs de l'économie en tentant d'ajouter les profits de l'un à ceux de l'autre. De cette façon, ils trouvent le moyen d'accroître encore leurs avantages par la privatisation des biens qui sont la propriété de l'Etat et surtout de la municipalité ou de la région. En outre, il faut signaler que les patrons (comme K.Borovoï) dont l'entreprise commence à voir leurs bénéfices diminuer, peuvent se tourner inversement vers l'activité politique ou publique. Les stratégies de ces patrons orientées vers l'Etat sont redoublées par des stratégies de reproduction scolaire: ils envoient souvent leurs enfants faire des études dans les écoles

prestigieuses d'Etat ou, grâce à des programme d'échanges avec les pays occidentaux, dans les écoles supérieures d'Europe ou des Etats Unis.

La position dominée des petites et moyennes entreprises est aggravée par l'absence de capital bureaucratique car, dans la majorité des cas, leurs propriétaires sont isolés et ne se regroupent pas à des fins d'échanges ou d'entraide. Ils n'ont pas les moyens d'obtenir les profits et les franchises offerts par les différents programmes gouvernementaux ou municipaux et n'ont même pas accès aux informations sur de telles possibilités - par exemple, l'exemption d'impôt pour les entrepreneurs produisant dans le domaine des technologies médicales ou encore l'attribution de crédits sans intérêt pour le développement des exploitations agricoles fermières.

Les entrepreneurs russes ne constituent pas encore un groupe social véritablement homogène, doté d'intérêts communs et de pratiques similaires, ayant ses organismes représentatifs, ses programmes, ses élus et ses porte-parole pouvant agir en son nom (comme, par exemple, le Conseil national du patronat français); ils restent encore assez dispersés, leur regroupement ne faisant que commencer. La constitution des entrepreneurs en tant que corps social spécifique ne s'observe actuellement qu'à l'état de tendances: à travers l'existence de plusieurs partis politiques d'entrepreneurs (qui sont encore très peu nombreux), de clubs (qui réunissent un cercle très restreint de grands entrepreneurs, quand il ne s'agit pas de nightclub), d'associations (dans les rares cas où ces associations ne poursuivent pas uniquement des buts commerciaux). Cependant, il faut souligner que toutes ces structures n'ont pas encore pris leur forme définitive, mais qu'elles sont, en cours de constitution.

Notes

¹ Cette recherche a pour objet principal l'ensemble des entrepreneurs russes qui sont propriétaires copropriétaires des entreprises constituant le secteur de l'économie privée. Pour désigner ce groupe, nous préférons utiliser dans cette recherche le terme d' "entrepreneurs" qui correspond mieux aux pratiques économique et linguistique existant en Russie que le terme de patron et qui est couramment employé. Le terme de "patron", bien qu'il soit parfois associé au comportement économique typique des nouveaux propriétaires au sens weberien, n'est pas répandu en Russie et se réfère plutôt à la période d'avant la révolution ou de la NEP (nouvelle politique économique). Le mot russe "entrepreneur" signifie en Russie la "personne qui dirige une entreprise pour son compte", définition équivalente à celle de "patron". Ayant adopté cette dernière définition de l'entrepreneur, nous avons parfois utilisé dans notre recherche les deux termes - entrepreneur et patron - comme des synonymes.

² Ce sujet est développé dans un article des sociologues russes: Klimova S., Dunacvsky L., *Novie predprinimateli i staraya cultura* (Les nouveaux entrepreneurs et l'ancienne culture) / *Sociologicheskie issledovaniya* (Recherches sociologiques), 1993, n°5, p.64-69. Les auteurs analysent la culture de type patriarcal et la culture de type occidental dans les rapports des patrons des entreprises privées avec leurs employés.

³ Etant donné les changements permanents du volume et des caractéristiques de ce nouveau groupe, nous n'avons pas pu construire, pour cette recherche, un échantillon représentatif des entrepreneurs, mais, tout en essayant de suivre les différentes étapes de sa constitution, nous avons choisi d'étudier les cas qui nous ont semblé les plus représentatifs des différents types de nouveaux agents économiques. La recherche a été réalisée principalement à partir de l'étude des trajectoires sociales, recueillies par interviews approfondies. Un total de 52 interviews ont été réalisées auprès de dirigeants d'entreprises privées travaillant dans la production industrielle ou "intellectuelle", dans le commerce ou dans les services, occupant les positions les plus diverses dans le champ économique: depuis des positions assez élevées (notamment des vice-présidents de grandes banques et interviews et les articles publiés dans la presse (45 interviews). Ces derniers étant réalisés par des journalistes et pour des raisons très différentes des nôtres, ont un caractère souvent incomplet, si bien que nous n'avons pu les retenir que pour des analyses complémentaires. Cet échantillon ne couvre évidemment pas tous les secteurs de l'économie russe,

mais il touche les secteurs qui se situent au centre des transformations et des restructurations du système de rapports économiques postsoviétiques.

Les 52 entretiens sont répartis entre ces catégories de la façon suivante:

1. Associations d'entrepreneurs - 4
2. Banques commerciales (sous forme de S.A.) - 5
3. Directeurs d'entreprises privatisées (usines et fabriques):
 - Industrie légère (textile, mercerie) - 4
 - Technologie industrielle - 2
4. NTTM (entreprises fondées sur la base de centres de créations technique de la jeunesse), petites entreprises dans le domaine de la haute technologie - 8
5. Petites entreprises (S.A.R.L., S.A., à titre personnel)
 - Service et commerce - 16
 - Haute technologie - 7
6. Boutiques (kiosques) - 6

⁴ Cf. Pierre Bourdieu et Monique de Saint Martin, *Le Patronat / Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. n°20/21, 1978, p.14.

⁵ "Tchelnok" (rus.) dans le sens littéral "navette" (fr.) - les gens qui voyagent dans les pays étrangers uniquement dans le but d'acheter des marchandises (en quantité très limitée et au prix le plus bas possible) pour les revendre après dans leur pays (des "shop-tours"). C'est une activité individuelle qui n'est pas enregistrée et qui est difficile à contrôler.

⁶ Les catégories de paysans, médecin, techniciens et professeur de l'enseignement secondaire n'existent pas dans notre échantillon.

⁷ A titre de comparaison on peut indiquer les chiffres concernant les 12 patrons des grandes entreprises: 3 ont été des cadres dirigeants dans des banques d'Etat; 6 - anciens dirigeants d'entreprises; 1 - secrétaire du Comité central du Komsomol; 2 - anciens cadres ministériels.

⁸ Cf. Nelson., Babaeva L., Babaev R. *Perspektivi predprinimatel'stva v Rossii* (Les perspectives de l'activité d'entrepreneur en Russie) / *Sociologitcheskie issledovania* (Recherches sociologiques), 1993, n°1, *ibid.* Fetisov E., Yakovlev I., *O socialnich aspectach predprinimatel'stva* (Sur les aspects sociaux d'activité d'entrepreneurs); Crichtanovskaya O., *Elita rossiyskogo biznesa* (L'élite du monde des affaires russe) / *Kouranty*, 12 mai 1994; Klimova S., Dunaevsky L., *Novie predprinimateli i staraya cultura* (Les nouveaux entrepreneurs et l'ancienne culture) / *Sociologitcheskie issledovania* (Recherches sociologiques), 1993, n°5.

⁹ Grichtchenko J., Novikova L., Lapcha I., *Socialniy portret predprinimatela: Minsk, vesna 1992* (Le portrait sociologique d'un entrepreneur: Minsk, printemps 1992) / *Sociologicheskie issledovania* (Recherches sociologiques), 1992, n°9, pp.53-61.

¹⁰ Trois boutiquiers sont actuellement étudiants dans des Ecoles supérieures.

¹¹ Le système de notes à l'école primaire et secondaire est à cinq notes ("1" - la plus basse et "5" - la plus haute).

¹² L'équivalent du CM1-CM2 dans le système français.

¹³ Une société fermée par actions est une entreprise dont le nombre d'actionnaires est limité en permanence par l'indiction qui frappe les détenteur d'action, de vendre ouvertement (par exemple à la bourse) leurs actions à des personnes extérieures à la société. Ce qui permet de limiter le nombre d'actionnaires.

¹⁴ Paradoxalement le meme phénomène s'observe aussi pour le marché du livre où les livres les plus chers (surtout les beaux livres et les dictionnaires) se vendent très vite ("comme des petits pains").

¹⁵ *Kouranty*, n°159, 24 aout 1993.

¹⁶ Lepekhin V. Les principaux business-clubs de Russie, *Vlast'* ("Pouvoir"), n°5, 1994.

¹⁷ Nous avons obtenu cette information par un entretien avec un représentant d'une grande banque occidentale dont la filiale est située à Moscou.

Turning Money into Culture: „Distinction“ among Eastern Europe’s Nouveaux Riches

Steven Sampson

“There are two kinds of people in our country: the ones who drive Mercedes and the ones who sell bananas.”

Albanian medical student, summer 1994.

What is privatization all about?

When “privatization” is discussed in terms of Eastern Europe, the immediate connotation is that control over certain public or anonymous goods devolves down into individual hands. Privatization is considered a good thing. The World Bank, East European politicians, and foreign consultants from the EU all advocate it. Privatization in Eastern Europe is not simply a transition to a market economy. It is also a transition to a consumer society. It is a society where consumption, taste, and the culture of goods all require the construction of new meanings, of new principles of organization. The consumer society redefines “who I am” and “who I am not”. Amidst all the talk about Eastern Europe’s ethnic identity problems, we seem to forget about all the other identities being forged. Talk about businessmen versus mafiosi, about “talent” versus “connections”, about being “cultivated” versus the “vulgar” is talk about identity as well.

These *nouveaux riches* display their status in various public fora. They are the topic of conversation among those who are jealous or condescending. They are claimed to be both the coming driving force of the new societies, and the parasitic group fostering inequality and inhumane behavior. They are the upwardly mobile new middle class, and they are the mafia.

They are rich, and they have bad taste. Derided as new rich without refinement, unable to turn their money into culture, the *nouveaux riches* are a kind of public topic to be consumed in the new Eastern Europe. In this sense, the *nouveaux riches* in East may be considered a kind of case of “Distinction Orientale” to use Bourdieu’s work. However, there is a problem for the East European *nouveaux riches*: it is a problem of establishing models for consumptions. In a society where some of those driving Mercedes themselves recently sold bananas, who gives them cultural models?

It is this insecurity of cultural behavior, centered on an insecurity in consumption, which will be the focus of this paper. How does this class in formation resolve problems of insecurity? How do people turn their money into culture? The data will derive principally from Romania, with additional examples from Hungary. Subsequent studies are planned in ex-DDR and Poland.

The problem of the nouveaux riches

The dilemma of *nouveaux riches* is hardly new. It is a displacement between economic resources and social status. Here again, it reflects an old problem that economic, social and cultural hegemony ought to overlap. The problem is that it often does not: those with culture or sacred knowledge may not be the materially wealthy; those with military/political power may not have the cultural refinement, etc.

Bourdieu has tried to resolve this problem by his detailed analysis of the kinds of capital among French elites. It is not simply a case that many people with high cultural refinement do not necessarily possess the material resources, and vice versa. The problem is also one of determining which groupe defines an elite. The power to make distinctions is the core of elite power, and this is inherently a function of cultural capital rather than pure money capital.

The “transition” in Eastern Europe is a transition in the kinds of capital which predominate, and in the way by which one kind of capital is converted or not converted into another. The *nouveaux riches* are both actors and victims in this process of “capital conversion”.

The problem for the *nouveaux riches* is to resolve the incongruity between newly acquired material resources and lack of cultural hegemony. The problem takes the form of the strategies pursued by the *nouveaux riches* to displace existing ruling classes. Historically, some of these class struggles have seen the old norms discarded and replaced: the aristocracy is killed and their cultural forms stigmatized or outlawed; this is certainly what happened in the USSR in 1917 and in most of Eastern Europe, China, and Cuba after 1945 (1959).

However, other possibilities could arise, the new class might try to appropriate the forms of the old elite. When such attempts at redefining cultural canons of taste do not succeed, we get stories of kitsch, vulgarity and bad taste. The annals of social scientists, stories of the aristocracy and Old Rich, and a considerable body of American novels, films and television are filled with tales of upwardly mobile strivers who somehow do not know to achieve such refinement. Acquiring cultural capital is often more difficult, and certainly more time consuming, than acquiring money capital. It takes a cultural investment, and one or more generations.

The trajectory from vulgar to refined may be predictable when there is a cultured old rich to emulate, as is the case in Western Europe or the United States. But what happens when this old rich is lacking or

invisible, as was the case in Eastern Europe? Where does the new wealthy, consumption class look out to find their models for cultural behavior? How are material resources converted into cultural capital (McCracken 1988, Douglas and Isherwood, 1978; Appadurai, 1986, Miller 1987).

And more important, to be taken up later, why should this happen? Why are the *nouveaux riches* not content to remain vulgar? Why, as in Budapest, do the *nouveaux riches* spend all this time going to the Opera? Why start up literary salons and invite poets to hold court in your home? Why, as in Romania, establish clubs where poets and actresses can come? What is this magic dust which people of culture have and which those with new money want?

The problem for the *nouveaux riches* is resolving this discontinuity between material, social, political and cultural status. The dilemma is sought resolved not by dismissing or ignoring the cultural dimensions, nor by any sort of cultural revolution, but in using all one's material resources to acquire the cultural patterns of the class being displaced. One hires tutors. One learns how to dress correctly. Clubs are set up. Wives go to aerobics. Home decorators, dog breeding, and trips to Asia become important. Private schools, private clubs, and etiquette books. One buys art. The *nouveaux riches*, like all insecure new classes, are culturally conservative.

Resolving this insecurity, turning money into culture, can only be accomplished by a public demonstration of mastery over cultural things and activities. Mastery here can be considered to comprise the individual's ability to manipulate culturally valued symbols in the culturally correct way. The opposite of mastery here is vulgarity. The vulgar rich may possess something or act out an activity, but manipulate it imperfectly, thus revealing their lack of cultural competence.

The proper consumption of things and their public demonstration, creating a lifestyle, thus becomes the key to any *nouveaux riches* cultural campaign. Following McCracken, this can be accomplished by catching

hold of culturally constituted meanings as imparted by those with cultural capital, and demonstrating mastery over them. The hunt for things with meaning takes place in the social world of the *nouveaux riches*, in their interaction with the culturally sophisticated, in their imparting of value to specific material goods. At the individual level this search for meaning is reflected in individual consumer behavior.

So far I have described a general problem for the *nouveaux riches*. It is a problem of appropriating and manipulating those goods and activities associated with taste. This pulls the *nouveaux riches* up. To pull them over the top would entail a situation where the *nouveaux riches* themselves determine these judgements. As yet this has not yet happened.

Bourdieu takes the problem of the “judgement of taste” as unproblematic. But it is here, in the field of judgement, that Eastern Europe seems to differ. In a society where conspicuous consumption was suspect and old cultured aristocracy invisible, if not liquidated, who determines judgement. How do we judge taste when there is no authority of judgement?

We might see the real class struggle in Eastern Europe not as one between groups fighting over hegemony, but as a struggle to obtain the position of defining taste. At the moment, judging from the foreign etiquette books and cult of foreign TV, the arbiters of taste come from outside, from the West. And here is the stuff of globalization and distorted meaning transfer. When meanings and cultural phenomena cross borders they get distorted. Here appear some of the differences between Eastern Europeans and the *nouveaux riches* experiences generally. Let me try to summarize them.

Eastern Europe and the transition to consumerism

The transition to capitalism in Eastern Europe is not synonymous with the emergence of an elite out of a faceless mass. There was an elite, and it was called, appropriately “them”. “They” were the nomenclature, those who held power, influence and could pass it on to their children by virtue of their position in the state and party apparatus.

The transition to privatization has not eliminated the “us”/“them” distinction. Rather it reformulates the principles behind these categories. “They” have now become those with money and privilege who flout it openly. The use of the term “mafia” to denote virtually any network of which one is not a member has been extended to cover this “them”. The state functionaries who were once a privileged caste have now acquired an “us” feeling as they see their salaries drop and their chances to draw on informal resources disappear: the market takes the place of bureaucratic corruption.

“Them” are endowed with several traits. Generally their success is seen as being due to hidden advantages, connections, corruption, ruthlessness, anything but talent.

Cultural capital in Eastern Europe

While some of the early socialist leaders were urban intellectuals (culture with or without money), the bureaucratic ruling class was often recruited from peasants and workers lacking both culture and money. It was a case of political capital replacing those with money or cultural capital. This new elite came to power in an Eastern Europe which was bereft of cultural models. “They wore shirts with open collars”, as Konrad and Szelenyi wrote in 1974.

Communist elites could convert material resources into cultural capital: they could pay for private tutoring from the old elite, invite

prominent cultural personalities in their circles, get their children into good schools or travel abroad. Unlike money capital, cultural capital could be retained by their children after their parents lost positions in the apparatus.

In pre-1989 Eastern Europe, there was certainly an obsession with obtaining and consuming scarce resources. But these were not consumer societies as one might think. A truly consumer society has to involve open display and demonstration of taste. A mass consumer society involves diffusion of information about standards of taste, about changes in these standards, about who judges what as “in” or “out”. One needs arbiters of good taste and centers of consumer choice.

The state controlled economies discouraged and prevented this kind of consumerism. Consumption had low priority and was considered ideologically dangerous. The consumption patterns of the upper classes were well hidden from the rest of society. Consumption differences were also limited in a society where everyone had the same car, where the number of restaurants was few and roughly the same fare, where the official style was conservative and where too much individuality was not politically correct or prudent from a career point of view. It was no accident that state functionaries, the faceless apparatchiks, even looked the same right down to their being clean shaven, same hair style, and dark suits. Without trend setters there could be no trends, and without trends, no markers of style; there was neither good taste nor vulgarity, but simply mediocrity.

The elites lived well of course, certainly better than the general population. But their tastes were rather mediocre or kitsch. A visit to Honeckers or Ceausescu’s villas after the revolutions show not extravagance as much as a kind of dull kitsch style.

The 1989 revolutions

The principle effect of the 1989 revolutions was to allow Western cultural goods to enter these societies virtually unhindered, and to allow East Europeans to acquire these goods in the West via travel. The real revolution, as so many East Europeans discovered, was a revolution in consumerism. Even East Germans, who each night had watched West German TV, remained dumbfounded as they prowled Berlin looking at the consumer society in person (Bornemann 1990).

The political opening of Eastern Europe affected people's economic and personal horizons. Scarcities of staples disappeared and were replaced by high prices. There arose the problem of consumer choice: to buy the locally produced TV or the Sony. A new "them" arose, the "them" who had acquired money. Envy of those with money was nearly universal. After all, some people don't want power, but everyone wants money. That those with money could now display their wealth made the situation that much sharper. Displays of wealth tied up with ethnic differences were especially provocative, as shown by the derision and attacks on Gypsies and Hungarians in Romania, Georgians in Russia and Wessies in Eastern Germany.

A new cult of entrepreneurship arose. Entrepreneurial intentions were viewed as positive by only 25% of the Hungarian population in 1988, and today by almost half. (Lengyel and Toth, 1993, Lengyel, Offe and Tholen, 1992). Words like spekulant and biznitza are now replaced by the more positively connotated businessman or the negative mafiosi.

The importance of the 1989 revolutions is they laid the groundwork for consumerism as a means of expressing class affiliation and identity. The 1989 revolutions are the first to bring with them consumerism and lifestyle. The results have been immediate and massive, much more massive than the large scale institutional problems

of democracy and privatization. Consumerism takes place not at a structural level but an individual level.

Who are 'nouveaux riches'?

Used here, several types of *nouveaux riches* have arisen in Eastern Europe according to their social “roots”. Such a categorization is deceptive, however, because it implies that the individuals enter only one category and remain there. In real life, we can find the same individuals moving in and out of these categories in the course of a day, week or month. They can be both legal and illegal speculator, struggling shopkeeper or well off businessmen. For analytical purposes, however, we can distinguish the following:

1. Former party and state officials who use social relations to establish themselves as private businessmen or managers of newly privatized state firms. Such individuals are called “parachutists” by Stark (1990) because they jump from the political to the economic sphere. The folklore regarding *nouveaux riches* is that all the old elite have become rich businessmen. Like all stereotypes, the parachutists metaphor contains an element of truth: conversion of political position into money has certainly taken place at different rates in Eastern Europe.

2. Former players in the second economy whose activities (legal, semiillegal, illegal) are now permitted or at least tolerated (Sampson 1987,1988). Those who changed money on the black market or did some petty smuggling are now bankers and importer-exporters. Like so-much second economy activities, and in an atmosphere of lacking law enforcement legal regulations, much private business operates in a grey zone of legality. In other words, some of the *nouveaux riches* from this category are criminals.

3. Former state employees, many with higher technical or professional training and “culture”, who leave state employment to start their own small firms. These may be free lance architects, computer consultants, or opening small restaurants or antique shops in the home of their parents. These classic entrepreneurs may parlay their social networks or cultural capital into a business venture. And they can become rich.

4. Former wage workers who lose their jobs and are forced to open small shops, kiosks, video rentals or food shops in order to survive. Here we may speak not so much of entrepreneurship as much as desperation. The situations resembles that of “ethnic business” in Western Europe (Sampson 1990) in which small household service shops compete with each other in a cutthroat, labor intensive market. The “kiosk culture” of any major East European city is typical of this situation for former wage earners whose enterprises have closed. Some of these individuals who start shops or sell their services as mechanics, or cafe owners, etc. may earn a lot of money at the upswing of such a conjuncture. However, recent observations suggest that in a later phase many will fail due to a saturation on the market and failure to keep apace with changing tastes.

5. “Traditional” liberal professionals or craftsmen who in various East European countries (ex-DDR, Poland, Hungary) were allowed to practice their trades. Privatization, and the ability to offer more services to *nouveaux riches*, has made these individuals especially successful.

The five categories above have little in common as to cultural background or political position. What joins them is that they are now able and willing to demonstrate good taste, but that is for some groups the canons of taste are lacking. Good taste must be recognized. It demands authorities and it requires confirmation. Taste is not an individual property but a social one. Good taste is the power to manipulate key culture principles authoritatively. And to be imitated.

Moreover, it is clear that some members of the above categories are better able to demonstrate good taste than others. Those with political capital from the old regime may have been able to acquire some cultural capital and in this sense feel a sense of identity with those in group 3. Those in group 3, however, may feel hostile toward the newcomers, deriding them for their lack of talent. Mistakes in utilizing cultural symbols may be more common for groups 1, 2 and 4 than others.

Finally, the fluid situation in Eastern Europe often forces these categories together in an unholy alliance. Uncertain legal regulations or unenforceable laws forces different categories to mix, or compels a member of one group to take the characteristics of another group. Highly educated specialists with old cultural capital suddenly have to do business with local mafiosi who have cornered the real estate market or who can provide a way through the customs bureaucracy. Those with culture are forced to cooperate with those who have money.

In sum, the transition in Eastern Europe is about “capitalism” and about the emergence of new classes. The former nomenclature are tenaciously trying to hold onto their privileges in the state or to privatize state property via subterfuge. The new poor are certainly jealous of the new rich.

But this class struggle is not the only kind of struggle going on. There is a struggle between groups to convert their capital into something else: parachutists are trying to convert political into money capital; aspiring *nouveaux riches* are trying to convert (or augment) their money into cultural capital; the professional free-lance entrepreneurs are trying to convert their cultural capital into money capital, and so on. Missing in this circle of capital conversions is the conversion of money capital into political capital. As yet, the particular conversion has not taken place, except in the sphere of illegal economic activity: the mafiosi, who have made money and try to politically dominate the illegal market are an example of the conversion of money into political domination via violence.

The *nouveaux riches*' aversion to politics may be understood simply in terms of trade off between political and economic spheres. Parachutists are in effect abandoning a sinking ship. One newly wealthy construction boss in Albania, who also has to make money by exploiting the embargo against ex-Yugoslavia, expressed it more succinctly when I asked him about politics. He waved a wad of 100 dollar bills in my face and said, "This is my party. The money party."

The struggle between different forms of capital and the efforts to convert one form into another, or augment the capital one has certainly varies from one country to another. The different communist regimes also influenced the speed and the character of the transition and the kinds of *nouveaux riches* groups which have emerged. It is instructive here to compare Hungary and Romania. Hungary is the home of refined central European taste and vulgar exhibitionism. Romania is a more frontier society in which the *nouveaux riches* find it harder to locate alternative cultural models and more difficult to replicate them. Romania is the home of vulgar kitsch. It is a place where men can walk around thinking they are J.R. and women may have their only model of refinement from Sue Ellen. There are reasons why.

Romania versus Hungary

Romania under Ceausescu was one of the most economically and politically rigid of the Est European states. Its private sector was the smallest in Eastern Europe and its living standards so low that even the most privileged functionaries lived modestly by Western standards. Excepting the Ceausescu family, wealthy Romanians were hidden from public view, their wealth consisting of not having to be forced to stand in line for food. Romania, to 1989 was a nasty place for just about everybody, which can explain why Ceausescu was killed by people in his very own apparatus.

Hungary, in contrast, had begun to evolve a private sector in the early 1970's, a sector which was legal, semi-legal and illegal (second economy research was itself a largely Hungarian enterprise conducted at Karl Marx university, which, like similar institutions in Eastern Europe, has had little trouble retooling its staff to teach business and management). Privatization in Hungary had begun in 1968, whereas in Romania it first began in 1991. Hungary's domestic political regime, led by the slogan "He who is not against us is with us" encouraged the channeling of any political discontent into privatized intellectual activity or private economic activity. Hungary was the country of salons, cafes, small entrepreneurs and private restaurants. If someone couldn't get rich, it was thought, it was largely their own fault for not exploiting networks (Kenedi 1982). Hungary thus saw the emergence of a limited *nouveaux riches* class early on, largely from traditional liberal professionals and craftsmen, whereas Romania did not.

The two countries also contrasted in the presence of culturally refined models to be followed. Hungary had never totally eliminated its old rich or cultured aristocracy. Models of refined behavior,-Hungarian, Central European, bourgeois, cosmopolitan, urbane-continued in the socialist period and were revived through the 1970's and 1980's as a form of resistance to the proletarian cultural chauvinism of the Kadar regime. Being cultured in Hungary was to be intellectual, to travel (they had the chance), to appreciate high and avant garde culture, to learn English, to invest in the cultural refinement of one's children via private tutoring, getting the right friends, and even in the right kind of young people's salon. This overshadowed the fact that the political elite had its own restricted neighborhood in the hills of Buda.

Romania had also had a small cultured aristocracy before the socialist period. After 1945 the cultured Jewish and German elites left the country, while the indigenous francophone Romanian elite barely survived, and struggled to pass on what cultural capital they had to their children. Widows of impoverished aristocrats would hold private

language classes in their homes. The salon of Madam O. would bring together children to learn French, but also fostered like minded views of the world in a private, elite setting (In what must be a typical sign of Transition envy, a study of the these elite children from the 50's is being carried out by the Museum of the Romanian Peasant.)

The Hungarian aristocracy, old bourgeoisie and urban Jewish elites survived the socialist period in much better shape. They were able to protect, and project their cultural models easier and remained more visible than their Romanian counterparts. The small, powerless Romanian cultured elite, suffering a Mao-like assault from the Ceausescu regime from the early 1970's was largely immobilized and invisible in the dark night which was Romania in the 1980's. The social gap between the Romanian *nouveaux riches* and the old rich was much larger. The desperation of the old rich or culturally refined can now be observed in the many antique shops in Bucharest, in which the material culture of the old elite is now being auctioned off to the highest bidder, inevitably the *nouveaux riches*.

Hungary, then, had a more gradual entry into the world of consumerism, whereas Romania in 1990 suffered a shock. Hungary's indigenous cultural elite and more urbanized society was able to publicly effect the values and culturally refined behavior of the *nouveaux riches* to a much greater extent than Romania. Hungarian *nouveaux riches* were able to become cultured. In Romania it seemed that there were those with money and no culture, and those with culture and no money. Finally, Hungary had prolonged and widespread access to alternative cultural models from the West; these were neither rejected outright in the socialist period, nor grabbed up wholesale in the frantic post-1989 euphoria as occurred in Romania. It is possible that Hungary in the 1970's was as vulgar as Romania in the 1990s and in this sense the Hungarian pattern may be reappearing in Romania today.

Romania's new rich

Romania's economy and society was dominated by brutal repression and economic and social homogenization. A small cultural elite dwelled in Bucharest and in the older cultural capitals of Transylvania-Cluj and Timisoara. The country was poor, repressed and isolated. Privatization was lacking and private display not only impossible, but in the atmosphere of the Ceausescu regime, virtually illegal. Low standards of living and the spartan attitude of the Ceausescu family kept Romania at a consumer standstill. Being rich in Romania meant not having to stand in line for meat, sugar and coffee.

The December 1989 revolution brought an upsurge of small-scale economic activity. Small time wheeling and dealing abounded as Romanians who had operated in the black and grey markets now traveled across the border to buy blue jeans or electronic goods, selling their merchandise in flea markets or street corners. In a legal vacuum many small private enterprises were created, and those who got in on the ground floor got rich. Or at least this is how most Romanians remember it. Businessmen were still considered criminal, speculators, and subsequently, mafiosi. This Stalinist thinking was combined with resurgent ethnic tensions, as so many street traders were Gypsies.

While some *nouveaux riches* were emerging from among the ranks of street traders, some members of the former secret police apparatus (the securitate) were parlaying their foreign currency holdings and foreign contacts into more discrete import-export companies. For most Romanians, the image of the nouveaux riches was that any private entrepreneur who was not a Gypsy smuggler or criminal was simply assumed to be a former securitate. Since holding foreign currency had been a criminal offense, who else could have had such start up capital during the Ceausescu regime. In this sense there began the notion that "all the securitate became rich", and that they all became "mafiotz".

Privatization went slowly in Romania, so that the parachutist ex-secret police firms also evolved slowly. By late 1990, however, there existed plenty of public fora and opportunities for new riches to display their wealth without fear of arrest or prosecution. Romania, Europe's poorest country, became filled with Mercedes and expensive restaurants. (The Mercedes cult has some interesting details. First, it has penetrated every East European country, lately Albania where it is called "Benz". Second, the lack of yearly style changes means that there is very little outward difference between an older cheaper model and the newer luxury one. "He worked three month and brought back a Mercedes" became a staple conversation in Romania, and now Albania. The year or model of the car is unimportant. Romanians in fact brought back so many ancient cars from autoyards of Western Europe that there is now a law preventing the import of cars over 8 years old).

In the fora of privatization, the emergence of many categories of *nouveaux riches* did not so much generate economic competition as it did cultural envy. After all, Gypsy traders, former secret police import-export firms, private computer consultants or kiosk owners don't really compete. They do need each other's services, however, and in this sense create contact. Educated, free-lance entrepreneurs, for example, found it hard to establish small enterprises. They lacked start-up capital, did not have the right connections in the bureaucracy or did not know how to skirt around regulations. Many complained that they simply lacked the necessary ruthlessness. Local kiosk or fast food owners needed help in obtaining supplies. Explaining their problems took on the character of attributing unfair cultural characteristics to their opponents. The new entrepreneurs possessing education complained that they had "qualification" while the others were "criminals" or lacked talent. "If I had their connections I would be rich too", was the refrain.

For their part, the former nomenclaturists never spoke of their social networks, but rather, of their "vision", "desire", "discipline" and "hard work". Former party bosses, communist party officials, secret police officers who were staunch defenders of socialism now mouthed

the Protestant Ethic. They insisted that those who protest “just don’t understand how to work hard.”

In contrast to the free lancers who complained of lazy, untrained employees and parasitic officials, the parachutists talked of being able to “understand” their employees so as to ease the transition. In their offices there was a much more patron-like atmosphere, where the employees were loyal to their boss. In fact such understanding was a big problem for the free lancers as well: an architect starting her own firm took with her some of her colleagues from the state planning office where they worked; they had all been friends. She quickly found herself in conflict with them, unable to maintain cordial relations and to simultaneously pressure them for more performance.

The parachutists did not just invoke a Protestant Ethic in terms of their work. They saw their work as a kind of calling, as a patriotic duty to elevate Romania back up and “show the West what we could do”. This was a continuity with their patriotism during the Ceausescu regime, in which a major businessmen could assert, “I worked for the secret police and I’m not embarrassed about what I did”.

The academically trained consultants and freelancers saw themselves not as patriots but as independent entrepreneurs using their natural talents to realize something. Trying to convert their cultural capital into economic capital and political independence, they criticized everyone for their lack of work ethic, fear or narrowmindedness and “lack of culture.” One might also note a political struggle between the two groups: the academic freelancers were often anglophone and worked for Western companies or aid foundations. The parachutists often did more commercial work with many Arab or Turkish firms. Inasmuch as the parachutists were often cut off from Western contacts they were also xenophobic.

The struggle for hegemony between these two groups of *nouveaux riches* thus revolved around two kinds of discourses: one about “talent”, or about whose right to be rich; the other around culture

or lack of culture. The academic free lancers condemned the parachutist, ex-black marketers and speculators for illegitimately obtained wealth: “they” were preventing “us” from earning a rightful share of the money which accrues to “our” level of talent or training. Listening to these laments, it was as if cultural refinement as such ought to be rewarded with economic resources.

Yet both the culturally refined academics, who criticize others for their ill-gotten wealth, vulgarity and bad taste, operate on an identical premise as their opponents: namely, that economic status and cultural refinement ought to overlap. The value is not only the means to achieve it.

The parachutists, too, were never content with simple money succes. Asked what they would like to do with their money, they talked about converting their money into culture: they wanted to establish a “foundation”, to start an association to restore old buildings, to build a museum or a monument to Romania heros. Several of them are linked to the bustling private universities which now awarded Ph.D. degrees to former officials of the old regime. The Ph.D. is still the sign of cultural capital in Romania. Mrs. Ceausescu, with a fourth grade education coveted her Ph.D. in chemistry, and all three of their children had them as well.

Marking status

How do Romanian *nouveaux riches* attempt to consolidate their status? How do they convert money into culture? One way is to find the proper forums where they can both demonstrate and refine their cultural mastery. One is via private or semi-private restaurants. In Bucharest, Ceausescu’s own grand compound, found on Boulevard Kalinin, is now Club Ilie Nastase, the street renamed Boulevard Mircea Eliade. The club has a pool and social facilities and members of the ruling political party hold meetings there. The club has a restaurant

which prides itself on not serving Romanian food. The restaurant is located near the homes of the old nomenclatura, and these dwellings are now being bought and refurbished by parachutist *nouveaux riches*.

Other restaurants, such as “Select” or “Velvet” speak for themselves as locations where parachutists can meet. The “Vienna” makes a point that its floor show does NOT include nudity, making it exceptional in the Bucharest night scene where nude dancing is not only performed, but where the dancers’ relations with clients have now reached the so-called “contact” stage. Other public forums include concerts and the yearly Crystal Ball, with an entry fee equal to about a month’s salary for a minister.

In the absence of being born cultured, *nouveaux riches* require cultural pedagogues. All the eastern countries have acquired best selling etiquette books, instructing people how to treat foreigners at dinner, how to serve caviar, how to have a cocktail party, and other phenomena heretofore foreign to Romanian life. One of these is simply an eight-page-brochure available at the Bucharest train station which begins, “The transition to a market economy requires new forms of social behavior....” Some of these books and columns are written by returned exiles. In both Hungary and Romania there are celebrity exiles who decide on good taste. Other etiquette books are simply translated from American books.

A problem with restaurants is that anyone, rich Gypsy traders, for example, can enter. Hence, there has been a move to establish private clubs in which the clientele can be more selective: no Gypsies, no petty Turkish or Arab traders. One club was open not only to business people but also to poets, actors, and Western businessmen and diplomats. A club of this sort would seem incongruous in the West. In Romania, however, it represents a forum for both money and cultural capital. We can see artistes and Western diplomats as possessing a kind of magic dust. It is magic because it comes from beyond and in unlimited

quantities. And it is dust because it can settle anywhere. In such a club, cultural capital can rub off.

The magic of Westerners is not just mystical of course. Western foreigners, and things western, have a mystique about them in Eastern Europe. Access to western popular and material culture was so long forbidden. Today it is a common belief that it is only foreign connections which enables anyone to take money. The cult of the foreigner pervades East-West rhetoric at several levels. It occurs in European Community development programs where the West makes demands on the East. It occurs in debates about whether Romania is bowing down to foreigners, selling out to foreigners, “entering Europe”, and in the critique of Western treatment of Romania with phrases like “we are not Burundi” etc. Little wonder, then, that Western foreigners obtain magical status in these clubs. They come from a world which is transmitted to the Romanians via media-Dallas, etc.- but it is a world which they do not know first hand. It is a magic world, and Westerners, along with artistes, have magic dust.

There may come a time when businessmen’s clubs may decide that actors, poets and Western diplomats are unnecessary. Businessmen may decide to convert their economic capital into political capital instead of searching after culture. We may also find the *nouveaux riches* becoming more discrete. Already some of Bucharest’s richest people drive their Romanians cars in Bucharest and take out their Mercedes only when they leave town. If discretion is the sign of cultivated wealth, then some Romanian wealthy should be getting cultivated. As of now, however, it has not occurred.

The future: a Hungarian scenario

What is the future for a Romanian *nouveau riche*? Here Hungary is an instructive example. Hungary’s *nouveaux riches* are now rapidly becoming cultivated. Cultural pedagogical materials are more available

in sophisticated magazines like “Private Profit”, “Elite” and “Beautiful Home”, not to mention the all-important Hungarian “Playboy” a favorite of intellectuals with its guide to good food, drink and social mores. More Westerners visit Hungary and provide models of behavior, although many of these people, befitting those doing business in the Wild East, would number among the vulgar rich in the West. The literary salon, an informal gathering of intellectuals built around a reading followed by drinking, has emerged as one forum where Hungarian *nouveaux riches* attempt to recruit cultural pedagogues, in what appears as a form of bribery. Hungarian intellectuals tell stories of *nouveaux riches* who wanted to attend or sponsor established salons but being unable to. The Hungarian media seems more attuned to trends among the *nouveaux riches* group: when they move into new neighborhoods, when they replace the Mercedes with the BMW or Volvo, when they acquire an interest in new hobbies such as dog breeding, and when they enter they buy art or suddenly decide that artificial flowers are in.

Some conclusion: converting capital

The world of transitional Eastern Europe is indeed a “world of goods” (Douglas and Isherwood 1978). Insofar as “goods help substantiate the order of culture” (McCracken 1988:75) the struggle to use goods appropriately helps form and consolidate the many types of *nouveaux riches* in Eastern Europe.

Ironically, we hear about 1989 as the year of revolution and the period afterwards as “transition”. In fact, it is only now that the real revolutions are taking place. They are revolutions in cultural attitudes and behavior which are as profound as anything experienced in 1917 or 1989.

Finally, the study of *nouveaux riches* necessitates a rethinking about two aspects: the assumption of overlap between the different

forms of dominance - economic, political, social, cultural - and the process whereby one form of capital is converted or transformed into two individuals or groups may not necessarily mean that one person only to be transferred or imparted. Hence, it may be possible to map out a variety of capital transfer processes in which capital may be converted, supplemented, augmented or duplicated. Contact between two individuals or groups may not necessarily mean that one person loses what the other acquires. Perhaps the whole concept of cultural capital should be replaced by “magic dust”.

We may still believe in capital. Eastern Europe's *nouveaux riches* believe in magic.

The Retreat of Middle Management 1960-1990

Ray Pahl

How have managers changed since the so-called ‘golden age’ of career stability of the mid-century decades? In this paper I look back at the 1960s, drawing mainly on Managers and their Wives, published in 1971.¹ I then turn to studies documenting the situation in the late 1980s and my own extended interviews with more senior managers in 1990.²

One change, which seems to be generally accepted, is that managers have a succession of jobs rather than the ‘career’ which may have existed in some previous golden age - for a few years perhaps in the 1950s. Some may claim that at that time managers ‘could be reasonably optimistic about their career prospects’³ but it is generally the case that those who argue thus base their position more on American material than on British. W.H. Whyte’s book on The Organization Man was first published in Britain in 1957 and later by Penguin Books in 1965 and it soon became a benchmark from which commentators felt change could be measured. Goldner’s article on ‘Demotion in Industrial Management’ was published in America in the same year but despite its seemingly greater relevance to the British situation than Whyte’s book, it has largely been ignored.⁴ The assumption that American cultural traits of mid-twentieth-century applied equally significantly to European countries is highly questionable. The interchangeability

of ethnography of that period between America and Britain was a product of the intellectual convergence which came with the fashionable notion of convergence of industrial societies.⁵ British sociology in the mid-1960s was at a pretty modest level of development and there was a tendency to follow American lines of thought more uncritically, perhaps, than would be acceptable thirty years later. We now have our own stars to give us light.

Clearly, we must be careful not to create a myth of relatively privileged managers enjoying what Scase and Goffee call their 'customary benefits' in the 1960s, to serve as a contrast to what became the insecure, 'Reluctant Managers' of the late 1980s. Nevertheless, there have been changes - not least in the introduction of new technology and in corporate restructuring - but there are also many more managers proportionately and absolutely now than there were in the 1960s and an increasing, although still small, proportion of these are women.

The changes for the British managers in the second half of the twentieth-century in Britain have, indeed, been substantial. There were some hints in the 1960s of what was to come. The British Institute of Management published a Report in 1969 entitled The Experienced Manager as part of a programme designed to explore the training and development needs of older managers. Reflecting the thinking of that period, the author described the 'career progress of the average manager'. 'On entering the company, especially if he (*sic*) joins as a trainee, he will normally be put through a form of processing. In addition to indoctrination in the ways of the company he will be encouraged to see his career as one of uninterrupted and loyal advancement.'⁶ If one substituted the phrase 'communist party' for 'company' in that quotation most people reading it in the 1990s might well consider that it made better sense. Certainly it illustrates how little the so-called liberating 1960s affected management thinking. But there were worrying clouds on the horizon. The author of the Report goes on to note 'The time may well come when that in which the experienced manager is an expert is of diminishing value to the company. The cycle of usefulness of

expertise is shortening as the technological and economic operations of the companies become more complex.’

Twenty four years later ‘the cult of insecurity’ could be discussed as part of the conventional wisdom of the middle class. As one commentator observed:

A new branch of management theory says that the ‘casualization’ of the middle classes is not just the result of cost-cutting in a recession but an efficient and rational response to the modern world. In a language that sounds like a second cousin to English, they justify the sacking of middle managers with talk of ‘down-sizing’ and ‘right-sizing’ of ‘delaying’ and ‘flattening’ of ‘shedding’ and ‘process engineering’.⁷

The same account, written in 1993, claimed that 8 per cent of Civil Service jobs - 44,250 people - have had the management of their jobs put out to tender. This process of ‘market testing’, whereby officials compete against private companies bidding to manage their work, is planned to continue ‘until all 555,000 civil servants have been confronted by the market’. British Telecom reduced its managers and staff by 80,000 from 1989 to 1993. The feature was headed ‘Nobody is Safe’.

This shift from ‘uninterrupted and loyal advancement’ to a situation where ‘nobody is safe’ is one of the greatest changes of the last quarter of the twentieth-century. It will do much to modify our views of success in the next century.

Over the past thirty years, I have had the opportunity to discuss managers’ ideas about success, since my own research interest in the topic spans that period.⁸ I can reflect now on the material reported in Managers and their Wives - published in 1971 -and compare it with interviews I have carried out over the last five years in preparation for After Success. The study by Scase and Goffee provides an additional valuable source, since it is based on a larger sample than I was able to gather, drawn from six large organisations. The oldest manager in my

sample, interviewed in the 1960s, was born in 1921; Scase and Goffee's managers were mostly born after the second world war.

In the 1960s I was puzzled why managers in industry worked so hard; I questioned in an ironical way whether they were 'willing slaves to the system': they appeared to have internalized an ideology of self-coercion and were suffering the full force of the competitive society. Commenting at the time on the men I first interviewed in 1965 and 1966 I suggested that, 'they must work hard to produce more, for if they did not, somebody else would; markets would decline and even managers can become redundant. They have no security'(sic). Their only reassurance seemed to come from moving forward and upward through a succession of jobs. 'For them life is a hierarchy and success means moving up in it ... very often it is the fear of failing rather than positive aspiration to climb which pushes these men on. Those who had an experience of downward social mobility in their family history were among the most determined to have a successful career. They work, then, because they are trapped in a competitive society: above all they do not want to fall. The men were not, however, usually prepared to admit that they were driven on for selfish, materialist reasons. They would talk of "challenge" and "responsibility" as well as family commitments.'⁹

Yet, paradoxically, a firm commitment to achieve 'success' was not, in general, typical of the managers of the 1960s. Few men were advancing along a clear and structured career line. I got a sense, when reading through the list of all the jobs they had done, of them being pulled up the management hierarchy by luck or by having a patron - or mentor as they are now called - who knew their name and suggested it at a critical time.

Mr Ash, one of the managers in the 1960s sample, knew the men who pulled or pushed him on and he felt more acted upon than acting:

I never set target dates ... partially because I am basically superstitious ... I am certainly or probably going to be disappointed if I plan too much ahead. As far as getting ahead in the world is concerned, to me it means nothing specific. In fact it is slightly distasteful and smacks of people with ruthless ambition. I have never taken business seriously. Others rate business success worth while for its own sake. I don't. Success means no more to me than my personal job satisfaction and more money. I don't admire successful businessmen ... I plan things mentally but don't like to recognize that I am planning it ... I think about it a lot but won't talk about it. This is probably because I am superstitious as I said before ... I don't have much choice - in fact I choose not to have much choice.

(Distribution Manager aged forty seven in 1968)

Mr Bridge was a head of department in 1968 and he revealed a nervous insecurity. 'Taking a job like this is often a way to fall flat on your face. There's a danger at my age of not reaching a plateau but of reaching a peak and then going down on the other side. This is a definite danger. I've now got to engage in rat-race politics. I apply for promotion thinking only of my masters - there is a need to be seen to be ambitious.' (Department Head aged forty seven in 1968). A younger man, Mr Petham, born in 1928, was a Sales Manager in 1968 but hoped eventually to get on the main board of his company. 'I always have doubts if I can do a job and I often wonder if the benefits are worth it in terms of the quality of life that I have to lead as a result of the job. The financial position that we are in does not improve generally because of the increased expenses of a bigger house ... I don't think I've made any conscious choice about my career other than taking promotion when it was offered ... I don't see my career as a logical process apart from staying in the technical sales side. It's more a series of sharp jumps. I think I've come a very long way.'¹⁰

The false image of the golden age of managerial careers seems to be based on the notion that all managers were working for companies like Unilever or BP. The reality was different. Most men moving between moderately responsible jobs in small or medium sized firms

experienced their working lives as going through a collection of jobs which they retrospectively termed a career. As various surveys of the 1950s demonstrated, many managers had worked their way up, having left school at fourteen but gaining skills and experience during the war. Many had studied in the evening for professional qualifications, had come a long way and were suspicious of 'success'.¹¹ Only 38 per cent of my 1960s sample were graduates, the rest had risen on the escalator of the post-war recovery from the 1950s. When I first took part as a tutor on a course for managers in the early 1960s many of them - maybe up to a half or more - were production engineers of one sort or another, happy amid the oily, noisy machinery of the plant and sceptical of the smooth-talking people on the sales side or those in the unreal world of personnel. Accountants were particularly despised as people 'who did not know what industry was all about'. Mr Ickham who, as a thirty one year old management consultant in 1968, was a high-flier was still absolutely sure that he did not want a son of his to be an accountant. I remember in 1961 or 1962 having a debate with managers on an AEI staff course on whether the goal of the company should be to sell what it could make or make what it could sell. The engineers, used to producing colossal turbo-generators for India or wherever could not conceive of an alternative of selling what you could make. Arnold Weinstock and his consumer durable revolution was yet to come.¹²

I feel that looking back on my main 1960s study I was fortunate in being able to catch glimpses of the stability and security of mid-twentieth-century Britain.

The middle class managers of the 1960s emphasised the importance of a 'rounded personality', a 'full person' and whilst they always said they didn't mind what their sons did, the assumption they made, either explicitly or implicitly, was that 'a lawyer would be nice' or a similar professional position. I didn't think to ask 'And how would you feel if your son dropped out and became a New Age Traveller?' but I am pretty sure of the answer I would get. I suspect that when the

age cohort of the established middle class is quite small it could afford to be quite relaxed about being ambitious. A stress on stability, style and 'gentlemanly' values was possible because it was not necessary to be otherwise.

Raynor has described success as 'an almost compulsive drive' for the middle-middle class¹³ yet it was hard to find much of that amongst the Madingley Managers of the 1960s. But the forces of change were waiting in the wings. The estate agents, accountants and city traders who would make greed acceptable in the 1980s had already left primary school by 1968. Furthermore, the first major post-war attack on British industry was just about to begin. The age of mergers, take-overs and asset stripping was short-lived but very dramatic. Post-war parvenus were not socialized by the public schools. Beneficiaries of the 1944 Butler Education Act were not socialized into submission in the way that Richard Hoggart described in his autobiography,¹⁴ internalizing what Parkin called the subordinate value system.¹⁵ They were angry young men eager to upset the establishment, whose 'gentlemanly values' were perceived as hypocrisy. Clever sons and daughters from the skilled working class and lower middle class went to university for the first time in the history of their families and became social workers, housing managers and academics. Sociology grew dramatically and its acolytes spent much time investigating class and the social mobility through which so many of them had benefitted. Indeed, social mobility became something of an obsession for some sociologists, despite the fact that the results did so little to explain the cultural changes that were having such important social consequences.

I was particularly fortunate in that I was a participant observer in this crucial period of transition in British industry between 1969 and 1973. Together with Jack Winkler, we had received a three year grant to look at what directors in British industry actually did, perhaps as a way of reducing their perceived stress and anxieties.¹⁶ Many of the most senior and powerful men in British industry were extraordinarily generous in allowing us to observe Board level politics at first hand by

shadowing them unobtrusively or by sitting quietly in their offices. This was the period of what at the time Prime Minister Heath called 'the unacceptable face of capitalism'. Small businesses were bought solely for the site value of their offices or plant; family firms were taken over and family directors bought out or given sinecures; large firms were re-structured, divisionalized and re-grouped; a new breed of over-smart-suited young men with MBAs appeared one week as 'consultants' and a few weeks later mysteriously became finance directors on the Board. Fortunes were lost and fortunes were made.¹⁷ I sat in the offices of a long-since bankrupt property development company and watched a portfolio of offices and shops in south east England being re-valued over a sandwich lunch. I can't remember now whether it was £50 million or £80 million that was added to the company's assets through this 'working lunch'.¹⁸

At the beginning of the 1970s we made some tentative predictions in Managers and Their Wives about the changes that might follow. We noted that the wives of our managers were much more reflective than their husbands and had more doubts about the necessity for 'management thinking' being entitled to impose itself on home and family life. They wondered whether all the long hours of their husbands' effort were worth it. Furthermore, we suggested that 'So long as wives accept a passive role or a supportive, work oriented one, all may be well. But the spread of the ideal of a close, companionate type of marriage, coupled with the rising level of education of women, may mean that the sacrifices will become increasingly unacceptable ... We found little evidence among the women in our sample of dislike of the nuclear family, resentment against the marriage tie, or very great frustration in their chief roles of wife, mother and housewife. But we did find a sense of uncertainty about identity among the women' (emphasis added now).¹⁹ We went on to conclude that the main force for change would not be the managers but their wives. We noted the changing conceptions about the position of women in the British society of 1970 and the emergence of different expectations about the nature

of marriage and family life. We suggested that the next generation of middle managers would be unlikely to be willing slaves to the system. 'We would expect the tension to become greater as the drive for greater efficiency in British industry meets increased concern about the quality of personal relationships, and of marriage in particular.'²⁰

My experience of the early years of the University of Kent led me to add, rather quaintly I now think: 'The "feminization" of young men, which has been one of the unintended consequences of the expansion of co-educational higher education, may have helped to make many more young men sensitive to the feelings of the young women they know or live with. Marriage is probably entered into far more seriously and on a basis of greater equality than it has been at any time in the past. It seems less likely that young men who have been to university since the mid-1960s will ever imagine that they are marrying a docile housewife.'²¹ However, we also considered the possibility that a strong streak of materialism could remain, which certainly appeared in the 1980s. 'It is possible that this category of people in our society will become more materialistic. Most of our couples have achieved only a modest degree of affluence: the incentives of a larger house, a second car, more lavish and longer holidays may keep middle managers in Britain hard at the grind until the end of the century.'²²

The oil crisis of 1973 ended the post-war boom. Inflation in the mid 1970s became almost uncontrollable. Public expenditure had to be contained. Britain was humiliated by tough demands from the International Monetary Fund in 1976. As industrial strife increased in the late 1970s the 'incompetence' of management and the 'greed' of the workers led to the final collapse of a kind of corporatist consensus. On Christmas Day 1976 The Economist published a special survey on 'The Coming Entrepreneurial Revolution'. Norman Macrae, the deputy-editor of The Economist was remarkably prescient when he began by stating, 'The world is probably drawing to the end of the era of big business corporations. These institutions were virtually created during 1875-1910. During 1975-2010 they may virtually disappear in their

present form Many services now provided by government will need to be “recompetitioned” and “reprivatized”.’ The end of organization man was at hand.²³

Scase and Goffee began their work on Reluctant Managers in the mid-1980s in order to explore the changing experiences and attitudes of middle-managers and, perhaps to their surprise, they rediscovered the ambiguities and uncertainties about success that had been described in Managers and Their Wives a generation earlier. However, what is of particular interest is that the reasons for the Scase and Goffee managers being reluctant about committing themselves to employment seemed to be substantially different from those we put forward. Perhaps it is worth emphasizing that another study, also referring to middle-managers in the 1960s, also documented a degree of distancing from complete work involvement: 47 per cent of Sofer’s example expressed significant reservations about the work they were doing and were resistant to total commitment. As one said: ‘I don’t live to work. I work to live’.²⁴ The authors of Reluctant Managers make it clear that compared with how they imagined the 1960s managers to be, the mid-1980s managers are not prepared to put employment first. ‘Managers of all ages, then, seem concerned to improve the quality of their personal life styles outside rather than within work ... they have consciously reduced their psychological dependence upon employment.’²⁵ Scase and Goffee discovered growing feelings of cynicism amongst junior managers; middle managers also became affected by the apathy that surrounded them and ended up adopting a similar stance. They quote a male manager in Accounting and Finance in his late forties in the mid 1980s. ‘Staff are expected to work much harder than before But when they see their hard efforts being lost by the stroke of a pen, it’s rather frustrating and people are beginning to wonder whether it’s worthwhile slogging their guts out.’²⁶

Managers appear to be showing signs of fatalism, alienation and anomie which Marx and Durkheim foresaw as part of the cost of a capitalist market economy. Like instrumentally oriented manual-

workers they may view their work as something they do for the money but their true identity develops outside employment.²⁷ Many managers now may seem to be little more than highly qualified technicians. Increasingly, senior managers now monitor very precisely the ranks of middle and junior managers, creating considerable pressure for them to reach specific targets. Individual respondents in the Scase and Goffee study objected to the short-term nature of the targets. Any success is short-lived: if a target is reached or bettered the target is then raised. This approach engenders fear. Working relationships become more aggressive: people are increasingly watching their backs and struggling for personal survival. All this destroys organizational commitment.

In answer to the question put by Scase and Goffee 'What do you think should be the major inputs in management training?', 69 per cent of the men and 82 per cent of the women mentioned personal and interpersonal skills such as assertiveness, team-building or leadership. The more technical aspects of the job were mentioned by very much smaller proportions of the sample. Since most managers have been promoted into their present positions because they have demonstrated various forms of technical, functional and specialist knowledge, their perceived lack of interpersonal managerial abilities may generate insecurity and anxiety. Furthermore, since the appropriate interpersonal skills differ between companies with different organizational styles and since men and women are likely to move between these different contexts in the course of their working life, the scope for confusion and increased anxiety is great.

Whether or not the golden age of orderly careers ever existed, the experience of most managers in the 1990s is of considerable insecurity and uncertainty about their future prospects. I suspect that in the past a disproportionate amount of social science research was focused on large organizations such as Unilever or the oil companies. Thus, whilst Scase and Goffee acknowledge that Sofer's study was based on a few large-scale organizations, they make the unwarranted assumption that his conclusions would apply to all managers. The

Madingley managers of the 1960s did not feel secure about the future but nevertheless at that time one of the most unlikely options was redundancy or dismissal. Thus, Scase and Goffee's assertion that few managers are committed to career success may not be particularly novel. However the idea that there is now an alternative idea of personal success is indeed new and non-work criteria play a large part in self-assessed ideas of success. In particular, and crucially, Scase and Goffee discuss the way that managers and their partners work out some joint survival/development strategy for themselves and their dependents. Men are becoming more like women in recognizing the futility of working out detailed career plans. Rather, they take jobs that suit their various circumstances or, indeed, make the best of a bad job. 47 per cent of Scase and Goffee's male managers said they were sometimes frustrated and a further 38 per cent said that they were sometimes or always frustrated. The percentages were much the same for both men and women.

Some people struggling with resentment and anxiety may show symptoms of sub-clinical depression and succumb to various dependencies. Relationships with partners may stretch or snap.²⁸ Increases in divorce and suicide rates among this category may indicate with different degrees of tragedy the personal crises which the contemporary way of organizing society seems to produce. Maybe the thrusting and aggressively written management textbooks are partly to blame, suggesting that career failure is due to some kind of personal inadequacy: character or moral weakness produces failure, not the system. This is a neat trick which Merton discussed so well in his classic essay on Social Structure and Anomie.²⁹ Anxious managers appear to be an exceptionally gullible market for evangelical 'consultants' or gurus who prey on their fears and insecurities and peddle the latest brand of psychobabble, which most people could get free from their grandmothers if they simply inserted the jargon and put it on transparencies for the overhead projector.

In a witty and perceptive review of more than a dozen books on management written in the mid 1980s, Patrick Wright pointed out that their authors have a new-found confidence. No longer under any obligation to consider management as a properly constituted 'academic' subject, borrowing from more established disciplines to justify its recommendations and prescriptions, the new management thinkers do not even attempt to bring the movement of enterprise under a rational description which might identify professional management with stable administrative functions of planning, resource allocation and control. Far from trying to take the guesswork out of the corporate game, the tendency now is to celebrate it.³⁰ The new magic words are 'excellence' and 'change', often approached with a religious fervour. 'The excellent company knows that the pace of "change" - one of management thinkings' catch all reifications - is escalating, and also that constant innovation is the prerequisite of success.'³¹ The new gurus urge companies to encourage those who under the old rational model would be dangerous deviants or oddballs. Now they are to be feted, encouraged to make mistakes in the search for innovation and to go hard for the vision thing. 'The new entrepreneur is a survivalist surrounded by "change" - an external force which comes at him with the irresistible power of the Megatrend. ... where traditional management thinking tries to help corporations get better productivity out of the Organisation Man by "tacking on skills to the same old person", the peak performer is interested in complete personal transformation.'³²

If excellence is to be limited to a maverick minority then most managers are likely to be nervous and insecure. How do they know that they are capable of becoming excellent if this is all a matter of intuition and personal idiosyncratic style, and being unafraid of risk and uncertainty? At least with the old rational model hard work and persistence might well lead eventually to success. In the study of Reluctant Managers it is interesting that only 35 per cent of the sample positively disagreed with the statement that the personal costs of career

pursuit outweigh the benefits; what then did the other 65 per cent consider to be most important as the basis for their non-work identities? Whilst they might long for a magic balance and insist that the most important thing in their lives are their family and personal relationships, there is very little evidence to suggest that there has been any radical shift in the domestic division of labour. Men may be disillusioned and anxious in their jobs but they have no better alternative to turn to, apart from taking early retirement. Two thirds of Scase and Goffee's managers want to retire in their fifties. This appears to be a much more seriously desired option at the end of the century than it was in the middle.

All these problems affect women managers too but they have the further problem of working in predominantly male environments which can be a distinctive source of stress. They also have the additional burden of being primarily responsible for the home. If men are yearning for a better balance between home and work, they should pay more attention to what their partners say before trying to delude themselves and those who interview them. The distinctive problems faced by women managers now receives much academic and journalistic comment but are likely to be more acute at the junior and middle levels of management discussed by Scase and Goffee. There are some indications that as managing involves more interpersonal skills, women may come to have the edge on men who are stereotypically less in touch with their feelings and less able to cope with emotional problems. If these are now some of the central problems of management then much depends on whether the fashion lies more in the macho, assertive, task-oriented approach to management, which men may find more congenial or the more people-centred style which women would find more congenial. Scase and Goffee are ambivalent, if not confused, about this point claiming, at different places in their book that each is in the ascendent.³³

Perhaps the nub of the argument being put forward by Scase and Goffee was reflected by one of their respondents, a man in his late

forties working in engineering and maintenance. 'I believe that if I go any higher ... I will be working for the Company twenty four hours a day. Then I should be married to the company. I don't want to marry the Company. I want to stay married to my wife and family. That's it, basically in a nutshell. Which is why I've got no ambition left.'³⁴ Scase and Goffee conclude, 'Very few couples are totally immersed in their work and overwhelmingly preoccupied with career success Accordingly, conflicts between work and domestic life are controlled.'³⁵ 'If, in the past, there was a pronounced work ethic which fostered a desire for occupational achievement and nurtured work-based values around which personal identities could be constructed, this has now diminished.'³⁶ This conclusion applies primarily to middle-aged middle-level male managers and not to male senior managers.

There are now signs, in the mid 1990s, that management faces a new crisis that will not be easily resolved. A recent survey shows a profound lack of confidence in management and a substantial deprioritization of the significance of employment. Overall, some two thirds of a national sample of over 2000 adults disagreed with the statement that the people in charge know best or that business strikes a fair balance between profits and the public interest. Over half the sample claimed that if work interfered with their personal life they would put work in second place.³⁷ The retreat from commitment by middle management could have far-reaching social and political consequences. The case for comparative ethnography in other European contexts is strong: are British managers unique in their disillusion?

Notes

1. R.E. and J.M. Pahl, Managers and their Wives (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971).

2. This latter work is reported in Ray Pahl, After Success: Fin-de-Siècle Anxiety and Identity (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1995).
3. Ibid., p.3. Richard Scase and Robert Goffee, Reluctant Managers (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1989).
4. F.H. Goldner, 'Demotion in industrial management', American Sociological Review 1965 pp.714-724 and W.H. Whyte, The Organisation Man (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957).
5. C. Kerr, J.J. Dunlop, F. Harbison and C.A. Myers, Industrialism and Industrial Man (London: Heinemann, 1960).
6. Alistair Mant, The Experienced Manager - A Major Resource (London: British Institute of Management, 1969) p.16.
7. N. Cohen 'Nobody is Safe', Independent on Sunday 24 October 1993 p.17.
8. My first experience of working with managers was acting as a Tutor for a staff course arranged by AEI (Associated Electrical Industries) in Oxford Colleges in the early 1960s. I later lectured on the annual course for managers held at Madingley Hall, Cambridge and organised by the University Board of Extra-Mural Studies. A sample of managers attending the Madingley courses in the middle 1960s provided the main source for R.E. and J.M. Pahl, Managers and their Wives (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971).
9. Pahl and Pahl, Managers, p.259.
10. Ibid., p.102.
11. See, for example, Action Society Trust, Management Succession (London, 1956) and R.V. Clements, Managers: A Study of their Careers in Industry (London: Allen & Unwin, 1958).
12. I was, perhaps, fortunate to be able to participate on a very informal basis with older and more senior men on these courses. I watched fascinated as men from different 'tribes' or parts of the 'same organization' mixed in the Oxford pubs. Old style research scientists in baggy tweeds, met brash consumer-oriented Hotpoint salesmen for the first time. In those days 'management training' was considered to be as effectively done through swapping anecdotes at the bar as in learning fancy book-keeping. However, they did all play a business game in a reasonably competitive way. When the syndicate that won was shown to have done so by being advised by one of its salesmen members

to invest heavily in advertising, the exercise lost all credibility for at least half the course!

13. J. Raynor, The Middle Class (Harlow: Longman, 1969).

14. Richard Hoggart, A Local Habitation (London: Chatto and Windus, 1988).

15. Frank Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order (London: McGibbon and Kee, 1971).

16. This was an astonishing experience about which, I am ashamed to say I have published very little. See, however, R.E. Pahl and J.T. Winkler, 'The Economic Elite: Theory and Practice' in Elites and Power in British Society edited by Philip Stanworth and Anthony Giddens (Cambridge: The University Press, 1974) pp.102-122.

17. G.D. Newbould and A.S. Jackson, The Receding Ideal (Liverpool: Guthstead Ltd, 1972).

18. This was all happening as Managers and their Wives was being published and parts were being serialised in The Observer. Seeing what was happening all around me I realised I had written about a world we have lost. The early 1970s were also heady days for the women's movement and, however accurate the title, my co-author Jan Pahl found the lack of a more vigorous feminist critique of the position of the wives in our book embarrassing. Had we waited as long between the gathering of the data and the writing of the book as I have done with this one, it would have been a very different, and probably better, book.

19. Pahl and Pahl, Managers pp.235-236.

20. *Ibid.*, p.236.

21. *Ibid.*, p.267.

22. *Ibid.*

23. The Economist: The Coming Entrepreneurial Revolution: A Survey. December 25, 1976 pp.41-65.

24. Cyril Sofer, Men in Mid-Career: A Study of British Managers and Technical Specialists (Cambridge: The University Press, 1970) p.247.

25. Scase and Goffee, Reluctant Managers p.100.

26. *Ibid.*, p.32.

27. There is a large literature on this theme. Much is summarized in R.E. Lane, The Market Experience (Cambridge: The University Press, 1991). The classic study is still R. Blaunder, Alienation and Freedom (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).
28. C. Cooper, Executive Families Under Stress (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1982); P. Evans and F. Bartolomé, Must Success Cost So Much? (London: Grant McIntyre, 1980). More recently Cary Cooper and Anne Ferguson surveyed the Chief Executive Officers of 118 of the biggest European Community and Scandinavian businesses, based on turnover, together with 93 of their spouses. David Miller, group personnel director of the textiles group Coats Viyella is quoted as saying that 'senior executives had adapted to working punishing hours and they may yet adapt to spending even less time with their families'. Twenty three per cent of this sample were considering leaving top management and finding another job. Cary Cooper and Anne Ferguson, 'Top people fear for their families', The Independent on Sunday 4 November 1990. Business section p.24
29. R.K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957).
30. Patrick Wright, 'Excellence', London Review of Books 21 May 1987 p.8.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p.9.
33. Scase and Goffee, Reluctant Managers at p.68 and p.122.
34. Ibid., p.143.
35. Ibid., p.175.
36. Ibid., p.180.
37. Nick Winkfield, 'Bad Timing': attitudes to the new world of work', Demos Quarterly 5, 1995, pp.26-29.

Cross-Cultural Interaction in Management between Polish and American Managers

Krystyna Joanna Zaleska

Introduction

This research was undertaken with the aim of improving the effectiveness of any organization that has Americans and Poles working together by trying to understand the patterns of cross-cultural interaction between them. Cross-cultural interaction is studied on two different levels. The first is the context of cultural meanings, and the second the level of management practices to which these meanings refer.

The data was collected between the 21st of July and the 6th of August 1992. It was collected among managers of the subsidiary of a large US based multinational corporation in Warsaw. It contains 24 unstructured interviews collected from seven Polish and seven American managers.

The choice of a subsidiary of an American multinational corporation in Poland has many consequences for the findings and the representativeness of the sample. This MNC has a strong corporate culture rooted in the traditions of the American business. The foreign organization attracts certain type of manager during the recruitment

and selection process. This selection process favours employment of those who have managerial attitudes more in tune with those of Western managers. On the other hand, the Polish business environment and the system of values inherited from the previous communist period still have a strong influence despite the fast cultural change. The mental product of that environment, Homo Sovieticus, is deeply rooted in the minds of those who are the products of the educational, political and economical systems of the past.

This case analysis is designed to answer the managerial question: How should we manage cross-cultural interactions within the organization? From the researcher's point of view the case addresses the question: What laws govern the interactions between culturally different people? ¹ The paper is organized around two major sections.

1. National Management Style - In this section the Polish response towards a participative management style is analyzed. The perspective of American managers working in the Polish cultural context and that of Polish managers working in the MNC is investigated.

2. "From Homo Sovieticus to Corporate Man" - In this section the corporate culture is divided into different categories involving the central values and beliefs of the MNC. The difference in attitudes towards them help to define what is new in the Polish business environment.

The problems in the analysis are defined in terms of the cultural traits, habits and norms of the researcher's home society (Polish), and then redefined in terms of American cultural traits. The differences in what the researcher interpreted and what the respondents attempted to communicate are likely due to the researcher's unavoidable cultural bias as well as her own value judgments. The letter "P" after citations from the interviews indicates a Polish manager, while the letter "A" indicates an American manager.

National Management Style

Participative versus Autocratic Management Style

“Poles like to be told what to do. Very often they look at me and say, ‘you are the boss, you decide, you tell us’.”^A

“I can’t stand when people say: ‘You are the boss. There is a problem and you need to make the decisions’. Maybe I do need to make decisions, but they should be based on information given to me.”^A

“A manager should know things. It is not good to go too often to subordinates and ask them. It is in contradiction with the role of a manager. Why are you the manager after all.”^P

American managers introduce a participative management style in the company and advocate that Polish subordinates participate in managerial decisions. They delegate decision making. They develop the competence of their subordinates by assigning tasks to them and by fostering successful task completion. They determine when to involve subordinates in making decisions. These attempts meet resistance. The old system of reliance on the director and centralized decision making by fiat seems to be still an obstacle to increasing participation and collegiality. Having a powerful superior whom Poles can both praise and blame is still a way of satisfying a strong need for avoiding uncertainty (Hofstede, 1980).² An American manager who asks his subordinates many questions and thus demonstrates the importance of his staff in problem solving, and one who at the same time is able to admit his mistakes in front of the staff, is displaying new features of management unusual for Polish managers.

The Polish manager of a warehouse for instance was surprised when the American manager told him to go to the employees, explain the options to them, and give them the choice as to when to open the

warehouse. The Pole was shocked about the possibility of the employees suggesting him when to open the warehouse.

Openness and Closedness

“Communication with Polish employees is difficult, especially when an employee has a problem. There is a general unwillingness to talk directly about oneself and one’s problems. Poles will gladly talk about somebody else. They will not talk about their own needs. They don’t like direct questions about things which are important to them. Perhaps it is considered impolite, too bold or inappropriate for them.”A

“As an American I am very used to the style of being up front with people and their problems. If you have a problem you come out and talk about it with others and your boss.”A

“In the beginning people didn’t like this directness. Poles don’t like to be told directly what they are doing wrong. Now they are accustomed to it. Some were shocked in the beginning, however, by our very direct style.”A

The American culture, which values direct and often blunt speaking, clashes with the Polish way of communicating. For the American, saying exactly what you mean is considered a virtue. There is a low tolerance level for ambiguity. That is why managers want to interpret and be interpreted pretty much at face value. Poles have a more closed and indirect style of communicating, especially in relations with subordinates and superiors. Poles often describe Americans as very open, direct, spontaneous and natural. They thus distinguish themselves as a group from them.

American managers do not receive the feedback they expect. They tend to receive only positive feedback, which is sometimes misleading. They must actively seek out and get the sometimes negative but more honest feedback from subordinates. Poles have an informal

network of communication. They discuss problems among each other, with the second person feeling responsible for going to tell the manager about the problems of the colleague. Americans find it a little bit unusual when a subordinate communicates with a manager by going through these informal channels, and sends a message through another person. After business meetings the Poles may burst into a deep emotional discussion in Polish. They would not, however, do this in English in front of Americans.

The problems of giving honest feedback can be explained as being typical when two different cultural groups try to communicate. Poles feel both the cultural and language barriers, which is further exacerbated by the power barrier between the American boss and the Polish subordinate. The reason why Poles are reluctant to talk directly about certain problems can also be traced to the communist past. As a rule the subordinates' right to communicate with a superior was restricted. Subordinates could not offer alternative interpretations of data or make proposals that would modify the superior's decision. It was rarely possible to relax or express one's feelings in a natural and spontaneous manner. On the other hand, the new values (influenced by the American "John Wayne" syndrome), which the organization is trying to build, influences the Poles' behaviour. They try to do their best at emulating this macho attitude by not showing their weakness in front of Americans.

"The Polish manager is often talking to me about how others are doing a great job, and he even asks me to go tell them this since he is unable to do this himself."A

"If you are good, Americans can send you a congratulatory letter. If it were the boss I could think this was motivation. But it was an American colleague of mine and he had no particular interest in it. I would never think of doing so. It was so spontaneous."P

There is a significant difference between two groups of managers in giving this type of feedback. Positive feedback is not popular among

Poles who tend to be critical. Negative feedback is easier for them to give both to subordinates and to peers on the same level.

“Americans don’t give me any strict explanations of what I should do. It seems that it is a conscious policy of the firm’s and it makes sense.”P

“Americans have certain assumptions about us and they don’t communicate them. When they think that something is obvious, they don’t say it.”P

“Poles more easily criticize things among themselves, but it is difficult for them to criticize things in the presence of Americans. It is as if they don’t believe in their strengths, and are afraid that their opinions are either untrue or irrational. They afraid of being funny.”P

“Poles don’t disagree with me as I would like. They are less likely to question decisions or directions, which is what I am used to in the US. It is because there is a difference in the respect given to, and recognized regarding average authority figure. It is my perception that the average Polish citizen will not on a daily basis question authority. Americans do this very readily.”A

Americans value active participation in any discussion. Poles, with a tendency towards a more autocratic management style, do not like to argue with managers. This is because criticism of management is viewed as criticizing the manager’s right to delegate, as well as his or her social status of being a manager. Americans attempt to create a sense of obligation in subordinates and for this reason keep job specifications loose. The subordinates in turn need to create their role implicitly from careful observations of their superior’s needs. However, a majority of Polish managers mentioned the need for formal rules and guidelines, with each specific task spelled out for each job function.

Attitudes toward Subordinates

“Secretaries are treated poorly here. I don’t need a waitress. I don’t want a secretary who makes me coffee. Secretaries who work for us have a huge job responsibility, they don’t just make notes, they have to make analysis on their own.”A

“In general Polish managers seem to have a little less respect for their staffs than in America. They can reprimand the secretary in front of the group, and give her a complicated task to do with little instruction and a short time to do it in.”A

“It is unacceptable in our company that someone from a higher level treats those at a lower level differently. That is classism. Some Poles do this. Poles place less value on the individual worker.”A

“These are some things that are easy to get used to. In America I would never ask the secretary to bring me coffee. You can only use them for business purposes. It is so easy to start it here.”A

Poles are not used to working with secretaries in the same way that Americans require. Secretaries are accustomed to being treated as “waitresses” by Polish managers. On the opposite end, expatriate managers expect secretaries to take on more responsibilities, and show independence and initiative in decision making. Some Americans pointed to the bad influence the Polish environment has on Americans as a sign of demoralization under the Polish working conditions. The American attitude towards secretaries in the perception of one Pole is, however, the following:

“I am very pushy and demanding on secretaries. I do the same thing as Americans. I think that if secretaries have a hard time now with me as a Pole, they will work much better in the future. In order to work here efficiently you have to prepare people because only then they will be able to adjust to the attacks of Americans, which are very aggressive.”P

Formality versus Informality

“I respect the history. I respect the cultural aspect. Every time they call me ‘Mister Director’ I remind them to call me by my first name. I am constantly telling them that I have a culture too. This company has a culture, one that I want to build here. I don’t like the environment that fosters formality and the environment that it creates. It is a barrier for effective communication. You almost have too much respect and then you stop talking to me, soon you stop coming and saying ‘I have a problem’.”A

“I noticed that a couple of people who use titles, locals on the same level as I am, they get more respect from their employees. I see a different level of respect due to formality. Maybe Poles like that. Poles like to know their place.”A

“There are some people in the firm with whom I will never be on a first name basis. I am on a first name basis with some people and on a Ms.\Mr. basis with others. I don’t know why but I will not change that.”P

Poland has a culture where management relations are generally formal and now locals have to adapt to a less formal American mode. Those Poles who resist informality appear to be cold and distrusting in the perception of foreigners. The majority of Poles learned to adjust to the norm very quickly, but this does not mean that they wish to continue to be on a first name basis when speaking among Poles, especially with subordinates. In the eyes of Americans, some locals use this distance to help them manage personnel, especially those at the lower levels.

It is too superficial to interpret Polish formality only as a way of managing and directing personnel. It is derived from both tradition and the educational system. Using first names for older people and for superiors is not a Polish norm. For Americans, it seems silly to address them as director and they think that it builds barriers. They are judging this by their own standards. In fact, this is an old Polish tradition,

although ceremonies in centrally-planned companies also reinforced formality in management relations. The major mistake is when Poles or Americans think that terms of address are equivalent in these two cultures. Being on a first name basis for Americans is not equal to being on a first name basis in Poland. They literally do not translate into the same meaning. In Poland if the boss calls the receptionist by their first name, the subordinate-superior relation is changed. In America it does not mean anything; the line is still maintained. Some Poles can be confused by a too rapid introduction of informality because they are not aware of this fact. Indeed, some Poles are afraid that they can lose the ability to lead by moving to a first name basis. They feel that it may have bad consequences concerning the behaviour of Polish managers towards their staff and vice versa.

“Poles like Titles”

“In America you generally accept what the boss tells. You don’t have so much courage to go to the boss and say: “I want a career I want to be a manager. That is important for me. When can I be that?”. The better way is when the boss sets the expectations with you and when you achieve those expectations you will be promoted.”A

“Poles are passionate about getting ahead in status. People are looking for examples of badges to wear for the rest of the populace to know that you have made it.”A

“My boss must be in a big car. ‘What car are you going to drive’ - I was asked by a Pole in the first meeting in Poland.”A

American managers noticed in Poland the importance of things which communicate the power and status of management. A car or having a title is used symbolically to exert control over subordinates and impress visitors. In Poland the superior is expected to demonstrate

his or her authority in relation to subordinates. “This is not a job for the boss”, said Polish sales person to the American boss when he was cleaning the shelves in the shop.

A lot of new Polish interviewees want to be managers without having any basic business experience. This is a magic word for them which associates a higher status. On the other hand, American managers try to show what little importance these formalities, titles, and other signs of status denote. But what is trivial, meaningless, nonproductive, and non business building in one culture has value in another. The system of values associated with formality, titles, and signs of status emphasize individual dignity and is deeply rooted in the social consciousness and traditions of the Polish nobility.

From Homo Sovieticus to Corporate Man

“Things don’t just happen, you have to make them happen”

“People are still afraid to make decisions, they want to be told what to do, to be given job descriptions and be told exactly what they should do.”A

“You work in a field and make mistakes on your own, nobody is over your shoulder. If you are not pushing yourself and if you are not checking yourself, then you never improve yourself.”A

“People are not aggressive about their career, there is a lack of ownership to some extent. People don’t believe that their career is something which can be managed by themselves. They can go as far as they can possibly dream of going based on their open merits. In the US people are more aggressive and very sure of themselves. Here the ambitious are just less vocal. I have trouble getting Poles to see that they are capable of doing that.”A

“We are modest, we don’t speak about our achievements, we are not assertive enough, we don’t praise ourselves.”P

“Poles don’t struggle for themselves. Now you have to do it. The new mentality of this company requires it. Nobody will take care of you if you do not do this.”P

“You have to be a fighter and want to change something and to do extra things in this company.”P

“Don’t go to your boss with a problem; go with the solution to the problem, give him options to the solutions. This is a principle which is not taught in Poland.”P

Effective performance that brings results and the ability to work in teams by showing leadership skills - these are the new skills which guarantee success in the company. Compliancy, maintaining the status quo, and being someone who waits for things are all undesirable characteristics. The reaction of the Polish manager in the store who did not change the price of a product in order to be more competitive is another example of the old apprehensiveness to make decisions. “Can I do that? Am I allowed to do that?” The idea of the manager asking whether she is allowed to do something to the product shocked the American manager.

This lack of assertiveness is very apparent during interviews. Many Poles find it troublesome to answer the very straightforward questions posed by Americans concerning personal achievements. People are not accustomed to speaking so openly about their strengths. Displaying a strong but relaxed sense of confidence is a new personality feature that many Poles lack.

“We want to make Employee’s Interests our own”

“Authority has never been something you trust here. They had always other motives. They never wanted what was good for the subordinates; that is why people did not trust authority. Maybe

that is why people don't come to talk to us about their problems."A

"Sometimes they don't understand that the company is trying to do the right things for individuals. Sometimes there will be questions which assume that the employer is going to take advantage of that and is going to treat locals badly and because of that assumption they behave in a certain way. It is not a good assumption that the company and manager is not trying to help them if they have a problem."A

The prevalent attitude towards authority is one of distrust, fear, and disbelief. It is too much to believe that the boss also wants what is good for the employee. The concept of managers being oriented towards assisting other people, and being motivated to serve fellow human beings is something new and incompatible with the old idea of a boss' function. For some Polish respondents the authority figure is still associated with individuals rather than with an organization. In the American point of view, the boss is employed to serve the organization rather than him or herself. The corporate culture meshes the need for results with the concerns of the individual. This managing style focuses on people and is appreciated by Poles. Employees then feel that they are an important part of the firm and that it is a worthwhile endeavour to be effective.

"Build the Business, build the People"

"I prefer to have an older boss because it would be very stupid if I have a boss younger than me."P

"He has less life experience, a shorter marriage, he is younger, he is not authority to me. I would prefer someone who has more life experience. It is a very Polish thing that I find this to be a problem. I realize that."P

“The company gives a lot of authority to young people very quickly. You never know, that guy who is looking younger than you could be a vice president already.”A

The basic new assumption of the American system is that the individual is appointed and promoted on the basis of his knowledge and professional expertise. The corporate culture rewards competence and performance in key skills as evaluated against objective criteria, tenure and loyalty. How much experience someone has and how professional he or she conducts themselves is valued by the company more highly than the person's age. The situation in which much younger managers have older subordinates provides problems for some Polish subordinates. Some Poles are convinced that it is not possible to have both youth and knowledge. Instead, experience and competence must go hand in hand.

There is a newly formed belief on the part of the Poles, that work will bring success. Everyone feels secure that as long as they produce results, they will not lose their job. There is a tacit new assumption that talented people who are willing to work can advance and succeed. The need for competence and the value placed on this competence is growing. It was not so obvious in the past that good performance also meant future promotions. It was quite possible to be a very good employee and yet never be rewarded.

“Poles make mistakes when they say: ‘Americans don't share salaries, in the Polish system we share salaries’. I would say it is not straight forward at all. In the American system, in our company's system, we don't share specifics on what any one person makes, we try very hard to share the system, by which you make more salary. We make it very clear that your salary is based on your performance. If you perform well you will make a lot of money.”A

“You are not in a position to bargain about your salary. If you tell Americans that you are not satisfied they will fire you. This is not good.”P

“I like this system but I would like to know how I am in comparison with the others. If I knew that the person who works together with me had a higher salary than me, I would be very unhappy.”P

Problems in adjusting to a new salary system is another example of the old way of thinking when competence and good performance was not a basis for promotion and rewards. Placing more value upon the individual's performance and effort, and rewarding that with increased income, creates motivation to be responsible. People learn to adapt to this new attitude to different degrees, but with many old habits still remaining. Poles want to know how much other salaries are because they are accustomed to it, whereas for Americans it is a distraction within the organization. The difficulties in introducing new customs are reinforced by the differences between the Polish and American cultures in deciding what information is personal. Poles have no problem with asking strangers about their salaries as a means of establishing their status, whereas for Americans it is very personal thing. Also the American attitude that salary increases should be initiated by the employees' direct supervisor, does not match well with the ease with which Poles ask for salary raises themselves.

“The Customer is always Right”

“That is really a holdover from the old system. Here they feel they are in a position of authority. They seem to forget what the relationship is between them and the customer. They always feel they treated customers well but they hadn't. They already think that they are different from the old mind set but it is still only half way. They have got a long distance to cover, unfortunately.”A

“When you are doing business with somebody you don't do it in a way which gives them an impression that you think you are smarter than anyone else.”A

“People applying for positions in sales departments do not want to do basic business first, to be a sales representative, they want to be immediately managers. People that I interview want to be only managers. How you can manage sales representatives if you don’t know what they do? They lack a concrete answer.”A

In spite of intensive training on how to properly treat a customer, Poles still tend to behave in the old manner. Americans are not satisfied with the Poles’ behaviour in front of the clients and view them as not being very service oriented towards the buyer. Americans believe that sales jobs are looked down upon in the Polish business culture, and that it requires intensive training to change this notion.

“Our Problems are our Opportunities”

“In the old system people tended to look for problems, not for solving the problems.”A

“People who come from the old system they are usually pessimists. You can see this in the interviews: “Do you really believe that you as a person can make a difference. Somebody associated with old thinking will say “No, anything that I do, it does not matter, things are just what they are, just accept it.”A

“The new project will never work”, “My customer will never buy this”, “We can’t do that”, “It will not work in the Polish environment”, “It has been never done in that way.”P

Negative thoughts are very prevalent among Poles. It is easier to be critical and find why something will not work than to look at why something may work. Such an attitude clashes with the company’s value that regards problems as potential opportunities. The Americans explained the Polish negative attitude as an environmental thing. But it can be also considered as a Polish national characteristic. Americans as a nation are more future oriented than Poles, who, in comparison

with them, tend to base decisions more on past experience. The assumption that people can substantially influence the future underlines much of the U.S. management philosophy and this now has to become a basis for Polish management as well.

This positive versus negative thinking is believed by Poles to be caused by the Americans' naivety and ignorance concerning the business environment in Poland. Therefore, it is not only that the Poles are negative, but also that they have a more intimate knowledge of the local business situation and they therefore try to convince Americans of the Polish reality.

"People are good"

"What was new for me was that Americans have the assumption that you are acting for the good of the firm and that you are honest. That people are good. If you go to a restaurant, nobody will tell you that you are nasty and that you used the company money and did it for a bad purpose."P

"A positive attitude towards people, trust in people - this is a basis for everything. Americans don't wait to catch you in a mistake. We are more suspicious of people, our assumption is that a person wants to do something bad."P

"I have never met a group of people that was more sceptical of the future and more distrusting. Everyone we do business with is convinced that we are dumping a less quality product on the market. The Polish customer is very sceptical, they don't believe that they can get products as good as anybody else in the world."A

The conflict between the Americans' belief that one can rely on the goodness of others versus the Poles' suspicion that somebody has done wrong, occurs between many different levels of daily business in the organization: between superiors and subordinates, and between co-

workers. It also affects the way customers view the product, and the way the employees view the product.

Polish managers describing the differences in interviewing styles uncover other examples, showing that they do not share the same optimistic and trusting view of human nature as do Americans.

“Americans want to hire the best, because the organization will gain from them and you as a boss should be not afraid if you hire a person who is more clever than you. You will benefit from it because the company will benefit.”P

“In state companies you had to protect yourself by not cooperating, a new employee was your potential enemy.”P

Thinking in broader terms of the company’s gain rather than of just one particular interest, is a new way of thinking, especially for those with previous experience in state companies.

“I don’t believe that colleagues are able to evaluate me properly, that they will tell the truth.”P

“I don’t like it because I have little experience in assessing people and you can make a lot of mistakes and hurt them. Only when you know somebody well and only when you have worked with somebody for a long time can you say something which is true.”P

A suspicious attitude mixed with the Polish inclination towards an autocratic management style raises problems with introducing a Western evaluation system. Poles do not like it and have problems adjusting to it. One Polish respondent said: “People can write subjective opinions, but I believe in the objectivity of my boss.” Whereas the main reason for such an appraisal system given by the American manager was: “In the old system you had a boss who evaluated everything, like a God. Now peers have a right to evaluate you. A boss is not objective, your peers can tell more about you.”

The main goal of this evaluation system is an attempt to provide specific feedback of a very constructive nature from the team within which the employee is working. This system derives from the company's concern about the individuals' development. It looks at how a manager is developing his or her employees and if the employees are developing themselves himself over a certain period of time. The stress on teamwork is strongly emphasized in this type of system.

During the first evaluation Poles were surprised at the number of relevant examples included about their behaviour. Many of them did not realize how much progress they had made during their time in a company.

There are obvious reasons why Polish employees do not like this system. It reminds them too much of the network of spies and informers from the past. This negative association is reinforced by old suspicions and biases. The Poles belief that the "Boss is always right" causes the evaluation system to not work as productively as intended.

"Do what is Right"

"Poles want to succeed so quickly that many times they will sacrifice organization to achieve the goal, to get five or six objectives but they don't pick the newest. You have to take a step back and look on your priorities, which project gives you the most benefits. They need some work with planning."A

"When you ask somebody to do something for you, they will do their best effort, but they will try one road and then not come back with an answer. In the U.S. you work for different solutions, when you find them you come back."A

"A good work ethic is not coming in 5 minutes after present time. A good work ethic is coming 5 minutes before. If a project is due tomorrow you have to do the job by tomorrow. It is not the next day or the day after."A

The Polish lack of discipline, the tendency to put things off until the last moment, and a lack of planning skills were all noticed by Americans. The American style places emphasis on precise, accurate data, and places a high value on planning things in advance. But these are skills that Poles did not have an opportunity to develop in the previous system. Polish employees need to be told often what steps are needed in a certain task. Their way of organizing their individual schedules affects their promptness and attentiveness to scheduled appointments, in a way that is different than that of foreigners. The ability to work under pressure at the last minute is even regarded as a virtue by some Poles, who think that Westerners are not able to work as efficiently when a deadline is approaching.

Americans perceive the work ethic outside the organization to be still bad but in the organization people work well. However, foreigners' opinions are different and range from very positive to negative.

“I tell them not to work so hard. I have many examples when I said to people - ‘Don’t work on this weekend’. I tell the secretary to leave at night. I don’t want her to work at night.”A

“A typical American is complacent, with a good standard of living relatively secure. A lot of people are interested in doing better for themselves. Poles in comparison with them seem to learn new ways of doing things. They want to see personal growth and financial growth. They have a strong desire to improve. The approach to longer hours is not a case in US. Poles keep longer hours and they don’t have any compensation, whereas in the U.S. it will be very rare.”A

“I am extremely surprised about the work ethic of Poles. In my mind it was such a distinction that Poles have a poor work ethic. But with the comparison to Americans, the desire to work hard versus Americans is bigger. People have much more addiction than my counterparts.”A

“One of the questions I’m asked a lot by people who just started to work here is ‘What are the working hours here?’ In our company you have to do your job, it does not matter how long, effects are important. A lot of Poles are coming at 9 and leave at 5 and they don’t care what else is going on.”A

“We don’t have strict working hours I am always here after 9, I am famous for that. On the other hand I work until 7 and I work 10 hours a day. Nobody tells me that I work too little.”P

“It means nothing that some Americans come earlier in the morning than Poles, the quantity of hours is not important but the quality of your work.”P

Generally Poles prefer, unlike Americans, to come in a little bit later and to stay a little bit later. A majority of the problems with different work styles have to do with the transition from the chaotic pace of a centrally planned economy to the programmed efficiency of the MNC. This shift requires new skills in strategic planning and time management, requiring the increased organization of the individual’s work. Adjusting to a new pace, and being able to work efficiently under pressure due to increased competition demands a completely new work style for some Poles. The personal adjustment of Polish managers includes the transition from managing smaller business operations to the larger more complex operations in a big corporation. This adjustment also includes moving to an efficiency-oriented system geared to profits.

“Americans look differently at the firm, they associate themselves very closely with it. They are part of the firm. In the past I never felt such a relationship with the firm.”P

“This new way of thinking that you have to have a strong psychological connection with the firm surprised me. You have to show you are interested. In the past you escaped from your job as quickly as possible.”P

“In a state company, if somebody has a problem, he or she solves it with their own interests in mind. Here we are thinking in terms of the benefit of the whole company.”^P

“I made a mistake and I regarded it as my mistake because I was responsible for it, but the problem was judged as a problem and loss for all of us. This is a different way of thinking and it is the attitude of this company. Success belongs to everybody and so does failure. This is better than making one person responsible for it.”^P

Belonging to the firm, teamwork, and thinking of the company's best interests rather than one's own, are all part of a new attitude which needs to be further developed. The degree of personal involvement and responsibility in the daily drama of company affairs is valued very highly by Western companies. The stress is on teamwork; not on destructive competition, which would be counterproductive for the whole firm.

Notes

¹ Adler, N.(1982) “Understanding the ways of understanding: cross-cultural methodology reviewed. In Comparative Management: Essays in Contemporary Thought, R.N.Farmer (ed.) Greenwich, CT: JAI Press

² Hofstede, G.(1983) Motivation, Leadership and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad? Organization Dynamics, 9:42-63.

*The Modern Crusade: The Missionaries of Management come to Eastern Europe**

Monika Kostera

Introduction

The connections between religion and society have been explored since Weber's fundamental work on capitalism and protestant ethics. The influences of religion and theology on philosophy (e.g. Kolakowski, 1989a: 166; on social structure (e.g. Kolakowski; 1984); on economy (e.g. Boulding, 1989a; Boulding, 1989b; Stein, 1989) and on organization of industrial society (e.g. Fromm, 1989) have since long been a topic for research and insight. The links between organization and religion also deserve some consideration. Organizations offer their participants rewards not only of a material kind, but increasingly also of an existential and perhaps even spiritual nature. They give people an identity and perform an ontological function, providing a sense of Being to the participants (Schwartz, 1987). Finally, they are *a way of*

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life (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993), cultures providing *networks of meaning* (Smircich, 1987). Participants are being socialized into organizations (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993; Czarniawska-Joerges and Kunda, 1992) and culture is used as a means of control (Van Maanen and Kunda, 1989). The cultural perspective (cf. Smircich, 1983) offers us, thus, a means of understanding the vital - or, in Schwartz's terms, ontological role of organizations to humans, and also what I would call the religious significance of organizing.

Metaphors are playing an increasingly important role in social sciences and organizational analysis (cf. Morgan, 1986; Smircich, 1983). In this paper, the business organization is seen as a religious organization and business administration - as religion. The metaphor, besides pointing to an important dimension of organizing, also helps us to see the current transition taking place in Eastern and Central Europe from a new and slightly unorthodox perspective. What is happening is not "only" an economic and political shift, not "just" the liberation of repressed peoples, but can also be seen as a religious mission: the capitalist West transmitting its managerial religion to eastern "heathens".

Culture, Symbols and Myths

Culture I understand as the *medium of life* (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991), through which we make sense of our lives, and that enables us to communicate with the world, with the extensive use of symbols (cf. Schütz, 1982).

It is through symbols that we give meaning to an originally intransparent reality (Schütz, 1982; 1996). Symbols are, according to Schütz, the outcome of choice between multiple options in the sense-making of human perception, making experiences persistent and continuous. The symbols, present in our memory, are open for interpretation and reinterpretation (1982). Symbols can constitute

important elements of the social and cultural context we live in, an intersubjective world of our common experience (Schütz and Luckmann, 1973).

Besides symbols, this paper also deals with myths. Myths are, according to Kolakowski, a specific kind of symbols, not containing words, but occurrences and persons. The myth is accounted through, or translated into words. Myths enable people to participate in those events, ontologically important to them, through a symbolical “immobilizing” of time (1967). Myth is seldom considered as a serious tool of understanding in management literature (Bowles, 1989).

[M]yth was ... seen as something antithetical to fact; myth is opposed to reality, an implicit assumption being that our set of beliefs is true and not as primitive or arbitrary as those of other cultures or epochs.”

(Ingersoll and Adams, 1986 as quoted in Bowles, 1989:406).

Mythology elicits and supports a sense of awe before mystery of being, provides a set of ideas which enable humans to answer the most vital questions, socializes the individual, and guides the him or her towards maturation (Bowles, 1989, after Campbell, 1976). Bowles (1992b) also notifies the role of myth in social life, one beyond the “ego psychology”, enabling understanding insights offered by the collective unconscious.

Rests to settle that the author is an adherent of the interpretive approach (cf. Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992a). The conclusions are not claimed to be universal nor generally applicable, but as an insight that can be shared and discussed. The empirical material is founded on my various experiences. From these experiences I chose a few windows (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992a) that I consider “typical”. I do not claim them to be statistically representative, they are however, substantially representative, i.e. represent the context described in the paper. I contrast the windows with quotations from historical sources (on religious

mission among various “pagan” peoples). The quotations come from library research on the topic.

Religion

Religion is a kind of culture (cf. Geertz, 1973), constructed as a medium of spiritual life. According to Kolakowski, religion is the “[s]ocially established cult of infinite reality” (1988:9). After Kolakowski (1989b) I distinguish between two approaches to religion: the functionalist and the idiogenetic and holistic. The first approach is grounded on the assumption that religion, through the participation in ceremonies, rituals, institutions, etc. offers the individuals a substitute for other values (or meanings). Religious life is thus a form of communication that offers stability of social structures and institutions. The other understanding of religion implies that religion is rooted in human needs, not related genealogically nor functionally to other more “primary” roots. Humans are seeking transcendental values through religion understood this way.

According to Kolakowski, big religions had the ability to satisfy all non-religious needs of past societies: the political, societal and these of learning about reality. To achieve this, *sacrum* could not be instrumentally understood and had to have an autonomous authority (1988). This point of view is analogous with Fromm’s: the “to have” versus “to be” approach to faith.

In religious, political or personalistic understanding, the concept of faith can have two entirely different meanings, depending on if we use it in the sense of “to have” or “to be”. In the attitude “to have” faith is the possessing of answers not needing rational verification. “
(Fromm, 1989:44).

These answers are offered by others to whom we abide. These “others” are usually a bureaucracy, that offers us a sense of certainty.

Faith is the price we pay for this sense of security that comes from belonging to a big social group that deprives us of the demanding responsibility of autonomous thinking and decision making. Believers possess this certitude. Faith claims to have the ultimate, absolute knowledge that is valid, because the people protecting and preserving it think it to be undisputed. Faith in the sense “to be” is not connected to beliefs in certain ideas in the first place, but

inner orientation, *route*. It would be a better way to express it to say that one *is* in faith, rather than one *has* faith...” (Fromm, 1989: 45).

In this paper the religious metaphor is based on the idiogenetic, “to be”- view on religion.

Substitutes for Religion in High Modernity

In high modernity (Giddens, 1991) religion tends to be replaced by science (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993; Kolakowski, 1989a). Fromm perceives yet another substitute for traditional religion, more widespread and powerful: work: Work has become the only way to get love and respect and thus the post-Christian religion emerged, that of the industrial society (1984). The lost meanings (of work and life) are replaced by a surrogate - motivation (Sievers, 1986). So the economic organizations keep humans going, in a fragmented and shallow way, yet offering people the only meaning generally available in modern society (even if it be a surrogate).

The religious (and related, focussing on the experiences, that can be regarded as “religious”, according to the above quoted definitions) metaphor has been used (fractionally or in-depth) in management and organization literature, to achieve a literary emphasis, or to demonstrate a certain aspect of organization and organizing.

So, for example, eminent management theoreticians have been called “management gurus” (Clutterbuck and Bickerstaffe, 1982). Expressions such as “evangelism” has also been used (Bowles, 1992b:20). A lot has been said and written on charismatic leadership, especially in the corporate culture mainstream of literature (e.g. Deal and Kennedy, 1982; McCormack, 1986; Pascale and Athos, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1986). Höpfl (1994) explicitly speaks of the religious significance of leadership in modern organizations. Management literature has been likened to mythological biographies of Late Antiquity and Middle Ages labelled *edifying literature* (Furusten, 1992).

Bowles has been using religious metaphors to explore organizational myths (1989; 1992b), unconscious (or religious, in my perspective here) needs and symbols (1992a; 1992b) and their consequences for organizational action, human relations (1992c), life in organizations (1992b) and individual maturation (1992a). Bowles (1992a) concluded that modern organizations do have a significant impact on the individual’s potential for maturation or individuation such as Jung (1968) has defined it. Organizations model a mass mind, proceed with collectivization and objectivization, they offer ontologic rewards but without deeper religious sense (Bowles, 1992a).

Sievers asserts that “organization and enterprises tend to become surrogates for the churches” (1988:36). Further, he maintains that these organizations are based on

the assumption that there is evidently no evidence and, therefore; no further understanding beyond what obviously is obvious: the companies’ and its’ members welfare. (1988:36-37)

The metaphor: business administration as religion and business organization as religious institution is not only an interesting way of depicting the phenomena but, in modern society, also a useful tool to achieve a greater understanding of the organizational world. In Alvesson’s (1993) terms, the religious metaphor is thus a “second level”,

while the cultural-symbolist (see e.g. Turner, 1986, 1990) - a “first level” metaphor.

In my opinion the cultural perspective is fundamental in the undertaking to understand the ontologic role that organizations play in the human life. Looking through the cultural glasses helped people to realize that organizations are not only a “tool” or “instrument” (or machine) for the achievement of goals, intended by the constructor, but a way of life. Organizations are, furthermore, a way of *spiritual life*, offering to their participants a set of meanings, together with proper interpretations (also a mental escape from the inevitability of death, as organizations are a substitute for immortality, cf. Sievers, 1986). They offer myths and other important symbols, helping them to deal with the irrational and non-rational, they become a moral frame of reference, through the shared norms and values.

The ones to lead their sheep in this kind of religious institutions, are the managers and organizational leaders. They know how to interpret symbols, they, together with the “experts”, the management consultants, offer meanings to the (organizational) people. Leaders perform a vital societal role - the one belonging to priests, namely, in Czarniawska-Joerges’ words,

to provide the rest of the cast and the audience with the illusion of controllability... The arbitrariness of life - especially organizational life - is too frightful to envisage. A leader who fails to provide the illusion... by showing us the illusion for what it is, cannot be applauded. The illusion must be supported at whatever cost. (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993: 42)

Management educators and consultants teach managers how to perform this role.

***Religion of Business Administration comes
to Eastern Europe - the Mission***

The modern business organization of the western type I see as a religious institution, providing the fulfillment of religious needs (as I have defined above) of the participants. Business administration as a modern religion has its priests: the managers and leaders of business, its missionaries: management consultants, management educators and its prophets: the authors of management books. While the priests look to their church-attendants, the missionaries are busy with transmitting the symbols and myths of their religion to the heathens, and supporting the priests. After the fall of the Berlin Wall a thriving field for missionary quest has been opened. The not yet redeemed peoples are a thrilling opportunity to strengthen the faith of the own believers - to convert the idolatrous has perhaps always been a means of strengthening the faith of the ones already saved.

It is widely believed that the East should “learn” from the West (this is particularly visible to the reader of East European press, such as myself) and that it has a long way to run before it “catches up” (this point is often stressed in Polish mass media). The desire to “catch up” (or, as Orgogozo put it, “East European aspirations towards Eldorado now”, 1992:596) is reflected in the flood of western models, publications, visiting professors and consultants coming to Eastern and Central Europe. First of all, the Polish language became enriched immediately after 1989 with such terms as: *management* (or *menedzment* - instead of or simultaneously with the Polish term: *zarzadzanie*), *manager* (or *menedzer* - instead of *kierownik*), *cash-flow*, *controlling*, *businessman* and *businesswoman*, *business* or *biznes*, etc. *Marketing* existed since long already, as did *dywizjonalizacja* and *holding*. Similar things happened to other languages of ex-Eastern Bloc countries.

The white missionaries showed a greater or lesser sensitivity to the native languages of the pagans they sought to convert to Christian faith. Some, like the Jesuits of Missiones in Latin America, used the native language, while communicating with the Indians. Others failed to do so. It is however true that missions spread the original language of the missionaries, which ultimately became the national - as Spanish in Latin America - or the official language - as English in the colonial India and French in Algeria.

Sometimes the catholic missionaries, who sometimes used Latin, especially to write more important letters and documents, could be met with adversity from suspicious natives. The following conversation took part between a Chinese dignitary and a Catholic missionary, whose letter the former had confiscated:

'In which language is [this letter] written?'

'In Latin.'

'This is very suspect indeed! Why don't you write in Chinese?'

(Hunermann, 1961:273)

The above conversation reminds of some complaints by Polish postgraduate students. The students, most of them in their late 40s, complained that some of the lecturers used foreign words. One commented: "I feel like listening to a Turkish sermon" (this is a common Polish expression, meaning that you listen to something you do not understand). They expressed their anger with this kind of treatment: "Why can't they speak Polish?", but at the same time they refused to talk about it with the lecturers in question. They probably felt ashamed of not being "adequate", not *au courant*.

Being "international", "American" or "British" became a virtue *per se*, which is also reflected in the way other products are marketed. Says a private entrepreneur leading a marketing agency:

I often have to put English text and names on the labels of my clients' products, the clients insist. Sometimes the description of the product is in English, I think it is weird, the consumer often does not understand the text. Somewhere on the label, in

a corner, with a small font, they add 'Made in Poland'. But this is how products sell nowadays in our country.

Also genuine western made products invade our markets. They are marketed and advertized on TV, sometimes, in the case of the Polish TV, direct translations (often in incorrect and hardly understandable Polish) are accepted and broadcasted. The already quoted entrepreneur remarks:

Many of the advertized western products have already run their life cycle out in the West. They advertize for the 'old version' in Poland and for a 'new', improved one on Sky or MTV.

The white missionaries brought with them glass pearls and mirrors to attract the 'pagans'. The Africans and the Indians would do almost anything to get the 'precious' goods of the white people. 'Having learned that the [Indians] willingly sell their women for European 'glitter', such as beads, hair-pins, metal buckles, they [the white settlers] threw themselves to initiate contacts with the Indians. A [...] Brazilian historian, Varnhagen, found through studies of Jesuit chronicles from the 15th Century, that in that epoch it was possible to buy a young Indian girl for a... hair-pin. (Wojcik, 1974:23).

It has to be remembered that before 1989, Eastern and Central Europe were ruled in an undemocratic and totalitarian way (Staniszki, 1989; Wesolowski and Wnuk-Lipinski, 1992). Totalitarian rule, is, according to Wesolowski and Wnuk-Lipinski, "the rule of an uncontrolled elite, supported by a mass political party, and executed by bureaucratic institutions that pervade public life" (1992:85). The people were suffering from more or less direct oppression and their human rights were frequently and notoriously violated. Market economy and western type democracy seemed to them after 1989 almost as the "coming of the Messiah" and this is also what my American interlocutor (private communication, Winter 1991; young American participating in assistance program) alluded to, while describing his task:

I think my job is very important. The Polish people have fought for their freedom, now they are trying to create a democratic society, for the first time since the beginning of World War II. They really had a tough time under communism.

It seems indubitable that among pre-cortesian Indians morality did not reach their level of intelligence. Their religion, indeed, does not appear as anything but an ensemble of mere rituals: human sacrifices, ritual drunkenness and anthropophagy; they were all too often bloody and immoral. (Ricard, 1933:43)

The West is supporting the ex-communist countries financially, through the activity of many foundations, offering important loans, grants, programs, etc. This help is more than welcome by the often underinvested and poor countries. It is, however, often difficult to acquire credit or financial support for the East and Central Europeans, as the formal requirements are viewed as complicated and far from what the ex-communist societies are used to. "It is impossible and infuriating; they make me paranoid and I start thinking they do it on purpose" - so the difficulties with filling application forms and taking care of the formalities when applying for western grants were commented by a young researcher (private communication, Spring 1993). Many of the Polish loans "wait" unused (J. Kostera, 1992). What more, they are often connected to specific western services and products which have to be bought if the credit is granted, or so at least my interviewees affirmed (explorative effort: interviews with academics and businesspeople, Spring, 1993).

It should be remembered that white missionaries often offered genuine valuable help to the natives they were (and still are) working with. The best known example is, perhaps, the one of the Missiones mission in Latin America. But there are other as well (e.g. Si-ing, 1940, Ricard, 1933). However, with this help went the new faith as an 'additional' offering.

The most important feature of the "new era" of transition is, however, the focus on management and the western-type business organization.

As an addition to already existing management education institutions (they were not many; in Poland it was in the first place the School of Management of the Warsaw University and also the Central School of Planning and Statistics, currently: the Warsaw School of Economics), new institutions started to mushroom throughout the ex-Eastern Bloc. They often have “international” in their names, or including an English word, e.g. “management” or “business”. Management education is growlingly popular in Poland and is viewed as one of the most dependable (or perhaps even the most dependable) path to professional career (before studies in foreign languages, law and international trade), as a pilot study presented in the popular weekly *Polityka* indicates (Nowakowska, 1993).

The interest in management is enormous. An employee of a Polish publishing company said: “Say ‘management’ and people will come running to buy it, whatever it is.” It is also easy to observe: the bookstores are full of publications on management, of various quality. According to the vendors the clients ask for these books and they sell very well (my interviews, Warsaw and Karpacz 1993).

Throughout the country numerous seminars, courses and complete studies are arranged by western institutions. These programs are sometimes of high and sometimes of poor quality. Some are organized together with Polish institutions, private or public. They have though one thing in common: they teach not only “new methods, techniques and concepts”, but also (or is it: in the first place?) *a new set of norms and values.*¹

In 1989 I have participated in a seminar organized by an eminent western institution, aimed at training in management and management consulting.

The participants found themselves seated in a classroom, reminding of a school-class. A group of people from industry sat in the front half of the class. The back was occupied by University people, among them one tenured professor and two assistants. Into the class

came in the visiting lecturer and his young assistant. They presented themselves as professional consultants with academic background and the lecture started.

First, the senior lecturer explained that communism had a very demoralizing impact on the society and in order to achieve wealth and success the Eastern and Central Europeans will have to work hard. It is not an acceptable attitude any more to wait for the state “giving” the citizens all they demanded. Market economy meant competition, hard work and problem solving. Communism was not a sustainable economic system, anyone could see that.

The Indians were not used to hard work, they lived a life in harmony with nature and they had to be ‘persuaded’ to work by the Jesuits in a special way - work was associated to religious ceremonies so that the natives understand its importance (Wójcik, 1974). ‘The natives do not cultivate the soil, nor do they keep any tamed animals. Here there are no cows, horses, goats, sheep nor chicken. The natives do not eat anything except for maniok roots, fish and fruit growing abundantly in the forests. In spite of this they are of remarkably high stature and good health [...]’ (ibid:18).

The Poles were, however, a very dynamic nation, the lecturer went on. He himself, as well as his assistant, were of Polish origin. It was here in Poland, that democracy was born in the Eastern Bloc. *Solidarnosc*, the great social movement of 1980 was an event that shook the world. Now, after the fall of communism, the Poles would easily adapt to the new environment. They have an “economic mind”, they will learn fast and outwit their teachers. Here the lecturer smiled with benevolence.

If our colonists, that settle down on these territories, learn the language of these natives, with facility they will convert them to the true religion, in which with God’s help they may succeed! It should be noted, that these natives seem to be honest people. God gave them human faces and postures, to become like us,

and the Lord, Jesus Christ, did not direct us here by accident, knowing that Your highness wants to multiply His honor through the redemption of new souls to the sacred catholic faith! [...] (Wójcik, 1974: 17-18).

The lecturer told us a few anecdotes, acquainted us briefly with his job and explained, that the assistant would now introduce some basic western managerial concepts and theories we will certainly be needing. He left the room and the assistant, in heart breaking poor Polish, explained the concept of costs, fixed and variable. Then he went on to the price-setting and the relationship between demand and supply in a market economy. To the academics and many of the industry people these issues were trivial, but made almost unrecognizable through the language. The assistant emphasized strongly what he was saying: this was certainly the “good news” of market economy.

The Augustines admitted the pagans to the Holy Mass before their baptism. After the Gospels, a minister explained to them the meaning of the ceremonies ... Finally, he held a short lesson in catechism. The Indians were not admitted to baptism before they knew the 'Pater', the 'Credo', the commandments of God and the Church and before they had sufficient comprehension of the sacraments. (Ricard, 1933: 105).

Now the junior lecturer returned. He was carrying a video. He explained that we were to see a lecture of the “big economic guru”, Michael Porter. He told a few anecdotes from Porter’s life, and then we watched the film. The video was attractive to watch, and included many suggestions about “how to succeed in business”, both recipes and insights. The video offered the participants a possibility to review what they already knew or believed in, in a splendid “package”.

The more modern Catholic missionaries educate the pagans in the new faith not so much by making them learn the catechism by heart, but by teaching them about what being a good Christian means in practice. They often account the stories of the saints and other pious Catholics.²

After having acquainted us with the new “religion”, the lecturers conducted a computer game. The participants filled in questionnaires, after having discussed matters through in small groups. Then the lecturer collected the papers and left the room to “process the data in his computer”, which we did not see. It was located somewhere else, in the lecturer’s individual room. Then he came back with the results. The winning team was honored and celebrated. Other teams were also celebrated - they had “done a good job”. Everybody felt satisfied, this was perhaps the most gratifying moment of the course, judging from “break gossip”. None of the gossip, neither critical or complimenting, were given voice in class.

The course participants reacted in a way, that e.g. Jankowicz (1994) describes as common among Polish managers and hindering creative learning. Jankowicz, involved in management education in Poland, observed a passive attitude among Polish managers, waiting for the lecturer “to teach them”. On explicit request from the lecturer that they participate in a more active way, people tended to react with embarrassment or even started to protest.

The participants were more loquacious in between classes, commenting and forming networks. They formed a lobby that ultimately would have the aim of grouping influential people within industry and management consulting. “This was the main benefit from the course” - a participant commented. The redeemed souls would now carry the mission further.

This kind of brief course is, of course, not the only way of communicating the Good News of Market Economy and Business Administration to the post-communist heathens. An elite must be formed, competent natives who will further the faith in practice and theory.

A modern Church cannot live without leaders. The humble mass of peasants, craftsmen, all who live of the work of their hands and to whom, in the New Spain, the missionaries had brought

the security of tomorrow, this humble mass should be directed, schooled and educated by an elite. A laique, a clerical and an elite of religious orders. The indispensibility of [such elites] is not to be disregarded, it is, to put it this way, of a theological importance.
(Ricard, 1933: 160).

Knowing about the importance of formation of such elites, the white missionaries established some colleges for education of future priests and civil leaders. The most succesful schools educated natives
(Ricard, 1933).

Thus, several high-standard, prestigious institutions have been established, based on cooperation between eminent Polish and western educational institutions. One of them is offering full fledged MBA studies. Some of the lectures are in English and, probably, most of the course materials are. The students, selected out of many candidates, are highly motivated and hard working. The work load is immense, compared to other management education curricula I know of in Poland. The students receive regularly bulky readings and pass demanding exams, even though they are busy with their work elsewhere - most of them are executives for various enterprises, some of which are of considerable size and importance. The course includes, among others, sophisticated financial management techniques, modern accounting, computer science, going into details and demanding memorizing of long and complicated texts and procedures.

If the preliminary education of Motolinie represented a minimum, it seams certain that the Pláticas³ des Douze represented, on the contrary, the maximum. Certain indications about the different categories of angels, Seraphins, Cherubins, Thrones, Dominions seem excessive for a preliminary education and extremely complicated.
(Ricard, 1933:108).

The courses, more or less high prestige and more or less advanced, all result in a diploma or degree, from MBA to a simple certificate of completing the course. This document is highly valued by the students and candidates - it gives them a good position on the

labor market. In the terms of my metaphor they acquire a certificate of being baptized and thus members of the “new church”.

The administration of baptism was [...] always preceded by a schooling which could be more or less abbreviated, more or less rapid, depending on the case and the circumstances.

(Ricard; 1933:105).

There are of course different guest lecturers. I see two broad categories of “the management missionaries”: the “free-marketeers” and the “culture sensitive”. While the former tend to concentrate on free market values and classic economics, often explicitly suggesting that the Polish students are to learn the “universally accepted” rules of the game and typically address to an intellectual elite, the latter show concern for the Polish “common man and woman”, gathering information on the culture and students before the lecture and adapting the style and language as much as possible to the listeners. The latter also show interest in the material situation of their listeners, while the former stress the importance of holding on to the crucial values (such as competition, individualism, pragmatism etc.), usually performing in front of middle and upper class students. However, the message taught is typically very much the same: “if you work really hard and economize, you will enjoy the fruits of your labor when the times comes”.

The Catholic and Protestant missionaries resembled each other in the way of thinking. The same sentiment of superiority of Christians, having the knowledge about the revealed truth toward the Chinese: ‘these ignorant pagan’s and the same combination of religious zeal and imperialist ambition... So, the religious practices could be different among the Catholics and Protestants...[but] before their eyes the Chinese pagans appeared in the same condition of ignorance and misery.

(Si-ing, 1940:105).

The method of recruitment of the Catholic missionaries was typically the one of protection of the peasants or of the poor. Because the Chinese used to group themselves in clienteles

they could not have found better protectors against the abus of local authorities or better suppporters than the Catholic missionaries... (Si-ing, 1940:106).

Simultaneously, the method of recruitment of the Protestant missionaries was based on humanitarian works. Because they were rich in personnel and money, thanks to the American element, they occupied themselves much more often with the citizens than with the peasants. They devoted much money at works having to do with hygiene and assistance.

(Si-ing, 1940:107).

I would like to point out that according to my experiences the role of the “culture sensitive” missionaries is more advantageous and helpful than that of the “free marketeers”. The former often stay at Polish hotels, let themselves be invited to people’s homes and thus learn about the culture and the people’s needs and expectations. The “free-marketeers” usually stay at the Marriott in Warsaw (thus their nickname: “the Marriott brigades”), and are said never to leave the hotel except in one of the hotel’s taxis. The “culturally sensitive” often ultimately develop reciprocal relationship with the students.

Communication between West and East: Sermoning the idolatrous

As the above windows show, the communication East-West seems to be pretty uni-directional. It is exactly what I would like to point out in this paper: the general direction for the transfer of symbols and meanings in the world after 1989 is that from West to the East. It is thus not a process of *conversation*, it is a monologue, or, in the terms of my metaphor, a *sermon*. The West is teaching the East to adopt its religion. The missionaries are sometimes cynical, sometimes genuinely devoted and pious, wishing sincerely to see their eastern brothers and sisters saved through the adoption of the “right” faith. They communicate to them the “right” symbols, norms, values and myths -

with the assumption that *if* they only be espoused and used properly, salvation (prosperity and modernity) will be possible for these peoples.

The symbols that the eastern societies are to embrace are various: from the "right" words (the prayers): management, marketing, divisionalization, strategy, etc., through physical artifacts (such as "right" clothes, cars, products) to "mystical" ones, such as advertisements, titles (MBA), prices, costs, taxes, etc. It is the "mystical" symbols that deserves, in my opinion, some more attention. I will here shortly address one of them: the advertisements.

TV-ads are an interesting source of mystical symbols that pervade the Polish everyday life. They are a popular topic for jokes, both at reunions of academics and at country weddings. They are often recited by children, to their parents' delight. Also my students quote TV-ads, most often ironically. Inevitably, the citations awake laughter, even when repeated for the 20th time. Once I have observed children playing: a few run and one was following after them. One of the running kids screamed: "Watch out! WC-Picker is chasing us!" (WC-Picker is a brand aggressively advertized for at the Polish TV currently). Some of the phrases from the ads became a common feature of the everyday language, typically used ironically (the ads are often direct and maladroit translations from English and German).

Myths are a particular kind of symbols. Eastern societies also receive a set of myths that they can now participate in to experience the fundamental truths of the new religion. The most important myths are: the myth of *hard work*, the myth of the *free market* and the one of *economizing*.

An example of the myth of hard work is the well known story of the shoe-shiner who became millionaire ("rags to riches"), also know as the American Dream. This story is being repeated now to the Poles, and the lecturers emphasize the moral lesson: all you have to do is to work hard, and believe in your product. If you do work hard, succes inevitably will follow. There is a protestant ethic moral in the story, a

belief in predestination. Similar myths on the free market are being communicated: the Market as a just judge and the fair allocator. If you only rely on the Market in a 100%, prosperity and justice will follow. These myths (often the British example) are told especially during lectures on privatization. Finally, the third Grand Myth, the one on economizing, is told in its various versions, but perhaps most often about the Japanese, who do not consume what they produce but invest and save. This is offered to the Polish students as the recipe for success and virtue in itself.

The central value of the religion of business administration is the one of *rationality*. It has been pointed out before (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993; Kostera and Wicha, 1994) that modern organizations are primarily rationality-producing constructs. It is true about both communist and capitalist enterprises. However, their rationality criteria were different, as Kostera and Wicha (1994) show. The communist enterprise was based on political rationality, the capitalist - on economic rationality. By economic rationality I mean maximization of material utility. By political rationality I understand maximization of influence and power “utility” (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). Rationality is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966/1983; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992b), and the rules for this construction are contingent with, among other factors, the basic kind of “utility” the society is concerned about to achieve. Thus, the eastern peoples are not only un-believers, they are idolaters and this is exactly what the western missionaries are trying to demonstrate to them: that their way of perceiving the organizational world is “irrational” and that there are “more effective” alternatives (i.e. better suited to reach the desired ends, salvation or well-being). Economic rationality is such an important and self-justifying value that I would claim it is the god of the new religion. In the name of rationality we prepare our accounts, just as Christians do in order to face God at the day of judgement. This does not apply only to purely economic accounts (such as the Annual Report), but everyday life in modern society. In organizations, rationality is produced by introduction

of specialized rationalization actions into the system and through preparing rational accounts for external use - the two methods are interrelated (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993). In modern society this rationality production process is taken for granted and obvious, it is regarded as the unquestioned, most often, unconscious ultimate end and also meaning of (organizational) life.

Salvation, as communicated by the missionaries, is, besides economic well-being and prosperity (measured in GNP per capita), also the modern society itself, seen as a value in itself. To be “well-organized” and “hard-working” on the societal level is an aim as laudable as prosperity. In the “good news” there is a hidden message: “You don’t have to be as wealthy as we are, as long as you are tidy, hygienic, hard-working and frugal”. Wealth is not a value of a new religion, in the western societies people are often living modestly and are very careful about how they spend their money, not at all how the Easterners imagine life in the wealthy (“prosperous”) West.

The most important thing to me is not so much that missionaries from the West are trying to convert Easterners to their religion. What I see as crucial is the fact that the communication is uni-directional. And yet, as Orgogozo (1992) points out, we have so much to learn *from each other and together*, I would add. Orgogozo notes:

[T]he discoveries being made by those fleeing to Western Europe regarding relations of mutual aid and cooperation, the coolness and indifference of wealthy Europeans towards each other, can help us become aware of our most serious deficiencies (Orgogozo, 1992:598).

She explains, that the capitalist society has disregarded the cost free relations, such as family, education and replacing them with sellable goods or services. Easterners have experienced life in a differently constructed society, with other goals and rationalities. In the case of Poland many valuable societal meanings and symbols derive from a powerful experience people have made: the *Solidarnosc* era of 1980-

1981, and to a certain degree the years of popular dissent and skepticism during the martial law. Furthermore, under communism it was quite “normal” for working class people to go to cinema, theater, to read books. Especially during the 80. there were many “people’s flying universities” active in Poland, among them one lead by Jerzy Popieluszko, a catholic priest, who organized high quality cultural activities in his church, including lectures by eminent professors, concerts, theater performances, directed primarily to blue collar workers of Huta Warszawa (Warsaw Steel Mill). Another typical example: a note in a Polish daily *Zycie Warszawy* of may 7, 1993 about the yearly film festival. The western partners were surprised, according to the note, that such a “post-communist festival of ambitious films” be arranged in Poland, but since it promised to be profitable, they accepted the idea. The festival lasted for two weeks and was a feast for those interested in non-commercial, ambitious films. According to the media, the overall interest in such events, the tendency to read books other than *Harlequin*, see films other than Hollywood productions and video tapes, is in decline in Poland. What people from Eastern Europe so light heartedly give up today seems to be non-negligible. It is, by the way, not what the conservative-nationalist parties in today’s Poland mean by “taking care of traditional values”. What they mean is reviving the values from before World War II and decreasing some of the human rights (for example those of women and sexual minorities) (cf. e.g. Kostera et al., 1994).

Moreover, the adoption of the new religion in itself might not bring the desired ends. What Western Europe achieved they had a high price to pay for, and also it was to an important extent the result of the Marshall plan, not just “hard work and economizing”. Are the East Europeans willing to (and able of) pay this price? And would it lead them in the desired direction, considering the role of the Marshall plan for the development of the economy of Western Europe? And then, would it really be worthwhile? These questions will probably stay unanswered, but they are certainly worth to be asked. By both Easterners and Westerners.

To summarize: it is time that we acknowledge that the East has a culture of its own, an own religion. Eastern Europe was long supposed to suffer a kind of “no-culture”, negligible or even simply negative, in other words “not deserving” to be labelled a “culture”, instead it was designated as a “system”.

Heathens waiting to be sermoned

There is another side to the management crusade in Eastern Europe. People reacted with solidarity and ironic resistance toward administered symbols during the 80s of martial law in Poland, and there is a dear myth about the Polish society as being particularly unsubmitive and ironic to attempts at colonization. People pride themselves in the Polish history of contradiction and sarcasm: how the Poles make jokes during Nazi occupation, then during communism. This attitude seems lost somehow in the recent development. How come?

One of the answers may be that the colonized somehow allow colonization through their passivity or even active expectations. A western academic told me a story about a help project that he was engaged in. Before 1989 the Polish partners were eager to act as partners and he thought of that period as cooperation, even if the material support went in just from one direction. The Poles offered other kinds of support and advice that the Westerners appreciated. After 1989 the attitudes changed: the very same people began to expect to *be helped*, to be offered material support no longer as a link in cooperation but as a “gift”. The story tells about a mysterious metamorphosis in the minds of people. More often, the Westerners coming as missionaries are not the same people who came in the 80, to participate in the Polish experience of *Soliarnosc* and then martial law. These Westerners were typically remarkable people, coming to Poland to give and to take, to

participate and to experience. The contemporary “missionaries” are usually consultants, profit minded and economically oriented. The “disciples” are typically not the same people who cooperated with the Westerners coming during the 80s. Those were dissidents, workers, academics, people dissatisfied with the regime. Today’s disciples are managers, Polish consultants, also economically oriented. However, the metamorphosis of societal attitudes at large remains as a reality. The phenomenon has certainly complex roots, that can be traced to feelings of helplessness that the public opinion polls tell about (CBOS, 1993-July 1994), Polish myths about the “rich western society”, attitudes that the communist era has successfully developed in people: that the “rich” should give to the “poor” who just have to take and nothing more, etc. However, the picture again reminds of the proud Native American cultures, that nevertheless gave up their dignity when western missionaries came to preach them about the white man’s condition. The Polish people have long believed that the western god is more powerful: his or her disciples are rich, happy and young. When the Wall fell down (who knows? maybe it was the western god who performed this miracle?), the Easterners resolved to abide, “open their minds”, and this is precisely a question of faith, to which I shall return again in the conclusions.

Conclusions: No happy endings

In modern society, religious needs were (and still are) being fulfilled in a superficial way by organization and especially the business organization. The modern religion of business administration with economic rationality as god has long served as a surrogate for deeper spiritual experiences. It is now being transferred to Eastern Europe, trying to find a model for organization of social life after the fall of communism. This process I have here described as mission. The uni-directional communication is not only an imperfection and a relative loss of values that the Eastern Europeans could offer their western

neighbors. The Westerners probably need these values as much as the Easterners need western experiences. The fact that the communication is so intense (as the metaphor of “mission” suggests) and uni-directional also means that we all are likely to lose some important values forever. If the East Europeans convert, there will be nowhere to look for the values given up and nobody to learn from.

Even if the profit oriented practitioners (the economic rationality driven priests of business religion) may be moderately inclined to “learn from the East”, then perhaps the academics might be more interested to honestly examine reality. Both eastern and western researchers could seriously consider a closer and mutual cooperation for shared insights about a common future.

Another important conclusion concerns the attitudes to democracy. When they finally recognize the current situation as colonization and start to resist it, they may refuse to believe in democracy as well. The attitudes toward both free market and democracy are already declining, as public opinion surveys show (CBOS, 1993- July 1994). In a recent survey a majority declared that the Polish democracy was faulty. While 62 % said that they in principle were for democracy, as many as 37% considered dictatorship as necessary “in certain cases”. The same percentage claimed that they would welcome a “strong person” as Poland’s leader (CBOS, 1993/ 7:5-18). This parallels with people’s growing disillusion with the free market, as a source of injustice rather than justice, oppression rather than freedom and poverty rather than wealth. The western god can be rejected just as easily as he or she was accepted. Together with the “new rationality” all other values can be refused, among them democracy. The religious metaphor helps to discern this dimension of social reality, and also perhaps provides with a perspective to understand the dynamics that pervades it. Democracy and the culture of organizing of a society are also about faith, and lost faith is not only a consequence of the deteriorating material situation. There is a need to believe

common for humans, thus a readiness to trust and to distrust, beyond the obvious. These needs deserve to be taken more seriously.

Notes

¹ Speaking of missionaries here, I mean only the lecturers and consultants who come to Poland on behalf of institutions and firms, pursuing well defined and material interests, earning very good money, and coming with ready made “packages” of knowledge and know-how. There are lecturers who come from entirely different reasons and work together with Polish partners, often in answer to their explicit questions and problems.

² Modern mission activity is familiar to me mainly through correspondence with a Catholic missionary working in New Guinea.

³ The *Pláticas* of Br. Bernardino de Sahagún, found by K.P. Pascual Saura and published in 1924 by P. Póu y Marti.

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„Wir, die wir einen Floh beschlagen haben...“¹
***Produktivität und Profit in einem
Moskauer Joint Venture***

**Birgit Müller, Elena Mechtcherkina, Kirill Levinson,
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Während sich Moskau im Herbst 1993 unter und über der Erde in einen Straßenmarkt verwandelt hatte, waren die Strategien und Perspektiven der russischen Betriebe von der Zerschlagung von Staatsmonopolen, Privatisierungen und Joint Ventures geprägt. Mit welchen Vorstellungen die Beschäftigten eines mittelgroßen Moskauer Betriebes sich für ein Joint Venture entschieden und was sich dadurch in ihrem täglichen Leben und Arbeiten veränderte, war Ausgangspunkt unserer Untersuchung in der Ersatzteilerfertigung einer Moskauer Firma für Aufzugsservice - wir wollen sie hier "Vijshe"² (höher!) nennen - die seit 1. Januar 1993 Teil eines Joint Ventures mit der amerikanischen Firma - nennen wir sie "INTEC" (International Elevator Corporation) - geworden war. In der Ersatzteilerfertigung mit im Oktober 1993 noch 230 Beschäftigten und einer eigenen Verwaltungsstruktur, führten wir im Herbst 1993 mit sozialanthropologischen Methoden über einen Monat Erhebungen durch. Wir interviewten, jeweils zu zweit, 15 leitende Angestellte und mehr als 19 Arbeiter und Brigadeleiter an ihrem Arbeitsplatz. Wir besuchten einige von ihnen zu Hause und nahmen an Informationsveranstaltungen und Betriebsversammlungen teil.

Unsere Forschergruppe³ bestehend aus fünf deutschen, französischen und russischen Forschern und einem Übersetzer debattierte in vier Sprachen und war in der täglichen Forschungsarbeit beständig mit den unterschiedlichen Sichtweisen der Russen und Westeuropäer auf das jeweils "Eigene" und auf das "Fremde" im Betrieb konfrontiert. Was einerseits eine Schwierigkeit in der Koordination der gemeinsamen Forschungsarbeit darstellte, war aber gleichzeitig auch ihre Stärke, da wir so auf Aspekte aufmerksam wurden, die Forschern aus einem einzigen kulturellen Hintergrund wohl entgangen wären. Der in der westeuropäischen Marktwirtschaft aufgewachsenen Deutschen und der Französin schienen die Argumente der westlichen Joint Venture Partner und ihre Entwicklungsstrategien für das Unternehmen vertraut, während sie für die russischen Forscher den Reiz der Neuheit hatten. Während sich die russischen Forscher vor allem für die Frage interessierten, ob das Joint Venture dem Betrieb und den dort Beschäftigten überhaupt Vorteile gebracht hat, und ob es nicht besser für sie gewesen wäre, unabhängig zu werden, suchten die westeuropäischen Forscher nach Spuren des Alten im Neuen. Sie fragten nach den Inhalten, die in den Schulen sozialistischer Arbeit vermittelt worden waren, nach der Funktionsweise des sozialistischen Wettbewerbs und den Überbleibseln der planwirtschaftlichen Organisation in der Verwaltung des Joint Venture. Die unterschiedlichen Sichtweisen beflügelten die Debatten unter uns Forschern und die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit den Aspekten des betrieblichen Alltags, die uns sonst leicht selbstverständlich vorgekommen wären.

Der Betrieb lag in einem Wohngebiet: zehnstöckige graue Wohnblocks, die Straße voller Löcher, einige Müllcontainer, die scheinbar nie geleert wurden und auf denen sich die Krähen tummelten. Der Betrieb mit seinen neuen Fertigungshallen, die schon seit fünfzehn Jahren im Bau waren, hob sich zunächst kaum von dieser Atmosphäre ab. Aber im Laufe unseres Aufenthaltes konnten wir jeden Tag die Fortschritte begutachten, die die Renovierung des Betriebes machte.

Eine hohe Mauer wurde errichtet, so daß es bald nicht mehr möglich sein würde, von der Straße aus auf den Hof zu sehen. Entlang der Mauer wurde ein Beet angelegt, auf dem vielleicht einmal Gras und Blumen wachsen würden nach dem Vorbild mancher westlicher Betriebe. Von der Eingangshalle aus konnten die Beschäftigte durch die offene Tür in die neue Halle blicken, die frisch gestrichen, hoch und hell war und damit im starken Kontrast zu den anderen alten Fertigungshallen stand.

Jeden Morgen, sobald alle Mitglieder der Gruppe eingetroffen waren, versuchten wir bei der Direktionssekretärin ein kleines unauffälliges Büro zu bekommen, in dem wir den Stand der Forschung besprechen und die Erhebungen in den Werkstätten und Büros planen konnten. In den vier Wochen unseres Aufenthalts gelang uns dies nicht. Stattdessen residierten wir im Büro der Direktorin, während sie zu einer zehntägigen INTEC Schulung in die USA gereist war, im Büro des deutschen Beraters, in dem des Chefingenieurs, in dem der Personaldirektorin und im großen Versammlungsraum. Die Arbeitsräume der Betriebsleitung waren für die Beschäftigten in der Fertigung die Räume der Macht, die sie nach dem Parlamentsgebäude in Moskau "das weiße Haus" nannten. Um nicht sogleich als Gehilfen der Direktion und Mitglieder des "weißen Hauses" zu erscheinen, versuchten wir, uns in jedem Gespräch deutlich von dieser Macht abzugrenzen und immer wieder zu betonen, daß wir nicht für die oberste Betriebsleitung oder den Joint Venture Partner spionierten und von einer unabhängigen Forschungsorganisation finanziert werden.

Wir versuchten, in der Untersuchung dieses einen Betriebs zu ergründen: Wie wirkt sich die Managementphilosophie der westlichen Partner im Reden und im Handeln der russischen Verwaltung aus? Was erwartete die Belegschaft von dem Joint Venture Partner und inwieweit erfüllte oder enttäuschte er diese Erwartungen? Inwieweit setzten sich die alten paternalistischen Strukturen zwischen Betriebsdirektion und Arbeitern mit all ihrer Willkür und Wärme fort? Bis zu welchem Punkt erkannten die Beschäftigten ihre alte Betriebsleitung nun als Arbeitgeber an, dem sie ihre Arbeitskraft ver-

kauften und mit dem sie um bessere Arbeitsbedingungen und Bezahlung ringen mußten? Welche Bedeutung hatten Begriffe wie Produktivität und Profit für die russischen Beschäftigten? Inwieweit unterschied sich diese Bedeutung von der Managementphilosophie des westlichen Joint Venture Partners?

I. Das Joint Venture: Hoffnungen und Enttäuschungen

Im Herbst 1992 standen die Arbeiter und Angestellten der mechanischen Fertigung der Moskauer Aufzugsfirma Vijshe vor der Wahl, sich von der Mutterfirma Vijshe Kombinat zu lösen, ihre Fabrik zu privatisieren und in Belegschaftseigentum zu überführen oder einem Joint Venture mit der großen amerikanischen Firma INTEC zuzustimmen. Das Joint Venture war seit Februar 1992 vorbereitet und von Vertretern der Firma INTEC mit einigen Direktoren der Firma Vijshe Kombinat ausgehandelt worden. Die Antimonopolgesetze erlaubten es, maximal 35% der Firma Vijshe mit der Firma INTEC zu verbinden. Die Privatisierungsgesetze vom Juni 1991 erlaubten es den Belegschaften von Betrieben mit eigener Rechnungsführung, eine Eigenbeteiligung von 51% zu erwerben. Ein Joint Venture mit einer ausländischen Beteiligung von 51% konnte daher nur mit Zustimmung der Belegschaft erfolgen, die damit auf ihre Kontrollmajorität verzichtete.

Die Beschäftigten der mechanischen Fertigung von Vijshe, die Ersatzteile für die 100000 Aufzüge im Raum Moskau herstellte, Aufzugsmotoren reparierte und Kabinen mit neuen Türen und Sicherheitssystemen ausstattete, hatten 1992 kaum eigene Quellen der Information, die es ihnen erlaubt hätten, die Vor- und Nachteile einer Übernahme des Betriebes durch die Belegschaft abschätzen zu können. Dennoch waren die Arbeiter zunächst fasziniert von der Möglichkeit, sich von der Mutterfirma unabhängig zu machen, und sie fühlten sich zum ersten Mal - wenn auch nicht als Besitzer - so doch als Herren

ihrer Fabrik. Die Angestellten in der Verwaltung hingegen hatten nicht das Gefühl die "wahren Herren" ihres Betriebes werden zu können. Manche Angestellten betrachteten die Möglichkeit der Übernahme des Betriebes durch die Belegschaft eher mit Skepsis und stellten fest, daß die Beschäftigten schon "zu frei" und "furchtlos" geworden wären. Der Chefingenieur faßte die Zweifel, die er 1992 an der Privatisierung durch die Belegschaft gehabt hatte, zusammen:

"Das Privatisierungsgesetz schreibt vor, daß wenn die Beschäftigten ihr Geld oder ihre Voucher in den Betrieb stecken, erhalten sie 51% der Anteile. Wir aber haben fast 300 Beschäftigte. Es gibt kein Gesetz über geschlossene Aktiengesellschaften. Das bedeutet, daß jeder Arbeiter, der morgens aufwacht und gerade nichts da hat, um seinen "Kater" zu pflegen, seine Aktien verscherbeln kann, um an Geld zu kommen. Dann haben wir schon nicht mehr 51 sondern nur noch 50% und so weiter. Wir könnten durchkommen, nachdem wir unser Geld investiert haben und eine Aktiengesellschaft gegründet haben, aber wir könnten auch scheitern. Das ist die erste Seite und die andere ist wie die erste: Wenn der wahre Herr des Betriebes 300 Arbeiter sein werden, die nicht bereit sein werden, mit ihrem Geld ein Risiko einzugehen, wird das nicht wie in einer Kolchose sein, in der alle Profite für das tägliche Brot ausgegeben werden, in der es Beschlüsse geben wird, die verbieten, Anteilseigner zu entlassen oder zu bestrafen? Das würde bedeuten, statt Fortschritt würden wir Rückschritt haben."

(Jewgenij Lykow, Chefingenieur, 2. 11. 1993)

Jewgenij Lykow befürchtete, daß der Verwaltung bei der Privatisierung durch die Belegschaft die disziplinarische Kontrolle über die Arbeiter entgleiten könnte und daß bei einem freien Verkauf der Anteile Fremde - oder wie es andere Beschäftigte ausdrückten - "kaukasische Mafia". Herren des Betriebs werden könnten. Die Verwaltungsangestellten knüpften dreierlei Hoffnungen an ein Joint Venture:

Erstens erhofften sie sich Investitionen in moderne westliche Technologien und neue Gebäude für die Fertigung und versprachen

sich davon bessere Arbeitsbedingungen, mehr Sauberkeit und Ordnung und höhere Produktivität. Sie hielten die Erneuerung des Maschinenparks, der im Durchschnitt 20 Jahre alt war, für absolut notwendig. Auch hatte der Betrieb zunehmend Schwierigkeiten mit der Stadtverwaltung, die es nicht mehr zulassen wollte, daß die neu gewickelten Motoren weiterhin in einem alten Ofen gebrannt wurden, der giftige Gase in die Moskauer Luft schickte. Neben dem Verwaltungsgebäude wartete seit 15 Jahren eine dreistöckige Fertigungshalle darauf, fertiggestellt zu werden.

Zweitens erwarteten sie, daß sie ihre Produktpalette erweitern und sich neue Märkte erschließen könnten. Ihre Mutterfirma, die große Servicefirma Vijshe Kombinat, die 1992 noch 8500 Beschäftigten gehabt hatte und für deren 16 Wartungsbetriebe sie die Ersatzteile hergestellt hatte, war dabei, sich in viele kleine unabhängige Servicebetriebe aufzulösen und drohte damit zu einem unzuverlässigen Kunden zu werden.

Drittens rechneten sie mit einer Verbesserung ihrer finanziellen Basis. Bei den Verhandlungen versprach die Firma INTEC ihren Moskauer Partnern, Investitionen in neue Ausrüstung und Produktionsmaschinen, sie stellte die Produktion von neuen Sets von Ersatzteilen auch für die INTEC Service-Firmen im Ausland in Aussicht und präsentierte sich den Teilbetrieben von Vijshe Kombinat, mit denen sie zusammenarbeiten wollte, mit dem ganzen Glamour einer internationalen Firma. Ausgesuchte Angestellte wurden noch vor Vertragsabschluß zu einer Informationsreise nach Paris eingeladen und für das Joint Venture gewonnen.

Diese wiederum hatten nun die Aufgabe, die Zustimmung der Belegschaft für das Vorhaben zu gewinnen. Die Direktorin erinnerte sich an die Informationsveranstaltungen, die sie im Herbst 1992 abgehalten hatte, um die Belegschaft von dem Joint Venture zu überzeugen:

“Was die positiven Seiten des Joint Venture anbelangt, da habe ich folgende Punkte angesprochen: die Gegenwart des ausländischen Kapitals würde es uns erlauben, in die Produktion zu investieren in diesen schwierigen Zeiten - niemand hatte mir etwas von einem Abbau der Produktion gesagt. Und ich sagte ihnen, daß sicher ein Teil des ursprünglichen Kapitals dafür verwendet werden würde, neue Uniformen, Werkzeuge und Sicherheitseinrichtungen zu kaufen, und so ist es ja dann auch geschehen. Das Hauptargument war - und ich glaube, ich habe die Leute damit nicht betrogen- : wenn wir diese Strukturen schaffen, werden wir die INTEC Servicepackages und Ersatzteile produzieren und damit unsere Produktion auslasten können. Schließlich erklärte ich ihnen, wir würden ein Service Center werden und damit das Profil unserer Aktivitäten so verändern, daß wir Arbeitskräfte von der Produktion in den Service transferieren könnten. Für mich war es allerdings auch sehr wichtig, daß das Gebäude immer noch nicht fertig war. Wenn wir den Betrieb mit unseren eigenen Mitteln privatisiert hätten, hätten wir für das Gebäude einen Investor finden müssen, der dann Mitbesitzer geworden wäre....

‘INTEC hat Weltruhm’, und das ist es, was ich auf dieser Versammlung gesagt habe...” (Katerina Selenzowa, 17.11.1993)

Zum Teil durch eine etwas mythologisierte Vorstellung vom westlichen Unternehmen, zum Teil auch wegen der konkreten Versprechungen, die ihnen auf zahlreichen Versammlungen im Herbst 1992 gemacht worden waren, entschied sich die Belegschaft schließlich gegen die Übernahme der Mehrheit der Anteile und für das Joint Venture. Wie der stellvertretende Betriebsgewerkschaftsvorsitzende Matwej Studenkin meinte, hing die Entscheidung letztendlich stark von der Art und Weise ab, wie den Beschäftigten das Joint Venture vorgestellt wurde:

“Das ist alles eine Sache, wie man den Beschäftigten die Information gibt. Wenn der Direktor kommt und sagt: ‘Hej, Kumpels, wollt Ihr, daß INTEC kommt und Euch 51% Eures Profits wegnimmt? Oder wollt Ihr es nicht?’ Natürlich werden die dann sagen, sie wollen es nicht. Es hängt alles von der Persönlichkeit des Informierenden ab.”

(Matwej Studenkin, 15. 11. 1993)⁴

Die Beschäftigten erwarteten viel von dem Joint Venture für das sie ihre Hoffnung auf Selbstbestimmung aufgegeben hatten. Manche glaubten sich durch das Joint Venture der Lösung auch ihrer privaten Wohnungsprobleme näher. Es gab bei einigen Arbeitern die Vorstellung, daß nach dem Joint Venture ein Teil des Lohnes in Dollar ausgezahlt werden würde. Die Direktorin bemerkte dazu:

“Was die sozialen Fragen anbelangt,... Ich habe schon gemerkt, daß die Leute mehr erwartet hätten, aber es ist normal für den menschlichen Charakter, immer mehr zu erwarten.”

(Katerina Selenzowa, 17.11.1993)

Die meisten Erwartungen waren jedoch pragmatischer und kristallisierten sich um die beiden Faktoren Technologie und Profit. Neue Maschinen wurden mit Spannung und Ungeduld erwartet. Die Arbeiter rechneten damit, daß die neue Technologie die Qualität der Produktion erhöhen würde und daß sie sich dann die Hände bei der Arbeit nicht mehr so schmutzig machen würden. Auch Arbeiter wie der stellvertretende Betriebsgewerkschaftsvorsitzende Matwej Studenkin, der lieber auf alten Maschinen arbeitete und wie er sagte: “drei neue computergesteuerte Maschinen für eine alte geben würde” (3.11.1993), erwarteten die neuen Maschinen als Zeichen dafür, daß es mit dem Betrieb weitergehen würde. Allerdings äußerten einige Arbeiter schon den Verdacht, daß die neuen Technologien nicht für alle sein würden. So meinte die Arbeiterin Marja Gulajewa, “in den neuen Werkstätten werden die Auserwählten arbeiten”.

Die Vorstellung, daß neue Technologien kommen müßten, ging einher mit der noch recht unpräzisen Vorstellung, daß mit den westlichen Partnern auch der “Profit” kommen würde. Während die einen, wie der Elektromonteur Maxim Pjatjorski, meinten:

“Die ausländischen Companies arbeiten nur aus Profitinteressen. Wenn sie gewinnen, bekommen wir auch etwas ab.” (9.11. 1993),

sahen Arbeiter, wie Matwej Studenkin das Streben nach Profit weniger optimistisch:

“Die Bourgeois haben uns gekauft. Sie werden nun Profit aus uns ziehen. Sie werden uns auch einigermaßen füttern, sonst aber nichts.”

Arbeiter wie Ignat Gmysin hatten für das Joint Venture mit INTEC gestimmt, weil sie die große Firma INTEC als Konkurrenten fürchteten:

“Ohne INTEC wäre der Betrieb bankrott gegangen. Mit INTEC können wir schwimmen, ohne INTEC würden wir ertrinken. Es geht INTEC darum, die Konkurrenten aufzufressen. Die Firma Vjshe wäre ein Konkurrent von INTEC gewesen und jetzt ist sie ein Teil von INTEC geworden. Wir haben von Marx und Lenin gelernt, daß man die Konkurrenz auffrißt. INTEC hat schon 30% der Aufzugsproduktion in der Welt und will jetzt auf den russischen Markt. Sie wollen ein Monopol machen.” (9.11.93)

Was war im Herbst 1993, ein Jahr nach der Entscheidung für das Joint Venture, von diesen Erwartungen und Befürchtungen in Erfüllung gegangen? INTEC entschied sich nur sehr zögerlich für Investitionen in die Fertigung von Ersatzteilen. Nach Großinvestitionen in die von INTEC gekauften Aufzugsfertigungen in Petersburg und Scherblinka, wollten sie nun abwarten, wie sich der russische Markt entwickeln würde und ob sie tatsächlich Bedarf haben würden für eine eigene Ersatzteilmontage in Moskau. Die Aussage “VjsheINTEC soll ein Service Center werden”, erwies sich als durchaus ambivalent. Sie beinhaltete nach Meinung des deutschen Vertreters von INTEC in Moskau auch die Möglichkeit, die Fertigung in der von uns untersuchten Fabrik auf das strikte Minimum zu beschränken, die Ersatzteile von fremden Firmen oder anderen eigenen Fertigungen herstellen zu lassen und über das Service Center zu vertreiben.

Im Herbst 1993 wurde das neue Gebäude fertiggestellt. Die Fertigstellung wurde von der Stadt Moskau finanziert, die 1993 noch 49% der VjshelINTEC Anteile hielt. Eine der drei Hallen wurde aber nicht für die Fertigung, sondern als Auslieferungslager für Ersatzteile bestimmt. Alle Fertigungsabteilungen arbeiteten immer noch auf ihren alten Maschinen. Nur die Motorenreparatur hatte Aussicht auf Verbesserung. Für sie wurden neue Maschinen gekauft, die in einer der neuen Hallen aufgestellt werden sollten. INTEC kaufte auch einen neuen Brennofen zum Brennen der reparierten Motoren, die dadurch eine längere Lebensdauer erhalten sollten.

Die meisten Beschäftigten waren enttäuscht von den geringen Investitionen und auch einige leitende Angestellten zweifelten, ob die Entscheidung für das Joint Venture die richtige gewesen war. Vor allem die Bestimmung des Erdgeschosses der neuen Halle als Auslieferungs- und Ersatzteillager beunruhigte die Produktionsarbeiter, weil sie darin ein Zeichen gegen die Modernisierung der Produktion und zugunsten einer reinen Servicetätigkeit des Betriebes sahen. Auch wenn die wenigsten unter ihnen konkret befürchteten, daß die Produktion eingestellt werden könnte und sie ihren Arbeitsplatz verlieren könnten, so fühlten sie doch eine generelle Unsicherheit und einen Mangel an klaren Perspektiven für ihren Arbeitsplatz in der Produktion. Der Arbeiter Ignat Gmysin kommentierte dazu:

“Ich möchte gerne, daß sich die Arbeit verändert. INTEC sagt: ‘Ihr arbeitet schlecht’. Aber wir haben hier alte Technologien und schlechte Maschinen. Ich denke, daß unsere Hände nicht schlecht arbeiten.” (9.11. 93)

Den Beschwichtigungen durch die Betriebsleitung wurde weniger Glaube geschenkt als den Gerüchten, die von den Arbeitern selbst ausgingen. Besonders glaubwürdig schien der Arbeiter Iwan Slegow zu sein, der im Firmenauftrag im Herbst 1993 nach Frankreich reisen durfte.

“Die Perspektiven des Betriebes sind unklar. So hat mir zum Beispiel der Arbeiter Iwan Slegow, der in Frankreich war, gesagt, er weiß überhaupt nicht, mit welcher Produktion sich der Betrieb nach dem Neujahr beschäftigen wird.”

Die Reformen, Umgestaltungen und Neuerungen in den letzten Jahren der Sowjetökonomie hatten die Menschen im Betrieb mißtrauisch gemacht gegen Veränderungen und Versprechungen. Auch die Hoffnungen, die sie in die Entwicklung des Joint Ventures gesetzt hatten, zerstreuten ihre grundsätzlichen Befürchtungen nicht.

“Wir haben schon so viele Renovierungen und Umgestaltungen gehabt, daß wir es gewohnt sind, sie zu fürchten. Wenn alles gut geht... Verstehen Sie, was im Westen effizient wäre, nützt möglicherweise hier bei uns nichts. Ein frisches Beispiel: Petersburg. Dort ist ein schicker nagelneuer Betrieb von INTEC gebaut worden, der aber für eine Technologie geeignet ist, die bei uns nicht geht. Er ist völlig auf Lieferanten angewiesen und arbeitet jetzt mit 60% der Auslastung.

Unsere Umstände sind etwas anders, aber wir haben es jetzt auch sehr schwer. Wir haben also Angst vor all diesen Neuerungen. So oft haben wir uns schon gedacht, alles würde gut gehen... Ein neues Beispiel, der Farbgebungsraum. Auf dem Papier ist das ein traumhafter Farbgebungs-komplex gewesen. Aber jetzt steht er seit zwei Monaten wegen vieler kleiner technischer Mängel still - nach nur zwei Monaten der Arbeit. Ich will also jetzt nichts beurteilen. Ich hoffe nur. Verstehen Sie, ich bin es nun gewohnt, nur auf meine eigenen Kräfte zu hoffen. Wir heißen alle diese Neuerungen gut, aber ich hoffe nur auf meine eigenen Kräfte.”

(Ilja Romadski, 12. 11. 93)

II. “Wir” und das “Weiße Haus”

Früher, so meinten viele Beschäftigte, wäre der Betrieb “wie ein zweites Zuhause” und die dort Arbeitenden wären wie eine Familie gewesen. Auch die Beschäftigten, die aus anderen Betrieben gekommen waren, betonten den besonders familiären Charakter des Betriebsklimas:

“Dort, wo ich früher arbeitete, kam der Leiter nur zu uns, um uns “aufzupumpen” (das heißt, eine Rüge zu erteilen oder zu fordern, daß die Arbeit schneller gemacht wird). Und hier gab es einen so engen Kontakt zwischen der Betriebsleitung und den Arbeitern, daß es manchmal unreal schien. Der Direktor drückte den Arbeitern die Hand, fragte sie nach ihrer Gesundheit, nach der Familie usw. Ich war am Anfang erschüttert, dann gewöhnte ich mich daran.”
(Ilja Romadski 12. 11. 1993)

Viele Betriebsmitglieder waren in der Tat miteinander verwandt oder verheiratet. Die meisten ArbeiterInnen hatten über den Betrieb die Erlaubnis erhalten, aus den Gebieten der ehemaligen Sowjetunion nach Moskau zu kommen, um dort zu arbeiten. Sie erhielten zuerst eine befristete Aufenthaltsgenehmigung (Propiska), die bei guter Führung im Betrieb oder bei Heirat mit einem Moskauer in eine unbefristete Genehmigung umgewandelt wurde. Der Arbeiter Alexander Komeljow beschrieb die Situation:

“Um das Recht zu bekommen in Moskau zu wohnen, mußte man vier Jahre lang unter Polizeiaufsicht leben. Man mußte niedriger als das Gras und stiller als das Wasser sein.”
(3.11.1993)⁵

Im Arbeitsvertrag der jungen Arbeiterinnen stand drin, daß sie während dieser Zeit nicht schwanger werden durften. Wenn sie trotzdem ein Kind bekamen, verloren sie nicht nur ihren Arbeitsplatz, sondern auch das Recht in Moskau zu wohnen und mußten aufs Land zurückkehren.

“Bei uns wurde einer Frau während dieser vier Jahre das Recht auf Propiska genommen und damit war sie entlassen. Sie hatte verborgen, daß sie auf dem Dorf schon ein Kind hatte. Wir sammelten mit Hilfe der Gewerkschaft Unterschriften zu ihrer Verteidigung, aber es ist uns nicht gelungen.”
(Alexander Komeljow, 3.11.1993)

Der Betrieb versorgte die alleinstehenden jungen Arbeiterinnen und Arbeiter mit Plätzen im betriebseigenen Wohnheim und oft fanden sie im Betrieb auch ihre zukünftigen Ehepartner.

Auch die heutige Direktorin war als junge Arbeiterin von Baku in den Moskauer Betrieb gekommen, hatte dort ihren Mann, einen achtzehn Jahre älteren Arbeiter, kennengelernt und hatte - die Weiterbildungsangebote und Parteiverbindungen nutzend - im Betrieb Karriere gemacht. Auch der Mann der Direktorin für Gehälter und Normen, die gleichzeitig Gewerkschaftsvorsitzende war, arbeitete als Meister in der Produktion. Diese beiden Ehebeziehungen bildeten den Kern des persönlichen Verhältnisses zwischen Arbeitern und Angestellten, zwischen Produktion und Verwaltung. Sie mündeten in dem informellen Anspruch der Beschäftigten, von der Verwaltung "fürsorglich" behandelt zu werden.

"Wir nennen die Verwaltung 'das weiße Haus'. Der Verwalter muß sich bewegen, sich drehen. Er ist unser Gehirn. Er soll uns die Arbeitsbedingungen schaffen, die neuesten Technologien einführen, ohne uns von unserer Arbeit abzulenken. Der Verwalter muß ständig bei uns sein. Es wäre gerecht, wenn sich die Verwaltung auch noch um andere Fragen kümmern würde. Manchmal brauchen wir ihre Hilfe, weil wir Sorgen haben... Ich habe zum Beispiel eine neue Wohnung bekommen. Jetzt muß ich die Hausverwaltung besuchen, aber die Verwaltung gibt mir keine Zeit dafür. Nur die Arbeit ist ihnen wichtig. Ich brauche ein Telefon, aber ich kriege keine Hilfe vom Betrieb"

(Valeri Tschistych 9. 11. 1993)⁶

Die in der Produktion beschäftigten Arbeiter, Brigadiere, Meister und Werkstattleiter unterschieden zwischen der Direktorin, der sie eine sorgende Rolle zuschrieben und dem Rest der Verwaltung, für die sie den Begriff "das weiße Haus" prägten. Die Direktorin war aus ihren eigenen Reihen aufgestiegen, auch sie war keine gebürtige Moskauerin. Die meisten anderen Verwaltungsangestellten hingegen kamen aus Moskau, hatten immer einen gesicherten Aufenthaltsstatus besessen und fühlten sich den Limitschikis⁷ überlegen.

“In unserer Werkstatt ziehen die Moskauer in schnellem Wechsel durch. Fast keine Moskauer bleiben bei uns, sondern die ‘Limitschiki’, die Leute aus dem Dorf, die mehr arbeiten, die fleißiger sind. Die Moskauer bei uns sitzen in der Verwaltung.”
(Alexej Ljapunow 9. 11. 1993)

Die Mitglieder der Verwaltung wurden von den Arbeitern als unfähig und passiv charakterisiert.

“Die Betriebsleitung ist sehr passiv. Sie verlangen von den Arbeitern nur, diesen Plan zu erfüllen. Sie lenken den Produktionsprozeß nicht. Sie haben keine Initiative. Sie haben feste Gehälter und daher keine materiellen Interessen. Ich bin hier acht Stunden und fünfzehn Minuten lang. Ich mache die Löcher und es bringt etwas. Sie sitzen hier auch acht Stunden und fünfzehn Minuten lang, aber sie bringen nichts.”
(Ignat Gmysin, 9.11. 1993)

Dem Chef der Materialwirtschaft warfen sie vor, zwar sehr aktiv zu sein, aber meist die falschen Materialien zu besorgen. Über die Technologen sprachen die Arbeiter nur mit Verachtung. Sie wurden als fachlich völlig unfähig bezeichnet. Die Arbeiter warfen ihnen vor, sie gäben keine technischen Hinweise, um den Produktionsprozeß zu optimieren und arbeiteten meist von ihrem Schreibtisch in der Verwaltung aus.

“Die Technologen müßten meiner Meinung nach die Technologie im Betrieb einschätzen und vervollkommen, auch zu anderen Betrieben fahren, dort forschen und das Beste übernehmen. Aber hier arbeiten wir fast ohne Technologen. In die Werkstätten gehen sie nicht. Sie beobachten uns nicht. Sie beschäftigen sich mit den technologischen Prozessen nur auf dem Papier. Wenn sie sie unmittelbar in die Produktion einführen könnten, würden wir einen größeren Effekt haben und wir könnten uns korrigieren und verbessern... aber sie schreiben ihre Papiere und sitzen auf ihrem festen Arbeitslohn.” (Valeri Tschistych, 9. 11. 1993)

Nur die Direktorin wurde von harter Kritik verschont. Allerdings fühlten sich vor allem die Beschäftigten mit der Direktorin verbunden, die in der gleichen Abteilung wie sie und ihr Mann gearbeitet hatten oder mit ihr zusammen in der Betriebsparteiorganisation aktiv gewesen waren. Sie wandten sich mit Beschwerden und Sorgen direkt an sie, ohne die Vermittlung von Brigadieren und Meistern in Anspruch zu nehmen. Andere Arbeiter, die sich nicht so vertraut mit der Direktorin fühlten, betonten, daß sie eine reine Arbeitnehmerbeziehung dem komplexen Geflecht persönlicher Beziehungen vorziehen würden:

“Sollte die Verwaltung jenseits der Arbeitgeber-Arbeitnehmer Beziehung etwas über mich zu sagen haben? Nein, ich ziehe es vor, sie geben mir Geld für meine Arbeit und meine Erholung kann ich selbst organisieren.” (Alexej Ljapunow, 9. 11. 1993)

Zu Zeiten der Planwirtschaft wirkte der Betrieb über die betrieblichen Partei- und Gewerkschaftsorgane mit bei der Beschaffung von Wohnraum, dem Recht ein Auto zu kaufen, bei der Verlängerung der Aufenthaltsgenehmigung für Nichtmoskauer und bei der Beantragung von Visa für Auslandsreisen. Die umfassende persönliche Betreuung und Gängelung reduzierte sich zwar, seit der Betrieb gezwungen war, sich marktwirtschaftlichen Kriterien anzupassen, aber auch als Joint Venture bot der Betrieb seinen Beschäftigten noch soziale Leistungen an, die als “Privilegien” bezeichnet und gehandhabt wurden. Über seine Gewerkschaftsorganisation (Profsojus) organisierte er Pionier- und Sportlager gegen geringes Entgelt. Er stellte den Familien von Betriebsangehörigen Ferienhäuser oder von ihm gemietete Etagen in Hotels zur Verfügung. Über die Gewerkschaftsorganisation wurde aus einem sozialen Härtefonds an Familien in besonders schwierigen Situationen (zum Beispiel bei einem Todesfall in der Familie, bei langer Krankheit, Naturkatastrophen etc.) einmalig eine größere Summe vergeben. Über die Höhe der Summe entschied die Direktorin. Der Betrieb gab Prämien für besonders lange Betriebszugehörigkeit und besondere Leistungen, wie beispielsweise Erfindungen.

All diese sogenannten "Privilegien" verloren die Beschäftigten, wenn sie sich Verstöße gegen die Betriebsdisziplin zuschulden kommen ließen: zum Beispiel, wenn sie in größeren Mengen Ausschuß produzierten, die Sicherheitsbestimmungen nicht beachteten, betrunken am Arbeitsplatz angetroffen wurden, mehr als drei Tage unentschuldig fehlten, wegen krimineller Handlungen angeklagt wurden oder in der Ausnüchterungszelle der Polizei gehalten wurden (Zusätzliches Abkommen zum Betriebskollektivvertrag zwischen der Verwaltung und dem Arbeitskollektiv der Aktiengesellschaft "VijsheINTEC" vom 25. 3. 1993). Die Privilegien waren zwar im Kollektivvertrag niedergelegt, konnten aber dennoch relativ willkürlich entzogen oder gewährt werden, da die Liste der Verstöße gegen die Betriebsdisziplin breit ausgelegt werden konnte. Die Kehrseite der paternalistischen Fürsorge war daher der willkürliche Entzug von Fürsorge und "Privilegien", wenn das Betriebsmitglied sich nicht den geschriebenen und ungeschriebenen Gesetzen und Regeln des Betriebsleben anpaßte.

Am deutlichsten wurde das direkte persönliche Abhängigkeitsverhältnis zwischen Produktionsarbeitern und Betriebsleitung beim Lohnsystem. Seit 1990 erhielten die nicht in Brigaden organisierten Produktionsarbeiter einen Lohn, der sich aus einem Grundlohn, einer Prämie und einem Stücklohn zusammensetzte. Der Grundlohn machte dabei den geringsten Teil aus und wurde nach der Lohngruppe des jeweiligen Arbeiters berechnet. Dazu kam eine Leistungsprämie, die sich auf die Arbeitsdisziplin bezog. Den größten Teil des Einkommens machte der Stücklohn aus. Waren jedoch keine Aufträge da, oder war die Materialzufuhr nicht gesichert, so reduzierte sich der Stücklohn erheblich. Einen Anspruch auf finanziellen Ausgleich für diesen Verlust gab es nicht. Es blieb den Arbeitern nur die Möglichkeit, sich persönlich bei der Direktorin zu beschweren oder zu hoffen, daß sie bemerkte, daß einige Arbeiter ohne ihr Verschulden wesentlich weniger verdient hatten als in den vorangegangenen Monaten.

"Wie ich meine Direktorin kenne, so schaut sie normalerweise noch einmal durch die Ausgabenlisten, wenn sie abgeschlossen

sind. Und wenn sie dann sieht, daß - sagen wir mal - Kirill nur 72.000 Rubel verdient hat, obwohl er im vergangenen Monat 100.000 Rubel verdiente, ruft sie die Leiterin der Abteilung Löhne und Gehälter und fragt sie, was los ist. Gut, diese weiß es nicht. Dann kann die Direktorin den Fertigungsleiter oder den Meister rufen und sie fragen: 'Warum hat er weniger verdient, obwohl er jeden Tag gearbeitet hat?' Aber eigentlich braucht sich die Verwaltung um diese Sachen nicht zu kümmern. Das hängt nur mit dem guten Charakter unserer Direktorin zusammen... (Matwej Studenkin, stellvertretender Betriebsgewerkschaftsleiter, 15.11.1993)

Der Lohnverlust, den die Arbeiter hinnehmen mußten, konnte durch die Verwaltung auf informellem Wege ausgeglichen werden, ohne daß die Arbeiter jedoch ein Recht darauf gehabt hätten.

“Unser Betrieb hat einen Fonds... Zum Beispiel, hatte ich drei Tage lang nichts zu tun, aber der Betrieb will mich nicht verlieren. Dann schicken sie mich zwei Stunden lang zum Saubermachen in die Werkstatt und ich kriege dafür 25.000 Rubel (bei einem monatlichen Durchschnittsgehalt von 150.000 Rubel B.M.)”
(Matwej Studenkin, stellvertretender Betriebsgewerkschaftsleiter 15.11. 1993)

Vor allem die Arbeiter, die schon lange im Betrieb waren und direkte Beziehungen zur Verwaltung hatten, konnten auf diesen Ausgleich hoffen. Bei den anderen führten die Engpässe in der Materialversorgung zwar zu erheblichen Spannungen in der Werkstatt, aber nicht notwendigerweise zu Eingaben bei der Direktorin.

Unabhängiger von der Verwaltung waren die Arbeiter, die noch freiwillig in Brigaden organisiert waren. Das waren im Herbst 1993 noch rund ein Drittel der 108 produktiv arbeitenden Betriebsangehörigen. Die Brigaden hatten vor rund vier Jahren bei der Verwaltung durchgesetzt, den Leistungslohn, den die gesamte Brigade für ihre kollektive Arbeit bekam, nach eigenen Kriterien zu verteilen. Wenn alle Brigademitglieder einverstanden waren, konnten sie gemeinsam entscheiden, den von der Gruppe erarbeiteten Leistungslohn nicht nur

nach Lohngruppen sondern nach einem selbst bestimmten “Koeffizienten der Arbeitsbeteiligung” zu verteilen. Wie groß der Anteil des nach Lohngruppen und nach Koeffizienten verteilten Lohnes war, konnte die Brigade selbst entscheiden.

“Ich wandte mich an die Meisterin, um sie davon zu überzeugen, daß man den Lohn nicht nur nach der Lohngruppe berechnen kann. Zu unserer Brigade stießen zwei Neulinge mit einer höheren Lohngruppe, als ich sie hatte, aber sie erfüllten die Norm nicht, fragten mich sehr oft um Rat und im Vergleich zu mir und den alten Kameraden hatten sie sehr wenig gemacht. Wie kann ich sie da nach ihrer höheren Lohngruppe bezahlen? Nein! Das ist nicht gerecht! Deshalb entschieden wir alle, nach dem Koeffizient der Arbeitsbeteiligung und reell in gleichwertigen Anteilen das Geld zu verteilen.” (Marja Gulajewa, 9.11.1993)⁸

Bestandteil des Koeffizienten war außer der quantitativen Arbeitsleistung auch ein Qualitätskriterium. Die Brigade konnte auch entscheiden, den Mitgliedern, die sich in einer schwierigen Lebenssituation befanden, mehr zu bezahlen, auch wenn die Leistung nicht entsprechend war. Eine Brigade gab zu, ihre Mitglieder nach Absprache auch für die Tage zu bezahlen, an denen sie gar nicht im Betrieb anwesend waren, während ihre Meisterin diese Praxis strikt abstritt.

Allerdings kontrollierte die Brigade auch nach innen, daß die Brigademitglieder nicht aus der Gruppe ausscherten. Diese Kontrolle ging im Sommer 1993 so weit, daß die Brigade die Entlassung von Kollegen forderte, die zwar fachlich qualifiziert waren, sich aber persönlich nicht in ihre Arbeitsgruppe eingepaßt hatten:

“Vor kurzem wurden zwei junge Arbeiterinnen entlassen. Da wollte sich die Gewerkschaft zunächst einmischen, verzichtete dann aber darauf. Es war nämlich so, daß ein Arbeiter von der Brigade abends im Betrieb blieb und sehr viel machte. Da er hochqualifiziert war, begann er wesentlich mehr zu verdienen. Zwei junge Frauen wollten das auch machen, traten aus der Brigade aus und begannen alleine zu arbeiten. Aber sie mußten

vieles machen, was früher von anderen gemacht wurde: bohren, schwere Dinge tragen. Und sie verdienten weniger als früher. Sie waren aber Frauen, nicht Männer und Sie wissen, was das bedeutet... Sie erwiesen sich als zänkische Persönlichkeiten und beschwerten sich, daß man ihnen schlechte Arbeit gäbe usw. Ihnen wurde vorgeschlagen, stattdessen zu stanzen. Stanzen ist aber eine schmutzige Arbeit. Sie wollten sie nicht machen. Und die Brigade wollte sie auch nicht wieder aufnehmen. Die Brigade schrieb eine Bittschrift, in der sie bat, die beiden Kolleginnen zu entlassen. Die Gewerkschaft konnte nicht dagegen protestieren, weil es die Meinung der Mehrzahl war. Und sie hatten es auch verdient. Ihre Ansprüche waren zu hoch. Hier war alles richtig.”

(Matwej Studenkin, 3.11. 1993)

Manche Brigadeleiter sahen es auch als ihre Aufgabe an, der Direktorin, die Mitglieder ihrer Brigade zur Entlassung vorzuschlagen, die sie für besonders inkompetent hielten. Diese reagierte aber, wie man uns sagte, äußerst reserviert, wenn ihr solche Vorschläge unterbreitet wurden. Nur wenige Beschäftigte teilten allerdings die Auffassung des Brigadiers Alexej Ljapunow, der sogar den Großteil seiner Kollegen für völlig unfähig hielt und ihre Entlassung befürwortete.

“In unserer Werkstatt kann man wirklich die meisten entlassen. Ungefähr sieben bis acht kompetente Arbeiter könnten bleiben. Die anderen haben ein solches Niveau, daß man sich keine Vorstellung davon macht, wie sehr man die Qualität ihrer Produktion überprüfen muß.” (Alexej Ljapunow, 10. 11. 93)

Die Brigade legte härtere Leistungskriterien an ihre Mitglieder an, als bisher von der Betriebsleitung an die individuell nach Leistungslohn arbeitenden Beschäftigten angelegt wurde. Allerdings ging dies auch zu Lasten des guten freundschaftlichen Verhältnisses innerhalb der Brigade.

“Die Beziehungen in der Brigade sind nicht mehr so freundlich. Früher gab es Geschlossenheit in den Brigadebeziehungen. Wir feierten die Geburtstage zusammen mit Torten, Tee und irgend-

wann auch mit Alkohol. Noch früher sind wir zusammen auf die Kolchose gefahren und am 1. Juni haben wir immer gemeinsam Flußkrebse gesammelt. Aber heute... Ich hatte zum Beispiel den Vorschlag gemacht, gemeinsam ein Picknik zu organisieren. Dafür hatte ich sogar mein Schwein geschlachtet. Alle wollten teilnehmen, aber als der Tag des Picknicks kam, fand ich mich zusammen mit einem anderen Organisator alleine wieder... Dasselbe Schicksal fand der Vorschlag, eine Fahrt zum Pilzesammeln zu organisieren.”

(Alexander Komeljow, 3.11.1993)

Auch die nicht in Brigaden organisierten Arbeiter betonten, daß sich ihr Arbeitsrhythmus seit der Aufhebung des sozialistischen Einheitslohns enorm gesteigert habe und daß sie sich glücklich schätzen würden, wenn sie viel Arbeit hätten, keine Pausen zu machen bräuchten und daher auch mehr verdienen könnten. Die Möglichkeit das Einkommen zu steigern, wenn genügend Material zur Verfügung gestellt würde und sie technische Hilfestellungen bekämen, wurde als schier unbegrenzt angesehen. So viel Geld wie möglich zu verdienen, wurde zur ersten Priorität, vor allem um den Lebensunterhalt zu sichern, den der Staat nicht mehr garantierte.

“Meine Aufgabe ist es, das altgewohnte Lebensniveau für meine Familie zu sichern. Heute ist es wichtiger geworden, das Existenzminimum zu halten, alle Aufmerksamkeit dem Arbeitslohn zu schenken und nicht mehr den Arbeitsbedingungen.”

(Marja Gulajewa, 9. 11. 1993)

Die existentielle Unsicherheit, die die meisten Beschäftigten verspürten, mit denen wir sprachen, bezog sich nicht direkt auf die Angst vor dem Verlust ihres Arbeitsplatzes, sondern auf die steigenden Lebenshaltungskosten und die politischen und sozialen Umwälzungen, die ihren Alltag veränderten.

Die Arbeiter forderten von der Verwaltung und vor allem von den Technologen Hilfestellungen, um ihre Arbeit noch mehr intensivieren zu können, um noch mehr zu verdienen.

“Wenn wir bessere Werkzeuge hätten und kleine mechanische Vorrichtungen, dann könnten wir noch mehr herausarbeiten. Aber die Technologen kommen nicht zu uns. Wir bitten sie und bitten, aber wir bekommen keine Antwort.”

(Marja Gulajewa, 9.11. 1993)

In diesem Stoßseufzer einer Arbeiterin drückte sich einerseits der Wunsch aus, die Arbeitsbedingungen zu optimieren, um mehr leisten zu können, andererseits aber sicherlich auch das Bemühen dem Forscher zu zeigen, daß andere, nämlich die Technologen aus der Verwaltung, dafür verantwortlich waren, daß sie nicht optimal arbeiten konnten. Die Leistungsfähigkeit der Produktionsarbeiter wurde zu einer Frage des Nationalstolzes den ausländischen Joint Venture Partnern gegenüber. Sie waren aufgefordert, den talentierten russischen Menschen endlich ihre Chance zu geben und sie mit Maschinen auszustatten, die ihren Fähigkeiten entsprachen.

“Wir schleppen diese Maschinen mit bei allen Umzügen, wir hegen sie, streichen, ölen und reparieren sie. Aber das Metall wird alt. Und wenn der Bohrer 0,01 mm Fehler bringt, dann sind es am Stück schon 0,1 mm. Verstehen Sie? Es ist nicht unsere Schuld, aber es beeinträchtigt unsere Produktivität und Arbeitsqualität. Daher hoffen wir, daß man uns neue Maschinen gibt. Wenn alle Staaten, auch (damals) die Sowjetunion, in rückständige Länder nagelneue moderne Maschinen schicken, und ein Mensch - entschuldigen Sie, ich will niemanden beleidigen -, der erst vom Baum heruntergeklettert ist, in Afrika zum Beispiel, bekommt einen Traktor oder eine neue Werkbank und versteht damit zu arbeiten... Und wir, die einen Floh beschlagen haben, wir haben seitdem noch vieles erlernt, und die Hände haben wir an der richtigen Stelle⁹ und der Kopf arbeitet.”

(Fjodor Perchunov, 9.11. 1993)

Auch für Arbeiter wie diesen, der gar nicht an Maschinen arbeitete, sondern kleine Elektroteile montierte, waren die modernen Maschinen der Schlüssel zum Erfolg. Das Verhältnis der Beschäftigten zu modernen Produktionstechnologien war mehr als das eines

Maschinenführers zu seinem Arbeitsinstrument. Es war ein symbolisches Verhältnis. Die modernen Maschinen symbolisierten Fortschritt und nicht zuletzt den Anschluß an den wirtschaftlichen Standard des Westens. Unsere Einwendungen, daß die Anschaffung teurer CNC-gesteuerter Maschinen sich auch für den Unternehmer lohnen müßte und daher möglicherweise zu Arbeitskräfteabbau im Betrieb führen könnte, traf völlig ins Leere. Das "Weggehen" von Arbeitern, die nicht mehr gebraucht wurden, wurde nicht als Problem wahrgenommen:

"Früher waren 22 Arbeiter in dieser Werkstatt. Jetzt sind es nur noch 12. Wir arbeiten zu zweit an 12 Maschinen, aber jetzt stehen einige davon schon seit zwei Wochen still. Die Anzahl der Arbeitenden wurde deshalb reduziert, weil die Produktivität des Einzelnen stieg. Heute wird bloß weniger Handarbeit benötigt, mehr Knöpfe, weniger Kurbeln. So viele Arbeiter werden nicht mehr gebraucht, deshalb gehen sie weg."

(Matwej Studenkin, 3.11. 1993)

Die meisten Beschäftigten fühlten sich im Herbst 1993 auf ihrem Arbeitsplatz sicher, weil sie den ganzen Tag etwas zu tun hatten und sie sich keine flagranten Verstöße gegen die Arbeitsdisziplin zuschulden kommen ließen:

"Ich habe keine Angst vor der Arbeitslosigkeit. Mir bleibt sogar keine freie Zeit, ich bin bis an meine Grenze beschäftigt. Wie könnte ich da arbeitslos werden?" (Valeri Tschistych, 9.11. 1993)

Die meisten Arbeiter, mit denen wir sprachen, sahen eine Gefahr, den Arbeitsplatz zu verlieren höchstens für die Kollegen, die sie als weniger fähig einschätzten als sich selbst. Dennoch wiesen alle auf die Stellenanzeigen für Schlosser, Dreher und Technologen hin, die unten in der Eingangshalle hingen. Tatsächlich wurden 1993 seit dem Joint Venture keine Arbeitsplätze abgebaut, aber 50 Beschäftigte, vor allem Arbeiter, wurden entlassen und durch qualifiziertere Kräfte aus der Rüstungsindustrie ersetzt. Die Personalchefin erklärte uns, daß bei den Entlassungen, die in den letzten beiden Jahren in den Werkstätten

vorgenommen wurden, meist fehlende Arbeitsdisziplin und Alkoholmißbrauch am Arbeitsplatz der Grund war.

“Wir hatten Drückeberger und Säufer und unser soziales System wies uns an, diese Leute zu überzeugen. Wir sollten sie mit Disziplin und Strafe unter Druck setzen und wie Babysitter für sie sein. Jetzt haben sich die Dinge geändert. Jetzt brauchen wir nicht mehr für diese Leute zu sorgen und können sie rausschmeißen, wenn sie schlecht arbeiten. Wir können stattdessen Leute mit besserer Qualifikation einstellen, die fähiger sind.”
(Shenja Wolochina, 27. 10. 1993)

Während die meisten Beschäftigten Alkoholismus und fehlende Arbeitsdisziplin als Entlassungsgründe akzeptierten, sahen sie fehlende Kompetenz oder mangelnde Professionalität als kleine Schwächen an, die nicht von schlechter Absicht zeugten und die durch Anleiten und Ausbilden behoben werden könnten. Wie eine Technologin meinte:

“Bei professionellen Fehlern kann der Leiter ja schimpfen...”.

Obwohl die Arbeiter nicht direkt fürchteten, ihren Arbeitsplatz zu verlieren, waren sie doch durch das Gerücht verunsichert, daß der gesamte Betrieb umstrukturiert und in ein Service Center umgewandelt werden sollte. Manche Arbeiter hatten gehört, daß der Verkauf von Ersatzteilen, die anderswo gefertigt worden waren, für den Betrieb profitabler wäre, als die Eigenproduktion. Sie warfen daher der Verwaltung vor, die Einigkeit des Betriebes zu zerstören.

“Die Stimmung in diesem Betrieb ist zerstört. Alle Fragen müßte man direkt mit den Arbeitern diskutieren. Man muß Versammlungen veranstalten und echte Öffentlichkeit herstellen. Aber im Moment gibt es bei uns fast keine Versammlungen und die Verwaltung bezieht sich nicht auf uns. Das beleidigt uns. Unser Betrieb ist aber doch ein “Kessel für alle”. Sein Geld ist für alle.”
(Valeri Tschistych, 9. 11. 1993)

Die Vorstellung, daß der Betrieb “ein Kessel für alle” sein sollte wurde noch durch die neuen Privatisierungsbestrebungen genährt, die während unseres Aufenthalts diskutiert wurden. Die restlichen 49% der Anteile an VjjsheINTEC mit insgesamt 3.000 Beschäftigten, die 1993 noch im Besitz der Stadt Moskau waren, sollten zu 51% von der Belegschaft übernommen werden. Die Beschäftigten des Service Centers hätten aber, selbst wenn sie Anteile erwerben würden, nur wenig Einfluß auf die Entscheidungen der Aktionärsversammlung, da diese ja die Interessen des Gesamtbetriebs betrafen. Oder wie es der Generaldirektor von VjjsheINTEC ausdrückte: “Ivanov¹⁰ wird nur einen geringen Anteil haben...”

III. Die Welt der Papiere und die Marktwirtschaft

Im Verlauf unserer Forschung bei VjjsheINTEC wurden wir von der Beharrungskraft der planwirtschaftlichen Lenkungs- und Leitungsmechanismen in der Verwaltung des Joint Ventures überrascht. Obwohl INTEC der Direktion des Betriebes einen deutschen Berater zur Seite gestellt hatte, der nun versuchte, den Mitarbeitern in der Verwaltung die Organisationskriterien näherzubringen, die bei INTEC weltweit angewendet wurden, blieb die planwirtschaftliche Logik in den Verwaltungsmechanismen erstaunlich präsent.

Dies zeigte sich am deutlichsten an der Tatsache, daß die Interessen der Arbeitgeber und die Interessen der Belegschaft durch die gleiche Person vertreten wurden. So war die Leiterin der Abteilung Arbeit und Gehälter, die unter anderem die Produktionsnormen für die Fertigung festlegte, vor anderthalb Jahren als Vorsitzende des betrieblichen Gewerkschaftskomitees wiedergewählt worden. Die Verbindung dieser beiden Aufgaben war für sie kein Widerspruch, da sie in der Logik der wissenschaftlichen Betriebsführung der Planwirtschaft davon überzeugt war, die Normen nach objektiven widerspruchsfreien Kriterien festlegen zu können. Sie gebrauchte dafür

technische Zeichnungen und Normlisten, ohne den Fertigungsablauf selbst zu beobachten.

“Nachdem ich fünfzehn Jahre als Technologe gearbeitet habe, kenne ich alle Produkte, alle Technologien und alle Normen, und indem ich sie vergleiche, kann ich jede Norm selbst festlegen.”

(Anna Jegorowa, 27.10. 1993)

Nur in Ausnahmefällen ging sie in die Werkstatt, um mit Stoppuhr und Kamera “zu sehen, wie sie arbeiten”. Viele Produktionsnormen, die in Rubel gerechnet wurden, lagen zehn bis fünfzehn Jahre lang fest.

Die Veränderungen, die in den letzten Jahren vorgenommen wurden, dienten nach ihrer Aussage auch nur dazu, die Löhne an die Inflationsrate anzupassen und nicht dazu, den Arbeitsdruck zu erhöhen. Wenn die Arbeiter unzufrieden mit ihren Festlegungen waren, wurden sie diskutiert und man suchte gemeinsam nach einem Kompromiß. Dies hatte sich auch bis Herbst 1993 nicht geändert, obwohl der vom Joint Venture Partner bestellte Berater immer wieder betonte, daß die Produktivität der Fertigung gesteigert werden müsse. Die meisten Arbeiter waren zufrieden, daß sie den Gewerkschaftsvorsitz führte. Sie erwarteten nicht, daß die Gewerkschaft in ihrem Namen für höhere Löhne und leicht zu erreichende Normen kämpfen würde. Sie waren es seit den Zeiten der Planwirtschaft gewöhnt, daß die offizielle Gewerkschaft die Aufgabe hatte, die Planerfüllung aktiv zu unterstützen, indem sie ihre Mitglieder disziplinierte und ihnen gewisse soziale Vergünstigungen zukommen ließ. Nach Ansicht von Anna Jegorowa gäbe es nur wenige Stimmen unter den Arbeitern, die behaupteten, daß ihre Rolle als Gewerkschaftsvorsitzende mit ihrer Aufgabe in der Norm- und Gehaltskontrolle unvereinbar wäre.

Der Direktor der Materialwirtschaft zählte für die Beschaffung von Halbfertigprodukten und Komponenten nach wie vor auf die alten Kontakte, die auch schon zu Zeiten der zentralen Planwirtschaft bedeut-

sam waren, als Materialengpässe und die unzureichende Feinabstimmung der Planpositionen durch Tausch und Schwarzhandel ausgeglichen werden mußten. Die Kontakte, die es ihm erlaubt hatten, Metall und andere Rohmaterialien zu besorgen, waren aber in den letzten zwei Jahren durch den Zusammenbruch des Sowjetreiches und der großen Staatsbetriebe unwirksam geworden und mußten durch völlig neue Netzwerke ersetzt werden. Leonid Shilin brüstete sich uns gegenüber mit seinen persönlichen Notizbüchern, die er seit 15 Jahren führte und in denen er alle nützlichen Namen, Adressen und Telefonnummern aufgeführt hatte. Diese Informationen und Kontakte waren sein persönlicher Schatz, auf den er zu Zeiten der Planwirtschaft seinen Einfluß im Betrieb gründen konnte. Es war damals entscheidend gewesen, an die größtmögliche Menge von begehrten und raren Gütern heranzukommen, um sie im eigenen Betrieb oder auch im Austausch mit anderen Betrieben einzusetzen. Im Zuge der Perestroika und vor allem seit den Privatisierungsgesetzen von 1992 wuchs die Anzahl der Anbieter stetig und Kosten und Preise wurden für das erfolgreiche Wirtschaften seiner Abteilung immer wichtiger.

Im Herbst 1993 kaufte die Materialwirtschaft die benötigten Materialien gegen Vorkasse und für Bargeld, weil bei einer Überweisung das Geld zu lange unterwegs gewesen wäre, wegen der Inflation an Wert verloren hätte und schließlich zum Kauf der benötigten Menge Materials nicht mehr ausgereicht hätte. Leonid Shilin suchte direkten Kontakt zu den Zulieferbetrieben und versuchte professionelle Vermittler zu vermeiden, weil er sie für unzuverlässig hielt und weil sie zuviel Unkosten verursachten. Seine Mitarbeiter und Abteilungsleiter, die nicht die gleichen Kontakte besaßen wie er, waren wesentlich mehr auf Mittelsmänner angewiesen.

Als Leonid Shilin im Sommer 1993 in Urlaub fuhr, wandte sich daher sein Stellvertreter und Freund an einen dubiosen Vermittler, dem er auch Geld bezahlte, damit er ihm Metall besorge. Der Mann kassierte das Geld, beschaffte die Materialien jedoch nicht, so daß die Produktion ins Stocken kam. Der Stellvertreter mußte die Konsequenzen tragen

und wurde entlassen. Leonid Shilin erklärte nun, daß es sich zunehmend negativ auf ihn auswirkte, daß er seinen Schatz an Informationen und Kontakten so gut gehütet hatte. Seine Mitarbeiter und Kollegen "beherrschten die Information nicht", und er mußte daher ihre Aufgaben miterledigen. Er sagte uns, daß er nun bereit wäre, seine Informationen und Kontakte seinen Mitarbeitern und Kollegen zugänglich zu machen, damit sie Gebrauch davon machten. "Ich werde meine Notizbücher veröffentlichen," meinte er.

Der Direktor der Materialwirtschaft löste sich nur langsam von dem Prinzip, das in der Planwirtschaft Geltung besaß, daß derjenige Macht hatte, der auf Netzwerke von Beziehungen zurückgreifen konnte, die andere nicht hatten. Im planwirtschaftlichen Betrieb war es entscheidend die Außenkontakte zu kontrollieren, ohne sie notwendigerweise mit Kollegen aus dem Betrieb zu teilen. Im Joint Venture Unternehmen wurde es jetzt zunehmend wichtiger, daß die Abteilung als ganzes effizient, das heißt für das Unternehmen kostengünstig, arbeitete. Das Zementieren und Abschotten von persönlichen Netzwerken erwies sich auch für den Direktor selbst als nachteilig, weil seine Leistung nicht mehr nur an seinen persönlichen Kontakten, sondern zunehmend an kruden Zahlen gemessen wurde, die von den Kosten des Materialeinkaufs zeugten.

Das finanzielle Kalkül war zwar im Betrieb auch zu Zeiten der Planwirtschaft nicht gänzlich abwesend gewesen, aber es trug nicht den Charakter der Profitmaximierung, sondern eher den der guten "Haushaltung" mit den begrenzten aber sicher feststehenden Mitteln, die dem Betrieb vom Staat zugewiesen wurden. Diese Einstellung war auch noch im Herbst 1993 bei vielen Angestellten und Arbeitern anzutreffen. Mitglieder der Belegschaft lobten die Direktorin dafür, daß sie eine "gute Haushälterin" wäre, die alles sieht, "wie eine gute Gastgeberin". Die Direktorin wiederum betonte die finanzielle Unabhängigkeit, die der Betrieb vor dem Joint Venture gehabt hätte, und die sie nun verteidigen wollte. Bis 1992 waren die 16 Zweigbetriebe von Vjjshe Kombinat, die die Aufzugswartungen durchführten, feste

Abnehmer für die von Vjjshe gefertigten Ersatzteile. 1991, als die ersten Kooperativen mit günstigen Angeboten begannen, der Fabrik Konkurrenz zu machen, konnte es die Direktorin bei der Firmenleitung von Vjjshe Kombinat durchsetzen, daß Aufträge für Ersatzteilmontage und Motorenreparatur nicht an Betriebe außerhalb der Firma Vjjshe Kombinat vergeben werden durften. Erst ab 1992 bemühte sich die mechanische Fertigung zusätzlich um neue Auftraggeber und versuchte ihren Wirkungskreis von Moskau auf Gesamtrußland auszudehnen.

Seit dem Inkrafttreten des Joint Ventures erschwerten sich die Geschäftsbeziehungen zu den ehemaligen Schwesterfirmen, die nicht Bestandteil des Joint Ventures geworden waren. Die Direktorin mußte Gerüchte zerstreuen, nach denen ihre Fabrik die Aufträge ihrer früheren Partner nun absichtlich besonders langsam und schlampig bearbeiten würde. Tatsächlich wurde das Service Center von der Zentrale von VjjsheINTEC angewiesen, den Zweigbetrieben von VjjsheINTEC zu einem niedrigeren Preis Ersatzteile und Reparaturen in Rechnung zu stellen als Betrieben außerhalb der Firma. Eine Profitmarge von 30% wurde von der Mutterfirma vorgegeben. Das bedeutete, daß sich die Preisgestaltung nicht an einem marktüblichen Preis orientierte, sondern sich zusammensetzte aus Produktionskosten, dem Kostenwert und dem feststehenden Satz von 30% Profit. Der Betriebsleitung von Vjjshe verließ sich bei ihrer Preisgestaltung nach wie vor auf die Vorstellung, eine Monopolstellung zu besitzen.

Als im September 1993 die Löhne der Inflation angepaßt und verdoppelt wurden, verdoppelte die Planungsabteilung auch die Preise. Der deutsche Berater, erst seit wenigen Wochen im Amt, versuchte gegen diese automatische Preisverdoppelung zu argumentieren:

“Das haben viele hier noch nicht so ganz verstanden, daß irgendwann doch mal Konkurrenz da ist, daß ich nicht hingehen kann und sagen von einem Tag auf den anderen: Ich erhöhe meinen Preis um das Doppelte, weil die Inflation entsprechend ist und morgen wird er wieder auf das Doppelte erhöht. Irgendwann wird sich das auch mal jemand finden, der sagt:

“Moment doch mal! Ich mache auch ein bißchen was mit der Produktivität, ich erhöhe zwar meinen Leuten den Lohn auch auf das Doppelte oder meinetwegen auch mehr. Aber ich erwarte, daß sie das, was sie vorher in 10 Stunden gemacht haben, jetzt in 5 Stunden machen. Und dann habe ich ja wieder etwas zurückgeholt von dem, was ich ausbebe.“ (Stolz, 25. 10. 1993)

Auf seine Nachfragen erhielt Stolz von der Abteilung Löhne und Gehälter zur Antwort, daß sich die Produktivität seit der Lohnerhöhung tatsächlich um 172% gesteigert hätte. Er prüfte nach und stellte fest, daß in den Papieren nicht nur eine gesteigerte Produktivität, sondern auch die doppelte Anzahl von gearbeiteten Stunden ausgewiesen wurde:

“Ich habe mir den Plan für September angeguckt, weil ich gedacht habe: Was ist denn da los, warum kommt der da auf 172%? Ich habe mir dann pro Baugruppe die Einzelzeiten angeguckt. Aha, da sagt er mir jetzt im September 8 Stunden, und für die gleiche Baugruppe hat er mir einen Monat vorher oder im Plan noch gesagt: 4, und ... Stunden! Und das habe ich nicht verstanden. Und dann haben viele versucht, mir das zu erklären. Nach irgendwelchen Normen oder dicken Büchern sagen die: Pro Teil gibt es im Endeffekt einen bestimmten Satz Geldes, und diesen Satz Geldes dividieren sie durch den Stundenverrechnungssatz und kommen dann plötzlich auf neue Stunden. Und da sie das eine drastisch erhöht haben, nur die andere Seite scheinbar nicht, kommen also plötzlich erheblich mehr Stunden heraus.”

(Stolz, 25. 10. 1993)

Der deutsche Berater traf auf “ein reines anderes Denken” bei seinen russischen Gesprächspartnern, das nicht darauf abzielte, von den Beschäftigten möglichst viel Produktivität für einen möglichst geringen Lohn zu erhalten. In der Gorbachovzeit war im Betrieb der Versuch gemacht worden, die Produktivität des einzelnen Arbeiters zu heben, indem vom staatlich festgesetzten Höchstlohn - von den Beschäftigten auch “gläsernes Dach” genannt - abgerückt wurde und die Beschäftigten die Möglichkeit erhielten, bei einem verdoppelten Produktionsausstoß auch den doppelten Lohn zu erhalten. Der absolute

Lohnanteil an den Kosten eines Produktes blieb damit gleich. Lohnerhöhungen erfolgten nach dem Prinzip, "wer viel arbeitet, soll auch entsprechend mehr verdienen." Diese der Profitmaximierung entgegengesetzte Herangehensweise wurde durch die Organisationsstruktur der Verwaltungsabteilungen unterstützt. Während die Produktionsnormen von der Abteilung Löhne und Gehälter nach "wissenschaftlichen Kriterien" festgelegt wurden, erarbeitete die technische Abteilung die Planung des Fertigungsablaufs. Dem deutschen Berater waren diese Strukturen völlig fremd:

"Da gibt es eine Abteilung, ein sogenanntes technisches Departement, was sich da um Methoden kümmert; um die Zeiten kümmern sich andere." (Stolz, 25. 10. 1993)

Verharrend in der Rationalität des planwirtschaftlichen Wirtschaftens maß die Verwaltung auch 1993 noch die Produktivität in Rubel und nicht in benötigter Fertigungszeit pro Produkt. Stolz versuchte hingegen seinen russischen Partnern den Begriff der Produktivität im marktwirtschaftlichen Sinne näherzubringen und sie von der prinzipiellen Überlegenheit seiner Managementansätze zu überzeugen.

"Es gibt einen großen Unterschied zwischen der sozialistischen und kapitalistischen Ökonomie. In der letzteren kannst Du nur jemand werden, wenn Du der Beste bist. Und in diesem Fall hast Du eine große Chance, mehr Arbeitsplätze zu sichern, weil Du die beste Produktivität hast, die besten Kostensätze und die beste Qualität. Dann brauchst Du mehr Arbeitskräfte, weil Du Deinen Marktanteil vergrößern konntest." (Stolz, 18.11. 1993¹¹).

Er stellte die Überlegenheit des marktwirtschaftlichen Ansatzes heraus und die Notwendigkeit den Ehrgeiz zu entwickeln, auch "der Beste" zu werden, um am Erfolg des internationalen Konzerns teilzuhaben zu können, den er, Stolz, bei VjshelNTEC verkörperte. Er betonte den pragmatischen Ansatz der geschickten psychologischen Manipulation der Beschäftigten, um sie zu höheren Leistungen anzu-

spornen: "Ich habe das an einem Beispiel gesagt, wie das bei uns ist. Das ist viel besser, wenn man eine Produktivität von nur 90 % ausweist, dann hat man immer leichter ein Druckmittel, einem anderen zu sagen:

"Nun komm' mal, wir wollen ja wenigstens die 100 % schaffen."
(Stolz 25. 10.1993)

Stolz lud die Mitarbeiter der Verwaltung zu zahllosen Einzelgesprächen ein und versuchte auf ihren Führungsstil und ihre Geschäftspraktiken einzuwirken. Gleichzeitig blieb er aber persönlich distanziert und damit auch isoliert. Das zeigte sich auch daran, daß er in den sechs Monaten seiner Tätigkeit im Betrieb nicht einmal von einem Mitarbeiter der Verwaltung nach Hause eingeladen wurde oder selbst einen seiner neuen Kollegen eingeladen hätte. An Betriebsversammlungen nahm er nicht teil, und auch bei seinen Rundgängen durch die Werkstätten richtete er nicht das Wort an die Arbeiter. Wie ein Arbeiter bemerkte:

"Ich weiß, daß er als Konsultant eingestellt worden ist, aber ich habe noch keine einzige Konsultation bekommen. Ich weiß, daß er Müll und Unordnung nicht gerne hat, aber das bedeutet ja noch nicht, daß ich dadurch besser arbeite."
(Fjodor Perchunow, 9. 11. 1993)

Stolz' Versuche, der Geschäftsleitung von VjjsheINTEC die Strategien und Taktiken der marktwirtschaftlichen Geschäftsführung näherzubringen, hatten zur Folge, daß die Angestellten der Verwaltung es sich angewöhnten, diese Ansichten zu reproduzieren, ohne jedoch notwendigerweise ihre Praktiken zu ändern. In Gesprächen mit uns gaben sie diese 'offizielle' Sichtweise wieder:

"INTEC ist erst seit einem Jahr in Rußland. Deshalb muß man erst einmal die Mentalitäten der Leute rumdrehen und sie zu solchen Begriffen wie 'profitabel' und 'unprofitabel' hinlenken."
(Pawel Mansurow, 4.11. 1993)

Nur die Direktorin, die als einzige aus der Betriebsleitung bisher die Möglichkeit gehabt hatte, andere INTEC Betriebe in Europa zu besuchen, hinterfragte offen die Grenzen einer festgefahrenen marktwirtschaftlichen Philosophie:

“Leute, die schon lange für INTEC arbeiten, haben ein bestimmtes Muster für ihre Sichtweisen und Reaktionen. Sie reagieren schnell, aber dies ist durch nichts anderes als durch diese Muster bestimmt. Ich habe Angst, die Möglichkeit zum nicht standardisierten Denken zu verlieren. Die Leute von INTEC haben ein spezielles Wissen, eine Philosophie der Produktivität und eine Philosophie der Lagerhaltung. Dies hilft ihnen, schnelle Entscheidungen zu treffen. Aber ich brauche die Möglichkeit, meine eigene Sichtweise einzubringen. Ich muß alles in Einklang bringen... Unsere Hauptaufgabe ist es, eine Richtung zu finden. Wir könnten damit Anfang nächsten Jahres beginnen. Die Arbeit mit INTEC bringt neue Aufgaben und Herangehensweisen mit sich, aber... einige dieser neuen sind nichts anderes als vergessene alte.”
(Katerina Selenzowa, 27. 10. 1993).¹²

Der Mangel an Freiraum für originelle selbständige Entscheidungen, den die Direktorin empfand, widersprach der Selbsteinschätzung, die Stolz von seinem Beratungsstil hatte:

“Ich sage den Leuten immer, Du mußt dich um Deine eigenen Dinge kümmern, und Du mußt Deine eigenen Entscheidungen treffen. Du kannst sie von nirgendwoher erwarten.”

Es war vor allem die Tatsache, daß Stolz im Betrieb Informationen sammelte und Analysen anstellte, ohne sich direkt und offiziell an Entscheidungen zu beteiligen und Verantwortung zu übernehmen, die seine Präsenz für die Belegschaft so unangenehm machte.

“Die Leute empfinden, daß Druck auf sie ausgeübt wird. Sie mögen es nicht, daß der INTEC Spezialist überall herumläuft und nur guckt. Das geht den Leuten auf die Nerven. Sie haben das Gefühl, als wenn über ihrem Kopf ein Stock geschwungen würde.”
(Katerina Selenzowa 27. 10. 1993)

Obwohl er offiziell nur der Berater im Hintergrund war, konnten viele wichtige Entscheidungen, wie zum Beispiel die Einrichtung der neuen Fertigungshallen und Investitionen in neue Maschinen, nur mit seiner Zustimmung getroffen werden, da er Investitionen direkt mit der Zentrale von INTEC abklärte.

Am letzten Tag unserer Forschung erfuhren wir von Stolz, daß er ab Anfang 1994 stellvertretender Direktor und "rechte oder linke Hand" der Direktorin werden würde. Die Direktorin begrüßte diesen Beschluß:

"Ich hatte das Gefühl, daß er uns gegenüber nicht freundlich gesinnt war. Aber vielleicht hing sein Verhalten ja mit seiner Funktion zusammen, die ganzen Informationen zu sammeln und sie irgendwohin zu schicken. Er war der Berater und hatte diese Funktion zu erfüllen. Jetzt hat er zugestimmt, mein erster Vertreter zu werden - das war gestern. - und die Verantwortung für die Empfehlungen und für ihre Durchführung zu teilen"

(Katerina Selenzowa 27. 10. 1993)

Die Direktorin hoffte, daß sich Stolz als stellvertretender Direktor stärker mit den im Betrieb arbeitenden Menschen identifizieren würde. Wenn er vor versammelter Belegschaft die Verantwortung für Entlassungen übernehmen müsse, würde es ihm schwerer fallen, den Arbeitsplätzeabbau in der Produktion zu fordern und die Umwandlung des Produktionsbetriebs in ein Ersatzteillager als anzustrebende Perspektive darzustellen.

Nachdem Stolz monatelang "beobachtet und analysiert" hatte, entschied er am letzten Tag unserer Untersuchung gemeinsam mit der Direktorin über eine grundlegende Umstrukturierung der Verwaltung. Die Abteilung Löhne und Normen wurde aufgeteilt. Die Planungsabteilung wurde aufgelöst und gemeinsam mit der Buchhaltung in der Abteilung Finanzen zusammengefaßt. Zusätzlich wurde ihr die Lohnbuchhaltung zugeschrieben. Die Festlegung der Normen wurde Aufgabe der Technologen, die nun mit in die Engineering Abteilung

kamen. Normen sollten von nun an nicht mehr in Rubel, sondern in Zeit gemessen werden und den technischen Möglichkeiten entsprechend verändert werden. Die Umstrukturierung zielte darauf ab, das feststehende Verhältnis zwischen dem der Inflation angepaßten Einkommen und der Produktivität aufzubrechen und damit mehr Leistungsdruck auf die Produktionsarbeiter auszuüben.

Das entscheidende Kriterium kapitalistischen Wirtschaftens, nämlich die maximale und optimale Ausnutzung der gekauften Arbeitskraft zum geringst möglichen Preis, hatte bisher im Betrieb keine volle Geltung erlangt. Die Beschäftigten gingen noch von der Vorstellung aus, daß eine höhere Produktivität auch eine entsprechend höhere Bezahlung nach sich ziehen müßte. Der Betrieb war für sie trotz aller Veränderungen nach wie vor "ein Kessel für alle". Mit den geplanten Umstrukturierungen wurde diesem informellen Konsens zwischen Betriebsleitung und Belegschaft die Basis entzogen und der Weg freigemacht für ein antagonistisches Arbeitgeber Arbeitnehmerverhältnis westlichen Typs. Bei den zu erwartenden Interessenskonflikten hielt der Arbeitgeber alle Trümpfe in der Hand, während die Arbeitnehmer weder auf funktionierende Gewerkschaften noch auf eine wirksame Arbeitsgesetzgebung zurückgreifen konnten.

Notes

¹ Aus einem Interview mit Fjodor Perchunov vom 9.11. 1993. Anspielung auf ein Märchen von Leskov aus dem 19. Jahrhundert, in dem ein schieläugiger russischer Linkshänder "europäische" Meister übertraf, indem er einen von ihnen gemachten winzigen stählernen tanzenden Floh mit Hufeisen beschlug. Die Geschichte wurde zum Symbol für die Talentiertheit des russischen Volkes.

² Alle in diesem Aufsatz verwendeten Namen von Firmen und Einzelpersonen sind Pseudonyme.

³ Unter der Leitung von Birgit Müller, Institut für Ethnologie der Freien Universität Berlin, in Zusammenarbeit mit Isabelle Cribier, Deutsch-Französisches Zentrum für sozialwissenschaftliche Forschung in Berlin, Elena Mechtcherkina, Institut für Soziologie der russischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Moskau, Kiril Levinson, einem russischen Historiker, Andrej Onikienko, Institut für Weltökonomie und internationale Beziehungen in Moskau und Vladimir Choros dem Übersetzer und Spezialisten für russische Umgangssprache. Larissa Kossova, Russisches Zentrum für Meinungsforschung in Moskau wirkte an vier Interviews mit. Die Forschergruppe dankt der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft für die großzügige Finanzierung des Projektes.

⁴Das Interview führte Birgit Müller mit Kirill Levinson.

⁵Das Interview führten Isabelle Cribier und Elena Mechtcherkina.

⁶Das Interview führten Isabelle Cribier und Elena Mechtcherkina im Ruheraum der Elektromontage.

⁷Als "Limitschiki" werden die im Rahmen einer von der Stadt festgelegten Quote (Limit) nach Moskau eingewanderten Bewohner aus anderen Gebieten des Landes bezeichnet, die sich ihr Recht auf Aufenthalt in Moskau (Propiska) erwerben mußten.

⁸Das Interview führten Isabelle Cribier und Elena Mechtcherkina.

⁹Anspielung auf eine russische Redensart: über einen unfähigen, ungeschickten Menschen sagt man, daß er "die Hände am Hintern hat", das heißt, daß sie ebenso ungeschickt sind wie die Beine.

¹⁰Ivanov, verbreiteter russischer Name.

¹¹Das Interview mit Herrn Stolz vom 18. 11. 1993 führte Andrej Onikienko.

¹²Das Gespräch führte Larissa Kossova.

Material and Symbolic Relations in the British Coal Mining Industry: 1945-1995

Huw Beynon

The British coal industry has been a central industry in the British economy for the past two hundred years. Coal miners formed a pivotal group in the working class in the critical period of its development at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. For five decades they formed a vital political grouping within the Labour Party. The miners were involved in major national strikes notably 1912 and 1926 when they were joined for a time by other unions in a General Strike. In the post war period their significance as a highly organised section of the working class was expressed forcefully in the national strikes of 1972 and 1974 (which provoked Edward Heath to call a General Election), and in their year-long strike in 1984 which was the longest ever national strike in Britain and which ended in their defeat. Today, very few of them remain, and the strength of their trade union has been broken. This is a good moment for reflection upon their role within British society. In doing this, I will draw upon the researches I conducted with coal miners and their families in the North of England during the seventies and eighties, and which present a number of important issues and questions for the social anthropology of industrial societies.

The Miners in British Culture

This presence of the coal miners in British social and political life has encouraged a view of them as "typically proletarian", as the embodiment of "classic" working class attitudes often understood as "the vanguard" of the working class or as "traditional workers". A story told of the miners union leader A. J. Cook is probably apocryphal but is worth repeating. In visiting the Soviet Union he was introduced to his audience, by V. I. Lenin, as the man who represented a half a million British miners. After the meeting Cook corrected Lenin, informing him that there were not a half million miners but three times that number. "Why then", said the Soviet leader "hasn't there been a revolution in Britain"? This is an interesting question and it serves to indicate that these perceptions of the coal miner, while understandable, conceal a number of important aspects of coal mining life; aspects which might be seen as atypical of the working class in general.

In 1910 Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the Fabian social researchers, were to note that one in ten of all children in Britain were brought up in mining homes [1]. The large number of miners, the nature of their working conditions and the essential nature of their work (Britain was virtually a single fuel economy until the middle of the 1950's), created a powerful moral element within British socialist thought which was perhaps best expressed by George Orwell. In 1937 he visited a coal mine in Lancashire and, in his description, was exhausted by the time he had walked to the coal face. He marvelled at the endurance of the miners and wrote of how you could easily drive a car right across the north of England:

and never once remembered that hundreds of feet below... The miners are hewing out coal. Yet in a sense it is the miners who are driving your car forward. Their lamp lit world down there, is necessary to the day light world above as the root is to the flower [2].

The miners recognised this themselves. Most often it was patterned into their social life through resentment. Living as they did, in mining villages which were most often remote from urban centres, their early political views, and those of their trade unions, were often couched in terms of their social exclusion. To an extent this was also celebrated through annual mining festivals and galas. On these occasions and especially in the old coalfields of North England, miners and their families would parade behind the elaborate banners of their lodges which clearly operated as the dominant symbol representing their village and their general aspirations. These occasions were significant in many ways. They registered annual reunions of families and friends; they also registered the absence of miners who had been killed in the previous year. In an industry notorious for its rates of accidents and fatality the symbolic representation of that death and danger formed a critical aspect of mining life. Miners joked about death, about cave-ins, and the danger of life underground. Death and absence, however was sacred. In Durham, for example, the banner of a lodge where a man had been killed, has always been draped in black crêpe at the annual Gala.

The marvel of the occasion was captured repeatedly in discussions I had with retired miners and their families in North East England. In these discussions it became clear that "The Gala" was being used almost as metaphor through which the past could be grasped and historical change explained. Often, with these old people it seemed as if "the past were simply an adjoining room" [3] and the Gala brought it into the room with us. "You should have seen it Hinnie; it was a sight to behold". As one man put it, eloquently:

"It stirred the insides of your soul and you didn't know whether to laugh or burst out crying all day. It is part of our heritage. Part of the working class. Part of our lives. It was something we always treasured". [4]

This eloquence, and the use of quite powerful imagery is not uncommon amongst miners of this generation. For example I talked with one man about the idea of "progress", and he replied that while there had been progress made, "it has been a devastating kind of progress". As these men talked they regularly re-enacted incidents, and conversation, often with mimicry and to great dramatic and emotional effect. Their lives have contained an almost intolerable mixture of the mundane and the heroic, and these aspects are bridged through "the crack" - the detailed and regular conversation and discussion of daily life and past events.

Here then is a dangerous occupation carried out by men alone. Its history is redolent with themes of masculinity, the separation (yet unity) of work and family life, and the social isolation of many of the villages, highly dependent upon mining for employment.

The State and the Union: Siamese Twins

These social and political elements came together clearly in 1945. During the war, the miners had been told repeatedly of the indispensability of their work. They have collaborated in production committees to assist the "war effort". Many of them felt that they were being badly used in this process and in 1944 there were many strikes. Their sense of resentment had increased as children from London were lodged in the mining villages as evacuees from the bombing. Every mining village, or so it seems, had at least one account of a child who expressed surprise at seeing miners above ground. In the nineteenth century, there existed a widely held view that miners lived in underground caves. The continuity here straddled the period when the coal miners had emerged as the most highly organised group of workers in Britain qualifying, on some criteria, as "labour aristocrat". The stories were of great significance. They were told to me in my childhood and

repeated to me again, across several coalfields, as a researcher in the 1980's: "That's what they thought of the miners".

In 1945, therefore, with the election of a Labour Government with a landslide victory, the miners and their newly formed National Union were determined that private ownership of the mines would cease and their status in the reconstructed economy would be increased. To this end, the union pressed for a Miners' Charter which related to the general social conditions of mining life, and through this developed their already deep involvement in local government and the operation of the Labour Party.

As such public ownership was an important political event. Perhaps above all else it symbolised the class compromise which was to form the basis of post-war corporatism, and reconstruction in the UK. It was also a significant popular occasion. These two facts were brought together ceremonially on January 1st 1947 when, at every pit in the country, a blue and white flag was raised up on a flagpole (usually by the oldest miner in the pit) carrying the letters of the NCB (National Coal Board); and a plaque was unveiled (usually by the youngest boy at the mine). The plaque carried the message that the industry had been taken into public ownership on behalf of the people. At Horden Colliery in North East England, the lodge extended the ceremony by burying a hatchet at the base of the flagpole. Lest one takes the significance of this too far it is worth recalling that the miners at the nearby Easington Colliery were instructed by their lodge chairman that a resolution to "throw the manager down the shaft" was out of order! Nevertheless the sense of the occasion is clear, and the significance of it for the miners' union was established in the ways in which the NUM (National Union of Miners) became involved in the construction of the administrative apparatus of the NCB.

Nationalisation brought coal owner, managers and union officials together as administrators of the industry. "The Board", as it became known was established under the Nationalisation of Mines Act of 1946,

and in its operation it called upon the support and assistance of a trade union which had been formed just two years earlier. An amalgamation conference held in Nottingham established the NUM, and to many of the people involved in the industry it seemed that the union and the Board were "like Siamese twins - they were both born of the same period". As the Board developed so did the analogy take on a deeper significance.

The first Director of industrial relation at the NCB was Ebby Edwards. Edwards had been General Secretary for the Northumberland Miners, and he believed deeply in the need for a national union. Both previous attempts to establish such a union had foundered as regional groupings and local interests divided miners from each other. In the 1930s (with the Miners' Federation of Great Britain seriously split) it was Edwards who took the responsibility of national office and more than any other held the Federation together. The 1944 Conference therefore was for him a major achievement which affirmed his beliefs and vindicated his commitment to national unionism. It was with acclaim that he was elected as the first General Secretary of the NUM. That he was persuaded to leave this post (the expression of his life's work as a trade unionist) within a year to take up the position of Director of Labour Relations in the newly formed Coal Board says much of the ways in which nationalisation was understood. The more so when we realise that this pattern of recruitment operated throughout the structure of the new organisation. In every regional coal field leading trade unionists resigned their positions and took office in the labour relations and welfare departments of the NCB. The production managers were recruited from the old private coal companies. In the North East the man in charge of industrial relations was William Natrass, Labour Alderman and previously lodge Secretary of the Crookhall lodge in County Durham. In the late fifties this area was run by William Reid; trained as a manager in the Fife Coal Company, son of the man whose report set the framework for the post-war development of the industry and who had advised his son, that "if the Reid's leave who will be left

to run the industry"? Reid developed a cooperative relationship with the NUM with the guidance of Natrass and the support of Sam Watson the powerful general secretary of Durham.

These social arrangements took the new state corporation through the difficult years of fuel shortage which accompanied post-war reconstruction. By the 1950s they had become stabilised and this was symbolically recognised in the appointment of James Bowman as national Director. Bowman had previously been General Secretary of the Northumberland Miners and Vice-President of NUM. This so sealed the social structure of the corporation that recalcitrant miners, on unofficial strike, were often told by their union officials that they were simply striking against themselves for "the Chairman of the Board is a miner". In this they were affirming what Arthur Horner, the Communist who succeeded Ebby Edwards as General Secretary of the NUM, had told miners delegates at the 1948 Conference of the National Union: they had to get away from this "class approach toward management"[5]. Siamese twins indeed. So powerfully were the union and management joined together that after 1957 - when the dependence upon coal dramatically declined - it was to Alf Robens the Labour MP for Blyth in Northumberland, and Shadow Minister of Labour, that the Conservative administration turned for Bowman's successor.

The Heroic Miner

The complex cultural apparatus which underpinned the nationalised corporation solidified it into a significant political bureaucracy. It administered the industry, regulated industrial disputes and coordinated production for twenty years. In so doing, it drew upon its roots within the culture and daily lives of the coal miners and their families.

In the ten years that followed the war for example, the National Coal Board successfully operated a system which saw coal production

increase from 193 to 227 million tonnes. This was achieved through some important changes in the social organisation of production, but with little significant technical change in the production system. By 1957, British Coal mining was, by international comparison, still under mechanised. Coal production rested heavily upon the skilled physical effort of the face workers, and upon their commitment to the industry. Evocative productionist language became common currency in this period; specifically through ideas of power resting "at the point of the pick" and more generally in society through reference to "the coal face" as the place where the real work gets done. (An example of the significance of this can be seen in the ways in which teachers and university lecturers in the 1980's attempted to appropriate this rhetoric through the idea of "the chalk face"). Miners themselves celebrated the "big hewer", the "rippers" and the "colliers" who performed superhuman feats underground. The Guinness Book of Records, listed a miner from Northumbria in this period as holding the record for the most coal cut by hand in a shift. These activities were orchestrated by the state corporation. In 1947, the NCB had seven film crews who worked regularly at producing "NCB News" that was shown in the local cinemas in and around the coalfields. These newsreels celebrated the achievements of the miners, documented industrial accidents and tragedies and successfully developed a powerful heroic view of the miner and the coal industry.

This was a period of a coal monopoly, when Britain was a single fuel economy, and when every ton of coal dug was needed and could be sold. It was also the Stakanovite period in the British mines. Production banners and medals proclaimed the achievements of men and pits which - in the most primitive of conditions - broke records and delivered the nation's coal. Here, in a state-owned industry, management and union combined to celebrate the heroic worker. Here, the artifacts of the industry the miner's lamp and pick became icons; enormous effigies of miners stood centrally in the mining festivals that were jointly organised by the union and the NCB.

In the 1950's the heroic image of the miners was celebrated in the miners' annual Galas. In these years the annual "Big Meeting" in Durham became akin to a state celebration. The miners and their families paraded their banners past their trade union and political leaders, but on these occasions this included the Prime Minister, senior managers of the Coal Board, and other dignitaries including the Ambassador of the USA. Michael Foot, ex-leader of the Labour Party spoke at the Gala on many occasions. When I interviewed him in 1982 he explained how:

"I started there in 1947. That is when I shared the platform with Arthur Horner. It was strange because the Durham area emerged as a Right wing within the union and the Labour Party, but I was elected to go there regularly. The Durham Miners Gala is a fine occasion today, taking place as it does in that beautiful city. But in those days it was absolutely sensational. There were so many lodges you see and they had to start bringing them in at half past eight in the morning. The whole city throbbed with the thing from early in the morning right through until you left. And you left absolutely drunk with it - I mean that metaphorically because there was very little actual drunkenness in my opinion - the music, the banners and all in that beautiful city. It overwhelmed you really. In those days it was, far and away, the best working class festival that there was in this country. Far and away the best. It was just marvellous".

The other side of the Gala, and the position of the miner in British society was demonstrated in 1951. In that year a major explosion had taken place in the Easington colliery, killing 94 men. In the village the funeral marches took place day after day as more and more mens' bodies were found in the ruins of the mine. On Gala Day the Easington banner was draped in black and as it was carried through Durham people looked at it and wept, or reached forward to touch it as a sacred symbol.

The parallels with the post-war experiences of the French industry is an engaging one. There, in a similar settlement, the Socialist and Communist parties were initially united behind a similar production

drive in the nationalised industry. In this period it was often argued that "to dig coal in the highest form of class consciousness" and that "a miner only becomes a man when he sees his blood on the coal"[6]. These ideas therefore took shape in the context of state ownership and they contrast with Belgium where, under private ownership, post-war coal production was achieved through migrant workers. Here the heroic image is absent, instead the miner is linked with notions of debasement. However, in contrast to Britain, the heroic period was short lived in France. The split between the Communist and Socialist parties over the running of the coal mines led to the major confrontation of 1948, after which 40,000 miners (many of them communist militants) left the industry. In Britain, in contrast, and in spite of the run down of the 1960's these images were retained and redeveloped in the 1970's to be finally destroyed in the aftermath of the 1984-85 strike.

Gender Relations

In their talk of the post-war period it is clear that, for miners born before 1930, the 1950's were the good years. In this time state ownership had counteracted the excesses of power associated with private ownership, guaranteed the trade union (through Act of Parliament) and stabilised the social life of the village. But this was not to last, and in reflecting upon what has changed it is important to point out that these social arrangements were powerfully organised around a clear differentiation between the lives of men and women. While the men and boys worked in the pit, the women and girls worked in the home. Much of the work in the home involved them in directly servicing the activities of the coal mine. Few of the collieries in Britain provided washing facilities for their workers in 1945 [7]. These men would travel home "black"; in the homes the women would be involved in an almost continuous process of boiling water in kettles on coal fires preparing the baths and washing the clothes of their husbands and

sons. (The NCB did not provide or launder work clothes and overalls for its workers until 1981!)

Not surprisingly therefore, the building of washing facilities and showers at the collieries were cause for some celebration. In Durham (where the NCB also owned the houses) the showers were also used on Saturdays by the sons of the miners. The NCB owned the miners' houses and these did not have bath rooms. The NCB indicated that it was prepared to "modernise" these homes but that the miners would need to pay a proportion of the cost. This would be measured as a proportion of the coal which the miners were given each year as a part of their wage.

These changes clearly affected the women more deeply. The men had access to showers but they didn't. Bathrooms would ease their work in the home and bring their standard of life to a level that was normally expected. However, as women, they were not members of the trade union and were unable to vote on the issue. In one of the villages in Durham the (militant) miners' lodge voted against the proposal insisting that the Board should pay for the improvements itself. The Board refused. The women -excluded from this decision-making process-petitioned the union meetings, marched and demonstrated through the streets of the village and finally occupied the union office. The decision was reversed. Interestingly none of this is recorded in the union minute books, and it serves to illustrate the gendered bias in many of the social arrangements which were sealed through state ownership. This was to form an important part of the cultural dynamic as these places changed.

Rundown

In the late fifties, in the face of a growing availability of cheap oil and gas, the NCB entered into a process of rationalisation which involved the increasingly rapid mechanisation of coal cutting and the

haulage of coal in the mines and its delivery to the power stations. This was achieved through the general introduction of a technology based around long wall faces, conveyor systems and the shearer loader. This technological system was one which saw coal miners producing coal continuously with enormous increases in productivity. Allied with these changes was the closure of the least productive mines. In this combined process 400,000 miners were made redundant and another 100,000 were transferred to other coalfields in the country. It was a period of economic change and social dislocation. In its most critical period (1964-1969) it was carried through by a Labour Government to whom the miners had looked specifically for help and assistance in the election of 1964. As part of these changes the government used state resources to encourage new industries and administrative activities to be located in the coalfields; significantly changing the structure of their labour markets and providing increasing employment opportunities for women.

The detail of this period is complex. What is perhaps most significant to register here, is that the restructuring was managed effectively by the political bureaucracy of the Coal Board. In the two key years of 1967 and 1968 (when all other industries experiencing restructuring, encountered strikes and redundancy) no strikes occurred in coal mining to challenge closures. With reluctance, the miners supported this process of change. As a part of it, a rhetoric of "progress" and "modernisation" was employed, which rapidly replaced the "heroic" images of the 1950's. Here the emphasis was upon science (the preferability of oil to coal), and a "new way of life" associated with modern factories, new towns and the move away from the restrictions of mining community life. The reactions of the miners to this was mixed to say the least. In part they accepted the changes as inevitable, many of them willingly left the industries. Many of the women appreciated the opportunities presented in the changes for themselves and for their sons. But there were deep tensions too. The changes were carried out at great speed; often with little direct consultation with the people involved. Often mines with enormous reserves were closed in ways

which people considered to be wasteful. These feelings came to a head in 1968 and were revealed in Durham on the Gala of that year. Once again the Prime Minister was present as were cabinet ministers and leaders of the NUM and NCB. On that occasion the men of the Silkworth lodge in Sunderland lowered their banner as they stood in front of the Labour Prime Minister. "It was" they said "to show him that he had lost our respect - we still had our dignity but we no longer respected him as our leader". This resentment became expressed most clearly through the idea that the miner (once the Stakanovite hero) had become transformed into an "industrial gypsy". The racist social epithet here is significant, as is its usage. It was employed by miners and the NUM to register their opposition to what they saw as the debasement of their occupation. This, together with an account of the conditions of mining work and wages, was a central element in the development of a successful national strike in the industry in 1972. On that occasion a public inquiry decided that the miners were a "special case", and recommended the full settlement of their claim.

In the period which followed the election of Harold Wilson's Government in 1974, it seemed that the old corporatist system had been re-established. Under the Plan for Coal, an investment programme began which modernised many of the existing mines and established new mines and complexes in the Yorkshire coalfield. Coal output increased, and this pattern continued even after the rapid rundown of manufacturing capacity and employment that took place after 1979. In the mines themselves, a system of dual power was reactivated which, in this period, brought clear benefits to the miners. Although a disciplinary procedure existed it was very rarely used beyond the level of the colliery as managers and union representatives dealt with such problems through a mixture of "rough justice" and "common sense". By common consent, men who would have been sacked in many other industries retained their jobs on payment of a fine to a local miners' welfare fund or charity. Early retirement and redundancy (while the subject of negotiated disagreement on terms etc) were often handled

flexibly and informally within the mine. (For example, there were several occasions in the N.E. coalfields of miners who died while employed in the mine, were made redundant post-humously so that their widows and families could benefit from enhanced redundancy terms). So too with recruitment. Miners' sons were given preference for jobs in the industry and often the lodge secretaries were involved in the selection procedure. Gouldner in his study of gypsum mine in the USA wrote of an "indulgency pattern", whereby management ignored or bent the rules in the interest of industrial peace [8]. A similar process was at work in the British mines in the late 1970's. Around it, management often spoke openly of sharing a common mining culture with the men who cut the coal.

From "Heroic Miner" to the "Enemy Within"

At the Home Office, things looked rather different. The mobilisation of the miners in 1972 and 1974 was seen to raise fundamental issues of law and order and national security. The successful mass picketing of the Saltley coke works in the West Midlands was viewed there as having the significance of a "minor nuclear attack"[9]. It was clear in these accounts that the relationship between the miners and the state had become problematic. In the post-war period of reconstruction, the miners were integrated into the state as a corporate group, and their position there was maintained economically and ideologically as the National Coal Board placed the popular culture of the miner on the national stage. In this period, coal mining was essentially a labour intensive system linked to a monopolist market. The arrangements were maintained through the most intensive period of economic restructuring, at the end of which (under a Tory administration, and under changed conditions in the energy markets) the miners successfully organised two national strikes. These strikes in 1972 and 1974 were the first national strikes organised by the coal miners since the General strike of 1926. They represented a change in

the approach of the miners' union toward the government, and was widely interpreted as representing a break with the corporatist tradition and, in the tactics adopted ("flying pickets" etc), a direct challenge to state power.

It is now clear that in 1974 two quite divergent views had developed within the NCB and the major ministries of state. On the one hand the rise in the oil price presented the possibility of stabilizing the coal industry on the basis of advanced technology linked with a long term planned growth in output and employment. It was this view which was publicly presented in a new tri-partite Plan for Coal, in 1974 and 1976. This plan was deeply expansionist and productionist in tone. This view was allied once again with positive images of the miner - now less of a superman and more as the embodiment of a new technical mining system.

The second view was radically different from this one however; it saw the miner, and the new younger left leadership emerging in the NUM as a powerfully destructive force. This view made common cause with the worries in the Home Office. For these people the old model of the forties and fifties could not be resurrected, nor was it desirable that it should be. What was needed was a dramatic alteration in the relationship between the institutions of mining and the state. The Home Office's view in relation to this has already been noted; to this can be added two other documents which have received some public attention. The first, written by Wilfred Miron, Deputy Director for the Midlands Area, pointed to the danger of NUM organised on new Leftist principles. Presented to the Director of the NCB in 1974, it pointed to the need to develop a strategy of technical change which was politically determined and aimed at affecting the social support achieved by the miners' union. In this it argues that the investment strategy of the NCB (based on public funds) should be directed toward the expansion of production in new areas, and that the labour process should be constructed in a way which marginalised members of the NUM. The second document, written by a Tory shadow minister Nicholas Ridley has been given

wider coverage. This is a document produced by the Tory Party in opposition under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. Here the emphasis is upon the regulation of the trade union power and the need for the government to effect changes, both within the state, (via laws, policing etc) and civil society, (notably the encouragement of "good" owner lorry drivers) which will successfully undermine the capacity of significant powerful groups within the working class to strike and to disrupt the economy. The miners were seen as the most significant of these groups; far from being heroic figures they had come to represent the enemy within the state.

After the defeat of the Labour Government in 1979 senior officials of the Board, unsure of their ability to obtain continuing financial support for their industrial plans, occasionally connived with the officials of the union to bring pressure on the Government. This was short listed however. By 1984, things had changed decisively. With the war in the South Atlantic over, the second Thatcher government was supremely confident and registered this with the appointment of Ian MacGregor as Chairman of the NCB in 1983. The miners in their turn had elected the militant Yorkshire leader Arthur Scargill as their national President. Both of these can be seen as important events. For Mrs Thatcher, Ian MacGregor was a manager untainted by the history of the NCB and the "cosy relationships" which she saw as characterising industrial relations in that organisation. Her understanding of the culture of this state organisation was such that she was convinced that it could only be altered by the introduction of a powerful outsider; preferably someone whose experience of industry had also been outside the UK. (A similar policy was adopted with regard to the state owned automobile and ship-yard industries.) The miners understood this also; they saw clearly that the old ways were at an end. As such they looked for a war leader and not a conciliator. Under his leadership the miners' union took up an openly belligerent tone, eschewing its previous involvement in joint cultural and social activities with the corporation; emphasising the independence of the miner, and his militant past. In his speeches

Scargill repeated summoned up ideas of "manhood", of past victories and sacrifices, and the folly of "collaboration". Equally clear was the determination of the Government to break the variety of social apparatuses which had regulated production in the state sector. In 1984, faced by a decision to introduce a programme of pit closures the miners went on strike. The Chancellor, Nigel Lawson spoke of the strike as a "worthwhile investment", and people were in little doubt about the meaning of this statement. No attempt was made to avert the strike and an enormous mobilisation of the resources of the State took place with the aim of defeating the miners' union and ultimately returning the industry to the private sector.

The Consequences of Defeat

The details of the 1984-85 dispute are complex and have, to some extent, been documented elsewhere [9]. What is significant for this paper is the implication of the strike for the production system in the mines, and for the symbolic representations of the miners within the British working class, and within the mining districts. In the early summer of 1984 I talked with several car workers about the miners decision to strike. Their reaction can but be described as a mixture of admiration and disbelief. In their view, car workers would never strike under the conditions that existed in the coal industry (the end of the winter, high coal stacks) and it would be simply impossible to imagine sustaining a strike for as long as the miners appeared to be entertaining. These views intensified, as the summer passed and turned into winter. In truth, few of the miners (and certainly not their leaders) imagined that the strike would last a year, but its momentum was maintained, in part, by a sense of historical continuity. Talk regularly turned to the growth of the 1972 strike and how it had developed; and then to the 1926 General Strike in which their grandparents had been involved "and it was worse for them". This sense of history was combined with another powerful image of "backs to the wall".

During the strike the miners through their lodges, and their linked support groups produced badges which represented themselves, or their achievements or a particular incident during the strike. The major confrontation that took place at the Orgreave coke works was recognised by an "Orgreave Veteran" badge. These badges became collector's items and were actively sought and traded by miners who themselves became "collectors". One badge, particularly sought-after, was that of a Maerdy lodge in South Wales. This badge carried the motif "The last pit in the Rhondda". The Rhondda Valley was, of course, for sixty years, synonymous with coal as the major producing region of the South Wales Coalfields. The slogan had an air of defiance but it also carried a sense of tragedy - of an end of a way of life. This was at the heart of the dispute, which also carried with it a dilemma, which became clearer during the long hot summer months as young miners with flowing hair and bronzed bodies talked of never feeling so fit or so well.

In a strike about jobs and about work, people were well aware that the jobs they were defending were not the best. The women who so solidly and bravely supported the strike would, at other times, have told you that they didn't want their sons to go underground; that they hoped that there would be "something better" for them. But, in the absence of that, "there's always the pit". In this and in other ways "the pit" had become understood as part of the collective property of many mining villages. These places, these "holes in the ground" had become part of their lives in a very detailed, and complex way. One man reflected that before the strike, throughout his life he had

"needed the pit; I needed to work in it, I've been there most days since I left school. But what I learned in the strike was that I didn't need it. That I could manage without it".

This idea was strengthened after the return to work under very different social conditions. In 1985 the "mock bureaucracy" and its related "indulgency pattern" was ended and a new "punishment centred" mode was put into operation. A thousand men had been dismissed

during the strike, and the return to work without them heightened the sense of broken solidarity. In the mines, new production systems and working contracts were introduced, as local agreements were abrogated by a management operating with a dramatically different set of priorities. Men talked then of the job being completely transformed, not so much by technological changes (which were not insignificant), but by the fact that:

"They have taken away the comraderie of the pit. It's all gone. And without laughing and joking down the pit its a rotten dirty, filthy job. The only good thing about the pit was your maras (mates) and that's gone".

Another Yorkshire miner expressed a similar view:

"I've worked in places before the pit. In factories and such like. It was all "do this" and "do that" sort of thing. The good thing about the pit was that you could tell the gaffer (boss) to fuck off and get away with it. You weren't working under the screw all the time. If its going to be like that its worth having".

Such statements were not unusual. In 1988 I talked with a lodge secretary of one large colliery in the North East and asked him how he had assessed the views of the men he represented. "It was", he said, "a question of let's shut the bastard pit, so that we can all be away". Intriguingly similar responses were found amongst steel workers, and amongst ship yard workers. All employed in the state sector, all with the background of a powerful occupational tradition, supported and then broken by the state. In mining this process was accelerated.

Destruction and Renewal

In the ten years that followed the dispute, 150 collieries closed. In 1983, 230 thousand men were employed in the mines, by 1992, the

total had fallen to 40 thousand. As the industry was prepared for its return to the private sector many more collieries were closed down; in 1994 just 10,000 coal miners remained working in collieries where productivity rates had trebled. New face machinery had been introduced and a range of sub-contracting arrangements developed which broke up the organised solidarity of the underground miners fragmenting them into contract workers, and mobile workers all operating under new payment rules orchestrated through a new rhetoric of accounting and cost per giga-joule.

The transformation and run-down of British coal mining has been dramatic, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the scale of it. Also it would be easy to present the account in a tragic vein. Maerdy has closed; there are now no pits in the Rhondda although there is a Wild West Theme Park. Just one pit remains in Scotland and two in the North East. Perhaps however, it is important to add a critical perspective to this, and to reflect upon the psychology of dependency built into the miners' view of needing the pit. Certainly there is an enormous sadness in the mining districts. In discussing a closed colliery, men often talked of "missing her" and all the attendant noises and rituals associated with a productive mine. Nevertheless, these mines operated through that back breaking effort which so deeply disturbed Orwell. The mine too was "men's world" and this also tended to dominate relationships on the surface. The drinking pubs in the mining districts maintained "men-only" bars. During the strike Arthur Scargill repeatedly appealed to the miners to "stand up and fight like men". It was a last, and powerful, appeal to an image of heroic, masculine worker, and it was flawed.

In the 1960's the coalfields changed. As the mines closed new industries were attracted to the region by state grants. Many of these employed women workers, and for the first time in many of the coal districts, regular source of employment were available for women. These factories and offices were unionised and some women became shop stewards and union activists. In 1984 the role of the "miners wives"

in the dispute has been widely reported. As a consequence of the state legislation of 1982 the families of striking miners were deemed to be in receipt of £15.00 strike pay and this was deducted from their social security benefits. In the face of a great deal of real need, communal kitchens were organised, food collections organised and food and clothing distributed. The women were central to all these activities and as the strike progressed it became clear that in many districts it was they (and not the miners) who were holding the strike together. Also in their activities they became increasingly critical of the form and organisation of the union - its bureaucracy, its lack of imagination. What these women mobilised has a powerful sense of community rights which extended beyond employment. To an important extent this was developed during the dispute as a coherent strand, often through the involvement of children, and through linkages with other public sector unions. Here a very different set of images was brought into play from the ones suggested by the Triple Alliance of coal miners, steel workers and railway men. This was resurrected in 1984 but it failed to operate in any strategic sense during the dispute. The alternative failed also, in that it did not prevent the defeat. But it has left a heritage.

The miners' union under the leadership of Arthur Scargill was involved in a form of militancy designed to **force** the state to secure employment in the coal sector. As such radicalism did not make a break with the historical route of the unions in British politics which was deeply statist, in perspective. The demand articulated by Scargill was for the preservation of production and employment. It failed to gain general support. The images which were most widely generalised were those of communities in struggle for their continuity, and of non-statist, autonomous activities of men and women in the mining districts. This perhaps indicates the interlinkage of positive outcomes of the dispute in terms of working class politics generally. In the context of dramatically changed conditions of international production, and the restructuring strategies of Conservative governments, working class corporatist politics had come to an impasse. In a sense the miner's

strike represented its last fling, and the importance of the defeat was far-reaching. Since 1985, however, there are signs that elements of a more complex, environmentally attentive, less "productive" concerns are emerging, both amongst the miners and generally in the British Trade Unions. This came to the fore in 1992 as the Tory government sounded the death knell of most of the remaining 50 coal mines, announcing a comprehensive closure plan that would lead up to the privatisation of the industry. There is little doubt that these coal mines could have been closed without any opposition from the coal miners, such was their level of demoralisation. That the programme was announced in a major national press conference is of some significance. Undoubtedly there was a strong element of hubris involved in the action of the President of the Board of Trade, Michael Heseltine. What was also involved was the need felt by the Government to publicly and symbolically register the ending of a particular tradition within British society. And it brought its reward as 300,000 people marched through London in torrential rain. People from all backgrounds representing trade unions, small employers, gay activists; men and women from the home counties and of middle England. I talked to many of them and asked why they were there. Most common was the answer: "because its morally wrong what they are doing to these people". To the very end (and today there are only 9,000 coal miners working in the UK) the miners were capable of mobilising this national sentiment in their support. It was this which Raymond Williams identified as part of the *Resources for Hope* [10]; the reworking of cultural traditions in new forms, with new perspectives and opportunities for individual and collective development.

Notes

[1] For a discussion of this early period in British mining see Huw Beynon and Terry Austrin, Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation, Rivers Oram Press, 1994.

[2] George Orwell "Down the Mine", in Inside the Whale and Other Essays, Penguin, 1957.

[3] Karl Mannheim, Structures of Thinking: Social Struggle over Culture, Routledge, 1922.

[4] The quotations in this piece all derive from the author's field notes and interviews unless stated otherwise.

[5] National Union of Mineworkers, Annual Conference Report, London, 1948.

[6] Darryl Holter, "Mineworkers and Nationalisation in France: Insights into Concepts of State Theory, Politics and Society, Vol. XI, No. 1, 1982.

[7] For a fuller discussion of these issues see Beynon and Austrin op.cit. especially Chapter 7.

[8] See A Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, Free Press of Glencoe, 1955.

[9] D. Jeffrey and P. Hennesey, State of Emergency: British Governments and Strike-Breaking Since 1919, London, 1983.

[10] See for example Huw Beynon (ed.) Digging Deeper, Verso, 1985.

Martin Adney and John Lloyd, The Miners Strike, Routledge, 1986.

[11] R. Williams, Reasons for Hope, Verso, 1991.

Die aus der Tuchbude: Lebens- und Berufserfahrungen von Textilarbeiterinnen aus der Niederlausitz

Petra Clemens

Textilarbeiterinnen, ihren Erfahrungen, ihren alltäglichen Arbeits- und Lebenszusammenhängen galt meine Untersuchung, die gekoppelt war an ein größeres sozialgeschichtliches Projekt, in dem Entwicklungen in der Industriearbeiterschaft der DDR bis in die 1960er Jahre am Beispiel einer Region analysiert wurden.

Die Region ist die Niederlausitz, ein Gebiet im Südosten des heutigen Landes Brandenburg. In der DDR wurde die Niederlausitz seit Mitte der 1950er Jahre zum "Kohle- und Energiezentrum" ausgebaut. Unter diesem Blickwinkel war und ist sie für die Mehrzahl der am Gesamtprojekt Beteiligten interessant. Meine Untersuchungen konzentrieren sich jedoch auf die Textilindustrie als eine in der Region ebenfalls angestammte Industrie, die in der DDR-Zeit eine quantitativ bedeutsame Gruppe von Industriearbeiterinnen stellte und immer auch Symbol bzw. Synonym für industrielle Frauenarbeit war. Schon in der Planungsgesellschaft der Vergangenheit genoß dieser Arbeitsraum von Frauen keine ökonomische und soziale Bevorzugung, und mit dem Einbruch von Marktwirtschaft in der Gegenwart wurde er schnell - und im Vergleich zu anderen - nur mit geringstem Widerstand "besenrein" gefegt.

Es gab, wenn man so will, noch eine Differenz in der Forschungsperspektive und -methode. Während im Gesamtprojekt Ansätze einer politischen Sozialgeschichte und quantitative Methoden dominierten, habe ich mich auf der Subjektebene bewegt, vor allem mit der Methode der Oral History gearbeitet, aber auch konventionelle Quellen historischer Forschung, also Archivalien herangezogen.

Als empirisches Untersuchungsfeld wählte ich die Inkarnation tuchindustrieller Produktion in der Niederlausitz, die "Tuchstadt" Forst, eine kleine Stadt an der Neiße.

Mit der Produktion und dem Export eines speziellen Streichgarngewebes für den Massenbedarf, dem Buckskin, lange Zeit Privileg der englischen Tuchindustrie, hatte sie sich am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts aus der regionalen Bedeutung gehoben. Die Stadt stellte Mitte der 1920er Jahre nicht nur 42% der in der Niederlausitzer Tuchindustrie überhaupt Beschäftigten, sondern übertraf damit auch alle anderen deutschen Textilindustriestädte. Diese Industrie dominierte die Stadt auch zu DDR-Zeiten. Ihre unzähligen alten Tuchfabriken aus dem 19. und ersten Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts dienten als Produktionsstätten bis 1990, ehe sie, an Handels- und Supermarktketten verkauft oder verpachtet, zu Konsumtionstätten und Warenlagern wurden.

In den "Forster Tuchfabriken" arbeiteten 1989 noch ca. 1900 Beschäftigte; 63% davon waren Frauen. Unter ihnen bildeten die 50- bis 55jährigen Frauen das Gros und zugleich die letzte Generation Forster Textilarbeiterinnen, die letzte in spezifischer und mehrdeutiger Hinsicht.

Die Textilarbeiterinnen dieser Generation (Jahrgang 1936 bis 1941) stammten mehrheitlich auch noch aus der engeren Region, aus der Stadt oder den umliegenden Dörfern. Und sie wuchsen in Kriegs- und Nachkriegszeiten auf. Die Belastungen, Zwänge und Maßgaben einer solchen Kindheit in zugleich regionaler und sozialer Randlage,

trugen dazu bei, daß sie ein Erbe, das vor dem Krieg schon fast als ausgeschlagen galt, noch einmal antraten und durchhielten: Arbeit in der Tuchfabrik. "Knochenarbeit" war ihr Wort.

Diese Frauen, die in den 1950er Jahre in die Tuchfabriken eintraten, gingen noch durch die "Tuchmacher-Lehrwerkstatt". Die Betonung liegt auf Tuchmacher. D.h. sie waren die ersten Mädchen und die letzten Lehrlinge, die noch eine Ausbildung in der Tradition soliden Tuchmacherhandwerks erhielten, und zwar in Person der alten Lehrmeister und in der Möglichkeit, die Tuchherstellung nicht nur in ihren einzelnen Stufen, also dem Spinnen, Weben und Ausrüsten, sondern noch in ihrer Ganzheit zu erlernen. Und bevor diese Mittfünfzigjährigen zwischen Ende 1990 und 1992 durch Kurzarbeit "Null", Vorruhestand und schließlich Entlassung ausgekehrt wurden, hatten sie mit ihrem "Schliff" durch die Alten und ihren z.T. sehr komplexen Arbeitsfertigkeiten viele Jahre den Puffer abgegeben in einer Stoß- und Mangelproduktion. Sie wirkten in einer Produktion, die seit Ende der 1960er Jahre ihre Lehrlinge überall in der DDR, besonders in Agrarregionen zusammensuchen mußte, in der bald ganze Abteilungen zu "Durchgangslagern" geworden waren und in der schließlich auch die mit Frauen nicht mehr zu besetzenden Arbeitsplätze von ausländischen Vertragsarbeitern und Vertragsarbeiterinnen eingenommen wurden. Die "Forster Tuchfabriken", hinsichtlich der Beschäftigtenzahl und der Höhe der Gewebeproduktion die Nummer Eins in der Niederlausitzer Tuchindustrie, hatten das Letzte zu bieten im Hinblick auf Arbeits- und Produktionsbedingungen in den mühsam zusammengehaltenen alten Gebäuden.

So lebten die Textilarbeiterinnen hier nicht nur mit dem wohl überall in der Textilindustrie und dort bei Frauen wie bei Männern gleichermaßen verfestigtem Bewußtsein einer selbstverständlichen gesellschaftlichen Hintenansetzung. Unmittelbar in der Lebenswelt der Forster Textilarbeiterinnen gab es den Stachel deklassierender Sterotype. "Ach, die aus der Tuchbude." Ein stereotyper Satz, den ich

in der Stadt auffällig häufig von Dritten hörte, ausgesprochen als schlichte Geläufigkeit, aber auch zur Absetzung und zur Herabwürdigung, mit bildhaften Kommentierungen. Diese allerdings waren nur auf Frauen gemünzt. Sie erinnerten mich in ihren Grundfigurationen an alte, z.T. "schaurige Bilder" über Fabrikarbeiterinnen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert (dumpf, ordinär, sich prostituierend).

Gewiß: Der Erfahrung sozialer Deklassierung setzten meine Gesprächspartnerinnen den Stolz entgegen, Arbeit trotz dieser Umstände ausdauernd und mit höchster Leistung vorgelegt zu haben. "Wer in die Bude ging, mußte arbeiten können und flink sein", wurde in einem Gruppengespräch das von mir eingeworfene Zitat "Wenn Du gar nichts kannst, gehst Du in die Tuchbude" gekontert. Im Einzelgespräch kam die erfahrene Kränkung zur Sprache. So antwortete eine Interviewpartnerin auf meine Frage, was sie mit dem Begriff "Tuchbude" verbinde, sofort mit dem Verweis auf seine herabwürdigende Bedeutung. Als "Menschen zweiter Klasse" wären sie angesehen worden. Eine Formulierung, die ihr in dieser Ausformung, wie mir schien, die neue Gegenwart in den Mund legte, denn sie fügte sofort an: "Na, wie die DDR-Menschen jetzt überhaupt." Über dem abschätzigen Bild von der "Tuchbude" lag also auch eine sehr junge Schicht.

Im Verlauf der Zeit, im Prozeß der letztendlich immer wieder gescheiterten Modernisierungsversuche kam es, beginnend mit dieser Generation zu Verschiebungen im Gefüge dessen, was als Arbeitsplatz für Männer oder für Frauen angesehen wurde. Erstmals arbeiteten nun auch Frauen als Meisterin oder Ingenieurin, die Rangfolge der Geschlechter, die den Männern die "ersten" und attraktivsten Plätze garantierte, wurde dabei jedoch nicht angetastet. Egal auf welchem Arbeitsplatz, Berufstätigkeit war für diese Frauen eine Selbstverständlichkeit, für viele eine notwendige Selbstverständlichkeit und eine kontinuierliche Angelegenheit. Zugleich blieb die Haus- und Familienarbeit an ihnen hängen. Berufs- und Hausarbeit waren für diese Frauen

eine doppelte Belastung, aber auch eine doppelte Erfahrung. Die Frage wäre, ob und wie sie diese doppelte Zuständigkeit und Verantwortlichkeit in einem Betrieb mit Frauenmehrheit und männlicher Vormacht zur Geltung brachten. Und weiter, in welcher Art das in einer Gesellschaft geschah, in der die ökonomischen und sozialen Bedingungen die Konkurrenz zwischen den Geschlechtern zwar abgeschwächt, die politischen Strukturen ein demokratisches Aushandeln und Diskutieren auch der geschlechtsspezifischen Machtverhältnisse aber nicht zugelassen hatten.

Ich möchte im Folgenden ein Gruppengespräch und zwei Einzelbiographien nacherzählen. Über diese drei Gespräche vermitteln sich Einblicke in die sehr unterschiedlichen betrieblichen Arbeitsräume und wird vor allem auch der Frage nach Erfahrungen mit der geschlechtsspezifischen Arbeitsteilung nachgegangen.

Ende des Jahres 1990 war die alte Selfaktorspinnerei geschlossen worden. Und bevor sie im Sommer 1991 geräumt wurde, traf ich mich mit ehemals dort Beschäftigte zu einer Besichtigung und zu einem Gespräch.

Die vier Frauen und der Meister hatten hier z.T. schon seit Jahrzehnten gearbeitet, mit Spinn- und Krempelmaschinen, die wie das Gebäude in der Mehrzahl noch aus den 1920er Jahren stammten. Seit 1978 war ihre Verschrottung immer wieder angekündigt worden. Nun erst, unter anderen Vorzeichen und mit bitteren Konsequenzen für die Frauen, wurde Ernst daraus. Vorher waren die Maschinen immer als Jonglierkapazität für die Planerfüllung stehengeblieben.

“Alle Mistpartien, die kamen zu uns, wollen wir ruhig sagen”, kommentierte eine Frau unter Zustimmung der anderen.

“Mistpartien wollen wir nicht sagen, alle, die de nee schlechte Laufeigenschaft hatten”, rückte der Meister zurecht.

“Jeden Mist”, die Frauen blieben dabei, hätten sie hier zu Vorgarn und Garn verarbeitet und “wenns mit Schreien war”.

Ihr wütendes und verzweifeltes Fluchen bei der Verarbeitung schlechter Partien - "schöne" hätte sie auch gehabt, die Frauen wollten bei der Wahrheit bleiben - schluckte der ohrenbetäubende Maschinenlärm. Wo andere wegen der vielen hängenden Fäden "lang gelegen" oder "Kopp gestanden" hätten, seien sie "halberwegen um die Runden gekommen", durch Flinkheit und Arbeitseinteilung, eingeschliffen durch die Alten.

Und weil er uns so gestriezt hat und wir mußten so schnell, so flott hintereinander arbeiten, dadurch sind wir eben so flink geworden. Ich hab mir manchmal gesagt: Das war nie zu schade, was wir gelernt haben, also wirklich. Denn die Alten haben uns mehr rangenommen, wie jetzt hier so een junger Spinner. Also, da hat man früher mehr gelernt als heute."

Diese Mitgift ließen sie sich nicht schlecht reden. Aber aus der "Schinderei", wie sie die Arbeit unter solchen Bedingungen nannten, machten sie dennoch keine Tugend.

Es war der Ehrgeiz des Meisters, daß keine der "Mistpartien" als unspinnbar zurückging. Er baute solange an den Maschinen, bis die Qualität des Garnes stimmte und die flinken Frauen mit dem Anknüpfen "halberwegen" hinterherkamen. Lief eine Maschine gar nicht mehr lief, wühlte er mit dem Selfaktorsteller in der zusammengetragenen Antiquitätensammlung bis ein Ersatzteil gefunden oder zusammengebastelt war. Seit die Krempelmaschinen wegen Mangel an Arbeitskräften nicht mehr zweischichtig laufen konnten, kam der Meister sehr häufig anderthalb Stunden vor Arbeitsbeginn ins Werk. Er schaffte Vorlauf beim Vorgarn. Dabei hat er, wie er sagte, "manchen Finger riskiert", mannhaft und zwanghaft zugleich. Er säuberte die Maschine, die durch alle Pausen und bis Punkt Feierabend lief, früh, nachdem er sie in Gang gesetzt hatte. Das war verboten, half jedoch an der ohnehin zugesetzten Zeit sparen.

Der Meister trug nicht auf, eher trug er etwas vor: Den Stolz auf Arbeit, Leistung und Qualität trotz Mangel an allem. Damit war aber

auch ein alter Streit zwischen ihm und den Frauen wieder auf dem Tisch. Und die Frauen hielten es im Gespräch wohl ebenso, wie früher im laufenden Betrieb. Sie blieben in beredet schweigender Reserviertheit oder konterten mal ironisch, mal mit nüchternen Einwüfen: Ihre Finger hätten sie behalten wollen. Haltet die Arbeitszeit ein, zitierten sie unter Anspielung auf die vom Meister zugesetzten Stunden einen ehemals landläufig bekannten Appell, die reguläre Arbeitszeit einzuhalten. Und für die schäbige Qualität der Ausgangsstoffe hatten sie eben nur das eine Wort. Es gab aber auf Seiten der Frauen auch vermittelnde Gesten. Ein Lachen, ein Tonfall in der Stimme, der Abbruch eines Wortwechsels signalisierten, daß das grundsätzliche Einvernehmen, das Abhängigkeiten einschloß, nicht aufgekündigt werden sollte.

Der Platz, den die Frauen im Werksaal einnahmen, führte sie wohl kaum in Versuchung in Arbeit trotz schlechter Bedingungen soviel Eigensinn zu legen und solche Befriedigung zu suchen, wie der Meister es vorgab (als Verhalten, als Norm, als Bild). Befriedigung schöpften sie wohl mehr daraus, Arbeit und Familie (gehabt) zu haben. Versehen mit beidem und bedacht darauf, auch bei dieser Partie "halberwegen um die Runden zu kommen", insistierten sie mit stiller Eigenwilligkeit und ironischer Distanzierung, aber eben unausgesprochen und unausgefochten, auf eine andere Logik.

Eine andere Geschichte, eine Geschichte von trauriger Bilanz.

Frau Bahlke, Jahrgang 1941, ist "vor der Wende abgehauen". Die Wende war für sie die Umstellung der DDR-Mark auf DM. Sie konnte den Anblick hamsternder Menschen und leergefegter Läden, die die Szenerie vor der Währungsunion beherrschten, nicht mehr ertragen. Merkwürdigerweise "flüchtete" sie in den Westen. Mit ihrem Mann machte sie ein paar Tage Urlaub bei bis dahin ungekannten Ver-

wandten. Am Tage der Vereinigung ging Frau Bahlke in den Garten. In "ihrem Paradies" hat sie sich "abgeschirmt" - vor der Euphorie der anderen und der Übermacht der eignen Ängste:

"Oh Gott, was kommt jetzt?!"

Als das Interview im Sommer 1992 entstand, war Frau Bahlke in Kurzarbeit, aber nicht "Null", wie die Mehrzahl ihrer Kolleginnen. Sie bediente die italienischen Webautomaten, das Modernste, was die "Forster Tuchfabriken" zu bieten hatten. Die liefen in rollender Schicht, wenn ein schmaler, kurzfristiger Auftrag vorlag.

Frau Bahlke ist "gelernter Tuchmacher". Gegen das Ansinnen der Mutter, den für Frauen so schönen und praktischen Beruf der Schneiderin zu erlernen, hatte sie diese Ausbildung selbst gewählt und sich nach einem Arbeitsjahr im ersten Frauensonderlehrgang zur Webmeisterin ausgebildet. "Immer irgendwie zu begeistern für was Neues", hielt sie es mit den jungen Lehrmeistern und der "Neuen Technik", die sie zunächst nur bei Besuchen auf der Leipziger Messe und in sächsischen Tuchfabriken bewundern konnte. Außer den Glocken des neuen technischen Zeitalters tönnten in der DDR auch die für eine "Neue gesellschaftliche Stellung der Frau im Sozialismus" (Frauenkommunique 1961). Und Frau Bahlke, kaum den Meisterbrief in der Tasche, plante gemeinsam mit den jungen Freunden von der FDJ einen Angriff auf die befestigste männliche Burg im Werksaal. Sie bewarb sich nun für eine reguläre Ausbildung zum Stuhlmeister (Mechaniker). Die Werkleitung beschwor den Arbeitsschutz und lehnte ab.

Frau Bahlke blieb Webmeisterin, aber nicht irgendeine. Sie wurde eine, die viel selber an den Stühlen baute, von Kolleginnen mit skeptischer Bewunderung bedacht:

"Erika, du bist unmöglich, was du alles kannst."

Und sie wurde auf diesem Platz eine Protagonistin “im Kampf um die Beherrschung der neuen Technik” und hat auch in der “sozialistischen Arbeit (gemeint ist die Brigadebewegung) kräftig mitgemischt”, wie sie formulierte. In dieser Rolle, so würde ich in Kenntnis des gesamten Interviewtextes sagen, hat sie lange Zeit ihre Substanz eingesetzt. Spät erst ist sie pragmatisch vorgegangen: Bei weniger körperlicher Anstrengung bis zur Rente in der Weberei arbeiten und gut verdienen können, hieß das Ziel dann nüchtern. Nun war auch diese Perspektive abgestürzt.

“1960 hat die “Erste Forster” neue Webmaschinen bekommen, das waren die CFG-Stühle, das hieß Großraumstühle. Das hat mich ganz doll begeistert und ich war eigentlich ein Mensch immer für moderne Technik, immer fürs Neuste mit einzusteigen. So daß ich dort eben als einzige Frau diese Maschinen einlief. Es gab viele Probleme... Wurde dann auch ausgezeichnet auf Grund meiner hartnäckigen Arbeit, die ich da gemacht hab als Aktivist. Später bekamen wir noch mal neue Webstühle, die hab ich wieder eingearbeitet und da hab ich denn bis 86 gearbeitet, also über 20 Jahre auf diesen Großraummaschinen. Dann hieß das Problem: Die “Forster Tuchfabriken” kauft neue italienische Webmaschinen, Pignone-Weberei. Frau Bahlke! Ja, Frau Bahlke ist dann wieder nach Cottbus gegangen, dort war eine Webmaschine, und hat sich mal den Spaß angeguckt und hat Riesenfreude empfunden. Und ich hab meinen Kollegen gesagt, wir waren ja zum großen Teil alles Frauen:

Frauen, hier satteln wir noch mal alle um. Das ist nee Arbeit, da schaffen wir unsere Rente. So. Und ich hab ooch meine Frauen wirklich so beeindruckt und überzeugt, daß wir eben alle in die Pignone-Weberei übergesattelt sind. So, und nun kam das eben mit dem Umsturz. Und das hat uns allen ganz schön Kraft und Freude zerstört. Weil keiner weiß, bleibt der Betrieb bestehen, werden wir noch gekündigt.”

So lautete die längste, zusammenhängende Passage in der sehr kurzen freien Erzählung von Frau Bahlke, mit der sie sich am Beginn des Interviews vorstellte. Ihr hatte sie nur ein paar “harte” Fakten zur Kindheit voran- und den Hinweis auf die drei studierten Töchter, die

“nicht nur Knochenarbeit” machen sollten, hintenangestellt. Dann schwieg sie. Auf meine Fragen, mit denen ich ein Gespräch am Laufen zu halten suchte, antwortete sie knapp und kontrolliert.

Frau Bahlke schirmte sich ab, im Gespräch ebenso wie vor dem Erleben (müssen) des Einbruchs neuer Realitäten und des Zusammenbruchs alter Verhältnisse und Konstruktionen, deren Hinfälligkeit sie so nicht gesehen hatte, in denen sie aber schon lange um einen ideellen Antrieb gekommen und ihr in ihrer politischen Rolle (als Wettbewerbs- und Parteiaktivistin in der Weberei) nicht viel mehr geblieben war, als billige Tatsachen nicht zu bemängeln. Mit dem Blick nach vorn hoffte Frau Bahlke, daß sie auf der schon vorher eingeengten Spur von Leistungs- und Begeisterungskraft in der Arbeit doch weiterkäme.

Dort, wo weggeworfene Textilien und Abfälle aus den Tuchfabriken wieder zerpfückt und zerfasert wurden, wo Gesponnenes und Gewebtes zerrissen wurden, fand sich Erinnerung als dichter Faden, der aus der Vergangenheit auch ein Stück weit in die Zukunft lief. Meine Gesprächspartnerin aus der “Reißwolle” verband in ihren lebensgeschichtlichen Erinnerungen das Schicksal eines Zöglings aus einem Waisenheim zu Anfang unseres Jahrhunderts mit dem von Kriegsgefangenen im Zweiten Weltkrieges, die Existenz afghanischer Studenten in der DDR mit ihrer eigenen und diese wiederum mit dem Waisenheimzögling. So war sie im Stande und sicher auch in der (glücklichen) Lage, ihrem Leben Bedeutung zu geben. Zugleich erscheint in dieser Erzählung die “Reißwolle” als der Ort, wo Frauen die gesellschaftlich gesetzte Unterschiedlichkeit in der Bewertung und in der Zeitlogik von Berufs- und Familienarbeit unterliefen, für sich außer Kraft setzten. Was sie in ihrem Werkraum eigensinnig als einen Zwischenboden, als ein Sicherungsnetz für den Balanceakt zwischen Beruf und Familie spannten, ging nicht “aufs Ganze”, sprengte nicht den Rahmen der Ausgestaltung einer “Nische”. Trotzdem und deshalb bleibt die Geschichte auch eine darüber, was sein soll.

“Und an der Schneidemaschine, das ist noch nee Vorstufe zum Reißer, da wird alles geschnitten, was länger als 40 Zentimeter ist: Tuche, Kleidungsstücke, Enden, die aus der Weberei zurückkommen, Zwirnenden und Spinnenden aus der Spinnerei. Da wird alles kleingeschnitten...Da läuft ein Band lang und vorne is een Messer, das hackt dann ganz schnell in gleichmäßige Stücke. Von den Webenden hatten wir mal Wollwebenden, dann anderes (Material). Jedes Webende hat sich anders verarbeiten lassen. Und Spinnenden... Und Zwirnenden... Das geht nich alles gleich gut, so ist das nicht. Aber das wurde eben geschnitten. Und da war ich dann die letzten sieben oder acht Jahre an der Schneidemaschine. Und da muß ich auflegen und dann vier Stufen hoch, in nen Sack springen, eintreten, runter(treten), aus'n Sack raus, wieder auflegen und so ging das den ganzen Tag.”

Vielleicht hätte Frau Gawlik (Jg. 1941) ohne meine Nachfrage am Schluß unseres Gesprächs von dem, was in der Reißwolle ihre Arbeit war und was dort überhaupt und an welchen Maschinen getan werden mußte, kaum mehr gesagt als im freien Teil des Interviews am Anfang:

“Wir waren überwiegend Frauen. So viel Männer hatten wir nicht. Wir hatten nur drei Männer und das kam nicht selten vor, daß wir doch Säcke von 150, 200 Kilo zu transportieren hatten. Und das ist natürlich im Laufe der Jahre immer schwerer geworden (schwerer gefallen). Wenn man jung ist, merkt man das nicht. Aber die ganzen Jahre...”

Frau Gawlik hat 30 Jahre in der Tuchfabrik gearbeitet, 19 Jahre davon in der Reißwolle. Zum Zeitpunkt unseres Gesprächs ist weder ihre Weiterbeschäftigung gesichert noch die Existenz der Reißwolle, nunmehr ein privates Unternehmen. Aber erst am Ende des Interviews kam Frau Gawlik auf die aktuelle Situation direkt zu sprechen. Davor rekonstruierte sie ihre Lebensgeschichte ohne Zurückhaltung, ohne sich als Privatperson abzuschotten, zeigte sich wenig irritiert von den Unwägbarkeiten und Umwertungen der neuen Gegenwart. Was hinter ihr lag, teilte sie in eine Zeit, die sie “lieber streichen möchte” und in eine “schöne Zeit, die nie, nie wieder kommt”.

Nach Landwirtschaftslehre und Arbeit in der Glasindustrie kam Frau Gawlik durch ihre Heirat 1961 von Dorf in die Stadt, nach Forst. Die Ehe "zerfiel", wie sie es bezeichnete, nach drei Jahren. Als alleinstehende Frau mit zwei kleinen Kindern geriet sie in einen Strudel aus finanzieller Not, sozialer Mißachtung und sinkendem Selbstwertgefühl. Sie wäre, wie sie sagt, "ooch lieber immer mit einunddemselben Mann ins Bett gegangen, aber das hat nun mal nich geklappt".

Was sich ergab, war ein drittes Kind, war das Stigma eines losen Weibes und einer Arbeitsbummelantin, die die Krankheiten der Kinder vorschob oder eingekackte Windeln bei Unpünktlichkeit. Was sich abspielte, war das Abputzen durch den Meister, lautstark und vor allen Kollegen in der Weberei. Die Weber, das waren damals mehrheitlich Männer, und sie war zu allem noch eine Hilfskraft, die das Garn aufsteckte. Was ablief, war ein Leben, wo oft kein Pfennig mehr im Haus war. Nicht nur die Krankheitstage der Kinder, von denen damals noch kein einziger bezahlt wurde, reihten sich aneinander. Frau Gawlik erkrankte auch selber schwer und für längere Zeit.

"Und dann die Kinder und kein Geld und niemand, wo man hingekommen ist, da war eben keine Tür, die sich offgemacht hat."

Die betriebliche Konfliktkommission saß über sie zu Gericht und desgleichen "fünf alte Butzelmänner, älter als Steinkohle" von der Partei. Denen sollte sie erklären, warum sie als Tochter eines Kommunisten seit Monaten keine Beiträge zahlte. Deren Starrheit quittierte sie mit: "Das ist nich das Erbe unserer Väter!" Dabei hatte sie wohl das Bild ihres 1951 verstorbenen Vaters vor Augen, das auch heute noch in ihr ist: Ein Arbeiter in einer Munitionsfabrik, der in seinem ausgepolsterten Buckel Medikamente für die dort eingesetzten Kriegsgefangenen schleuste - auch in Erinnerung an das eigene Ausgeliefertsein als Waisenheimzögling. Damals noch zu klein, um zur Zeugin des Tuns ihres Vaters zu werden, war es das spätere Erzählen

darüber, das Erinnern daran, worüber sie dieses Bild aufnahm. “Das hat”, meinte Frau Gawlik, “irgendwie den Grundstein bei mir gelegt. Ich wollte mit dem Eintritt in die Partei (1961, P.C.), wollte ich eben so handeln wie mein Vater damals gehandelt hat. Aber es ging alles schief.” Sie wurde aus der Partei “gekantet”. Aber auf die konnte sie auch “verzichten”.

“Die vier Jahre, wo alles aufn Hauf und so klein war”, die sind es, die Frau Gawlik “vielleicht lieber streichen möchte” aus ihrem Leben, nicht nur wegen der Last, die sie da zu tragen hatte, sondern weil sie sich eben doch ein bißchen dafür schämte. Aus diesen Erfahrungen leitete sie aber auch die Maximen für ihr späteres Verhalten in der Arbeit her:

“Und ich hab auch, nachdem meine Kinder groß waren, immer dafür gesorgt im Betrieb, daß diese Mütter (Frauen mit mehreren Kindern) auch verstanden wurden. Und nicht immer abgestempelt wurden als lustlos, faul, hinterhältig und sind mit den Kindern zum Arzt gegangen, um irgendwelche Probleme zu verbergen.”

Die Reißwolle, in die Frau Gawlik 1973 nach dem Verlust eines Auges wechselte, wurde die Insel, auf der sie diese Flagge hißte, über uralten Maschinen und in staubiger Luft.

Abgesprengt vom Hauptwerk lag sie, gut geeignet zur Unterbringung alkoholabhängiger Männer als Hilfsarbeiter, letzte Möglichkeit für Frauen mit Kindern einschichtig arbeiten zu können, gewohnte Umgebung für die, die dort alt geworden waren.

Hier hatten Frauen die Arbeit und die Posten, das Sagen und das Sorgen. Im Dreigespann, eine Polin als Meisterin, Frau Gawlik als Gewerkschaftsvertrauensfrau, eine Mutter mit 6 Kindern als Gleichgesinnte, zogen sie es durch, daß niemand wegen Leistungsschwäche auf Grund von Kindern, Suff, körperlicher oder geistiger Mattigkeit ausgegrenzt wurde und “Fehler nicht hochgespielt werden”. “Die wurden eben eingebaut in unser Leben mit.” Frau Gawlik hatte dazu ein paar Geschichten parat und resümierte :

“Wissen Sie, das war nee sehr, sehr schöne Zeit, nee Zeit, die nie nie wiederkommt. Nicht deshalb, weil unsere Brigade zerfallen ist, sondern ganz einfach, weil die Zeit jetzt viel zu schnellebig und zu herrschsüchtig ist. Das war damals nicht der Fall. Wir hatten für einander Zeit.”

Die tragende Säule der lebensgeschichtlichen Konstruktion von Frau Gawlik war Mitmenschlichkeit. Die machte sie nicht an Frauen fest, hatte sie aber als Frau vermißt und gelebt. Sie suchte sie, als der veränderte gesellschaftliche Kontext das in ihrer Arbeitswelt scheinbar nicht mehr zuließ, in der Kirche. Sie vollzog ihren Wiedereintritt in diesen Raum nach der Wende nicht zuletzt wegen ihrer Enkelin, deren Vater Afghane ist. Noch vor der Wende hatte sie das Kind in einem katholischen Kindergarten untergebracht, weil sie es da bedingungslos angenommen wußte. Angesichts des wachsenden Fremdenhasses wollte sie erst recht seine Begleiterin bleiben, eine, die zu Zweifeln keinen Anlaß gibt. Sie meinte: “Man vergibt sich nichts, wenn man die Hände faltet.”

Ich erzählte Geschichten von Frauen aus einer Industrie, einem Ort, auf den die Lasten einer dirigistischen Wirtschaft mit ihrem Mangel und ihrer Favorisierung der sogenannten Grundlagenindustrien nachhaltig fielen. Es sind Geschichten von Frauen aus einer Generation, über die zu DDR-Zeiten das Bild vom Aufbruch durch Berufsarbeit gelehrt war. Dieser Generation war tatsächlich erstmals der Einstieg in qualifizierte Berufsarbeit möglich. Viele Frauen entwickelten auf diesem Weg ihr Selbstverständnis, ihr Selbstbild stärker an „männlichen“ Maßgaben in Hinblick auf Lebensleistung und Arbeitsleben. Die Geschichte von Frau Bahlke ist ein davon. Die anderen Geschichten sind Geschichten von solchen, die „zurückgeblieben“ sind. Sie sprechen vom Verharren in z. T. erbärmlichen Arbeitsbedingungen und sie zeugen von einem stillen Beharren auf eigenen Bedürfnissen und Vorstellungen als Frauen, die den Rahmen der kollektiven Ausgestaltung einer „Nische“ nicht sprengen. Von diesem Stoff ist die letzte Geschichte. Trotzdem und zugleich ist sie auch eine von dem, was sein soll.

Réorganisation d'ateliers et luttes d'identité
La modernisation des ateliers de finition aux Usines
Peugeot de Sochaux (1989-1993)

Michel Pialoux

Je vais faire un récit de ce qui s'est passé pendant trois ans dans certains ateliers d'OS de l'Usine de Sochaux (les ateliers de finition dans lesquels travaillent environ 2000 ouvriers) et évoquer les diverses tentatives qui ont été faites pour réformer une main-d'oeuvre déjà âgée (beaucoup travaillaient dans l'Usine depuis une quinzaine d'années) pour promouvoir un nouveau modèle d'organisation de travail (en référence au "modèle" japonais), pour impulser une nouvelle "culture", à la faveur d'une opération de délocalisation et de modernisation de ces ateliers reconstruits à environ deux kilomètres. L'opération s'est étendue sur trois ans, (on a construit successivement deux ateliers dits d'habillage-caisse, couramment appelés HC1 et HC2), a connu des vicissitudes diverses, et en gros a débouché sur un échec - ou sur un résultat qui, du point de vue de la Direction, a été traité comme tel¹.

Ce travail s'est d'abord fondé sur l'idée qu'il fallait tenir ensemble des considérations qui sont habituellement disjointes (notamment dans la réflexion des économistes du travail, des sociologues du travail et des experts en organisation):

- d'une part celles qui touchent aux transformations économiques, techniques, organisationnelles survenant dans les entreprises,

- d'autre part celles qui touchent aux formes de conscience de soi et de représentation de soi, que les agents construisent, et notamment aux formes de conscience politique ou syndicale, aux stratégies de valorisation de soi que les agents parviennent à conduire dans un espace social qui ne peut jamais être circonscrit à celui de l'Usine.

I - Terrain, techniques et méthodes

L'Usine de Sochaux est la plus grande Usine de France : elle a eu près de 42000 salariés en 1979 et en 1990 elle en a environ 20000. La plupart des salariés de l'Usine pensent qu'elle en aura environ 15000 au début du 21ème siècle. Parmi les salariés on compte 14000 ouvriers environ dont 11000 sont non qualifiés et 3000 qualifiés. Le nombre des E.T.A.M. s'élève à 5000 et celui des cadres à 1000.

Il n'est pas possible évidemment de faire une analyse même résumée de l'histoire de l'Usine et du Bassin d'emploi. Or la connaissance de cette histoire est absolument indispensable à la compréhension des événements actuels. On pourrait en schématisant beaucoup, distinguer quatre périodes depuis 1960 ;

- celle du "taylorisme triomphant" de 1960 à 1977/78 - qu'on pourrait facilement décomposer en deux phases : avant 1968 ("paternalisme") et après 68 (croissance très rapide et efforts de la part de la Direction pour extirper l'influence des syndicats...)

- une époque de transition, de crise aiguë ; de 1978 à 1983 : avant l'arrivée de Calvet la firme risque de "plonger". Des modifications très profondes surviennent : absorption de Citroën, de Simca-Chrysler, etc. L'endettement est énorme. Mévente des véhicules. Les problèmes de qualité se trouvent brutalement posés, etc.

- de 1984 à 1990, rétablissement et redémarrage sur de nouvelles bases technologiques et organisationnelles, (rétablissement de la santé économique de la firme), décision de transformer le site de Sochaux,

robotisation qui va toucher d'abord l'emboutissage et les presses, puis la carrosserie...

- les années 1999-93 : époque d'incertitude et de remise en question : après la guerre du Golfe une "cassure" survient qui se traduit notamment par la chute de la production, le licenciement de tous les intérimaires présents sur le site et la recherche de nouveaux moyens d'augmenter la productivité.

Quant à la transformation des structures du groupe ouvrier quelques faits, parmi les plus marquants, doivent d'emblée être soulignés :

- la diminution numérique et symbolique du groupe des professionnels, des O.P. Ce groupe qui dans les années 50 et 60 jouait un rôle essentiel perd de sa force. Le nombre des O.P. va passer de 6000 à environ 3000. Leur vieillissement s'est beaucoup accentué : le pôle ancien de l'Outillage Central, un des "fiefs" des OP, s'est progressivement déstructuré. Autrefois l'Usine produisait des moteurs et des machines outils, la disparition progressive de ces secteurs se traduit par l'amointrissement de la force d'un groupe professionnel qui jouait un rôle capital dans la représentation que le groupe ouvrier dans son ensemble avait de lui-même ; les O.P. se trouvent "laminés" entre d'une part les O.S. et d'autre part les techniciens. Ce fait produit un ensemble de conséquences en chaîne, par exemple, de nombreuses possibilités de promotion qui s'ouvraient aux O.S. disparaissent. Il n'est, pour eux, plus guère possible de "monter" dans l'Usine (en passant des "essais"...). Le modèle d'excellence sociale et professionnelle que les O.P. incarnaient disparaît, etc.

- la montée des techniciens : ceux-ci sont de plus en plus nombreux surtout à partir de 85/86 ; ils apparaissent en rupture totale, par leur formation, avec les anciens professionnels. Recrutés d'ailleurs d'une manière tout à fait différente relevant d'un univers mental et social très différent ; ils incarnent de nouveaux modèles d'excellence

professionnelle (et aussi sociale), fondés sur la possession d'un savoir technique très différent de celui des anciens OP.

- le vieillissement des O.S. : leur poids va croissant dans l'Usine même si cette croissance est contemporaine d'une dévalorisation symbolique du groupe. La plupart d'entre eux ont été recrutés dans les années 60 et 70, ils sont souvent d'origine rurale (au départ ils étaient payés 30 ou 50 % plus cher que dans les usines environnantes. Un problème central est celui de leur vieillissement). Un fait majeur est aussi que l'Usine de montage cesse d'être une usine "complète" dans laquelle les voitures construites parcourent toutes les étapes du processus. L'effet de vieillissement se trouve d'ailleurs renforcé par la suppression des deux classes d'âge extrêmes : les plus jeunes du fait de l'absence d'embauche et les plus âgés du fait des départs en préretraite. Pour les membres de ce groupe, l'avenir se rétrécit de plus en plus, l'espace des possibles se réduit.

II - Le passage aux nouveaux ateliers

Le passage de l'ancienne finition (HC0) aux nouveaux ateliers d'habillage-caisse, HC1 et HC2 s'étend sur trois ans environ (depuis le printemps 89 jusqu'au printemps 92) et s'opère sans que la production s'arrête un seul jour. Deux mille ouvriers environ passent d'ateliers archaïques, sales, bruyants - qui avaient été construits dans les années 30, modifiés dans les années 50 - ou les chaînes sont très rapprochées les unes des autres et où le système de travail a longtemps été rigide taylorien, à des ateliers immenses, clairs, lumineux qui ressemblent plus à un hall d'aéroport (ils sont peints en jaune et bleu) qu'à une usine de type classique. Les conditions dans lesquelles ce "transfert" a lieu changent considérablement dans le temps et plus précisément les conditions dans lesquelles ces ouvriers sont sélectionnés, formés, installés sur de nouveaux postes de travail, et les conditions dans lesquelles de nouveaux "groupes de travail" sont mis en place. Au début,

en 1989, les ouvriers qui partent à HC1 sont jeunes, ont été sélectionnés par la maîtrise, ont souvent été choisis parmi les anciens intérimaires qui viennent d'être embauchés en fixe. Deux ans et demi plus tard, en 1992, les derniers ouvriers qui partent à HC2 le font par petits groupes, leur formation est assurée en une demi-journée, ils sont beaucoup plus vieux et "transportent" avec eux la plupart de valeurs et des systèmes pratiques de l'ancien atelier de finition...

Un nouveau type de travail ?

Ces nouveaux ateliers se distinguent des anciens sous trois rapports :

- sous le rapport technologique. Il y a des changements significatifs : l'installation de robots ou de zones robotisées (ces robots mettent par exemple en place les planches de bord, certaines vitres, etc.) a fait disparaître certaines opérations particulièrement pénibles mais il n'y a pas de véritable bouleversement technique. La Direction avait annoncé en 1988 que 40% des postes de travail seraient robotisés. En fait c'est seulement 20% qui le sont. Et autour le nombre de postes dits de "préparation" hors-chaîne s'est accru. La ligne elle-même n'est pas profondément transformée. Certaines modifications mineures sont introduites par exemple introduction d'une "luge", introduction d'un tapis roulant, etc.

- sous le rapport organisation du travail et de la production. Le système de flux tendus flexibles qui existait déjà est amélioré. On en connaît le principe : un nombre très élevé de pièces en provenance des "équipementiers" sont apportées par une noria de camions jusqu'aux ateliers de montage où elles sont immédiatement montées. Il s'agit de diminuer le plus possible les stocks, y compris celui des voitures en cours de montage tout en étant capable de satisfaire aux à-coups de la demande. On attend également que des "réactions en chaîne" se produisent, qui affecteront l'état d'esprit et la disponibilité de l'ensemble

des salariés. Le thème majeur est ici celui de l'introduction de la "flexibilité" et de la "disponibilité".

- mais surtout il y a eu la volonté de la part de la Direction de tirer parti de cette rénovation technico-organisationnelle, pour réformer en profondeur le système d'attitudes des salariés. Ou plutôt pour accélérer cette transformation parce que celle-ci avait déjà été lancée dans les années 85/86. Le raisonnement de la Direction était du type : les ouvriers de ces ateliers sont en train de vieillir, il faut lancer quelque chose de très fort qui permette de transformer, à court ou à long terme, les systèmes d'attitudes. Tout un dispositif s'est donc mis en place qui au départ s'organisait - sur le papier - autour d'un stage de trois semaines hors de l'Usine même, dans un château (Morvillars) situé à une quinzaine de kilomètres de l'Usine de Sochaux.

L'idée de base était la suivante : les ouvriers doivent être "extraits" des anciens ateliers un par un, regroupés en de nouvelles "structures" (ou "modules" placés sous l'autorité d'un chef d'équipe (les appellations sont changées) et d'un moniteur. Ces nouveaux "modules" n'ont strictement rien à voir avec les anciennes "équipes". Les ouvriers participent donc à ce stage puis sont réinstallés dans les nouveaux ateliers. Au cours de ce stage ils ne reçoivent pas de formation proprement technique mais sont invités à écouter des exposés à la fois informatifs et moralisateurs. On leur explique notamment que leurs conditions de travail vont être améliorées et n'auront que peu à voir avec les anciennes. On leur demande également de signer une "charte" dont les thèmes principaux sont : je serai toujours disponible, volontaire; je comprendrai ce qu'il en est des besoins de mon entreprise ; je ne ferai aucune déclaration qui puisse porter atteinte au crédit de celle-ci, etc.

Et on réinstalle les salariés dans le nouvel atelier où, en bref, le travail n'a pas fondamentalement changé, même si l'espace a été réorganisé d'une manière toute nouvelle : les interdits sont nombreux (notamment boire ou fumer sur les chaînes) ; de nouvelles obligations

(être habillé tous de la même manière, tutoyer les chefs), de nouvelles règles de sociabilité, sont imposées, etc. Il s'agit d'agir à la fois sur le corps et l'esprit des nouveaux "opérateurs".

Sans entrer dans une véritable analyse je voudrais évoquer quelques points qui me paraissent importants.

Il faut évidemment replacer ces processus dans un cadre plus large, celui de la stratégie des entreprises de l'automobile. Il faudrait repartir de ce qui se passe dans l'ensemble des grandes firmes de l'automobile, en France comme en Europe, des contraintes qui leurs sont imposées et qui sont donc aussi imposées aux managers de chaque unité de production. Plus précisément il faudrait repartir des conditions dans lesquelles s'est diffusé le "modèle" japonais (toyotisme ?), des conditions dans lesquelles un certain type de pratiques a tendu à s'imposer (rôle des consultants...) pratiques qui à un moment en viennent à considérées comme les seules vraiment efficaces. Les économistes (cf. les théoriciens de la régulation) font bien comprendre sous quelles contraintes travaillent les managers, comment la peur de perdre des parts de marché tenaille les Directions, etc. D'autre part le schème de l'innovation organisationnelle est bien connu : le marché entre dans l'Usine, "Taylor va au marché". Des changements capitaux surviennent dans la demande, les modèles sont de plus en plus variés, les firmes sont contraintes de réagir très vite à ces changements dans la demande, etc. Si l'on se place du point de vue de l'entreprise, les choses sont claires : pour se maintenir dans la compétition il faut d'une part, un autre type d'usine dans laquelle le rapport entre salariés, machines et agents de commandement se trouve réorganisé d'une nouvelle façon, de telle manière que l'Usine devienne plus "réactive", plus capable de s'adapter extrêmement vite au marché ; d'autre part un autre type de main-d'oeuvre, sensiblement différent sans qu'on puisse dire avec précision quelle doit être l'ampleur de ce changement, qui doit être concerné, mais il est clair que la main-d'oeuvre est perçue comme devant être dotée de nouvelles qualités sociales, très différentes de celles qu'elle possédait antérieurement.

Toutes les innovations organisationnelles (flux tendus, absence de stock, “lean production”, management participatif) découlent de là: un fait majeur est, notamment, qu’un nombre croissant de pièces, (70 à 80% ?), doivent être amenées d’entreprises externes et que de nouveaux rapports doivent s’établir avec les sous-traitants et les équipementiers.

Il faut insister sur le fait que dans les ateliers de finition de Sochaux le mouvement de transformation des processus de travail était engagé depuis plusieurs années, en gros depuis 84 ou 85. (C’est même sur ces processus-là que j’avais focalisé mon attention après avoir travaillé avec C. Corouge et c’est sur ce processus que j’avais rassemblé de nombreux matériaux, aussi bien entretiens que documents). En ces années-là de quoi s’agissait t-il ? Avant tout, de la mise en place de l’auto-contrôle : les ouvriers devaient contrôler pour une part la qualité de leur production et ne plus déléguer cette tâche aux “contrôleurs”.

Enfin il faut insister sur ce point capital qu’a été la présence au cours des années 88/89 de très nombreux intérimaires dans les ateliers de montage et tout particulièrement en finition. Ceux-ci vont rester là jusqu’en septembre 90. ils constituent une sorte de vivier pour le management. Plus largement la Direction pense que ces intérimaires (dont beaucoup ont été recrutés dans le Nord et l’Ouest de la France.) ont un système de dispositions très différent de celui des anciens ouvriers de Sochaux : elle va chercher à en tirer parti : elle va, par exemple, tenter de recruter des moniteurs parmi ces anciens intérimaires.

HCI : flux tendus et disponibilité

Je voudrais reprendre le récit que j’ai esquissé plus haut. Cela m’amènera à mettre l’accent sur le fait que, même si on regarde les choses “de haut”, les réactions et les attitudes des ouvriers à leur nouvel environnement technique et social ont considérablement changé au cours du temps...

Au début, au printemps 1989, au moment du “démarrage” des nouveaux ateliers tout se passe très bien. L'entreprise est servie par les circonstances : on est, au niveau national et régional, dans une phase de croissance forte. De très nombreux intérimaires comme je l'ai dit, sont présents dans l'Usine. La Direction peut sélectionner parmi eux. Chez les managers il existe à ce moment une croyance forte dans le “participatif” (c'est le moment où les Directions du personnel sont transformées en DRH, Directions des Ressources Humaines).

En septembre 1989, environ 300 salariés sont déjà présents dans le nouvel atelier HC1. Mais il ne s'agit pas de n'importe quels ouvriers; ce sont des jeunes, “des battants” soigneusement choisis. Les ateliers nouveaux fascinent et inquiètent à la fois. Au yeux de tous les salariés, ils incarnent le renouveau de l'entreprise après une période de très forte inquiétude. Ces “élus” signent, sans la moindre réticence, la “charte” que leur propose la maîtrise, s'engagent à être “disponibles”, etc. Il acceptent la polyvalence. La plupart apparaissent fascinés par la perspective de la modernité, et également par les espoirs de promotion professionnelle au niveau individuel et collectif que celle-ci doit permettre. A ce moment les militants syndicaux pensent (et disent) : “les salariés qui partent pour ces ateliers sont complètement perdus pour nous”.

Puis survient la grève de septembre/octobre 89. Partie de Mulhouse, elle gagne assez vite Sochaux. Evénement important dans l'histoire de l'Usine, elle est très populaire en France : on dit qu'il n'y pas eu de grève aussi populaire depuis celle des mineurs, en 1963. Un fait frappant est que les 300 ouvriers déjà entrés à HC1 n'y participent pas, alors que les ouvriers de l'ancienne finition et plus largement ceux de la carrosserie non seulement y participent dans leur très grande majorité mais en sont les éléments moteurs.

A partir de novembre/décembre 1989 surviennent les premières difficultés à HC1. Dans un climat social largement transformé par le

grève, le flux d'arrivants nouveaux en provenance de l'ancienne finition continue à se développer. La Direction oblige au "volontariat".

Les problèmes techniques sont nombreux et entraînent des pannes très longues, les nouvelles installations n'apparaissent pas fiables. Problème du sol qui se déplace, problème de la température dans les ateliers, problème des équipementiers et des fournisseurs qui ne se sont pas immédiatement adaptés à la nouvelle situation, etc. La conséquence est que des pannes très longues surviennent qui freinent ou désorganisent le flux de production.

Le début de l'année 1990 est marqué par le développement d'une micro-conflictualité qui prend des formes nouvelles : insatisfaction croissante des opérateurs, conflits permanents et multiformes qui surgissent sans cesse. Des difficultés surviennent également dans le fonctionnement des nouveaux "groupes de travail". Après une phase de relative acceptation de ceux-ci, une sorte de refus larvé apparaît : refus de se plier aux nouvelles exigences du groupe, d'accepter le tutoiement, de vivre la "promiscuité" avec les agents de maîtrise. La plupart des ouvriers éprouvent le sentiment d'être dépossédés de l'espace dont ils se sentaient autrefois relativement maîtres : par exemple problème des objets personnels, de la bouteille d'eau qu'on ne peut conserver sur son poste de travail, du petit frigo qu'on a installé à côté de son poste de travail, etc².

Après des pannes très longues, de trois à quatre heures, la Direction essaie de solliciter des volontaires pour rester et rattraper le temps perdu : presque toujours c'est l'échec. Dans les deux ateliers, l'ancien et le nouveau il y a en fait un autre usage du temps et de l'espace. Les militants après la grève apparaissent "regonflés" et agressifs, ils lancent pendant les stages à Morvillars de véritables défis aux agents de maîtrise qui sont souvent maladroitement relevés. Le mécontentement lié à la gestion des primes collectives s'accroît entraînant souvent de la discorde dans les nouveaux groupes de travail, très préjudiciable à la qualité.

En même temps beaucoup d'ouvriers éprouvent de la satisfaction à travailler dans un espace plus propre, plus lumineux et dans lequel certaines formes de travail particulièrement pénible ont été supprimées... Cependant, globalement, la nouvelle organisation tend à être de plus en plus nettement mise en cause. Les conséquences sont évidentes sur la qualité des produits ; la détérioration de la qualité se traduit dans le fait que des "contrôleurs" et des "retoucheurs" sont réintroduits (en bout de chaîne) et que le poids du service de contrôle de la qualité (autonomisé et géré depuis Paris) va rapidement croissant (en même temps que de nouvelles techniques de mesure de cette qualité sont mises en oeuvre : système du "démérite", généralisation des audits, etc).

Mars 90 : élection des D.P. (délégués du personnel). Forte poussée de la C.G.T. qui surprend tout le monde, et d'abord les militants qui avaient eu très peur d'être éliminés de ces ateliers (en Mars 91, la C.G.T. enregistrera de nouveaux progrès)

Septembre 90 : à la suite de la récession liée à la guerre du Golfe un événement capital survient, le renvoi des intérimaires qui va entraîner une succession de mutations des anciens ateliers vers les nouveaux ateliers, et notamment vers habillage-caisse...

En même temps, tout au long de l'année 90 et de l'année 91 la Direction continue à faire venir un par un des ouvriers de l'ancienne finition, en cherchant à constituer à chaque fois de nouveaux "groupes", formés d'individus qui jusqu'alors n'avaient aucune relation de travail. Les anciennes solidarités sont systématiquement rompues. Seulement peu à peu ce sont des ouvriers plus âgés, plus proches du pôle militant, de la culture militante qui sont envoyés vers le nouvel atelier. Les vieux "militants" (et les vieux "hein-hein" au sens de Durand) ne partent que les tout derniers, par peur de la "contamination" : la plupart des ouvriers sont conscients que cette peur de la "contamination" est très présente chez les cadres qui gèrent la main-d'oeuvre...

C'est ainsi qu'on se retrouve à peu près dans la situation évoquée dans les textes que nous avons publiés, S. Beaud et moi en 1993, dans la "Misère du monde". La Direction tente, coûte que coûte,

d'imposer de nouvelles formes de vie sociale, de vie de "groupe". Le résultat est qu'il finit par exister dans les ateliers une "ambiance pourrie" que les militants n'ont pas créée, même s'ils tentent de l'"exploiter". Le fait majeur est l'existence de pannes multiples et le refus larvé de la plupart des ouvriers de se plier aux nouvelles exigences, à la nouvelle discipline. Le travail fourni est considéré comme de mauvaise qualité : négligences, oublis... Il faut "assurer le flux" coûte que coûte. C'est sur la petite maîtrise (chefs d'équipe et moniteurs) que retombe pour une large part le poids de cette responsabilité. Cela va déboucher notamment sur l'obligation de faire revenir toutes les 605 à Sochaux parce que les défauts sont très nombreux, défauts qui concernent surtout les faisceaux électriques (dans les nouvelles voitures la multiplication de ces faisceaux est un fait frappant).

Le "peuplement" de HC2 : repli tactique ou retour en arrière?

A la fin de 1991 et au début de 1992 c'est le début du "peuplement" du deuxième atelier, HC2. 900 salariés vont progressivement quitter l'ancienne finition pour se diriger vers HC2, atelier dont l'organisation est absolument identique à celle de HC1.

Ici on pourrait parler (en se plaçant du point de vue de la Direction) d'une sorte de reculade, de retour en arrière. En effet les choses ne se déroulent pas du tout comme elle s'étaient déroulées au moment du peuplement d'HC1. Tout se passe comme si la Direction avait fait une sorte de bilan critique de ce que qui s'était passé dans le premier atelier. Schématiquement elle s'aperçoit que si elle veut "sauver les meubles" et obtenir un niveau minimal de qualité elle doit profondément modifier sa stratégie, cesser d'imposer des méthodes qui sont en train de produire un effet inverse de celui escompté. Cependant elle sait bien qu'il est impossible de revenir en arrière, de revenir à une forme d'organisation rigide taylorienne. Elle va donc effectuer une sorte de repli tactique imposé par les circonstances. Trois ensembles de faits apparaissent ici significatifs :

Le stage de Morvillars dont la durée avait d'abord été réduite à une semaine est complètement supprimé. Suppression également de toute référence à la charte. A la fin la "préparation" se réduit à une demi-journée de stage pendant laquelle la maîtrise fait visiter le nouvel atelier à de petits groupes...

Les ouvriers quittent l'ancienne finition en groupes compacts, en "équipes" d'une quinzaine de personnes, telles qu'elles étaient déjà constituées dans l'ancien atelier. Et la hiérarchie veille systématiquement à ce que tous les membres d'une "équipe" soient présents. Autrement dit les anciennes équipes ne sont plus dispersées mais transférées "en bloc". Mais cela se fait à peu près sans commentaires, sans justifications : personne ne théorise cette pratique, ne s'explique vraiment à son sujet...

Dans l'atelier une logique de "tolérance" s'établit, qui peut faire, à certains égards, penser à celle de l'ancienne finition. Un certain type de comportements qu'on avait, deux ans plus tôt, impérativement prescrits est remis en cause. Les anciens interdits (ne pas fumer, ne pas manger à son poste, porter les deux pièces de la combinaison vert fluo, etc.) ne sont plus imposés de la même manière et dans une large mesure ne sont plus respectés. On assiste à un retour des anciennes pratiques. Par exemple on voit revenir les bouteilles de bière, de pastis : les boissons alcoolisées sont consommées dans une demi-clandestinité. Tous les témoignages confirment que "l'ambiance a changé", à certains égards le "climat" de l'ancienne finition se trouve reconstitué. On pourrait parler de l'établissement d'un nouveau "compromis" entre Direction maîtrise et ouvriers.

Pourtant le travail se révèle de plus en plus pénible : il ne fait pas de doute qu'il y a intensification du travail. Le même mot revient dans la bouche de tout le monde, y compris des agents de maîtrise : "les postes sont de plus en plus durs", "on tire sur les postes en permanence" ; les ouvriers ont l'impression que des opérations sont sans cesse rajoutées à celles qu'ils font déjà. D'autre part la pression

sur les malades, la lutte contre l'absentéisme se fait très forte, les visites à domicile se font plus nombreuses, etc. Tout cela oblige les moniteurs à tenir de nombreux postes, à "courir partout", tout au long de la journée. Si les ouvriers peuvent se réinsérer dans l'ancienne logique taylorienne les moniteurs, eux, doivent rester "disponibles"...

On constate également que des mutations de poste surviennent continuellement. Sans cesse arrivent en finition des salariés d'autres ateliers, qui sont le plus souvent des gens âgés - d'où des conflits qui naissent autour de la question des primes, comme autour de l'affectation à un poste plus ou moins pénible. A la limite tout se passe comme si le management disait aux salariés : vous avez voulu rester dans un schéma taylorien, vous allez y rester, mais vous devrez payer en conséquence...

On ne sera pas surpris de constater qu'il existe une forte tension entre les exigences de la Direction nationale de PSA, telles qu'elles sont formulées à Paris qui impose une amélioration de la productivité de 10 ou 12 % par an et la Direction locale qui doit, avec les hommes dont elle dispose, s'efforcer d'obtenir de la "qualité", une qualité minimale...

III - Démoralisation, désarroi et versatilité

Peut-on parler de victoire ouvrière ? Certainement pas, bien qu'il y ait eu incontestablement un recul de la part du management. Il suffit de penser à l'intensification très nette du travail... Peut-on dire que la vieille "culture ouvrière", l'ancienne "culture d'atelier" a repris le dessus face à un modèle culturel imposé, bâti en référence aux méthodes japonaises de management ? Oui et non. Oui, parce que les ouvriers ont bien perçu le recul opéré par la Direction sur les questions d'autonomie, de marge de manoeuvre au poste de travail, sur les formes les plus voyantes d'une imposition. Non, parce que cette victoire les ouvriers ne l'ont pas assumée, et ne pouvaient l'assumer : ils voyaient trop bien

quel était le revers de la médaille : l'aggravation, sous une forme "classique", des cadences de travail.

Ce qui m'a surtout et beaucoup frappé, c'est plutôt l'intensité du désarroi des salariés (sur fond de peur), leurs oscillations leurs revirements, leur versatilité. C'est au fond l'impossibilité, où ils sont désormais, d'avoir - compte tenu de la forme que revêt la modernisation de leurs ateliers - une position stable, liée à une argumentation qu'il puissent vraiment assumer dans le temps. C'est la perte de repères fixes, stables, d'objectifs clairs par rapport auxquels ils pourraient notamment, envisager d'organiser une action collective. C'est aussi le fait que cette situation d'indécision s'étend à presque toutes les sphères de leur comportement. C'est le fait qu'il n'est plus possible par exemple, pour l'observateur extérieur, de scinder en deux ou trois grands "blocs" la population des salariés (comme on pouvait encore le faire jusqu'en 85/86) sur des critères politiques ou para-politiques, c'est le fait qu'une sorte d'inquiétude "existentielle" (en un sens large) est partout présente.

Pendant longtemps il y avait eu clairement à Sochaux des "peugeotistes" (10% ?) et des "antipeugeotistes" caractérisés (10% ?). Entre les deux s'étendait une gamme d'attitudes complexes, de nombreux ouvriers se déterminant tantôt en relation avec le pôle Peugeot tantôt avec le pôle syndical. Il y avait également un système de coupures franches : entre O.S. et O.P., entre agents de maîtrise et ouvriers, etc. Au début des années 90, c'est l'ensemble de ce "système" qui tend à se brouiller. Les anciennes références se fissurent, sont prises en défaut par ceux-là même qui en sont les tenants. Certaines fidélités demeurent mais on peut s'interroger à leur sujet. La peur face à l'avenir est de plus en plus présente et oblige à un réajustement continu des attitudes et à une sorte de reconstruction des identités. Chez presque tous les salariés il y a au fond oscillation entre deux tentations :

- celle de jouer le jeu de l'Usine, d'accepter certaines des propositions de l'Usine, de les prendre au sérieux (ou de ne pas les rejeter trop vite) de ne pas refuser à priori, par exemple, l'implication

dans les nouveaux “groupes”. Et cela pour plusieurs raisons, à partir de l’implication dans différentes logiques, mais au fond plus par peur que par adhésion profonde.

- celle de se replier sur les modes (et les modèles) anciens de résistance ouvrière, et notamment la solidarisation avec les délégués (contestataires, revendicatifs, etc) qui, sur des points essentiels apparaissent encore souvent comme la seule force de recours, dans une situation où l’aggravation des conditions de travail est manifeste...

Et cette oscillation se retrouve chez presque tous. Elle dépasse et transcende les anciens clivages politiques. Elle se retrouve également chez beaucoup d’agents de maîtrise, etc.

Peut-on aller au delà de ce constat d’un désarroi généralisé? Sans doute. On retiendra quelques points :

En fait, il faut mettre au centre de l’analyse la question de l’hétérogénéité (passée et présente) du groupe. En se gardant de penser qu’on peut raisonner à propos d’un ouvrier abstrait, “générique” (“flexible” ou “postfordiste”). Il faut au contraire d’emblée poser le problème de la morphologie du groupe ouvrier et de la spécificité des conditions locales de formation de ce groupe dans une usine ou un atelier déterminé. Il faut donc réfléchir aux conditions dans lesquelles groupes et sous-groupes se sont constitués, sur des bases très différentes, (nationalité, qualification, sexe, âge, etc.) ont réagi au monde, ont construit des visions du monde, sont passés par des expériences différentes, etc. Il suffit à cet égard de faire allusion aux problèmes de “génération”...

Il faut procéder à de multiples retours en arrière, invoquer sans cesse l’histoire. Analyser par exemple aussi bien l’Usine et les changements techniques qui y surviennent que l’évolution de la firme en tant que telle, que les migrations depuis des dizaines d’années ou les changements qui surviennent dans le système de formation. De multiples critères se composent entre eux pour déterminer l’existence

de "sous-groupes" spécifiques. Il suffit de faire référence à des "groupes" comme celui des O.P. ou celui des "immigrés".

Il faut invoquer des registres d'explication, des logiques de détermination qui concernent aussi bien l'intérieur de l'Usine (et on retrouve tous les thèmes que développent économistes et sociologues du travail : thèmes des changements survenant dans le système technique, mais aussi thèmes d'une culture politique) que l'extérieur de l'Usine : l'espace social au sens large, la manière dont le rapport à l'avenir s'y constitue (notamment dans le rapport au système de formation), les formes complexes et différenciées d'habitat, d'attachement au pays ou à la région.

Sans prétendre développer l'ensemble de ces points je mettrai l'accent sur trois faits qui me paraissent essentiels :

- ce qu'il faut d'abord évoquer c'est l'existence dans ces grands ateliers d'O.S. d'une certaine culture d'atelier qui a pour particularité d'être nettement politisée, qui est un produit historique, l'héritage d'une certaine histoire. Sous ce rapport l'atelier de carrosserie est particulièrement caractéristique. Il se distingue nettement d'autres ateliers comme l'emboutissage ou la mécanique. D'emblée, on doit marquer que cette politisation propre à un atelier est une sorte de réaction à un ensemble de mesures que la Direction de l'Usine a imposées à différents moments. Pour comprendre il faudrait sans doute distinguer d'une part une politisation consciente qui peut s'exprimer en discours clairs, structurés, chez les militants et ceux qui sont proches du pôle militant, et ce qu'on pourrait appeler une infra-politisation liée étroitement aux conditions de travail des O.S. dans ces grands ateliers, "prise" dans ces conditions de travail...

Il va de soi que, si on voulait vraiment expliquer les formes concrètes de cette politisation, il faudrait rappeler d'abord ce qu'a été au long du temps la politisation des O.S. et notamment celle des militants O.S., le rôle capital qu'ont joué les O.P. dans cette politisation (puisque c'est autour d'eux que s'était longtemps façonné le système

d'identification ouvrier dans l'Usine) ; mais aussi la manière dont cette politisation peut revivre à certains moments et plus particulièrement la manière dont elle a revécu dans le contexte de l'après-grève de 89 (qui pose bien le problème, justement, du rapport entre politisation et infra politisation.)

Il faudrait insister sur la prégnance de cette culture politisée et sur le rôle central qu'y jouent les délégués. Dans cette logique, on serait notamment amené à mettre l'accent sur l'importance :

-des échanges qui se produisent entre délégués et ouvriers "de base" : une sorte de "système" qui change dans le temps se trouve construit, fondé sur des dons et des contre-dons. Échanges de services et de gratifications symboliques soutenues par une représentation de ce qu'est et de ce que doit être le "groupe" ouvrier,

-du mode de construction de l'estime de soi et des modalités de la self-défense, au niveau individuel et collectif,

-du charisme des militants et des conditions qui ont longtemps permis son apparition, et qui aujourd'hui la permettent de moins en moins,

-des visions du monde et des schémas cognitifs qui soutenaient le travail militant et qui aujourd'hui se trouvent atteints dans leur principe, mais progressivement (ces schémas cognitifs étaient reliés à un ensemble de croyances bien spécifiques).

On constate en bref que, au cours des années 85/93, l'autorité symbolique des militants syndicaux a cessé d'être ce qu'elle avait longtemps été, qu'elle ne fonctionne plus comme avant, bien qu'elle fonctionne encore, -notamment parce que les militants sont des personnalités fortes, des "figures" qui "en imposent", qui sont respectées. Pour comprendre les traits particuliers de cette culture il faudrait parler longuement du corps : de ce qu'est le travail, dans son rapport au corps, de ce qu'est la fatigue, de ce qu'est le vieillissement, de ce que sont les postures corporelles exigées par le travail en "chaîne".

Il faudrait également parler du rapport à la virilité : pendant longtemps un corps fort a fonctionné comme ressource identitaire essentielle, élément capital d'identification. Un aspect central de la "démoralisation" des années 90 tient certainement au fait que le nouvel espace de l'atelier ne permet plus à l'ancien rapport au corps de "fonctionner" comme avant, de s'imposer "naturellement" comme avant. La concurrence d'autres modèles de rapport au corps apparaît dans l'espace même de l'atelier. L'aire de repos par exemple est un lieu "dominé" par les agents de maîtrise et surtout les techniciens, dans lequel l'ancien rapport au corps ne se perpétue que difficilement; l'uniforme vert fluo ne peut se porter la même manière que le "bleu" ancien, etc.

Ce qu'il faut invoquer en deuxième lieu c'est le sentiment qu'ont la quasi totalité des ouvriers d'une dégradation très nette de leurs conditions de travail (et d'existence) le sentiment qu'ils ont de ne plus pouvoir changer grand chose à celles-ci. Et au delà, la perception qu'ils ont d'une fermeture de l'avenir. L'"infra-politisation" évoquée plus haut ne peut se reproduire que parce qu'il existe, du fait de la politique de gestion des hommes (management, formation etc.) suivie par l'entreprise, une sorte de "terrain favorable". A cet égard on peut insister sur deux points :

-la faiblesse du niveau de salaire. Le sentiment d'un appauvrissement absolu et relatif s'est considérablement développé ces dernières années. La question du salaire semble particulièrement importante parce que celui-ci apparaît comme le signe de la valeur sociale que la société reconnaît au travail de ces ouvriers. Son abaissement tend donc à être vécu comme une dévalorisation sociale dans laquelle sont pris aussi bien les O.P., que les O.S. ou les agents de maîtrise. Cependant beaucoup d'O.P. ont "des moyens de s'en sortir": leurs femmes travaillent plus fréquemment, ils bénéficient plus souvent de primes, etc.

-la pénibilité du travail et l'aggravation sous de nombreux rapports des conditions de travail. L'organisation réelle du travail ne tient pas les promesses qu'avait pu susciter un moment le discours modernisateur. Parallèlement cette organisation du travail apparaît liée à un système de pouvoirs dont le jeu a, certainement, été modifié (réorganisation de la maîtrise, nouvelles tâches confiées au chef d'équipe, apparition de la "figure" du moniteur, développement de l'auto-contrôle, système de primes...) mais pas du tout dans le sens d'un allègement des contraintes. Ce qui frappe en effet lorsqu'on entend le discours ouvrier c'est l'accélération dans tous les secteurs de la course à la productivité, la réduction de tous les interstices de la journée de travail, l'accroissement de la pénibilité du travail et de l'usure des corps. On peut penser à cet égard qu'on est en présence du développement de logiques contradictoires, du point de vue même de l'entreprise : d'une part développement de l'individualisation des salaires, des primes, de la concurrence entre individus et équipes, (concurrence qui est vécue, dans un contexte de vieillissement, comme un facteur décisif de la dégradation de l'"ambiance"...) et d'autre part, en même temps, appel à la création d'une nouvelle "solidarité", à de nouveaux "rapports sociaux", qui semblent exigés par le nouveau mode de production.

Mais le fait essentiel est sans doute qu'en dépit de toutes les promesses faites à la fin des années 80, au moment où de considérables changements techniques étaient introduits, la Direction ne propose rien de sérieux en matière de formation ou de promotion interne, et surtout rien aux ouvriers non qualifiés. Parce que les managers ont fondamentalement "fait l'impasse" sur ceux-ci, ont implicitement déclaré qu'ils devaient rester à leur place et être usés jusqu'à la corde, la "mobilité interne" est réduite pour eux à presque rien. L'avenir se ferme, la déception est multiforme, un mot revient souvent dans les propos de ceux qui ont espéré quelque chose de la nouvelle usine: "on a déchanté". Corollaire : on ne peut faire aucune confiance aux O.S. On recourt au "marché externe" si l'on a besoin de trouver de nouveaux ouvriers professionnels, etc. Le sentiment de n'avoir qu'un avenir

d'ouvrier ringard et inconvertible est de plus en plus largement présent et se diffuse tout au long de ces années-là (sentiment, également, d'être "pris pour un con"). Et ce sentiment va "irradier" sur la représentation que la grande majorité des ouvriers a de ses conditions de travail. Et au delà sur l'ensemble des conditions d'existence, sur la vision qu'ils ont de l'avenir.

Il faut ajouter que cette conscience d'une fermeture de l'avenir joue aussi chez les militants au niveau individuel, l'appréhension qu'ils font de l'avenir collectif du "groupe ouvrier" apparaissant dans une large mesure, "surdéterminée" par le rapport qu'ils ont à l'avenir de leurs propres enfants.

Le sentiment de la fermeture de l'avenir se relie à la perception qu'ont les familles ouvrières de la situation scolaire de leurs enfants de la découverte qu'elles font peu à peu que cet avenir scolaire se présente sous un jour très sombre. Symptôme éminemment significatif : la plupart des parents ne veulent pas que leurs enfants entrent dans des carrières ouvrières ou de technicien, la plupart reportent en quelque sorte sur l'enseignement professionnel l'hostilité (ou la haine) qu'elles ont elles-mêmes pour l'Usine³. En fin de troisième les enfants d'ouvriers déclarent préférer les études longues même si la réussite y paraît très aléatoire. Ils les préfèrent aux études courtes de l'enseignement professionnel dont ils pensent qu'elles vont les enfermer dans un univers "ouvrier". Et le fait important, c'est que ce sont les enfants d'O.S. vivant dans les "cités" qui refusent le plus clairement cet engagement dans l'enseignement professionnel. On voit donc fonctionner ici un de ces effets de cercle, de boucle qu'on peut repérer, dans cette région, dans bien d'autres domaines de l'existence...

Le troisième point que l'on doit ici évoquer, concerne la question des identités différenciées, des images de soi qui se sont constituées dans différents sous-groupes pendant ces années-là. Il suffit d'évoquer les identités de génération, de sexe, d'âge, etc.

Les entretiens apparaissent ici comme l'outil essentiel de l'analyse. Ils permettent de comprendre comment des dynamiques complexes se sont mises en marche dans les différents sous-groupes et comment des luttes autour de l'image de soi, de la défense de soi se sont développées. Un problème crucial semble bien être ici celui des modalités de la défense identitaire contre tout ce qui est ressenti comme une atteinte aux manières de faire et d'être "anciennes" -qui apparaissent souvent comme le seul recours, la seule référence à laquelle on puisse utilement se raccrocher.

Il est à peine besoin de souligner combien la connaissance des modalités de construction de ces identités et des formes que prennent les luttes qui se développent à leur propos importe à la compréhension des problèmes techniques et économiques dans l'entreprise, et par exemple à la compréhension de la question de la qualité des produits et des processus de disponibilité des salariés...

L'imposition de mots comme "opérateur", "module", "ligne" l'invocation de l'"esprit de groupe" etc. tendent à être vécues, dans certaines circonstances, par beaucoup d'ouvriers comme une véritable agression symbolique. Plus largement le travail de conversion des attitudes (qui paraît "appelé" par les nouvelles exigences techniques) tel qu'il est mené par les agents de maîtrise ou les cadres doit aussi être considéré comme un aspect particulier d'un processus de disqualification des anciennes manières d'être. Tout peut devenir enjeu de lutte : le fait de fumer, d'écouter de la musique, de se reposer, de manger, à un certain moment, d'une certaine manière, etc.

Globalement, la restructuration des ateliers tend à imposer aux salariés qui y travaillent des représentations d'eux-mêmes qui sont presque toujours dévalorisantes. Il faudrait mener ici des analyses de type goffmanien sur les adaptations "secondaires", par rapport aux adaptations "primaires"⁴.

On peut être tenté ici de mener une analyse en termes assez généraux à propos du groupe ouvrier dans son ensemble. Seulement

on s'aperçoit vite que les choses sont plus compliquées : on ne peut présupposer que tous les ouvriers affrontent la même situation avec des armes égales, la question des sous-groupes présents dans un même espace doit être immédiatement posée, etc.

Et ici surgit à nouveau la question des générations, de l'opposition entre jeunes et vieux. Mais, même à l'intérieur des "vieux", il existe de grandes différences dans les systèmes de ressources et d'attitudes face au monde. D'où l'importance d'une analyse des différences dans les stratégies, dans les logiques d'action, différences qui doivent être d'emblée mises au premier plan, en tout cas si l'on veut rompre avec le discours économiste qui tend à réifier et à essentialiser des différences propres à un groupe d'acteurs à un moment du temps.

IV - Délocalisation des ateliers : vers de nouvelles stratégies ?

On pourrait arrêter là l'analyse. Et revenir pour l'approfondir, sur la question du rapport entre générations. Mais il me semble nécessaire d'infléchir l'analyse dans une nouvelle direction, en mettant plus nettement que je ne l'ai fait jusqu'ici (surtout par manque de temps...) l'accent sur les stratégies de la Direction, et notamment les stratégies de délocalisation des ateliers que j'ai seulement évoquées. Dans les années 80 le problème de la délocalisation s'est trouvé déjà posé -les ateliers de professionnels avaient déjà été largement déstructurés- mais il va prendre au début des années 90 et surtout à partir de 92/93 des dimensions tout à fait nouvelles dans les grands ateliers d'OS.

Des événements survenus entre 1989 et 1993 dans les nouveaux ateliers (habillage-caisse, peinture, etc.), la Direction semble avoir conclu :

- en premier lieu qu'elle devait renoncer à transformer d'autres ateliers de Sochaux sur le modèle de l'habillage-caisse. L'échec était

patent. Le “mixage” vieux-jeunes, la dynamisation des vieux par les jeunes avait échoué. Une opération de même type lancée dans tous les ateliers risquait d’aboutir au même résultat.

- ensuite qu’il fallait dans les ateliers nouvellement (et coûteusement) construits -puisque on ne pouvait licencier massivement les vieux, pour des raisons sociopolitiques- “composer” avec l’ancienne culture des ouvriers qui y travaillaient.

- enfin qu’il fallait, hors de l’usine de Sochaux, développer une autre stratégie de delocalisation des ateliers, et de création de nouvelles unités de production peuplées presque entièrement de “jeunes” non-qualifiés (ou considérés comme tels), mais ayant subi une sélection très sévère. Cette dernière stratégie paraît d’autant plus “réaliste” qu’au même moment les équipementiers de l’automobile (auxquels les grandes firmes automobiles recourent de plus en plus systématiquement dans le cadre de leur politique de flux tendus) développent eux-mêmes (pour des raisons qui s’apparentent beaucoup à celles qui jouent dans le cas des usines donneurs d’ordres) une politique de construction de petites unités de production.

Finalement, il apparaît qu’on ne peut étudier ce qui se passe dans les ateliers de Sochaux, surtout depuis 1988, la manière dont la Direction y introduit des innovations techniques et organisationnelles multiples sans évoquer d’une part la logique selon laquelle cette Direction envisage la délocalisation de certains “services” ou de certaines unités, d’autre part la manière dont, dans ces nouvelles entreprises (généralement de petite taille) et construites depuis 1992/93 à peu de distance de Sochaux (25 ou 30 Km) le recrutement s’effectue et la main-d’oeuvre est gérée, la manière dont notamment on y gère le rapport entre différentes générations pourvues de qualités sociales bien différentes.

Aujourd’hui, objectivement, une grande firme tend à penser les problèmes de gestion de son personnel à l’intérieur d’un espace beaucoup plus vaste qu’il y a quinze ans. Un élément capital de sa

stratégie est la possibilité qu'elle a de délocaliser certains ateliers lorsqu'elle voit que des résistances sociales (qui peuvent être d'origine fort diverse) s'accumulent. Quant à l'argumentation donnée, elle peut être d'origine très diverse même si fondamentalement, on délocalise au nom d'impératifs "techniques". En fait, il faut bien voir que certains "problèmes" qui se posaient au niveau de la grande usine vont tendre, à se trouver simplement déplacés dans l'espace...

Tout cela a évidemment des répercussions sur la manière dont on peut et doit construire un objet de recherche. Entre autres conséquences : la réflexion sur le rapport entre "vieux" et "jeunes" déjà entamée à propos de l'usine de Sochaux, peut et doit être impérativement poursuivie par une réflexion sur ce qui se passe ailleurs, dans des établissements souvent juridiquement indépendants de Peugeot, mais en fait "tenus", "contrôlés" par Peugeot, soumis à la logique imposée par une firme qui y impose des manières précises de travailler, un système de normes avec lesquelles ceux-ci peuvent de moins en moins jouer.

A Sochaux, l'idée s'est peu à peu imposée dans le groupe des managers et des cadres dirigeants au cours des années 92/93 qu'il valait mieux essayé de s'accommoder de l'ancienne culture de résistance, façonnée dans le cadre de l'organisation taylorienne du travail. Au prix de quelques aménagements (et dans une logique de moindre mal..) cette culture pouvait finalement paraître mieux adaptée "aux besoins" de l'entreprise" que la culture "participative" d'inspiration japonaise qu'on avait tenté d'imposer par la violence dans les années 89/93.

En mars 1993, Vardanega, ancien Directeur du personnel de Sochaux dans les années 70, devenu responsable du personnel pour l'ensemble de PSA, tire dans l'Usine nouvelle deux grandes leçons des événements survenus à Sochaux entre 89 et 93 :

Première leçon : il ne faut installer les "vieux" ouvriers que sur des installations fiables. Techniquement à Habillage-Caisse les installations n'étaient pas au point. D'où multiplication de pannes, ce

qui a contribué à casser, dit-il, le moral des salariés. En même temps les équipementiers chargés de la livraison des pièces sont mis en cause. Peut-être est-ce une manière de ne pas faire peser des responsabilités trop lourdes sur les responsables hiérarchiques de Sochaux.

“Aucun opérateur, déclare-t-il, ne sera jamais satisfait si les machines et les robots ne sont pas fiables. Il y a eu beaucoup de problèmes au début pour cette raison, ce qui a décrédibilisé l’atelier aux yeux des salariés”. Et il ajoute : “la prochaine fois nous ferons en sorte de nous associer avec les fabricants d’équipements dès le départ et de mieux prendre en compte les contraintes réelles des ouvriers.”

Deuxième leçon : il faut en même temps revenir à un encadrement fort, il faut que les agents de maîtrise soient de “vrais chefs”, il faut prendre des distances avec tous les conseils fournis par des consultants qui ne connaissent pas vraiment les ateliers.

“Il me semble que des opérateurs même polyvalents et semi-autonomes doivent pouvoir compter sur un encadrement fort. Il n’y a pas de mystères : les vrais chefs ont des compétences de management, doivent motiver les gens, ils ne sont pas seulement des techniciens. L’habillage caisses a souffert d’un encadrement trop faible.”

Dans l’article qui accompagne cette interview, l’accent continue à être mis sur les mêmes points : le manque de culture des OS, leur archaïsme mental qui resterait la question de fond ; la présence de la C.G.T. qui a repris de la vigueur en 1992 à la faveur des maladresses et des échecs de la Direction (on ne dit rien de la grève de 89 qui paraît complètement oubliée...) ; la précipitation de la hiérarchie qui s’est lancée dans un programme de réforme des attitudes ouvrières sans avoir assuré son terrain, sans avoir vraiment formé des “chefs” pour faire réussir son programme.

Il est clair qu’en reprenant ce type de schéma, on se refuse à examiner de près le problème du mode de constitution et de perpétuation d’une “culture de résistance” dont on ne veut mesurer ni la force, ni les

racines, ni les raisons pour lesquelles elle se survit, ni les conditions dans lesquelles elle trouve sans cesse, d'une certaine façon, une nouvelle jeunesse. On remarque aussi qu'on ne parle plus de ce qui avait été un thème majeur des années 1988/89 : le recours aux "jeunes" pour dynamiser les "vieux"...

Dans la zone proche de l'usine de Sochaux il apparaît désormais possible de mener une stratégie de délocalisation systématique. On essaiera donc de faire éclater progressivement les grands ateliers. L'éclatement de certains ateliers (ou de certaines parties d'entre eux), par exemple la garniture ou la fonderie, est programmé à brève échéance (1996 ou 1997 ?). Ces délocalisations qui se font à la faveur du lancement de nouveaux modèles permettront de réaliser des travaux de montage très comparables à ceux qui se faisaient dans l'ancienne usine à un moindre coût, dans des conditions sociales transformées. En même temps -avantage subsidiaire- on s'attend à ce qu'elle contribue à une déstructuration contrôlée de la culture des ateliers peuplés de vieux ouvriers.

Les travaux de A. Gorgeu et R. Mathieu⁵ sur les équipementiers de l'automobile et le développement des établissements dits de proximité entre 88 et 93 apparaissent ici comme tout à fait importants.

D'une part ils montrent bien que la plupart des tendances qu'on repère dans le Bassin d'Emploi de Montbéliard se retrouvent sur tout le territoire national (et quelquefois de manière plus affirmée encore) et notamment dans toutes les zones où coexistent une grande usine et un tissu industriel hétérogène de type ancien. Parmi les plus caractéristiques de ces tendances on évoquera : réorganisation du travail manuel, (flux tendus, informatique, robots) ; recherche d'augmentation rapide de la productivité ; tendance à mettre en place des systèmes de gestion de la main-d'oeuvre très différents de ceux qui existaient avant ; tendance bien sûr à supprimer des emplois de montage et à les remplacer par des robots, mais également tendance à délocaliser certains types de production. Simultanément, on construit, à faible distance de l'usine

de montage de nouvelles unités de production, de faible taille, où les syndicats sont très peu présents, et qui sont peuplées de jeunes qu'on considère comme plus malléables, plus disponibles, plus flexibles, plus aptes à se mobiliser au service de l'entreprise.

D'autre part, et peut-être surtout, ils montrent que le sens économique et social de ce qui se passe à Sochaux depuis 85 ne peut être saisi que sur la base d'une connaissance minimale de ce qui se passe dans d'autres entreprises - celles qui ont déjà été construites, celles qui sont en cours de construction. Autrement dit la manière dont la Direction traite ses "vieux" à Sochaux, accepte de les laisser encore un temps dans ses grands ateliers, nouveaux ou anciens, ne peut être comprise indépendamment de la perspective qui s'ouvre à elle de monter ailleurs des ateliers gérés d'une toute autre manière.

Conclusion

En conclusion, je mettrai l'accent sur la complexité des processus qui se développent dans ces ateliers, sur le fait qu'il faut saisir simultanément la logique de développement de plusieurs de ces processus. Je mettrai également l'accent sur la nécessité de faire intervenir l'histoire, de réintégrer la réflexion sociologique dans une histoire, sur l'impossibilité de dissocier ethnologie, sociologie et histoire. Mais une histoire qui prendrait en compte aussi bien l'extérieur de l'Usine que l'intérieur, qui ne privilégierait pas seulement la question des innovations techniques et organisationnelles telles qu'elles sont habituellement saisies par les sociologues du travail et les spécialistes de l'organisation, qui poserait d'emblée le problème des caractéristiques structurelles des groupes et des sous-groupes de salariés présents dans l'entreprise, des formes de l'individualité sociale telles qu'elles se construisent dans l'Usine, et hors de l'Usine.

Je mettrai l'accent sur tout ce qui se joue dans l'espace social et notamment sur les efforts que font les individus pour se valoriser hors

de l'espace de l'Usine. A Sochaux, la question des identités sociales et politiques (des modes de constitution de ces identités, des modes de politisation et d'identification, des logiques de reconnaissance et d'auto-reconnaissance...) apparaît comme une question cruciale. Sa spécificité est qu'elle se recoupe très largement avec celle des générations et du rapport à l'École et à la formation. La manière dont un groupe social existe, résiste, se défend au niveau identitaire doit être appréhendée dans sa spécificité. (cf. par exemple les problèmes posés par la grève de 89 et la manière dont la mémoire de cette grève survit...).

Le progrès de la réflexion implique qu'on comprenne la manière dont les différentes générations de salariés s'investissent dans leur travail en atelier, le rapport qu'ils ont à ce travail, et aussi tous les effets que cela a sur la "qualité" de la production ; qu'on comprenne surtout qu'il n'y a pas de salarié abstrait mais de multiples sous-groupes organisés par de multiples différences. S'agissant du groupe ouvrier à Sochaux, on est renvoyé nécessairement au problème du travail politique qui fait exister ce groupe, au problème des croyances, des utopies qui ont, pendant longtemps, fait exister ce groupe par l'intermédiaire d'"élites" (au sens large, politiques, et professionnelles) qui, à certain moment, se dégageaient au sein du groupe et qui risquent fort aujourd'hui ne plus apparaître.

On est également renvoyé au problème des formes de démoralisation qui, aujourd'hui, atteignent ce groupe. Ce qui est sûr c'est que les changements techniques ou économiques ne font jamais sentir leurs effets directement mais toujours à travers des médiations, dont il faut essayer de reconstruire la complexité et qui mettent en jeu la diversité des groupes et des sous-groupes. On est aussi conduit à des analyses qui sont à la fois proches et sensiblement différentes de celles qui sont menées habituellement dans le domaine de la sociologie du travail: plutôt que de mettre l'accent sur la "démotivation" ou l'"archaïsme mental" des salariés, il me semble qu'on est amené à le mettre sur certaines formes de cohérence et de rationalité construites dans le temps...

Le problème est de comprendre comment, presque toujours dans la souffrance, ces formes de “cohérence” se désagrègent. Le plus souvent elles renvoyaient à des formes compliquées de défense de la dignité, qui s'étaient construites dans le temps. Pour différents groupes, à des moments différents du temps, la défense de la dignité avait pu prendre des formes paradoxales et souvent antagonistes. On est alors, en fait, renvoyé à des questions plus larges sur le groupe ouvrier, sur la façon dont il a existé dans l'histoire et dont il continue encore à exister. Il me paraît clair qu'on doit adopter à ce sujet une perspective résolument constructiviste en mettant l'accent sur la façon dont, pendant longtemps, un certain travail politique et éthique a contribué à faire exister ce groupe et à, proprement, le construire, et sur la manière dont aujourd'hui, un processus de déconstruction qui est aussi un processus de désobjectivation se trouve engagé...

Cependant, ce travail politique ne peut pas être autonomisé. Il doit être pensé en relation étroite avec l'existence de certaines formes historiquement constituées de division du travail, avec l'existence de certaines particularités dans l'organisation matérielle et sociale du travail. Et également en relation avec certains changements qui surviennent au niveau de la société toute entière, dans son organisation politique, etc. En tout cas, la question de l'héritage, de sa complexité, des modalités de sa gestion ne peut pas être éludée⁶.

Ce qu'on voit aujourd'hui, dans le Bassin d'emploi de Sochaux-Montbéliard, en travaillant sur les transformations d'un groupe professionnel - celui des ouvriers -, en mettant l'accent sur la catégorie des ouvriers non qualifiés (et sans s'enfermer dans la considération des seuls ateliers, en prenant en compte simultanément la famille et les formes de l'existence hors-travail), c'est le fait qu'il y a de moins en moins de coupure tranchée entre deux fractions des classes populaires, auparavant, depuis 50 ou 60 ans, clairement séparées⁷. Le fait que la peur, le sentiment de vivre sous la menace, la conscience d'une vulnérabilité de plus en plus grande sont présentes dans le “groupe” des ouvriers. C'est le fait que ce groupe tend à être structurellement

pénétré par la crainte de déchoir, et qu'il a le sentiment que bon nombre des anciennes "barrières" qui assuraient une protection ne tiennent plus - barrières historiquement constituées qui, longtemps avait paru extrêmement solides. Cette croissance du sentiment de vulnérabilité, de précarité, doit être considérée comme une sorte de fait objectif. C'est elle qui agit sur la déstabilisation des identités, la déstabilisation des points de repère⁸.

La question des générations apparaît alors capitale, dès lors qu'on ne fait pas un usage naïf de ce terme de génération. Ce à quoi on a affaire, ce n'est pas évidemment à un problème de génération biologique ou même démographique, mais plutôt à un problème de changement structurel, de "métamorphose" d'un groupe. Celui-ci, dans sa composition, sa structure interne, son rapport avec d'autres groupes sociaux, les "visions du monde" de ses membres, le rapport que les différents sous-groupes qui le composent ont à l'existence, à l'avenir, etc., se trouve déstabilisé, pris dans un processus multiforme de réorganisation ; ses différentes composantes, se réagencent de manière tout à fait nouvelle et spécifique.

Le groupe ouvrier, structurellement, à toujours été exposé à une logique de transformation rapide, l'histoire le montre bien. Mais aujourd'hui, le rythme des changements socio-techniques semble s'accélérer... L'analyse des "problèmes" de ce groupe ne peut être faite qu'en relation étroite avec ce qui se passe dans les ateliers, du côté de la production, des formes concrètes de travail, de la réorganisation du Bassin d'Emploi, etc. Mais on ne peut en rester là.

Un des problème qui reste fondamental, structurel, est celui des moyens, multiples et divers, par lesquels les membres de ce groupe cherchent à s'assurer la défense d'une dignité, cherchent à se faire reconnaître une valeur sociale... A partir du milieu des années 80, dans le Bassin d'Emploi de Sochaux-Montbéliard, on entre clairement dans une autre époque : la valeur objective des individus tend à se constituer de plus en plus à l'École et par l'École. Le poids des autres moyens,

des autres logiques tend à se réduire. C'est l'École qui tend à définir la valeur des individus, leur chance d'avoir une profession, etc. Il s'agit là d'une rupture très nette par rapport à une époque où la valeur des individus tendait à se construire dans le cours même de leur travail, dans le cours de leur vie professionnelle, sans parler des autres "scènes" où cette valeur pouvait également se déployer. En travaillant d'une certaine façon, en menant un certain type de vie professionnelle on pouvait soit monter dans l'entreprise soit se faire reconnaître une place, soit s'imposer comme une sorte de leader dans un milieu relativement homogène. Pourquoi en était-il ainsi ? Très schématiquement parce que, à cette époque, il y avait une "demande" au sens des économistes de travail non ou peu qualifié : les ouvriers y compris les non qualifiés offraient leur force de travail. Et la possibilité existait que celle-ci soit utilisée. Or, des changements sont survenus, cette demande s'est d'abord lentement, puis de plus en plus rapidement réduite...

L'affaiblissement de cette demande et l'imposition de nouvelles valeurs scolaires et "techniciennes" (au détriment des anciennes valeurs scolaires...) font que les "vieux" OS "bloqués" dans l'usine, objectivement et subjectivement, tendent à être de plus en plus perçus (et à se percevoir) comme "inconvertibles", tendent à être de plus en plus considérés -et d'abord par leurs propres enfants engagés eux-mêmes dans la logique de la concurrence scolaire- comme des "pauvres types", tendent à être de plus en plus socialement dévalorisés. Et c'est contre cette dévalorisation (qui se matérialise au niveau du salaire) que beaucoup se battent et esquissent des stratégies dans des conditions, objectivement, de plus en plus difficiles.

Notes

¹Ce travail au départ était une réponse à un appel d'offre du Ministère du travail et des affaires sociales portant sur les problèmes du chômage de longue durée. Le titre du projet que nous avons rédigé en 1989 en réponse à cet appel d'offre était : "Changements dans le système de formation et attitude syndicale." C'était d'emblée marquer que nous allions mener une réflexion dans de multiples directions, assez différentes de celles qui sont ordinairement suivies dans les études sur le chômage qui se centrent avant tout sur l'analyse du fonctionnement du marché du travail et l'étude des caractéristiques sociales des chômeurs. En fait nous avons abordé de nombreux thèmes : transformations technologiques, problèmes de syndicalisme, analyse des formes de vie sociale dans les quartiers et les cités, problèmes de formation au sens étroit et au sens large, etc. Nous nous sommes cependant recentrés sur trois questions : d'une part la réflexion sur une certaine catégorie d'ouvriers : les ouvriers non qualifiés et peu qualifiés, ceux qui continuent à s'appeler eux-mêmes OS, sur la manière dont ils étaient "impliqués" dans certaines transformations technologiques et organisationnelles survenant dans certains ateliers : ateliers de "montage", ateliers de " finition " ; d'autre part la question des changements qui surviennent dans le système d'enseignement général, et professionnel et des conditions dans lesquelles les nouvelles générations d'enfants d'ouvriers entrent dans la vie professionnelle ; enfin la question de la transformation des attitudes politiques (au sens large et au sens étroit). En témoigne le titre donné au rapport final : "Ouvriers de Sochaux, l'affaiblissement d'un groupe" avec un sous-titre : "hantise de l'exclusion et rêve de formation". Le mot "affaiblissement" est certainement insatisfaisant, pour plusieurs raisons, notamment parce qu'il suggère l'idée que les tendances vont toutes dans un même sens, alors qu'il existe manifestement des contre-tendances. On aurait pu remplacer ce terme par celui de "déstabilisation", de "désarroi", par un mot qui évoque l'idée d'une perte des points de repères chez les salariés.

²Cf. in La Misère du Monde, le texte : "Le vieil ouvrier et la nouvelle usine".

³ Cf. ce qui a été dit plus haut du travail de S. Beaud

⁴Goffman montre dans Asiles que pour comprendre ce qui se passe dans l'asile, il faut connaître un double discours : celui du patient et celui du psychiatre ; il y a réinterprétation constante par l'institution, dans la logique de l'institution,

de tout ce qui peut pourtant être lu d'une toute autre manière, dans la logique du patient...

⁵Cf. par exemple Gorgeu A. Mathieu R., 1993, "Deux ans de relations de sous-traitance" dans Travail n° 28, printemps 93. On citera ici quelques extraits d'une étude rédigée par A. Gorgeu et R. Mathieu à la fin de 1992 sur le développement extrêmement rapide d'établissements dits de "proximité", construits par les équipementiers de l'automobile à peu de distance des grandes usines de montage de l'automobile.

"Dans les nouveaux établissements : le travail s'inscrit dans le cadre de la polyvalence, la sélection drastique qui a accompagné le recrutement a pour but de s'assurer du caractère souple de l'individu ou de son adaptabilité. Il doit régner dans l'établissement un esprit de convivialité, (...) en effet le personnel doit consentir à vivre autrement : accepter la mobilité, accepter de travailler dans un collectif de travail, accepter des horaires qui remettent en cause des loisirs ou qui empiètent sur la vie privée(...). La différence est flagrante avec les établissements anciens où la polyvalence se met lentement en place, car elle doit faire place à beaucoup de réticences, sinon à des oppositions. Nous pouvons constater le décalage profond, du point de vue mentalités et attitudes au travail, entre le personnel de ces unités nouvelles et celui des autres unités.

Dans les premières, les ouvriers n'ont pas d'expérience professionnelle, c'est leur premier emploi, ils ont connu le chômage, ou ont eu une interruption d'activité très longue, cas de femmes ayant élevé leurs enfants par exemple. Ils ont été immergés dans un univers sans formation dans le travail et le prolongement de la vie privée.

Dans les unités anciennes au contraire le personnel ouvrier est plus âgé, a une longue tradition industrielle marquée par le taylorisme et à connu des luttes sociales importantes pour faire aboutir leurs revendications. Leur vie à l'Usine est totalement dissociée de leur vie privée et ils ne veulent pas remettre en cause cette situation car cela signifierait d'accepter la culture d'entreprise, accepter toutes les contraintes pour d'abord être utiles à l'entreprise" (...).

Dans quasiment tous les établissements nouveaux on retrouve les mêmes caractéristiques :

1 -un noyau stable de permanents avec un volet important d'intérimaires qui n'est pas déconnecté de ce dernier,

2 -un recrutement au moindre coût qui n'exclut pas une sélection drastique et des exigences contradictoires,

3 -une gestion de l'emploi à cours terme qui risque de poser des problèmes à moyen et long terme..."

⁶On retrouve ainsi, à propos d'un travail de terrain, nombre de questions posées par R. Castel dans les deux derniers chapitres de son livre sur Les métamorphoses de la question sociale, (Fayard 1995). Et notamment le problème de la constitution de ce qu'il appelle une "société salariale" dans les années 50, celui de l'effritement de cette société, celui de l'érosion des protections dont bénéficiaient les membres du groupe ouvrier. On ne peut pas ne pas être frappé par la manière dont, aujourd'hui, reviennent dans ce groupe, l'angoisse, la peur, le sentiment de vulnérabilité, y compris dans les rangs de ceux qui sont encore du côté de la stabilité. On peut être d'accord avec R. Castel sur le fait que cesse d'exister cette ligne franche de partage entre les ouvriers précaires qui seraient placés du "mauvais côté" et d'autres qui seraient solidement et définitivement protégés contre l'adversité. Un long séjour sur le "terrain" montre que la distance tend considérablement à se réduire entre ces deux groupes d'ouvriers...

⁷Est-ce si différent de ce que Marx appelait, autrefois, l'imbrication de l'armée active et de l'armée de réserve,

⁸Conséquence : La question du "militantisme" semble ne pouvoir être abordée qu'après qu'on ait mené ce type d'analyse sur les "ouvriers de base", qu'on ait compris comment ceux-ci essaient de se sécuriser, etc. Bien sûr, les deux types d'analyses ne s'excluent pas. Elle doivent être amenées simultanément, l'une suppose l'autre. Il faut, en fait, critiquer les démarches qui autonomisent la question du militantisme. Celle-ci ne peut être traitée que sur la base d'une connaissance approfondie de ce qui se passe sous le rapport du travail, notamment dans les ateliers. Il reste cependant que le traitement complet de la question exige la prise en compte de ce qui se passe hors Usine : dans la famille, à l'école, dans le quartier, dans l'espace social, et qu'il convient de s'opposer à une réduction "politiste" du problème qui est trop souvent le "pendant" d'une réduction "économiste".

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