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The Dimensions of Self-Management

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THE DIMENSIONS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

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by

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SELF-MANAGEMENT: TREND OR FAD?

Sometime in the latter part of the 1970's, those of us concerned with trends in the evolution of management theory began to hear about the well-springs of a new spirit amongst the believers. Indeed those committed to the new theory were as evangelical about their gospel as any of the earlier devotees to Taylorism, human relations theory, humanistic management and others. Rensis Likert even called it a new system -- number V in his litany of trends I through IV.¹ With this act of academic ululation, Americans now joined their even more devout European peers in sounding the knell for self-management. Have we a new trend here, one that can rival the importance of say scientific management or contingency management, or have we nothing more than a "me Decade" fad? We try to answer this question in our deliberations over the next few pages.

On Defining Self-Management

One would think that self-management is one of those terms which defines itself. On the surface, at least, the assumption behind self-management is simple: the individual at his own level and function in the organization is the best person to manage himself and his activity. As such, this obviously presupposes a confidence that individuals are capable of motivating themselves and conducting their own activities accordingly. And, of course, the aggregate of this behavior, from one individual to another, results in the collective good for the organization -- a type of Adam Smith syllogism at work in the manager's arena. But this rather simplistic definition does not capture the full range of managerial praxis that now goes under the guise of self-management. For this, we must look to the culture in which it is practiced.
The European Challenge

In 1968, when Jean Jacques Servan-Schrieber wrote his now disabled look into the managerial future, The American Challenge, he raised the eire of European managers by saying the Americans were coming to dominate their continent with their managerial skills. In essence, Americans schooled in the virtues of contingency management would overwhelm their more bumbling European counterparts who still thought Prussian bureaucracy was the wave of the future. Thus was born the so-called "management gap" which would doom Europe to a role of being a post-war branch plant of American multinationals.

As we know, U.S. firms did have an advantage in Europe during this period, but it was short-lived at best. No one speaks anymore about the American Challenge. In fact, Europeans now flex their intellectual muscles by suggesting that the reverse may be the problem of the future. That is, Europeans have quietly discovered their own wave of the future, perfected its operations in European enterprises, and packaged it for export to the United States. European self-management, more broadly defined as the key tenet of industrial democracy, is the tool kit which will give the edge once again to the Europeans. We shall look at three European examples to better define our perspective on self-management.

Yugoslavia: Peoples' Democracy at Work

The trend toward self-management in Europe began as a social movement, heavily influenced by Marxist social thought, and one more concerned about authority relationships in the work place than with Western concepts of individualism. This was never more visible than in Yugoslavia where a conscious attempt was made to create a system of communism based on humanizing the work place. The Yugoslavs took serious some of the tenets of Marxism, particularly regarding the creation of participative systems as foundations for managing
economic enterprises. Whereas communism in the rest of Europe was noted for its bureaucratic clumsiness and even repression, Yugoslavia tried to actually decentralize its economy and transfer real authority to workers at the plant level. This was indeed one of the prime differences between Moscow-based communism and that espoused by Marshal Tito. Yugoslavia, therefore, became the first European communist country committed to a decentralized pattern of socialist authority. Other Eastern European countries have not been as fortunate as Yugoslavia in their experiments with self-management. When Czechoslovakia tried to modestly emulate the Yugoslav experiment in 1968, we remember well the response by Moscow — it never got beyond the minds of dissident intellectuals and a few politicians. More recently, of course, the Solidarity movement in Poland has endorsed the reformist ideas of self-management; the future of this movement is yet to be decided.

The Yugoslav system of self-management is rather simply explained. The organization is restructured from the bottom up around teams of workers called appropriately enough, "workers' councils." These councils are given broad decision making powers that they share in common with other councils throughout the firm. At the top level of the organization, a collective body exists that roughly parallels the function of the workers' council at the shop floor level. This is a representative body with membership changing periodically, rotating with people elected from the various workers' councils. In short, it's a form of representative democracy in the work place, and not actual self-management where authority is lodged in individuals. It's a social and collective form of participative decision making, reinforced by a Marxist ideology rather than any theory about management in a traditional sense. As with all theories of management, it works well in some organizations, rather atrociously in others, and is by no means the last word in the evolution of the
practice of management. The Yugoslavs have learned the lesson of modern management as others have -- namely, don't count on any single approach to management in this era of change. ²

German Co-Determination

As is their want, the Germans start social change from the top, not the bottom. Whereas Yugoslavia initiated its brand of self-management from the shop floor level, and at the behest of the workers, the German experience began at the top. One of the concerns of the allies after World War II revolved around the need to decentralize economic decision making as German industries were reconstructed. The charms of Prussian authority structures in German organizations only served to reinforce autocratic patterns of decision making which in turn underscored the fragility of democratic institutions in Germany. One way to combat these tendencies, thought some, was to open up the decision making processes to participation from those formerly excluded -- particularly at the top of the organization. This they called co-determination and here's how it works.

Without discussing the variety of details of this process, co-determination is another form of representative decision making. The "co" in this case refers to people representing management and the stockholders and organized labor. Equal representation and thus equal power is given to labor vis-a-vis management and the stockholders on the board of directors. That is, the voting strength of labor is equal to that of management and the shareholders and the board becomes the arena of participative decision making where these groups are represented. This of course dramatically changes the role of organized labor since it is not merely involved in a process of collective bargaining, but now a process of making policy at the highest levels of management. German workers have also begun to organize into workers' councils
at the shop floor level, but the role of management here is still very traditional and very few German industries are as decentralized as those in Yugoslavia. Again, self-management is used as a catch-all term to refer to the German experiment, but we see again that the reality is another matter. Decision making authority has indeed been extended beyond traditional patterns and elements of shared authority are very much a part of German industries. The results of this shared authority again are mixed but it is becoming the norm throughout German industries, reinforced by a fear of the past as well as by an overall commitment to industrial democracy throughout the European Community.

Scandinavia: The Quality of Work

Norway and Sweden have probably taken self-management further afoot than any other country. In Scandinavia, the tenets of this philosophy of management are endorsed by labor and management and are virtually the law of the land. In fact, it is one of the few examples in history where a management philosophy has become a legal mandate, since both the Norwegian and Swedish parliaments have blessed its tidings. It has become an important plank in the evolution of the Scandinavian welfare state and it has perhaps the broadest base of support anywhere in the world. It is seen as the primary means of improving the quality of life at work and thus it has an almost ecological messianic overture to its message. It pervades all levels of the organization, indeed all levels of society.

In short, the Scandinavian approach is the most comprehensive attempt to implant the ideas of industrial democracy in society as a whole. It borrows much from other efforts in Europe, but it also goes beyond all of these. The following appear to be the main tenets of the Scandinavian concept of self-management:
1. Co-determination in large industries
2. Mandatory work councils
3. Worker dismissal protection acts
4. Financial profit sharing
5. Unrestricted collective bargaining (all issues thus being democratized)
6. Work environment legislation which protects both the physical and the psychological health of the workers.

Little is left untouched by these reforms and clearly the work place has become the focal point for social change in Scandinavia, particularly Sweden. However, appealing as many of these reforms may be, they are unlikely to find deep roots in the American context. The reasons why have to do with the comparative differences of work in Europe and the United States.4

Work life in the United States, as in Europe, is undergoing dramatic changes. And for the first time in years, American managers are beginning to look abroad to see what they might learn from foreign competitors. But wholesale industrial democracy as practiced in Europe will not be imported to the United States. The reasons are threefold in nature.

First of all, most American unions have little faith in the tenets of industrial democracy. In Europe, these reforms were a product of the union movement itself, but not so in the U.S. American unions have succeeded quite well with collective bargaining as it is practiced in the U.S. and they even see industrial democracy as a threat to its continued success. Without strong support from the unions, self-management European style will only be a concern of U.S. multinationals in Europe. Secondly, industrial democracy has too much a flavor of the "one best way" for the current crop of American managers. American management has thrived on its commitment to trial and error, to experimentation, to finding many ways to manage. European self-management
imposes too many rigid rules on the work place to find many devotees in the United States. Finally, American individualism is once again asserting its traditional elan and it is wending its way into the work place. This is at the core of reforms in the American work place, but these reforms will be an expression of our own concepts of democracy and individualism, not those of our ancestors. Yet with all these rejoinders, self-management is by no means an idle concept to American managers.  

Self-Management in the United States

This study revolves around a definition of self-management that is reflective of its dimensions, yet is not merely a copy of what is practiced elsewhere. That is, the authors have tried to capture the spirit of the concept as it would be invoked in the American work place, much in the manner that Rensis Likert believes to be inevitable. The dimensions of this concept are definable under eight categories as depicted in Table I-1 below. Let's look briefly at each dimension.

Table I-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of Self-Management</th>
<th>Directive Management</th>
<th>Self-Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Freedom of expression</td>
<td>Many restrictions</td>
<td>Few restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Motivation</td>
<td>External factors</td>
<td>Dominance of internal needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dominant</td>
<td>Self determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership</td>
<td>Autocratic &amp; organi-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zational</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Goal setting</td>
<td>Hierarchically set</td>
<td>Individually based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Professional development</td>
<td>Reflects organiza-</td>
<td>Supports individual needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tional needs</td>
<td>Growth of the individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal development</td>
<td>Professional bias</td>
<td>Multiple structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organizational structure</td>
<td>Command structures</td>
<td>Individually based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decision making</td>
<td>Top management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>oriented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Freedom of speech, opinion, criticism, and behavior are a hallmark of self-management. The organization that creates a climate which tolerates or supports these expressions is one that practices self-management.

A second measure of self-management is the source of motivation. On one end of the spectrum is a situation where people are almost totally motivated by the demands placed on them from superiors. The opposite end of the spectrum is the case where the individual's own personal satisfaction is the main source of motivation. The more towards this second end, the higher degree of self-management is said to be utilized.

Source of leadership is the third dimension of self-management. One source of leadership stems from the formal organization. Basically the leadership is assumed, in a given situation, by the individual who has positional authority. In contrast to this is the case where leadership arises more spontaneously and informally. Here the leadership is based more on the particular situation. The individual with perhaps the most knowledge or experience, or perhaps the most charisma is looked upon by the others as the leader. The self-managed organization is characterized more by this second type of leadership.

Goal setting is the fourth dimension of self-management. Goals for an individual may be set by himself or by others at various levels of the organization. The more an individual is free to set his own work goals the more we characterize the organization as self-managed. Vice versa, the more the goal setting process is removed from the individual, the less self-management.

Professional development is the next measure. We say the organization practices self-management if it supports and assists its employees' professional development. The same definition holds for dimension six, personal
development. We expect the self-managed organization to also assist and support the personal development of its people.

Organizational structure is the next important dimension. We can characterize an organization as being highly structured, having little formal structure or gradations in-between. The highly structured organizations would have many vertical levels in the chain of command. It would also have very clear lines of responsibility, authority, and functionality. More importantly, managerial behavior would reflect this high degree of structure. The higher the degree of organizational structure, the less we define the organization to be self-managed. The self-managed organization does not rely heavily on structure to function.

The last measure of self-management used here is decision making. We would expect the self-managed organization to place decision making primarily with the individual in his own work area. In contrast to this would be the philosophy of group decision making or decisions being made in higher echelons of the organizations and filtering down. The more decisions are made at the point of implementation, the higher the degree of self-management.

These dimensions are of course only considered to be constructs or "ideal types" in the Weberian sociological mode. They do not depict actual reality as much as they describe a possible reality or perhaps a tendency toward a particular reality. The degree of support and enthusiasm managers may have toward these dimensions is a rough measure of the attractiveness of self-management as a philosophy of management. The degree to which managers may feel that self-management is currently practiced in their organizations raises issues about our ability to explain organizational reality through the tenets of this philosophy. For this information, the authors queried the management community in the manner described below.
The Survey

In science, when a field of inquiry is relatively new and unexplored, there may be little or no theory to work with. In such cases it is often sound methodology to gather a limited amount of empirical data. From these data, it is hoped that the beginnings of a theory might start to evolve. If so, specific hypotheses can be formulated for more rigorous testing. It was in this spirit that the authors designed and conducted the pilot survey, described below. It was hoped that statistically valid, conclusions could be drawn for the sample itself and that these conclusions could form the basis of some hypotheses concerning SM today.

More specifically, the survey was designed to capture the attitudes and perceptions of top executives concerning the eight dimensions of SM defined earlier. To do so, a random sample of 60 top executives was selected from the Dallas metroplex area. Of these, 45 were from the private sector and 15 from the public sector. A total of 41 executives responded by mail to the survey.

The survey asked the respondent to rate on a five point Likert scale each of the eight dimensions of SM. Each of the eight questions were broken down into A and B parts. Part A asks to what extent the given dimension actually exists in their organization today. Part B asks to what extent the dimension should ideally exist.

The A and B parts contrast the executive's perception of reality, with his normative view of the dimension. For example, part A of question 1 asks the respondent to characterize his organization's climate with respect to the free expression of ideas, criticisms, opinions and behavior. Part B is phrased as ideally what do you think the climate should be with respect to free expression.
Level three on the five point rating scale is intended to be a neutral response with respect to SM. It neither shows substantial support for SM nor substantial lack of support. A rating of four is indicative of a significant level of SM, while a two rating shows the opposite, significant lack of support. The five rating is suggestive of very strong SM while a rating of 1 shows a very distinctive absence of SM.

**Empirical Results**

Bearing in mind the meaning of the rating scale, Table 1 presents a summary of the mean scores and standard deviation of responses for each dimension. It is interesting to observe that for part A, the perception of actual, every mean is equal to or above the neutral point of three. This implies that the top executives in the sample believe that at least neutral support or more for SM already exists in their organizations. On the average, in no dimension do they believe that SM currently is lacking.

On the normative side, part B, with the one exception of the leadership dimension, every mean exceeds that of part A. This implies strong conceptual support for the SM notion. Further, respondents tend to believe that there should be a greater degree of SM in their organizations than currently exists. On the whole then the mean responses tend to indicate that the top executives surveyed believe that SM ought to be a part of their organizations and, in fact, already is.

There is also an interesting pattern observable in the standard deviations. Note that with the exception of the leadership dimension, once again, all standard deviations are higher for part A, the descriptive than part B, the normative. This suggests that there is greater concensus concerning what is seen as the ideal level of SM than there is about what is perceived to already exist.
Table 1
Summary of Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Mean Response</th>
<th>Standard Deviation of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part A</td>
<td>Part B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part A</td>
<td>Part B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Expression</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Motivation</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Goal Setting</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Professional</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Personal</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Organizational</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decision</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to test the statistical significance of the above observations, a series of tests were performed. The first set of tests is intended to measure the significance of the part B results. That is, are the responses really indicative of strong support for SM as a concept.

Since the data are grouped into five discrete categories as opposed to being continuous and, in addition may not be approximately normally distributed, it seems more appropriate to use non-parametric statistical testing. As described earlier, the four and five responses are supportive of SM while the one and two responses are unsupportive. To test the apparent supportiveness displayed in Table 1, we will take as the null hypothesis that there is neutral supportiveness. We will test to see if the scores are strong enough to statistically reject this hypothesis.

If the null hypothesis is true, then we would expect an equal number of responses on the unsupportive side, responses one and two, as on the supportive side, responses four and five. The Chi-Square test is an appropriate method for measuring the difference between the frequency of supportive and unsupportive responses of the top executives and the frequencies predicted by the null hypothesis.

The Chi-Square test was applied to each of the eight dimensions. The Chi-Square statistic and its level of significance are displayed in Table 2. Two of the dimensions, leadership and organizational structure, show no significant difference from the null hypothesis. Strikingly, however, all six of the other dimensions indicate supportiveness for the SM concept at the .01 level of significance. This implies a strongly positive attitude toward the SM notion.

The same set of tests were repeated for the part A responses, perception of actual. These results are shown in Table 3. Here, the same two
### Table 2

Tests to See Whether Executives Say There Ought to be Self Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expression</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Motivation</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Goal Setting</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prof. Devel.</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Per. Devel.</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Org. Struc.</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decision Making</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

Tests to See Whether Executives Perceive Self Management to Exist in their Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expression</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Motivation</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Goal Setting</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prof. Devel.</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Per. Devel.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Org. Struc.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decision Making</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dimensions, leadership and organizational structure, plus personal development are not significant. The other five dimensions are highly significant at the .01 level. This implies that the executives perceive that these five dimensions of SM have already been actualized in their organizations. Interestingly, the leadership and organizational structure dimensions are not perceived to be in the SM mode, and further, they are not even seen to be particularly desirable.

The last set of tests check the statistical significance of the difference between the parts A and B responses. Is there a significant gap between the ideal and the actual? Table 4 presents these results. It is readily seen that only two dimensions show a significant difference between actual and ideal. These are motivation and personal development. This means that the respondents would like to see much more SM in these areas than currently exists. The lack of significance in the other six dimensions implies that these top executives perceive that their organizations have, in fact, achieved close to the desired level of SM.

One other test was performed. The binomial test, was used to check the apparent differences in standard deviations reported in Table 1. The test showed these differences to be significant at the .01 level confirming the earlier observation.

The results of the statistical analysis can be summarized as follows:

(1) As a whole, top executives surveyed report that SM is highly desirable.

(2) By and large, these executives perceive that a significant level of SM already exists in their organizations.

(3) Overall, the respondents see no significant difference between what they believe to be the desirable level of SM and the level which already exists. The next section will explore the implications of these findings.
Table 4

Tests to See if There is a Difference Between
What Executives Say There Should be and
What They Perceive to Exist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expression</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Motivation</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Goal Setting</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prof. Devel.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Per. Devel.</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Org. Struc.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decision Making</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Realizing again the limitations of the sample data, what further conclusion can be drawn from the study? We are by no means able to extrapolate to the level of theoretical accuracy; however, the following ideas would seem to have support from the data.

The concept of self-management is by no means a culturally derived and constrained set of ideas that appeal only to European managers. When one goes beyond the definitional stage and actually begins to construct the dimensions of self-management, one finds from the sample an exceptionally high level of support from top executives. In fact, the support is so strong that one might begin to look behind the data and question why. For example, is self-management merely another fad that is sweeping through the halls of corporate America? One answer to this may be rooted in the American psyche. The dimensions of self-management are in many ways a restatement of the American ethic of individualism. This ethic has long enjoyed -- at least from the mythic level -- strong undercurrents of support from those whose job is to manage capitalism. After all, who could be opposed to concepts of individual freedom even though they may be constrained in the workplace? However, let us muddy the water here by comparing this study with a recent book by another author of similar ideas.

In 1975, Professor George Lodge surveyed the management community to seek their ideas regarding two different ideologies. One was the traditional American concept of individualism and the other was what he rather indelicately called "communitarianism." The response was interesting, if unexpected. At that time, the respondents said that communitarianism was the wave of the future even though they expressed reservations about its implications. Not so in our study. Our respondents expressed strong support for both the ideas of
the individualistic ethic (self-management) and the belief that it should and does exist in the organizational world. Time and context always affect the outcomes of research, but we might begin to raise the alarm bells for Professor Lodge's well-known conclusions about the American management community.

One might also raise doubts about the ability of self-management to become a part of the managerial landscape. There's little doubt that most organizations in the United States fail to practice this managerial philosophy even though it has strong support among some key decision makers. In fact, what might be happening here is a reflection of what one author calls the "Front Office Syndrome." In essence, this is a blind spot in the sight of top executives who see the world in ways that don't reflect reality. What goes on at the level of the top executive may indeed conform to the precepts of self-management, but what about the lower floor of the organization? Not likely. The perceptual problem of top executives may allow them to see a partial reality and be firmly committed to it even if it fails the test of depicting a broader reality. But another problem exists here as well.

When there is such a high level of commitment both to the concept of a reality and apparently to its existence as well, what then do we do if we feel there is evidence to suggest the contrary? For example, if American management would be reformed and improved by changes that might reflect the procedures of self-management, how does one "grow" this concept if the clients already believe it exists? There is a problem here we often see in studies involving values of managers and the reality that actually exists. In short, there is a gap between these two and one must be careful to suggest that the value preferences of managers depict reality. Therefore, it would not be invalid to conclude that -- despite our limited data to the contrary -- self-management as defined here does not exist at the level suggested by our
respondents. If it did, our organizations would be far less bureaucratic and authority oriented, and much more decentralized and participative. Again, at the level of top executives, self-management may be a more common element of administration than it is elsewhere in the organization.

In conclusion, the study raises many issues about an emerging concept that seems to leave strong support among some top managers. There are indeed cracks in this support -- for example, the dimensions of leadership and organizational structure receive significantly different levels of support than the other six dimensions -- but the overall level of enthusiasm for the precepts of self-management is surprisingly high. The old authority-based management has been modified greatly in the post-war era, and this study would suggest that a framework can be designed to explain the exact nature of what might be forthcoming as managerial practices adapt to changing environments. The further testing of this concept will assess its rightful place in this transition.
References

1Likert's notions of self-management were first discussed in a speech delivered to the national meetings of the Academy of Management, Kansas City, August, 1976.

2For an account of the Yugoslav approach to self-management, see

3Much has been written about co-determination, but perhaps the best overview is that of Soloman Barkin, Worker Militancy and Its Consequences (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975).


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