

РАЗДЕЛ 2
КОРПОРАТИВНЫЙ КОНТРОЛЬ

SECTION 2
CORPORATE CONTROL



LABOUR PROCESS THEORY AND CRITICAL ACCOUNTING:
CONCEPTUALISING MANAGERIAL CONTROL*

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Abstract

This paper examines the need to limit managerial control in the corporate world, by using the contribution of the labour process theory and critical accounting, in which the theoretical complementarity of these two scientific disciplines is pointed out. Neither labour process nor accounting are mere technical phenomena, but should be placed in the totality of social relations, which means the context of alienating effects of the capitalist mode of production. Relying on the works by Braverman, Tinker and Thompson, this paper is the introduction to an interdisciplinary methodology based on Marx's labour theory of value, and its goal is to provide a guide for working-class action to change society.

Keywords: Labour process, Managerial control, the Labour theory of value, Alienation

*I thank Tony Tinker for his initial encouragement and support, and David Crowther for important insights in the earlier phase of developing this article. Thanks also to Christine Cooper for her patience and intelligent questions. I am certainly most grateful to Peter Burnham. His valuable advice and, above all, helpful comments have had a crucial impact on the final structure of this paper. If I have misunderstood anything, I as the author bear the sole responsibility.

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But, above all, the majority of people must understand what capitalism really is and why its seeming necessity and inevitability are indeed nothing more than ideological fig leaves covering the naked personal interest of the tiny minority.

Paul M. Sweezy

Introduction

The underlying message of this paper is that the function of control is too important to pass it on to the researchers in the field of management in today's turbulent conditions of the processes of globalisation, whose theories, in the first instance,

aim to justify corporate practices and malpractices. For this to be possible, however, the social issues should be put into the context of the law of value in capitalist economy.

The key question is: how to create a new social morphology that will limit managerial control and reduce the possibility of its abuse? The question of

conceptualisation of managerial control becomes the question of the day, and this paper, relying on the works of Braverman, Tinker and Thompson, is an introduction into a multidisciplinary methodology whereby, we believe, a joint enterprise between labour process theory and critical accounting can set foundations for the methodology for a number of reasons. *First*, these two disciplines can offer a theoretical direction, which empirical research has lost sight of as it drowned in particularism. *Second*, unlike the managerial paradigm which sheds control with the veil of efficiency, the two disciplines insist on the thesis that the central issue of control is not related to a mere technical function, but to revealing that, despite the diversity of structural forms of control, their combined forms and dynamics, it essentially is an instrument of domination of capital over human life. *Third*, what links the two disciplines is Marx's labour theory of value, as it reveals the social conflict lying in the background of market development. Interconnecting these two disciplines includes an explanation of how workers are exploited and a demonstration that the whole system is founded on that exploitation.

Karl Marx recognised human freedom as the universal global project that will be realised through praxis. Marxist analysis of capitalism is designed to provide a firm scientific foundation for the workers' movement. As capitalism undergoes constant change, the methods of struggle and working class resistance change as well. The eruption of an anti-capitalist movement worldwide over the recent years entails a number of new and innovative means of resistance, which increasingly find their material foothold in the use of the Internet.

By affirming the voice of the individual the Internet provides mechanisms for the creation of a new global solidarity that enables redistribution of power within society (Crowther, 2002a; Conway, Combe & Crowther 2003). In this paper, the author challenges the instrumentalist perception of managerial control and emphasises the need to place this concept in the totality of social relations, meaning the context of the alienating effects of capitalist production.

Although it is not questionable that the major power in the organisation lies in the hands of managers, the context in which control takes place requires an open system, which means that legislative and regulatory requirements from the external environment, as well as the organisation's interactions with its environment, should be considered. In this way, systems of control become agents of social change (Crowther, 2002b; Mraović, 2003, 2004).

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the discussions making us aware that the global order requires global institutions, regulatory mechanisms and control, whereby the disclosures of financial scandals are seen as a crucial factor in mobilizing the public to form its opinion. As Sampson (1996) points out, accountability will become a more explosive

issue in the twenty-first century, as it affects the competitiveness of nations and the health of their societies. The demands for global regulatory mechanisms have a two-sided moral and ethical basis. On one hand, they are a logical answer to the pathological processes that bring to surface the crises of capitalism, while on the other hand they come from the fact that modern corporations are run by professional managers who are not accountable to dispersed shareholders. The main difficulty lies in that – regardless of the system of corporate governance, be it market-oriented as in the US and the UK, or bank oriented as in continental Europe, especially Germany, and in Japan – management eventually operates like a stakeholder in its own right, who often acts up to its responsibilities and at the expense of other stakeholders, despite of all mechanisms of control over managerial work. Vives (2000) and Hellwig (2000) believe that the understanding of corporate governance in that sense of «the ways to ensure that investors get their investment back» is problematic, because managers, or insiders in general, have the incentive and the ability to manipulate the form of the game, both in design and applied mechanisms and in signing incomplete contracts. This may result in various types of malpractices such as frauds, private benefits and entrenchment. Practice may differ in individual countries, yet this issue is equally relevant for the developed as for the developing countries and transition economies. Therefore it is evident that what is thought to be the concept of good performance depends on the points of view taken by the distinctive stakeholders' groups. As Stefan Stern suggests, «Good company can still be anti-social responsibility» (The Guardian, January 19, 2004, p. 23).

Control: some definitions

Managerial control helps ensure that overall directions of individuals and groups are consistent with short-range and long-range organisational plans. Patterns of control develop out of struggles and contain various meanings and demands. Peters (1994) holds that strategic advantage now lies in the acquisition and control of information. Hence the old model of “own it to control it” is death in today's markets. Also, the “new” model of “pick and polish your core competence” is probably out of date, too. In a cyberspatial world corporations are becoming bewilderingly diverse and geographically far-flung. Cyberspace corporations will be very fast-acting and transient. The processes influence the function of control; the contemporary manager is more likely to be a facilitator of performance instead of playing the role of performance policeman (Thompson, 1995) while the new principle is a shift from span of control to span of coordination (Arlington & Baker, 1999). Aside from being open to abuse, the “command-control” model of hierarchy is a poor path to high

performance in rapidly changing or globally dispersed operating environments (Senge, 1999). Senge describes the new mental models of corporate managers as a decisive factor that will allow learning organisations to be more locally controlled and more well coordinated than their hierarchical predecessors (Senge, 1990: 289).

Robey and Sales (1994) distinguish three different approaches to control: internal market controls, clan controls, and formal control systems. Internal markets use the price mechanism to regulate activity, and they are appropriate where such markets can be easily identified. These internal markets are best seen within large corporations that operate as holding companies for diversified operations. Clan control depends on shared values and trust, and it works best in small units where markets do not apply and where formal controls are inadequate. Formal control systems influence members' behavior through standards, measures, and corrective action (Robey & Sales, 1994: 300-1).

Vives is focused on two forms of control: passive (or "exit") and active (or "voice"). *Passive* control aims at measuring better the manager's performance rather than trying to increase the value of the projects in the firm. The basic idea is that better information reduces the agency problem by reducing the incentive cost. *Active* control is made with the board of directors by a large shareholder, a large creditor, or the market for corporate control (Vives, 2000: 6).

According to Schermerhorn Jr. (1996) organisational systems and the management process itself establish a framework for several types of control via: 1. strategy and objectives; 2. policies and procedures; 3. staff selection and training; 4. performance appraisal; 5. job design and work structures; 6. performance norms; 7. organisation culture; 8. compensation and benefits; 9. employee discipline systems (Schermerhorn Jr, 1996: 446-7).

The power of networks in the electronically operated global capitalism

A convergence of social evolution and information technologies has created a new economy organised along the global networks of capital, management and information (Castells, 2000). The integrated, global networks are sources of huge and dramatic reorganisations in power relationships because the switches that connect the networks, and using signal codes in the process, have an ability to shape, guide and misguide societies. The networks are appropriate instruments of capital economy, and their interrelations and crossings reflect the relations between corporations and small firms, sectors and geographical entities. The new social organisation is defined by the evolution aiming towards the network form of management and production, and its main ingredient is information. A characteristic of the electronically operated global capitalism that it is structured with the help of information networks in the timeless space of financial flows. Money has

become almost totally independent of production, escaping into networks of high-order electronic interactions. Capital networks unify and have command over specific centres of capital accumulation, structuring and conditioning the behaviour of capitalists in global networks.

Thus the Pandora's box being opened, the three key issues have come out of it: first, the issue of creating effective managerial control and coordination; second, the issue of the public's responsiveness in the form of the call for social audit in the sense of systematic reporting of an corporate's commitments and accomplishments in areas of social responsibility (Schermerhorn Jr., 1996, Crowther, 2002); third, the creation of effective mechanisms of control of the corporate sector when making the contracts with the Third World countries and transition countries. The subtlety of this issue arises from the fact that here we deal with the countries which have the status of the countries followers in the two ways: 1. In the sense of being importers of the capitalist way of production and institutions, and equally of its crises and pathological processes; 2. In the sense of importers of information technology industry, as it represents the technical basis for the network society.

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) intensifies, as Little (2002) believes, the sudden development of global economic integration on the one hand, but on the other, it creates new forms of locational and functional differentiation, leading to new inequities. The centripetal production model is replaced by the distributed form, which means that the transnational companies must make complex locational decisions for every part of their production chain. Disaggregation of the production chain has led to a degree of supervision and control which was never possible before. The distributed production chain network facilitates the layering of the labour markets by the developed economies which conduct these processes. Little is particularly concerned about the fact that, in distributed globalisation, the production of intellectual capital can be separated from the production process which is more and more often marginalised. The pressures on local communities are exerted on the level of regions and national states.

One of the most important features of the global capitalist system is «the national political constitution of the states and the global character of accumulation» (Burnham, 1996:103). The basic problem of the present time according to Burnham (1996) is the spatial dimension of the global crisis of capital, in the sense that the crisis is shifted towards certain countries and regions, thus achieving unbalanced development. Thus, the crisis of capital becomes the crisis of the international state system. It is the cause of a number of disequilibria in production and trade across the globe. States respond to crises arising from the subordination of the national state to

global money through political terms, which means that «politics» are not to be interpreted separately from economics.

According to Burnham, national states are theoretically best established as differentiated forms of global capitalist relations. They support the global mobility of capital and offer institutional schemes for securing international property rights. From that arises their responsibility for mobilising resources in refashioning international political and economic relations within the inter-state system.

Burnham challenges the anti-statist rhetoric of free enterprise with his concept of the state as the essential «independent form», which must be separate from private interests. As an instance of general concern, the state reconciles the contradiction between private and common interests through formal and regulatory activities. Following Marx's analyses, he draws attention to the fact that the state is neither autonomous nor related to the economy, but should be observed in the totality of social relations, in which its distinctive form depends on how the ruling classes control the conditions of production in order to ensure the extraction of surplus labour from the immediate producer. This means that the tensions between the national states and the global economy represent a part of the crises of the society as a whole. National states based on the rule of money and law as fetishised forms of the power of capital are at the same time restricted by the limits imposed by the over-accumulation crisis of capital on a world scale. Also, they must deal with the consequences of the struggles between the labour and capital on the global level.

As Holloway (1996) points out, to reach a satisfactory understanding of the changes taking place at the moment we need to go beyond the concept of the «crisis of the Keynesian Welfare State» in order to identify functional *similarities* in the development of different states.

Deindustrialization» has meant the conversion of productive capital into money and has enormous consequences for states and their relation to the international economy. The shift in the relation between national state and global capital means a radical change in the forms of global capitalist domination. There is, as Marazzi puts it, «a shift in state power to the world level – the level at which monetary terrorism operates» (Marazzi, 1996:85).

The World bank, the IMF and the WTO emerged as an institutional response of transnational corporations and the seven largest capitalist economies to slumps experienced in late capitalism in order to «discipline» countries and regions. They seem to replace the old dictatorships of national elites with new dictatorships of international finance (Stiglitz, 2002). Now they are charged with reproducing the conditions of domination and dependence (Aronowitz, 2003:192). Globalisation is not however the cause but is rather the result of crisis (Burnham, 1996:109).

The volume of purely monetary transactions carried out in offshore money markets dominate real world trade among countries. Some authors talk about the «global financial revolution», while Arrighi (2000) holds that there is no revolutionary tendency in current financial expansions at all. His analysis is based on Braudel's (1977) observation that the maturity of every major development of the capitalist world economy is heralded by a particular switch from trade in commodities to trade in money. Consequently, Arrighi argues that throughout the capitalist era financial expansions have signalled the transition from one regime of accumulation on a world scale to another. They are integral aspects of recurrent destruction of «old» regimes and simultaneous creation of «new» ones.

The subjection of civil society and the national state to the global movement of capital is described by Holloway (1996), Marazzi (1996) and Clarke (1988), who elaborate that the money is the most abstract form of capitalist property, and as such it represents the supreme power through which social reproduction is subordinated to the reproduction of capital. Therefore money is not an aspect of «economics» but rather a form of class struggle itself. Clarke (1988) suggests that fundamental conflict of the global age is a conflict between the interests of multinational capital and the needs of the mass of population. Hence we need to locate the source of capitalist crisis in the social form of capitalist production itself. Thus the «irrationality of monetarism is not the irrationality of economists and politicians, it is the irrationality of capitalism» (Clarke, 1988). Money is defined by Holloway as the brashest, most arrogant form of capital (Holloway, 1996:135). The power of money is the power of command over labour-power as a commodity (Clarke, 1988:9).

Money and its diverse credit and investment extensions represent the expressions of the value form, which broaden and accelerate the social division of labour in both a geographical and an inter-temporal sense. Marx points out that it is only at the world market that money functions in its full capacity as commodity, the production form of which is also a direct form the realisation of human work *in abstracto* (Marx, *Kapital*, Vol. I, 1970:133). In contrast to the classical political economy, *Capital I* is important for three reasons: first, the dynamics and the inherent instability of capitalism lie in the centre of the analysis, second, an important role is assigned to the extraction of surplus value in the growing reproduction by a whip of market competitiveness and technological development; and third, the dialectic moves in assessing economic dynamic are given a decisive role.

From the construction of the value forms it is possible to do a reconstruction of the labour process, but also to «read out» the basic characteristics of the changes in the subjective, cultural, juridical, economic and political sphere. This is at the same

time a basis for understanding the functioning logic of the corporate sector in the present situation (Tinker, 1997). Without institutional and social forces that lie in the background of the crises of monopoly capitalism, it would be difficult to understand certain economic phenomena resulting from the unequal exchange. Tinker notes:

«By 'crisis', I am referring not only to catastrophic slumps, but also to the more pervasive forms of alienation that emanate from social conflicts that distinguish capitalism as a social system. Thus, the horrors of toxic dumping that are stimulated by competitive pressures to cut costs, the predatory activities of some managers and shareholders, the rapacious exploits of multinationals in poor countries, the overcharging the customers by public utilities and nationalized industries, all constitute the forms of alienation» (Tinker, T., 1985: 147).

As Tinker points out, the main lesson that we can learn from the theories of social values, be it canonists, accumulationist, Marxist, marginalist or distributionist in perspective, that they are always focused on the question of how to distribute social income for the benefits of a particular interest group (Tinker, 1985). In corporations, these relations are institutional and are in the background of the crises and slumps which can be experienced in capitalism. Theorizing is always subjective, as is accounting practice. Namely, what is at stake here is that the question of income distribution is intricately related to the issue of alienation, hence all accounting issues are fundamentally the issues of income distribution and alienation. Hence Tinker sees accountants not as harmless book-keepers – in the way that traditional practice in both the educational system and companies perceive them – but as arbiters in a social conflict, architects of the expropriation of millions of people. In this way, accounting becomes fundamentally a social service which can hardly be neutral in terms of values, so it is the value that becomes a key word that connects two conceptual orientations: social evaluation and critical accounting.

The alienating role of social reproduction

What are the lessons we have learnt from Braverman?

Braverman does not define the labour process in universal notions as industrial sociology did, but instead places it in the specific context of the mode of capitalist production. According to Tinker (2002) the enduring lessons one can learn from Braverman belong to the “method” of political engagement (dialectics) and an anthropological view of human development that is trans-historical and trans-psychological. As Wardell (1990) points out, Braverman has focused on the contradictory unity of the mental and manual, subjective and objective di-

mensions of production. By doing so he introduces a philosophical anthropology which stipulates that production is a form of praxis. Hence in contrast to the standard view, it is possible to conclude that he brought the subjective back into his analysis of the labour process. His crucial contribution is reflected, as Spencer (2000) claims, in the attention he drew to the «objectivity» of opposition between the working class and capital and thus revealed the decisive importance of class conflict in shaping organisational outcomes. There is nothing subjective about alienation, rather it arises from objective dispossession based on the enforced separation of labour from the means of production, and as such it represents an explicit expression of interest conflict between labour and the capital. This is why, in his analysis, Braverman primarily focused on labour as a class *in itself*, and not because he neglected or rejected the importance of considering the labour as a class *for itself*, as subsequent labour process writers fervently objected. Moreover, the subjective and objective approaches are mutually conditional, in which labour as a class *in itself* is merely the means to achieve labour as a class *for itself*. In other words, its target is the degradation of labour, which is the result of the class dominance of capital over labour.

The basic weakness of political economy is reflected, as Marx explicates, in the fact that in its analyses it never raises the question *why* labour is represented by value, and the measure of labour by its duration in the scale of the value of labour's product. Hence political economy has never achieved to find a form of value, on the basis of the analysis of commodity value, that makes commodity an exchange value (Marx, K., *Kapital*, Vol. I, 1970: 81). The form of the value of the worker's product is a most abstract, but also a most general form of the capitalist mode of production, which gives to the capitalist system its distinctive historical feature, and its main characteristic is that the process of production has power over people, instead of the process being under their conscious, planned control.

Marx viewed labour as a key explanatory variable, which, along with the political, social and cultural factors, determines the exchange values, and thus the distribution of income among social groups and classes (Tinker, 1985). He makes a distinction between the two basic forms of work:

«Every work is, on one hand, a use of human labour force in the physiological sense, and in this sense of the equal human work it creates the value of commodity. On the other hand, every work is a use of human labour force in some special purposeful form, and in this sense of a concrete useful work it produces values of use... The English language has an advantage in that for these two sides of work it has two different terms. The work that creates the values of use and that is qualitatively determined is called 'work', unlike the word 'labour'; work that creates values and is measured quantitatively only is

called 'labour', unlike the word 'work' (Marx, K., *Kapital*, Vol. I, 1970: 53).

In the capitalist process of production the work spent on the production of some useful thing is seen as its 'inherent characteristic', that is, as its value, so that the product of work becomes commodity. In this way, the development of the form of commodity is in line with the development of value form. The dialectics of the value form is a basis for understanding the general principles lying in the background of the evolution of capitalism, and its detailed account can be found in *Volume I of Capital: a Critique of Political Economy*; Tinker (1997) holds that this book is a basis for understanding the social and economic formation of capitalism. The basic phenomenological features of capitalism are, on the one hand, the enormous growth of commodity production for the market, and on the other, the increasing interdependence between previously semi-isolated communities which gradually lose their autonomy and self-sufficiency, by becoming articulated within the framework of a broader division of labour through exchange and trade. The value form is an integral part of the process in the sense that it points to the basis on which specialised, independent production of commodity establishes its terms of trade - the rates of exchange for their products. The occurrence of the common equivalents - money and financial services - has eased the development of trade, specialisation and the ever greater interdependence.

Braverman's research efforts are focused on the consequences that, in the period of monopoly capitalism, a variety of technological changes had on the form, dynamics and transformation of the labour process. He is not interested in the 'pure technics', but the connection of technics and the special needs of the capital (Braverman, 1983: 66), which enables him to develop a thesis according to which 'the mode of production' as well as 'technology' are a product of social relations, while the technological development, instead of providing for the power of man over labour process, contributes - in the conditions of monopoly capitalism - to the ever more sophisticated forms of capital control over labour. However, it is important to emphasise that every society is "a moment in the historical process and can be understood only as part of the process. And only in this sense, in the sense of the cloth being weavered through centuries, we can say that capitalism 'created' the present capitalist mode of production. This is very different from a fixed formula which enables us, from a certain level of technological development, to 'derive' a certain form of social organisation" (Braverman, H., 1983: 24).

The movement of 'scientific management', Braverman argues, has a crucial significance in creating the contemporary corporation, while the principles of Taylorism are, in fact, an explicit expression of the capitalist mode of production. What

Braverman is especially concerned with is to unveil two illusions related to Taylorism, the illusions being quite widespread in the literature on industrial relations. First, Taylorism is not concerned with technological development, but with the developmental path of management and organisation of work, that is, it is concerned with the control of labour at all levels of technology. Therefrom follows the general applicability of Taylorism to labour, regardless of the nature of the corresponding technology. Secondly, Taylorism was not replaced by the other Schools of Human Relations concerned with the issue of humanization of work. The Schools were actually concerned with the accommodation of workers to the production process, created by the industrial engineer with the main intention to reduce labour costs and to gain control over the labour process. Hence Taylorism remains the basis for the overall planning process in the modern industrial society. Taylorist forms of exploitation are just as prevalent in the knowledge workplace, as they were in manufacturing. Moreover, recent «off-shoring» projects have revealed that knowledge industries can just as easily be relocated to countries employing cheaper labour, as was the previous case with manufacturing industries.

The fact remains, however, that 'scientific management' does not explore the labour process as such, but its function is to apply 'scientific management' methods to the increasingly complex issues of the control of the labour force in the fast growing capitalist companies. Therefore, as Braverman notices shrewdly, the management does not enter the workplace as a representative of science, but as a representative of management 'masked with the veil of science'. Taylor does not look for 'the best way' of doing business 'generally', as many industrial sociologists think, but is only concerned with the most successful way of taking control over alienated labour, that is, over the labour force that is bought and sold. Besides, in order for the principles of 'scientific management' to really start living in practice, production should reach such a level so as to justify the expenses needed for its rationalisation. This is the main reason why Taylorism occurred simultaneously with the growth of production and concentrated into the ever bigger corporate units in the second half of the 19th and 20th century.

Braverman describes the contemporary corporation as a form which terminates the direct link between capital and its individual owner, whereby operational control is transferred into the hands of the staff specialised in management. The foundations of the theory of monopoly corporation were laid by Marx, who described the tendency of capitalism to concentrate and centralise. The concentration of capital is a natural consequence of the process of accumulation - "every capital grows, and with it grows the size of production that it encourages" (Braverman, H., 1983: 214). On the

other hand, the centralization of capital changes the distribution of the existing capital due to the expropriation done by one capitalist to another. Consequently, at the corporate top level, the members of the same class, the owner and the manager, become 'the aspects of class'. The occurrence of managerial control as a distinctive category opens up a new space for a new conceptualisation of the very concept of control; the concept becomes a dynamic category, and interacts with numerous factors within and outside the organisation.

Braverman and the subsequent labour process writers

Braverman has accused sociologists that they perform the job of a Human Resources Department, as they are normally concerned with the "reactions of workers" and their "accommodation" to the labour process, instead of being concerned with the nature of work, which is degrading in itself, regardless of how it affects the personality of workers. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it was his book *Labor and Monopoly Capital* that triggered numerous empirical research projects on the labour process.

Friedman (1977) objects to Braverman that he takes the phenomenon of the inevitable tendency of capital to reduce labour costs – through intensifying the procedures for subordinating workers, and through the processes of deskilling of labour – too simply, while essentially the tendency is a changeable and complex one. This means that the routinisation and fragmentation of the labour process ought to be understood as one of many, yet not the only strategy through which the management exerts control over labour, as the strategy can, under certain circumstances, be counterproductive. Friedman emphasises that managers often adopt the strategy of "responsible autonomy", i.e. the workers are encouraged to identify themselves with the company's objectives, so that they are given a wider scope of freedom for decision making in the labour process, in which they behave responsibly, with a low level of supervision. Therefore, the forms of authority and control are not static and unchangeable, but they are a result of management adjustment to the diverse and ever changing situations in the world of work.

Edwards (1979) shares Friedman's belief that management has an array of strategies of control on disposal. However, he goes one step further from the Friedman's dichotomy between direct control and "responsible autonomy", and makes a distinction between direct and simple control, technical control and bureaucratic control. Direct or simple control is such a control in which workers are directly controlled by the employers themselves, or by their representatives through close supervision. The control is characteristic for the early stage of capitalist development, but it can also be found in small firms, as

well as in alternative forms of employment, such as various forms of part-time jobs. Technical control occurs at the stage when the machines start dictating the dynamics of work and the direction of the labour process, which means that the responsibility for assigning tasks is transferred from human agents to the impersonal demands of the technical structure. The new element brought about by the development of the technical control can be seen, Edwards holds, in that it contributes, through the identical patterns of work, to the creation of a homogenous labour force. In this way the process of control can be transferred and put on the plant wide level. The aim of bureaucratic control is to find ways to create a simultaneous process of new divisions and segmentation of labour force, which prevent the creation of a collective consciousness, but also the aim is to get the loyalty of the employees so as to ensure their integration into the company's structure. In this way begins a transfer from control based on coercion to control based on consent. The phrase "welfare capitalism" encompasses positive initiatives that aim to encourage workers to accept the patterns of authority. Consequently, bureaucratic control, by introducing institutionalised hierarchical command based on systematic administrative structures, brings about the formation of the rule of order, which, as Edwards points out, forms the basis for the organisation of work. Edwards has contributed to the labour process theory in two ways: he has emphasised the diversity of structural forms of control, but also the competitive nature of workplace in the form of struggle between the worker and his supervisor. According to Edwards, these are two fundamental triggers of change at the workplace. What might be objected to him, however, is a failure to interpret the control structures in their combined forms (Thompson, P., 1989:150).

The writers advocating the theory of strategic choice point out that we cannot *a priori* assume, as Braverman and the subsequent labour process authors do, that the managers at the lower levels of hierarchy obediently implement the decisions on the new technologies made by the organisation's top management. Buchanan (1986) points out that the low level managers, when introducing technological changes, need not necessarily act in the way that is consistent with the organisation's overall objectives. The managers at the middle and low level of hierarchy take part in introducing and applying the technological changes as well, and have the power, depending on the scope of their real influence in the organisation, their leading interests and values they hold, to modify the strategic choices made by the top managers (Wilkinson, 1983).

It is unquestionable that employers exert control over labour force, but what is questionable is that they do this without workers' resistance, as Braverman holds. The technological development, however, does not diminish the ways of workers' resistance, but on the contrary, the moment that

workers – regardless of their skills – become skillful in using the machines, there opens up new, more subtle, informal ways of resistance, hard to control; as a result, those can afflict more harm to the employers than the formal, traditional ways of workers' self-organisation (Penn, 1978; McLoughlin & Clark, 1988).

Another important element for managerial control over labour force is the structuring of the labour market. The researchers point out that the structural forms of economic segmentation are multidimensional and are caused by a variety of factors: the concentration of the capital, the size of the organisation, and state intervention on the market (Gagliani, 1981; Kalleberg, Wallace & Althausen, 1981; Brown & Scase, 1991). Stewart, Prandy and Blackburn (1980) came to the conclusion that the key issue, from the employer's point of view, is how to define the payment systems. It follows that the crucial factor in recruiting workforce is not only the selection of skills and qualifications, but also the issue of strategy that the employers will apply in the structure of pay grades. It seems that strategy in which the numbers of well-paid jobs is limited is economically justified, but the social consequences of such a strategy are quite another issue.

Crompton and Jones (1984) view the structuring of the labour market as an important element of managerial control over labour force, and conclude that, in reality, the labour market is structured according to the particular requirements of employers, which means that it is not a mere reflection of the labour available. It follows that some employers, as a reaction to the existing economic fluctuations, will seek cheap labour force, that is, will employ unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Others will decide on the more skilled, but more expensive labour force, which possess certain technical skills and can easily accommodate to the new patterns of the work organisation arising from technological changes. It is obvious, therefore, that technology does not determine the structure of qualifications or the demand on the labour market, but that it is the organisation and its management that make choices.

The choices, however, should not be taken one-sidedly. Workers have the opportunity for making choices as well. Blackburn and Mann (1979) point out that there are two crucial issues here: 1. Does the labour market allow the worker, objectively speaking, a sufficient number of choices during his/her economic life?, 2. Does the worker, subjectively speaking, experience this as a choice? The employers directly contribute to the structuring of the labour market through the process of recruitment and selection, and the system of promotion, but still it would be wrong to say that they control the situation. Namely, the general structure of the labour market is hierarchical, which means that workers have the opportunity of selecting their jobs. The research of Blackburn and Mann has

shown that the employer's biggest problem is whether he/she will be able to find appropriate workers, that is, the quality of the workforce needed for the organisation; here the concept of quality does not refer only to abilities, but also to willingness to cooperate.

Burawoy (1985) claims that Marx and Braverman go too far in stressing the salience of coercion in ensuring capitalist dominance over labour. He moves his analysis from production to the spheres of distribution and exchange and claims that the interests of labour and capital are not something rigid, predetermined, but are produced and reproduced in different ways, as compelled by competitive processes. Hence, the debate on the interest theory should be developed outside the sphere of ideology (Burawoy, 1979). Thompson (1989) objects to Braverman that he has failed in three main aspects, and this has significantly determined the direction of the post-Braverman labour process debate: firstly, Braverman did not show the effects of workers' resistance on the development of production; secondly, he neglected the phenomenon of the homogenisation of labour force; thirdly, he underestimated the varieties of control. This has had two damaging consequences for the theory's further development. The process of production has been removed from the focus of the Marxist analysis, while determinism and functionalism have seriously threatened the authenticity of the orientation itself. This in turn has opened up an opportunity for the attacks on the labour process theory. Therefore the critics come from various stances, including Marxism. What is in common to all of them is rejection of the central position of the concept of control given to the concept within labour process theory.

Contribution of labour process theory

Regardless of all criticisms, the authors advocating the labour process theory, whether directly involved in the theory or being prompted to argue about it, have significantly contributed to the research on the phenomenon of control. *First*, they have pointed out to the fact that the concepts of the general control systems can be an essential tool for representing capital relations. *Second*, they have emphasised the importance of a whole range of mediating and contextual factors that form the processes of control such as the product market, workers' resistance, the processes of recruitment and selection, as well as the formation of a distinctive organisational culture (Knights & Wilmott, 1986). Control through culture is not only feasible, but actually practised in a modern organisation. As Ackroyd and Thompson (1999) have pointed out, control crosses the 'last frontier' to 'cultural control', in which the manipulation of the symbols of culture is the basis of moral discipline. Grugulis, Dundon and Wilkinson (2000) have concluded that control through organisational culture

extends the employment contracts to areas previously outside the managerial prerogatives. *Third*, control always implies a hierarchy, and the level of the worker's discretion to make decisions is ruled by the dictates defined by the company's purpose. At this point, however, the authors hold different viewpoints. According to some of them, the existence of hierarchy is justified by the need for profitability in the conditions of capital control, and not because it would necessarily be the only form of production organisation that achieves efficiency, or because of the demands of technology (Edwards, 1979; Gorz, 1976, 1982). Others, who tend to view the labour process from the viewpoint of the orthodox Marxist analysis, point out that capital is able to make a choice between accumulation and efficiency (Palloix, 1976; Brighton Labour Process Group, 1977). Yet what is not questionable, as Thompson argues, is that no one has ever convincingly proved that a certain form of control is necessary for the functioning of capitalism. *Fourth*, debates have shown that the phenomenon of labour process control, with the help of capital, involves a variety of diverse procedures and structures. The key dilemma, from the managerial perspective, is how to simultaneously achieve an optimal control over activities and free compliance. Hence the working task of the labour process theory becomes the task of how to understand those combinations in the context of the specific position of the company or an industry. In contemporary research, the emphasis tends to be put on the varied dimensions of control, as well as on various combinations of practices, and the conditions affecting their use. *Fifth*, regardless of a control structure, a successful operation of control always depends upon human agency (Thompson, 1989). Unlike the early research, which neglected the fact that objective control is ultimately dependent on subjective compliance, the authors gradually tend to turn towards the approaches that, in studying the category of control, deal with the subjective facets of human experience at work. *Sixth*, the conceptualisation of managerial control comes from the understanding of management as a collective labour process, an extremely important element highlighted in modern research.

The influence of poststructuralism on the labour process debate

The meeting of the labour process theory and poststructuralism, particularly Foucault's work, had many productive outcomes (Willmott, 1998; Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; O'Doherty & Willmott, 2001). The analyses are shifted to the level of discourse, while the attention in analyses of power relations is focused on the materiality of power that operates on the bodies of individuals. On the other hand, the difficulty of this paradigm is reflected in the fact that the relations between labour and capital are blurred to the benefit of de-centred subjectivity (Spencer, 2000; Tinker, 2002). Consequently, control is re-

duced to a disciplining function, and it follows therefrom that its primary function is to maintain the workers' consent to the existing order, rather than maintaining exploitation.

The deconstruction inherent in the poststructuralist analysis looks into the ways in which a managerial discourse privileges certain types of values such as *feasibility* and *effectiveness*, while excluding, marginalising or instrumentalising others. Unlike the conventional linguistics which takes words as conventional means to capture the phenomena they describe, Derridian deconstruction points out that any concept within the given system of differences depends on the arbitrarily imposed exclusion of meanings which, in some other constellations of relations, could be included. Hence the aim of deconstruction is to expose the ways in which certain knowledge depends upon the initial rhetorical step, which in itself is arbitrary (Mouffe, 1996). Pointing out to the partiality of language used to determine the various contents of a "descriptive ethics", for example, an ethical code which aims to establish the power of management as an objective "régime of truth" (Foucault, 1994), poststructuralism gives a serious blow to the "descriptive ethics" because it questions its coherence (Willmott, 1998). Hence normalisation emerges as an inevitable poststructuralist target (Foucault, 1991). The unshaken Weberian confidence in "facts" the authors challenge with questions of the production of facts and the value choices made during their identification. In like manner, poststructuralism challenges the economic analyses that celebrate the autonomy of the individual, as it puts emphasis on the *how* actions of the individual are formed and enabled by the help of superindividual forces. Even though the "régime of truth" is ideological by its content, this is not its essence. More importantly, it was a condition for establishing and developing capitalism, just as it operated in a similar way in the former socialist countries. The idea is not to emancipate truth from every system of power, because truth is power, but rather to detach truth from any form of hegemony. Its intention is to denounce totalitarian politics disguised into something progressive and liberal. Therefore, the aim of poststructuralism is subversion of closure and not to give new authoritarian recipes for solving ethical dilemmas (Norris, 1993; Derrida, 1994, 2001; Willmott, 1998; Tinker, 2002).

Is control a key issue in the labour process theory?

Managers are interested in control because it is necessary for profitable production in the sense of developing appropriate mechanisms for direction, supervision, evaluation, discipline and promotion. Workers are also keen on having control over their jobs because it allows them work allocation, intensity and reward. Still, is control a key issue in the

labour process theory? In other words, what do critics object to the labour process theory?

The focus of criticism by many authors from the field of industrial relations is targeted against the dichotomy of dominant management and subordinate labour, which means that the workplace should not be taken in the sense of zero-sum power (Buchanan, 1986; Harris, 1987), while one cannot neglect the existence of competitive interest groups within the management itself (Miller & O'Leary, 1987). Also, some authors claim that managers are viewed from a purely functional perspective, so that control is seen as just another way to convert the imperatives of the law of value into the strategies for labour exploitation (Bastone et al., 1984; Streek, 1987). In the research on the implementation of technological innovations, the authors often insist on co-operative relations with labour force and management's negotiated preferences (Rose & Jones, 1985; Campbell & Currie, 1987; Storey, 1985). The arguments, however, should be taken with some caution, because the fact remains that the computer based technology enables the development of technical control; so, for example, numerical control in engineering clearly reduces workers' job control, this in turn being the basis for an increased productivity. Research done by Thompson and Bannon (1985) in telecommunications has shown that even in the case when the computerisation within the communication systems have a predominantly technical purpose, it is also used as a means for a stronger control over job performance. Hence labour control is an important strategic factor.

Criticism comes from the Marxist positions as well. Morgan and Hooper (1987) believe that placing the emphasis on managerial control strategies in the late phase of the labour process theory debate results in the fact that the very focus of Braverman's analysis, i.e. capital, disappears from the analytical framework. As capital, in the first instance, deals with costs, accumulation and profit, managers will be primarily interested, in their search of the best ways to secure profit, in the outcomes of the labour process, rather than in labour control. On the other hand, the production process is only a part of a wider circuit of capital in which the extraction of surplus value is one element within its realisation, and as such cannot have a special status over other elements. Cohen (1987) objects to post-Braverman authors that they have lost clarity in relation to the nature of control. He reminds us that what the labour process makes a specifically capitalist process is the unity between production and valorisation – the determination of the value of goods. Marx and Braverman were concerned with the structuring of the labour process with the help of the logic of valorisation, and not of control. What Cohen fails, Thompson argues, is to interpret the nature of this logic. For Braverman, control is a key for of his analysis as he links the development of systematic management with the evolution of capitalist labour

process. However, as Spencer (2000) points out, twenty-five years on, the challenge is to rejuvenate the radicalism of labour process analysis.

Why are Labour Process Theory and Critical Accounting complementary disciplines?

In the criticism related to control issues, a major confusion came out, Thompson believes, because of mixing the goals of the company and managers, and the means of their realisation. Control is rarely important for goals, but is essential for means (Thompson, 1988: 234). The main difficulty of the intention aiming to theoretically base the concept of managerial control can be seen in the issue of how to overcome the conceptual leap from managerial control to capitalist production relations. Thompson believes that it is possible to usefully apply a structural analysis as it is not a determinist one, and as such can interpret many of the complexities of industrial behaviour. Many authors tend to prefer dialectics. Storey (1983, 1985) places institutions within totality and studies the contradictions within the structures and strategies at the workplace. Willmott (1990) wants to create a theory which could overcome the dual separation of the 'objective' and 'subjective' aspects of the labour process. Hyman (1987) is focused on the issues of co-ordination of various managerial interventions, actions and sites of decision making in capitalist production. What is essential for contemporary contributions, argues Thompson, is the understanding of management as a collective labour process. Here he directly turns to Braverman:

«Management has become administration, which is a labour process conducted for the purpose of control within the corporation, and conducted moreover as a labour process exactly analogous to the process of production, although it produces no product than the operation and coordination of the corporation» (Braverman, H., 1974: 267).

In modern corporation, management contains the same antagonistic relations as the production process as a whole. Major contributions in the field of study were made by the following authors: Teulings (1986) focuses on level differentiation; Hales (1988) focuses his analysis on the managerial division of labour, and is especially concerned with the vertical fractioning of working tasks and responsibilities. Armstrong (1987) holds that the divisions in managerial work should be understood as part of the struggle for control within capital. Although degradation do exist at lower level of managerial work, the analysis which views management as a labour process takes the risk, Armstrong draws an attention, to incorporate theoretically any non-productive activities, including accounting, which primarily concerned with the mechanisms of control linked to the realisation and growth of capital.

«Accounting rose to prominence through changes such as the rise of management accounting and cost control techniques in the 1920s. But it kept its power through the continued need for a 'financial rationality' as the common basis for co-ordination and control over managerial activities in complex, multidivisional organisations» (Thompson, 1988: 240).

Thompson's contribution lies in that he has offered an alternative to the existing labour process theory, which, as it tends to rely on the empirical evidence, often fails to see that a certain level of abstraction in relation to the dynamics of the capitalist labour process is essential for any research in the field, regardless of its methodology. Turning to the very 'classics', i.e. to Braverman and subsequent labour process writers, Thompson summarizes the basic postulates of Marxist analysis of the labour process: social relations in the labour process become a capital labour process at the moment when the capacity of labour is used as a means of production value. This relies on the capital's capacity to transform work power into labour for profitable production, that is, into the unique features of labour as commodity. Hence his core theory consists of four constitutive elements (Thompson, 1988: 242-44):

First, since the labour process generates surplus, and is a man's basic working experience, much as the reproduction of economy, the analysis should focus on the process of production as a whole, and not only on a single element of it. *Second*, the logic of capital constantly compels capital to transform the conditions and to reduce production costs. This results in two things: limiting the creative capabilities of workers and depriving them of the possibility to free themselves of hierarchy. *Third*, the imperative of control – Marx's understanding of transfer from formal to real subordination is useful and important as it highlights a continual need of capital to realize control in the context of pressures to radically change the labour process and thus secure the value. *Fourth*, just because the capital needs to continually change production process and the role of labour force, it should not exclusively rely on control and coercion; this would open up a space for workers' resistance and new forms of labour organisation in the sense of "workers' co-operation, productive powers, and consent".

Although Thompson sees class as something important for understanding the labour process, his problem is, according to Spencer (2000), that he offers no complementary interpretation of alienation or exploitation. Instead, in his subsequent writing, he focuses on individual perception of «misbehaviour» (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1995), which does not take into account the problematic position of the «collective worker» in capitalism.

On the theoretical-methodological level, the labour process debates avoid the analysis of connection between workplace organisation and capitalist social relations, and consequently do not observe the

interconnections between capitalist alienation and exploitation. This is a sure way, believes Spencer (2000) not to participate in the dialogue on the possibilities of transcending capitalist dominance on the practical-political level and, by neglecting the class dimension of the workers' resistance, represents a significant departure from Braverman's original intention. The final result of this viewpoint is that it contributes to the trend of excluding Marxist concepts from the debate on labour process, forgetting the fact that Marx was indeed the first philosopher who tackled power from the bottom up, from the aspect of the victim. The main difficulty of these approaches is that they attempt to separate the essence from the appearance, in which they give advantage to empirical contingency over historical specificity.

Instead of confining its analysis to the financial outcome of those who are immediately related to venture, the Marx theory of value enables us that we expand the field of analysis in order to define the alienating and appropriative social relations lying in the background of business enterprise.

The main difficulty in the field of accounting, Tinker (1985) emphasizes, come from the fact that the conventional accounting has no methods of detecting inequalities or exploitations that occur in transactions and also fails to adequately account for value added and value sacrificed, and it is exactly this that should be the main task of accounting. The alienation theory of values is focused on social alienation, which incorporates all forms of deprivation, alienation and estrangement, inherent to class society. He points out that inequalities in rights are structural in their nature, and can be used as basis to identify distinctive social systems.

Unlike the marginalist theory, in which the alternatives are 'pregiven' or 'subjectively determined', in emancipatory accounting, which Tinker advocates, alienation is defined 'objectively' in the concept of alienation accepted in capitalism, so that it precludes the social order which would be more egalitarian. Emancipatory accounting includes information systems capable of reorganising the alienation effects of capitalism, which is especially evident in the situations when the private and the public interests are opposed. The potentials of emancipatory accounting are primarily perceived in the fact that by being focused on the alienation effects of capitalism as totality, it reveals the methods in which corporations usurp social wealth beyond the constraints of lawful actions.

«A radical social accounting» challenges the neo-classical perspective of value and singles out the problematic nature of the context of its valuations, where the starting point for assessing the values of things is the market, rather than the essential value of those things for society. Counter-information systems – CISs, initiated by radical accounting – allow a take-off of the «social audit» and make legitimate the demands for openness and transparency posed by pressure groups to governments, the corporate

sector and the accounting profession. Such activities, Gallhofer and Haslam (2003) claim, show that the capture of social accounting by the companies, although stronger today than in the past, is not and cannot be complete. The radical orientation of Corporate Watch is directed against the repressive character of capitalist tendencies and institutions. On this issue, they write:

Our approach is to investigate, corporate structures and the system that supports them more broadly, rather than solely criticising the individual companies for bad behaviour. We are committed to ending the ecological and social destruction wrought by the corporate profit motive.

(Corporate Watch, 2002)

Radical accounting poses a challenge for conventional accounting, but also creates a space for defining an alternative political-ethical stance, which emerges in the form of «counter-radical» orientation. As opposed to radical accounting which has an emancipatory intention, counter-radical social accounting defies the radical changes and is directed at preservation and strengthening of the existing socio-political order. In this way, it provides the corporations with an alibi for manipulating the concept of social accounting, in the sense that they can take it as the means for establishing and strengthening their demand for social legitimacy (Hopwood, 1983; Burchell, 1985; Puxty, 1986; Gallhofer & Haslam, 2003).

Today, business organisations have penetrated into social accounting initiatives to such an extent that it is completely reasonable, as Gallhofer and Haslam claim, to consider the recent developments in social accounting as the corporatisation of social accounting, in parallel to the corporatisation of the state. The business organisations mobilise social accounting by trying to eliminate the effects of critical accounting and redirect its intention to their own purposes of public relations. They monitor and study their stakeholders, in order to gain the role of a privileged knower, which will provide them with further control, rather than giving them a voice. Hence, business social accounting leads to more repressive shifts and more conservative turns instead of emancipation.

It is these critically oriented authors who made a significant move to mobilize the public opinion in the struggle against neutrality in viewing accounting. It is obvious that accounting profession needs a reform in order to recognize once and again the primary accountability of the profession towards the public interest (Hendrickson, 2001; Brillhoff, 2001; Tinker, 2000, 2002). One of the key issues in debates regarding the need for liberation of the accounting profession from the role of an accomplice in corporate malpractices is definitely a phenomenon of disclosure. As we are dealing with utterly delicate issues, it is not surprising that researchers disagree regarding their function. For Cooper (1988) more important than to try to improve the corporate accountability even through greater expansion of ac-

counting disclosures is to intensify the power of regulating bodies, such as courts and states. Others such as Macintosh (2002) argue that nowadays accounting information does not hide the truth; rather, truth no longer exists in the hyperreal world where the difference between the real and illusion has imploded. Munro (1998) shares Cooper's standing regarding the significance of institutions, but relying on Lyotard points out that both accounting and law are in their essence technologies of control. Moreover, what Munro mostly holds against modern debates is the refusal of their participants to recognize their own going back and forth between a "technology of ethical decision-making" and a "technology of procedural fairness"; that is between a "technology of community" in terms of Hegel as opposed to a "technology of will". For Munro (1999), the Selfness is always spread through technology, i.e. it is always «in» technology. A problem that is especially important is that knowledge no longer serves the Selfness as defined by Kant. In contemporary circumstances, the transmitters of knowledge are those who use it, which is performed by fixing the Selfness to the flows of information and assisting it to stay where it is. Hence: «... accountability is no longer 'outside', a matter of duty and obligation, or of good conduct in a dialogue between the 'I' and 'thou', but has become a matter, as well, of our endlessly having to render 'decision-making' transparent» (Munro, 1998: 215). Far from eliminating the ethics, accounting is really a field that enables it and provides the reason for its survival. However, it is neither accounting nor ethics that could run the society by itself.

Change: under or beyond existing capitalist institutions?

The postmodernist return to the natural and the spontaneous, which stems from a reliance on Foucault, assumes the existence of the repressed human essence locked in a cage of Modern civility. Its liberation takes place in two forms – either through the help of cognitive reflection at the level of “gendered subjectivity” or through an individualistic focus on “existential subjectivity” (Tinker, 2002). What Tinker mostly objects to Foucault is that he does not seem to admit that identity and non-identity mutually constitute each other. Adorno does not fall into the trap, and his intention is to “use the strength of the subject to break through the deception of a constitutive sovereign identity” (Dews, 1986). What is necessary is “an interpretation-of-opposites” which retains a grain of truth in the both identities, while transcending them by forming a new identity in the process. It is this aspect of “negative dialectics” that is overlooked by postmodernists, which is, Tinker argues, the reason why difficulties are encountered in creating socially efficient political project. A compensation for this failure they find in epistemic rules, which continually perpetuate themselves in a dis-

course of undecidability. Economic and political adaptability of the postmodernist project comes from the fact that the authors reified risks, and by doing so they excluded historical and social roots which reproduce insecurity. By separating dialectics from cultural materialism, the postmodernist analysis has become self-limiting for a number of reasons. Firstly, anxiety and insecurity are treated as something unproblematic – this is summarised in a thesis that we need to learn to recognise insecurity as ultimate data (Knights, 1989). Secondly, although postmodernists call for a historically and institutionally formed analysis, free from “dualism” and the “totalitarian”, they really use these assumptions in their analyses. Thirdly, and consequently, political transcendence becomes their problem (Tinker, 2002). The radical critical tradition makes an important step ahead from “gestures of exclusion” by questioning the dialectic relationship between critical philosophy and political praxis, by and taking as the target of its criticism the exclusionary practices and institutions themselves. It is unquestionable that the analyses of alienation represent a basis for understanding the contradictions of late capitalism, showing at the same time a way to an alternative social order. Emancipatory accounting is an essential element of its practical realisation. For Tinker, praxis is a political activity informed by a cognizance of fissures in the social totality (historically specific contradictions of capitalism). In that sense, relying on Lukas and Gramsci, he points out that «Being» becomes «Reality»; where the latter is predicated on a pragmatic understanding of «The Real». In searching for the meaning of praxis which would announce the liberating opportunities of the new age, Tinker's plea for joint enterprise between social sciences and critical accounting, as in the theoretical analyses so in the practical engagement relating to the corporate practice and malpractice, seems to incite a distinctive type of writing on the wing of critical perspective: writing with purpose.

Towards new methods of struggle

The important thing emerging from the processes of globalisation is indeed global interdependence of the labour force in the informational economy. Castells, however, is not optimistic about these processes, while we believe that they open up a space not only for new forms of workers' resistance, but also for new methods of struggle. This certainly presupposes a much greater ability of the labour movement to adapt itself to a networking logic as a major source of social cohesion in the global capitalism (Munck 2000).

«The new global agenda talks about the need 'to make our voices heard for a new global social development, for democracy and human rights and for the improvement of workers' rights everywhere in the world' (SID Global Labour Summit 1997). International labour organisations will play a role in this discursive construction of the new reality, and

discursive construction of the new reality, and the Internet will probably be a privileged medium» (Munck, 2000: 391).

Global communication in cyberspace has placed social accounting on the World Wide Web. Counter-information systems-type activists, with the assistance of the opportunities provided by global and electronic communication technology, have moved their initiatives towards the global level, just as the corporations' efforts to transform these initiatives into the company image and thus take the political edge off them have also intensified on the global level. Environmental accounting represents an explicit example of the way in which the trans-national corporations manipulate social accounting, which has the aim of softening the social critique and legitimising business activities.

New technologies are used for implementing new political relations, which Webster (1999) calls «techno-communitarism», and they emerge as an alternative to the «notion of private society» from the era of neo-liberalism (Griffin, 2002). E-communications broaden the possibilities of building multiple and changing «cyber» identities and network relationships. The communication in on-line communities, through the use of textual signals, «emoticons», encourages the mobilisation of emotional energy towards a specific viewpoint, which is generally a part of broader processes of social construction. This dissemination of information, as Kavanagh (2002) believes, paves the way for «power to» relations as opposed to «power over» relations.

In this context, as Hosking (2002) suggests, it makes sense to ask whether the new ICTs create a space for constructing radically different people and worlds. This is an important question, particularly if applied to trade union work and activity. ICTs have a great potential for openness to multiple voices and facilitate the efforts for large-scale changes. Hence, their strength is in «making social realities», rather than finding out or sense-taking of a pre-existing reality (Hosking, 2002).

Conclusions

In this paper, the author challenges the instrumentalist perception of managerial control and emphasises the need to place this concept in the totality of social relations, meaning the context of the alienating effects of capitalist production. The processes of globalisation bring out to surface, on a daily basis, too many complex issues for any individual scientific discipline to be able to successfully deal with them. Hence this paper is an introduction into a multidisciplinary methodology, based on the belief that a joint enterprise between labour process theory and critical accounting can form a solid foundation for it due to several reasons.

A value-theoretic approach to research of the labour process improves the debate, both on conceptual and on political levels (Spencer, 2000). On the

theoretical-methodological level, the value theory represents a useful tool for different levels of analysing the phenomena which shape the developments within and around the labour process and create a space for interdisciplinary research within the critical perspective.

On a practical-political level, Braverman's clarifications that the connection between the logic of capital accumulation and the transformation of labour process is an indirect and varying one, and that the de-skilling of labour will be actualised only where conditions allow it to develop, create an opportunity for collective resistance to the degradation of labour. Thompson and Tinker created a theoretical and methodological framework that enables us not only to synthesise partial research efforts both within labour process theory and critical accounting but also to build a bridge between different theoretical disciplines within a critical theory.

Emancipatory change can only be placed in the context of the totality of social relations, because it is not possible without the collective resistance of the working class. For this reason, «the class must be studied as a whole, not an arbitrarily selected part of it» (Braverman, 1974: 26).

Braverman's project has human production as the ideal, in which the reconnection of mental and manual labour will occur, enabling production to be reconstituted as a process under the control of labour. The emancipation of labour is based on the transcendence of abstract labour and value, and hence the necessity to shift the focus of research from perceiving capitalist production as a simple labour process to the specifically capitalist process of valorisation.

As stressed by Gallhofer and Haslam (2003), social accounting assumes that the goal of business organisations goes beyond narrow and conventional focusing on profits and the increase of financial wealth. When evaluating business performance, social accounting involves the public at large and places the social benefit above that which is believed to represent the shareholders' interests. Emancipatory accounting, which is promoted by the radical critical orientation, incorporates a critical vision which goes beyond the instrumentalist reasoning characteristic of our era, and advocates the «social audit» of governments' and the corporate sector's work, because this will lead to a balanced relationship between humanity and nature. In other words, the goal of the critical holistic praxis is to transcend the alienating effects of capitalist social reproduction. Emancipatory accounting speaks on behalf of the repressed and disadvantaged groups, and brings to the fore things which are important to the community. It gives a voice to the poor.

In the context of the regionalisation of the world market and regional coordination of political relations, the class struggle is raised from the national to the international level, which means that it is justifiable to talk about a global class struggle and emanci-

patory possibilities of global workers' strategies. New strategies for trade union renewal bring to the fore the use of ICTs and the need for developing an «organising» culture within the trade union movement, particularly when one wants to encourage under-represented groups to join the trade unions. ICTs can be used as the tools for all kinds of trade union activities, which are equally used by union leaders and by lay representatives and activists. They will certainly reshape trade union democracy by enabling distributed action, and particularly distributed leadership and organisation.

Hogan and Greene (2002) emphasise that e-forms of trade union recruitment, organising, mobilising and campaigning offer the greatest potentials for supporting trade unionism in the 21st century. They provide a higher level of transparency through using «intelligent auditing» and «search functions», and reduce the distance between bureaucracy and the rank and file, which offers a challenge to dominant voices and the hierarchical leadership, thus restoring the credibility of collective action.

The electronically operated global capitalism can only be challenged by the organised labour networks aiming towards control over production process. Workers have nothing to lose but their misery. And they will get a whole world. The global solidarity among workers is based on the principles of reciprocity including mutual interchange, care, protection and support. Are we ready for the global integration?

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