

Chapter 1

What Is Autonomy?

Introduction

In this chapter I examine autonomy in terms of the theories developed by Harry Frankfurt and Gerald Dworkin. Their accounts dominate the literature about autonomy and help clarify the central problems that a theory of autonomy must address. I focus principally on Frankfurt's theory because he provides substantially more detail about autonomy. Dworkin does add some novel elements to Frankfurt's approach and it is these that I consider. After exploring Frankfurt's and Dworkin's theories I consider how their insights may be extended. I refer to the work of Charles Taylor who has important things to say about values, autonomy and the ability of persons to appraise things, including themselves.

The Frankfurt theory of autonomy

Detailing and appraising Frankfurt's theory of autonomy is not an easy undertaking as he revised and added to his theory over the years.⁵ It is recognised that his theory may be interpreted in different ways given the variety of elements that can be traced to what can be called his overall theory. To assess his contribution to understanding autonomy I aim to explore his account in a comprehensive way.

Frankfurt originally developed his theory of the will in response to the question of how best to understand autonomy. What most characterizes his theory is the notion that the will must be understood hierarchically. There are at least two orders of desires; first-order desires concern objects, like food or drink, although these desires need not take bodily objects, and higher order desires which take lower order desires as their objects. A first-order desire is a desire to execute or refrain from some action. A second-order desire endorses or repudiates a particular first-order desire. Second-order desires are formed when an agent reflects on which desires they want to approve and which they want to reject. The desire for a cigarette is a first-order desire; the desire not to desire cigarettes given a resolve not to smoke, is a higher-order desire.

The issues Frankfurt's account of autonomy must answer

A hierarchical account of autonomy such as Frankfurt's will have to deal with several interrelated problems. Identifying the possibility of a regress on Frankfurt's theory of autonomy, Gary Watson argued that an agent would identify with a desire

if it was one that flowed out of their valuational set.⁶ This means that a desire would be autonomous if it would lead the agent to perform an action that they valued doing. This is to be contrasted with those desires which would lead an agent to perform an action that they simply desired to do and whose performance they did not also value.

Watson outlines two ways in which desiring something and valuing something may differ. In the first example, after suffering an ignominious defeat a squash player wishes to smash his racquet into his opponent's face. He does not value injuring his opponent, but he desires this nonetheless; he desires it in spite of himself.⁷ Watson's second example shows that the distinction between wanting and valuing may apply to dispositional as well as occurrent desires that one has. Here a man has sexual desires that he regards as the work of the devil. He desires to engage in certain sexual practices, but he does not value them at all.⁸ In these examples non-valued desires are simply ones that one can find occurring within them. As Frankfurt writes, it would be a desire that just came over me, and which I would later repudiate as not being really mine.⁹

This is not an adequate answer because one may fully identify with a desire to do something that one does not think is valuable and if this is so, Watson's earlier claim, that to be autonomous a desire must be regarded as being valuable, must be mistaken. An example of one fully identifying with a desire that one does not believe to be valuable would be when I fully identify with my desire to drink beer with my friends rather than work on this thesis. I do not think that the desire that leads to this course of action is the best that I could have in the circumstances, nor do I think that it is especially valuable. It is just a desire that I have and which I recognise as being mine. Although this desire is not one that I consider to be valuable, both it and the actions of beer drinking that it leads to, are fully autonomous; they are fully my own.¹⁰

In order to avoid the regress it is necessary to specify the conditions under which an agent can develop autonomy from a set of desires that are not originally autonomous desires. In addition they must show how an individual initially becomes autonomous in relation to a desire. Why should one believe that it is the higher-order desires that are more indicative of what the agent really wants than their first-order desires? question Is endorsement sufficient reason to say that a person identifies with a desire? question Why should one assume that a person's second-order

desires are more indicative of what she really wants than her first-order desires question

For example, a housewife could have first-order desires to study information technology. However, she may have been socialised into the view that a woman's place is in the home, and so does not endorse these independence-orientated first-order desires that she experiences occasionally. Yet one may claim in this case the woman's second-order desires are less autonomous than her first-order desires, simply because they have been inculcated into her through socialisation, and so may be less indicative of her character than those unendorsed first-order desires that she experiences.¹¹

If the approach is that a person only identify with a desire if it is endorsed by a higher volition they will not definitely identify with any desire, for one could always ask of the highest-order volition in the sequence of volitions that endorsed it, whether they identified with it, or they must concede that Frankfurt's model is incomplete and that volitional endorsement is not sufficient for a person to identify with that desire.

Frankfurt's account should also be able to make a clear distinction between licitly and illicitly formed desires. Questions can be raised about whether a person is necessarily autonomous with respect to a desire because it stands in the correct structural relationship to an endorsing volition. However, a person may have implanted into someone else the desire to have an adulterous affair; a possibility that the person would otherwise never have considered. Furthermore not only could this person implant into their victim the desire to have an affair, but they could also implanted into them a volition that endorsed this implanted desire. This raises doubts that person who identify with their desires is not necessarily acting autonomously.

Foundation of Frankfurt's theory

Frankfurt's theory of autonomy is founded on the notion of a person. As a person one has desires, these involve things one would like to experience, attain, and achieve. As persons our desires are not just statements of what one wants. Often hand in hand with desires are the drives; the motivations for the desire to be achieved. Desires are things about which one can and does take personal positions and actions.

Frankfurt tells his reader that effective desires are necessary but do not provide sufficient conditions alone for being a person. The capacity to have first-order desires and even to make choices or deliberate about alternative options, are not things peculiar to persons. What differentiates the will of a person from that of a non-person is the ability to make evaluations concerning first-order desires, and change them. Persons not only have certain desires but desire to have certain desires. Furthermore, they want these desires to have motivating force and to be the source of their actions. They want the desires they desire to be their will. These special types of second-order desires Frankfurt calls, second-order volitions. A second-order volition is a desire, not only to have a first-order desire, but also to have that first-order desire move the agent to action. For Frankfurt, a second-order volition is indicative of a person's will. Accordingly, for Frankfurt a person's will is their effective first-order desire and they are autonomous to the extent that their will conforms to their second-order volitions.¹²

The challenge of wantons

Frankfurt foresees that a model using only first and second-order desires could face the problem of wantons. Wantons are beings that have first-order desires, and possibly even second-order desires, but do not possess second-order volitions.

He illustrates the distinction between wantons and persons by an example concerning drug addiction. Two persons are both driven by the desire to take a drug that they cannot resist. But there is an essential difference between them in terms of their will. One of the drug addicts, John, also has an additional desire that conflicts with his desire to take the drug, this is a desire to be rid of the drug addiction because he thinks that it is bad or enslaving. More specifically, John has a second-order volition involving taking the drug; he desires not to. However, the wanton would not consider whether or not they should want to comply with their strongest desires. What distinguishes the rational wanton from other rational agents is that they are not concerned with the desirability of their desires themselves. Not only do they pursue whatever course of action they most strongly are inclined to pursue, but they do not care which of the inclinations is the strongest. In addition to the problem of wantons, the absence of volition would leave no way to adjudicate between conflicting second-order desires. This is because an individual may have second-order desires while lacking second-order volitions. A wanton might

rationally consider which of their first-order desires are strongest in order to decide which desires to satisfy and how to satisfy them.

Identification and decisive identification

Frankfurt in his account of autonomy stresses the importance of identification. The notion of identification is used to distinguish between a person's own desires and those that are alien to them.

Frankfurt notes that there are two ways by which a person may identify with their desires. They may do so reflectively or without reflecting on them.¹³ To the extent that they identify with their desires without reflecting upon them they are merely a wanton with respect to them. If they reflect upon them, however, they will then be the desires with which a person identifies. For Frankfurt it is only persons not wantons who may be autonomous with respect to their desires and actions. Since this is so, then it is only to the extent that a person reflectively identifies their desires that they will be autonomous with respect to them. For Frankfurt the notion of identification is concerned with segregating the agent's desires into those which are internal to a person and those which are external.¹⁴ An involuntary spasm, for example, is considered external.

Frankfurt believes that it is possible to terminate the regress without cutting it off arbitrarily. When a person identifies himself decisively with one of his first-order desires, this commitment resounds throughout the potentially endless array of higher orders. Thus, according to Frankfurt, autonomy seems to be dependent upon resolute identification with a first-order desire.

The nature of Frankfurt's decisive identification can best be seen through an example. Lance is in a restaurant and while looking at the menu he realizes that he has a desire to eat a steak. When Lance comes to this realization he also begins to wonder whether he truly wants steak, or if he is merely about to act on a random first-order desire. To solve the problem Lance reflects on his desires for various types of food and he forms a second-order volition endorsing his first-order desire for steak. In other words, Lance started out merely wanting steak. Now he also wants to want steak, and he wants his desire for steak to move him to act. Regrettably, Lance finds himself unsatisfied; he begins to wonder whether his second-order volition is genuine. In order to guarantee his second-order volition, he might be inclined to form a third-order volition. Obviously, Lance can repeat this

exercise indefinitely, and a regress begins. It is at this point that decisive identification becomes important.

Frankfurt notes that persons do not actually go through such a process of forming legions of higher-order desires and volitions to guarantee their autonomy. Instead, persons form second-order volitions whose genuineness need not be questioned. In the example, Lance would not look for confirmation for his second-order volition; he would merely form a volition with which he decisively identifies. The decisiveness of the commitment he has made means that he has decided that no further question about his second-order volition, at any higher order, needs to be asked. It seems that Lance can eat his steak in peace because he will, at some point, become disinterested in rechecking the genuineness of his desire.

However, a setback appears when one considers the fact that persons are often indecisive. Frankfurt's requirement of wholehearted decisiveness seems to classify persons as non-autonomous whenever they confront a truly difficult decision. In fact, the strong decisiveness that Frankfurt speaks of is not commonly experienced outside relatively trivial cases of decision-making, and it would seem odd to classify a person as lacking in autonomy every time they make a momentous decision which leaves them with some concerns. Incidentally, I should make a distinction here between having concerns about the consequences of a decision and concerns about the decision itself. One may be wholehearted to have made a decision even if one has lingering worries about possible negative outcomes because of it.

Wholeheartedness is not compatible, however, with one being uncertain about whether one truly identifies with the decision. According to Frankfurt, this uncertainty would render many persons non-autonomous when they make some of the most important decisions in their lives, such as career choices. For instance, a person's desire to become a priest would be inconsistent with their desires to engage in other careers, such as journalism. Upon forming their second-order volition to become a priest, they must consider the possibility that their volitional endorsement is misplaced, and then it does not seem that their identification is, in fact, wholehearted. If they do not identify decisively with their desire to become a journalist then it might be concluded that they are simply non-autonomous with respect to their desire to be a professional journalist. But this conclusion appears unwarranted; the fact that they may still coherently question the genuineness of their desire does not seem to undermine their autonomy with respect to it.

Frankfurt's response to this supposition is that if a person has made a genuinely unreserved commitment to a particular answer that is their most reasonable alternative, they can anticipate that this view will be endlessly confirmed by accurate reviews of it. '...The fact that a commitment resounds endlessly is simply the fact that the commitment is decisive.'¹⁵ On this understanding of decisive commitment, their problem dissolves because they would decide to become a journalist every time they consider their career options. This definition of decisiveness is dependent, however, upon the subjective mental states of a person. Yet if a person's autonomy depends solely upon their subjective mental states, then it is possible that a person may be manipulated into having the appropriate mental state.

Caring about desires

For Frankfurt an essential quality of personhood is that persons are able to care about their desires and hence have second order-desires. You could have second-order desires without caring but this changes the nature of these desires; they are not volitions. An example about caring about one's desires follows. I may experience a first order desire to smoke. However, I do not want to be a smoker; I do not want to be subject to this desire. I do not want to smoke so I repudiate my first-order desire for nicotine at the second-order level. Yet even if I did want to have a particular first-order desire, this does not entail that I will identify with that desire for I may wish to experience the desire and yet not desire that it be effective in leading me to act. So I may wish to experience the first order desire for nicotine that my wife is subject to as she tries to quit smoking, in order to feel her pain in the belief that this increased empathy with her situation will lead me to become more sympathetic. However I do not wish to actually become a smoker; I do not wish for this desired first-order desire to be effective in action. So even if this desired first-order desire does lead me to smoke once I have acquired it, I will not have acted on a desire that I identified with, for even though I may have willingly inculcated its possession I did not willingly inculcate it with the purpose of acting upon it, and so it still remains external to me.¹⁶

For Frankfurt, the essential hallmark of personhood is that persons are able to care about their desires; they are able to have second-order desires. For example, I may have a desire to sing Karaoke at a local bar every night of the week. I do not wish, however, to be the sort of person who engages in such activities. I regard it as rather

undignified activity, and besides, it takes a lot of time away from my research. Whenever 8pm comes around each evening, however, I am beset by a desire to grab a microphone and belt out classic hits to a crowd of drunks at the local bar. Now, it is true that I want to perform Karaoke each night; I have a first-order desire to do this, however I also have a second-order desire; a desire about my desire to sing Karaoke. In this case, I do not want to have the desire to sing Karaoke every night; I do not want at the second-order to want at the first order to do this. So here one would say that although I am periodically afflicted by a desire to sing Karaoke I do not really want to do this. What I really want to do is work on my next book. In this case, then, my first-order desire is not endorsed by my second-order desire; it is somehow external to me and is not truly my own. So, I do not want my desire to sing Karaoke to be my will.

How does this involve autonomy question In order for my first-order desires to be autonomous they must be endorsed by my second-order desires. Thus, in order for my desire to sing Karaoke to be autonomous, I must want to want to sing Karaoke. For Frankfurt this in itself is, however, not yet the whole story of what it is to possess autonomous desires. This is because in order for my will to be free it is not enough that I want to want it, I must also want to want it and want it to be effective in leading me to act. The following example illustrates this further

Consider the case of a man whose girlfriend is trying to quit smoking cigarettes. Being a sympathetic person he decides that he wants to experience the craving for nicotine that she is subject to so that he will be able to sympathise with her more. Because of this, he wants to want to smoke in the same way that she does; he wants to experience similar cravings for nicotine. Part of his motivation stems from her occasionally yelling at him in her withdrawal-fuelled fits of rage that he doesn't know what it's like to experience the craving for nicotine that she is subject to. He does not want to smoke; however, he merely wishes to experience the craving for cigarettes that his girlfriend has. Thus, he just wants to want to smoke and he does not want this endorsed first-order want to actually lead him to act.

If this man did acquire the desire to smoke and actually did smoke, his will would not be free according to Frankfurt's account of autonomy, for he did not want that will. That is he did not want the desire to smoke to be effective in action.¹⁷ However if he had wanted to want to smoke, and had also wanted this desire to smoke to be effective in leading him to act, then his will, the desire to smoke that leads him to

smoke, would have been the will he wants. In this case, then, his will would have been free, because he would have acted on the will he wants; that is he would have acted on the desire that he wanted to be effective in action. Such a second-order desire for a first-order desire to be effective in action Frankfurt terms a second-order volition, and writes that if the first-order desire that leads one to act is endorsed by a second-order volition, then one identifies with it; it is one's own, autonomous desire.

What Frankfurt is endeavouring to distinguish are those desires that are really of the agent, (they are what the agent really wants) from those that just come over them; such as the sudden desire to swear at one's colleague which is a desire one does not wish to act on. What an agent really wants, then, simply indicates which of their desires are those that are truly theirs, rather than those that are alien to them, in the way that the sudden impulse of a neurotic compulsion may be alien.

Volitional necessity

Frankfurt contends that focusing on expanding the range of options from which persons can select misses an important fact about the relationship between freedom and necessity. According to Frankfurt, it is only by virtue of a certain sort of necessity that an individual can exercise the faculty of choice so that it represents an authentic expression of their own will. The 'extensive growth in the variety of a person's options may weaken his sense of his identity'. The reason for this is simple 'without a definitive set of goals, preferences, or other principle of choice a person's will lacks the kind of stability required for any given choice to be a genuine reflection of that will. Their will itself will be in flux, and they will be in a position to redesign their own will. If that happens no choice will be fully or wholeheartedly their own, however, and as such they 'are not volitionally equipped to make truly autonomous choices'.¹⁸

The idea here is that without a stable core of higher-order commitments by which an agent organises his lower-order desires, identifying with some and rejecting others, there is no truly autonomous volition. A person may still act after a certain fashion and pursue the objects of various desires as they come to the forefront of his mind. If this is the case, however, there is no long-term plan or organisation to their life. They become what Frankfurt describes as a wanton, buffeted by changing desires, driven from one object to another without an enduring self-conscious sense

of self. They lack unity; the unity of a life responding to reflective commitments to principles and ideals that guide, organise, and so provide meaning to their life.

Autonomy does not consist merely in the absence of options, such as outside compulsion, nor is it strictly advanced by an expansion of options. Rather, autonomy consists of having a life organised around central volitional commitments, which themselves are not subject to easy alteration, and further that these commitments themselves partially constitute that will. These commitments to persons, institutions, or other ideals provide the ground upon which real choices can be advanced, as opposed to choices that are a result of the mere giving in to various inclinations or desires. Unless a person makes choices within restrictions from which they cannot escape by merely choosing to do so, the notion of autonomy cannot get traction. For a morally responsible agent to be autonomous their will must itself be grounded in commitments which themselves are not subject to easy alteration. These commitments provide the core principles of choice by which all other choices are made and managed and as such represent the foundation for responsible action. The agent is an agent only by virtue of these commitments. Without them they would cease to be the person they are, and would lose the very core of their individuality. These commitments are what one most cares about.

This does not mean that an agent's core commitments are immutable and fully insulated from change. It is possible that in response to changing circumstances these commitments could grow or decline. If some of them were to weaken they might be overthrown by new commitments growing out of these changed circumstances. These changes will not proceed out of capriciousness, however, nor are these changes so comprehensive that they throw the agent's psychic structure into disarray.

For Frankfurt, choosing our autonomy by self-betrayal can be understood as a matter of violating entirely subjective criteria. These subjective criteria can be found in what one cares about most deeply.

Frankfurt sees self-betrayal as a central concept to autonomy. One betrays oneself when one does not act in accordance with what one cares about most centrally; which can be understood as what one cannot help caring about. In Frankfurt's view a person who fails to act in the ways that caring about their beloved requires fails to live in accordance with their ideal for themselves. In betraying the object of their love they therefore betray themselves as well.¹⁹

With volitional necessity, constraints that are not alien to the self do not impair one's autonomy since one is acting in accordance with a law that is one's own. He quotes Martin Luther as an example of the subjectivist aspect of autonomy. He sees Luther:

...trying to convey something about himself ... something like this that he could not help being driven by the considerations supporting his stand; that even when he attempted to give countervailing weight to considerations tending to lead to a different stand, he found it impossible to do so. That whatever the objective logical or moral value of the considerations that moved him, he experienced them as irresistible..²⁰

Frankfurt's point is that it becomes a volitional necessity because it is self-imposed. It is endorsed by the agent. In this endeavour a person may suppress or dissociate himself from whatever motives or desires he regards as inconsistent with the stability and effectiveness of his commitment.²¹ In this way Frankfurt sees autonomy in terms of cutting off options that make oneself subject to volitional necessity. Once certain options have been rendered volitionally necessary or impossible they are no longer matters of choice.

Volitional identity expresses something that is essential to a person in that without the volitional necessities to which he or she is subject, that person would be lost. Frankfurt's intuition here seems to be that there are some loves or cares that are so important to a person that to cease to care about them would represent a profound and identity threatening loss.

Frankfurt sees ceasing to care as a threat to autonomy. As Frankfurt writes, for us the value of loving is at least derived in part from the very fact that whether one loves is not up to us. The self-fulfilment and freedom that love provides depend upon the very necessity that love entails. The justification for the worth of caring is not something reducible to a judgement about what is good. The point he makes here is:

... love is volitional rather than affective or cognitive. That a person cares about or that he loves something has less to do with how things make him feel, or with his opinions about them, than with more or less stable motivational structures that shape his preferences and guide and limit his conduct.²²

If there is no volitional necessity it wouldn't be a good thing. In other words if one is plagued by ambivalence or lack of orientation, this does not necessarily mean that there is no truth about one's will. The lack of internal constraints is a threat to autonomy. Such a person will be accidentally and infinitely malleable and neither their present will nor the will that this person adopts can be said to be theirs.²³

Frankfurt introduces his discussion of volitional necessity with the example of a mother who has decided to give up her child for adoption thinking this decision is better for herself. However, when 'the moment arrives for actually giving up the child... she may find that she cannot go through with it—not because she has reconsidered the matter and changed her mind but because she simply cannot bring herself to give the child away'.²⁴ What is happening here is that she is coming up against the limits of her will. What Frankfurt wants us to see is that it is not a question of belief or even desire; she has not changed in her belief that it would be better for her to give up the child, and perhaps she still desires to some degree to be free of him; rather, she cannot will the action. This limitation grows out of some core commitment within her will. In this case, the child's good has become a central commitment for her. Thus, even though she may have the conscious belief that she ought to give up the child, she nonetheless finds herself incapable of doing so.

As the will acts, it must necessarily act on and in the light of beliefs about the world and itself. Nonetheless, what this example is designed to show is that the incapacity to give up the child is not the result of an all-things-considered prudential judgment but a volitional incapacity, through which the mother discovers something about herself; that she loves the child.

Accordingly, Frankfurt says she experiences this less as a defeat than as a liberation. Although (what one might call) her better judgment is defeated by her volitional incapacity to carry it through to its conclusions, nonetheless this incapacity is not an external imposition, but rather the means by which she comes to understand something important about herself. It is liberating precisely because it gives her real knowledge about what matters to her. It is not a defeat because it proceeds from her will; it is her true self breaking through, as it were. For a person in a situation like this woman's, this kind of necessity is unequivocally constitutive of her nature or essence as a volitional being.

Volitional necessity can involve demands of special concern. The person feels the deepest demands of special concern by virtue of the very structure of their will.

These loyalties rise up within the person in this example; they are not external impositions, but internal imperatives rising from their integration of her care for her child into their volitional nature. This is true autonomy, because her actions issue from the very deepest commitments of her will—from what makes her who she is.

Acting in response to these demands comes not from rational deliberation, but the deepest expression of an agent's will filtered through their understanding of what constitutes the best interests of what they love. Deliberation is finished; there is nothing more to be said. Luther's declaration here I stand and can do nothing else is right. It is the inescapable consequence of caring about what is constitutive of his volitional being—it is who he is. One can do nothing else because our will is determined and no other action would be an expression of who one is. To fail to do this would only be possible insofar as one give up the core of what one cares about, which would give up being who one is.

Cases where a person has to act or forbear from acting in a certain way because of volitional necessity do not mean that they are rendered unfree or non-autonomous with respect to their actions. Instead being constrained these ways can enhance rather than undermine the autonomy of the agent concerned. This is because the agent concerned is unwilling to oppose the necessity that they are bound by. Moreover their willingness is itself something which they are unwilling to alter, they will oppose any motivating forces within themselves that run counter to their commitment.²⁵

Frankfurt is clear that any such opposition is not to be understood as the agent making an effort to be unmoved by any forces which are counter to their volitionally necessitated commitment, as one may strenuously attempt to resist the temptation to abandon a course of action that one has already decided to pursue. This is because such attempts to resist temptation are voluntary.

For Frankfurt then, second-order volitional necessities that constrain our ability to want different desires to be our will don't detract from our freedom. Such necessities may be enabling, because in them lies the answer to the vexing question of how one is to live.

Frankfurt recognises that when a person acts out of love they may be acting solely in accord with their essential volitional nature, and will thereby be autonomous

with respect to their resulting actions. Here in arguing that a person may be autonomous when they are moved to act by love Frankfurt is also arguing that it is his own inherent nature. This is because what a person loves is a defining element of their volitional nature, it is an inescapable part of who they are, and thus is not a voluntary matter. Moreover, for Frankfurt what a person loves is not up to them, they do not choose to love A or B. On the contrary the person is captivated by the object of their love and because of this are not free to ignore the demands of love at will.

The only way in which concerns that come from volitional necessities can be moved from this course is for the agent to cease to love the object of that concern, and that is not within the bounds of rational choice. As Frankfurt notes one 'cannot help loving what one loves, nor can one make ourselves love by a mere act of will'.²⁶ The reason for this is that if one were able to reconstruct the nature of our will by merely choosing to do so, then our will would lack the stability necessary to make any particular configuration authentically ours. Unless there is some enduring ground from which our choices proceed as accurate reflections of what one cares about, the choices are nothing more than flights of fantasy; they are not choices at all. For a choice to be a real choice, it must proceed from principles of choosing or reflect values that are fixed to some degree. Otherwise, these choices are no different to passing fancies and certainly would not manifest anything important about the chooser.

Frankfurt's point is that many things one cares, about such as our families, have not arisen by choice. One has no choice over the family one is born into. What is being highlighted here is that one can repudiate what one has come to care about but this does not mean one originally accepted these things by choice. He sees the act of caring as a practical guide for a person. He argues that the satisfaction of higher order evaluations is achieved by caring about a person, project, ideal or our identity. He writes:

A person who cares about something is, as it were, invested in it. He identifies himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes something vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending on whether what he cares about is diminished or enhanced.²⁷

Satisfaction and identification

In his Presidential address to the American Philosophical Association Frankfurt recognised that 'there were problems with explaining the notion of identification in terms of decisions, and came to reject some deliberate attitude or belief or feeling or intention as the basis for a person to identify with a desire'.²⁸ In place of the notion of decisive identification Frankfurt argues that an agent will identify with those desires they are satisfied with. Here a person is satisfied with a desire if they have no active interest in removing it from their motivational set, or else rendering it ineffective in leading them to act. When an agent is satisfied, then 'as a sheer matter of fact he has no ambition for improvement; they accept the State of things as it is, without reservation and without any practical interest in how it compares with other possibilities'.²⁹

Frankfurt argues that where a person identifies with a desire, that desire is autonomous if it is endorsed by a higher-order desire with which the person is satisfied.³⁰ Here satisfaction is a matter of simply having no interest in making changes. In more specific terms, one might think of satisfaction in terms of competing desires. Initially, a person may have several competing desires but at some point, the individual will decide volitionally to endorse one of those desires. If the person is satisfied with their decision, then the competing desires will lose some of their motivational power. In this case, the person is satisfied, not only because they volitionally endorse their effective first-order desire, but also because they feel no inclination to reconsider their choice or the reasons that caused them to choose it.

Since satisfaction is simply a state of being disinterested in further investigation of one's desires, one simply will not question these desires. To be satisfied with a desire in this sense one need not make a decision concerning it, nor take any different attitude concerning it. Instead, one simply has no interest in trying to change one's motivation. Therefore, satisfaction leads to identification with a desire because the satisfied person accepts the desire as his or her own in a way that is intrinsically beyond question. Since the autonomy of one's desire does not depend on any further attitude or decision, there is no threat of regress. Furthermore, one's satisfaction with the desire confers authority on it.

This does not mean that it is the best desire that one could have, it is simply one that one sees as satisfactory.³¹ If one does alter one's higher-order desires to be in accord

with one's lower-order desires, and one is satisfied with this then those altered desires will be autonomous. If one is not satisfied with this change these pertinent desires will not be autonomous. For example, if one alters one's higher-order desire not to take drugs simply to gain some peace and stop struggling fruitlessly against one's first-order urges.

Frankfurt is not concerned with a person reflecting upon the acceptability of their desires on an individual basis and so does not address the question of whether a person should decide to challenge a particular desire or not. Instead his account is based on a model of reflection where persons consider whether they have any reason to be dissatisfied with their desires. Under the satisfaction criteria some influences on our desires can be allowed as long as they are consistent with our overall desire sets. This allows a person to maintain their autonomy even if some of their desires are affected by their culture and upbringing.

Frankfurt's position is that a person is satisfied with their desires unless they have reason to think otherwise with respect to any particular one. In other words they will be satisfied with their desires unless they see that there is a troubling degree of discord between them. Frankfurt holds that being satisfied occurs when one do not recognise discordant desires. Thus if a person is not moved to challenge any of their desires this is indicative of the fact no discordance has been discovered. They will thus be satisfied with their desires, and thus identify with them. The implication is that there will never be a situation where the person reflecting upon a desire is moved to challenge it.

A person being satisfied with their motivational state and thus the desires which constitute it, however, is not a matter of them taking any particular attitude towards it, rather it is a matter of them having no interest in changing things. If a person did have an interest in changing things, one could assume that there would also be an unacceptable discord within their psychic condition. However, it is possible that a person may be deceived into believing that there is no such discord within their psychic condition, even when they are actually subject to it. For example a person may deceive themselves into believing that they are satisfied with their job, and have no desire to change the way things are. It is also feasible that a person may be deceived by another into believing that they are satisfied with their psychic condition. Without this manipulation they would recognise that they are suffering

from discord between their desires and respond by repudiating that which they thought to be alien.

Frankfurt's response might be found in his claim that in order to be genuine a person's satisfaction with their psychic condition 'develops and prevails as an unmanaged consequence of the person's appreciation of his psychic condition'.³² Frankfurt here is referring to the agent's own attempts to manipulate or contrive their own satisfaction. The central requirement for this condition of satisfaction is that one is free from uneasiness about this identification and that one has no particular inclination to reconsider the identification. Frankfurt's point is that one does not need to engage in too much critical appraisal. One can be satisfied with the way things are, hence one don't want to change them. One can settle on a way to resolve internal conflict that works for us. Yet Frankfurt doesn't describe satisfaction as under a person's control, he says:

... One does not control our voluntary command, the spirits within our own vast deeps. One cannot be authors ourselves. One can be only what nature and life make us, that is not so readily up to us.³³

Manipulated desires, autonomous actions, and duress.

In this next section I explore the threat that manipulation poses to autonomy and how Frankfurt's theory responds to this threat. There are two ways in which one might understand manipulation noting a difference between its agential and nonagential forms. Agential manipulation is enacted on someone by another agent(s). Nonagential manipulation has no immediate controlling agent(s). Forms of nonagential manipulation might include such things as socialization, socioeconomic standing or cultural background. Frankfurt's approach commits him to the view that certain influences on our desires are perfectly licit. In order to deal with this predicament, he needs to offer us an explanation of manipulation that separates acceptable influences from ones that endanger or undermine autonomy.

Basing a model of the autonomy of desires solely upon an agent's motivational structure is open to problems of manipulation through which a person may have a first-order desire that is endorsed by a second-order volition, both of which have been implanted by an external agent.³⁴

For example, if Bill were hypnotised to have a desire to kill Ben, and also to have a second-order volition concerning that implanted first-order desire that is he wants

his desire to kill Ben to be effective in action, one would not wish to say that his desire to kill Ben was autonomous. Given that Frankfurt only has a structural view of autonomy, as opposed to an historical approach³⁵ in which one may take into account the way in which one acquired the desires in question, it seems he would be compelled to say that such an implanted desire was autonomous.

Desire-manipulation can occur via advertising that may manipulate persons into buying things (and wanting to want to buy things) for which they would otherwise have no desire. This may affect their subsequent ability to act autonomously.³⁶

It may be possible for someone else to inculcate into someone a certain desire and a decision to treat that desire as being reason-giving and also a feeling of satisfaction concerning that decision. Thus, this alien, inculcated desire will satisfy all the above conditions for being autonomous and it seems that one would not wish such alien desires to be considered autonomous.³⁷ For example, while sitting in my seat at the local cinema I am subjected to repeated images of delicious popcorn covered in lovely warm, fresh, salty butter. Such images have been designed by unscrupulous popcorn salespeople to instil in me a desire for buttered popcorn, and to make me decide to treat such a desire as being reason-giving when the interval comes around, and to be satisfied with this decision. When the interval comes, I go off to buy buttered popcorn from the foyer. Now, although this inculcated desire does meet the conditions for autonomy, it seems mistaken to claim that this desire for popcorn is truly autonomous.

John Christman argues that to be autonomous an agent's desire must have come about through a process of desire formation that the agent accepts.³⁸ Therefore a desire is not autonomous if it stems from certain illegitimate external influences, such as fierce conditioning or subliminal advertising.³⁹

Such external influences upon an agent's desires may be illegitimate in two ways. They are illegitimate if an agent would be moved to revise the desire if they were aware of its external origin. Also a desire is alien if the person's identification with it only occurred because of external influences.⁴⁰ Consider the case of actions performed under duress, such as those of a bank teller who is forced at gunpoint to hand over the cash from his safe. Here, a person's desires to submit to those threatening them may well fulfil all the criteria for autonomous desires outlined above. They regard their desire to submit as reason-giving; they have trained themselves to have this desire if they are ever faced with this situation. Yet, although

one may plausibly claim that the desire to submit is autonomous, one would not also want to say that their actions were also fully autonomous. One usually regards forcing someone to do something at gunpoint to be a violation of that person's autonomy. Acting on an autonomous desire then, may be necessary but not sufficient for autonomy.

What makes an action autonomous. It must flow from an autonomous desire, however this is not sufficient. What needs to be added? In cases of duress, an agent acts with diminished autonomy because their actions are those which they would have no reason to perform unless they were told to do so by a threatener. The threat of harm becomes the reason for the action. The teller may thus be seen to be acting on the desire to do whatever action the robber tells them to perform to avoid harm. Therefore these actions will be dictated by something external to the teller, in this case, the will of the robber. The teller might not have independent reason provided by their own motivational desires to give the robber the money in the safe. An agent's action will be autonomous to the degree that their action is motivated by an autonomous desire and the agent has an independent reason (provided by their motivational set) to perform that action.

In Frankfurt's model of autonomy one may see that there are different though related criteria for the autonomy of a person's desires and a person's actions. A person's desire is autonomous if they decide to treat that desire as giving them a reason to act, and if they are satisfied with this decision. Moreover, this desire and their subsequent satisfaction with it and decisions concerning it must not have been inculcated into the agent through any illegitimate external interference with their motivational set. A person's action, however, is not necessarily autonomous to the same degree as the desire from which it was performed, the autonomy of a person's action will also depend upon whether or not they had an independent reason to perform it.

Coherence for autonomy

Lack of coherence may also pose a threat to autonomy. How might this occur? Managing a conflict of desires in autonomy may not just involve ranking and evaluating preferences. Within the hierarchical theory of autonomy there is the possibility of a more serious kind of conflict at the level of volition. Conflicts between volitions may involve volitions that have objects that are mutually unsatisfiable for contingent reasons. A person may have many first-order desires

which are contingently in competition, yet identify with all of them. If that is so, then ranking the contending first-order desires may be needed.

Second-order volitions can also conflict by being inconsistent. Inconsistent volitions are a pair of second-order desires with the same object. An agent who has inconsistent volitions has a second-order desire to be moved by the desire to x and a second-order desire not to be moved by the desire to x. Stated in terms of attitudes of approval and disapproval, the agent both approves and disapproves of the desire to x. When one has inconsistent second order volitions one's self can be seen as being in conflict. Such conflicts make self-direction impossible, for there is no coherent self to do the directing relative to the conflicting desires. No action will be expressive of what the person really wants to do.

Frankfurt is aware of the threat that unresolved intra-personal conflicts pose to autonomy. Thus he insists that a desire is authentic only if one's identification with it is decisive and wholehearted, by which he means that one's identification with it is made in the absence of any present or anticipated conflict with respect to that desire. One cannot be simultaneously ambivalent toward and wholeheartedly identifying with a particular desire. Thus Frankfurt describes ambivalence as a lack of coherence within the realm of the person's higher-order volitions themselves and claims that this is a question of whether the highest-order preferences concerning some volitional issue are wholehearted.⁴¹

Frankfurt recognises that inner conflict may threaten one's autonomy. He considers the problem of deciding whether or not one is in conflict. Is there anything that will stop one's side of one's conflict such as one's strongest desire from winning? The answer he gives is that one cares about the outcome. In order to resolve the conflicts between inherently opposed first-order desires, one must take sides in favour of one of the desires, sometimes through an act of decisive identification. Frankfurt rejects the idea that this involves judging the quality of one of the desires. Second-order volitions express evaluations only in the sense that they are preferences. There is no essential restriction on the kind of basis, if any, upon which they are formed.⁴²

What is in focus here is that one cares about whether a particular desire will be effective in action. For Frankfurt caring about this cannot be reduced to a judgement about the goodness of being motivated in the relevant way. Rather it is a matter of being constituted so that the failure of that desire to win the conflict would amount to a loss for oneself.

Decisive identification with a desire, however, does not necessarily eliminate the conflict. Yet it ceases to be a conflict within oneself for the conflict can now be described as being one between ‘...what the person really wants and other desires that are external to the volitional complex with which the person identifies and by which he wants his behaviour to be determined’.⁴³ What this means is that though one may find oneself continuing to have conflicting desires one is no longer torn, divided or confused, for now one’s wholeheartedness is compatible with having desires with which one must struggle. What it is incompatible with is being divided as to what one wants the outcome of this inner struggle to be.

Frankfurt argues that to show a lack of volitional coherence and unity of wholeheartedness is to be afflicted and impaired in one’s agency. Although volitional incoherence need not paralyse one, it diminishes one’s ability to act in accordance with second-order volitions to do what one really wants and thus it ultimately diminishes one’s ability to be autonomous. Frankfurt discusses volitional incoherence as a threat to the self in two ways. In ambivalence one is torn between committing oneself or not committing oneself to a given person, project, or ideal. There is also the paralysing disorientation of being pulled in so many different directions that one does not know what one wants. Both forms of volitional incoherence undermine one’s autonomy, but in different ways.

In the case of ambivalence the agent is seriously divided regarding internal conflict. Ambivalence is problematic because, even if one is able to act one will not be doing what one really wants to do because one’s ambivalence stands in the way of there being a certain truth about one at all.⁴⁴ Frankfurt holds that one may resign oneself to one’s ambivalence. He has a valid concern that critical appraisal can become bogged down and block one’s capacity to decide and act.

Disorientation involves being unable to make use of one’s freedom of choice and opportunities, however limited, in an autonomous manner. Even when the external necessities that have constrained a person’s life are abolished that person may still lack volitional coherence to act in a way that can be seen as the way in which they want to act.

Frankfurt’s point here is that overcoming volitional incoherence provides a basis for self-governance by endorsing or identifying with certain elements which are then authoritative for the self. In actively resolving inner conflicts persons set principles for themselves which might be called self-chosen laws of autonomy.

As long as one remains divided, there is nothing within the self that commands authority. Only once volitional coherence is established is there a self to respect. Overcoming volitional incoherence is also a matter of authorizing certain desires so that when they govern, the agent is self-governing.

Dworkin's theory of autonomy

Much of Dworkin's theory is similar to Frankfurt's however there is one difference of special importance. Like Frankfurt, Dworkin has a hierarchical theory of autonomy, based on the notion of higher-order endorsement of lower-order desires. Dworkin, however, adds a component to his theory that Frankfurt's lacks. Frankfurt's view of autonomy is ahistorical in that his theory does not consider the formation of an agent's desires. Dworkin on the other hand, thinks that it is important to consider the method by which a person's desires are formed.

Like Frankfurt, Dworkin has changed his theory significantly over time, however, the more recent views of Dworkin are vague. Some elements of his theory can be clarified, he agrees with Frankfurt that an agent can be autonomous with respect to a lower-order desire only if the agent has an endorsing higher-order desire. Dworkin thinks that this, however, is a necessary, rather than sufficient, condition for autonomy. He writes that his theory '...may be characterized by the formula autonomy = authenticity + independence'.⁴⁵

As Dworkin defines them, authenticity is the hierarchical aspect, and independence is the historical aspect. Authenticity, at least in this context, is similar to Frankfurt's notion of identification. In order for a person to authentically hold a desire, they must approve and endorse their motives for the desire. Alternatively, someone can be autonomous with respect to a desire even when they are not aware of their motives as long as they would have approved of those motives under conditions of full information. Therefore, authenticity is dependent on the degree to which someone approves of their desire. Even so, Dworkin does not believe that authenticity alone is sufficient for autonomy; independence is also necessary. He claims that there are two types of independence: procedural and substantive. Procedural independence refers to the requirement that an agent's desires should be formed through an appropriate process, whereas substantive independence requires one to be free from commitments.

Dworkin explains that maintaining procedural independence involves identifying and avoiding the ways in which persons's reflective and critical faculties may be subverted. It involves recognising those influences such as hypnotic suggestion, manipulation, coercive persuasion, subliminal influence, and so forth, and doing so in a non ad hoc fashion.⁴⁶ Although Dworkin does not explicitly state how procedural independence can be judged, it is obvious that his goal is to address the problem of agential manipulation, or intentional control by an outside agent. One has strong intuitions that a person cannot be autonomous with respect to desires that were instilled or cultivated in the person by outside forces, and Dworkin proposes procedural independence in order to explain our intuitions. For example, imagine that Terry is invited by his friends to go camping in the forest. Terry's mother does not want him to go, so she tells him that there are evil ghosts in the forest who will attack him. Owing to his mother's manipulation, Terry forms a higher-order desire that repudiates his desire to join his friends. Terry lacks procedural independence because his mother has hindered his ability to rationally evaluate his desires. If Terry had formed his higher-order desire based on some reasonable assessment of the dangers of camping, for instance if he were allergic to tent canvas, then his desire would be procedurally independent.

Another requirement for autonomy, substantive independence consists in being free from all external influences or commitments. It appears that Dworkin's original intention for proposing this condition is to eliminate the influences of harmful non-agential manipulation.

Marilyn Friedman claims that '...clearly our highest level principles are as much the products of socialization as any of our lowest level motivations.'⁴⁷ Dworkin is attempting to address the concern that hierarchical theories of autonomy cannot account for the influence of society. To see how substantive independence is supposed to work, one can return to the example of Terry. This time, his mother does not tell him that there are ghosts in the forest, however Terry has been raised in a society that views camping as extremely unmanly. Terry still forms the higher-order desire to avoid camping, but now his reason is that he is afraid of humiliation if he ignores his prescribed gender role. Although no one has directly manipulated him, Terry lacks autonomy because he has a commitment to social norms that interfere with his rational evaluation. Although substantive independence does succeed in preventing non-agential manipulation, Dworkin recognizes a serious drawback. "The compassionate or loyal or moral man is one

whose actions are to some extent determined by the needs and predicaments of others. He is not independent or self-determining.⁴⁸ Dworkin's concern is that substantive independence may be impossibly demanding, as well as counterintuitive.

Dworkin asserts that what is crucial in the autonomous person is their second-order capacity to reflect critically on their first order preferences and aims and this person's capacity to accept or reject these aims and preferences in conformity with their higher order preferences and values.⁴⁹

Dworkin considers the case of a person who might succeed in identifying himself with motivations that he does not wish to have by changing his second-order desires. This change might be autonomous if it is due to the influence of higher-order values or is the result of the person's conflicting second-order preferences. The manipulations resulting in a modification of the second-order preferences and even the higher-order ones annul a person's capacity to see themselves as the result of the natural development of their personality in normal conditions of the world.

As Gerald Dworkin has pointed out, autonomy actually functions in various ways in our culture: as a moral ideal, a political ideal and a social ideal.⁵⁰ Failure to attend to these distinctions can lead to confusion. For example, as a moral ideal, one may be able to agree on the value and desirability of an individual choosing or accepting their own moral code, and, as a political ideal, and that the state refrain from imposing any particular view of the good life on its citizens, however it would be a mistake to think that persons can choose outside any and all influences. As Dworkin puts it, there is no 'unchosen chooser, no uninfluenced influencer'.⁵¹ To think otherwise is to confuse moral and political autonomy with social autonomy. Dworkin believes, that both Kant and Sartre made this mistake. One cannot, contra Sartre and Kant, be obligated to invent the law for ourselves, for this would disavow our nature as social (and genetic) beings who are at least partially determined by these factors.

Conclusions

In this section I reach some conclusions about the contributions to understanding autonomy made by Frankfurt and Dworkin. I start by identifying the weaknesses and strengths of their approaches.

Frankfurt's notion of wholeheartedness does not seem adequate for self correction. Why would one reach this conclusion? In order to follow Frankfurt's principle of wholeheartedness and thus avoid not only frustration but also self-betrayal, the reflecting agent needs some way of telling when they have been successful in terms of their wholeheartedness. A judgement process is needed. Frankfurt thinks this is unnecessary because within the framework he has developed, the demand that one's actions should make sense in more than a volitional sense would generate a regress because then one is supposed to be monitoring our monitoring and making sense of our attempts to make sense, and where does this end?

Consequently how can one distinguish between being autonomous and thinking that one is autonomous? Intelligibility cannot be reduced to volitional coherence. For agents' actions to make sense to them, they must have some further understanding of what they are doing and why they are doing it. Even when one is perfectly wholehearted about one's pursuits, the question may arise as to why those pursuits are considered so important?

The intuition driving a demand for more is based on the idea that an agent who is unable to understand the worth or significance of what they care about could easily end up caring about something that they would later reject if asked deeper questions. Just pointing to the structure of our history for our commitments doesn't explain why the grounds for one's actions are endorsed or rejected. One is left with no justification and no understanding of the significance of choice on an ongoing basis.

Frankfurt does not use critical reflection in his approach, his discussion of reflection by satisfaction and wholeheartedness suggests that the access one has to our inclinations and aversions is introspective in what seems to be a direct way; not so much mediated by language, or by interpretation. This approach underestimates the complexities of how one relates to ourselves and our inner-life. The object of self-understanding is not given as an object of direct introspection. It is not always obvious to oneself who one is or what one wants or how one feels. Finding the answers to the questions one faces by virtue of being autonomous, often involves a struggle to find an appropriate way of articulating or formulating answers to those questions.

For Frankfurt, when a person decides to identify with a desire their decision is based upon an attempt to integrate their desires into a coherent whole.⁵² Thus, one will decisively identify with a desire if, to the best of one's current knowledge, it is part of

one's own motivational set.⁵³ Frankfurt seems to believe this approach will overcome the problem of regress because his account does not depend upon a hierarchy of desires conferring autonomy upon each other. It solves the problem of authority of desires for the same reason; the second-order desire has more authority because the agent decides to identify with it, with this decision being guided by the current structure of that motivational set that one recognises as one's own. If an agent does decide to alter his higher-order desires so that they are in accord with his lower-order desires this will not reduce his autonomy. Instead it will be the higher-order desires that do not fit with the motivational set (ie the lower-order desires) that they recognise as their own. Thus, unchanged higher-order desires would have been the outlaws. Frankfurt also holds that since the act of identification is something that the agent himself does, it is not vulnerable to manipulation.⁵⁴

Velleman states that such an appeal to decisions will not work. This is because decisions may also be subject to externality in the same way that desires are, and so cannot be the hallmark of what it is to be autonomous. Thus, if one regards alien desires such as a person's neurotic desire to wash their hands all the time, as not being neither autonomous, or leading to autonomous actions because they are external to the agent, so too must one allow that desires that one endorses through a decision that is similarly alien will be similarly non-autonomous. This is because an agent may make unwitting decisions and will therefore be external to them, the agent is not actively making them, and so they are not theirs in Frankfurt's sense. The desires and subsequent actions that they endorse will be non-autonomous.⁵⁵

To illustrate this, Velleman gives an example of a person who raises his voice in anger to a friend, and is later puzzled and regretful that he did this. This person comes to realise that past grievances had crystallized into a decision to sever the friendship. At the time of action, however, this decision to sever the friendship was unwitting; it just occurred within them, just as an alien desire may occur within somebody. Thus, when I shout at someone when I lose my temper, I may apologise by saying that I don't know what came over me. Here, I will claim that my desire to shout is not really mine it isn't one that I endorse, or identify with. Instead it is just a desire that occurs within me, and which I am subject to. Since the agent in Velleman's example doesn't identify with the decision to sever the friendship, they neither identify with the desire to sever the friendship, nor with the actions that result from it.⁵⁶

Bratman's view is that a desire is autonomous if one has decided to identify with that desire, and if one is satisfied with that identification.⁵⁷ Bratman claims this is superior to Frankfurt's satisfaction account of autonomy, in which a desire is autonomous if an agent is not moved to alter it. This is because, as Bratman notes, a person may have no interest in altering their desire because the agent has not yet come to a conclusion concerning whether or not the desire is theirs, and therefore autonomous. This means that even-though a person is not moved to change things with respect to that desire this does not necessarily mean that such a desire should be seen to be autonomous, for they may still be thinking about whether or not they should accept the desire as theirs. To settle the question of whether or not a desire is autonomous, a person's reflections upon that desire need to reach closure; they need to reach a decision concerning that desire and this decision must be one with which the person is satisfied. In deciding whether or not a certain desire is autonomous, Bratman argues that one will be deciding whether or not to treat it as giving one a reason to act. Thus, if I treat my desire to buy Turkish Delight as a reason to buy some, then my desire is autonomous. If on the other hand, I do not treat my desire for Turkish Delight as a reason to buy it the desire will not be autonomous. For example I may realise that I only have this desire because of my addiction to chocolate, which I am trying to quit. Of course, a desire will only give one a reason to act if it conforms to the criteria that the agent normally invokes when considering whether or not to accept something as reason-giving.⁵⁸ So one will treat a desire as being reason-giving in the relevant sense if one is satisfied with doing so; that is to say, if one has no interest in rejecting such a desire.

For Frankfurt what is essential to persons is the capacity to identify themselves with, or refrain from identifying themselves with, their tendencies to be moved in one way or another. These reflective attitudes of identification or of withholding are often based on evaluations of desirability, however they need not be. A person may identify himself with, or withhold himself from, a certain desire or motivation for reasons that are unrelated to any such assessment, or for no reason at all.⁵⁹ Since I may identify with desires of which I do not approve, identification does not entail endorsement. Since I may identify with desires that I consider to be quite trivial, such as the desire to have some ice cream, identifying does not entail caring. Perhaps it is more or less true, as Watson observes, that 'what Frankfurt has in mind in cases of volitional struggle is the endeavour to go against what one cares about'.⁶⁰ This may be true but not because a person's identification and caring are linked. This

could occur because persons ordinarily have no reason or motive to struggle except in cases where there is something at stake that they care about.⁶¹

One can identify with the implications of Frankfurt's approach to satisfaction by looking at the steps in the process. At time t_1 , a person forms a second-order volition endorsing one of their first-order desires. Then, at time t_2 , this person becomes satisfied with their volition. So the desire is not autonomous when it is first endorsed only later when the agent is satisfied with their volition.

As there is no theoretical reason to assume that t_1 and t_2 could not be separated by periods as long as years, this notion of retroactive autonomy conflicts powerfully with our normal intuitions. Frankfurt could attempt to respond to this objection by stating that since satisfaction is not an intentional action, it can appear simultaneously with the second-order volition. For this to be so one would need to show that satisfaction always occurs simultaneously with a person's volition and this claim seems almost certainly false. If satisfaction does occur simultaneously with all second-order volitions, apathy would insulate all of an agent's volitions from scrutiny. Of course, if persons cannot examine their volitions, then they cannot distinguish the licit from the illicit ones, even if they do have criteria for making such a classification.

Frankfurt eventually states that in the development of his theory identification that he is more concerned with confidence than truth. This involves persons believing that the things they value are in fact valuable, even if only to themselves. Such a belief however need not be explicit or even noticeable to them.

If the person is satisfied with their second-order volition, then they are autonomous with respect to it. In this way autonomous governance can be understood in terms of intentions and endorsements of desires. Agents create their volitional identity through the constant practices of endorsement, prioritizing and rejection. Yet how are agents supposed to guide themselves? Do commitments need to be submitted to critical examination before they can serve as a basis for autonomous action?

Frankfurt's standard of not betraying oneself seems to be mandatory. If one has a strong volitional identity then self-betrayal is not an option. Yet how can one change without betraying oneself? Frankfurt allows that volitional identity can change without self-betrayal, yet the problem is how does one distinguish between a self-transformation and self-betrayal. Frankfurt seems to have no way of accounting

for courses of action that are more extended and for which it is impossible to say whether they constitute self-betrayal except in terms of a more extensive stretch of time. Frankfurt could try to build the idea of continuity into the definition of volitional identity by saying that if a person vacillates wildly on what he cares for; he does not wholeheartedly care about any of them. The last claim represents a departure from the approach to identity based on volitional necessity. Instead of an approach based on what one cannot help doing, one has a much more complex account of volitional identity; one that must crucially rely on substantive notions of how much persons may change without betraying themselves.

If volitional identity makes it impossible to betray oneself over time, only at a given moment then this approach cannot explain what is problematic about radical shifts in identity. Alternatively, volitional identity is supposed to constrain what one can come to care about in the future as well so that I wholeheartedly care about something only if I can never stop caring about it. As a result all changes of commitments seem to constitute self-betrayal. At which point is self-betrayal something to be avoided?

Frankfurt's view doesn't give persons much capacity to change volitional coherence; they either have it or they don't. He seems to suggest that one needs to accept the limits of our volitional character, however if one accepts that autonomy is largely a matter of small acts of shaping oneself can one be satisfied with that? Perhaps one can become satisfied with accepting what is out of our hands. What if this is premature and is more like adaptive preference formation, like what has been termed sour grapes?

Despite his efforts in the revision of his thesis, Frankfurt's approach still does not seem to be critical enough; it seems too arbitrary. One's perception is that it does not seem to exclude cases of heteronomy, the happy slave, the arbitrary tyrant, and so on. This seems like a major oversight. Frankfurt does not see that it is necessary to bring normative considerations into an analysis of autonomy. He insists that the volition coherence required for self-determination can take a variety of forms that are not always rational ones.

Frankfurt does not provide a good account of how persons can determine whether, in taking a new direction, they are undergoing transformation or betraying themselves. Frankfurt's approach does not offer much explanation about how to understand one's actions. Wholeheartedness of actions is not sufficient. It is

important to try to make sense of what one is doing. To fail to do so is to acquiesce to being driven by forces that one does not understand.

Having considered some of the main weaknesses of Frankfurt's account I will now consider the main strengths of his theory.

Frankfurt's approach, that volitional necessity not evaluative standards provides the warrant for one's autonomous choices, does have some merit. He suggests that if pushed too far many of the claims about the need for rational reflection jeopardize the possibility of there being something to which one must be true.

There are situations where one can and does act from rational deliberation, yet Frankfurt's point is that the deepest expression of an agent's will, filtered through their understanding of what constitutes their best interests, does not come by this means, for example of what they love.

Volitional necessity may seem like a kind of compulsion, but this can be a valid and effective way of acting and it may be an expression of autonomy. The caveat here is that it may not always be. Nevertheless this is an original and important insight provided by Frankfurt.

Frankfurt's concern that rational reflection could become endless is not without substance. He is correct that the exercise of reason to achieve autonomy has been widely discussed with the assumption that it can solve most of what is considered as the problems of self-direction and self-evaluation. In a practical sense it would be burdensome to meet the criteria of rational reflection and appraisal that are raised as requirements in order for a person to be autonomous; few persons might count as being autonomous if these criteria are strictly applied.

One can also appreciate that one could have lower and higher desires as Frankfurt identifies. While the weakness of this distinction has been widely identified it does not mean that it is without value. The notion of desire is an important concept. Desires are fundamental to personal expression. Persons do seek fulfilment of their desires and can focus their lives accordingly. The notion of desire is a fundamental ground to autonomy, particularly as it has been referred to in discussions about desires that are one's own, and are not alien desires.

Frankfurt's focus on the less cognitive components of decision making such as the exercise of care, are also admirable. Care can allow us to put what matters to us into

action; it is important that what one comes to care about is considered in autonomy. Another problem not adequately considered in writings about autonomy is motivation.

Care does help explain why someone would be motivated to be autonomous. Frankfurt is right to identify the power of what one cares about. Cares can motivate us to undertake ongoing actions to achieve what is important to us. Indeed, they may also be quite individuating by personally defining and clarifying what matters to us against the contexts and environments that do not necessarily support what one cares about. Cares give us a reason to be autonomous rather than to acquiesce and to be swept along by others.

Culture and autonomy

One of Dworkin's insights is the importance of culture. When persons gradually and experimentally form their conceptions of a good life, what they are doing, to a very large extent, is deciding which social traditions they should participate in. This decision may be taken from the inside of the traditions to which they belong, or from the outside by considering other traditions that appeal, repel, bore or interest them. The decisions may be conscious, deliberate, *clear-cut* yes-or-no choices, they may be ways of unconsciously, unreflectively falling in with familiar patterns, or they may be at varying points in between. The bulk of the activities of persons concerned with living in ways that strike them as good is composed of participation in the various traditions of their society. As they participate in them, they exercise their autonomy. They make choices and judgments; their wills are engaged; they learn from the past and plan for the future. However they do so within the frameworks of various traditions which authoritatively provide them with the relevant choices, with the matters that are left to their judgments, and with standards that within a tradition determine what choices and judgments are good or bad, reasonable or unreasonable. Their exercise of autonomy is the individual aspect of their conformity to their tradition's authority, which is the social aspect of what they are doing. They act autonomously by following the authoritative patterns of the traditions to which they feel allegiance. When a violinist gives a concert, a student graduates, a judge sentences a criminal, then the individual and the social; the autonomous and the authoritative; the traditional pattern of doing things and a particular person's way of doing them are inextricably mixed. To understand what is going on in terms of individual autonomy is as one-sided as it is to do so in terms of

social authority. Both play an essential role, and understanding what is going on requires an understanding of both the roles they play and what makes them essential.

The response needed is to have and maintain political arrangements that foster the participation of persons in the various traditions that have historically endured in their society.

Dworkin does not discuss who should decide which tradition is valued and how a decision should be made. The answer conservatives give is that the decision should be made by those who are legitimately empowered to do so through the political process of their society and they should make the decisions by reflecting on the historical record of the tradition in question.

Dworkin also reminds us that autonomy can involve the acceptance of some form of social authority. If this were not so, no military or devoutly religious life, that is, no life that involves the subordination of the individual's will and judgment to what is regarded as a higher purpose, could be good.

If a good society is one that fosters the good lives of the persons who live in it, then giving precedence to autonomy over authority is not necessarily right, since autonomous lives may be bad. If the will and judgment of persons takes precedence over the social authority leaves it open as to whether the resulting lives will be sufficiently satisfying personally or beneficial for others in order to be good. Autonomous lives may be frustrating and harmful. There are times when it may be legitimate that social authority prevails over the individual's autonomy. Fanatics and criminals are not given free reign in the name of autonomy if a society is sincerely dedicated to fostering good lives for the many.

The problem of letting social authority override individual autonomy are no less serious. What is the reason for thinking that if social authority prevails over individual autonomy, the resulting lives will be good? Lives cannot just be pronounced good by some social authority. They must actually be satisfying and beneficial, and must ultimately be judged by the individual whose will is unavoidably engaged in causing and enjoying the satisfactions and the benefits. Of course their will and judgment may be influenced by the prescriptions of a social authority.

Dworkin also pushes strongly that autonomy must remain fairly thin to protect agents from various forms of disrespect, including unwarranted paternalistic intervention. This also has some merit. Actions taken in the name of autonomy can be disrespectful to persons.

Overall Dworkin's attempt to extend Frankfurt's theory is not very successful. This view is dependent, however, on one's expectations about what Dworkin was trying to achieve. Perhaps his aim was not to solve the problems and criticisms that hierarchical theories such as Frankfurt encounters but to identify the many important issues that an account of autonomy needs to face. His approach does not seem to be about providing detailed answers for these issues. Judged from this perspective Dworkin does raise many valuable points.

Extending Frankfurt's and Dworkin's insights into autonomy

Frankfurt's theory of autonomy could be extended by a more analytical approach regarding how one's self-understanding interacts with one's personal projects and ideals. The work of Charles Taylor can assist here. Taylor's approach demonstrates that the process of self-transformation is important for personal autonomy. In addition greater clarity is also needed over how one responds to error and how self-correction operates regarding autonomy.

The Taylor approach to autonomy

In contrast to Frankfurt's volitionist approach Taylor develops a view of autonomy as an ongoing interpretive achievement. He sees self-determination as requiring an ability to understand from one's responses to situations what is of genuine importance.

Taylor's concept of autonomy considers the ways in which a person find themselves moved to respond to certain situations. These responses can be considered as the points from which self-interpretation starts but they are also already interpretations. This is not meant to imply that overt behaviour is always involved since a feeling of shame itself may, in some cases, not be visible or expressed. Taylor's insight is that subjective states can be contextual. The situation that one includes in one's perception of events is part of the object of reflection. This is shown by the fact that revising one's understanding of the situation can alter one's feelings and desires and vice versa.

Charles Taylor speaks of deliberation as choosing our mode of life. To determine whether it is in a person to do so in the sense of realising or finding out is to examine the kind of life and kind of subject that this action properly belongs to. It is to reflect on the choices that lie before us in terms of who one is and who one wants to become. This type of reflection calls for strong evaluation.

Taylor's account of human agents is one in which the capacity to evaluate desires is bound up with our power of self-evaluation which in turn is an essential feature of the mode of agency one recognizes as human. To reflect on our desires according to worth, to evaluate some desires as desirable and others as undesirable is to engage in second order evaluations concerning the sort of person we take ourselves to be, or the sort person one desires to become. It involves:

...a kind of orientation. To know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what is not, and what is not what has meaning and importance for you and what is trivial and secondary.⁶²

These second order evaluations and desires place our moral identity at the heart of our character. Such evaluations find expression through language of evaluative contrasts that distinguish between different modes of life, courageous or cowardly, sloppy or rigorous, noble or base. The distinctions convey the qualitative worth of values for us, they convey our desires and underlie our motivations. To deepen one's character is to develop a richer language of evaluative distinctions. It is to define oneself more clearly in relation to different desires, and thereby be motivated in qualitatively different ways. Most importantly, deliberation of this sort leads us to interpret ourselves in light of these values, to determine the meaning and significance of what lies before us. To place emphasis on meaning and significance in this way is not to deny the importance of paying attention to whether one is reasoning soundly. Rather it is to say in this sort of reasoning criticism and critique is inextricably entwined. It is to say that getting our reasoning right is not only a matter of avoiding logical error, but of paying attention to interpretation.

Critical thinking involving our identity as strong evaluators and moral dispositions are both inseparable from our moral identity. Good critical thinkers can only be unreasonable thinkers when dispositions to think critically are segregated from their lives as persons.

Taylor shows that autonomous, practical reflection is a way of making sense of our responses to situations. What is essential to the self-corrective reflection of autonomous agents is that they critically examine these responses. But these responses are also the deeply personal basis for determining what has importance for a person. Without this self-understanding, the grounds for our actions will not be intelligible and this threatens to break the link between one's practical identity and the grounds of one's actions. For what is moving one then becomes something alien to oneself.

What does Taylor mean when he speaks of the meaning from the response to a situation? He refers to the way in which something can be important to a person's desires and hence they are not indifferent to it. The response to a situation is thus not something that is given in independence from the fact that one cares about it. Rather it is constituted by whatever it is, by virtue of the fact that one cares about what happens. Our response and the situation are interwoven.

Taylor doesn't say that one can simply determine subjectively what the importance of the situation is. This is partly because one cannot always control what one feels in a situation, and more importantly because one could never be sure that one is not mistaken about the import⁶³ of the situation. The response is also a property of the situation; something that one can see or fail to see.

One can discover from Taylor's point of view that successful self-understanding involves examining emotions that one has difficulty making sense of. In seeking to clarify one's response to a situation is partly a matter of grasping its import, one is trying to formulate, one's response as best one can. This is the case because language is necessary for the precision of one's thought. In this sense, having a language allows us to clarify our complex emotions and confused desires. Finding the right words serves to clarify one's feelings by identifying certain aspects of the situation as particularly salient.

What makes some self-descriptions more insightful than others often lies in how they evoke or disclose the relevant but overlooked aspects of what one is feeling. Without appropriate concepts, the possibilities for grasping one's responses are hampered. The language one uses plays a central role in our responses to situations.

Central to Taylor's argument for the practical character of self-interpretation is the idea that the process of one's actions is, in principle, never ending. Our identity is

deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it. Every interpretation is open to being corrected and also being developed and explicated further.

Interpreting one's commitments can be transformative. In trying to clarify what one's feelings and desires involve, one is trying to move out of a state of perplexity by finding a formulation that reveals what is salient about these feelings and desires. According to Taylor, the character of those feelings and desires is partly a matter of how they are interpreted; a change of interpretation often involves a change in what one is experiencing. The practical character of self-interpretation goes beyond knowledge of one's character, tendencies, abilities and dispositions. Such self-knowledge is, of course, quite relevant to practical reasoning. For example by knowing how good one is at something one can determine how one should act. He is also saying that the interpretive process by which self-understanding is achieved is one in which the self is transformed directly, at least with regard to relevant sorts of important experiences.

Taylor sees that we have responsibility for ourselves. Self-interpretation represents a context in which one becomes responsible for the way in which one's identity is being shaped or failing to be shaped. One can be held accountable for our acts and omissions regarding our ongoing self-interpretation.

It is crucial that the reinterpretation of oneself represents an improvement; that one arrives at a more insightful understanding of one's responses to the import of the situation one faces, and thereby oneself. Not only is one's sense of what is personally important bound up with one's interpretation, but one's interpretation can also have a distorting influence. It is because all formulations are potentially under suspicion of distorting their objects that one has to see them all as revisable and that one are forced back to the inarticulate limit from which they originate. From this view, the only way to be confident of the self-interpretation on which one's choices must be ultimately based, is to question, to examine the language in which those interpretations are formulated. Once one has begun to try to make sense of one's responses, one discovers that one can only continue by adopting a stance of openness that is part of the radical re- evaluation.

Under Taylor's approach autonomous agent's concern with, and capacity for, self-correction requires an active stance of openness to the ever present possibilities for developing a deeper self-understanding and a concomitantly clearer sense of

what is of genuine importance to them. Thus one can always ask if one ought to re-consider one's most basic evaluations? Have I really understood what is essential to my identity and have I truly determined what I sense to be the highest mode of life?

Taylor needs to explain how one decides when radical evaluation is appropriate. For example, if a person is trying to make better sense of his commitment to not losing his temper, this self inquiry will point beyond any single situation. Response to a situation highlights Taylor's insight that the subjective states that are at issue are contextual.

Autonomy requires the ability to guide one's commitments to projects, persons, and ideals in the light of their significance as it is disclosed in an ongoing transformative and interpretative process. What is essential to the self-corrective reflection of autonomous agents is that they critically examine these responses to situations, however these responses are also the deeply personal basis for determining what has importance for the agent as a unique individual.

Taylor focuses on the ways in which we find ourselves moved to respond to certain situations. For example, these responses are intended to capture the constellation of subjective states of a person that are evoked by a given situation and can include everything from a feeling of shame to a desire for revenge. These responses are the points from which self-interpretation starts, however they are also always interpretations.

Taylor believes that our identity places constraints on what kind of life it would be good for one to lead; constraints that one cannot simply dispose of. In a sense, our identity sets a standard that one cannot merely modify at whim, and hence introduces the possibility of us getting our choices wrong. Taylor thinks that these constraints governing significant personal choice must go beyond the volitional to include constraints of intelligibility and evaluation. There must be a sense in which these standards are not alien to the particular self whose interpretation they are to constrain.

Taylor argues that even with an understanding of the importance of something one is satisfied with this can be subject to criticism. There are grounds for disputing one's sense of what is personally important that go beyond the experience of internal conflict. A person can have a better or worse understanding of what is important to

them. According to Taylor's theory critical reflection contributes to autonomy by involving one in a process of improving one's grasp of what one sees as personally important rather than simply providing the opportunity to reject or endorse one's first-order desires. In one's responses to a situation one can mistakenly interpret the options available. Part of Taylor's argument is that mistakes in interpretation are tied to failing to perceive the true worth of a given way of leading one's life. Coming to see a project as trivial takes the form of the discovery of a feature of the project rather than the awareness of an inconsistency or a sense of inner conflict.

Taylor does not find a position such as Frankfurt's as adequate; that persons could determine what is significant either by decision or perhaps unwittingly by just feeling that way. The reason for this is that the constraints of intelligibility are part and parcel of the horizon of significance within which we always find ourselves and which we cannot simply construct ourselves.

Taylor argues that one must have a vocabulary of values from which to articulate what is meaningful about a given choice. As Taylor says, things take on importance against a background of intelligibility. For Taylor the possibility of making sense of one's individual responses to the world presupposes the availability of the appropriate linguistic resources. The availability of this language is not some optional extra but is rather an essential component of having an identity at all. Achieving, attaining sense is something that one does with language. It is with language one may answer questions of what to do with our lives and try to make sense of who we are.

Our identity, is defined by the way things have significance for us. The issue of our identity is worked out only through a language of interpretation that one has come to accept as a valid articulation of these issues.

For Taylor it is only through employing these terms that one can have any sense of what one is up to or who one is. By making ourselves intelligible in language to others we can question and clarify our identity and what we want. Central to Taylor's understanding of human agency and self-guidance is the concept of strong evaluation. Taylor's suggestion is that there is a difference between rejecting a desire to eat an éclair on the grounds that it would spoil one's dinner and rejecting a desire to eat an éclair on the grounds that it would be irresolute to give up on a diet even though both attitudes are at a higher order. Taylor calls the former mode of reflection weak evaluation and the later strong evaluation.⁶⁴

What separates strong from the weak evaluation is the relatively contingent character of the grounds of one's choices or actions. In weak evaluation what is primarily at issue is how to find a convenient way to resolve a conflict between two courses of action where the worth of the pursuit is not in question and it is impossible to do both. In strong evaluation, the rejected desire is not rejected because of some mere contingent or circumstantial conflict with another goal. Imagine a drug addict who has a second order desire to stop wanting another fix because their addiction conflicts with their other desires such as affording a comfortable apartment or composing great music. Although reflective, they are only evaluating weakly. In comparison the strongly evaluating addict finds their cravings base and contributing to their inability to take hold of their life. Furthermore the strong evaluating addict would still reject their desire for a fix even if they could feed her habit and still pay their rent and successfully follow other personal pursuits.

To make judgements of this kind Taylor argues that one needs to be able to employ qualitative distinctions as to the worth of certain desires and goals. Only by appealing to subject-transcending standards of what makes something cowardly or base rather than courageous or noble, does it become possible to understand our experiencing some desires and goals as deserving and to be endorsed while others are to be rejected.

Strong evaluations involve discriminations of right or wrong, better or worse; higher or lower and are not rendered valid by our own desires, inclinations, or choices, but rather stand independent of these and offer standards by which they can be judged.

Strong evaluation is primarily a matter of interpreting one's import-attributing responses in terms of a vocabulary of qualitative contrasts. Insofar as one is a reflective agent in Taylor's sense, one will be concerned with the re-evaluation of the grounds of one's actions, thus the mere application of standards never presupposes the finality of any substantive values, as may sometimes be implied.

A strong evaluator is an agent whose practical reflection is geared toward ensuring that one's practical identity and the grounds of one's actions stand in the proper relationship. The category of strong evaluator is also the category that has degrees. This includes those who are to some degree capable of reflecting interpretively on the grounds of their actions and on their responses to a situation.

The strong evaluator can ask themselves whether they have got it right. (They are not able to make sense of the import that their responses attribute to the situation as long as they think that they have not correctly grasped that import.) Since this process of reinterpretation and re-evaluation also concerns the question of whether or not one is on track, it can be thought of as a matter of self-correction. As a strong evaluator one is oriented toward avoiding errors regarding the import of a situation.

While Taylor's approach has merit it doesn't provide a complete account of what it means to reason about the good. His approach is overly strict about what it is worthwhile for one to devote oneself to and this leaves less and less room for the sort of choice that seems integral to self guidance in the personal domain. Nevertheless, his insights are valuable with their emphasis on the interpretive character of practical reflection, the need for some appeal to non-subjective standards and reasons, and the endlessly transformative character of self-interpretation.

Taylor's approach may be extended by public practice of justification. There can be benefits in argumentation in a public context in which reasons can be adjudicated. One may think that one has good reasons for our position, but one cannot legitimately assume such a privileged position in public disputes.

Frankfurt's conditions for wholeheartedness are unsatisfying in the sense that a person has no access to the perspective from which to determine whether or not they are making epistemic progress. For Charles Taylor, even the capability to form second-order volitions is not a sufficient though necessary condition for being a person. In this regard, he makes a crucial distinction between strong and weak evaluations. A weak evaluator is someone primarily interested in weighing alternative courses of action that involve given desires. They are capable of forming evaluations concerning their desires and even resisting the temptation caused by an immediate desire. The weak evaluator can thus form second-order volitions, but what is crucial is that those volitions are not concerned with deep issues; they are not the outcome of reflective evaluations that seek to distinguish desires according to qualitative worth or significance. What distinguishes the strong evaluator, in this sense, is that the strong evaluator envisages their alternatives through a richer language. The desirable is not only defined for them by what they desire, or what they desire plus a calculation of consequences; it is also defined by a qualitative characterisation of desires as higher and lower, noble and base, and so on.

In this sense, a second-order volition is at work, for instance, when one decides that their habitual desire to bet on horses is undesirable and to be abandoned because the money can be spent on something better, or that my desire for steak is to be abandoned because they want to look slim to persons around me. In both cases second-order volitions are formed out of weak rather than strong evaluations because they do not concern themselves with the qualitative value of the original desires or the significance thereof at a deeper human level. The same second-order volitions would be due to strong evaluations if, for example, they depended on one's view of both of their habitual desires above as violating animal rights, provided, of course, that that view is an essential part of their self-conception. Who we essentially are and want to be in terms of our practical identity can give our lives some sense and unity. It is, in this regard, an evaluation that has depth. Seen this way the identity of a person is constituted essentially by their self-evaluations concerning the quality and meaning of their life.

As Taylor asserts, the question Who am I? can't necessarily be answered by giving name and genealogy. What does answer this question for us is an understanding of what is of crucial importance to us. To know who one is, is a form of knowing where one stands. Our identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which one can try to determine, from case to case, what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what one endorses or opposes. In other words, it is the horizon within which one is capable of taking a stand.

It needs stressing here that the essential character of a person's identity, constituted by the strong evaluations that give shape to their horizons of significance, has a very unique motivational impact upon their will. Its elements are fundamentally different from mere likings, wants, or preferences because they have a special normative authority over the person's motivations. When someone cares about something deeply, this person is constrained by a kind of necessity that draws the boundaries or limits of their will. A volitional necessity of this kind forces the person subject to its influence to perform certain actions unconditionally while ruling out other actions as alternatives. In such a case, there is really no choice, or the choice is between being true to who you are and to betraying who you are. This necessity, furthermore, does not undermine the freedom of the person who is subject to it because it derives from the essence of their practical identity.

The essential elements of our practical identity, and hence its necessitating motivational impact, should be regarded as capable of being subject to challenge and change in the future. What makes our self-evaluations radical as well as strong is the fact that they are directed first and foremost towards our deepest commitments. In this sense, these evaluations cannot be done once and for all. Our reflective endeavour involves a constant search for making the best sense of our way of life; our strongest desires, attachments, and practical conceptions. The more sincere this search is, and the stronger one is against temptations like conformity, self-complacency, all sorts of closed-mindedness and prejudices capable of interrupting or distracting us from this search, the more one can be confident that our commitments are genuine constituents of our identity. This sense-making quest is what Taylor refers to as radical self-reflection.⁶⁵

That we are self-responsible means that we are responsible ourselves for our fundamental evaluations and volitions that are inseparable from who we are. In this regard, self-responsibility is something to which one must aspire as human agents and on which our sense of dignity depends. This means that in real life one can differentiate between types of persons in a qualitative sense. One can call some persons reflective, deep, and self-responsible on the one hand, and some unreflective, shallow, and not self-responsible, on the other (this kind of differentiation is, normally, considered a matter of degrees).

The same idea of what is normal illuminates the distinction Frankfurt makes between full persons and wantons, and for Taylor between strong and weak evaluators. There is also the idea that all human beings are capable of self-responsibility and are usually minimally self-responsible in their actual lives. They care about certain things, though they do not always care enough, and they evaluate their motives and actions, though not always too strongly.

One is free as far as one dares to be, to reflect upon one's desires, commitments, conceptions, and evaluations through a critical eye. To do this one has to be disengaged (to a certain extent) from established customs, norms, and ideas that claim our allegiance. To sum up, one's evaluations and motivational dispositions should not be completely determined by forces outside of oneself; a person should play a crucial role in their own determination. This is however quite a separate from saying that the individual makes their own self out of themselves, however, or that

they can make sense of themselves and the world, and be an agent, through complete detachment from what lies outside of them.

In a related sense, the identification of individual freedom with choice is a misleading one. A person's freedom does not depend on their ability to choose between different options or alternatives, it depends on how a person chooses to choose, or less ambiguously, on whether at the time of making a decision they can take full responsibility for their choice, by saying they choose and they can give full account of it by reference to who they are and their horizon of reflective evaluations. But our horizons of evaluations themselves are not and cannot be the outcomes of mere choices.

The validity, or normative authority, of a person's volitions and evaluations is not determined, is not just derived from a person having chosen them. Those volitions and evaluations must have deeper and more reliable foundations. Such deeper foundations are what Taylor calls constitutive goods. Constitutive goods are evaluative frameworks that one uses to make judgements and distinctions concerning all other goods. They are the sources of self at the highest-order level.

For Taylor, what gives a person's self-evaluation its authority, what makes it strong, cannot be the fact that it is their own evaluation; it has to be something that they do not determine. In other words, when a person evaluates one of their actions, plans, or goals by using terms like right/wrong, good/bad, worthy/unworthy, the validity of such evaluative terms cannot be just relative to only this individual. While Taylor's meaning is not always clear he appears to be pointing to the objective sense, the social shared sense that things can be evaluated in terms of their value.

One can consider claims such as strawberry ice-cream is better than chocolate ice-cream or it is always worth going skiing, as relative to the person who utters them. This is because one would not consider those claims to be issues of significance because they do not concern a person's practical identity. But what if this person regards the content of such evaluations as important and as an essential part of their identity? What appear to be person-relative evaluations and goals are not always in the form of crude desires or cravings. Sometimes persons find great meaning in activities like supporting a team, or in aspirations like climbing a high mountain and sometimes such things become the dominant parts of their identity. This isn't, however, enough for Taylor to regard them as constitutive goods.

The recognise of strong evaluations are, in a way, things one respond to rather than things one generates by our choices. These are what Taylor calls horizons of significance which take the form of constitutive goods at the ultimate level. In a sense, they are where our evaluations finally stop; we cannot go further when we try to give an account of what makes our desires and commitments worthy and good.

Some of these horizons of significance are essentially internal to our human agency. We sometimes tend to think that the sources of significance to which we respond are deep within us rather than external ones. As sources of significance our human nature, sentiments and reason have been the three most important candidates even though they are not always easy to separate. These sources, however internal they are to us, are sources independent of our desires or preferences.

If our self-evaluations are not given validity by being products of our will, what does make them valid? In Taylor's conception, the answer to this is our horizons of significance, or, our constitutive goods. Can this alone be a decisive answer? Saying that our self-evaluations or motivational dispositions derive their authority from our constitutive goods should on its own be unsatisfactory. One should also be able to say why our constitutive goods themselves are authoritative, or be able to say what makes one constitutive good more worthy as a horizon of meaning than another. First and foremost, our self-responsibility involves responding to these fundamental questions. One has to see ourselves as capable of taking responsibility for who one is, however, this must essentially include giving reasons for our evaluative and motivational dispositions. It is always difficult to know how far our reason-giving capability can take us in practical matters. One's identification with a constitutive good or higher-order volition is not enough to establish its authority in the normative sense.

A famous example illuminating a case of this sort is Sartre's '...young man who is torn between remaining with his ailing mother and going off to join the Resistance'.⁶⁶ The conflicting, constitutive goods in this example can be seen as two different sources of moral responsibility. One is a personal relationship to a human being who has a strong claim upon the young man because of the very nature of that relationship, and the other is his relationship to his country and countrymen.

This constitutive good is also, by its very nature, one shared by all human agents. It is where our common dignity as humans ultimately lies. It is also what demands our respect, commitment, and love, but it must be clear that our activity of, and

responsibility for, reason-giving should involve other human beings. One must respond to the claims of other persons for our reasons, including most significantly, those concerning the essential elements of our practical identity. Many of the human constitutive goods one lives with are in fact closely tied to, or even products of, our practices of collective reasoning. Our autonomy has a relational component.

Sources of self-evaluations: the role of practical reason

Reflective self-evaluation involves a form of practical reasoning. Our practical reasoning, our desires and ends are not to be taken as given; they can and should be evaluated, criticised, and, if necessary, transformed. In other words, the fundamental role of practical reason concerns deliberation about our ends themselves. Moreover, such deliberation concerns not only our particular ends but their sources as well.

One makes strong evaluations when one tries to interpret or articulate the meaning behind our moral intuitions, but being a self-reflective person should mean that one has better access to, and understanding of those intuitions, than other persons. Similarly, it should mean that a history of our self-reflections in relation to ourselves gives those intuitions a conceptual and volitional strength.

For Taylor practical reason should proceed, both in the personal and inter-personal cases, in a transitional fashion, by moves that secure better self-understanding. In this sense practical reason does not aim to establish that some position is correct absolutely, however it aims to establish that some position is superior to some other. It is concerned with comparative propositions. This form of argument has its source in biographical narrative. One is convinced that a certain view is superior because one has lived a transition, which one understands as error-reducing and hence as epistemic gain.

Hence one starts their learning journey from existing dispositions and intuitions and tries to articulate what makes one important. While making this effort, one might come to see that there is something wrong with those dispositions and evaluations, and that one must dispense with them. Some of the problems one may correct include the identification of contradiction, and the dissipation of confusion. According to Taylor, such transitional improvements one's self-understanding, given their nature, cannot be regarded as final or as absolutely correct. They can and

should only be regarded as one's best account so far subject to change through further shifts in one's understanding of ones self.

Practical reasoning is most powerful when it includes more than one person that is when it has an inter-subjective form. Our new ways of seeing things normally come from our conversation with other persons. They introduce to our self-conceptions new perspectives that we have not thought about, or failed to pay enough attention to, before.

Requirements for critical appraisal

In this section I explore what is required for a person to achieve critical appraisal. The role and importance of the exercise of reason for autonomy is frequently mentioned in accounts of autonomy. Yet the connections between persons, their reason and their behaviour is not considered in depth. Writers on autonomy do not show how the person shapes critical appraisal and how they express themselves as a result.

I argued that a critical thinker is a certain sort of person. A critical thinker can be understood as someone who has mastered certain skills and also has critical thinking as part of their character. These are persons who have internalised the significance of reasons; for them having a reason means something.

Rationality will be regularly exercised by persons who have rational dispositions. What might be called a critical spirit is what motivates a person to be the sort of person who engages in critical thinking and this motivation is personal and internal.

The exercise of reason influences self-determination and the development of character. A critical spirit, is expressive of one's individual character. One's character traits enable others to recognize who one is. Being a thoughtful person will mean that I can be seen to be the sort of person who engages in critical reflection. There are persons who have internalised the significance of reasons, they are persons for whom having a reason means something specially. They are persons who have a character which means that they care about the quality of their reasoning. They aim to have well developed reasoning skills, reason which can withstand external scrutiny.

Critical thinkers are motivated to think critically because this is their way of life. They may strive to be fair minded in their thinking as they desire to be someone that

is attentive to other persons and their needs. The way one reasons affects the way one relates to others and the world. This will involve not only rules of logic but also involve judgement about the kind of response a certain situation calls for and what factors ought to be taken into account. It involves determining what interpretation and meaning is appropriate in a particular context, expanding and refining our understanding of the concepts one uses, and exploring their fit with other concepts as one assess things.

Critical thinking involves acting according to the best reasons one have, either individually or collectively, and this requires listening attentively to others. Thinking does not just involve asserting something. Listening is an important characteristic of the thought process. Listening with an open mind to the views of others can help us avoid action we may later regret. It also provides a way of avoiding poorly developed and superficial reasoning.

One can expect the critical thinker to have the ability to ask and answer questions of clarification, identify instated assumptions, deduce and judge decisions, and make value judgements. They also care that their beliefs are true and seek to get them right as far as is possible and to represent a position honestly. This also involves seeking and offering reasons, and take into account the total situation, and being reflectively aware of their own main beliefs.

Thinking for one's self involves taking responsibility for our own reasoning. With autonomy of thought one take responsibility for our views and supply reasons, consider alternatives and modify our own views in light of further considerations.

Self-understanding

While deepening of self-understanding is not always present in critical thinking, this does not mean that when it does happen it is extraneous to it. Rather this reflection on, and discovery of, self is a key feature of much of our critical thinking. Self-awareness is important for the use of reason. Critically assessing a situation involves being able to locate one's self in that situation in order to work out the best way to respond to it. This awareness and engagement involves some self-relatedness or reflexivity in which one is aware of one's self as experiencing something and responding to it.⁶⁷ Being attentive involves more than merely making our thinking the focused object of our attention. Here I am alert, I take notice of my thinking. Being attentive means being moved to accommodate or respond to the object of my

attention. This kind of self-awareness and reflection may lead to a deeper understanding of the meaning and significance that our beliefs and actions have for us. In this way self-awareness can deepen our critical thinking.

Caring to get our reasoning right as far as possible would not just involve reasonably deciding what to believe and do according to my personal interests; but also deciding in relation to the total situation amongst other persons whose point of view and interests I am obligated to take into account in my own thinking. Here caring to get my reasoning right involves caring that I will present my views in an intelligible and fair way to others. As a result I will be seen as someone who can be reasoned with. Consequently I will seek and receive the most constructive criticism and alternative views others can offer me.

Given that all claims to knowledge are made within a conceptual framework, critical thinking requires that one takes these frameworks into account in deciding what to believe and do. One needs to be aware of the perspective of our own view of the world and the logic that underlies it before one can bring judgement on it.⁶⁸ Critical thinkers are not routinely blinded by their own points of view. They know they have a point of view and therefore recognise on what framework of assumptions and ideas their own thinking rests.⁶⁹

Unless there are also moments of reflection in which one recognise what we are doing as critical thinking, and unless there are moments of reflection in which we become aware of our habits as constitutive of who we are, one will not be able to care about thinking critically nor bring self-criticism to bear on our thinking. We will not be able to decide if critical thinking is called for nor intentionally decide to engage it.

To have integrity as a critical thinker involves attending to the relationship between our thoughts, commitments, values, beliefs and world-view. To cease to think for oneself is to lose one's self. As critical thinkers persons are engaged in the construction of self and knowledge.

Communication and relationships

Communication broadens the skills of critical thinking to include ones that involve our assessment of the strength of arguments. This is determined in part through the activity of justifying our arguments, beliefs, and actions to others. The critical thinker can engage in assessment of reasons with other persons. In thinking things

through with others, one take account of other persons and their views. Critical thinkers care about the dignity of persons, discover and listen to the views of others, and take into account others' feelings and level of understanding.

We experience reason in a most personal way. This requires that one not only account for how a person's individuality is tied to general principles (logic) and procedures and this is important, but also that one attend to the experiential nature of reasoning as a relational activity of persons engaged with each other.

As persons our personal perspective and mode of thinking is expressed within the framework of a common language shared with others. Truth is bound up in the language used. What is taken to be true is shaped by the constructs of language that are used and shared.⁷⁰

Each person within the community requires others for their own self-determination. It is this that connects critical thinking to our autonomy as a self on the one hand and with our concern for the autonomy of and selfhood of others, on the other. In as much as one values ones' self and ones' existence as a critical thinker, one must also value their relationship with other persons and this will, at least, involve attending to their views of life.

Being reasonable involves accommodating other persons as members of the one community who are engaged in dialogue with one another, other selves with wills, interests, projects, histories and orientations of their own. Autonomy in this way can impose reciprocal obligations on persons.

Care can be seen in our attentiveness toward others in our dialogue with them. It may be seen when one attend to another's thinking when one help one another to realise their own autonomy by participating with them in the process of self-realisation. It can be seen when one engage in the process of self-correction as individual selves and as a collective self.

Truth and others

In searching for truth together one allow for the possibility that our perspective may need correction and what was taken to be objectively true needs to be re examined. It is this that enables our inquiry to self-correct as it proceeds. Ascertaining what contents one share leads us to focus on the way one are individually attached to that content, what it means to us and what it reveals or tells us about ourselves.

Exploring the way we are each uniquely involved with shared content will in turn lead to a critique of what this common or objective content amounts to.

Ascertaining the truth of our views will require us to explore what our perspective's mean to us and what they tell us about ourselves. It will involve us in self-critique. The contents of our thought or our propositions are themselves expressive of choices, interests, assumptions values and commitments in us. In this way critical thinking as a search for truth, leads to knowledge, personal insight and self-realisation.

Critical reflection may lead us to develop a more clearly defined sense of who one are as persons and how different aspects of our self can be brought into relationship with one another. Critical thinking leads to depth and complexity in our thinking as well as ensuring that the reasons we have for things, matter to us.

Value and self correction

Persons can sometimes choose ways of living that are not of value. Does autonomy have value, however, if persons are frequently choosing actions that do not contribute to their well-being? Arguably what is vital about autonomy is the capacity to correct mistakes. As the work of Joel Anderson and Warren Lux⁷¹ states:

It does matter that agents can evaluate the desirability of acting on certain impulses or values. In our view, being autonomous involves understanding the extent to which one has the capacities [to achieve] one's intended actions.⁷²

What is the value of being able to evaluate the desirability of doing something when you cannot execute it? Autonomy needs to be achievable in a concrete setting. Being pragmatic does reveal some important aspects of autonomy that would be of value for persons. Living involves talking actions. Our capacity to act effectively can be considered in terms of the quality of our lives.

Anderson and Lux highlight that it may be difficult or impossible to exercise autonomy through to successful actions in accordance with our reflected and chosen desires. They do this by exploring cases where a person's capacities are diminished. They explore the medical case of John who had no vision but who not only insisted that he had vision but also acted as if he did by trying to move about his room in the manner of a person with normal vision. Consequently John walked into walls and furniture, collided with objects in his path rather than avoiding them, and

repeatedly placed himself in positions that were extremely precarious for a person that could not see. Despite his ability to initiate action in a self-directed way, John's persistently mistaken assessment of his visual capacity made it impossible for him to act as he intended. He lacked autonomy because his impaired self-assessment left him unable to make sense of what he was doing.⁷³

To have an accurate self-assessment one must be able to accurately recognise that one is able to perform the task as intended. Where agents come to recognise and correct a reasonable but mistaken self-assessment, their autonomy is not in question.

In autonomy there can be a disconnection between one's intentions and one's actions. Without self-assessment agents are not properly connected to themselves as authors of their intentions.⁷⁴ Their actions are actually maladaptive; they don't achieve their intended aims. Where an agent's inaccurate self-assessments persist in the face of available evidence, the self-assessment will count not only as inaccurate but also as unreasonably inaccurate typically with more serious practical implications.⁷⁵ Autonomy should allow for at least some mistaken beliefs. Indeed respecting autonomy is usually understood as being partly a matter of letting persons make their own mistakes. Where one cannot, over time, recognise that one's self assessments are erroneous one's actions become less one's own. If one had better self understanding one would not continue to act the way one do. It is not that one's actions should always come out as intended, however it is important for autonomy that we can control ourselves, and this includes our actions.

Competency

A fully autonomous person is a person with authentic desires, and enough decision-making competency and efficiency to implement these desires. They have both the required capacity and the necessary conditions to independently consider their own basic projects and values, make decisions on the basis of them and realize them through their own action. To a great extent this ideal is an ideal of character. An autonomous person is not weak-willed, self-deceiving, confused, phobic, and so on, since these things tend to destroy autonomy.

In terms of competency, autonomy is the effective capacity, or set of capacities, to act under any significant range of circumstances in ways that reflect and issue from deeper concerns that one has considered and reaffirmed. The relevant capacities include: capacities for having values and commitments; understanding them; taking

up attitudes toward them; making choices and undertaking actions that mirror these commitments, and doing the latter with some resilience in the face of at least minimal obstacles. This capacity is not often emphasized in accounts of autonomy, yet it seems important nonetheless. Someone is more autonomous the more they can succeed in pursuing their concerns despite resistance. Minimally autonomous choice or action requires values or commitments of sufficient depth or strength as to persist in the face of obstacles including those posed by social conditions. An autonomous person is one who has these capacities and exercises them at least occasionally. An autonomous life is one lived by someone who has the capacities for autonomy and is able to exercise this frequently over a substantial stretch of time.

Requirements for full autonomy

In the following section I outline the requirements for what I refer to full autonomy that will be applied in the review of the management practices in the next chapters.

Full autonomy involves much more than the ownership of desires and making choices. Foremost, full autonomy involves responsiveness to one's environment and situation. In addition a person values their responses in terms of the underlying desires and in terms of their actions to achieve the good.

It is important for full autonomy that a person is responsive to their environment. In particular this involves a person reflecting and evaluating their interpretations. The importance of our interpretations becomes clear when one considers how they effect our actions. Reflecting on our actions can enable self-correction and valued direction. To be autonomous one must be capable of self-understanding. Responsiveness is also important for self-understanding. By interpreting our actions and ourselves one can identify whether what is moving one is something alien to one's self or not. Without this self-understanding, the grounds of our actions will not be intelligible and this may break the link between one's practical identity and the grounds of our actions. Which things one can recognise about our responses to situations are therefore important. This was the problem identified with persons who have a severely diminished capacity for self-correction.

The following interrelated and mutually supportive requirements are needed to achieve responsiveness, self-knowledge;; self-correction; ability to respond to threats to autonomy; and the ability to care about self and others.

Self-knowledge

Self-knowledge can assist our autonomy for it allows us to be confident that our commitments are genuine constituents of our identity and not deceptive sources of mere psychological comfort. A fully autonomous person has understanding of what is of crucial importance to them. By knowing themselves they know where they stand. This self-knowledge is limited and imperfect, yet it can assist a person in determining what is good, valuable, or what ought to be done, or what they endorse or oppose.

The requirement of self-knowledge reveals that choice is not ultimately the most important aspect of autonomy. The amount of choice from low to high does not simply equate to increased autonomy. Autonomy that is of value to a person may actually involve little or no choice and could at first, seem counter intuitive. Yet over empathising choice leaves out the importance of commitments, of what matters to a person. It maybe be of immeasurably greater value to a person that they can honour their commitments rather than just choose from a number of options.

By developing one's self-understanding, in particular what is essential to one's identity as a person, they can determine what they consider to be the highest mode of life in terms of the good.

It is not sufficient just to have self-knowledge but also be informed by the good and this cannot occur without the capacity for self-correction.

Self-correction

A person can be mistaken, indeed misguided and still be autonomous. What is required for full autonomy is the capacity for self-correction. While a person's capacity to correct themselves need not be effective all the time it needs to be effective at least sometimes. As Anderson and Lux argue, autonomy is of questionable value for persons if they are frequently or always choosing and achieving an action that does not contribute to their well-being. Agents should be able to evaluate the desirability of acting on certain impulses or values. Fully autonomous agents can evaluate the desirability of acting on certain impulses or values. They have the capacity to act in ways that reflect and stem from deeper concerns that they have considered and reaffirmed. Language, as Taylor identifies, plays a crucial role in self-correction, indeed self-guidance, and self-knowledge. For the language one has access to and uses shapes the evaluative framework one uses,

the meanings one attain and our capacity to understand things. Moreover language allows us to access a shared resource of inter-subjective meaning.

A person's capacity to reflect, to clarify and to understand things including themselves, influences their autonomy. Language, as Taylor argues, strongly shapes this capacity. Where language is compromised somehow, such as in false advertising, our autonomy may be undermined. As Lippke identifies, persuasive advertising can '... deprive persons of the ability and willingness to critically reflect on their beliefs, desires, aims and interests.'⁷⁶ Where information is deliberately incomplete and misleading it can be difficult for a person to make informed choices. Persuasive advertising can affect a person's ability to discern truth and their beliefs, expectations, desires and attitudes. As a result the key requirement for autonomy, responsiveness, is undermined.

Language can evoke or disclose what one is feeling. Without appropriate concepts, the possibilities for understanding our responses are hampered. The language one use plays a central role in our responses to situations. Critical reflection recognising error, and leading to self-correction, is learned and needs to be exercised to be maintained. Language allows us to develop critical reflection, discursively. Public discourse can help us avoid error and to guide our actions critically. Via language one can collectively respond to ideas, beliefs, and values. It is through language that persons routinely explain their beliefs, desires, choices, and actions. Guiding one's self involves the development of the capacity to respond to other persons.

Autonomy can be understood as a resource that is intersubjective. The desires, plans, commitments and values that one examines in critical reflection are always examined under description and are always interpreted. Our access to them occurs in language. In engaging in critical reflection, we are thus drawing on inter-subjective resources of meaning.

Because critical appraisal is open to error, the capacity to be self-guiding should include the reflective capacity to participate in the correction of one's critical reflection as well. This is informed participating inter-personal dialogue and practices of critique and justification. The reasons considered and evaluated in critical appraisal can be considered like language, as a shared resource. The autonomy of guiding one's self occurs within a socially contestable space. All our interpretations may be corrected and also be developed and explicated further.

Ability to respond to threats to autonomy

A person can still be autonomous when their autonomy is threatened. So to prevent a person from being autonomous the type of threat must be that the person is unable to have desires and unable to act in a way they would value as their own. This is not so easy to distinguish in actuality as a person may act in a way that they don't value but nevertheless still choose it because it appears to be the best choice in a difficult situation such as the previous example of a bank robbery.

To have full autonomy a person must be able to exercise some discriminatory capacity over their desires and actions. The problem is establishing the degree to which this discrimination is required. Set the degree too low and you end up with wantons, set too high and you end up with very few persons being counted as autonomous.

Exercising reason is a demanding requirement for autonomy and it is not always the most effective way of making choices. It appears difficult to quantify the criteria that satisfactorily encapsulate a person's capacity to respond to threats to their autonomy. Nowhere near the level of a wanton will do, as sufficient capacity is required to allow a person to determine what is most important to them.

Dworkin's procedural independence while not developed in adequate detail, is useful in highlighting the importance that an agent's desires may be formed through an appropriate process. To be fully autonomous a person must have control over their own faculties of critical appraisal. This means persons's reflective and critical faculties need to be intact, not subverted.

Care

The ability to care is an important criterion for autonomy. Lack of care as Frankfurt demonstrated is associated with lack of autonomy. By caring persons can identify and apply values that matter to them in their desires and their actions. The inability to care is associated with not being a person, a wanton. A fully autonomous person cares about certain things, unlike a wanton who is indifferent to them.

For autonomy of value a person should be able to distinguish between the worth of various desires and goals. This means being able to judge and appraise things like our own desires, inclinations, choices and standards, as well as being informed by others, publicly accessible concepts, criteria and values.

Care provides a faculty to discriminate about what matters to us and to respond accordingly. What is most important for a person is not always found by rational deliberation but is sometimes found by the deepest expressions of an agent's will translated through their understanding of what constitutes the best interests of what they love. In addition by taking regard of their own actions a person may be self-responsible. When we care we want to make the best sense of our self and world for it is important to us what direction we take.

Care can provide motivation to maintain values or commitments in the face of obstacles and resistance, including those posed by social conditions. In this way care may help us to maintain our autonomy. Caring gives us a reason to be autonomous rather than to acquiesce, to be swept along with the flow, and just go along with the view of the majority.

The motivation supplied by care also identifies another important aspect of autonomy. This is that a fully autonomous person needs to be autonomous with respect to their actions. Care plays a role here in persons evaluating their own actions. Care can help guide a person towards actions that they value doing.

A key aspect of full autonomy is to be able to be successful in one's chosen actions at least sometimes. Self-correction plays a vital role in achieving this and is aided by care. Care can inform us about salient factors and issues in our environment and assist us to recognise what is important. The context of our actions is important. The analogy of leverage might be apt here. Determining where, when and how to act can make all the difference to the success of our endeavour. If we are unable to discern with some accuracy and perceptiveness the context in which to act and how it may hinder or support our actions it will be difficult for us to succeed in realising our desires except by pure luck. Being autonomous is not a matter of luck, it involves some deliberation as Taylor clearly highlights.

Possible criticism of the requirements for autonomy

What criticisms might be made about these outlined requirements of full autonomy? It might be claimed that the requirements are overly demanding. It may be permissible for the requirements for autonomy to be demanding because they may help illuminate the ideal for persons. The fact that many persons may not reach the ideal does not of itself make the ideal of autonomy a problem. Yet it does need to be acknowledged that the requirements identified in the theories of autonomy

discussed are idealistic. It is true they require persons to make efforts, and they require attention and indeed responsiveness in order to be autonomous. As was aptly summed up in the phrase there is no such thing as a free lunch achieving full autonomy is a demanding undertaking. Persons can live without full autonomy and it might be claimed that they can still have happy, indeed good, lives. Yet the kind of value that full autonomy provides cannot be attained elsewhere. Full autonomy is worth the efforts identified.

Self-knowledge is a difficult requirement for persons to achieve. If it were just about attaining facts about one's self it would be comparatively straightforward to achieve. We interpret ourselves and our interpretation can have limitations including distortions such as self-deception and self-serving bias. We can be one kind of person or another, one can evolve over time. Our self-knowledge plays a vital role in us being who we are and how we evolve. Our self-guidance would be greatly lacking, as Taylor identified, without self-knowledge.

It may be true that many persons lack self-knowledge. Without the insights provided by self-knowledge it is difficult, however, to see how a person is actually directing themselves in any adequately informed way. They may be autonomous but not fully autonomous.

The requirement of self-correction for autonomy is uncontroversial. It features in various forms in most accounts for autonomy. The question could still be asked; what degree of self-correction is required? Setting this requirement too low, as I have argued, can result in persons not just being frustrated but ineffective in their attempts to achieve their desires as their ability to learn is compromised by their inadequate self-correction. Lack of self-correction can also place persons at risk of harm.

Being in error is quite a different matter if you have some prospect of recognising it and therefore seek to overcome it.

The ability to respond to threats is also frequently mentioned in writings about autonomy. The claims made in this account are fairly conventional. It might be raised that this requirement has not gone far enough nor has it considered the issues in sufficient detail. This criticism could be driven by the underlying perception about the degree of threat posed to a person's autonomy. It is accepted that this requirement could be developed further yet the overall account of autonomy does

not just depend on this requirement. Self-knowledge self-correction, the ability to respond to threats and to care should be sufficient to identify persons that are fully autonomous.

The term care has been used in varied senses in the theory of autonomy. Persons could have autonomy without care. It might be argued that care is an optional aspect of autonomy. Care is also something of great value as it informs, guides, motivates and adds richness to our lives.

An alternative line of criticism might be made that few persons demonstrate care in their lives. One could live effectively without care. This could be correct. Yet care can impart, purpose, meaning, and value to human life. Care might be in part an ideal but it is one that helps a person to exercise themselves more in terms of who they are and what they should do. Other requirements of autonomy also do not go very far in motivating one to stay autonomous. The ongoing efforts that a person needs to sustain in order to be autonomous over the long term do not seem to be captured in the majority of writing about autonomy. The requirement of care only partially explains why someone would endeavour to be autonomous over the long term. Yet care does appear to be one of the most important reasons for a person to be autonomous. The implications of care for autonomy are a worthy area for further research.

Methodological Issues

In this section I answer two key questions that arise from the proceeding discussion of autonomy, these are:

- What account of autonomy is being advocated in this thesis?
- What is the benefit of using Foucault's theories to illuminate contemporary work practices when he does not actually support autonomy?

As it turns out, these questions are interrelated. I will answer both of them in detail as they are fundamental to considering autonomy at work. I will also explore more broadly, than I have in discussing specific management practices, what the theory of autonomy, and Foucault's theory raises, for contemporary work.

What account of autonomy is being advocated in this thesis?

While I have discussed the notion autonomy in detail, I could further clarify the account of autonomy being advocated. Am I, for example, advocating a substantive or procedural account, of autonomy?

I advocate a social account of autonomy rather than advocate a substantive or procedural account of autonomy. It is a task of philosophy to question things, the question it self whether one should advocate a procedural and substantive account could be challenged. Instead of having to choose between procedural or substantive accounts it could be argued that the choice should be neither. Both accounts have merit, however this an applied thesis and as such I advocate an social account of autonomy because it is based fundamental facts of human existence¹, on how we actually live, and can offer guidance about how good lives might be developed. I will now discuss the reasons for holding this view.

A case can be made that a better understanding of autonomy will be achieved by examining the complex personal and institutional relationships that make possible, or sometimes hinder a person actually making choices. The claim for this understanding of autonomy, known as 'relational autonomy', is that it accurately describes autonomous action, and provides a better grounding for respecting each other's autonomy.

Relational autonomy highlights the importance of supportive social conditions for fostering autonomous action.² The capacity and opportunity for autonomous action is dependent upon the particular social relationships and the power structures in which we are embedded. Persons are never fully independent and therefore there

is a need to find ways to facilitate meaningful self-direction within an overall context of interdependency.

Relational autonomy recognises that that persons are socially embedded and that their identities are formed within the context of social relationships and shaped by a complex of intersecting social determinants, such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Autonomy is a property, not merely of an individual and their capacities, but of the relations that comprise those conditions. To protect autonomy in this way is to protect those relations. Social conditions are required for the enjoyment of autonomy, such as education, social structures and opportunities, and resources such as housing, and work. Relational views of autonomy also identify social conditions as supportive of autonomy and also recognise the danger that autonomy-based principles of justice will exclude from participation those individuals who reject those types of social relations demanded by these views. Relational autonomy asks us to take into account the impact of social and political structures. Autonomy is socially enabled, and may also be socially hampered.

Autonomy is only possible by forms of dependence and interaction with others. Potentially autonomous agents have extended periods of dependency on others, usually in family settings. Insufficient or ineffective nurturing during childhood makes it more difficult to attain autonomy in adulthood. Young children are not merely physically dependent on others; they must be taught language, the rudiments of self-control, the concept of values, the resources of their culture, and the possibility of relations with others. The development of autonomy is therefore not possible in the absence of social relations.

People are social creatures living within a physical-biological framework, and therefore autonomy must be judged against the totality of the sorts of ways that human lives are led. True autonomy is of value only when expressed within the social context of persons interacting with persons yet at the same time establishing their own unique identity that is free from coercion, compulsion and duress.

Our ongoing success as an autonomous agent is affected by our ability to share our ideas, our aspirations, and our beliefs in conversation with others. It is unlikely that our vision or aspiration is sustained in isolation from others. We rely on others for emotional support, for communicative interchange, and to supply the context in which many of our own projects can be pursued. Autonomous agents have various goals and desires which require cooperation from others. Additionally, each of us

continues to alter our sense of self and our life plan in response to the input and actions of agents around us. Social practices give autonomy substance.

According to the relational model of autonomy self respect, self-trust, and self-esteem, are social relations of recognition. Because agents are largely dependent on this recognitional infrastructure for their autonomy, they are subject to autonomy-related vulnerabilities. Harms to and neglect of these relations of recognition can jeopardize individuals' autonomy.

Acquiring the evaluative and motivational capacities needed for authentic self determination is a result of a socialization process that enables the child to grasp distinctions in value, challenge prevailing conventions, and consider its first-order desires. In addition to these capacities and skills further psychological and social conditions are need to shape an authentic and foster an autonomous life. Without a positive attitude toward oneself self-respect – one will not be able to make use of one's autonomy-constituting capacities. Consequently interpersonal recognition is a condition for autonomy, it is necessary for acquiring second-order capacities for self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem. Another condition for autonomy is having a social standing that makes available participation in valuable activities. This standing is defined by the absence of domination marginalization, and emotional exclusion – is directly constitutive of being autonomous, for it, together with competitive material resources, shapes one's control over one's life.

Self-respect implies that one values oneself for those things that make one a person: one's consciousness, will, ability to choose, capacities, and abilities. A person with self-respect has a sense that he or she is a human being whose interests and ends are valuable and that, as a human being, he or she has dignity and worth. Having self-respect, a person can stand up when demeaned and insulted, holding the conviction that these reactions are not deserved. Allowing oneself to be exploited, manipulated, or used over a long period of time is seriously undermining to one's self-respect; if one becomes solely a tool enabling others to achieve their ends, one's sense that one's own ends, goals, and interests have worth is unlikely to survive.

There is a close tie between self-trust and self-respect. A person with self-respect must value herself as a person and regard her own interests, values, beliefs, and goals as having some importance. This is not to say that their ideas and needs must always take priority over those of others, but rather that they should be considered as having equal value and not be de-valued simply because they are hers. A person with

self-respect must regard himself or herself as a person with dignity and moral worth. This person has intentions, motives, needs and goals, and these are worthy, meriting attention and consideration

Rawls regards self-respect as a primary good, something needed whatever life plan one was trying to implement. Rawls understands self-respect as necessary for continuance in any endeavour. In any endeavour there are obstacles; if one does not regard the endeavour as worthy and achievable, one will soon give up. A person with self-respect has a sense of his or her own value, a sense that his or her 'plan of life' is worth carrying out and that the conception of good on which that plan is based is a worthy one. If one does not value oneself and one's plans, one is 'plagued with self-doubt' and one may be unable to move toward one's goals. Such a person will lack autonomy of action.

Self-trust and self-respect are clearly closely related notions. Self-trust requires having a positive sense of one's own motivation, competence, and integrity. The self-trusting person is disposed to see himself or herself in a positive light, and, due to the sense that he or she can and will act competently and rightly, the person with self-trust is able to accept vulnerability to the consequences of his or her own actions and to be self-reliant. To distrust oneself would be to see oneself as ill-motivated, incompetent, and unable to act independently. Such self-doubt would entail a lack of self-respect: the self is deemed to be unworthy, lacking integrity and unable to implement worthy goals, and inadequately equipped to deal with the world. Such self-doubt is clearly incompatible with self-respect. Thus self-trust is, conceptually, a necessary condition of self-respect.

People often face challenges to their actions and beliefs. Others confront and criticize, suggesting that one is badly motivated, ill-informed, wrong in his or her actions, or just plain incompetent. In order to preserve one's sense of one's motivation and character, it is necessary to have resources within the self to consider and respond to these sorts of challenges. One must be able to reflect on what others say; reflect on one's actions, values, and beliefs; determine the accuracy or importance of the challenge; and respond appropriately. This reflection requires relying on one's own capacities of memory, deliberation, and judgment—and one will not be able to do this unless one trusts oneself. To discriminate between apt and ill-founded challenges from others, one needs to trust one's own memory, judgment, and conscience. A person who has no resources to preserve her ideas,

values, and goals against criticism and attack from others will be too malleable to preserve their sense that they are a person in her own right, and will therefore be unable to maintain her self-respect.³

In order to reflect on and appraise one's options and beliefs and implement decisions based on the reflecting judgments, one must trust oneself. One must deliberate and choose on the basis of one's own values, beliefs, and judgments, depending on one's own competence and accepting one's vulnerability to possible omissions and errors.

Autonomous people must be able to pose and answer the question 'What do I really want, need, care about, value?' They must be able to act on the answer; and they must be able to correct themselves when they get the answer wrong. A person reflects on what they needs and cares about: to do this presumes both that they sees their own self and their concerns and motivation as being worthy of their attention and that they regard themselves as sufficiently competent to examine these ends and the actions they might take to achieve them. Such attitudes are not to be taken for granted: they can be put in question by challenges—either from other people or from the course of events. One may be treated as a person whose needs are of no importance, or as incompetent even to remember and describe events in one's own past, or one may frequently experience frustration and failure. Such denigration or disappointment can be internalized so that a person has little or confidence in themselves. In such case, without self-trust, they would not be able to think and decide for themselves and therefore cannot function as an autonomous person.

Self-esteem is a necessary condition of self-trust because such requires a positive sense of one's own motivation, competence, and self-trust presumes a belief in one's own worth. If one does not accept one's motives and goals as worthy, if one does not believe that one has sound judgment and competence in key areas of decision and action, then one lacks basic self-esteem. And this lack of basic self-esteem rules out core self-trust. Self-acceptance and a sense of one's competence in core areas are conceptual prerequisites of self-trust. There is a pragmatic dimension here: to the extent that a person trusts himself or herself, self-trust will be of tremendous help in retaining basic self-esteem in contexts in which external recognition and acknowledgment are lacking. Should one be in a context in which others ignore and insult one, treat one as inadequate, incompetent, or unworthy, strong trust in oneself will be a major resource for resistance and maintenance of autonomy.

The self preserves a sense of itself, an understanding, a capacity to reflect, to respond, and to act. It need not act solely from its own interest; it need not work alone to define its beliefs, values, needs, and interests. It can interact and cooperate with others. The self of self-trust is the everyday self—the empirical self that acts in the world. This is the self that believes and feels, that has attitudes of trust or distrust toward others and itself. When it trusts others, it has a positive attitude to them—positive expectations and confident, relaxed feelings. When it trusts itself, it has positive expectations about its own actions and motivations.

Stressing self-trust does not imply that the self is set against others in a way that is necessarily adversarial or oppositional. One can come to trust oneself in some specific area because one trusts others. For instance, one may have trust in an art teacher whom one respects and who says one has a good eye and real talent and, partly as a result, one may come to have confidence about one's own critical and creative abilities in art. Here self-trust emerges from one's trust in the other: if one did not respect their judgment, one could not build one's own confidence on the basis of their praise. In other cases, trust in another is supported by self-trust: one is able to maintain one's trust in someone else only because one trusts oneself.

The need for self-trust can emerge from external events, from one's own feelings, or from what is said and done by others. Trust in others can support and enhance trust in oneself, and trust in oneself can support and enhance trust in others. The self is the I of relation and dialogue as well as the I of self-understanding and independent action. These are not separated 'I's.' The self is the I that listens and speaks, that wonders, feels, and responds—that accepts or rejects, confirms or disconfirms, persists or desists. To do this coherently and confidently, I need self-trust.

For Foucault the individualistic conception of autonomy reflects the important historical process by which, within the social context of modernity, individuals have increasingly shed traditional social ties and role-ascriptions to engage in their own pursuit of happiness. But this modern conception of autonomy adds an additional component – namely, the idea that individuals realize their autonomy by gaining independence from others. But within culture at large, the images that accompany the emergence of this conception of autonomy suggest that any constraints reduce an individual's autonomy. An individualistic conception of personal autonomy has crept into modern theories of social justice. The drive to maximize negative liberty thus seems to rely on a misleading idealization of

individuals as self-sufficient and self-reliant. Eliminating interference thus misconstrues the demands of social justice by failing to adequately conceptualize the neediness, vulnerability, and interdependence of individuals. Individuals (including autonomous individuals) are more vulnerable and needy than the liberal model has traditionally represented them.

Fostering autonomy especially for the vulnerable – leads to a commitment to guaranteeing what one might call the material and institutional circumstances of autonomy

A key insight of relational accounts of autonomy is that full autonomy – the real and effective capacity to develop and pursue one’s own conception of a worthwhile life – is only achievable under socially supportive conditions. It is an important accomplishment that, we come to be able to trust our own feelings and intuitions, to stand up for what we believe in, and to consider our projects and accomplishments worthwhile. In achieving this we cannot make this progress alone and we are vulnerable to autonomy-undermining injustices such as interference or material deprivation and to disruptions in the social nexus that are necessary for autonomy.

The recognitional account of autonomy requires a reconceptualization of the nature of justice in order to protect people from assaults on their intersubjective vulnerabilities. Principles are required for governing how the institutions of society secure the social conditions for mutual recognition. To understand what this means, I will explore what is meant by the term recognition in a philosophically deep sense. Recognition is an important element in social interaction and crucial for the identity formation process. Recognition, as Charles Taylor says is a ‘vital human need’. According to Honneth⁴, to achieve a productive relationship to themselves, people require intersubjective recognition of their abilities and achievements. Should this form of social approval fail to arise at any level of development, it opens up, as it were, a psychological gap within the personality, which seeks expression through the negative emotional reactions of shame or anger, offence or contempt.⁵

Hegel writes about how our freedom to self-actualise and achieve co-operative goals in the division of labour is determined by how we balance our subjective self-mastery (or morality) with the demands of recognition which define the respect, trust and other social values necessary for mutual dependence with

others.⁶ According to Hegel by receiving recognition from others, we achieve our identity; and learns to know our self and our special characteristics. In this way, people recognise they are individuals who exist as something particular in relation to others. When a person receives positive recognition because of some particular ability they start to form a positive self-image.

Axel Honneth notes there are three practical self-relations in the social development of personality:

- self-confidence;
- self-respect; and
- self-esteem.

An individual's self-confidence is established and reproduced in relations of friendship and love. Recognition at this level actually means that one has a right to exist as the kind of person one is. This form of recognition takes place within the family and within the other persons that one is close to. Through one's very first contacts with one's parents, one gradually achieves trust. One learns to express one's needs without the fear of becoming abandoned. Love and friendship are the forms of recognition by which parents create. The experience of love and care is a precondition for the formation of an individual's identity and development of morality. This experience is also a precondition for the development of more advanced self-relations: self-respect and self-esteem.⁷ Honneth describes the formation of self-confidence as:

...relation of recognition thus also depends on the concrete physical existence of other persons who acknowledge each other with special feelings of appreciation. The positive attitude which the individual is capable of assuming toward himself if he experiences this type of emotional recognition is that of self-confidence.⁸

Self-respect in this context means that a person in a 'community of rights' gains recognition as a legally and morally mature person. Hegel calls this community of rights 'civil society'. At this level of the struggle for recognition, the individual receives or does not receive basic legal rights. Here recognition means that every person must be considered an 'end in itself' ⁹. The opposite of this is a paternalising attitude which denies the individual's freedom of will, and autonomy. Self-respect

grows out of the responsibility which the individual gains in the struggle for recognition at the level of the Civil Society.

Respect and autonomy are, in a sense are related. In order to value its own autonomy properly, a person must value every other rational creature in the same way by paying it respect.

Self-esteem can be fostered through the respect one receives for one's work. Self-esteem means that one sees one's work being acknowledged and recognised. This way one becomes recognised as a person who has something to give to the community. Hegel writes:

Labor is of all and for all, and the enjoyment of its fruits is enjoyment by all. Each one serves the other and provides help. Only here does the individual have existence as individual. Prior to this, the individual is merely something abstract, untrue, as a concept.¹⁰

Recognition occurs intersubjectively and as Taylor writes via dialogue. Our personal and public lives are characterised by our situation within 'webs of interlocation' in which we struggle to define ourselves with and against significant others. Individuals are dependent on their intersubjective relations with others for acquiring a sense of self. Through perceiving ourselves as others perceive us we acquire the capacity for self-reflection. Recognition by others does not passively reflect back our self-interpretations, then, but actively shapes the way we think of our selves: it 'forges identity'.¹¹ Our sense of dignity depends on recognition of our universal status as moral agents: given our sense of dignity, we expect to be accorded the same rights and entitlements as other members of society. Further than this, our sense of self-worth depends upon recognition of the value of our particular life.

The demand for personal recognition as a distinct identity is sustained by the ideal of authenticity: the idea that every individual has an original way of being in the world that they should seek to realise. While our identity is partly constituted from without through relations of recognition, it is also partly worked out from within through self-interpretation and articulation:

.... an identity is of fundamental importance to being a human agent, since it defines the horizon within which we judge what has worth in our lives

and what makes our life worthwhile. It provides the 'background against which our tastes and desires and aspirations make sense.'¹²

The value of identity is that it situates us in relation to an ultimate good. By furnishing us with a vocabulary of worth, an identity makes us capable of 'strong evaluation'. As strong evaluators, we act and judge according to the 'kind of beings we are or want to be.'¹³ The capacity for strong evaluation is constitutive of human agency since it enables us to form second-order desires, to judge our immediate desires as higher or lower, noble or base. It is due to this trait that we attribute depth to human agents. Without the capacity for strong evaluation an individual would be a 'simple weigher of consequences'. Agency depends upon being able to positively identify with a particular form of life because we cannot act meaningfully without the orientation to the good that an identity provides. In its absence we are disoriented, without a sense of the worth of things.¹⁴

We need the recognition of others because we cannot form our identity in isolation but must realise it through social dialogue. Hence, we owe the other due recognition because we undermine the other's potential to flourish by misrecognising them, not taking them as they are. In order to avoid misrecognition we must make a 'presumption of equal worth' when entering into the dialogical encounter with the other.¹⁵ A genuine attempt at understanding presumes that the other's form of life has something valuable to say to us, that in coming to an understanding of the difference between us we may discover some inadequacy in our own conception of the good. While there may be aspects of the other's form of life that we eventually choose to reject, it is almost certain that there will be aspects of it that are worthy of our admiration and respect.

Genuine recognition is oriented 'toward a wider understanding which can enable the other undistortively and thus allows for real judgements of worth to be made'.¹⁶ This requires comprehending the other in such a way that we are able to apply 'the desirability characterisations which define his world'. This means being able to articulate the vocabulary of worth through which they makes strong evaluations. This recognition must be mediated by our own self-understandings. In this way we enter into a dialogue with the other that requires us to more carefully articulate our own self understandings through which this dialogue is mediated. By reflecting on our practices in relation to those of the other, we are forced to articulate our

background assumptions, to make explicit what was formerly implicit. Through this dialectical process of recognition and re-articulation we should arrive at a more open sense of human possibilities.

In coming to an undistorted recognition of the other, therefore, we do not simply re-present them in our own terms but rather within a 'language of perspicuous contrast'. Such a language should enable us to 'formulate both their way of life and ours as alternative possibilities in relation to some human constants at work in both.'¹⁷ We know we have developed such a language when both partners to the dialogue could accept the points of contrast and comparison stated between the two frameworks. It is only once we have developed this language of perspicuous contrast that we have arrived at a shared horizon in which non-distortive recognition is possible. In doing so, we no longer perceive the other only as a 'transgressor of our limits'. Rather, we are able to perceive 'two goods where before we could only see one and its negation'.¹⁸

The process of recognition and rearticulation has value for it is through our dialogical relations with others that we enrich our vocabulary of worth. Overcoming distorted relations of recognition requires that we enter an open-ended dialogue with the other that holds out the possibility of coming to a shared understanding.

It may be may be impossible to acquire a good life without recognition. These self-relations include determinants self-respect, self-esteem and self-confidence. Sufficient self-confidence, and sufficient self-esteem and sufficient self-respect are needed by autonomous life. Thus these healthy self-relations can be called psychological preconditions of good life. They form so to speak an objective, real, psychological condition of good life. Institutional settings sanction, promote and prevent certain types of self-relations and intersubjective attitudes that effect the realisation of the good life.

Foucault's insights for autonomy

Foucault's philosophies might seem bleak, anti human, yet it would be a mistake to characterise them this way. He is actually concerned about determinants of personal well being.

Foucault's theories about power show how crucial it is to understand the social and institutional factors that enable autonomous action. In considering Foucault's ideas,

particularly his account in *Discipline and Punish*, we might conclude that he sees contemporary human beings as caught within an web of power relations with few options for escape. On this reading of Foucault there is little hope for autonomy, for he seems to hold that a conception of ourselves as free agents's an illusion. Yet as I will show, Foucault makes other points about power and autonomy that put them in a different light.

Foucault's main concern about the concept of autonomy developed by many theorists is that it contains too many ideas and yet fails to differentiate them because the term is too broad and abstract. He also is concerned about how the concept of autonomy can be turned into an unacceptably perfectionist idea which that carries with it the danger of exclusion and overarching paternalism that attention to autonomy should protect against. In particular, to conceive as autonomy as a good or end of policy may misrepresent the way that autonomy presupposes already existing community structures mores, habits, values and institutions.

Foucault did not trust of notions of universal emancipation or liberation. This was an attitude linked to his rejection of humanism, and to his concern to understand history as the history of multiple, specific and therefore potentially conflicting rationalities of government. The core of Foucault's concern was the desire 'not to close off the possibilities of human action and therefore autonomy and freedom'.¹⁹ He suggested liberation' may be necessary where domination exists, that is, where the relations of power have become 'fixed and congealed'. For Foucault, liberation' involved freeing up existing (or creating new) relationships of power not dissolving them per se. This freeing up of the capacity of agents to act, involves the transformation of rigidified relations states of domination to add the dynamic 'agonism' that exists between autonomous agents in relations of power and resistance.

Foucault's critique of humanism is that certain modes of subjectivity as universal or transcendental must be rejected precisely because it presents a certain form of ethics as a universal model for any kind of freedom and in doing so forecloses other possibilities for freedom. The enlightenment notion of personal autonomy did not provide freedom, according to Foucault, nor will people who exercise choice as neo-liberals advocate be free either. This is because busnocratic rationality and busno-power will shape them as particular kinds of subjects so that they will choose in certain general ways.

Foucault objects to the concept of autonomy within liberal philosophers' theories. He sees such a concept in seeking to ground liberal polity also misrepresents and distorts the character of social existence. For Foucault, the autonomous chooser is not the free person offered by Enlightenment thought and liberal education. They will be a product of both bureaucratic rationality and busno-power. A person needs, interests and choices can themselves be manipulated because the autonomous chooser is highly manipulable. Foucault reminds us that people are socialized, they are 'responsibilized' through strategies of 'power-knowledge' to believe they are freer than they really are.

For Foucault every individual depends far more than liberal political philosophers have traditionally acknowledged - on the structures of social and institutional support. Even those few who finally end up being highly competent at achieving life's goals cannot really be said to be autonomous in anything but a highly qualified sense. It is rather that person's capabilities depend on a whole network of complex structures and supports.

The liberal view of freedom evokes areas of life, often defined by rights, where the individual should not be subject to any social constraint. The enlightenment view of knowledge and the liberal view of freedom are tied to one another in presupposing that the individual can stand outside of society. Modernity, therefore, enshrines a faith in an autonomous subject who can avoid local prejudices and who can be freed from social constraint. Foucault archaeological and genealogical studies show us that our modern society neither enshrines a universal reason nor defends individual liberty in the way we might think it does. Foucault's analysis makes clear that individuals are highly situated in relationships, not only integrally related to other persons but to institutions as well. For Foucault both technologies of domination and technologies of the self produce effects that constitute the self. They define the individual and control their conduct, as they make the individual a significant element for the state through the exercise of a form of power which Foucault termed 'governmentality' - to produce useful, docile, practical citizens.²⁰

Subjects must therefore be free to act, and are able to do so as long as the field of possibilities for action remains open. The relationship between subjects said Foucault, is a dynamic tension, an 'agonism'. Furthermore, the configuration of relations of power within a particular social context is a historical product, and as

such, specific relations of power are neither necessary nor immutable, but rather open to transformation and change.

Foucault sought to understand the productive modes of subjection as central to the formation of modern subjects and the knowledge of them as embodied in the human sciences. There is a positive, or productive aspect of power relations that produces and transforms knowledge, truth, discourse, and emotion. Individuals (and groups) are not merely the docile objects on which power operates, but also the result of complex networks of social relations through which power is exercised and articulated.

While as discussed, Foucault's concern had concerns about how autonomy has been understood, he placed the notion of the freedom and autonomy of the subject at the centre of his work:

I do not think that the only point of possible resistance to political power - understood of course, as a state of domination - lies in the relationship of self to self. I say that governmentality implies the relationship of self to self, which means exactly that, in the idea of governmentality, I am aiming at the totality of practices by which one can constitute, define, organise, instrumentalise the strategies which individuals in their liberty can have in regard to each other. It is free individuals who try to control, to determine, to delimit the liberty of others and, in order to do that, they dispose of certain instruments to govern others. That rests indeed on freedom, on the relationship of self to self and the relationship to the other.²¹

Foucault's examines ancient practices of self-fashioning in order to raise in his reader the possibility of autonomous existence. He discusses the Ancient Greeks in order to demonstrate the possibilities for autonomous existence that could prove relevant today. Foucault saw Socratic self-examination as allowing the individual to ground themselves in liberty, through the mastery of the self.²² This is the Greek aristocrat who is able to become autonomous and constitute himself independently of the heteronomous forces seeking to determine him.²³ Critique allows the individual to fashion themselves out of the very governmental relations seeking to determine them. It becomes a necessary response to existing relations for power and knowledge when individuals begin ask themselves 'how not to be governed like that'.²⁴

While Foucault's recognises that the subject always sets off against a social background that influences them, and they can reason and act in creative, novel ways so as to modify this background. People can and do adopt different beliefs and perform different actions against the background of the same social structure, so there must be at least an undecided space in front of these structures where individuals decide what beliefs to hold and what actions to perform.

Foucault's idea of an 'aesthetics of existence' suggests that can we use our agency so as to resist normalizing pressures by questioning the limits of the traditions and practices we inherit. There is value of in questioning the norms we inherit from the position we happen to occupy. Although we are not autonomous beings able to discover ourselves alone or to reach a neutral standpoint, we are agents capable of producing ourselves and of questioning any received standpoint. Thus, the freedom we attain in ethical conduct is not liberation of a true self from all social influences, but is an ability to modify ourselves in the context of the social influences at work on us. As Foucault says, the subject 'constitutes himself in an active fashion by the practices of the self, but these practices are not something that the individual invents by himself.'²⁵

Foucault argues that we should be free to join, or stand apart from, struggles made on behalf of any collective to whom we are supposed to belong; we should be free to reject all imposed identities. We can enter into social relations to pursue co-operative endeavours, but it matters that we should decide, critically and for ourselves, whether or not we wish to be part of any particular co-operative endeavour. We can work together for shared ends, but we should do so in accord with identities we have produced for ourselves not ones others have defined for us.

Foucauldian concepts can be used to analyse how particular individuals find their autonomy threatened by the social forces that shape the self. For example, Sandra Bartky writes:

The woman who checks her make-up a half a dozen times a day to see if her foundation has caked or her mascara run, who worries that the wind or rain may spoil her hairdo, who looks frequently to see if her stockings have bagged at the ankle, or who, feeling fat, monitors everything she eats, has become, just as surely as the inmate of Panopticon, a self-policing subject, a self committed to relentless self-surveillance. ¹

This woman has been shaped to meet the expectations of patriarchal society, and seems to place those expectations ahead of any she generates and authorizes for herself. Since she knows what constitutes attractive femininity, even if she contemplates the possibility of spoiling her hair and mascara in the rain, she cannot envision herself acting on that possibility: the results would be factually unattractive. Hence she does not wish to resist against these expectations.

The Importance of social aspects of autonomy

A study by the University of Rotterdam provides some evidence of the importance of social aspects of individual autonomy in the workplace.² The study examines the interplay between team autonomy, self-efficacy and social support in determining individual autonomy of team members. They found that social support moderates the extent to which team autonomy is incorporated into the individual tasks of team members. In highly autonomous teams, individuals experiencing moderate support from coworkers and supervisors reported higher individual autonomy than members experiencing either low or very high support.

The results showed a positive relationship between team and individual autonomy. The relationship between team and individual autonomy was negative at very low levels of support, turned positive when support increased. When support exceeded the average score, the relationship between team and individual autonomy declined, to disappear altogether when support reached its maximum level.

The results also indicated that members of teams with low team autonomy reported moderate levels of individual autonomy, irrespective of the extent to which they felt supported by coworkers or their supervisor. With increasing team autonomy, social support began to differentiate between team members. In teams with high autonomy, team members who lacked social support reported the lowest level of individual autonomy. Team members with either high or low support from their supervisor or coworkers reported moderate individual autonomy and individual autonomy was highest for team members who experienced moderate levels of support.

Team members who feel strongly supported are likely to be more deeply embedded in the team's social structure, making them more susceptible to the pressure to conform. Instead of feeling in control, they may feel controlled as a result of working in a team with high autonomy. Team members with moderate support

may feel sufficiently supported to assume additional responsibilities but at the same time sufficiently independent to feel in control. Similarly, members of a team that is to a large extent autonomous who experience high levels of support from their direct supervisor may feel restricted rather than encouraged in their personal latitude.

The study indicates that high autonomy at the team level is, in itself, related to higher autonomy for individual team members. As such, increasing team autonomy or responsibilities may be an effective means of improving individual task design, and thereby improving team member psychological well-being. An additional means to increase individual autonomy may be to promote team member self-efficacy and to provide a supportive work environment.

In an autonomous team context, moderate levels of support appear to be most effective in encouraging team members to assume individual responsibility.

Work, relational autonomy and Foucault's theories

In this section I examine the issues raised by the relational theory of autonomy, and Foucault's theory in terms of contemporary working conditions and work practices.

A fundamental issue identified by relation autonomy is the need for support indeed love for healthy personal development. Yet as persons grow up they move from family and friend based mutual recognition and support to taking actions and roles in the world that are highly contestable. While Recognition is arguably essential for personal well being it is not assured. As Foucault recognised, historically in any era, there will be those who we exercise power and may undermine our autonomy and not recognise us as persons. These are, arguably, the realities of human life.

The contestability of recognition, as Foucault has helped to identify, in no way implies that any status quo needs to be accepted blindly, without challenge, or without reformation. The entry into the workplace is of fundamental importance for persons, not simply for the amount of time spent there, but in terms of its influence over the development of relationships, learning, communication, self understanding, and also on a person's ability to support themselves.

The framework of recognition can be used to illuminate the impact of contemporary trends and work practices. One trend is the move towards individual

contracts both in the permanent job market as well as the temporary/casual one. The idea of individual contracts, on the surface seems in keeping with promotion of individual choice. However as the relational theory identified choice is not necessary the most important issue when considering the well being of persons. Contracts can have one sided power against employees allowing immediate termination without protections such as warnings or demonstrating sound indeed defensible reasons for terminating an employee.

The effect of such contractual provisions goes far beyond the termination of an employee. In terms of the relational theory of autonomy seems to exploit the vulnerabilities of persons. What is meant here is in describing persons as vulnerable is that they are particularly vulnerable to something, something that is harmful to them and against which they have a reduced or an absent capacity to protect themselves.

Risking termination may not be an option for many workers with obligations. Changing positions where contracts have heavily penetrated sections of the market may also not provide much real opportunity of real change for an employee. To address the issue of the vulnerable we must first hear their voice. The solution isn't found in traditional liberalist concept of autonomy, but a relation one. To be recognised other people must recognize you. To be respected, trusted, supported, encouraged etc requires other people. It can't be simply solved by oneself. Writers about relational autonomy recast the word 'others' in terms of the whole society. Autonomy isn't progressed by those with contracts jumping up and down and being terminated, or going from job to job in what may be a vain hope that the next one will provide better working conditions.

Collective workplace agreements may them selves be flawed in execution, subject to union distortions of power and ideology. Yet they are a response to the collective nature of relatedness. They can be seen as a way of providing protection against vulnerabilities.

Contract workers have noted how they feel invisible, the opposite of being recognized. They may not feel or experience being recognised as persons rather like a pair of hands that does what is asked. This is not to say that contract workers don't need to exercise skills or self directedness, rather that success here may be experienced in a disembodied sense by such workers as their self concept is not that are recognized. This capacity is expected indeed demanded, but the person in the

sense of their humanity is not in the relationship for this kind of relationship not occurring. The focus on outcomes for hours billed.

The human elements of personal recognition are not part of this equation. Contractors being hired before work is available may face the self diminishing prospect of having to appearing to be busy. Harms may arise from the ongoing frustration and loss of confidence in their abilities as they may not have a voice that is heard. In response it might equally argued that permanent staff may have the same problem. While this is true there are policies procedures, processes and may be collective agreements which can provide a layer of recognition that contract workers lack.

Contract workers may be expected to complete assignments what ever that requires. Ten hour plus days, or more, and may also need to work at a frenetic pace. Failure to achieve what has been set, whatever the impediment or difficulty may result in on the spot termination. As result contract workers self esteem and self confidence may be threatened and possibly undermined. One contract worker I spoke to had been given a very unrealistic timeframe to complete an assignment of two weeks. As a result she worked 11 hours days. Some days she only had 10 minute breaks for lunch. The language used by her reveals the inner state, her comment was 'I have to do this', it wasn't perceived as a choice. At the end of the assignment it was obvious she was exhausted.

The consequences of a loss of recognition for contractors may pass unnoticed, as the focus is on outputs, not on any dimension on the person or what they had to do, or the effect this had on them. The notion of recognition identifies the importance of status in how one is treated, in the way other people treat you. Workers who have a temporary status may be perceived as having a lower status, or no status. It may not be considered necessary to consider them when decisions are made that may affect them. They may be given a say in matters concerning their expertise and knowledge. Yet they may have little or no influence over working conditions, concerning who they report to, and access to resources etc.

The relational view of autonomy raises the consideration of supportive social conditions in the workplace. Historically workers, particularly craft workers may have had more recognition, not surprisingly as fathers trained sons in trade. Training was more personalized. The point here isn't about romanticising past working conditions. There will always be a transition that each person will need to

face from the recognition that they receive from family and friends, then at school and then at the workplace. While each person will need to deal with contestability from others of their recognition, how the workplace is structured, management practices can affect not just the recognition persons at work but whether they experience harms, particularly concerning their self esteem, self respect, and identity is undermined.

The relational view noted how persons are emotional beings, and while objective rational rules and procedures in the workplace may promote efficiency, greater control, the effect on persons may not be adequately accounted for. The relational view illuminates that persons have identities and self concerns that mean that if they are reified at work, treated like objects mere factors of production, this can cause them anxiety distress, and reduced self confidence, and trust. The focus on personal recognition identifies how emotional relationships of loving acceptance and care tend to promote self-confidence. It is also important for people to be have self-respect, to view of oneself as equal person among others, capable of acting responsibly, autonomously and rationally. The important issue about self respect is being respected by others as an autonomous person promotes one's self-respect.

In conclusion, the relational theory illuminates how viable autonomy cannot occur for workers that are (in terms of recognition) ignored, silenced and marginalised. The notion of recognition and Foucault's theory of power overlap here. As Foucault writes we will judge societies against an ideal of 'a minimum of domination.'²⁶ A good society must recognise people as agents. Personal recognition is inseparable from contestability, being autonomous doesn't mean anything goes, its means having the opportunity for forms of resistance against any status quo. To recognise a person, is to recognise that they can grow, develop, in ways that can even surprise themselves. In philosophical terms Foucault recasts autonomy as marking the space not of an accomplishment, nor a substantive identity in which the presence of a revolutionary subject might be recognised, but as an ongoing tension in which mediation always risks positioning itself as an instance of capture.

The workplace will always be a crucial place for intersubjective negotiation which is overlayed by the broader needs of the organisation and the collective human needs of the workers. A key and lasting insight of the relational theory is the need for intersubjective negotiation to remain open. Ongoing intersubjective negotiation

occurs in ongoing friendship. In the later discussion of Semco I examine an organisation which appears to be actually fostering relationships based on personal recognition, indeed friendship rather than just the more traditional, roles, rules and procedure based relationships.

Endnotes

- 1 An autonomous subject who stands outside of society is not plausible.
- 2 S Sherwin.. *The politics of women's health: exploring agency and autonomy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1998, pp.19–47.
- 3 Gross illustrations of this dynamic can be seen in the battered-wife syndrome.
- 4 Honneth is a seminal writer about the notion of recognition.
- 5 Axel Honneth. 'Integrity and Disrespect: Principles of a Conception of Morality Based on a Theory of Recognition'. In C. W. Wright (Eds.): *The Fragmented world of the social: Essays in social and political philosophy*. New York , State University of New York Press, 1995 p.257.
- 6 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* New York: Oxford University Press, 1967: pp. 233-34
- 7 Axel Honneth.. 'Integrity and Disrespect', pp.252–256
- 8 Axel Honneth 'Integrity and Disrespect' . p. 253
- 9 Axel Honneth. *Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Oxford : Polity Press. 1996. p.11
- 10 Hegel 1983, pp.120 – 23
- 11 Charles Taylor. *The Sources of the Self*. p.30
- 12 Charles Taylor. 'The Politics of Recognition' in *Philosophical Arguments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. p.231
- 13 Charles Taylor. 'The Politics of Recognition'.p: 23
- 14 Charles Taylor. *Sources of the Self*. p.30.
- 5 Charles Taylor 'The Politics of Recognition'. p.256
- 16 Charles Taylor. 'Comparison, History, Truth' in *Philosophical Arguments*.Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 1995,,: p.151
- 17 Charles Taylor. *Human Agency and Language*, Cambridge University Press. p.125
- 18 Charles Taylor. 'Comparison, History, Truth' in *Philosophical Arguments*.pp.162-163
- 19 Michel Foucault. 'The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom', in: J. Bernauer and D. Rasmussen (eds.), *The Final Foucault*, Boston, Mass., MIT-Press, p15.
- 20 Michel Foucault. 'Technologies of the self'. In L H Martin, H Gutman and P H Hutton (eds) *Technologies of the self*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Press, 1988, pp 16–49.

- 21 Michel Foucault. Technologies of the Self p.20
- 22 Michel Foucault. Technologies of the Self. p.20
- 23 History of Sexuality project, The Use of Pleasure.
- 24 Michel Foucault, "What is Critique?" in What is Enlightenment: Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions, Ed. James Schmidt, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- 25 Michel Foucault. The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom, in: J. Bernauer and D. Rasmussen (eds.), The Final Foucault, Boston, Mass.:MIT-Press, p. 11
- 26 Foucault, 'Ethic of Care', p. 18.

Chapter 3

The value of autonomy

Introduction

In this Chapter I show how autonomy can serve as an explanatory ideal for establishing and realising the good life. To achieve this I explore:

- the various ways values have been defined;
- the importance of values for persons;
- the ways autonomy has been considered valuable (in particular autonomy as a ideal, or value of full autonomy);
- the egalitarian philosophy and its support for autonomy;
- the applicability of the egalitarian approach to work; and
- the notion of the good life and how values provided by autonomy can promote good lives.

Values and autonomy

Autonomy is often raised in discussions about values. It may not be clear, however, what a writer means when they use this term. Human values may be so closely associated with what might otherwise be considered to be distinct concepts that they cannot be easily separated from them.

Economic value: The concept of value is central to traditional economic value theory for which value is the so-called exchange or market worth of a commodity. Economists distinguish between exchange value and the value of persons or societies.

Such values may then be realised by the value assessments and imputations. Baier⁷⁷ distinguishes between value assessments and value imputations. Value assessments are assertions that something does, will or could favourably affect the lives of persons. Value imputations are assertions that someone or some group has, holds, or subscribes to value from some achievement. Examples of values include altruism, comfort, equality, thrift and friendship. The word value here means different things in these different contexts. Assessed values are measures of the capacities of various kinds of entities, including persons, to confer benefits. Alternatively imputed values are measures of tendencies of persons to promote certain ends, for certain reasons.

Instrumental and intrinsic values: A distinction may also be made between instrumental values, which are the means to something else, and intrinsic values which are those desired for themselves such as goodness, truth, and beauty.

Values can also provide a means for persons to direct themselves. Values can also be inventive powers. Human values form a sub section of values. Human values may attach worth to a human being because of their uniqueness. Values may refer to anything human beings cherish.

Values and persons

It is not just any kind of value that will do for persons. One may value a machine, an animal or a person in different ways. Persons have a different status than other creatures. While it may be considered permissible to confine one's pets to one's house this is not something one has the right to do to a person because a person is an entity that has the moral right of self-determination. A person is a creature that deserves this protection under the constitution of a just society. The embodiment of to these principles is enshrined in many international conventions such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. This Declaration describes human rights as universal, natural, inalienable and indefeasible.⁷⁸

If one is exploring autonomy in terms of its contribution to persons and their well-being⁷⁹ it is not the case that any kind of value will do. Persons have interests that are specifically related to their personhood such as the development of their autonomy.

Human beings are not just unique, identifiable sentient beings but they also have a singular past and an anticipated future. Persons have their own locus of subjectivity; they can adopt a position about themselves. A person is the kind of entity that has the moral right to make their own life-choices and to live their life without interference from others. There are practical limits to the degree to which one can do this. Society functions to support collective and individual needs therefore there are limits to the degree that individual needs can be supported. Autonomy occurs within a contestable space.

Persons have no choice but to live their lives in accordance with values. They have needs, desires, preferences and long term goals which determine their courses of action, and they cannot step completely outside of these applied values. Even if one decides to question one's preferences, or to evaluate them, one does this from the standpoint of other preferences that act as a standard for evaluation. Conducting

such an inquiry expresses commitment to a value, that of self-understanding. Thus one never looks at the world, or one's self, from a completely neutral, unmotivated stance.

Values and autonomy

What kind of value is autonomy and why is it valuable? The problem in answering this question is that Liberals, Marxists, and Existentialists approach autonomy with different intentions and hence speak about value with quite different meanings. Dworkin identifies this issue when he writes, '...autonomy actually functions in various ways in our culture as a moral ideal, a political ideal, and a social ideal'.⁸⁰ It is possible to distinguish between moral, political and social autonomy.

To be autonomous is to be self-governed or self-directed in the conduct of one's life. Respecting autonomy involves respect at least for this capacity. The way one may respect the exercise of autonomy, however, can depend on the understanding one has of the value of autonomy.

Respecting autonomy may be based on the view that persons value doing what they want to do. The ability to do what one happens to want to do, however, is not sufficient for self-government. A person whose condition is one of wanton self-indulgence does whatever they happen to want to do. What is valued in self-government is the ability to evaluate desires and to act selectively in accordance with these evaluations.

Will acting in accordance with any kind of evaluation count as an exercise of autonomy? Our answer to this question will depend on what one thinks the point of self-government is. The capacity for self-government is properly exercised and developed to support the well-being of the person who possesses it. Our character is shaped by our chosen actions. These do not merely bring about effects external to us, they also serve to form our dispositions. A person's exercise of choice influences their well-being. So the exercise of autonomy may have value in the way it may promote dispositions that encourage and maintain a person's well-being.

Persons differ in their views on the degree to which an exercise of the capacity for self-direction should be respected. One very important factor in determining these differing views is whether or not one believes there is human knowledge of moral truths, that is, knowledge of the objective requirements one needs to meet to flourish as human beings. If there is such knowledge, then it is clear why one should

value the exercise of choice in conformity with that knowledge, for evidently that would be an exercise of autonomy that makes for human well-being. But it would not be obvious, however, why one should value exercises of autonomy at variance with the requirements of human well-being.

Still, if there is to be choice one has to allow for the reality of erroneous choices. So, necessarily, respect for autonomy must leave scope for some erroneous choices but it does not follow that every exercise of choice is to be respected. If one's choices seriously undermine one's capacity to flourish as persons, and if they aim to damage aspects of this capacity in others, there is no moral reason why those choices should be respected.

Respect for autonomy accommodates the part played by free choice in the achievement of fulfilment for self direction. If the moral significance of autonomy is understood in this way, then the value of autonomy is derived from and reflects, and gives value to one's humanity.

How does autonomy promote values?

In biomedical ethics the value of autonomy is often stated as the right to have one's decisions respected. Autonomy has been used as the ground for not being manipulated or coerced to accept a medical treatment. Instead, the patient has a right to know what the treatment is and a right to accept it or reject it. This is in line with the idea of autonomy as something that ought to be respected. Recently, however, it has become more common to defend various medical practices with reference to autonomy. Autonomy is thereby conceived as an aim to achieve or a value to promote.

Being an autonomous person can be valued. This is a person with authentic desires, and enough decision-making competence and efficiency to implement these desires. The autonomous person has the capacity to independently consider their own projects and values, make decisions on the basis of them and realise them through their own action. This ideal is to a great extent an ideal of character. An autonomous person is not akratic, self-deceiving, confused [or] phobic since all these things tend to destroy autonomy in the sense of authenticity. This ideal also stresses not being manipulated, coerced or in other ways prevented by others from realizing one's plans for life. Also this ideal makes autonomy a matter of degree. The more authentic, decision competent and efficient one is, the better for one. The value is to

be a person that can realize their desires. If the person has desires, it is better if they are authentic and the person is capable of realising them.

Tension in ideas about autonomy and value

There are tensions between various claims made about what autonomy is and its value. H J Engelhardt⁸¹ identifies the nub of the problem⁸² as the recognition of not just numerous accounts of autonomy, but by the inability in a principled fashion to select one as canonical.⁸³ Autonomy is understood as a good and as an element of human well-being. In both of these, however, it can have a different content.

Different accounts of autonomy can lead to strikingly different understandings of what is considered appropriate behaviour. From this perspective it might be argued that an egalitarian such as Lippke⁸⁴, is actually conflating the concept of autonomy with other concepts, for example, with the concepts of the good life, moral responsibility, or of authenticity.

It is sometimes argued that autonomy must be conceptually linked to a substantive conception of the good. According to this view, it is not enough that persons be autonomous in choosing how they should live but that the government should be actively engaged in promoting conceptions of the good that are autonomy-friendly. This concept is defended by Thomas Hill Green. He writes:

...man seeks to satisfy himself, not as one who feels this or that desire, but as one who conceives, whose nature demands, a permanent good. So far as it is thus in respect of his rational desire that he makes himself an object of himself, his will is autonomous. ... So far the modern state ... does contribute to the realization of freedom, if by freedom one understand the autonomy of the will or its determination by rational objects, which help to satisfy the demand of reason, the effort after self-perfection. It means a particular kind of self-determination; the state of the man who lives indeed for himself, but for the fulfillment of himself as a giver of law universal; who lives for himself, but only to the true idea of himself, according to the law of his being, according to the nature.⁸⁵

The values discussed in terms of autonomy are frequently influenced by Liberalist philosophy that is committed to the idea that persons in a political society must be free. The underlying belief here is crystallized by Kymlicka: ‘...No life goes better by being led from outside according to values that the person does not endorse’..⁸⁶

No one, including the government, may be in a better position than I am to know my own good. It is better for persons to choose their own way of life. Persons should not be dragooned into living what others consider to be good lives.

Mill states that ‘...it is the privilege and proper condition of a human being, arrived at the maturity of his faculties, to use and interpret experience in his own way’. ‘To make free choice implies no higher authority of any kind, and ‘he who does anything because it is the custom makes no choice.’⁸⁷ Mill’s autonomy, hence, does not only contain the idea of having freedom to choose, but also the idea of using some individual capabilities to arrive at the right decision and apprehend the truth. As Mill says ‘the mental and moral, like the muscular, powers are improved only by being used’.⁸⁸ Hence autonomy may be enhanced when it is exercised.

According to personal rights, respect, sovereignty a person should be able to decide for one’s self how to best pursue one’s own good. This claim is necessarily limited, the ability to make one’s own decisions should not be a warrant for a person to do anything no matter how morally valueless the options being exercised.

Autonomy as a result can be seen as something that gives rise to negative rights or side-restrictions for how persons are allowed to treat each other.⁸⁹ If one is an adult and competent to make decisions, other persons should not prevent that individual from making decisions and acting upon them if they do not violate the rights of others or inflict damage on someone else. According to this line of reasoning, one has a duty to not restrict the autonomy of others. This, however, does not imply any obligation to help others to be more autonomous. In other words, one have a moral obligation to respect autonomy but not necessarily to promote it. Rawls and Gerald Dworkin avoid any guideline regarding the good. This accords with Mill’s view that ‘...the only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way’.⁹⁰ Mill wants to protect persons from oppressive majorities in society in cases where the individual is right and society is wrong. But should the opposite be the case—that the society is right and the individual is wrong—then the society may offer or even obtrude on the individual ‘...considerations to aid his judgment, exhortations to strengthen his will, ... but he himself is the final judge. All errors which he is likely to commit against advice and warning are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain him to what they deem is good’.⁹¹

With an alternative view of autonomy such as egalitarianism one can argue that it is not enough that one be autonomous in choosing how one should live. Rather there

is a need to promote conceptions of the good that are autonomy-friendly. There is subsequent rich and lengthy debate about whether the government should take on this role. Alternatively one could argue that autonomy does not need to be promoted and that persons need to respond their life circumstances as best they can.⁹² Raz on the other hand is only prepared to endorse those options that he thinks are not ignoble or immoral; namely those that are derived from the autonomous nature of all humans. The government therefore has to be based on a principle that is derivable from morality which regards the personal. He writes:

... the government must promote value pluralism so that citizens' autonomy as an essential ingredient of the good life, and regards the principle of autonomy, which imposes duties on persons to secure all the conditions of autonomy, as one of the most important moral principles.⁹³

By seeing autonomy in terms of certain values and these as a moral imperative one runs the risk that one is not in fact promoting values for the good. Paternalistic interventions can also be a form of disrespect.

Concerns about the arbitrariness of values within autonomy

Gerald Dworkin's concerns about promoting some values over others in the name of autonomy are not without foundation. There is however something disturbing about autonomy that allows a person to be a '...tyrant or a slave, a saint or sinner, a leader or follower.'⁹⁴ Ronald Dworkin's account of values also raises questions:

...each person follows a more-or-less articulate conception of what gives value to life. The scholar who values a life of contemplation has such a conception; so does the television-watching, beer-drinking citizen who is fond of saying 'This is the life', though he has thought less about the issue and is less able to describe or defend his conception.⁹⁵

For Rawls a scoundrel may be considered as autonomous as long as they express this characteristic freely and freely choose selfhood in life.⁹⁶ Here the implicit value of justice is that it is endeavouring to provide agents with the maximum liberty possible in the choice of their conceptions of good.⁹⁷

There is no agreement regarding the epistemic status of the conception of the good. It is not in dispute that different persons can hold radically different views of what a good life is and also genuinely believe and hold that their view is good, indeed correct. Yet does this necessarily make them equivalent? All values are not of equal

merit. As Raz writes ‘...certain conceptions of the good are worthless and demeaning, and political action should be taken to eradicate or curtail them’.⁹⁸

It needs to be noted that reflecting and endorsing one’s desires can be done sub-optimally. One’s autonomy is not intrinsically valuable if it is used for harm; for rash, or self-destructive choices. Autonomy is not equally valuable for persons who have different levels of it

Good values

How does one distinguish a good value from a bad one and how does one know that one has decided in a valid way what one should do? Some clarifications and some qualifications can be made about what can be called positive and oppressive values. Good/positive values are consistent with principles such as charity, sympathy, compassion and the notion of treating others as ends in themselves. Bad/oppressive values are inconsistent with such principles; for example dishonesty, treachery, and the principle of treating others merely as a means to an end.

Any particular theory or set of principles is likely to be wrong or incomplete. So in evaluating and selecting values, the conceptions of a good life must be subject to revision themselves. Persons may be mistaken about what the good for them consists in and, therefore, must have the opportunity to revise their life plans. As Kymlicka writes, persons must be able to question the current belief and conception of the good life because ‘...leading a good life is different from leading the life one currently believe to be good’.⁹⁹

There are valid reasons to be sceptical about the epistemic status of our conception of the good. One cannot believe any conception of the good to be necessarily true and claim a privileged status in a society. Given this one must have the cultural conditions conducive to acquiring an awareness of different views about the good life, and to acquiring an ability to intelligently examine and re-examine these views.¹⁰⁰ Internalised values do need to be examined for they may not actually promote the good.

For autonomy one needs to be able to re-evaluate the values one holds. A good example here is the often quoted case of Huck Finn by Mark Twain.¹⁰¹ Huck is on a raft with his friend and fugitive slave, Jim. Huck Finn is torn between his belief that Jim, a slave, is someone’s property and therefore ought to be returned to his owner, and his feelings of sympathy and friendship for Jim. When Huck has to tell the

white slave hunters whether his companion his white or black Huck says his companion is white, while at the same time expressing the thought that he has consigned his soul to hell and has abandoned morality. Huck feels and acts out of sympathy for his friend, the slave Jim, while believing he is wrong in doing so.

One might consider that Huck has given up his values in turning himself over to whatever impulse is the strongest at the moment and has abandoned the possibility of self-governance. Yet what autonomy means in a deeper sense is taking an occasional step back from one's self, so that one can ask one's self whether this is what one wishes to hold and value for one's self and for others. The point here is that the good life does not involve maintaining dogmatically certain values. Certainly one should not be overturning values that are important on a whim, yet it is also important that one is able to review one's values in an ongoing way.

Stout provides an insightful perspective into the problem of values and good. He writes:

... [Persons] lack the virtues needed to use their freedom well whether in the political arena, in the workplace, in the home, or elsewhere. Terminal wistfulness (the supposed character of communitarianism which Rorty debases, i.e. utopianism, idealism, romanticism, etc.) doesn't help, but neither does the idea that liberal freedom is worth the price of bad persons. The latter is as far removed from our actual choices as the former. What one need to discover, it seems to me, is the mean between smug approval of the status quo and wistful alienation from it - the mean between liberal apologetics and implicitly utopian criticism.¹⁰²

There is, as Stout argues, a need to explore ways in which one can reintegrate the now theoretically separate realms of economy, politics and culture into a societal system that no longer ignores injustice and instils virtues in its persons that are 'needed to use their freedom well'.¹⁰³

Revising the good

One may conceptualize forms of autonomy that don't promote the good for persons. These forms of autonomy may provide some other kinds of values, such as value for the economic market. One can also conceive forms of autonomy that don't have value. It is important that one is able to revise one's conception of what makes life good because one can make mistakes about it, and since one have an

interest in being able to live a good life, it helps if one can correct mistakes about how to do it. Furthermore, if one is able to act on these revisions, one shall be living our lives according to our conception of what makes life good. It is to these ends that autonomy matters.

Part of what is definitive about persons is our ability to think about and so choose our visions of the good which partly define the kind of persons we are. A person's values are at least in part up to them and are in this sense subjective. A person can have a say in creating or inventing the kind of person it is worth being. To be able to invent oneself in this way is to have a kind of freedom that is distinctly human. It is a freedom not merely to control our actions but govern ourselves; to have autonomy. One could see that it is inconsistent with our autonomous state that the source of the values at issue in the kind of person it is worth our being could be wholly external to us.

There seems to be an element of objectivity in what values a person holds in that they can deliberate about them correctly or incorrectly. Deliberation is a matter of choosing for reasons, thereby making possible consideration of why one course of life is better than another.

Through deliberation one can discover the values things have and the kind of person it is worth our being, and potentially overcome delusions or misunderstandings about ourselves. The possibility of such discovery means that there are rational constraints on which values one can autonomously choose.

There are some values that it may be morally impermissible to choose, such as the value of bigotry. Our choice of personal values and so our understanding of the kind of person it is worth each of us being is not arbitrary in this way. It is possible to have better or worse reasons for our choices, reasons one might discover only through much effort and soul-searching.

Autonomous invention and rational discovery are essential to our understanding of ourselves as persons. It is arguable that not having invention is to give up on our autonomy, our ability to have a say in the kind of person it is worth our being and thereby to take responsibility for who one is. The ability both to call our lives into question and, having done so, to determine what life it is worth leading, is fundamental to distinguishing ourselves as persons from animals. An arbitrarily chosen life lacks the kind of grounding that is precisely the point of one's

deliberation about value: to attain through the discovery of such grounds a depth of meaning in one's life that would be wholly lacking in a life chosen arbitrarily.

Egalitarian values and autonomy

For egalitarians autonomy can provide another kind of value it can serve as a inspirational ideal for those who must cope with the all too familiar human wrongs of abuse, exploitation, domination, and oppression.¹⁰⁴ Here the notion of autonomy can raise ethical dimensions about the conditions under which persons live.

Autonomy can be an ideal that provides a normative standpoint for assessing social conditions that suppress or prevent autonomy. Oppression does more than simply limit one's options at the time of choosing. It also infects the conditions under which persons are socialised. Oppression may damage someone's capacity to care about what is worth caring about. It may deform the nature of a person's concern for one's self.

Autonomy may assist moral competence; the ability to discern the moral salience of the situations one faces, and use this by being responsive to the needs and attitudes of others involved in those situations.

Lippke in *Radical Business Ethics* explains how autonomy can function as an evaluative ideal. One of his key theses is that '...structural features of society determine how individual lives will go'.¹⁰⁵ He argues that structural features of advanced capitalist societies truly and unfairly impede persons in their efforts to attain happiness, autonomy, or self-development.

Basic structural features of society play a huge influence in determining whether persons attain or realize the values in question. Those structural features are what determine access to the means of subsistence, education, health care, culture, social and political power and economic opportunities.¹⁰⁶ It is true that some of the most important problems involved in achieving autonomy are largely structural.

Most prospective employees in advanced capitalist systems lack feasible alternatives to the acceptance of work under conditions that deny them the exercise of their moral powers. It is simply not the case that there are work options readily available that respect these powers and ones that do not.¹⁰⁷

From an egalitarian perspective, work that affirms the autonomy of persons is a highly significant component of having a meaningful life. What is in focus here is the

role that work plays in determining the character and quality of individuals' lives.¹⁰⁸ Lippke writes:

Egalitarians object to the inequality in overall life prospects, the existence of a large class of persons who lack the basic prerequisites of a decent life, the extent to which wealth and economic power are allowed to undermine political democracy and dominate social life, and the increasing hegemony of the consumer lifestyle in such societies.¹⁰⁹

As Ronald Dworkin argues '...persons should be relieved of consequential responsibility for those unfortunate features of their situation that are brute bad luck, but not from those that should be seen as flowing from their own choices'.¹¹⁰ Egalitarians argue that one should respond to this situation. Activities such as distributing resources may be necessary '...in order to ameliorate the inequalities in natural circumstances and endowments and market failures'.¹¹¹

Validation of egalitarian concerns about work

The work of Professor Marmot¹¹² in his seminal Whitehall Studies provides very strong evidence for the applicability of an egalitarian point of view when considering the ethical dimension of work practices. Marmot and his fellow researchers studied several groups of British civil servants, the largest being 17,530 over 5 years, and he found a dramatic difference in disease from those at the top of the Civil Service hierarchy compared to those at the bottom. Mortality from coronary heart disease over a 7½ year period was much higher in the lower employment grades.¹¹³

He found that lower-rank civil servants (mainly unskilled manual workers) had coronary disease rates almost four times greater than those in top (administrative) grades. The fourfold difference in disease rate, top to bottom is not surprising, because the most important predictor of health and well-being has always been social class. What is surprising about this finding is not the variation by grade but the gradient. Why do those at step 2, one step from the top, professionals and executives in the British Civil Service, doctors and lawyers, have disease rates twice as high as those at the very top? Why persons at the bottom of the hierarchy have higher rates of disease can be explained in terms of low income, low education, poor medical care, poor housing, but that is not true of professionals and executives. The difference could not be simply attributed to the income, 'executive grade civil

servants are not poor by any absolute standard, yet have higher mortality rates than administrators'.¹¹⁴ The threefold difference in mortality between the lowest and highest employment grades in the Civil Service is much greater than differences between social classes.

Of significance for the investigation of autonomy at work, is the finding in the Whitehall study that men and women who rated their jobs as low for control, variety, use of skills, pace, support at work or satisfaction had higher rates of short and long periods of sickness absence than those who rated their jobs high for these characteristics. This was particularly striking for control and variety of use of skills. Men who reported low variety and use of skills had 72% and 82% higher rates of short and long spells of absence respectively, compared to those who reported high variety and use of skills.¹¹⁵ Marmot's and Smith's research shows that features of work can be a major cause of preventable premature death. As Marmot concludes, there is no known biological reason why persons of class 4 and 5, lower semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers should not have the same mortality rates up to age 65 as persons in class 1 and 2.¹¹⁶

In his Whitehall II study Marmot identifies the key factor influencing health status against position. When controlling the gradient for the concept of control the gradient of health outcomes disappears. So control becomes the key factor in the differential of health outcomes.

The Whitehall II study showed that even after controlling for other risk factors, those with the lowest job control had the highest risk of coronary heart disease. In the study data was collected from 7,373 workers who were contacted on three occasions. The mean length of follow up was 5.3 years. About a quarter of the gradient could be explained by social differentials in smoking, cholesterol, blood pressure, height, obesity and physical activity. Although they are correlated, low control and low socio-economic status are separable. Low control predicts coronary heart disease (CHD) independently of its relation to socio-economic status. Persons in the lower employment grades have less control, and workplace control when included in the model explains the rest of the relation between employment grade and coronary heart disease. Marmot argues that workplace control is directly on the causal pathway of disease. Low control in the workplace affects the body directly through the brain, and various hormones in the body, and those effects in turn change a person's physiology and biochemistry and increase their risk of disease.

There is no shortage of other health research which also validates these findings. They provide sufficient reasons to heed egalitarian concerns about work. Lippke is correct. Autonomy as an ideal does provide a means of illuminating egalitarian concerns in a way that mainstream business ethics does not do.

Another important finding supporting the value of autonomy for work comes from research conducted by Benz and Frey over 23 countries.¹¹⁷ The conclusions here were that higher job satisfaction can be directly attributed to the greater autonomy that self-employed persons enjoy. The results also held for countries with a non-western background.¹¹⁸ Of significance was the finding that autonomy is not valued because it leads to better instrumental outcomes, like higher income, but rather because it is a good decision making procedure.¹¹⁹ The value of autonomy essentially explains the whole job satisfaction differential between self-employed and employed persons, at least in western countries. Self-employed persons value being freer to select tasks they find interesting, and they can determine the variety of their tasks.¹²⁰ The results of this research show that autonomy of choice seems to be of value to persons in many cultures.¹²¹

Value of full autonomy

For Lippke the question of what is the value of autonomy can be more clearly answered by distinguishing between what he refers to as partial and full autonomy. He writes that one can try to put persons in the best position to pursue good lives. Persons as rational beings are capable of framing a concept of well-being in life, and deserve a more equal chance at a good life. This is necessarily an ideal, but as Lippke identifies, it is a worthwhile one. Ensuring that persons 'have the skills of full autonomy' puts persons in that position to pursue good lives¹²² and that it is unclear what else could take place of those skills.¹²³

Autonomy does not necessarily have to contribute value to other lives. One can conceive of forms of autonomy that don't have value. The way these can be distinguished is by the difference between minimal to full autonomy.¹²⁴ However as Lippke notes, there is '...a continuum from minimal to full autonomy'.¹²⁵ How is full autonomy conceptualised? Fully autonomous persons have developed skills of cognitive and practical rationality that enable them to lead critically reflective lives. While they are disposed to, and capable of, rational scrutiny of their desires and to projects this does not mean that they are continually engaged in it. As Meyers argues, full autonomy requires persons to develop competencies such as the ability

to see themselves without self-deception or the presence of other distorting defences to be sensitive to doubts, anxieties and dissatisfactions with the way that their lives are going. Such persons are able and willing to reflect on their beliefs and values and their mutual implications to imaginatively discover activities and pursuits that accord with their talents, interests, and temperaments: to incorporate self-chosen commitments and ideals into their conduct and to realize at least some of the important ends that they set for themselves. These competencies enable fully autonomous persons to exercise critical oversight over their lives and thus to progressively stamp their lives with their own style.¹²⁶

The benefits of full autonomy

To be a person it may be argued that it is necessary to have full autonomy. Autonomy endows a person with inherent value and makes them an end in itself, or a subsistent end. In this sense autonomy can be considered subsistent in or of itself and not just because it satisfies a desire or need of a subject.

One who is capable of determining themselves in some minimal degree, is, in that respect, capable of action that partly determines the particular and distinctive person they are; their overall identity is partly defined by their deep concerns. Although a person's resources for acting and reflecting are socially grounded, they can act and reflect separately from all other persons. The distinctive set of concerns that partly constitute a person's perspective further entrenches itself as a characteristic of the person to the extent that it is effective in shaping their actions and their life. Practices of behaving autonomously can thus make us more distinct from each other than we are to begin with. Autonomy further individuates us.¹²⁷

Full autonomy has a crucial role to play in promoting happiness. It is true that fully autonomous persons may be more likely than others to despair of meaning, to be unable to justify to themselves the grounds on which they prefer one choice of ends over another or to be anxious and self-absorbed. Moreover, full autonomy may enable persons to select projects and activities that fit in better with their talents, interests and temperaments. Fully autonomous persons are likely to have better self-knowledge and are likely to be more astute at evaluating which pursuits are best for them. Such persons have the competencies that enable them to tailor life plans that reflect their own priorities.

In contrast persons whose lives are wholly directed by others are not in any sense authors of what they do. They also cannot enjoy responsibility, self-respect and the chance to engage in self-monitoring and self-criticism. These goods are only available to persons who are free to formulate and act on their own intentions and to thereby determine their own biographical paths through life.¹²⁸

Fully autonomous persons are not limited in their scrutiny of themselves by whatever standards or ideals they simply happen to find themselves with. Instead they will, on occasion, subject to criticism even those standards or ideals around which they base their lives.¹²⁹ Persons with full autonomy have the competencies that enable them to tailor life plans that reflect their own priorities.¹³⁰ As Lippke argues:

In pluralistic societies persons will need to make choices, those who lack the competence to make reflective decisions seem at a distinct disadvantage. Heteronomy also leaves persons susceptible to flawed conceptions of important goods. Whether this is because they are inadequately exposed to what Richard Hare terms facts and logic or got enough of the right concepts. The fact is that persons are often in a muddle about matters of great significance to their own happiness. For instance suppose that an individual's conception of the good of friendship is such that she believes that a friend is someone who will always act in ways that please her. It seems unlikely that she will be able to find persons who conform to this conception and so she will be frustrated in her pursuit of it.¹³¹

Lippke provides a good overview of the benefits of full autonomy against minimal autonomy in the following:

...now suppose she succeeds in finding someone who always acts to please her. Nonetheless, a different conception of friendship might bring her even more happiness. If she were willing to allow that a friend can sometimes cause her pain by giving her honest feedback that leads her to grow intellectually or emotionally, she might discover opportunities for different and perhaps deeper satisfactions. Minimally autonomous persons who cannot critically scrutinize or rethink the goods they pursue seem cut off from better lives in this way.¹³²

Fully autonomous persons are better equipped to carefully evaluate existing roles, norms and social structures and to try to reconstitute them in ways that more equitably contribute to human flourishing and to the communal bonds likely to thereby be strengthened.¹³³

The competencies comprising full autonomy are ideally suited for helping persons to oversee their lives to gain accurate and sensitive self-portraits and to determine which mix of goods and what priorities are most likely bring them happiness.¹³⁴ Those deficient in self-monitoring skills or the ability to imaginatively reconstruct their life plans will be more prone to frustration and dissatisfaction in the face of such changes.¹³⁵

Conclusions

Libertarians, as different to each other as Hayek and Rawls, assume that persons are basically benign and rational, and hence urge the government not to interfere with their choices and to allow persons to set their personal and collective courses on their own. It is not always true that persons are benign and rational. Accepting the need for neutrality rather than tyrannizing persons into holding particular values does mean however that the government should be neutral about absolutely everything that persons do, or about everything they perceive as good in the name of well-being. As Ronald Dworkin argues, liberal neutrality is not compromised when ‘...a thief is punished who claims to believe that theft is central to a good life’.¹³⁶ Maintaining neutrality should not mean that anything goes. Government action may be needed in order to ameliorate the inequalities in natural circumstances, endowments and market failures.

The notion of well-being is useful in helping to find some boundaries; some limits within a variety of conceptions of good. While human beings are enormously adaptable they have limits. Ill health can provide markers of conditions that do not promote well being. When a certain condition is clearly found to harm persons the response to it could be like Ronald Dworkin’s idea of a referee in a football game. Here the liberal state would only allow freedom up to the boundary where persons are not harmed. In response to this theory a critic might argue that whether some one is harmed or not is ambiguous. This is only true to a point. As Professor Marmot’s research demonstrates, lack of autonomy at work can negatively affect workers’ well-being.

Autonomy is genuinely valuable. When applied in the egalitarian approach autonomy can highlight the values and assumptions that influence inequality at work.

The problem of paternalism could also be raised regarding protecting persons from harm. It is accepted that persons should have the freedom to make mistakes and take some risks. Indeed this can be thought of as an aspect of autonomy. Here the question arises around where one might find a line between excessive paternalism to prevent harm and paternalism that promotes well-being. Autonomy must remain fairly thin to protect agents from various forms of disrespect, including unwarranted paternalistic intervention. It is not a simple undertaking to determine where the boundaries should be. Egalitarians may see some paternalism as a lesser evil than the harm and disadvantage that could be prevented by action to address inequalities.

The aims of egalitarianism go further than reducing harm to persons. They involve helping them to flourish. While this is an ambitious aim it is not necessarily an impossible one. It is possible, for example, to clarify the kinds of values that may promote a good life via autonomy. The notion of full autonomy helps in this regard. It does provide a way of responding to what might otherwise be thought of as arbitrariness of the values which accord with autonomy. It is accepted, however, that what is good for persons is not something that one can always be certain about. This is not necessarily a problem for egalitarians for what is important is the kind of good that is pursued in promoting autonomy. A process of discovery where the good is understood in an open-ended way seems to be the best approach.

Well-being is related to the degree of autonomy one has. Medical evidence supports Lippke's argument that full autonomy is associated with greater well-being. Accepting that this is true does not solve the problem of whether inequalities should be addressed to some degree or at all? It could still be argued that it is nobody's business, Government or otherwise, to address inequalities. If some persons have less autonomy than others then that is just something for the free market to regulate and persons just have to deal with.

The fairness of the so-called free market is questionable. In considering potential arguments for the inherent fairness of economic markets,¹³⁷ Sen discussed Friedman and Friedman's¹³⁸ claim that the market makes persons free to choose, a freedom that might be seen to be valuable in itself whether or not it also helps in other ways,

such as the protection of the interests of the consumers. Sen noted that, 'If that freedom is shown to be illusory, then the case for the market mechanism would be disestablished'.¹³⁹ Despite all the competition and individual decisions involved in buying and selling, a surprising equilibrium is reached, so that the market not only appears to be just—because no one interferes with our choices—it also appears to work.

Thus, the notion illusory or otherwise, that the free market presents persons with the opportunity to control their own fates seems to play some role in perceptions of economic fairness. The belief that free markets are inherently fair is widely held in the Western world and has been making incursions into other regions. Market-based systems now enjoy a kind of taken-for-granted legitimacy. As a result of the increasing dominance of fair market ideology, other ways of reasoning, other logical schemes, and other values are unlikely to be seriously considered, even if they would be preferable on moral grounds.

Moreover it is easy to say that one should accept what ever is available to one if one is not disadvantaged. Disadvantage and the ability to do something about it do seem to be negatively correlated. Those who are best placed to address this situation are not those that are disadvantaged, though they could assist.

Some may not see evidence of harm and suffering due to disadvantage, as good enough reason to disrupt the free market. In the end values can only be driven in part by reason, by arguments and by evidence. Values should be guided by our reasoning and by our judgement. Yet we are persons, not machines programmed by facts and by logic. Our values also involve emotions and this is well understood in seeing values as preferences. The sort of preferences one has in action in a social sense do effect the kind of society and world one has. Our preferences are important. In the end our choices may reach further than can be justified. Because of this a person needs to evaluate their values in an ongoing way and be able to recast them.

Raz's¹⁴⁰ requirements for persons to pursue acceptable valuable projects and relationships are best understood as an ideal. Ideals can be useful as they can inform us about the direction one should aim for. Full autonomy recognises that human beings are capable of forming and acting on intelligent conceptions of how their lives should be lived. From a moral point of view, all humans possess these characteristics and should be treated as equals.

Autonomy can allow us to evaluate social institutions, practices and individual actions. In the work context the encouragement of full autonomy and critical reflection on the tendencies of existing institutions and practice, can provide insurance against domination.

Is full autonomy an essential ingredient of the good life? There are good reasons to think so. Autonomy allows detachment from the immediate situation and allows one to lead one's life autonomously, orientate oneself toward distant goals, and to persevere in this direction against obstacles. The result of such determinations represents an enormously enlarged life perspective.

A paramount part of the good life is that an individual decides what sort of life to live and how to pursue their ends. It is possible for autonomous persons to continue to choose bad options. This should not be a usual situation. Full autonomy should help inform persons about what options and what actions are worth valuing and what are those that are not. It should help prevent one from taking actions that are not worth valuing. A person who cares about their own autonomy cares about their own activity of reflecting on their deeper self-defining desires and principles and act accordingly. They care about their own self-reflectiveness, and the wants and values they reaffirm thereby, as ends to promote. It is difficult to achieve moral competence without personal autonomy.

It would be a mistake to see autonomy as principally about self-concern. In recognising the value of autonomy one grasps that not only does one seek to live as one ought but that others have similar desires. Autonomy can involve collective and individual reciprocity. While respecting others' wants and values regarding their lives, one expects the same respect and value from them.

If one wants to be the kind of person who makes decisions and accepts responsibility for them, or who chooses and develops their life plan, then choices are valued not for what they produce nor for what they are in themselves, but as a constitutive ideal of a good life.

Chapter 3

Autonomy and scientific management

Introduction

In this chapter, I explore and analyse the impact of scientific management on autonomy. To achieve this, I will review the main features of scientific management; consider Henry Braverman's deskilling thesis as a response to scientific management and labour process theory; and use these two theories to critically identify and consider the implications of scientific management for autonomy.

Background to the development of scientific management

Scientific management aimed to gain increased control over the process of work and the end product of work. Prior to the industrial revolution in order to produce a commodity, the merchant had to buy labour power to work on materials supplied by the merchant. The process of buying labour was known as putting out, and the labour included working from a home site. If several workers were involved, it was classed as the system of cottage industry. The capitalist had to take labour power as it was found, and only the type of work undertaken was under capitalist control.

Irregularity of production, loss of materials in transit, slowness of manufacture, lack of uniformity, and uncertainty of the product's quality plagued the subcontracting and putting out systems. Most of all these factors provided limited means to change the process of production.¹⁴¹ Control without centralisation of employment was very difficult, and so the precondition for management was gathering workers under a single roof. This enforced upon workers regular hours of work in contrast to the self-imposed pace of cottage work that included many interruptions, short days and holidays.

Employers could not exercise direct control while the subcontracting or putting out system persisted, as Friedman notes with the silk ribbon weaving industry, a great advantage of the trade from the weavers' point of view was the degree of direct control they exercised over their hours and pace of work.¹⁴²

By bringing about a transition from home-based (domestic/cottage) production to the workshop or factory capitalists had more direct control over the work process. The organisation of work, however, was still a problem for the capitalist as the process of production still relied on

traditional hand skills. Craft guilds were also active in restricting the number of journeymen and apprentices who could be employed¹⁴³

With the advent of new technology (mechanisation), the capitalist could now create a division of labour by breaking down the production process into separate tasks. The outcome of this was to deny the worker full knowledge of the production process. In this early period of the industrial revolution, manufacturing processes helped to break down the craft guilds and create a hierarchy 'based on skill, training and wages, including a substantial class of unskilled labourers'.¹⁴⁴

The beginnings of industrial organisation can be linked to the formal subordination of labour where peasants, small producers, farmers, craftsmen, and artisans are gradually separated from access to productive property and independent means of existence. This process, also known as primitive accumulation resulted in persons being forced into a labour market to sell their labour and work for a wage. Separation from productive property did not result in an automatic acceptance of the wage-labour relationship. As Thompson says, 'there were many halfway stages before the workhouse door was reached'.¹⁴⁵ The redefinition of human roles and identities under the wave of capitalist industrialisation disrupted communities and guilds. This provoked intense resistance over the emerging organisation of production. Workers responded by forming exclusive craft unions which excluded unskilled men, women and children.¹⁴⁶ Countering resistance to management control is an ongoing force behind the development of management practices.

Features of scientific management

Frederick Winslow Taylor has been considered the father of scientific management. Taylor was one of the first to attempt to systematically analyse human behaviour at work. Before scientific management, it was thought that the only way to produce more was to work harder. By divesting work of its analytic component, Taylor saw that the key to profit was routine work methodology.

Taylor's system involves four steps. The first is the development of a science for each element of the labor process. Taylor believed that each and every physical act of labour could be subjected to scientific analysis, and that the single best way to carry out each act could eventually be discovered.¹⁴⁷

Once each task was sufficiently analysed and perfected, management needed to scientifically select, train and develop workers. Taylor recognised that labour was

variable in its capacities and talents, and that management must be able to detect these differences and assign workers to the tasks most appropriate to them.

In this sense, Taylor believed in the axiom 'there is a proper tool for every job'.

Persons were viewed as tools, instruments or, more accurately, parts to be fitted into the production process. The challenge was to determine the dimensions of the assorted parts of labour. Here, science was called upon, this time to measure human specifications with regard to reaction time, physical prowess and mental capacity. Taylor spoke of physiological experiments and the measurement of the personal coefficient that gauged the quick powers of perceptions accompanied by quick responsive action.

On the basis of these types of experiments, managers could select the best worker for a particular job.

Taylor's primary concern was to create relatively simple tasks on the basis of time and motion analysis, and select workers appropriate for the performance of these simple tasks. These might range from handling pig iron to shovelling coal. The scientific analysis of the labour process reduced all jobs to a series of simple and repetitive physical motions.

Taylor notes that, in contrast to earlier systems of management where 'practically the whole problem is up to the workman', under scientific management, 'fully one-half of the problem is up to the management.' There is a clear division of labour, a mental-manual division. Managers plan and workers execute.¹⁴⁸

With scientific management workers were treated as interchangeable, each doing a specific function. Taylor broke down each task into its smallest unit to figure out the best way to do each job. After analysing the job, the worker was taught to perform only those motions essential to completing the task. The effect of this was to remove knowledge from workers and leave them with handwork. They were required to do as they were directed rather than think. What Taylor required was unquestioning subordination.

He says to the benighted pig-iron handler, Schmidt, You know just as well as I do that a high-priced man has to do exactly as he is told from morning till night ... And what's more no back-talk. A high-priced man does just what he's told to do and no back-talk. Do you understand that? When this man tells you to walk, you walks; when he tells you to sit down, you sit down, and you don't talk back at him.¹⁴⁹

Taylor's approach only allowed for strict adherence to instructions. There was no room for initiative, only the carrying out in the smallest detail what one had been ordered to do. A problem faced by management was how to obtain the best initiative from every workman. The workers believe it to be directly against their interests to give their employers their best initiative, and that instead of working hard to do the largest possible amount and quality of work for their employers, they deliberately work as slowly as they could while, at the same time, trying to make their superiors believe they are working quickly. Here Taylor is referring to the so-called *soldiering* by workers.¹⁵⁰

Taylor's challenge was to reduce labour to an object of the production process. Rather than having labour determine the organisation of production or the pace of work, managers would determine these and the structural apparatus would be based on scientific management. This could be achieved by dissolving the recognise of independent action or, more specifically, the leverage obtained by virtue of possessing technical knowledge. Curtailing this source of power was part of the effort to push labour closer to the object side of human existence and toward a convergence with the other factors of production. For Taylor, only the application of science could realise this purpose. In addition, science would remove the variability and uncertainty characterising the methods of production and replace them with a one best way to complete any given task.

What was the impact of scientific management on workers?

Powderly provides a vivid example of the change in the amount of control workers had over their lives during the industrial revolution:

The village blacksmith shop was abandoned, the roadside shoe shop was deserted, the tailor left his bench and all together these mechanics (workers) turned away from their country homes and wended their way to the cities wherein the large factories had been erected. The gates were unlocked in the morning to allow them to enter, and after their daily task was done the gates were closed after them in the evening. Silently and thoughtfully, these men went to their homes. They no longer carried the keys of the workshop; tools and key belonged not to them, but to their master.¹⁵¹

The labour process has become the responsibility of the capitalist. According to Braverman, in the United States, around four-fifths of the population was self-employed in the early part of the nineteenth century. By 1870 this had declined to about one-third, and by 1940 to no more than one-fifth. By 1970 only one-tenth of the population was self-employed. This is a significant shift in management control since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Increasingly work was not just done for others, but organised by others.

Scientific management and deskilling

Henry Braverman's landmark book *Labour and Monopoly Capital* stands out within the critical discussion of scientific management. According to Braverman, capitalism contains a logic of deskilling manifested in Taylorism. This involved a twofold process of job fragmentation and the progressive separation of conception from execution in the process of production. Braverman states, there was a transition from production dominated by the scientific knowledge and craft skills of workers, to a situation in which management exercised full control over the knowledge and design of the production process. Each step of the labour process would be broken down into its simplest elements, and management would determine the most efficient method of performing the task and provide detailed instructions that workers would follow unquestioningly. Taylor anticipated considerable increases in productivity through the simplification of production into specialised tasks. The result, as Braverman argues, is deskilling as workers perform increasingly routine, fragmented tasks without understanding the principles underlying the production process.

The progressive application of scientific management overtook the guilds and crafts and replaced them with a sequential manufacturing process known as the assembly line. Skilled artisans, who once performed many different tasks were replaced by lower paid factory workers, each performing a single task.

Braverman rightly considered control to be the central concept of all management systems. It was essential for the capitalist that control over the labour process pass from the hands of the worker into his own. Thus, Taylorism was not simply a system of job design, but of control over alienated labour. The first implication of this principle is that Taylor's science of work is never to be developed by the worker and always to be by management. All of the planning which, under the old system, was done by the workman, as a result of his personal experience, must of necessity

under the new system be done by management in accordance with the laws of the science. Besides even if the workers were well suited to the development and use of scientific data, it would be physically impossible for them to work at their machine and a desk at the same time.

Braverman rightly argues that, for Taylor, the purpose of study was to cheapen the worker by decreasing his training and enlarging his output. In his early book, *Shop Management*, Taylor said frankly that the full possibilities of his system 'will not have been realised until almost all of the machines in the shop are run by men who are of smaller calibre and attainments, and who are therefore cheaper than those required under the old system'.¹⁵²

As Braverman concludes, to ensure management control and to cheapen the worker, conception and execution must be rendered separate spheres of work. Therefore, the study of work processes must be reserved for management and kept from workers, to whom its results are communicated only in the form of simplified job tasks governed by simplified instructions. Henceforth, it is their duty to follow unthinkingly and without comprehension the underlying technical reasoning or data.

Braverman highlights that the essential feature that makes human beings' labour capacity superior to that of the animal is the combination of execution with a conception of the thing to be done. As he says:

But as human labor becomes a social rather than an individual phenomenon, it is possible—unlike in the instance of animals where the motive force, instinct, is inseparable from action—to divorce conception from execution. This dehumanization of the labor process, in which workers are reduced almost to the level of labor in its animal form, while purposeless and unthinkable in the case of the self-organised and self-motivated social labor of a community of producers, becomes crucial for the management of purchased labor.¹⁵³

A necessary consequence of the separation of conception and execution is that the labour process is now divided between separate sites and separate workers. In one location, the physical processes of production are executed. In another the design, planning, calculation and record keeping are concentrated. The physical processes

of production were now carried out, more or less blindly, not only by the workers who performed them, but often by lower ranks of supervisory employees as well.¹⁵⁴

Deskilling has profound consequences. Where once workers could control days and hours of work, manner and pace of construction and, in some cases, what to make and its shape and decoration; these areas of idiosyncrasy, skill, pride and creativity were progressively removed by capitalist manufacture. The more science and technology get built into the machines and procedures, the more items are mass-produced the more interchangeable workers become and the less control they have.¹⁵⁵

Braverman is right, the pivot of all modern management control over work is achieved through controlling the decisions that are made in the course of work. As Taylor says:

the managers assume the burden of gathering together all of the traditional knowledge which in the past has been possessed by the workmen and then classifying, tabulating, and reducing this knowledge to rules, laws, and formulae.¹⁵⁶

The transition from Taylorism to Fordism left the worker no choice as to the pace of work. Henry Ford introduced the idea of a continuously moving assembly line from the tracks used to move carcasses in a meat packing plant. The result was that he could produce as many cars in a day as he had once done in a year. Braverman points to the human consequence of this. The control that management attained over the pace of assembly meant it could now double and triple the rate at which operations had to be performed, and thus subject workers to an extraordinary intensity of labour.¹⁵⁷

Installing machines is one way of reducing the number of rules in the organisation. The rules are built into the machine itself and the organisation pays for those rules in the price of the machinee Maglin notes:

The origin and success of the factory lay not in technological superiority, but in the substitution of the capitalists' for the workers' control of the work process and the quantity of the output.¹⁵⁸

The fact that many machines may be paced and controlled according to centralised decisions, and that these controls may thus be in the hands of management. These technologies are not simply designed to improve production methods, but to

enhance managerial control of the labour process. Machinery assists in making tasks routine and separating knowledge from workers' skills.

As work has been simplified the drive for speed has come to the fore. Management points to the demands of the market as justification for ever-increasing work demands. Leaders of organisations have become so used to their persons working harder that they now see the frenzied work pace as business as usual. Excessive workloads, seen in the past only during crisis times, have now become commonplace. As Annie Merrile Ingram argues:

Because overload situations are not exceptional persons internalise and accept overload to the point that they feel they need to apologize for the radical notion that such excess is, in fact, excessive.¹⁵⁹

In the first form of the division of labour, the capitalist disassembles the craft and returns it to the workers piecemeal so the process, as a whole, is no longer the province of any individual worker. Then the capitalist conducts an analysis of each of the tasks distributed among the workers, with an eye toward getting a grip on the individual operations. It is in the age of the scientific-technical revolution that management sets itself the problem of grasping the process as a whole and controlling every element of it, without exception. The subjective factor of the labour process is removed.

Braverman notes that machine tools have become virtually automatic. Many machines can be controlled by computers and relieve the worker from being in close supervision of the tool. Work tasks can be more easily fragmented between operators who are required to know less; conceptual knowledge is placed in the hands of the programmers.

Since the 1960's, technologies of computerised electronic control have provided a new basis for the organisation of production. As Braverman notes, the introduction of process-control machinery, numerically controlled machine tools and, eventually, production line or process computerisation has transformed the representation once again. It has moved the worker one step further back from being the operator of the machine that did the work, to supervising the controls that operated the machine that did the work. Thompson quotes the research of Noble who found that, in visits to 24 plants, '...in nearly every case management had

attempted to transfer skill from the shop floor to the programming office, to tighten up lines of authority and to extend control over all aspects of production'.¹⁶⁰

As computers became more powerful and computer networks more extensive, these processes are no longer confined to factories and production, but are extending into the world of knowledge-based work, including that of designers and managers themselves. This has created entirely new forms of organisations in which managers do not manage and supervisors do not supervise; they too, have become the operators of computers that supervise and manage through pre-programmed algorithms and models. Computers can be used for operational and process control. They enable collection and generation of much more data about performance than has been possible before, and offer the option of making it available online, in real time, as well as storing this in huge amounts for later analysis. According to Morton:

Information technology has important general-purpose power to manipulate symbols used in all classes of work, and therefore, as an information engine, it can do for business what the steam engine did in the days of the Industrial Revolution. However it is a technology that permits one to manipulate models of reality, to step back one pace from the physical reality. Such an ability lies at the heart of information technology's capacity to alter work fundamentally. Computerisation provided management with a new means for integration and control.¹⁶¹

Braverman is right about a general tendency toward deskilling. Some occupations were more affected than others, however the pattern was consistent. Computers can be used to simplify, and hence deskill, the work of scientists, engineers and software programmers. Phillip Kraft notes the deskilling affecting computer programming:

programmers, system analysts and other software workers are experiencing efforts to break down, simplify, routinize and standardize their own work so it can be done by machines instead of persons. Computers are the most sophisticated instruments available to managers in their efforts to deskill production workers and now they are used against the very persons who made it possible for managers to use them.¹⁶²

Problems with the Braverman account of deskilling

Braverman fails to provide any account of the workers' subjective experiences of work. He makes the point that deskilling has impacts that are psychological as well

as physical. One may get repetitive strain injuries from repeating the same task over and over, yet our self-control is also affected. Most of Braverman's account is at the level of causes and responses, such as repetition and consequent boredom and fatigue.

Braverman sees scientific management primarily in terms of direct control. Autonomy helps to illuminate the use of other forms of control. An account of autonomy would reveal that workers have been psychologically incorporated into processes of control. What the Braverman deskilling thesis missed is how subjectivity has been used in shaping the social relations of production. This is important for, as Foucault identifies, subjectivity and power are mutually constitutive. Human freedom is constituted through mediation of subjectivity by techniques of surveillance and power-knowledge strategies.

Braverman's focus on deskilling and reskilling in the workplace confuses integration with discretion, and blurs the distinction between reconfiguring the breadth and scale of a task and redefining its nature. The distinction he makes between skill and function is similar to that made in other contexts by Zuboff:

As workers are deskilled, their actions are narrowed and they become more integrated into the machine systems. In defunctionalization, on the other hand, the workers give up all execution functions and manual action and are fundamentally displaced from production. Displacement is hidden in semiautomatic systems, as workers lose execution functions but gain in control activity. Mechanization narrows skills and coerces workers to commit their bodies, if not their minds, to the machine process. Post-industrial technology threatens to throw them out of production, making them into dial watchers without function or purpose.¹⁶³

Here the problem seen in terms of autonomy is not just of deskilling, but the larger problem of a person's self-government and identity. What this means is workers do not identify with their actions. By losing a connection to activities that are to a degree their own, they may assume the identity of a thing rather than a person who is an originator, a source of actions.

Braverman raises the question: why would workers participate in deskilling given its pernicious effects? Why would there not be considerable resistance, more actual revolt? Autonomy would have revealed that workers' processes of making choices

has been co-opted in the same way that a person suffering from weakness of will may excuse themselves, so a person whose autonomy has been undermined may paradoxically legitimise their own loss. On the face of it this seems bizarre as it has no obvious purpose. Legitimation reduces what workers require and makes the loss seem less significant and bearable. This is self-delusional.

Braverman is right because work is still almost exclusively organised on a capitalist basis, and contemporary trends like workplace reorganisation, downsizing and lean manufacturing practices, change rather than remove, the dimensions of deskilling. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest significant upskilling is occurring as a result of contemporary management practices.

According to J. C. Taylor, there has not been a great change in job design in terms of production. The focus is on minimising the immediate cost of production rather than on emphasising a long-term approach to job design that recognises the economic cost of worker frustration and acknowledges employee satisfaction and motivation. Proposals for redesign of jobs started with a concern to counteract repetitiveness and moved on to encompass the provision of autonomy and discretion. One of the earliest suggestions was for job rotation in which persons are allowed to move from job to job at specified intervals. Another was horizontal job enlargement where a wider range of component tasks was considered. Finally, enrichment refers to the deliberate increase in the degree to which an individual can control the planning and execution of their work.

At a theoretical level, job redesign may mitigate deskilling to some degree. Yet there is little evidence that job redesign actually applied to the workplace has increased workers' control and level of skill. When job redesign is actually applied there appears to be largely a cosmetic exercise to maintain managerial control. Braverman's view that job enlargement and humanisation of work is a style of management rather than a genuine change in the position of the worker appears to be valid.

Implications of scientific management for autonomy

In the following section, I examine the main features of scientific management in terms of their impact on autonomy.

Seperation of conception and execution

Worker's organisational responsibility to conceive, plan, and appraise activities before doing them was removed by scientific management. This reduces work to labour, to mere effort. The impact of work involving only execution can mean that persons have an experience similar to that of animals. That is, by just doing things, by being absorbed, by responding only to immediate requirements of predetermined tasks rather than creating a space for conceptualising one's life.

The notion of autonomy can more deeply illuminate what is happening when our capacity to conceive is separated from execution over extensive periods of time. To be able to conceive of things before they have been achieved, and to consider and evaluate them, is an important part of acting on our own possibilities. It is our ability to conceive and evaluate that helps to prevent us from being trapped in repetition.

A key part of autonomy is having a degree of freedom from relying on ready-made answers from others, from rules and resources that one do not appraise, select, choose and combine in some way. This also requires a degree of creativity that one is not just born with but needs to develop by exercising it. Without opportunities, our capacity for creativity will be under-developed; and over time, our confidence in working beyond rules and procedures and achieving successful actions and directions, is also likely to be undermined.

Conceptual development requires resources from one's environment or environments. One does not conjure up concepts from thin air. Stifle and restrict our access to these resources and our ability to conceptualise will be undermined. The workplace is an important location where concepts can be shared, developed and transformed. Yet, with the application of scientific management, access to this shared world of developing and personally engaging with concepts is only available to the select few: the managers.

Autonomy, to a degree, is partly about making our own way in the world. To get where one can be, one has to conceive where one wants to be in life, and this requires time and practice. Persons are not born knowing how to conceptualise things including ourselves: to imagine, plan and scrutinise what they want in their lives. It is true that persons can conceive of things outside the workplace and plan and make them happen, but given that most persons spend a significant portion of their lives at work, a restriction in one's ability to conceive and execute things can be expected to

have an effect on one's life overall. Work may provide the complexity and the time to develop one's ability to conceptualise and then apply these concepts. The experience and knowledge gained may also be applied to other spheres of life. Failure to conceive and apply these concepts can leave persons in a state of being dependent on ready-made answers. Being a mere pair of hands, just executing things as one is ordered to do, will restrict what it is possible for one to achieve and, over time, the kind of life one has.

Conceptualising things, particularly accurately by truth seeking, takes practice and opportunities, not just innate abilities. Experimenting, getting things wrong, being able to not just develop concepts but also testing them requires opportunities. This does not occur in a vacuum; indeed, conceptual development, like language, is social in nature. A person needs resources to draw upon to fashion their concepts and to test them, not just theoretically but practically. What resources might these be? One of these is education. Developing accurate concepts and a range of concepts, including creative combinations and transformation, requires skills, knowledge and effort. They require personal engagement and orientation, which can be fostered by the form of education provided. The education system is important for work because it influences and shapes vocations. Education prepares and helps to provide persons with orientations and capacities that can be applied at work.

Here education, as shaped by scientific management, would tend to be rigid and closed. This is because it is based on rote learning and absorption of a limited set of facts. Dewey identifies this results in a narrowing of the educative potential of the workplace.¹⁶⁴ Here, the potential value dimension of education comes into focus. Education can support the development of interest and inquiry that is un-coerced and intelligent. The meaning and value of our lives can be appraised and given form in the development of concepts. Business values by shaping education may influence the preparation of workers to the workplace. Workers may end up with pre-digested, pre-processed, pre-cued symbol and concept sets. In the use of these, one may have an illusion of making some choices; yet, this may not actually be the case. What can be recognised here is that even prior to working, a worker's autonomy may be undermined by market ideologies within the education system.

As well as the education system, the workplace may also play a highly influential role in conceptual development in its own right. Work may extend and develop what persons have learnt by formal education and instigate training. On-the-job

training may focus on new and specific concepts, particularly as they are cued into organisationally desirable behaviour. The concepts to be used and applied may not, under scientific management, be autonomously selected or applied by workers.

Scientific management does not provide workers with the necessary resources and opportunities that are needed to develop and apply concepts in the light of truth.

A person can try and test their concepts and note how effective they are via feedback from their deviation from their applied plans. The effectiveness of our concepts may not always lie with the concepts themselves, however, but may lie with their execution. So, both the formation of our concepts and how one implement them need to be examined. Over time, with the right opportunities, a person may know to a useful degree how good one are at conceptual development and implementation of concepts through actions. With opportunities and effort, they may get to recognise the accuracy of our concepts and their limitations, and also the weaknesses of our attempts to execute them. A person is able to learn from our experience and where our concepts fall short and continue our focus on truth. By having well-developed conceptual abilities, critical appraisal, sensitivity and the ability to adjust to the results of their actions a person can be expected to have a greater degree of autonomy than someone who does not. This is because the better grasp of reality one have the more likely it is given considered implementation, that one will be effective in our actions. This is important, for if one are rarely if ever, effective in our actions in the world, one will not have a full autonomy, one that is of value to us.

An important resource for autonomy is the ability to work creatively with a variety of perspectives and frameworks. Scientific management would prevent this as it is not just unnecessary but contrary to organisational requirements. Taylorism not only allocated the responsibility of conception to a small number of persons, the managers, but it also removed thinking and developing concepts in particular from the agenda for most workers. Those who were involved in this way would not be doing what is required and, if identified, would likely be informed that they were exceeding their specified role. Repeated instances of workers not doing what was required would lead to disciplinary action and possible termination.

Because of the lack of authority and the social sanction against what could be new ways of doing things at work, it would be unlikely that workers could continue to engage in such activities. Over time, after years of doing only what one is directed to do within narrow guidelines, one may come to believe, accept, that one is not

competent to conceptualise and act on one's own concepts. At the very least, one may have diminished confidence in one's conceptual abilities due to a lack of familiarity and experience in their application as well as feedback and opportunities to assess their effectiveness. In response, one might argue that the development and application of conceptual skills are not restricted to the workplace. This is clearly true, and the application of scientific management has also extended to the consumer market.

The loss of our capacity to conceptualise may affect our ability to determine and shape our interests; and in particular, our future. Choosing from a range of pre-packaged conceptualised goods or services, or following predefined concepts unreflectively at work, does not allow the degree of self-direction that autonomy requires.

Conceptual development plays a major role in allowing us to move beyond our current situation, circumstances and actions to see them differently and to change them. Rather than blindly trying to achieve something new, conceptual development extends our autonomy by allowing us to experiment before we act. A person can consider a number of possibilities before they identify the one or more they wish to act on. It is not hard to see the significance of this, because regardless of their situation, a person's resources are limited. They may never have the time, energy, materials or a host of other resources that might be required to pursue many possible actions.

One vital way where a person might narrow down and identify a number of alternatives that are most important for us is by conceptual development combined with critical appraisal. In this way, many false initiatives may be considered before resources and efforts are expended on them.

As our conceptual ability is lost, our likelihood of being a victim of circumstances one who is pushed and pulled by forces that are not our own is likely to be increased. For without conceptual abilities, a person is always working at the level of what is, and responding as if it is all of human life.

Autonomy is about the degree to which a person can shape their lives, whether one have intent and whether one can pursue ends that one values. The erosion of our ability to conceptualise may narrow our repertoire and restrict what experiences one may have, and what one perceive is possible. A critic might reply that work

prior to scientific management did not necessarily involve or engage our conceptual abilities and help us to apply them to things in terms of actions. This charge is in part correct, but what it overlooks is that prior to scientific management, the utilisation and development of conceptual abilities were not discouraged. Under scientific management, workers do not have a mandate and authority for conceptual development. They are able to execute, not conceive. Under scientific management conceptual development was off the agenda. In response, a counter objection might be made that many workers prior to scientific management were absorbed in grinding toil and hence they did not have opportunities to develop their conceptual capacities. Moreover, they would lack the education and other resources to appraise, develop and apply concepts. While these points may be partly correct, workers' conceptual capacities were not supported or encouraged, they were not actively discouraged. Traditional crafts did encourage the development of conceptual capacities. A simple, consistent formula for production of goods and services was not followed. Experiments and conceiving new ways of doing things and applying them was possible with craftwork.

Specialisation

Narrowing the tasks to be completed and not allowing workers to complete a whole job may reduce the level of skill but not necessarily in all cases. The introduction of new machines and techniques could sometimes lead to a reduction of skills. One's experiences may be similarly narrowed. The reduced complexity of completing a narrowed range of tasks may set one's bounds of experience. The narrowing of one's focus to discrete tasks repeated over extensive periods of time may undermine one's self confidence and willingness to encounter and deal with new things, it may diminish one's flexibility.

Achieving autonomy implies having some capacity to make adjustments in the light of experiences. By narrowing, specialisation reduces our exposure and interaction with a variety of things and completion of a whole job. To achieve autonomy, one needs to select from a range of resources and be exposed to them to make the connections and integrations necessary for our purposeful actions to be successful. Self-censorship, the restriction of alternatives, not being allowed to make mistakes, not being allowed to experiment, to appraise things could present a problem. The experience gained by finding out how one is performing in a variety of contexts and

taking what one has learnt is important, as it aids our flexibility and ability to respond and to achieve what one is aiming for.

The endless repetition of narrowly defined tasks has a more pervasive influence on autonomy than one might initially think. Motivation is important for achieving autonomy. Where a person is trapped in endless repetitions of a narrow range of tasks their motivation for self-direction may be reduced as their self-confidence is undermined. This occurs because one lacks the experience gained by dealing with a variety of things.

To achieve autonomy, we need to have some real intentions and actions that are ours. We also need a good grasp of the realities of our environment, our world, and to be engaged in it to put ourselves into the actions that are the most important for us, for at least some of the time.

In craftwork, workers may have been able to adjust the way they carried out their work and the product/s created as well. Their personal values could be engaged in the process of production and the end product. Here, it is necessary for workers to learn the techniques of their craft. With their own values, and with a degree of imagination, they may have been able to go beyond mere technique. In this way, some of their personal values could be applied in their work. As work is usually a significant aspect of a person's life, the possibility of being able, to some degree, to engage our personal values at work is important for us to achieve full autonomy.

Pacing and scheduling

Ensuring that workers complete tasks at a fast pace can make it difficult for them to conceptualise and think deeply about anything. To be autonomous, one's critical faculties need to be able to function. When they are compromised our flexibility and behavioural repertoire is diminished and our autonomy along with it. Being able to conceptualise, critically appraise, evaluate and be sensitive to the results of one's actions, is essential for autonomy and may require more time and effort than pacing will require.

The required pace at which work is to be completed may be such that one may not be able to think clearly in any flexible or detailed way. With pacing, the orbit of one's thoughts may only be confined to what one is immediately involved in. Pacing can control not only how quickly a product or service is produced, but also the thought processes of those workers involved in paced tasks. In this way,

management control has a more extensive reach, not only over the end products, but also over how workers apply themselves to their work.

One right way

A now famous part of scientific management is Taylor's one right way. The implication here is clear: there are not a number of right ways but only one and, importantly, this one right way has been determined by management. From the point of view of autonomy, there may be a number of ways in which an intention may be implemented. They may allow one to achieve one's goals with similar effectiveness. By considering and appraising a number of ways one may accomplish something, it is important (from the point of view of values) to consider how they are not just congruent with these values, but also how they are an expression of them. As the notion of autonomy identifies, it matters a great deal which values one lives by. By being unable to taking alternative right ways, which may be effectively off the management agenda, the value dimension of autonomy appears to be compromised.

Confirming what our values should be involves evaluation, confirmation, selection and rejection. It is by an ongoing process of evaluation, confirmation, selection, or rejection that the good is a reality for a person. By applying values in a particular way over time, by emphasising one thing or another over time the reality of whether a life can be considered good is known. Having one right way as the major resource to work with can be seen as providing an insufficient basis for founding our values. It is necessary to consider or appraise the things that one supports in order to achieve full autonomy.

Scientific management requires workers to do exactly what they are told. Yet, a fundamental part of autonomy is being able to question one's self, one's values, ideas and actions. Questioning can assist us in attaining the flexibility needed to best respond in ways that are, in part, ours to the situations and issues we encounter in our lives.

Training development/information

Under scientific management Management assumes the responsibility for training and development. Yet with craftwork workers assumed some responsibility for their own training, how the work was to be conducted, measured and supervised. Under the craft system, alternatives were restricted, and individual workers were

not free to do whatever they thought best, or just what they pleased. Yet, autonomy does not require freedom from all constraints. Indeed, some restrictions and focus are important for autonomy of action if a person is not to spread themselves too thin.

It was possible under craft control for mentoring to be, in part, a reality. A father might, for example, pass his trade on to his son, or an apprentice may have sought out a craftsman because he believed this could best assist his development. What the notion of mentoring illuminates is the personal connection between those involved in it. The person being trained, their desires, wishes and beliefs would, to some extent, be considered in the training process. Some persons under the craft system could produce work of marginal or poor quality. Yet workers were likely to have more opportunities for mentoring before the introduction of scientific management.

Work process organised by management

With scientific management, Management decided how the work was to be organised. Workers were to follow the prescribed systems rather than being involved in shaping them. This has implications for autonomy because autonomy involves our ability to change how we respond to things. Being able to contribute to practices and teachings can enable a person to achieve things and does influence their autonomy. This is because one is being determined rather than influencing the background practices that affect how we live and our experiences.

Background practices also affect what a person is cued to and how they interpret things. To be autonomous one should not be trapped or enveloped by background practices that one cannot change. What may result from worker's lack of access to influencing background practice and evaluating themselves and their actions, is the loss of the capacity to discriminate between what is valuable and what is not. From the perspective of autonomy work practices can be seen as a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

Quotas measurement and control

Scientific management required workers to complete quotas on their output. Meeting quotas narrowed the focus of workers. The workers' main focus is on meeting quotas as their continued employment can depend on it. Only a small degree of deviation from quotas may often be acceptable. Continued deviation beyond the specified limits could lead to disciplinary action, including termination.

The importance of meeting quotas, could dominate their focus. As their focus is progressively narrowed their autonomy may be diminished. Being preoccupied with meeting quotas makes it less likely for workers to have the inner flexibility required to be autonomous. To be autonomous requires an informed, creative effort to respond to the world and monitor the effectiveness of one's actions to achieve one's intentions.

Without the flexibility to dynamically respond to the changing issues and problems one encounters in life, one may not be able to maintain autonomy over an extended time. This is because successful assessment and an effective response to the world, in terms of what one most wants to do, requires ongoing adjustment of what actions are required to achieve our desires. Achieving demanding quotas could mean that there is insufficient time to be autonomous. Meeting demanding quotas on an ongoing basis may create the habit of a fixed response and thereby reduce one's experience of acting flexibly.

Chapter 4

Management by objectives

Introduction

Drucker has been widely recognised for his contribution to modern management.¹⁶⁵ His management texts appeared on the New York Times best-seller list in 1974.¹⁶⁶ A 1974 survey found that nearly 40 per cent of Fortune 500 firms had a management by objectives (MBO) program. By 1980, 75 per cent of large industrial firms surveyed used MBO. While other management theories have arisen, and many firms may no longer refer to MBO, the management practices they use often draw from, or are highly influenced by, MBO.

Drucker considered that management that concentrated on processes rather than goals was inadequate to meet today's challenges from foreign and domestic competition. The operative question, therefore, shifted from 'What am I supposed to do?' to 'What is the objective toward which I am working?' Drucker defines a business process as a collection of activities that takes one or more kinds of input and creates an output that is of value to the customer. Thus, the focus of MBO is outputs. While Taylorism may work well at the task level, the larger objective may be overlooked. The individual tasks within the production process are important, but none of them matter to the customer if the overall process doesn't work; that is, if the process does not deliver what is required. For Drucker, the management process must be effective in delivering the required outcomes. Drucker required managers to be accountable for results, not activities, such as the number of meetings they attended and reports generated.

MBO and new management control

Drucker's management philosophy was designed to solve the problems that Taylor and Ford had been unable to solve. His approach was to enable managers to overcome short-sighted and selfish habits that led them to treat persons as factors of production. Workers were not to be just cogs in a machine. Frederick Taylor and Henry Ford assumed that most workers preferred mindless labour. Taylor talked about requiring workers with the mental capacity of an ox. Moreover, Ford argued that most workers were dumb and should be treated like animals. In the first part of the 20th century, workers' creativity and self-conception were ignored. In contrast, during the second part of the century, the management of subjectivity has become a

central task for the modern organisation. The problems of workers' resistance to deskilling and alienating working conditions, due to Taylorist and Fordist work practices, did not encourage commitment to organisational aims and objectives. The management problem that Taylorism and Fordism did not adequately address was that employees represent both labour costs to be minimised by efficient deployment, and human resources whose capacities, actual and potential, need to be fully realised and enhanced in the workplace. To achieve this, the management of workers' subjectivity became a necessary for capitalist control. Drucker's MBO seeks to achieve a more effective organisation by controlling worker's subjectivity.

Despite the efficiency gains of scientific management, resistance to management control was still a significant problem. Deviation from the required direction and activities is an organisational risk that needs to be minimised. Workers may not act in line with organisational goals: they may shirk, steal or evade responsibility. More importantly, resistance against overt control poses other management problems. Psychological and social dissatisfaction could result in problems such as high turnover, absenteeism, sabotage, and low morale. Therefore, a vital aspect of effective organisational control is ensuring employee choices coincide with organisational intentions. MBO potentially provides a way of achieving this.

MBO business plans and control

An important form of organisational control is achieved through business plans. Oakes, Townley and Cooper argue¹⁶⁷ that business planning should be seen as a profound mechanism of control. Business planning has significant implications for the forms and amounts of capital within a field, and for organisational identities. As Bourdieu identified, there is an important power to nominate. He noted that 'the social world can be uttered and constructed in different ways. It may be practically perceived, uttered, constructed, according to different principles of vision and division'.¹⁶⁸ The monopoly of legitimate naming is important because 'it is not the relative value of the work that determines the value of the name, but the institutionalised value of the title that can be used as a means of defending or maintaining the value of the work'.¹⁶⁹ Naming is also powerful because it displaces the existing names, identities and understandings that ground organisational agents, and makes it possible for them to manoeuvre comfortably within a field.

Under the theory of MBO, the set business objectives are given a prominent legitimacy. They actively construct the perceivable and the sayable by specifying what will be documented and what will be ignored. Aspects that are named and categories that are recognised gain legitimacy and importance. In this way, the business objectives can be seen as a managed truth as they represent the bounds of the vision for organisational members.

In Business planning one is presented with the pre-established, supposedly rational, determination of how much or how little should be allowed to be contestable at all; from what point of view and with which end in mind. In contrast the capacity of critical appraisal requires the ability to recognise misinformation, and other forms of worker manipulation. The point here is that MBO can be seen as a powerful form of control where workers' perceptions and views, indeed what they habitually see, are strongly shaped and managed by the objectives reached through business planning.

Market legitimacy for management control

In this section, I explore the consumer market's relationship and connection with management control. In MBO, Drucker serves to strongly legitimise his management theory by pointing to the consumer market and its needs. The market is not just a simple mechanism of producing products and services to meet needs; it is also a province of ideological power connected with organisational management.

Consumption can also be seen as an ideological power where the meaning of life is to be found in buying things and pre-packaged experiences. This ideology of consumerism serves to legitimise capitalism, and motivate persons to become consumers in fantasy as well as in reality. Techniques are employed to ensure persons act in ways that secure the reproduction of the capitalist system. The institution of the market exchange legitimates certain things so the questions of choice do not arise. The market is the place for ideals of happiness, autonomy, self-fulfilment and psychic wellbeing. One can see that consumer values in a sense are conflated with producer values.

Behind the market ideology, one can find the notion that it is unnecessary for human agents to work at jobs they find worthwhile and enjoyable. As long as the market system honours individual's desires for goods and services, persons can always achieve self-fulfillment through acts of commodity consumption

(particularly the consumption of leisure goods). It is, therefore, undesirable that society respect individual's preferences as producers at the expense of leaving consumers' preferences unsatisfied. If society were to respond to producers' preferences for autonomous and enjoyable work, it might interfere with consumers' quest for utility, yet the ideology in the process of consumption is hidden. Workers aspire to earn more money so they will enjoy greater freedom, even when they have to trade off valuable time and energy to secure that money. Moreover, on ideological lines, one thing is identified as another. Money is identified with personal autonomy, greater individuality and freedom for persons to be themselves.¹⁷⁰ Being able to perceive one's self as a freely choosing consumer is achieving autonomy and wellbeing. Yet the reality is that the consumer's ultimate objectives do not actually meaningfully relate to the individual's own goals. Thus, while the ideals of choice embodied in the vocation of the free consumer have gained a foothold in the sphere of consumption, the heteronomously organised sphere of production leaves little room for the exercise of autonomy.

Under MBO, fulfilling market needs is promoted as a moral indeed a good, choice. The implicit assumption here is that by fulfilling needs, society benefits, the individual benefits, and workers benefit by fulfilling organisational objectives.

Features of MBO

Drucker sought to help managers to become entrepreneurs and statesmen whose firms were profitable as well as socially responsible. In addition, he sought to help managers transcend the Taylorist separation of planning and performing which was not appropriate for professional, highly educated workers. To achieve this, MBO tried to teach managers to legitimise their power by going beyond paternalism and counselling interviews, and moving to negotiating work goals and methods with their subordinates.

For Drucker, objectives are something you develop first in managing an organisation. They are essential before other planning, organising or measuring. This was an important distinction from other management theories. The real work of management is therefore setting objectives and deciding what the business is, what it should be, and what it could be. Drucker sees the role of the manager as integrating the organisational tasks and goals of its members. Managers takes responsibility for the whole and get their subordinates to work to a common goal. He likened a manager to a conductor. The manager selected the piece (the goal to be

sought). Each musician in the orchestra, each worker in the organisation, played one instrument and one part. The conductor brought together all the performers in the orchestra so the goal was achieved. Drucker explained that the manager's job is to know the capacity of each instrument and to evoke the optimal performance from each by leading.¹⁷¹ So to be effective, management must direct the vision and efforts of all managers to a common goal:

It must ensure that the individual manager understands what results are demanded of him. It must ensure that the superior understands what to expect of each of his subordinate managers. It must motivate each manager to maximum efforts in the right direction.¹⁷²

For Drucker, the primacy of economic performance should not obscure how the business corporation is as much a social organisation, (a community and society), as it is an economic organ. In the new society, the firm had a responsibility to realise social values and satisfy individual needs. For Drucker, legitimate power was authority based. The ruled, in other words, must voluntarily grant the rulers the right to command and thereby their own obligation to obey; thus, giving the ruler the capacity to make their will effective. Real legitimacy would transcend passive submission to managerial authority. It would inspire active commitment by the ruled to organisational goals, and the self-discipline that would motivate and guide their activities and to produce peak performance. Workers would work without discipline being imposed on them by managers and would freely subordinate their personal needs to those of society.¹⁷³

Drucker saw the need for management power and the need for individual satisfaction as a fundamental management problem. He concluded that conflict could be minimised through methods that would lead employees to adopt managerial attitudes and seek their fulfilment through commitment to the corporate good. Workers needed to be persuaded that employment, as a social contract, was an agreement of association and one of subjection. But he also decided that they could experience some degree of self-government at work. Control over jobs, work methods and work environments would allow more workers to be responsible and active participants in their government. Exercising responsible choices was to be rewarded, such as advancing the committed worker up the hierarchy.¹⁷⁴

What Drucker calls independent workers (professionals, technicians) had work to complete that was difficult to routinise. They were expected to internalise the

formal objectives of their organisation and accept a kind of implicit contract where they exercised initiative and solved problems while, at the same time, respected corporate authority.¹⁷⁵ Managing such workers was difficult because they were dedicated to their discipline, professional ethos or specialised tasks rather than the organisation they worked for. They could not be managed through the traditional techniques of bureaucratic control. They refused to be treated as inferiors or subordinates, and bullying tactics were likely to produce some form of sabotage or encourage them to search for jobs elsewhere. Drucker considered that Taylorism was not effective for these independent workers, particularly in knowledge work, where planning could not be separated from doing. These workers were hired to apply professional knowledge, to think, innovate and adapt to changing circumstances. They were both a planner and a performer, and managers could not take the knowledge out of the work without destroying its usefulness. Furthermore, since the knowledge worker needs to design their own work, a control system in which managers regulated work through formal written rules was self-defeating. Unskilled labour and machines could rarely effectively substitute for professionals. In Drucker's view, other ways would have to be found that would allow these new workers to be self-directed and loyal to corporate goals.¹⁷⁶

In addition to these issues, Drucker recognised that management needed to respond to a radically different marketplace to the one that had existed under Taylorism. Efficient and rapid product development, intricate coordination, reliable communication systems and quickly dealing with exceptions are the basis for getting competitive products to global markets in a timely way. Managers also see a dilemma: if design, coordination and dealing with unanticipated disruptions are most important in value adding work in the global production system, there needs to be an effective way of managing employees who need to deal with these exceptions.

MBO and self-control

To be able to creatively respond to the market and broader community needs, every member of an organisation needs to have specific goals that they agree to attain by specific dates, and which will obligate them to examine and explain the reasons for variance or deviation. This produces the most effective form of control, self-control.¹⁷⁷ Workers need objective goals and measurements so they know they are doing what is required. Here, performance appraisal provides a way of providing

structured feedback on an employee's performance. One way this can be achieved is by the manager's letter:

In this letter to his superior, each manager first defines the objectives of his superior's job and of his own job as he sees them. He then sets the performance standards which are being applied to him. Next he lists the things he must do himself to attain these goals and things he considers in his own unit are major obstacles. He lists the things that his superior and the company do that help him and things that hamper him. Finally he outlines what he proposes to do during the next year to reach his goals. If his superior accepts this statement the manager's letter becomes the charter under which the manager operates.¹⁷⁸

In the idea of getting workers to work under self-control, Drucker's technique involves: centralised determination of corporate goals; decentralised definition of operational targets and task organisation measurement of performance against objectives, and a system of rewards and punishments based on results. Of prime importance was a clear corporate strategy. Management must have a clear understanding of what the mission and purpose of the firm was and had to be. This required careful market analysis of business opportunities. Drucker argues that managers must learn who the customer was, who they could be, what their unsatisfied wants were, what they regarded as value, and what products would satisfy them. After such questions had been answered, the business goals could then be set.¹⁷⁹

After clarifying organisational goals, the next action was to convert these into specific operational objectives. In other words Managers should proceed from understanding what their business was and envisioning what it could be, to marshalling the means to achieve its goals and devising a plan for utilising these means. Numerous operational objectives must be drawn up that set forth what was to be achieved in such areas as marketing, product innovation, output, resource allocation, personnel performance, corporate social responsibility and performance measurement. The objectives must then be kept current with changing market conditions. The benefit was that if everyone in the organisation knew what the objectives were, each could better organise their efforts to produce the results required by the market.¹⁸⁰ The problem was finding a way that managers could establish the objectives while ensuring everyone else understood the goals and

accepted their legitimacy. The approach used by Drucker is consensual decision-making as adopted by Japanese corporations.

Yet claims that initiatives came from the bottom up tended to obscure how managers used consultations as a way of legitimising decisions actually from the top down. Drucker claimed that employees throughout the firm began by defining and reaching a consensus on the problem to be solved. Yet managers decided what the question was before possible answers were solicited. Then discussions throughout the organisation explored various alternatives and their implications. The result usually was that every decision came from below and was an expression of general will. Top management selected the appropriate persons to make the decision and, once a final determination had been made, orders could be given that would be obeyed without argument or reservation. Implementing ideas happened swiftly because the decision process was seen as a means of action rather than as an end in itself. Because plans resulted from consensus rather than compromise, the peculiar combination of autocracy and democratic participation ensured that decisions never had to be sold to subordinates; authority from the top down was always matched by responsibility from the bottom up. This can be seen as a managed consensus rather than autonomous decision-making.

After executive management has established a corporate strategy and made general operational objectives clear, subordinate managers and knowledge workers were to negotiate with their superiors and draw up very specific work assignments, performance goals, expected contributions, production targets, timetables and allocation of resources. In negotiating with their superior, each worker was to set personal objectives that would substitute for narrow, systematic work rules and job descriptions that were imposed from above. Drucker concluded the aim was for real participation where jobs and goals were actively defined and requiring responsibility would cause each worker to commit themselves with a positive act of assent to the ultimate business goals and assume genuine responsibility. Their manager could hold them to exacting demands. This would involve upward responsibility. By encouraging the subordinate to communicate upward about their work problems goals, values, beliefs and aspirations, a superior could find ways to reconcile corporate and individual goals. Drucker advocated the establishment of a common language that would help each person see what the other sees. These conditions would allow all organisational members to concentrate on their shared objectives via genuine teamwork.¹⁸¹

Although manual work had to be planned, it did not follow that the planner and the doer should be different persons. Managers should provide information and allow workers to use their expertise in designing jobs and work rates that would be comfortable and consistent with the production system. Drucker would give manual workers more control over the design of their work but not its purposes and, indeed, the same could probably be said of knowledge workers.

Harmonisation and rewards

MBO would also establish a system of rewards and punishments based on clear standards of performance. Appraising performance, Drucker concluded, was one of the most important tasks of the manager, and doing it fairly required integrity, which was the one absolute requirement of the manager. The system should develop managerial vision, foster internal self-motivation, and encourage employees to drive themselves. Employees should be accountable for their results and periodically review their contribution. All rewards and punishments including salaries, perks, promotions, demotions and terminations, were to be based on performance relative to the objectives of the company.¹⁸²

According to Drucker, the combination of business goals, personal objectives, feedback on performance and appropriate rewards would harmonise the goals of the individual with the common weal. In addition, it would substitute management by self-control for management by domination. When it was implemented, each worker would become a manager and assume the full burden of responsibility not only for their job, but also for the economic and social welfare of the organisation. The result was there would be control from the inside that would be stricter, more exacting and more effective than control from the outside. As a self-manager, each worker would take action not because they were ordered to or persuaded to act, but because the objective needs of their task demanded it and they had therefore decided to choose what must be done. It is also like $2 + X = 4$: the answer for X must be 2. This is like a kind of indisputable law. It is followed because it is the nature of things, just as everyone knows that two plus two is four. By converting objective needs into personal goals, MBO, for Drucker, could guarantee performance and genuine freedom.¹⁸³ This is not the self-shaping required for autonomy.

MBO discipline and self-control

Under Taylorism, worker behaviour is controlled by direct monitoring and by the swift and predictable application of carrots and sticks (for example, variable piece rates, bonuses and threats of discharge). Yet, as discussed, MBO can be seen as a move beyond this by managing the worker's subjectivity. The aim here is not just to shape conduct, but also to go further in seeking to shape the identity of the individual. As Keenoy and Anthony note:

While once it was deemed sufficient to redesign the organisation so as to make it fit human capacity and understanding; now it is better to redesign human understanding to fit the organisation's purpose. The redesign of human understanding includes changing the way that persons evaluate and judge themselves.¹⁸⁴

This has led to the birth of expertise on subjectivity (psychology, human relations, quality circles, counselling, therapy and even teaching). In turn, the discourses of the experts produced vocabularies of the subject that informed the ways in which we perceive, evaluate and change ourselves.

Culture and self-control

With organisations fulfilling more complex, less clear-cut organisational objectives, the less organisational management can rely on the hierarchical mode of steering the organisation by order, command and by monitoring the implementation of defined rules and standards. As Drucker notes, it is necessary that all workers interpret the organisation's goals. These interpretations should not be arbitrary; rather, they should be framed by the institutional culture and consist of shared values and shared group behaviour. To achieve the organisation's objectives, an organisational culture is needed that includes the service commitment of the institutional members; that is, the commitment of the persons to the goals of their basic units and the organisation as a whole equally. To shift managerial conduct in a culturally oriented direction under which the employees act in the best interest of the organisation, not because they are physically coerced but because their behaviours are driven by internal commitment, requires strong identification with the group goals and essential satisfaction from their work. The intent in enrolling employees into the values of the corporate culture is to shape or re-form the individual's values by harmonising them with those of the employing organisation. Or as Legge says:

...with its emphasis on strong culture, in theory human resource management is able to achieve a cohesive workforce but without the attendant dilemma of creating potentially dysfunctional solidarity. For a strong culture is aimed at uniting employees through a shared set of managerially sanctioned values (quality, service, innovation).¹⁸⁵

To achieve organisational control, the aim is to create a homogeneous, stable and coherent organisational culture. On the organisational level, a strong culture is reflected in the degree of coherence between management and employees' goals. Intense emotional attachment is required and the internalisation of company values. The outcome sought is for employees to internalise the organisational culture (goals and values) into their subconscious conduct and therefore no longer need formal and authoritarian control.¹⁸⁶ The notion of cultural control can be seen as endorsing some aspects of MBO's self-management disciplinary techniques, as will be discussed in the next section.

Disciplinary techniques and MBO

In this section, I explore Foucault's disciplinary techniques and the ways they have been thought to be adopted by MBO. Instead of providing workers with enhanced autonomy, MBO can be seen as a disciplinary technique that encodes organisational goals within the individual so they act in their own interests and generate organisationally favourable outcomes. Insofar as it requires a careful drafting of goals and calibration of performance measurements, MBO embodies elements of disciplinary techniques that render partners calculable. It fits them into a grid in which they are compared with peers, and thus subjects them to forces of normalisation. Here, all employees are measured against organisational values.

Foucault maintains that all forms of truth and power have a discursive dimension. In a sense that discourse manufactures the persons who in turn, perpetuate and alter that which created them. Persons can be understood as the products of discourse. Foucault's insight is that choices occur within a realm of possibilities defined by discursive practices.

For Foucault autonomy is embodied in the interaction of particular institution-formed persons. Yet while one exists in relationships of power this does not entail that one cannot make choices freely. It is possible however to create discursive practices where the choices that arise are more or less free ones. I explore this idea in chapter 6 in the idea of dialogue.

Foucault sees autonomy as a product of a person's capacities. Foucault identified the need for persons to overcome oppressive subjectivities or at least experience some control over who they are. In response to this he requires that humans use reason in a way that involves a critical attitude. He seeks to promote personal enterprise in which persons would escape from the immature use of reason. Following the authority of others when our own reason is sufficient is considered by Foucault immature.

Foucault's approach entails a critical and autonomous attitude towards the self that is both aware of the historical character of the self's traits and displays a willingness to rework them. As such, it is a second order capacity allowing subjects to reflect on and evaluate their first order beliefs or desires.

Foucault identifies strategies of power that involve altering agents' understanding of the various ways in which they may act. As such, it places limits on what a person can or cannot do by altering their perceptions of what it is possible to do. What is involved here is ensuring workers are the kind of persons wanted by management and who will therefore do what is required. This poses a threat to autonomy because it involves a loss of the agents control over their own identity as well as their choices.

He also raises the importance of that capacity to distinguish between the worth of different choices. As power to some degree is always being exercised over persons, autonomy can be important in helping us to distinguish between objectionable instances of power and acceptable ones.

Confession and MBO

MBO requires yearly counselling sessions between supervisors and subordinates. Here, MBO contains elements of a formal system of confession, as workers must talk about the details of their performance, emphasise their failings and suggest remedies for overcoming them; thus, adding to the force of normalisation. The MBO-fostered performance review can function such as Rose identifies:

...in complying, persuading and inciting subjects to disclose themselves, finer and more intimate regions of personal and interpersonal life come under surveillance and are opened up for expert judgment and normative evaluation, for classification and correction.¹⁸⁷

Townley specifically identifies MBO as one form of disciplinary technology that seeks to render persons recordable, visible and calculable by comparing an

individual's documented goal achievements with organisational norms.¹⁸⁸ She theorised that MBO renders time and activity productive, as in Foucault's capitalization of time.¹⁸⁹ wherein certain objectives are to be achieved within specified time limits using a productivity rating index that performs a panoptic surveillance function.

MBO can be understood, in part, as a normalising technique that subjugates persons by objectifying them. This is related to the constitution of persons through disciplinary technologies as technologies of the self like confession, where persons, either by themselves or with help from others, act upon their bodies, thoughts and conduct to attain happiness, satisfaction, success, health or wisdom.¹⁹⁰ Here the inner truths of one's self can be discovered through self-examination and expressed outwardly through speech to affirm and transform oneself. Through confession, the speaker becomes known and tied to the intentions, thoughts and deeds proclaimed in the discourse; thus, constituting a self-identity through 'the objectivisation of the self by the self'.¹⁹¹

In Foucault's detailed account of the disciplinary techniques, one can, as touched on, trace the need for more effective control over persons and the ways in which this may be achieved. In MBO, one can see the engagement of the key focus of disciplinary techniques; this is moving workers from compliance through to self-management and willing embracement of organisational ideals. Foucault's theory reveals how subjectivity is manipulated in the workplace to produce an obedient, dutiful and reliably useful subject. With disciplinary techniques, the seat of power is shifted to internalised discipline where persons police themselves. Consequently, the rack, pillory and thumbscrew are replaced. In their stead, various therapeutic techniques are applied to discipline the heart, the thoughts, the will, and the inclinations. The social aim of punishment has become no longer retribution or mere deterrence, but to reform or normalise:

to supervise the individual, to neutralise his dangerous state of mind, to alter his criminal tendencies, and to continue even when this change has been achieved.¹⁹²

In a disciplinary operation, bodies and minds are to be harnessed and made productive for the modern economy. The aim is to produce an obedient subject: the individual is subjected to habits, rules, orders and authority that are exercised

continually around them and upon them, and it must be allowed to function automatically in them:

The order does not need to be explained or reformulated it must trigger the required behaviour and that is enough.the disciplined [] begins to obey whatever he is ordered to do, his obedience is prompt and blind.¹⁹³.

Surveillance

Surveillance is a disciplinary technique that can be used to influence behaviour. Foucault examines the role of surveillance in the external control of human activity with reference to the work of Jeremy Bentham, whose conceptualisation of an architectonic machine called the Panopticon serves as an eighteenth century conception of a model prison that had the following operating principles:

The Panopticon comprises a central observation tower surrounded by a concentric ring of peripheral cells. Observers reside in a tower and can gaze directly into every cell. Meanwhile, these cells are only open to the front, where the incarcerated individual has a clear view of the tower but is shut off from contact with any other inmates.¹⁹⁴

This arrangement must be such that although the inmates can only see outward, all their possible actions must be constantly visible from the observation tower. Although the inmates must always be aware of the focus of surveillance activity, the warders themselves must be invisible to them. The aim is that the inmates are constantly aware that they may be under surveillance. This is important for control, for it allows a small number of warders to exercise control over a large number of inmates, for the disciplinary effect of the surveillance is constant even if the surveillance itself is not. Hence the principal effect of the Panopticon is to:

induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary.¹⁹⁵.

As a normalising gaze, surveillance makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over persons a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them. It is the fact of being constantly seen that maintains the disciplined individual in their subjection. Moreover, examination also introduces something of

individuality into power through the practice of practical record keeping. Workers are constantly ranked in terms of production, wasted time and so forth. One can see the application of this process with competency-based training and MBO measurement programs such as 360 feedback. A worker's sense of competence is part of their self-disciplining subjectivity that confirms an identity as a productive worker.

Surveillance in the workplace

Surveillance started by bringing persons under one roof in the earliest factories so they were under the direct visual surveillance of the overseer. Direct visual surveillance was, by itself, of limited effectiveness as capitalists could never know if workers were really working as hard as they could. Achieving adequate surveillance was a problem, where surveillance was incomplete workers could make out; in other words, they can vary the pace of their work, cheat on quality standards, and improve on the industrial engineer's methods to create idle time, manipulate the bonus system, and so on with little fear of the capitalist finding out (or finding out soon enough).

More recently, technologically and socially based modes of surveillance have superseded direct surveillance. American Management Association (AMA) surveys¹⁹⁶ show a considerable growth of electronic monitoring. Fifty-four per cent of employers report monitoring their employees' Internet connections. Examples of electronic surveillance include computer operators who have their keystrokes-per-minute counted and the quality of their data entry monitored, while telephone sales staff have the number of closing statements they make scrutinised and the time it takes to complete a transaction recorded.

Observation can be used to measure, capture and classify an individual's performance. The aptitudes of each worker are noted and the time they take to perform a task compared against averages. These averages are inscribed in rules of conduct that function as a minimum threshold or an average to be repeated, or as an optimum toward which one must move.¹⁹⁷ Information technology can be seen as enabling heightened surveillance of labour by the panoptic gaze. Here, management is seeking to exercise minute control with a minimum of supervisors. As Sewell and Wilkinson say:

the panoptic gaze is internalised and that self-management is assured while the controlling function of middle management has simply been incorporated into the consciousness of the members themselves.¹⁹⁸

Cost accounting and normalising judgement

Cost accounting can be considered as an expression of normalising judgement.¹⁹⁹ Normalising judgement ranks the individual's performance and distributes it along a scale around a norm and places persons in a hierarchy in relation to one another.²⁰⁰ As accounts are constantly brought up to date, it makes it possible to obtain the balance sheet for an individual. Moreover, it is possible to measure the non-observance of the required norm and commit to it by training or prescribed techniques that impose graduated tasks on the body. Normalising judgement is to judge according to a standard or rule. By setting accounts, by quantifying rules, they function as an average for a minimum threshold or as an optimum toward which one must aim.

Writing, documenting, marking and notation may be used to objectify, individualise, render visible, and subject persons to the norm; for example, as students through examination grades. At work, promotion and performance management systems individuate persons as describable and analysable subjects within a comparable population. In this regard, MBO evaluates workers against prescribed objectives and organisational values. With MBO, worker conformity is gained by way of appraisal systems and a tight corporate culture. The performance appraisal process of Drucker's manager's letter (as will be discussed) is discontinuous in its action, yet aims to be permanent in its effects. Workers are to be continuously self-policing based on the outcomes of their manager's letter.

Workers under MBO are caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. When panoptic techniques are used, workers can come to see themselves in the ways defined through surveillance; for example, as good corporate/community citizens against those who fail to live up to the required values.

Surveillance plays an invaluable role in corporate performance because it can identify not only those who are failing to achieve the agreed objectives, but also those who exceed them. Drucker intends that such persons are recognised and rewarded. Yet this is not necessarily what is put into practice. Rather, objectives

may be set so they are very difficult to meet; hence, the worker is always operating at less than the required standard and therefore always needs to do more. The actual effect of MBO when applied, rather than the intended effect, may be closer to the desired effect of disciplinary mechanisms; that is, increasing workers' docility and conformity.

Zuboff has made the most practical study of the application of panoptic control in the workplace. She conducted a detailed investigation of information systems for panoptic control using primarily the Cedar Bluff Paper Mill as an example. Here, she identified that 'information systems that translate, record and display human behaviour can provide a universal transparency'.²⁰¹ The introduction of an information system at Cedar Bluff Paper Mill allowed managers to receive real-time data from the plant-wide control system.²⁰² The system could improve management control by basing decisions on more dependable information: As a worker says:

When I managed the older plant, one depended on the operators putting true numbers in the logs. The computer takes away this need to rely on someone's integrity. Persons were very apt to fudge the numbers to cover their own ass. I no longer have that problem because the computer doesn't lie.²⁰³

Cedar Bluff Paper Mill managers also used the information in the system to discipline persons:

One disciplined and terminated persons based on information from the overview system. It provided information on incidents which showed that an individual was not performing to basic knowledge requirements. One can see exactly what was done, what should have been done and what was not done.²⁰⁴

The system proved invaluable for counselling, guidance, promotion and discipline. Prior to the information coming from the system, it would be difficult to obtain absolute proof of poor performance.²⁰⁵ As one foreman says:

One can direct a worker on what to do and when to do it at all times. He doesn't do it when he wants to do it.²⁰⁶ I can now track persons's work. All I have to do is type the craft person's initials and see what his total work load was, what is his productivity.²⁰⁷

The system automatically computed the efficiency ratings for each worker by comparing the amount of time it took to complete a job with the amount of time for which it had been priced.²⁰⁸ As a result of using the information system, it is more difficult for workers to cheat; to say they did more work than they actually did. The system ensured normalisation. Persons would be able to see where they fall short of the norm, and would know that everyone else would also know. The potential for experiencing shame under these conditions would fuel individual energies toward anticipatory conformity. The system could also be used to flag exceptions, activities that fell too far outside the norm, and to focus the organisation's efforts on those problem areas to bring them into alignment with corporate expectations. As a plant executive said: 'the system made exception management possible'.²⁰⁹ Knowing that one could show up as an exception was thought to be an important motivator in ensuring anticipatory conformity.

This is exactly what Drucker seeks: workers not just holding the required values, but acting in accordance with them. As workers realise that they may be questioned about their work performance, they self-manage their actions accordingly. Moreover, workers may worry about being exposed in some way, what others might see. Drucker advocated the use of information systems and saw them as playing a crucial role in measuring and evaluating organisational objectives had been reached by workers.

For employees to become good management subjects, as prescribed by MBO, it is important that they own the organisation's objectives. To achieve this, it may be necessary to increase the organisation's knowledge of the individual. One of the ways this can be understood is in terms of Foucault's concept of confession. What is required here is that the inner truths of one's self be discovered through self-examination and expressed outwardly through speech to affirm and transform one's self. Since the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement, the one who speaks identifies with what is being said and thereby confesses. In this way, 'the speaker becomes known and tied to the intentions, thoughts, and deeds avowed in the discourse, thus constituting a self-identity through the objectivisation of the self by the self'.²¹⁰

Historically, self-examination and self-decipherment were shown to be insufficient since one could get lost without spiritual guidance. One had to be self-aware precisely so one could reveal the depths of one's self to a guide whose role it was to

elicit, evaluate, judge, and forgive the speaker.²¹¹ The language, criteria and categories of self-examination were provided by others who were more experienced and expert than the novice. The power relation is such that it is the novice who, through discourse, is subjected to the guide who listens and, in turn, speaks. It is the guide who, as the arbiter of truthful discourse, exercises the power to subject the one who speaks to the truth of what was avowed. Thus, it is through interpretation and the hermeneutic function that power is exercised over the speaking agent by the listener or, by the act of confession. Here a considerable power may be exercised as it shapes how one interprets ourselves and our motivations to act. The outcome is that the employee judges themselves in organisational terms: am I performing at the right level? am I exhibiting the right attitude? and so on.

By confessing our performance at work we may place obligations on ourselves about our future performance. As a result, as Drucker intended, management control becomes inner self-control. This can be seen as a form of indoctrination in which values that serve organisational ends are reinforced in the individual, and those who exhibit the values are consequently rewarded with the freedom to act them out.²¹² Hence, managers who display the new virtues come to be dominant, but in doing so, they become the embodiment of the organisational objectives. In the guise of autonomy, and self-management workers are increasingly taking on the administrative and coordinating role traditionally performed by supervisors. This is akin to Foucault's theory:

A power to punish ran the whole length of the social network and would act at each of its points, and in the end would no longer be perceived as a power of certain persons over others, but as an immediate reaction of all in relation to the individual.²¹³

Confession orders persons hierarchically, and hence renders them more controllable as they would become self-managing subjects. As Rose says:

Success in engaging the employee with the goals of the company ... aligning the wishes, needs and aspirations of each individual who works for the organisation with the successful pursuit of its objectives. Through striving to fulfil their own needs and wishes at work, each employee will thus work for the advance of the enterprise.²¹⁴

Making such judgements classifies persons hierarchically, and those at the top of the assessment list derive rewards, promotion and employability. Those at the bottom of organisational assessments derive punishment, unemployment and failure.

Normalisation

Normalisation is another disciplinary technique discussed by Foucault. Timetables minutely divide time into productive segments; manoeuvres regulate and economise each gesture for efficiency; and examinations reward conformity. The disciplinary institutions apply utilitarian and anonymous power effects to produce homogenised normality. The Walnut Street Prison is cited as an example of disciplinary regulation:

Life was partitioned, therefore, according to an absolutely strict time-table, under constant supervision; each moment of the day was devoted to a particular type of activity, and brought with it its own obligations and prohibitions..²¹⁵

Foucault notes that individualisation proceeded by singling out differences, defects, childish traits or secret follies. Disciplinary punishment applies to any deviation from the norm and incorporates a range of techniques. It is corrective in nature; that is, it punishes deficiencies through correction and training. According to Foucault:

the workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro- penalty of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body. At the same time, by way of punishment, a whole series of subtle procedures was used, from light physical punishment to minor deprivations and petty humiliations. It was a question both of making the slightest departures from correct behaviour subject to punishment, and of giving a punitive function to the apparently indifferent elements of the disciplinary apparatus: so that, if necessary, everything might serve to punish the slightest thing; each subject find himself caught in a punishable, punishing universality..²¹⁶

Normalisation can be seen in the worship of efficiency in achieving set corporate objectives. With normative techniques, efficiency is achieved through means that are less obviously coercive than Taylorism. Despite

the rhetoric of inclusion, trust and mutual commitment, normative discourses are still strongly linked to notions of efficiency in realising the full potential of labour power through a process of continuous improvement.

Normalisation produces a body that is useful in an economy governed by the Industrial Revolution and the capitalism based upon it, both in an economic sense as well as a political one. In a particularly illuminating paragraph of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault says:

The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an ideological representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called discipline. One must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it excludes, it represses, it censors, it abstracts, it masks, it conceals. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.²¹⁷

Foucault elaborated the penalty of the norm along four dimensions.²¹⁸ Normalisation requires that individual action be situated within a larger whole that provides the framework for ordering and arranging individual actions in relation to a norm or standard. This norm or standard is stipulated as either a minimum threshold to be cleared, an average to be matched, or an optimum to be achieved, and thereby permits a comparison and differentiation of persons. By factually evaluating persons, the schema of the norm also specifies the adjustments and corrections that are necessary for those who fall away from the norm, thereby targeting them for programs of normalisation. Hence, the action of the norm introduces homogeneity by situating the individual within a comparable grouping, and measures individual differences so the individual is both the product of the norm and the target of normalisation.

Critique of MBO

While Drucker's MBO has been very influential,²¹⁹ his goal of harmony is more apparent in his theory than in the practice of MBO. Drucker assumes that managers will 'listen' and respond to concerns and issues raised by those below them. Why would they necessarily do this? His theory is silent here. Moreover, managed consensus means many legitimate concerns would not be considered because they

are off the agenda. In other words, they are not seen as legitimate concerns if they don't fit the MBO management framework.

Tosi and Carroll drew ambivalent conclusions about MBO. They noted that MBO had some potential to create harmony and improve performance when subordinates were self-confident, well informed and high on the organisational chart, and when their bosses were supportive, could reward achievements, and were willing to relinquish some of their power. To establish such conditions would require a 'change in the philosophy and the practice' of management, however, they also found that managers had little incentive to make such changes.²²⁰ Managers could keep their power, set individual goals by executive authority, persuade their subordinates to accept them, and gain improved productivity without lengthy negotiation.

Drucker's starting point is that organisation's relations with workers has severely compromised worker autonomy, if they had any autonomy at all, under their management schemes. While Drucker's theory might offer more autonomy than other management theories, MBO does require workers to sacrifice their autonomy though they may not always consciously recognise this.

Using Drucker's system, corporate performance goals come first and allow the individual little influence over goals and no power to pursue individual ends that conflict with job assignments. Workers, are in effect, reified and treated as an instrument for reaching corporate goals. The employee is forced to set personal goals in accordance with corporate strategy and become their own policeman if they fail to reach them. Drucker's system is still, however, carrots and sticks, which causes workers to act less out of corporate virtue and more out of a desire to avoid pain and gain pleasure. They are being bribed and bullied rather than being autonomously self-motivated.

Drucker's supposed democracy ended up being more rhetoric than reality. While managers were supposed to undergo sensitivity training and become more humane leaders, the traditional hierarchy was to stay in place while, at the same time, those on the top would be more sympathetic to those at the bottom. Drucker is silent about the need for any process to ensure this actually occurs. Moreover managers using MBO were reluctant to cede any power and were happy to just cherry pick convenient parts of Drucker's management theory.

MBO and autonomy supporting conditions

How might Drucker's MBO be assessed in terms of supporting conditions for autonomy? Drucker states that MBO and self-control as a management philosophy responds to the need for autonomy. Yet Drucker is not different from other management theorists who have used the term autonomy with little critical investigation of, and reflection on, what autonomy actually means and implies.

Is a worker in an MBO schema able to choose from valuable and, indeed, meaningful options? Under MBO there is some potential capacity to influence work methods regarding how the organisational objectives are achieved. Yet this is in terms of the theory of MBO. In terms of its actual application in many organisations, there are doubts about whether this potentially increased influence is realised. Workers under MBO do not seem to have the range of meaningful options that would be sufficient for autonomy.

The objectives-set by managers also influence the boundaries within which choices and decisions can be made. This narrowed scope was essential for Drucker so resources and organisational activities are only focused where they should be. An interesting issue raised here is that narrowing scope and focus was, for Drucker, a means of increasing autonomy. This is partly true in the sense of autonomy of action. If one tries to consider and apply one's efforts to too many things, this may exceed our finite abilities and one may achieve little or nothing.

As discussed previously, to have full autonomy one of value where one's chosen actions need to be effective at least some time. We don't achieve autonomy if our chosen actions never achieve our appraised and valued desires. The theory of autonomy highlights that there is a dynamic in play here. Narrowing of one's focus is not in itself always a problem for autonomy, particularly when one had influence in the narrowing of our focus and identify the range of things that one attend to and consider. Yet, when others fix this orbit without us having much capacity to influence it, our autonomy may certainly be compromised. One may not have the opportunity to reflect on and pursue what would ordinarily be our own goals and interests.

MBO actually substitutes control from the outside to more exacting control from inside. It motivates the worker to action not because someone tells them to do something or talks them into doing it, but because the objective needs of their task demand it. When it comes to needs of management and workers, Drucker's regard

for the interests and autonomy of workers falls away quickly. While on the surface MBO seems an advance, it does not take one very far in terms of gaining autonomy.

The availability of real opportunities to carry out one's desires is another feature required for autonomy. As long as one's desires were in accordance with fulfilling the organisation objectives, then they could be fulfilled. Moreover in ongoing performance appraisals, one would need to account for one's performance against the objectives. Opportunities would certainly exist to carry out desires in line with organisational objectives. Yet, as discussed, this does not appear to constitute autonomous opportunities. They are not necessarily the opportunities one exercises one's self rather, they are opportunities that have been chosen for us.

What sorts of resources does a worker have under Drucker's MBO that enables this worker to be autonomous? As fulfilling organisational objectives is linked in a chain of requirements and activities and involves the highest staff member to the lowest one, there is a prospect that appropriate resources and supportive social roles may be provided by MBO. At least, theoretically, this appears to be a benefit of MBO.

MBO does consider broader social values, and advocates going beyond one-dimensional values such as organisations only pursuing profit. This is a positive development. Under MBO, Drucker does open up the need for a variety of values to be in play when objectives are framed. Yet the values applied in objective setting and broader planning are still those primarily drawn from management. Drucker assumes that managers will hold, for example, socially responsible values (consider broader social needs and not just concentrating on making more profit, for example).

There doesn't appear to be evidence to show that a plurality of values really flowed through organisations using MBO, or that there was a process for debate and assessment of them. In addition, importantly, workers do not appear to have had much influence over organisational values. Even in the less common instances where their views may have been sought, a major cultural and behavioural shift was required for new values to be encompassed in organisational decision-making processes. Hence, given the lack of real change in the underlying power structure in organisations based on MBO, it is not very likely that this would occur.

MBO and critical appraisal

Critical appraisal – the ability to weigh, to assess and judge things, is vital for autonomy. How does MBO accommodate these requirements? The aim of MBO is to provide clarity and set narrower boundaries for what is important, and then to plan, focus and measure performance at all levels of the organisation in terms of one's contribution to the agreed objectives.

Lack of clarity and persons in the organisation working in greatly different directions can undermine organisational performance. The reduced scope of the decision-making process mandated by MBO is a dual-edged sword. By over-proceduralising what is to be considered (what counts, what should be measured, and how it should be measured), MBO has a strong bias toward so-called objective measures (quantifiable measures such as finance). This has a consequence for critical appraisal. Effective critical appraisal benefits from access to and the use of, a range of methods, ideas and information, knowledge, and the experience gained over time from these.

Under MBO as implemented, rather than the pure form advocated by Drucker, one may still get a one-dimensional focus on efficiency. The efficiency principle promoted by MBO is difficult to counter because it is not intrinsically bad. Yet, there are values involved in achieving efficiency. The criteria that define what counts as costs and benefits under MBO can be empty where social intelligence and other potentially constructive discourses are suppressed.²²¹ Drucker asserts that post-capitalist society requires a unifying force, a common and shared commitment to values, encompassing a common concept of excellence. Yet in this new rational economic order social decisions are defined within managerialism and, consequently, social policy, politics, democracy and ethics disappear.

MBO can be promoted as enhancing autonomy because it is seen as an antidote to chaos, irrationality, disorder and incompleteness. Yet, there are no spaces within such a social order in which full autonomy can be contested legitimately. Here, the prescribed definitions of quality, efficiency, improved productivity or self-management construct a managed autonomy. Only workers that embrace such managerial constructs of autonomy that are defined have a legitimised and secure role in an organisation run by MBO.

MBO and threats to autonomy

What threats to workers' autonomy might be evident via MBO? Autonomous activity has an internal locus of control. In other words, decisions and activities come from the individual concerned.²²² A bribe to do what one would not ordinarily do establishes an external locus of control. The roots of intrinsic motivation, such as an individual's self-identity (including the larger social units with which the person identifies), are typically not open to intentional and deliberate choice. One chooses according to who one is; but a person does not directly choose who they are. These basic preferences can be transformed but more as a 'by-product of actions undertaken for other ends'²²³ than as the result of deliberate actions. For instance, one cannot simply decide to be in love and thus one cannot buy love. This can't-buy-love situation limits the domain of the market and the reach of extrinsic motivators; hence, it increases the reach of management control and may impact on one's internal locus of control. This is a key feature of MBO: the re-shifting of control from external to internal control.

The notions of internal or external loci of control are related to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When an externally offered reward or punishment is used successfully to redirect a person's behaviour, the behaviour is said to have an external locus of control. When one acts for one's own reasons and is the source of one's actions, one would be said to have an internal locus of control. Having an internal locus of control is to act autonomously in contrast to responding to heteronomously imposed rewards or punishments.

MBO and the motivation to be autonomous

If one examines Drucker's MBO in terms of motivation to be autonomous, one identifies some interesting issues. At one level, MBO is encouraging autonomy. This is in terms of encouraging workers to take responsibility for their actions in line with corporate requirements. From the point of view of motivation, this might be seen as a good thing as resources and corporate supports underpin our activities so it is actually possible for us to complete them. Our motivation can be eroded, indeed undermined, when there is an ongoing gap between what one want to do (in this case, to fulfil a corporate objective), and what one is able to do. What is apparent here is a trade off. Drucker has advocated a form of autonomy of easiness. The underlying logic that runs right through Drucker's theories is the supposed value of certainty. In other words, MBO makes things clearer, more focused and requires

workers to be one hundred per cent committed to achievement of organisational objectives.

Drucker was right to identify a difference between organisational procedures and outcomes. Some organisational processes do not necessarily lead to the required organisational outcomes. Yet, in terms of autonomy it is not always a bad thing that one does not achieve some of one's aims.

It could be argued that there are benefits to Drucker's approach. Given that autonomy is so unassured, full of great difficulties and disappointments, why not settle for something easier to attain? Why not indeed? At first sight, this proposition seems entirely reasonable. What is promoted as autonomy under MBO is however not full autonomy.

How we actually live, and what we consider as being most important, and what our choices are is strongly bound up with autonomy. What does MBO imply here? Drucker, to his credit, does appear to be genuinely interested in values being in play in the workplace that are not one-dimensional. He also sees a process of alignment of worker's individual values and those of the organisation. In reality workers' values are to be largely reshaped into those required by the organisation.

Values are crucial to autonomy as they give foundation and guidance to the kinds of lives we wish to have. Drucker has promoted a limited set of values as all one need. By identifying with our values, we can harness them, and motivate and focus ourselves. Yet the danger here, highlighted previously in Chapter One, is if one are unable to achieve distance, indeed achieve a perspective on our values, we can get stuck with them even when they are inappropriate and are ones we would repudiate if we knew better.

MBO does not really encourage adequate critical appraisal. A critique is required that will not simply fall into the trap of resistance within the definitions supplied by MBO discourse. The workers' identity is anchored, by prescribed values at several levels: this is responsibility, acting for the good of the organisation, the team, the community and themselves. Drucker says:

for the organisation to perform to a high standard, its members must believe that what it is doing is, in the last analysis, the one contribution to community and society on which all others depend. In its culture, therefore the organisation always transcends the community.²²⁴

Failing to assimilate the required organisational identity and act in accordance with it is not just seen as organisational and community failure but also as a major personal failure. Under the theories of MBO having the required identity involves upholding the required values. Drucker notes, that organisation has social power, and a good deal of it. Consequently, workers may drive themselves hard, for they perceive not meeting the social/organisational obligations as their ethical failure. One becomes marked as outside the bounds of normalisation, and therefore a deviant.

MBO may exert a considerable level of control. Its strong social reinforcement influences the worker via the combined weight of team, and organisational requirements legitimised by market requirements. To really resist such manipulation, we need first to unwind the identity that has been created for us and regain, at least to some degree, an identity of our own, one we have in part shaped.

Engineered identities and satisfactions, and beliefs that are not really our own are not autonomy. Moreover, a person with autonomy will struggle where they can against things that undermine their autonomy; however, they will not always succeed. Nor should one always expect to succeed. Yet, what one can realise is that there is still value in the attempt. Constraints and limits do not mean one should not hope for and try to achieve an extension to our autonomy.

More recently, this aspect of MBO can be seen in Stephen Covey's notion of circle of concern and circle of influence. Covey argues one should only be concerned with what one can influence. Besides the practicality of knowing when this actually is the case, what philosophy underlies this idea? One reason that autonomy is complex is because it is not about clear boundaries, but rather can be seen as a dynamic that involves an interaction between persons and their environment. Autonomy can be seen, in effect, as influencing boundaries between how one is to live and the things that control us, including our selves. Covey, like Drucker, by marking out our boundaries thinks he has assisted our autonomy. This is, however, a gain and a loss. MBO in action discourages, both in terms of values and sanctions, going beyond prescribed boundaries. To achieve sustained autonomy, one needs to be able to assess one's position and abilities, appraise oneself and the environment in an ongoing way, and adjust our actions accordingly.

Chapter 5

The management theory of Simon

Introduction

While Simon's interests were diverse, ranging from organisational theory and management science to political science, statistics, computer science and cognitive psychology, decision-making was the central question that unified his work.²²⁵ Simon identifies what he considers is needed for effective management decision-making. His behavioural model of rational choice has been highly influential. He argues in *Administrative Behaviour*, that the correct angle from which to study organisational management is that of decision-making and the actions that follow these decisions.²²⁶

Simon sought to understand organisations and their management as an aggregate of human choices based on persons's actual behaviour. Simon aimed to make decisions in organisations more rational. What this means is 'agreeable to reason; not absurd, preposterous, extravagant, foolish, fanciful or the like; intelligent, sensible'.²²⁷ He endeavoured to invent mathematical models and tools that would make bureaucracy more efficient. He wanted to instruct managers on how to adopt effective methods for reaching good decisions.

The Simon theory of management decision making

The main elements of Simon's theory of management decision-making are bounded rationality; satisficing, and procedural rationality. Simon uses these concepts when identifying, and examining the factors that he considers influence and shape decision-making within organisations.

Bounded Rationality

The foundation of Simon's theory of management decision-making is bounded rationality. The idea of bounded rationality encapsulates the limited capacity of the human mind to acquire, process and assess knowledge of consequences; to anticipate values; and to identify all the possible alternatives in a decision-making situation.²²⁸ As Simon writes persons have very limited attention, working memory and computational capacities:

[I]n any realistic description of the environment of a human decision maker, the variables and information to which he might attend (and to

which he must attend to satisfy the strict requirements of rationality) are innumerable.²²⁹

And [T]he capacity of the human mind for formulating and solving complex problems is very small compared with the size of the problems whose solution is required for objectively rational behaviour in the real world.²³⁰

In his work on bounded rationality Simon writes that we are in the maze, not over the maze surveying all the options from an Olympian perspective.²³¹ We do not see all the possibilities at any one time, or know the probabilities of the outcomes given our choices, and one do not have the computational capacity to determine an optimal outcome even if we had this information. Thus our capacity for rational behaviour is bounded in many dimensions. Simon contends that the bounds of our decision-making process includes:

- limitations on our knowledge of the consequences of the actions we consider;
- our ignorance regarding what value one will ultimately attach to those consequences we do foresee; and
- our capacity to take into account only some of the alternatives available in any situation.²³²

Simon encapsulates our need to limit and manage the information one receives and process in bounded rationality. According to Simon cognitive limitations prevent persons from:

- knowing all the choice opportunities;
- remembering all the previous optimal choices;
- knowing all the consequences of the alternatives among which he has to choose;
- knowing all the methods that could allow him to rank the alternatives with respect to his preference ordering; and
- from having enough time and resources to perform the computations leading to the optimal solution even if he knew the computation methods.

Because rationality is bounded the process one uses in making the best decisions becomes more important.

Satisficing

In introducing the notion of satisficing Simon focuses on developing a science of administrative decision making that can account for the cognitive limitations of persons.

Simon argues that seeking pleasure and avoiding pain is fundamental to choosing. Yet persons have goals that are numerous, uncertain in priority, and which are frequently contradictory. Their knowledge about alternative plans of actions, according to Simon, was also limited, costly to obtain and rarely sufficient to predict the results of each plan. Even when outcomes could be accurately predicted it was not always clear what the payoff of the future event would be. If the alternatives for choice are not given initially to the decision maker, then they must search for them. Satisficing involves a strategy where one ceases to search for alternatives when one finds an alternative whose expected utility, or level of preference satisfaction, exceeds some previously determined threshold of what is to count as satisfactory. Simon uses the analogy of playing chess to illustrate satisficing. Chess players are constrained in their choice of moves by their ability to memorise all possible combinations of their own and their opponent's moves. The player necessarily generates and examines a small number of potential moves, and makes a choice as soon as the player discovers which is satisfactory. This choice constitutes satisficing because information-processing constraints prevent the player from making the optimal choice that, in a chess game, may involve processing some 10,120 combinations.²³³

Our attention involves, according to Simon, handling limited cognitive resources to maximum capacity. The result here is that persons are forced to use only small and unsophisticated decision models. Persons, Simon holds, can therefore only be expected to have a very limited model of the true decision problem. As a result the decision-maker will try to stop his search as soon as he passes a satisfaction threshold rather than to try to attain an unreachable optimum decision.

Satisficing is a way of reducing the information-processing load. As a result the decision maker tends to make choices using relatively simple rules of thumb so as not to overly tax his capacity for thought. Here it is assumed that the decision maker has some set of standards that an option must meet for it to be at least minimally satisfactory. The idea is that the first option that comes along that meets all of the standards is the one that is selected.

Simon observed, only in exceptional cases is an individual or organisation concerned with the discovery and selection of other than satisfactory alternatives; cases where it is concerned with the discovery and selection of optimal alternatives.²³⁴ This view

is rooted in the idea of an evolutionary strategy if a firm wastes its time making optimal decisions, it may not survive.

Satisficing is not rational in the prescriptive sense because the decision maker has no assurance that an as-yet-unseen option might not be superior to the one that has been selected. The simplicity of this decision strategy can make it worthwhile, however, to risk missing the best option in favour of choosing one that is at least sufficient.

Simon argues that persons simplify their models of their preferences and seek a minimum guaranteed payoff for one goal at a time. Because they lack knowledge about the costs of the search they study alternatives sequentially and chose the first satisfactory one. In searching for a needle in a haystack they do not search for the sharpest one, but only the one that was sharp enough to sew with.

Simon also argues that because satisfaction is easier to attain if desires are satiable persons often adjust their aspiration levels according to the difficulty of the search. Responding to a difficult problem by lowering their aspirations makes it easier to find satisfactory alternatives, and in the same way, easy problems caused aspirations to rise. For example, a person selling a car initially kept the price high, studying the offers from prospective buyers one at a time, but if no offers met or exceeded their aspirations, they accepted the one that was good enough.

Procedural rationality

For Simon procedural rationality is an aid in decision-making. It is a theory about procedures that tend to boost the decision maker's computational capacity and, in the process, bring about an increase in objective rationality. It refers to any procedure and to all those computational devices that persons have designed over the years to assist the decision-making process to be more efficient such as calculus, analytic geometry, the calculator, and computer systems. The aim here is to reduce the overhead in one's precious cognitive resources in order to economise attention. For Simon, procedural rationality consists of '...a theory of efficient computational procedures to find good solutions'.²³⁵

Presenting organisations as a response to bounded rationality

Simon thinks that organisations are among simplifications that satisficing persons create to achieve their goals. The individual recognised that they could not be very

rational, that their goals were too vague, alternatives too numerous, and information too fragmentary. Hence they joined organisations and accepted employment contracts, that provided security and the possibility of achieving at least some their aims.

Simon's administrative person recognises that the world they perceive is merely a simplified model of the real thing:

...he is content to leave out of his account those aspects of reality that are substantially irrelevant at a given time. He makes his choice using a simple picture of the situation that takes into account just a few of the factors that he regards as most relevant and crucial.²³⁶

Simon found the attention of the decision maker was limited in helping channel workers' choices and this caused them to adapt their decisions to the organisation's objectives. In addition, fixed costs of past decisions further restricted choices rendering them more predictable and thereby rationalise behaviour and gave the organisation its peculiar inertia. A consistency of decisions was thus achieved which provided a basis for coordinated work, and a rationality that was impossible for an individual became possible for an organisation.²³⁷

Simon also maintained that coordinating the work of a group required managers. By centralising decision-making, some persons could become experts at making choices and be held accountable by the group. In addition, centralised decision-making was necessary to integrate the horizontal division of labour. A controlling group of managers was needed to set the terms of membership for all the participants, establish organisational goals, and convert vague ethical values into definite, operational premises of decisions. The managers also influenced the choices of their subordinates by the deliberate control of the decision making process. They supervised efforts to construct means-ends chains and select appropriate means to reach designated ends. In particular, they tried to ensure that group members made decisions based on the criterion of efficiency and chose alternatives that maximised profit and produced the best results for the least expenditure.²³⁸

Decision making within organisations

I will now examine the factors Simon considers that influence effective decision making in organisations:

- authority;

- organisational roles;
- zones of acceptance;
- docility;
- rules/heuristics; and
- programmed decisions.

Achieving control by authority

Simon argued that authority of others in an organisation did not rely on persuasion or agreement with the premises of authority. It rested on acquiescence, that is on a willingness to obey and follow along, irrespective of one's judgement as to the merits of that decision. In particular, following authority involved suspension of one's 'critical faculties for choosing between alternatives', and the need to 'adopt a criterion of choice that made one's own behaviour dependent on the behaviour of others'.²³⁹ For Simon the worker was 'an instrument of the firm turning off his own desires from nine to five'.²⁴⁰

Two types of authority existed according to Simon, the authority of ideas and sanctions. The authority of ideas existed when members accepted the goals of the organisation through identification and internalisation. By this means, authority is exercised over staff when they identify with the goals of the work team and feel they own the organisation, and therefore use adjectives like my and mine to describe their job. Other examples are when workers adopt an organisational personality distinct from their individual personality, and when they adopt a set of values and a style of thinking that causes them to focus on their task and to narrow the range of vision to the organisation's goals.

To achieve effective decision-making workers need to accept the goals of the firm, their superiors and their work group. Once performing a role with its system of values there was one and only one best decision and this was determined by the organisational values and situation.

Simon saw the organisation as a role system²⁴¹ he emphasises that the behaviour of a person in an organisation is constrained by the position that person holds in that organisation. This means that decision-making in organisations is strongly influenced by the structure and norms of the organisation.

Zone of acceptance

Simon recognised that authority did not ultimately rest with the power of the superior to apply sanctions in response to non-compliance with decisions. Simon believes that effective leaders restrained their exercise of power. Managers had to work within the limits set by their subordinate's zone of acceptance.

Simon sought to investigate the extent to which a decision made by top managers is acceptable to subordinates and how this affects the execution of such a decision. Simon called this the zone of acceptance. The idea was that the institutional setting should enable the individual decision maker to take the right decisions for the organisation. Therefore for Simon, the organisation provides a setting by which objectives and criteria affect the decision making of its members.²⁴²

The efforts of superiors to shape the decisions of subordinates are limited by the attempts of subordinates to pursue personal goals. Here Simon used the idea of equilibrium where persons accepted employment and loss of autonomy in exchange for some satisfaction of personal goals on the understanding that work goals and tasks would not violate their personal goals and values. If their responsibilities fell within their zone of acceptance they accepted the organisations' goals, acknowledged their manager's authority and contributed to its projects. But if a manager tried to operate outside of the zone of acceptance²⁴³ then personal goals became operative, and members disobeyed directions.

Docility

In a world of bounded rationality, Simon sees docility as contributing to the fitness of human beings. He writes:

Because of bounded rationality, docility contributes to the fitness of human beings in evolutionary competition. By docility I mean the tendency to depend on suggestions, recommendation, persuasion, and information obtained through social channels as a major basis of choice.²⁴⁴

Behaving in this fashion contributes heavily to our fitness because social influences will generally give us advice that is for our own good and the information on which this advice is based is far better than the information one could gather independently. As a result, persons exhibit a very large measure of docility.²⁴⁵

Based on these views Simon argues that there may be good reasons for persons to be docile, to follow the directions of others. In terms of organisational decision making docility is justified in terms of being both an organisational and social good.

Use of rules for decision making

Simon argues that simple procedures will facilitate decision-making in an environment that is too complex relative to a persons' mental and computational capabilities.

According to Simon, decision making processes – with reference to persons, teams and organisations -are carried out through the development of heuristics and routines, and through the assessment of the outcome on the basis of aspiration levels, which depend on the persons' capacity to mentally represent the environment and on their previously acquired experience.

Simon thought that persons in organisations make decisions under constraints of bounded rationality, they have limited time, knowledge, and computational capacities. Heuristics help here for they can deliver strategy for decision-making under uncertainty. They can be fast and computationally cheap because they are adapted to particular environments. That is, they exploit the structure of information in natural environments. Heuristics consist of simple rules for guiding search, for stopping a search, and for decision-making. Janis and Mann provide an example of a search heuristic:²⁴⁶

- prospection of a large set of possible alternatives;
- examination of all the objectives and values present in the choice;
- prudent weighing up of all the decision-maker knows about costs and risks, about negative and positive consequences; and
- search for relevant information which may shed light on other consequences or alternatives;
- assimilation and taking into account of all new information and expert judgments;
- new examination of positive and negative consequences of all alternatives, including those that were judged unacceptable at the start; and
- detailed prediction about all resources which will be necessary for the implementation and execution of the chosen alternatives.

Critique of Simon's theory

Simon's aim to identify how decision-making may be made more effective in organisations is insightful. Some of the factors he identifies as contributing to effective decision-making are relevant to the management of organisations. The

claim that managers have limited cognitive abilities, and that hence one needs to account for this in promoting the most effective decision making seems to be sound in principle.

The organisation in which the decision-maker operates is part of the process that determines both the decision-maker's goals and the alternatives considered to achieve these goals. The organisation plays a role in defining what the decision maker sees.

Rules, and as Simon argues, heuristics, may help organisational decision-making. Employing simplifications can make decision making easier. A decision that is good enough may often be all that is required.

There are however some weakness with Simon's approach. Bounded rationality helps introduce the behaviourist notion of decision rules. Clearly such decision rules may be analysed as manifestations of bounded rationality. Yet how are decision rules related to organisational behaviour? The link that Simon seems to be making is that persons develop skills aided by decisions rules that become part of organisational routine. Simon makes an assumption about bounded rationality, and behaviourist decision rules, combines this with ideas on tacit knowledge as embodied in skilled behaviour, and then transfers individually bounded rationality and skills to the level of routines and organisational capabilities.

There are different ways to see rule following; that is, where cognition is not set with what the agent is programmed with from the beginning. In this alternative, rule-following behaviour is more a matter of executing a skill. As Dreyfus notes, humans follow explicit rules; yet, what makes human behaviour effective is the implicit or tacit character of human rule following. Persons follow rules unconsciously, in a skilful or expert fashion; and persons actually perform less well when they deliberately try to follow explicit rules (let alone when they try consciously to optimise).

Simon has put tacit knowledge and bounded rationality together. Tacit knowledge and bounded rationality represent different kinds of assumptions and do not necessarily imply each other. Thus, there can be tacit rules for maximisation. In other words agents can cope with bounded rationality by means of fully explicit operating procedures. While one can certainly construct an argument that boundedly rational agents make use of experientially produced and skilled decision

rules that are likely to embody a good deal of tacit knowledge, there is no necessary connection between bounded rationality and tacit knowledge. It is also not clear whether organisation-level routinization is produced by interaction among the members of a team or whether it is ultimately founded in aspects of individual cognition.

Simon began his discussion by showing how persons in organisations accepted the objectives of the firm as givens and chose the most efficient means of achieving them. Efficiency effect was an important value. Managers demand workers submit and conform to their ends in the name of efficiency. As Storing argues, Simon fails to champion the interests of all members of the organisation and he concentrates narrowly on how managers establish order.²⁴⁷

Simon did not consider values involved in cybernetic control. For Simon rewards and punishment were just ways of communicating information about performance. What is important about feedback is not the form of its incentives, but the content of its information. By providing knowledge about performance administrators changed behaviour and eliminated errors that caused deviations from goals. He therefore portrayed managers as controllers of information, not controllers of persons.²⁴⁸ The goals and values of others were not considered.

In focusing on management decision-making Simon did not consider that persons have needs of personal growth and self-actualisation that bureaucracies do not address. His conception of human nature lacked a concept of self-actualisation. This is puzzling given that Simon appears to recognise the importance of self actualisation:

Man is a problem-solving, skill-using, social animal. Once he has satisfied his hunger, two main kinds of experiences are significant to him. One of his deepest needs is to apply his skills, whatever they be, to challenging tasks - to feel the exhilaration of the well-struck ball or the well-solved problem.²⁴⁹

Autonomy and Simon's theory

Simon considered that human beings are best adapted to a life of routine where decisions are simplified and satisfactions are regularised.

Persons, Simon argues, accept employment and loss of autonomy in exchange for some satisfaction of personal goals, and on the understanding that work goals and

tasks would not violate their personal goals and values. Hence, if their responsibilities fell within their zone of acceptance,²⁵⁰ they would accord with organisational objectives. Simon argued that authority of others in an organisation did not rely on persuasion or agreement with the premises of authority, it rested on acquiescence that is a willingness to obey and follow, irrespective of one's judgement as to the merits of a decision. In particular, following authority involved suspension of one's 'critical faculties for choosing between alternatives', and the need to 'adopt a criterion of choice that made one's own behaviour dependent on the behaviour of others',²⁵¹

Simon depicted bureaucracy as resting on the voluntary consent of employees, an advice acceptance relationship between superiors and subordinates. Yet he also describes how managers used incentives and controls to manipulate zones of indifference. Bureaucracy subjected employees to standardised channels of decision and directed them to apply procedures and rules without deliberation. Workers did not appear to be autonomously giving their consent for they could only freely choose between quitting or accepting the terms imposed by managers.

Simon appears to have employed a key idea of Skinner's: that autonomy is illusory because what human beings do is an outcome of prior material and psychological conditioning. As Skinner sees it, all human behaviour is a product of environmental control. He says 'scientific analysis of behaviour dispossesses autonomous man and turns control he has over to the environment'.²⁵² Yet Skinner's base data was derived from studies with pigeons. Human beings can and do use different factors to pigeons when making decisions. They may forgo certain choices even if they have apparent benefits if these choices undermine their values. Frankfurt's volitional necessity is an example of the active way human beings can employ values when making choices. Human beings have the capacity of critical appraisal. They can and do evaluate their own process of decision-making and adjust this as they consider they need to. Pigeons cannot change their decision process, indeed cannot create one, as human beings can. Skinner assumed more similarity between pigeons and human beings than is actually the case.

For Skinner, what confronts us is not a choice between more or less ownership of control. What confronts us is the choice between more or less rational forms of control. Therefore, Skinner argues, we can arrange our environment in a way that is more rational, in the sense that it produces the kinds of behaviours one desire.

Skinner's views appear to inform Simon in his promotion of bureaucracy. He says that workers need a suitable environment to make it more likely they will achieve rational behaviour and actions.

Simon, advocates reducing the discomfort inherent in the human condition. For Simon, attempting to achieve autonomy leads to misery as Skinner predicts. Much of human misery, Skinner suggests, arises from the mistaken belief that human beings are free. According to Skinner's philosophy, 'a person does not act upon the world, the world acts upon him'.²⁵³

Simon argues that the rational person is the happy person. Here, the collective mind programmed and embodied in contemporary bureaucracies is, for Simon, an answer to our need for a good life. Yet, this comes at the cost of most persons disengaging from the complexity of the broader environment, the world. This is exactly what autonomy does not shrink from, the difficulty of choosing and shaping the way one lives. Autonomy involves facing failure, disappointments and the finite nature of our capacities.

Supporting conditions

Simon's management decision-making does not provide workers with the ability to choose from valuable and meaningful options. Satisficing is no doubt a valid decision-making process. It may be the appropriate model in some circumstances but not in others. With autonomy a person may not want to decide by satisficing. To exercise autonomy a person may be quite willing to incur the costs involved.

Simon's approach does not promote critical appraisal; and without this we cannot accurately weigh and assess things. His approach is promoted as being right because it accommodates satisficing and responds to the problem of bounded rationality. Truth seeking requires being open to the possibility that one might even be in error in the methods one uses, however, and to being open to revise or abandon them if they are found to be in error or a more effective method is found.

Simon's approach does not consider, nor is open to, the idea of self-scrutiny. As a result it does not support the requirements of autonomy to be open to learn, to recognise error, and to be sensitive to the outcomes of one's actions in terms of deviation from where one believes for good reason that one should be.

Chapter 6

Supporting autonomy at work

In this chapter, I examine what a workplace that supports autonomy would be like.

Recruitment practices and autonomy

The impact of organisational work practices extends further than the workplace itself. To be able to gain employment in an organisation one needs to be found suitable, and usually be the most suitable candidate measured against the organisation's assessment processes. Development of selection processes for employees goes back to Taylor. Taylor sought to only employ workers who were adequate for the tasks required of them.

Staff selection practices have, since Taylor become more multi-dimensional. Not only skills and knowledge are considered, but also personal values, self-concept and, more recently, what has been termed emotional intelligence. Workers today may be assessed in terms of the values they hold and whether they have the kind of self that the organisation is looking for. In addition, docility may be an important factor in deciding whether an applicant is considered for a position.

On face value, it appears legitimate for organisations to develop staff assessment methods. The motives of organisations may not necessarily be malevolent, however, they may not promote the worker's welfare and interests as well as those of the organisations. Staff assessment practices may involve ideological control, and the control may be exerted even before a person starts working. This is achieved by influencing a person's desires and self-concept by influencing their striving to attain a particular employment identity.

Whyte identifies how organisational values and market forces can socialise and precondition persons for the workplace. This conditioning has the benefit for organisations that employees require minimal adjustment and will conform to the organisation's values, standards and directives. This is important because a person's autonomy may be undermined prior to them even joining an organisation. Yankelovich notes, for example, that persons may be socialised to sacrifice and defer their desires:

I give hard work, loyalty and steadfastness. I swallow my frustrations and suppress my impulse to do what I would enjoy, and do what is expected of

me instead. I do not put myself first; I put the needs of others ahead of my own.²⁵⁴

Therefore, the first requirement for an organisation to promote autonomy is supportive staff selection and recruitment programs. What sort of elements, what issues need to be considered in staff selection and recruitment programs to support autonomy?

Particularly in the public sector, contemporary recruitment practices have adopted the selection criteria process. The selection criteria process appears to contain features of MBO and disciplinary techniques. Why would one come to this conclusion? MBO, as identified, focuses on setting clear objectives and measuring one's performance against them. In selection criteria, objectives are set that a person must meet to be considered for a position. The process of confession also appears to be engaged here. Applicants are required to confess about themselves against the criteria, which may frequently include organisational values. Here, the process is to predict how well prospective employees will conform to the firm's culture.

The confession requires the applicant to make claims and commitments about their work performance that are testable and subject to scrutiny, and the values they hold are assessed as their fit with the organisation's values. The objectives here are tightly normalised. Those who don't closely fall within the range of those required will not be employed or promoted. What consequence does this have? The result is applicants who are outside the required norms are screened out. In the process of stating one's performance, a close testament to the norm is required. The individual's values, desires, beliefs and decision-making processes are illuminated in terms of the required norms. In applying for a position, the individual is to appraise themselves in terms of these norms. Once joining an organisation, employees may be expected to assimilate the corporate culture into their conception of themselves.

To allow autonomy the recruitment practices of organisations need to free up compliance with norms and consider responses that are not themselves normalised. One particular effect of the selection criteria process is effectively screening out persons who have potential, but may not yet meet an objective when measured. Autonomy as identified in part involves potential, yet potentials may be screened out in recruitment processes. Admittedly, assessing potential can be difficult and does not simply fit into selection criteria recruitment measures. The cost of the greater perceived certainty of performance by measuring persons against selection

criteria is screening out the self-made person. Testability relies on greater proofs such as qualifications and clearly relevant experience; that is, a direct link to the selection criteria. This, by its very nature, can place those with more potential rather than those possessing these kinds of proofs completely out of contention. Selection of persons who have more potential than current evidence of performance against the required objectives goes against convention. As Roger Teal, group information technology director with Securicor writes:

Ten years ago I transferred a security guard into the IT department because he said he wanted to work with computers. It raised a lot of eyebrows and a few objections, but I felt he should be given a chance. Now he's one of our senior analysts. On paper he didn't fit the template; in reality he worked out wonderfully. Sometimes you just have to trust your feelings about these things.²⁵⁵

Encouraging autonomy by empowerment

For a workplace to encourage autonomy, one of the clearest solutions within the most recent range of management practices would be empowerment. While it may seem an unnecessary question, it is important to ask just what is empowerment? Within management literature, there are broadly two ways of conceptualising empowerment. First, there are simple, general and commonsense concepts of empowerment such as redistribution or devolution of decision-making power to those who do not currently have it, or giving employees the power and authority to make decisions. For some writers, empowerment is gaining the power to make your voice heard, and to contribute to plans and decisions that affect you. In addition, empowered employees are employees who feel involved in the results of their efforts.

Empowerment is conceived of in another way as an integral part of a shift away from management and toward leadership as the fundamental organisational principle. This conceptualisation of empowerment is something qualitatively different from earlier approaches to participation. As Clegg says:

the notion of empowerment means getting things done through sharing power rather than exercising it from above. Indeed, the idea of the placement of persons 'above' others is increasingly redundant in this view of leadership, as self-directing teams replace the traditional organisational

hierarchy. Solutions to problems are reached through negotiated settlements which encompass all members of the team, rather than former participative management styles in which managers took an interest in employees simply in order to gain their compliance.²⁵⁶

While claims have been made that empowerment will enhance feelings of self-efficacy, what this means in practice is far from clear. In Waterman's notion of directed autonomy, persons are empowered within a context of direction. Persons know what the boundaries of their work are: they know where they should act on their own and where not to act. The boss knows that their job is to establish those boundaries, then truly get out of the way.²⁵⁷ This is something like: you can have autonomy as long as you follow my boundaries. Autonomy involves being able to reflect and work to change the processes and the environments in which one live.

Within management literature, there are a number of more concrete mechanisms of empowerment. The first is total quality management (TQM). Central to the theory of TQM is the utilisation of the expertise of production workers to solve problems as they arise, and to seek new and better ways to improve the quality of products or services. Thus, empowerment is said to be integral to TQM since it is necessary for employees to understand their place in the production process and to take responsibility for their work if quality is to be built in at all stages of production. Team-based work or autonomous work groups have been called self-managing teams. The logic here is that employees who are granted some degree of autonomy over their work will use their expertise to devise new and better ways of producing goods and services, and thereby improve organisational productivity and efficiency. While self-managing teams have been frequently referred to in management literature, there is little evidence of them actually being used.

A survey of literature suggests that empowerment represents relatively minor modifications to dominant, pre-existing organisational forms and practices. TQM, autonomous work groups and other communication and participation mechanisms do not make hierarchy redundant.

The extent and nature of empowerment was studied in ten five-star hotels in Amsterdam. The research revealed a wide gulf between the rhetoric about empowerment and the reality. Empowerment and related ideas were in managers' vocabularies and they all were able to recite the litany of competitive advantage and profitability through the provision of quality service, and the critical role of

front-line service employees in delivering that quality. In the quest to be the best and to exceed guests' needs and to deliver perfect customer service, front-line service employees were held to be the hotel's representatives and the experts on guests' needs. To achieve this, all the managers espoused employee involvement in decisions and actions impinging on service quality and argued for trust and the support of employee decisions. Managers supported the visible recognition and reward of exceptional employee performance, and the importance of good communications. Finally, they all enthusiastically advocated a long-term policy of selective recruitment and extensive training in technical and social skills to support this. This rhetoric, embodied in company mission statements and official policy, was not matched in practice. In all ten hotels, involvement was confined to employee participation in departmental meetings of varying frequency, rather than in decisions that affected the hotels as a whole.²⁵⁸

The conclusions of this study were that empowerment simply entails a relaxation of regulatory controls, and an increase in employee discretion. They had little more power in the workplace than before. Advocates of empowerment seem content to ignore the tension between managerial and employee control of production. This point is made by Foy who writes:

Empowering persons must not mean disempowering managers. Persons want to be managed. They want to be managed well. They want their leaders to lead them, pointing the way, focusing on priorities, feeding back on how they are doing. There is no room for management abdication in an organisation that is trying to empower its persons.²⁵⁹

A significant amount of power still remains in organisational hierarchies and continues to be exerted. This effectively washes out any small changes due to empowerment. It is not to be doubted that, on occasion, some sharing of power, some relaxing of organisational control, may be achieved via empowerment. Yet, the literature does not present evidence of empowerment that has much more than a slight impact on workers' self-control. Empowerment programs had insufficient weight and substance to overturn pre-existing chains of command authority, cultural acceptance and perceived legitimacy of hierarchy. Managers are managers by virtue of their positions within hierarchies, which affords them the capacity to exercise power over their subordinates as well as granting them a relatively high level of autonomy. Subordinates are subordinates by virtue of the fact that they have

a lesser capacity to exert control over production than do managers. In this sense, as long as hierarchy remains a feature of organisational life there are very real limits on the extent to which managers can give away power.

Bill Harley assessed the validity of the empowerment idea: the belief that new forms of work organisation are overturning traditional managerial structures and returning control to employees.²⁶⁰ Harley measured associations between work organisation, hierarchy and autonomy. The table below summarises his findings about the extent of control Australian employees have over their work.

Control in Australian workplaces

Form of control	None	A little	Some	A lot	Total
Type of work	19.2%	19.7%	34.9%	26.3%	100%
Flow work done	7.7%	14.1%	30.8%	47.4%	100%
Start and finish	34.1%	15.7%	24.0%	26.1%	100%
Pace of work	14.6%	16.4%	30.4%	38.5%	100%
Flow workplace managed	43.4%	23.3%	22.19%	11.3%	100%
Decision-making	27.0%	30.9%	29.5%	12.6%	100%

Employees tend to have much less control over management and decision-making than they do over the conduct of their own work. When questioned on workplace management and decision-making, around 60 per cent of employees said that they had no control or little control, and only around 10 per cent reported high levels of control. These results show that Australian workplaces without any empowerment mechanism do not report any difference in their level of autonomy from those employees who work with these mechanisms. As Harley says:

...this is a very significant finding. It is consistent with the claim that the practices allegedly associated with empowerment do not contribute to employee autonomy. This undermines severely the case put forward by proponents of empowerment.²⁶¹

Autonomy in Semco

Ricardo Semler's bold managerial reform of Semco might promote autonomy. In his management reforms, Semler eliminated all secretarial positions and implemented an aggressive product diversification strategy. At Semco, company officials choose their own supervisors, and set their own hours. A third of employees set their own salaries. Production workers evaluate their superiors once a year and post the scores. The company redistributes 23 per cent of corporate profits to employees, and chief executive responsibilities rotate among six employees.²⁶²

Semler found that persons will act in their own best interests and, by extension, in their organisation's best interests, if they are given complete freedom'.²⁶³ Here a relational form of autonomy can involve thinking and deciding for oneself while considering the rights and welfare of others.

Semler's fired two-thirds of the top management of Semco because he considered that they would be unable to adapt to the management practices or could undermine them. This does present a practical difficulty with Semler's approach. There would be real costs, possible litigation and upheaval involved in the restructuring needed to encourage autonomy in the way Semler advocates.

In the restructured Semco, workers typically work in clusters to assemble a complete product. This 'gives [workers] more control and responsibility'.²⁶⁴ Each business unit needs to be small enough to allow each worker to understand what is going on and contribute accordingly.²⁶⁵ Self-managed groups of six to ten manufacturing employees are placed in charge of all aspects of production. The cells and the workers located in them are allowed to figure out the best way to do their jobs. Moreover, they are able to set their own budgets and targets.²⁶⁶

The work cell does not have a formal manager; whoever shows the strongest capacity to lead gets the job. Here workers can set their own production quotas and even come in on their own time to meet them without prodding from management. They also help redesign the product and formulate the marketing plans. The work group manager is able to run the business units with extraordinary freedom, and determine business strategy without interference from the top brass.²⁶⁷

Semler's aim was a more flexible organisation based on three interdependent core values: employee participation, profit sharing and the free flow of information. Semler writes:

Our philosophy is built on participation and involvement. Give opinions, seek opportunities and advancement, always say what you think.²⁶⁸

What Semler implemented at Semco is a philosophy based on trust; it is a philosophy that does not involve time checking and security monitoring.²⁶⁹ In recruitment, persons are sought with open mindedness, trust, and distrust of dogma.²⁷⁰

Semco also recognises the importance of fostering development and allowing workers to work and study elsewhere and return when they are ready, or let them spend some time somewhere to just think.²⁷¹ Semler writes:

The key to management is to get rid of the managers. The key to getting work done on time is to stop wearing a watch. The best way to invest corporate profits is to give them to the employees.²⁷²

Reducing hierarchy and the structural power that flows from it can potentially encourage autonomy. Semler writes:

the organisational pyramid is the cause of much corporate evil.. Pyramids emphasize power, promote insecurity, distort communications, and make it very difficult for the persons who plan and the persons who execute to move in the same direction.²⁷³

Semler reduced twelve layers of management bureaucracy to three concentric circles.²⁷⁴ The small, innermost circle consisted of six counsellors who determined general policy and strategy, and attempted to catalyse the actions of those in the second circle.

Has Semco encouraged autonomy?

Has Semler's management philosophy promoted full autonomy? While Semler has written a book and articles on what he has established, he has not written a detailed management theory. Yet, it is possible to extrapolate the likely implications of his approach. This is my next task.

Can workers under Semler's philosophy choose between meaningful options? At Semco, there is a structural support and hence a greater opportunity for workers to raise and question things. Workers also have increased flexibility in taking on and experimenting with work and undertaking study. This does not guarantee that the options are meaningful, however, the influence over the options does provide

greater likelihood for one's options to be meaningful. This is the case if workers can actually have input into how work is conducted, and, even better, its design. This does appear to be the case with Semco. With Semco, the classical divide between management conception and execution along Taylorist lines has been dissolved. The establishment of small teams dedicated to completion of a whole product or service gives the workers an increased ability to understand, and assess not just their role and contribution to production, but their actions and ability.

Semco reforms provide the possibility for persons holding a variety of values, and for the values adopted by groups and the organisation to evolve. Abandoning close time monitoring and checking, and creating an environment for thinking, for reflection, are important initiatives.

Small cells make it more likely that workers can express themselves honestly and openly, and challenge existing ideas and approaches. By providing information openly within Semco, workers can exercise their abilities for critical appraisal in dealing with systemic complexities. This may enhance their autonomy of action by gaining more experience at dealing with real world complexities.

Semco's approach of staying away from formulas and encouraging an open mind.²⁷⁵ is valuable. Access to a variety of information, concepts and frameworks can help encourage critical appraisal. There is no ideal way to critically appraise, however, looking for the truth is a good way to begin.

Small work groups that are responsible for a complete activity means that appraisal can be monitored in terms of ideas that may be implemented in the conduct of the cell's work. Feedback to guide the effectiveness of our critical appraisal is very important. Giving workers opportunities not just to influence work processes but also assist in implementing changes and monitoring their effectiveness helps workers to develop their critical appraisal skills.

Workers at Semco are not learning by rote, nor do they have some kind of false empowerment. At Semco it is likely that one's critical appraisal, the ideas and beliefs one holds will be subject to evidence as it arises.

Semco does not appear to rely on compulsion. A philosophy of openness, and frankness, about their work requirements ensures that they are self-motivated not coerced. Semco employees are supported and encouraged. Setting salary and their

own work goals means employees are driven by possibilities that are, in part, their own.

At Semco, there is some opportunity to encounter and reach one's own limits. In encouraging autonomy Semler would rather persons face their own limitations to find what they can do which may even exceed some of their own expectations. Autonomy unavoidably carries the risk in finding our limits in our actions in the world means that sometimes one will fall short of our expectations for ourselves and sometimes one will exceed them. Over time, in these experiments in our development and self-control via critical appraisal, we may develop more accurate understanding of what we are capable of.

A striking feature of the Semco reforms is the way employees appear to exercise care in their behaviour and activities.

Autonomy lies not in rote or following a process, nor is it achieved by random, unfocused actions; it lies between these poles. Sensitivity of limits can flow through to one's desires. So one's desires are, at least, within the bounds of possibility even if some of them might be improbable.

The importance of being able to perceive the distinction between the actual and the ideal was recognised in Chapter One as important for autonomy. If you cannot recognise a distinction between the current situation or context in which you find yourself in and the ideal, then your actions in actually achieving the ideal will be of limited effectiveness. Semco's openness assists the development of autonomy through allowing concepts and details of individual and group performances to be challenged.

Context for increasing autonomy at work

In the next section I show the importance of language and relationships for autonomy. I then explore how dialogue may be able to enhance autonomy at work.

Relationships

In order for a person to exercise autonomy at work they would have to deal with existing networks of relationships. Relations with others can be understood both as an obstacle and enabler for autonomy. Realistically even were relationships enable autonomy some aspects of the relationship may pose obstacles to autonomy.

Radical independence from others even if was a good way to encourage autonomy; it would imply that few persons could be autonomous.

Conventional wisdom renders persons prone to regard their own self-interest as natural and therefore unproblematic. Yet, arguably it is more plausible to see it as a product of economics. Market economics promotes individual self-interest as a virtue. This conflation of autonomy and individual self-interest is treated as the natural condition and legitimate consequence of the practice of free market economics. Individualism is celebrated in autonomy as a central value. Yet exalting an individualistic conception of autonomy can have the cost of denying our relations with others. As Held argues, a model of autonomy that conceives the self as free and independent bound only by those rules one has given oneself, obligated only by those relationships one has freely entered into, is abstract empty and unrealisable.²⁷⁶ As Joel Feinberg writes, it is not necessary to allow individual liberty to trump community but autonomy can coexist with mutual tolerance, respect, charity, and cooperation.²⁷⁷

Language

Language plays a significant role in shaping the thought processes used in organisations', decision-making, and organisational behavior. The language used in organisations can be a product of the hierarchical relations of power. In the simplest form managers make decisions that are communicated to workers as commands. In traditional hierarchical arrangements, those at the top of the organisation can afford to be casual about how well they understand those at lower levels.

To have autonomy workers must be listened to by those that are making the decisions. While workplace hierarchies and expressions of power shape the communications process, persons may have also developed habits that impede effective communication. In communicating, persons may not ask each other questions or genuinely listen to what the other side is saying. In many cases, while one person is talking, the other person is thinking of what he will say when it is their turn to talk.

Organisations can dispossess agents from their speech by reducing language to a monological role. What needs to be encouraged is speech where each agent is not systematically ignored but is seriously taken into account.

The idea of consensus can still be seen as an expression of institutionalised power structures. Here the power distribution differences are focused on common ground. This may not enhance autonomy because power is never distributed equally and most organisations have cultural management programs, what is common between stakeholders frequently favours the already privileged position.

Participation and decision making

Management literature and organisations themselves frequently consider techniques that improve organisational communication. Such discussion often focuses on increased use of team decisions, forms of dialogue, and methods of participation as alternative ways of communicating. Often these alternatives are presented as unproblematic democratic or participatory communication. The reality in many organisations is a lack of opportunity to effectively participate. This results not only from the limited nature of participation that is sought but also from the inability to participate well. What is needed is communication where participation is genuinely favoured. Through genuine dialogue there is the possibility of each person to speak for them self. In this way one can be personally present in one's communication.

Solving complex problems and making decisions about them may not be best achieved by satisficing even though this is a commonly used organisational strategy.

An alternative approach to decision-making is broadly harnessing the knowledge throughout the organisation so as to understand the systemic nature of many problems and their solutions. What is needed is knowledge that is harnessed collectively. The traditional approach where managers deal with information and make decisions that are implemented by workers may not be effective. A more effective approach to understanding the nature of problems is where everyone is to some degree is a knowledge worker. As systems theory suggests, decision-making may be made more effective if it is made at the lowest possible level of the hierarchy. Hierarchy should be minimized in order for information to flow not only top-down-top but also horizontally.

What needs to be promoted in the workplace is not enabling persons to do what they want in an isolated and perhaps egoistic sense, but to do so in a relational autonomy. The autonomy that could be encouraged would involve collective contestation and clarification of ideas values and actions. It is in the interaction

between the individual and the group, indeed the whole organisation in a dynamic sense that could increase the quality of its knowledge management and decision-making. At the same time persons may be able to exert a form of autonomy that is supported by their relationships with others.

Encouraging autonomy via dialogue

How could the language and decision-making used in organisations actually increase relational autonomy? What seems to be needed is a way of taking account of persons, indeed their subjectivity, in the communication and decision-making process. This might potentially be provided via dialogue, a word derived from Greek, suggesting speaking that comes or goes in several directions. Through dialogue it might be possible for workers to enjoy relationships indeed relational autonomy that does not involve domination. Dialogue would involve collective agency where persons could pursue their own ends in the context of relationships in which others may do the same. This would involve safeguarding a person's choice of situation from improper constriction.²⁷⁸

To see why autonomy might be enhanced by dialogue one needs to identify what is different about this form of communication, or more broadly relating. Dialogue responds to the actuality that persons do not, and cannot, constitute themselves without others. In dialogue persons can, simultaneously, recognise the complex web of interpersonal and societal connections that comprise a person's particular context and at the same time recognise the possibility of self-determination.

Bubers' idea of an I-Thou rather than I It relationship²⁷⁹ can be understood as a key aspect of dialogue. Buber's idea of I thou shifts the focus in communication, peoples' behavior, decision-making, and subsequent actions that follow. Buber suggests that in authentic dialogue something far deeper than ordinary conversation occurs. The I-Thou interaction implies a genuine openness of each person to the concerns of the other. In such dialogue, I do not, while talking with you, selectively tune out views with which I disagree, nor do I busy myself marshalling arguments to rebut you while only half attending to what you have to say, nor do I seek to reinforce my own prejudices. Instead, I fully take in your viewpoint, engaging with it in the deepest sense of the term. You do likewise. Each of us internalises the views of the other to enhance our mutual understanding. One listen and respond to one another with an authenticity that forges a bond between us. In this sense, dialogue is a process of successful relationship building. Buber recognised that by performing the seemingly

simple act of responding empathically to others and in turn being heard by them, one transcends the constricting confines of the self. Instead of saying you or me, you hear yourself saying you and me. Buber describes true dialogue as one where the integrity and autonomy ones' self and the other are preserved. In dialogue, neither person loses his or her own standpoint, nor transforms the other into an image to serve one's own purposes. The autonomy enhancing aspects of dialogue are therefore evident.

The anthesis of dialogue is where a person assumes that another is an all-knowing authority on the matter under consideration, and does not speak, only listens. Dialogue is also undermined where a person assumes a position of authority, where they believe that relative to them others are ignorant, and so they only speak, do not listen. Dialogue is a conversation animated by a search for understanding. Participants focus on their relationship and the joint process of making sense of each other. The broad aim of dialogue is to promote respectful inquiry, and to allow important issues to surface freely.

Dialogue calls on participants to pay attention to their thinking, feelings, assumptions, and patterns of communication. Persons typically have a sense that their way of interpreting the world is the only way that it can be interpreted. They may not immediately be aware of the degree to which their conception of reality is biased and influenced by their personal needs and fears.

Because its broad goal is to increase understanding about persons' concerns, fears, and needs, dialogue centres on inquiry and reflection. Participants refrain from assuming that they already know the thoughts, feelings, and intentions of the other. Instead, they assume that the other is speaking honestly from experience, and listen closely. This process of deep listening and reflection typically slows down the speed at which parties converse. The slower interchange enables persons to observe the conversation while it is actually occurring, so that they become more aware of both the content of the communication process and the structures that govern it. They gain insight into the assumptions and unspoken implications of what is being expressed along with what is being avoided.

Each person engaging in dialogue can examine the preconceptions and prejudices that lie behind his or her opinions and feelings, and then share these insights with one another. Participants not only expose ideas to one another's scrutiny, but also open themselves up to the possibility that their ideas will be changed. This means

that they try to appreciate what others are saying and keep listening even when they do not like what they hear.

For dialogue to work and a person's autonomy maintained it is not sufficient to allow others to speak. They need to be heard in their own way, on their own terms rather than constrained to use the voice of those who have constructed them.²⁸⁰

Real dialogue requires a willingness to see to question the assumptions of one's most cherished attitudes, the core of one's own beliefs, approaches, and commitments. Through the grasping of the other person's difference from us one can come to see more clearly who one is. In this way the interrelatedness of personal autonomy is exercised in the dialogical aspects of critical appraisal. Dialogue can potentially enhance our self-knowledge.

In successful dialogue for a person to maintain their autonomy they must be able to maintain their own voice in the communication. They need to be able to differentiate their perspective from the other person's and speak about it. In dialogue the persons involved do not become the instruments of others. The challenge is to keep the dialogical space open rather than fall back into the routine where persons just think in terms of what they are told rather than for themselves.

Dialogue can also allow personal values to be raised and explored. In engaging with other persons in dialogue there are not two parallel processes of practical deliberation going on, someone else's as well as your own. Within dialogue the persons and the values that persons have are at the centre of the communication process. There is potential that personal values are contested, evolved and engaged in an ongoing way. Dialogue may promote autonomy also through helping persons to think for themselves by expressing and sharing their own ideas.

Barriers to implementing dialogue

There are significant barriers to implementing dialogue in organisations. Allowing persons to express their opinions may give the impression that autonomy is being enhanced. Yet the selection of speakers, the order in which they speak, and how they are treated may be planned in order to manipulate persons to achieve the desired ends of organisations. Dialogue is an opportunity to express an opinion freely without fear. This won't be achieved without creating a supportive context and this would necessarily require quite a deal of organisational effort.

The exercise of authority and power in organisations will undermine dialogue. Yet will existing authority and power structures be suspended to allow dialogue to occur? Those in power may wish to further their own interests to maintain control even if they agree to support dialogue in the workplace. Everyone involved must want the benefits of dialogue more than they want to hold onto their privileges of rank.

Managers may undermine the discourse. What may remain as a problem is the acceptance of views because of an individual's privilege or authority. For those involved in dialogue to be able to express their own authentic interests, needs, and feelings they need to be free from coercive and hegemonic processes. Dialogue may highlight dysfunctional organisational activity, but this news is not necessarily what is wanted. Managers may not want to hear bad news, especially if it reflects on their own performance.

Given that dialogue is fundamentally based on relationships, which involves more than the superficial engagement of persons, a high degree of trust is necessary. Without careful consideration of and signs that it is actually safe to speak freely and openly workers and managers will not want to take the risk, especially if they may perceive that their career or future employment may be negatively affected. Management will need to do much more than provide assurances that it is okay for workers to speak out.

Effective dialogue is greatly dependent on the quality of the personal relationships involved. Achieving personal relationships, however, may be disturbed by exercise of organisational power and unethical practices. Those involved in dishonesty, falsifying records, inflating productivity numbers, for example, seek control in particular to manage persons' perceptions of performance rather than establish genuine relationships.

Dialogue also requires both forums and places for persons to freely develop and express themselves. Forums and places for dialogue may not exist and if they are not developed dialogue may end up being rhetoric rather than as an organisational reality. Resources would need to be invested in creating and maintaining these forums. Limitation of time is one of the main inhibitors to dialogue. In particular not being free of interruptions, not being able to pause or to allow silence, not being able to hear the others. Therefore the place, and timing of dialogue, is most important.

Dialogue may not always generate clear organisational benefits and may therefore be seen as an overhead. Dialogue needs to be embedded and become a key part of the organisation's decision-making process and help guide organisational strategic directions.

The idea that everyone is equal and has full input into the dialogue may be difficult to achieve as persons with dominant personalities may monopolize the discussion. They may also exercise their own agendas. The use of a moderator may impose too much structure and undermine the free flowing nature of the dialogue. At first dialogue may not produce results because of lack of familiarity, commitment, effort, and expertise. An organisation may need to take a long-term view about the benefits of dialogue. It is not something that will necessarily deliver immediate benefits.

Without a real and sustained commitment of behalf of workers and management in reality attempts to implement dialogue are likely to fail.

The benefits of dialogue may also be judged against their cost. The outcomes of dialogical communication are by their nature unpredictable. Dialogue may uncover and highlight some of the weakness of the assumptions of the management decision-making methods being used. While this may be good for enhancing organisational performance it may be perceived as a threat by those involved. Workers themselves may perceive that the dialogical process is risky even if their safety to speak openly is assured. They may not participate effectively as a result, they may fail to speak openly, they may not want to deal with assumptions with what lies behind things, they may not want the cause for certain practices and behaviors to surface.

Achieving dialogue requires participants to act with humility to recognise their own ignorance, the inherent limitations of their own knowledge. Questions can be raised as to whether participants will be genuinely ready to act in this way. Some employees may resent the increased commitment and effort that genuine dialogue requires. Cooperation in the process of dialogue cannot be assumed.

The rhythm of dialogue may be undermined by what might be called sound byte mentality. Many senior managers have grown accustomed to obtaining information in sound bytes, that is ideas expressed very briefly and in compressed form without pauses, silences such as these are taken to be a waste of precious time. This abbreviated communication habit devalues the importance of pauses, of reflection and exploring what is going on behind a proposition or an idea. Moreover it also

undermines the personal aspects of relationships involved in the communication process. The focus is on perceived efficiency of information content not the persons involved, their beliefs, values, and even bias. However, dialogue doesn't work when it is rushed. Assumptions for example need to be surfaced, considered and evaluated and this necessarily takes time. Dialogue cannot be simply fixed into predetermined periods of time. The organisational flexibility needed for dialogue to work well may make implementing it difficult.

Senior managers may be accustomed to taking up a large proportion of the discussion time. This habit may be hard to break, it certainly would not happen automatically. Some one in authority can take up a large part of the proceedings but if someone junior has a lot to say whether this is relevant or not they may be prevented from speaking or stopped before they have finished.

Dialogue also presumes that participants will listen. As listening may not be regularly practiced within organisations it may need to be developed before dialogue can operate effectively.

The overall barriers to implementing effective dialogue in organisations appear to be considerable. While some of Semler's account of the reforms at Semco seems to involve dialogue, there is insufficient information provided to know the degree to which dialogue was implemented. One area of possible connection between dialogue and Selmer's approach to management is truth seeking. The idea here is that via dialogue persons search for truth together.

The barriers identified in implementing dialogue may not be insurmountable if an organisation is genuinely committed to its success. Some tough²⁸¹ and swift actions may need to be made against those that undermine dialogue, and this includes managers. For once distrust becomes an issue dialogue would be quickly undermined and hard to restore. The most significant barrier to implementing dialogue may be the genuineness of the organisation's commitment to implement it.

Conclusions

Autonomy is achieved through social environments and the workplace provides an invaluable context for autonomy as it potentially provides issues, tasks and activities that may allow persons to exercise autonomy over extended periods. Work provides an important opportunity for persons to be autonomous.

To achieve autonomy at work one needs to be able to respond to the rules, process and frameworks that have shaped us. Foucault identifies what is needed when he writes:

Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what one is, but to refuse what is are. One have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality.²⁸²

Even if work conditions and management practices change, workers may need to reevaluate their self-conception, self-understanding if they are to achieve full autonomy.

Dialogue if successfully introduced would shape the power exercised at work, that is why it would be very difficult to implement yet could enhance autonomy at work. In my 25 years of experience working in positions as varied as postman, to photocopier repairman to business analyst, and policy officer I have rarely experienced or witnessed full autonomy in the workplace. I have experienced one company, a public relations and marketing firm, where I was surprised to observe junior and senior staff engaged in real dialogue. Many of the staff appeared to have a high degree of autonomy, and greatly enjoyed their work. The quality of the work they produced was also exceptional. While this example offers little evidence that dialogue could assist the realisation of full autonomy there is a need for further research on the application of dialogue to the workplace.

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Maf54: You in your boxers, too?

Underage_page: Nope, just got home. I had a college interview that went late.

Maf54: Well, strip down and get relaxed.

Maf54: What ya wearing?

Underage_page: tshirt and shorts

Maf54: Love to slip them off of you.

Maf54: Do I make you a little horny?

Underage_page: A little.

Maf54: Cool.

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