

## Panel Discussion with Robert A. Dahl, Claus Offe, and Alain Touraine

Aarhus University, January 30, 1987

*Chairperson (Erik Damgaard):*

I suggest that we start the discussion of 'Problems of Participation and Governance in Modern Democratic Societies' with a few comments from the panel on some fundamental questions. The first question is, How would you describe or criticize existing modern democratic societies? What is, in your opinion, good or bad with these societies, what are their main problems? What is your *critique* of these societies? The second question is, What do our scholars – who come from very different places and work within different research traditions – have to say about how these societies ought to look like, ideally? What vision do you have about the desirable development of these societies? What is, to use another term, your possible *utopia*? The third question is, What would you recommend, what kind of strategy should we use or choose, in order to achieve the visions that are used in evaluating the deficiencies of existing democratic societies? This is a question of *strategy*. What strategy, if any, could be used? And finally, a question of a somewhat different nature: What is, according to your opinion, the proper *role* for yourself as a social scientist in the possible attempt to improve upon these modern democratic societies that are not as perfect or ideal as they perhaps could be?

After the comments from the panel on these four questions we go on with questions from the audience. But first I should mention that I posed the four questions to Robert Dahl at the opening of the symposium. He replied along the following lines – I think:

As far as the *critique* is concerned, there exists an unacceptable degree of political and economic inequality in our societies. There are national variations, to be sure, but inequality seems to be a common problem for our societies. Dahl has a vision, even a *utopia*. He wants our societies, if possible, to become more perfect: They should apply certain democratic procedures that he precisely defines, and Dahl's ideal democracy also includes a proper organization of economic enterprises – the idea of self-

governing enterprises. Dahl's utopia also includes, and this was the second major theme, a better informed citizenry to counteract tendencies towards rule by technocratic guardians. Dahl's analysis and visions of course have implications for the *strategic* question. We got a number of suggestions from Dahl although perhaps not an overall general strategy that could be used. Concerning the fourth question, I think the message was that Dahl sees himself as a scholar writing and teaching about fundamental democratic problems in our time. He does not, he told us, see any contradiction between the role of a social scientist and the role of an actively involved politician although he indicated that there could be some problems. In theory the two roles could be combined. Before proceeding I really should ask Robert Dahl whether he wants to add something to my interpretation.

*Robert Dahl:*

I couldn't improve upon it except by going on at much greater length.

*Alain Touraine:*

To the first point of *critique*, I would say I am probably more (not being a political scientist) preoccupied with purely political problems. Democracy is representative in its very nature, and I feel there is a deep crisis of representativity in our democracy because, in our Western – maybe European – countries (it would not apply to the United States to the same extent) after all the strength of democracy came from the fact that political parties were roughly speaking representative of major economic and social interests. We had a century of strong democracy in several countries, the British or Scandinavian type for example, because politics was strongly based on social conflict and the capacity to solve or institutionalize conflict. Now political parties are vanishing into vague coalitions. We don't have a real democratic regime, because we don't see clearly enough which groups, interests, and values are represented. We have to go out of the industrial period and must as soon as possible enter into a new social definition of political forces.

Second, the *ideal* society, I would say that our social and political life is not well enough structured. There is a strong tendency to develop a central majority and marginalized groups. There is what I could call a Latin Americanization of Europe. The proportion of marginals – people who are semi-unemployed, marginally employed, who marginally participate in political and cultural life – is increasing. In some sense, there is a growing distance between citizens and excluded groups. That is a big threat. And as was mentioned a moment ago, the role of the communication system is extremely important. We certainly need a new development, a new extension of our *Öffentlichkeit*.

The third point is probably the one I am most unable to answer. I don't

think we are in a period of *strategies*. Our democracies are not really directly threatened. Globally measured, the situation is fairly acceptable in our part of the world. I would personally say that I'm still one of those who feel threatened by totalitarian regimes, and from a purely strategic point of view, a cold blooded point of view, I would say it is very urgent to reincorporate the largest possible parts of the so-called Third World into, excuse the expression, the Western World. The point is that our countries should act in a responsible way towards the rest of the world. That, I think, is strategically fundamental.

Now as to the last point, what is the *role* of a social scientist, for me the main role of the social scientist is to help individuals and groups to become political actors. I would certainly agree that there is no frontier between analysis and – I would not say action, but – responsibility. The responsibility of intellectuals is not to tell the truth or to give information; it really is to help groups to become conscious of what is central for themselves, to disentangle major from minor, central from marginal problems because – and here I come back to my first point – the role of intellectuals is to help their society, their environment, to identify central, major problems.

*Claus Offe:*

Let me say first of all that this scheme of critique, vision, strategy, and role is very familiar to me and by some coincidence it is the scheme I use in my introduction to political theory courses to discuss every single author. It appears in a course called 'From Machiavelli to Max Weber'. I did never dream of being asked about my own views in these terms, but it makes sense.

I think I would rephrase the first question. It has very little to do with what I find good or bad in the modern society or what we as a group happen to find good or bad. It is worth remembering the original philosophical meaning of the word *critique* which is determination of limits, and these limits refer back to the twin-term of critique, namely crisis. Critique is finding out where the established dynamics of some social arrangements lead into crisis, or into a state of discontinuity, or break of identity, but not necessarily 'catastrophe' which is still a different concept. It is a very difficult concept to handle, and of course the interaction between the first and the fourth question becomes very obvious here: Who are you, or who are we, to be able to claim superior insights into those limits? This is the question that all philosophers and social scientists have to ask themselves. Nevertheless, I think that although a uniquely accurate answer to the question of what are the limits is hard to find, the right direction is equally hard to miss in the sense that all critique of modern society has to do with the critique of the dominant forms of rationality and action. At what point, for what reasons, and by which necessities does the pursuit of rationality of

action lead to collectively undesirable and even intolerable or self-nihilating outcomes? Three rationalities are the most prominent in leading the action of individual and collective actors in modern society, viz., economic, political-administrative-bureaucratic, and scientific rationalities. All these rationalities have led to phenomena of alienation, destruction, non-consideration of long-term and external effects. They have combined into a process out of which crises are generated, and irreversible and uncontrollable states of affairs have emerged. A critique of the irrationalities of rationality, the undesirable effects of rational action, is probably what most social theorists are actually concerned with.

There is an implicit and sometimes hopefully explicit counterconcept. The term 'responsibility' has made a very interesting revival in political theory. You find dozens of titles both in the German and the English speaking world using the term responsibility as a standard of a rationality that reflects upon the limits of rationality. I think it is a healthy, fruitful and suggestive term although it should be deprived of its paternalistic and elite connotations. Some people are thought to be responsible, and hopefully they are at the top and make good policies we can benefit from. This is the Weberian view in which responsibility itself is not specified. In his moral logic Max Weber speaks on passion and *Augenmass*, i.e., 'sense of proportion' as most English translations render it. Passion and sense of proportion are very difficult principles to use. Anyway, that takes care of the critique.

Second, vision or *utopia*. I think some of it is prefigured in what I have just said. The vision or utopia would be a less irresponsible society, a society that is not driven by unanticipated threatening factors resulting from its own action. Pre-modern societies were threatened from without, modern societies are threatened from within, from lack of consideration of what they are doing. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that we cannot simply rely on a pre-modern vision of order and think of some moral revelation or benign dictatorship of some kind. We are confronted with the modern problem of generating order, responsibility – a stable, orderly society – in other words, to generate certainty out of uncertainty, and to create what in traditional societies were moral and political certainties out of an ongoing process of uncertainty.

That tells us something about *strategy*. The term *Öffentlichkeit*, very hard to translate into any other language and therefore perhaps not very useful, is in the title of one of the most influential books for my generation of political theorists and sociologists. In 1963 Jürgen Habermas wrote *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. He discusses in the form of a review of political theory over the last 250 years the self-critical potential of civil society, the self-transcendent potential and the way it is generated. This notion of 'the public sphere', as it is most often translated, is most important.

As far as policies, strategies, reforms, and proposals are concerned, I think there are no positive, substantive things to say. One negative, substantive thing to say is that in modern society a unique privilege of one social sector or class – be it the peasants, the farmers, the women, the intellectuals or whoever – is no longer given. No one is closer to God than anyone else. That is a hard lesson to learn, particularly for people from the traditional Left. I would say that the lesson should be learned. A second thing to say is that all strategies, proposals, reforms, and policies should be experimental, that is reversible, revisable, and open to learning processes. There is no once and for all revelation. A third thing is that there is most likely – but this is an empirical generalization rather than a logical principle – to be mixed strategies, i.e., strategies that make use of a combination of principles of order, i.e., use of the state, the market, and the community in some richer, integrated form rather than relying on one of the three.

Finally, the proper *role* of the intellectual. I think the proper role of the intellectual is the one he or she can best perform, or with the performance of which he or she has the least legitimation difficulties as an intellectual. What he or she can best perform is specifying those deficiencies of the dominant criteria of rationality and also do a second order critique: Not only specify what goes wrong, as has been done in the Marxist tradition in the crisis theories, but also specify the deficiencies of theories that try to overcome these deficiencies, i.e., criticize political and social theory, positive theories of order. I definitely think that the task of the intellectual does not extend to the assumption of leadership roles, and I would even tend to be a little more modest than Touraine. To constitute social actors is something that can be very demanding and for which there is no clear model – except perhaps Touraine's. But I think it is difficult, and I would tend to stay away from this ambition.

Finally, let me say that if I am right in the basic assumption that we live in an age and a society characterized by a process of deconstruction of collective identities and cultures, then the potential source of coherence will have to be found. Intellectuals – including game theorists, political economists, philosophers, psychologists, a lot of people in the social sciences and in the specific disciplines of the social sciences – are very good at, and can become even better at, constructing, developing, and experimenting with potential innovations at the level of procedural rules or constitutions, the desirable effect of which would be to overcome what I perceive as the current under-utilization of the moral capacities of citizens and improve the utilization of those idle resources.

*Chairperson:*

I want to thank both Claus Offe and Alain Touraine. We shall now have questions from the audience.

*Øystein Gaasholt:*

Professor Touraine, you suggested as we got to the last of these questions that the role of the social scientist is to assist groups/individuals to participate actively in politics, or in society. Is that any individual or any group? Or do you have limits?

*Alain Touraine:*

I've been devoting a good part of my time these last ten years developing and using a technique called sociological intervention with this kind of goal and very often people who happen to work with me ask the same question. Are you ready to make a so-called intervention with big business-people, or with the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, or with the chairman of the Mitsubishi company? And my answer is yes. I think what we basically need is to rediscover a certain priority to social relations, including power relations, and to disentangle them from global visions or roles. For example, it would be positive to have economic leaders accepting themselves as economic leaders instead of speaking all day long about the interests of mankind and the progress of knowledge. And I'm exactly in the same situation to avoid identification of a specific actor with universalism or with being deprived of access to universities. To put it in more general terms, my preoccupation is that at the end of this century we are not dominated by social processes and social problems. The 20th century was dominated by the formation of and fights among empires, political states or political powers, and all empires try to swallow their own society. It is important to destroy the pretense of any elite group to identify itself with the community, history, rationality. If you want to help this movement of society to develop itself, you must as much reconstruct leading groups as dominated groups.

*Robert Dahl:*

I think I would draw the boundaries slightly differently. For temperamental reasons I've not been very active. There are boundaries, it seems to me, which we would probably more or less agree on. One's task as a scholar imposes some limits as to time. But aside from that it seems to me – if I may pick up on Claus' term responsibility which I've been very fond of also – that as one moves out of the strictly scholarly role into the domain of political life, then responsibility takes hold. Now it would be possible to argue, I suppose, that enlightenment is always desirable, and that no matter what the group is that you are assisting to become more enlightened, that is a positive good. But there are groups in society that I don't want to assist, groups that I feel are dangerous and already too powerful. I would clearly draw boundaries and refuse to offer my services to a variety of groups.

*Alain Touraine:*

I would join you completely every time the ideology of an individual or a group is to identify itself with society. I just fight. Not only would I not assist it, I would say it is a positive task for a social scientist to attack this pretense of an individual or a group to identify itself with a totality – society, mankind, future, history, anything you like.

*Mette Bock:*

Claus Offe was talking about the structures in societies that have great influence on how people are conscious about their own situation and about the society as a whole. I would like to hear what our panelists have to say on how institutions can create people's consciousness and whether people could change not only their consciousness but also their way of living and their way of being.

*Robert Dahl:*

It seems to me that the major problems we confront require both changes in consciousness and changes in structures, and that those interact with one another. If anything that I have said has led anybody to think that I suppose that human consciousness is somehow permanent and unchangeable, autonomous or independent of human structures then that would be a total misunderstanding. In order to have changes in structures, you have to have changes in consciousness. In order to have changes in consciousness, often you also have to have some kind of changes in structures. It is not a strict interdependence, however. There is a certain amount of autonomy on both sides, I think. Consciousness is not wholly determined by structures, though in some sense structures may be wholly determined by consciousness. I would say that within some limits none of us can confidently forecast, we can shape human qualities. We can shape human consciousness by changes in structures, but we also require prior changes in consciousness in order to make those structures bring about the kinds of changes that we want.

*Alain Touraine:*

Maybe it is not a direct answer to your question but a partial one. In our intellectual and political tradition of the last centuries, we attached very central importance to institutional reform. After all, politics was about institutions and the word institutions itself was really a very central one. My view would be that institutions as such are less and less important. Democracy once meant parliament. Then we began to speak about labour relations, working conditions, social justice, and so on. That does not mean that parliament is not important at all but there was a gap, a wider and wider gap. Today I would say that the institutional problems are more and more problems of rules and procedures. We want to have institutions which

do not impose upon us any substantive orientation. We want to be free from that. What we want is not to replace or substitute a popular prince for a monarchical prince, we want to have no prince at all! And we want to avoid the rule of the majority, which is meaningless because nobody is Mister Majority. In our present situation I would say that institutional problems are secondary, at least in the small part of the world where the basic institutional problems of democracy have been solved, and where mechanisms for dealing with labour problems exist. So our task right now is to put the emphasis not on the institutions – and I think nobody actually does – but on what you call consciousness or the discovery of new social problems. Then will come a time in which it will be a priority to define new structural reforms. Having said so, I must add immediately that we should not exaggerate the separation between these two items on the agenda. I certainly would agree with Bob Dahl and say that very often structural or institutional reforms help the transformation of consciousness, demands, and social relations.

*Claus Offe:*

You raised a very important question that is often considered one of the most central questions in social theory: How is action related to structure? And of course there is one candidate for an answer, namely classical historical Marxism. It argues that it is in specific ways related to science, and that specific actions are related to specific structures. This structuralist argument has come under attack, partly for plausible reasons and partly for implausible ones. Let me try to get at one complication of the argument. The structure of the argument is very compelling. If you see a person in extreme conditions of poverty you cannot imagine that the person would have any choice of action. The structural location of this person is somehow thought to be the cause of the actions, of the high probability related to some action. Let us just see why this is wrong. For example, a person finds himself or herself in a condition of slavery. There are exactly four possibilities for responses to that: Individual and collective responses, reformist and revolutionary ones. There is a range of choice among these four options. Individual/revolutionary is unusual, it means escape. The second is to withdraw collectively. The third is to ask for improvements individually, and the fourth is to ask for improvements collectively. Then the question becomes which structure decides what action will be taken in response to structure. Furthermore, there will be structured perception of the structure which makes one of these responses, so structure must be conceptualized as a reflexive category. I must conceive the situation of others as making either of these four strategies more likely to lead to a success. This is a starting point of the conventional phenomenological argument, of course. The way you perceive the world is itself structured



and is a new layer upon the structure of the world itself. I think this is the point that needs to be added to any conventional historical materialist argument.

Let me add another point in this connection. All major, contemporary social theorists have written books that only in one case was called 'After the Revolution?'. However, in other cases the topic was the same: What happened after '68? What is the new situation? A German author, Niklas Luhman, in a respected book wrote a sentence as a real provocation. It said, 'Everything can happen today, and nothing is going to change'. So the last challenge is over. We have to foresee a lot of surprises but no change. Deviant behaviour of all kinds can happen, non-standard behaviour of all kinds, but everything is going to stay stable. My point here is to say, coming back to what I think is an important argument, that the sentence of Luhman could be slightly changed and make even more sense. The sentence would then be: 'Everything can happen and *therefore* nothing is going to change'. That is a problem which structural theories face: The very unpredictability of actions and events minimizes the extent to which actors can actually organize for projects of collective change.

*Uffe Østergaard:*

I should like to address all three speakers on the subject of economic decisions or what once was called class struggle. As my point of departure I take a rather provocative remark by Touraine who sketched the overall development from economic to political and to moral interests in society. He mentioned very briefly that today it might very well be that the economic interests of the workers are better taken care of by efficient managers, and referred to the Japanese example. My question is, Do you really mean that? And I should like to ask the advocate of economic democracy, Robert Dahl, What do you think about this? Is it a gross overstatement? Is it all wrong? I should also like Claus Offe to comment.

*Alain Touraine:*

First of all, I didn't say that the Japanese workers' interests are better taken care of by Japanese management. I said that Japanese managers speak more about participation. That is much more limited. Now, economic interests is a very obscure and ambiguous expression. In one way it represents a structural problem: There are contradictions in an economic system which have negative social consequences and these consequences produce, one way or another, an uprising or a rupture – a break-down of the system. One can say that without introducing actors. On the other hand, what is interesting now is that the objective definition of a group as a class is progressively being replaced by the definition of actors. By that I mean people who are defined both by their cultural orientations or their

value system and their conflicting social interest with another group. The opposition between objective and subjective factors should be abandoned. The notion of social actor means that what we call structure is really a system of social relations between actors who are all part of a certain cultural field with unequal power or opposite interests. After all, we could speak in objective terms in a situation where the wage level was a subsistence level objectively determined by the necessity for workers to survive. That is certainly no longer the case and the discussions, debates, and strikes cannot be expressed in terms of minimum wages but in cultural, political, and social terms. To put it in relatively aggressive words I would say that the only acceptable way to pronounce social class today is social movement.

*Robert Dahl:*

I would first like to respond concretely to the question of Japanese managers and the Japanese system as an alternative to economic democracy. Several things are important to remember about the so-called Japanese solution. One is that it is quite recent. As late as the 1940s and the early 1950s the relationships of labour and capital in Japan were among the bitterest in the world. The system came about as a solution to that problem. A second point to remember is that the system did indeed draw upon certain traditional characteristics of Japanese society and culture. A third point to keep in mind is that it did not involve the sharing of decision-making power in crucial decisions. What it did, however, and does to a very significant degree, is to provide a high degree of dignity and self-respect, in marked contrast for example to American managers and their traditional treatment of workers. A primary task of Japanese managers is to pay careful attention to the individual as a person, to treat that person as a human being, to give self-respect, a sense of dignity, of self-worth. In fact, a large part of the task of Japanese managers, like that of Japanese professors, is to go to weddings, funerals and things of that kind, and so by one's sheer presence to show respect for the employee, the one-time student, and so on. Another thing to remember about the system is that it has always applied to a comparatively small sector of Japanese industry. It does not, for example, apply to the same extent to the subcontractors, and a lot of subcontracting is done. Life-time employment, for example, does not on the whole extend to women, who are taken on as temporary employees. It may be that the system is now in a process of decline. If the economic difficulties of Japanese industry increase, some part of it may disappear.

However, I would say that while it is certainly not highly democratic in terms of decision-making, it is rather participatory on some accounts. Japanese managers spend seventy or eighty per cent of their time not making decisions but negotiating, communicating, and talking with others. American managers spend ninety per cent of their time making decisions

rather than communicating, negotiating, and talking to people. So the Japanese system was not and is not terribly democratic, but it is highly participatory, it yields a great deal in terms of communication and sense of worth. If, from the standpoint of my values, I were to rank American corporate managerial structures, the Japanese system, and what I would like to see brought about, the worst in my view would be the American hierarchical structure, in which workers are by and large treated as objects, to be used as efficiently as possible. That is markedly inferior, and I think inferior even in terms of its productive capacity, to the Japanese solution which treats the employees, at least in the best of their firms, as human beings, with whom consultation is important, and whose self-worth is important. But the Japanese system does not allow the employees to participate in the crucial decisions of their firm, and there may not be strong grounds in Japanese culture for supposing that this kind of participation will ever develop. In an ideal scheme, I believe the employees would also participate in the crucial decisions bearing on their lives. That is the best solution and of course the reason why I recommend it.

Now, as to the concept of class, class as a concept based on occupation or ownership, is no longer terribly useful. The most deprived groups now are not the people in the working classes. The most deprived group in Third World countries, Europe, and the United States, is an under-class that looks to be a persistent fixture of contemporary societies. There seem to be no easy solutions in part because this under-class is not revolutionary, not reformist, not activist, not engaged in politics. And the under-class is not sufficiently important to any political coalition to insure that its problems are on the political agenda. If you are concerned about injustice, hardship, and difference in life-chances in contemporary societies, attention must be focused on this permanent under-class consisting of people who find it extremely difficult, and even impossible, ever to move out of membership in that under-class.

*Claus Offe:*

I think the problems of class theory are numerous and I don't know of anyone who has really made a successful attempt to resolve them. There are three main problems. The first is whether class means anything other than stratum, social category, or collectivity of people who are in a certain position in the labour process. In any classical sense, class associates a number of levels. The first is a structural location in society which consists of being employed, being productive, being exploited, being poor, and being dominated. Being deprived of essential resources rather than being poor, and being dominated, that is, subject to the authority of management. If all these things go together, then you belong to the working-class. This class has, secondly, a potential for action and this action, thirdly, will lead

to a certain historically relevant outcome of a basic change of the relations of production. If you don't want to accept either of these three assumptions, then you'd better choose a different term for class. This is the Marxist conception that has been in the centre of social theory for more than a century.

Now, the problems with this are two. One is, and that is my second point where I am in full agreement with Alain Touraine and Bob Dahl, that the transformative processes that no doubt go on in our societies are very likely not class conflicts of that type but non-class issues. Non-class movements are as frequent, or more frequent, than class politics. This is not to deny the potential for change but to question the potential for change that results from class conflicts – apart from the definition and measurement problems.

The other aspect and the complementary argument in this context would be the following which also must be taken very seriously. Adam Przeworski in a recent book has spoken of what he calls the 'valley of transition'. By this he means that the working-class sees that there are even higher peaks to be reached in the far distance. However, before you get there, you have to pass the lower point of the valley of transition. The valley of transition argument makes the whole process a very long-term one. Since you are relatively high to begin with, you might as well stay where you are. This is a very simple version of what seems to go on in the types of conflict that used – with more right than today – to be called class conflict.

*Jørgen Poulsen:*

I want to raise a question in continuation of what Mette Bock said before. It is the 'model of man' question. I find that I am myself sort of incoherent in my analysis of this question. I also think that our three guests are in difficulties with respect to the micro-foundations of their theories. Claus Offe talked about the under-utilization of moral resources and special arrangements that might contribute to bring these resources into play. I think that it is a good and useful perspective. But then his whole analysis depends on game-theory. In order to establish your motivation premises you have to accept the egoistic model of man which is behind these premises. I don't perceive that you want to go beyond game theory, as I want to do, but then you do get a two-layer theory with first economic man, and then a moral level superimposed. This may be inconsistent. I also had difficulties with Professor Touraine's conception of man because it was built around the 'creative potential' and the 'potential for love', but at the same time this was a social model about power struggle. I thought that I did not get a coherent picture of the actor in the programmed society who was both motivated by creativity and love and also part of the power struggle that was supposed to go on. Thirdly, I think that the premises of Professor Dahl's argument for economic democracy will appeal to persons

of a certain type, to people with a certain kind of moral commitment. But that does not correspond to the descriptive model of man that he often uses in other works, for instance *Who Governs?* If most people are like those in *Who Governs?* will they then at all be interested in economic democracy?

*Claus Offe:*

I think there is a misunderstanding in the first question. I introduced the notion not of a model of man but of two models of man, and you can base that on a number of modern political economists: Albert Hirschman, for example, but you also could use James March and part of Jon Elster probably. I argue that there are these two models, and then the question becomes not which one is true, not which one is the more frequent, but who or what determines which model is selected by a certain set of rules, the argument being that economic man is not the *factum brutum* of human nature but an artifact of constitutional rules. Certain rules make men selfish rather than selfish men make certain rules. That's an all important difference. If that's the case, then you can think about rules that evoke other qualities or make use of other qualities. It is like machinery that runs on different resources. Mechanical metaphors are probably not very well suited in this context, but the idea is that constitutional rules may, in the sense I've specified, help to explore, exploit, and find out other capacities or models of action that are so far unknown to us, or are not visible. You also get into the methodological problem that you see only what existing rules produce as human behaviour. Other potentialities – again a problem that Herbert Marcuse was very much concerned with – of action or models of men, are not allowed to surface under given constitutional rules. It is obviously an experimental, transcendent, and hypothetical aspect to think about the possibility of such alternative rule-making, although as Hirschman and others show, a lot of it is occurring even within the domain of existing constitutional rules.

*Alain Touraine:*

Well, I think we should avoid speaking about models of man as much as about classes because that supposes a complete separation between types of models of action and of situation. I think it would be quite useful to eliminate all references to images of man. I would be sorry if I gave the impression that I'm trying to introduce a certain definition of man. No. On the contrary. I can even be a bit excessive saying that the word *subject* could be dangerous if it is separated from a definition of its social actor. Instead of defining a model of man, or basic needs, or anything you like, what we should do to begin with is to define the nature of new power relations. What interests me is that in the so-called industrialized society, power meant the control of means of production. We were at a given level

of domination, that's why a lot of aspects of men's experiences in life were not included in these conflicts. The new fact is that now we live in societies in which powers exist not only to control means of production but also the ends of production, what I call symbolic goods, i.e., cultural industries. That's why what is at stake in new conflicts is cultural orientations or models of man, but these models of man are social facts and are the expressions of what is at stake in a given social conflict. I would say that in a sense the idea of subject is the first negative answer of a dominated actor who asserts himself of being potentially an actor, but has no capacity to control his situation. It's what I once called a romantic period. In the romantic period you are not committed to social goals, you just free yourself from something that you generally define in cultural terms. Then you commit yourself to transforming social relations. Now, what we call subject is this negative moment of the construction of a social actor, but we should never separate this image of the actor for himself, which we call the subject, from the social relations and the conflict in which and through which this actor constitutes himself.

*Robert Dahl:*

I've always found myself reluctant to try to specify too precisely what my assumptions are about the nature of man. I realize that it is an orthodox philosophical assumption that you cannot have a political philosophy without specifying the nature of man. I think that's a mistake, because I don't think that the nature of man can be specified. If we know anything, it is that we don't know very much about the nature of man. The limits and possibilities of human beings are matters about which we don't have very good knowledge. As a result, in my own work I deliberately tried not to be too clear about these limits and possibilities. Therefore, it seems to me that if you erect your theory on a careful specification of the limits and possibilities, then your theory is probably going to turn out to be wrong. Consequently, I have deliberately tried to leave the specificities rather vague, because I believe that reflects the state of our knowledge. With the pace at which knowledge, understanding, hunches, and guesses are proceeding on this question, I believe that we are going to have very new perceptions about the limits and possibilities of mankind in the next 20, 30 or 40 years. For some purposes it seems to me useful to assume rather narrow limits on the possibilities of altruistic behaviour: in constitution building, for example. To build a constitution on the assumption that a requisite for its working successfully is a high degree of altruistic behaviour would be a tactical error. The fathers of the American constitution of course had an image of human beings as being dangerously destructive in their potential misuse of power. That was a useful kind of axiom, even though it's a very one-sided perspective. But if they had constructed a

constitution on the assumption that human beings can be entrusted with unlimited amounts of power, which they would use well and wisely, it would have been a disaster. But attention was called to an interesting contradiction. If you try honestly to describe what's going on in a political system – like that of New Haven, for example – you will say something, even if only implicitly, about the limits and possibilities of human beings. For example, my description of people in New Haven made them look rather more narrowly interested than would be required in order for people to say, 'Well, a scheme of worker participation is not going to do *me* any good, but it is a good thing on moral grounds, and therefore I am going to get behind it and work for it'. The implication may be that the only way in which worker participation and ownership can be brought about is by some moral commitment to democratization of firms. You might then conclude that if the implicit and explicit characterization of human limits and possibilities contained in *Who Governs?* is correct, then my proposals for self-governing firms will never get off the ground.

To conclude this, however, may be mistaken. I think we see in some of the contemporary social movements that Alain Touraine has been talking about a mixture of commitments that are quite interesting from this point of view. For example, consider the environmental movement. If you take it in its total range in the U.S. today, the environmental movement is quite an important political force. It's not a party, but it is important in national decision-making. It has veto-power in certain circumstances. Though it operates within certain limits, it can positively influence certain kinds of legislation. Now, by and large, environmentalists are not committed to things that will personally benefit them and only them. Their commitment is not narrowly egoistic in that sense. It is a diffuse public commitment to a general good, a public good that will be shared by others, that cannot be completely private in character. It is a good that they themselves expect to share with others. Movements of this kind are neither wholly altruistic nor narrowly egoistic in the classical 19th century liberal understanding. They are a mixture. They reflect a sensitivity to the fact that one's interests and the interests of one's fellow beings are broader than might have been thought in previous centuries, because of the nature of one's interaction with others, the environment, and the world around oneself. Something of this kind conceivably could form a basis for a commitment to a greater degree of democratization of economic enterprises. That democratization may not come about, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility and it does not require an assumption of unlimited charity, benevolence, or altruism on the part of human beings.