Workplace democracy
Introductory comments

- Periodization:
  - The literature on workplace democracy flourished from the end of the 19th century and gradually declined during the 1990s

- Location:
  - Some of it is in pol. Theory – starts with ideas of participatory/deliberative/radical democracy, and then seeking labor market institutions to match
  - **What are the reasons for the declining interest in WD?**
  - Some of it is in organizations and management, drawing on democracy as a form of justification for a particular institution
  - **what form can or should WD take on at present?**
4 justifications for workplace democracy

- The “all subjected” argument by Dahl
- Participation as a form of self fulfillment
- Democracy affects rent sharing and promotes a more economic egalitarian society
- The workplace as a learning laboratory

The justifications are of different sort
- Deontological or teleological
- The workplace as a site of democracy, or as an instrument to democracy at the nation-state
- Emphasis on the shop-floor and daily experiences or on the arrangement of the democracy generally

- Common to all: the integration of the public and the private
The rainbow of WD institutions

- Community
  - The problem of defining the community
  - Unitary and plural forms of community

- Process: roughly equal distribution of power to affect decision-making
  - Negative and positive forms of power
  - One Person One Vote
    - More complex forms of representative democracy
    - Participatory democracy

- Substantive guarantee of individual and group Rights

- The institutions of workplace democracy:
  - Co-ops, ESOPs, board-level representation, shop-floor level representation, trade union representation, employee participation plans, tripartite institutions outside the workplace....
The declining interest in WD

- Globalization and the dimming of the nation-state community
- Marketization and the loss of workplace boundaries
- With the absence of community
  - What process can diffuse power to constituents of multiple communities and/or who are not deemed to be part of a community at all
  - Whose rights and whose obligations
A renewed democratic order

- **Community**: from the workplace community → *work related communities* → **LAYERING**

- **Process**: new processes at the shadow of the law → **PROCEDURALIZATION**

- **Rights**:... well, this requires a bit of discussion...

- **Isomorphism**: similar public values – visibility, information, deliberations, representation, accountability

- **Congruence** of law and practice at all levels; spanning numerous communities of reference
process-based regulation

- PBR requires a process instead/in addition to substantive standardization
- Compliance is based on conformance with the process (instead of the outcome)
- PBR can be in the domain of soft- or hard-law

- Due process in dismissals
- Sexual harassment and mobbing
- Monitoring and privacy
- Derogation clauses
- Internal audit of contractors
- Diversity programs
- CSR
- Reporting and reviewing
- Social dialogue
- Indexing
- Facilitation

Sexual harassment and mobbing
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CSR
layering

- Processes take place at different levels
  - Multiple levels: Within the company, in the local community at the global level
  - Multiple agents: trade unions, NGOs, INGOs, works councils, identity and professional groups
  - Multiple venues for claims—economic sphere (banks), social sphere (shaming), media, legal sphere (courts, legislators), active participation of workers/consumers/stakeholders/communities

- Partial overlap, compensation for democratic “blind spots”
critique

- The potential and risks of process-based laws.
  - Selling out on “real democracy” in favor of procedural rituals
  - WD is the social democratic agenda all over again through the back door