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Emergent HPWS: why HRM may not be needed to build a high-performance work system

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the antecedents of high-performance work systems (HPWS). HPWS promise workplaces that are both highly productive and offer employees high levels of job satisfaction. The existing literature tends to see HPWS as outcomes of planned change initiated by management as part of an human resource management (HRM) strategy. We question this assumption and show that under favourable conditions, HPWS may emerge from workers' self-organization.

Design/methodology/approach: A qualitative case study was conducted of a department producing automotive components. Empirical material was collected through participant observation. The material was coded for recurring themes and used to construct an explanatory model.

Findings: HPWS may emerge in the absence of managerial or HRM interventions. The emergence and reproduction of HPWS can be explained by a shop-floor culture of craftsmanship, worker solidarity and jobs with high levels of task significance and task identity.

Research limitations/implications: We encourage future research to explore and more carefully theorize the antecedents of HPWS. Of particular interest is the relationship between planned HPWS initiatives and elements of the informal work organization, which may also promote autonomy, flexibility and commitment.

Practical implications: Planned implementations of HPWS would benefit from appreciating and building on existing norms of craftsmanship and solidarity. Reinforcing and officially endorsing these norms may be preferable to introduce novel normative ideals of "teamwork", "empowerment" or "quality".

Originality/value: Few studies have systematically explored the antecedents of HPWS. The proposed concept, "emergent HPWS", captures largely unacknowledged organizational dynamics.

Keywords: High-performance work systems, team organization, informal organization, change management.

Introduction

The concept of high-performance work systems (HPWS) has been central to recent debates on work organization and labour reform in Western countries. HPWS is one of the main labels under which team organization is theorized and implemented. According to Tomer (2001, p. 64), “the main idea of HPWS is to create an organization based on employee involvement, commitment and empowerment, not employee control”. HPWS include such practices as self-managing teams, flexible work assignments, open communication, extensive training/upskilling and decentralized decision making, supported by employment security and selective hiring of personnel (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Evans and Davis, 2005; Posthuma *et al.*, 2013). HPWS are proposed as a “high road” alternative to both traditional scientific management and “low road” cost-cutting strategies based on neo-Taylorism and externalized employment relations (Appelbaum and Batt, 1993; Bacon and Blyton, 2000). As such, the aim is to create workplaces that are both highly productive and offer employees high levels of job satisfaction (Godard, 2004).

Given that HPWS represent mutual gains for labour and management, it is of interest to both researchers and practitioners to know what the antecedents of such systems are. Under what conditions do HPWS emerge? How can change agents promote the creation and sustainability of HPWS? Somewhat surprisingly, these questions have not been adequately explored in the literature, and are not dealt with systematically in recent HPWS reviews (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Combs *et al.*, 2006; Posthuma *et al.*, 2013). Although it is acknowledged that “there is diversity in the paths that organizations follow” (Boxall and Macky, 2009, p. 7), the literature leaves the impression that HPWS are the result of planned change initiated by general managers or HRM specialists as part of strategic HRM (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Huselid and Becker, 1997; Posthuma *et al.*, 2013).

This paper questions the premise that strategic HRM and planned change are necessary antecedents of HPWS. Based on a case study of a Norwegian manufacturer of automotive components, we show how an HPWS emerged even though the department in question had been largely ignored by general management and HRM. Rather, the HPWS was grounded in a shop-floor culture of craftsmanship, autonomous work, solidarity and workers’ desire to make good products, even though production machinery was unreliable and the department suffered from a lack of investment. To capture these dynamics of HPWS, which evolved largely unrelated to managerial interventions, we propose the term “emergent HPWS” as a contrast to the conventional “planned HPWS”.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we review the literature on HPWS and establish the distinction between planned and emergent HPWS. Second, we present the case study and show how workers under specific, favourable conditions may construct an HPWS. Third, we discuss our findings before concluding the paper and proposing implications for research and management.

HPWS – planned and emergent

Although commentators disagree on the exact definition of an HPWS, a common baseline is that it is about enabling “high performance through people” (Tomer, 2001, p. 64) or to “achieve high performance by adopting practices that recognize and leverage on employees’ ability to

create value” (Gittell *et al.*, 2009, p. 490). The emphasis on people – their knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation and social relations (Combs *et al.*, 2006) – is what makes HPWS distinct from more technically oriented rationalization concepts such as scientific management (Taylor, 1967) and lean production (Womack *et al.*, 1990). The HPWS discourse integrates and extends previous work on human relations, socio-technical design, quality of working life, empowerment and other human-centred organizational concepts (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Sandberg, 1995; Wilkinson, 1998). Historically, the concept was proposed in the 1990s as way forward for Western industry facing the dual threat of high-quality Japanese manufacturing and low-cost third-world manufacturing (Appelbaum and Batt, 1993). Although the viability of HPWS and the plausibility of its underlying theoretical model have been questioned (Godard, 2004; Ramsay *et al.*, 2000; Thompson, 2011), the HPWS discourse has gained momentum and found increasing support among researchers and policy makers.

HPWS may be conceptualized as a “bundle of practices” in the tradition of MacDuffie (1995). The different practices are complementary, mutually supportive and together produce system-wide effects, in broad terms commitment and performance. These practices may further be differentiated into work practices (applicable to work system design) and employment practices (applicable to employment relations) (Boxall and Macky, 2009; Godard, 2004). While the latter includes employment security, skill- or performance-based pay and worker–management partnership, the former includes self-managing teams, decentralized decision making, flexible work assignments and open communications. Although different authors list slightly different work practices (Evans and Davis, 2005; Posthuma *et al.*, 2013), the common theme is to increase shop-floor workers’ skills, flexibility and discretion, which is traditionally captured in the terms job quality or autonomy (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Klein, 1991).

The presence or absence of these practices may be used as a criterion for assessing whether or not a work system in question is an HPWS. However, Boxall and Macky (2009) argue that the “acid test” of HPWS is not whether particular practices have been implemented, but rather whether or not employees “experience a positive shift in their responsibilities and decision-making powers relative to their historical norm” (2009, p. 10). By introducing a criterion of employees’ subjective apprehension, Boxall and Macky’s (2009) “acid test” complicates the conceptualization of HPWS. Another, related source of ambiguity is the premise, often implicit, that management introduces HPWS through a process of planned change. HPWS is described as a *management* strategy (Tomer, 2001), *managerial* practices (Boxall and Macky, 2009), an *HRM* system (Evans and Davis, 2005; Posthuma *et al.*, 2013) or an outcome of *strategic HRM* (Combs *et al.*, 2006). Illustrative of this managerialist bias is Ramsay *et al.*’s (2000) assertion that the associations between HPWS and performance “reflect a causal link which flows from [HRM-] practices through people to performance” (2000, p. 503). In this model, employees are portrayed as recipients of change, who react to the practices that management prescribes and “find that their needs are met by the opportunities and benefits these practices provide” (Ramsay *et al.*, 2000, p. 503).

In general, these references to (subjectively apprehended) change and management as initiators of change are largely unproblematic. However, in some cases these conceptual subtleties may be detrimental to our understanding of how HPWS are constructed and institutionalized. They underplay the agency of labour and the possible presence of norms and institutions that enable HPWS, but predate any deliberate HRM strategy or HPWS implementation. These issues become pressing when the conventional, “planned HPWS” model is confronted with evidence of HPWS-like work organizations that emerge from the bottom up, and do not involve any deliberate interventions from either general management or HRM staff. Research on informal work organization has documented such emergence (Bélanger *et al.*,

2003; Ezzamel *et al.*, 2004; Trist and Bamforth, 1951). The case study presented below is another case in point.

Theoretically, there are two problems with the planned HPWS model. First, the general emphasis on change, and the “acid test” in particular, fails to capture processes of emergence with no clear “before” and “after” states. Imagine, for the sake of argument, a modern work organization with extensive autonomy and commitment, which has evolved gradually from craft-like work arrangements, and to which scientific management and its associated alienation never applied. This work organization would be likely to display features of HPWS, even though a “change” would be hard to pinpoint and the “acid test” would fail.

Second, emphasizing the strategies and actions of management and HRM introduces the assumption that HPWS are implemented top down (in a more or less participatory way). This assumption is not universally valid. As acknowledged by Boxall and Macky (2009, p. 7), there is a diversity of paths leading to HPWS. In principle, such paths may not require managerial or HRM interventions. HPWS practices on the shop floor may be the result of workers’ mutual adjustment and self-organization. Furthermore, HPWS practices such as high autonomy and open communication may be present even though management officially prescribes a more bureaucratic or Tayloristic work organization (Ezzamel *et al.*, 2004; Gouldner, 1954). Therefore, HPWS should be understood as not only managerially initiated.

As an alternative to “planned HPWS”, we propose the concept of “emergent HPWS” to designate a work system, which includes core HPWS practices but has developed more or less independently of HRM strategies and planned change. In the following case study, we explore how an HPWS could emerge and reproduce at the shop-floor level, even though general management or the HR department never deliberately planned it.

Case study

Methods and data collection

This study is part of a national action research programme concerned with work organization and operations management in Norwegian industry. Empirical material used in this study was collected through participant observation. Two of the authors were engaged full-time in the case department, called “Spare Parts”, for three weeks in 2013. In addition, one of the authors worked in another department in the case company for eight weeks over the last two years. The authors’ engagement primarily related to work process and risk analysis. The authors had day-to-day contact with both operators and departmental managers, and participated in departmental meetings. This prolonged engagement gave them a unique insight into the shop-floor culture. After each work day, field notes were written.

In line with the tradition of open-ended qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), the empirical material aimed to capture the lived experience of working in the Spare Parts department. Specific research questions were later developed by juxtaposing empirical findings and theoretical models. Analysis of the material was conducted in two steps.

First, we sought to validate our initial hypothesis that the work system in question could indeed be characterized as an HPWS. The material was coded (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) with respect to HPWS practices and outcomes, and these were found to be prevalent. We focused on HPWS work practices, since the employment practices in Norwegian industry are strictly

regulated by labour laws and nationwide agreements between employer and labour confederations. These regulations ensure employment security and workers' representative participation, and are generally considered to be labour friendly (Gustavsen, 2007). Among the HPWS work practices described in the literature, we chose autonomy, open communication, skills and flexible work assignments as our main constructs. The extent of their prevalence was evaluated by comparing the social organization of the case department to similar work organizations within and outside the case company, about which both informants and researchers were knowledgeable. This method of evaluation, we admit, may introduce some subjective bias. Preferably, it should have been complemented by a survey instrument capturing the variables in question, but we did not have the opportunity to conduct such a survey. HPWS outcomes were assessed through the constructs of performance and commitment. Both were evaluated by our informants in the course of data collection. In addition, we used the display of discretionary effort as an indicator of commitment.

Second, the material was coded with respect to identifying how the HPWS had emerged and was reproduced on the shop floor.

Overview of the case

The case company casts, extrudes, forms and assembles aluminium products for the automotive industry. It is part of an industrial park in rural Norway with about 3000 employees in total, 600 of them working in the case company. The case department makes products mainly for the aftermarket. It employs 15 people, 12 of whom are operators. There is one team leader on the shop floor who is responsible for work allocation and has the formal authority to make decisions on behalf of the operators. Production is relatively labour intensive, as manual assembly tasks are predominant. The product mix is very broad, with about 900 different product specifications. Most of the operators come from the local community, and have parents and grandparents with experience from the plant. The average age in the department is high and the length of service, an average of about 15 years, is high compared to other departments in the company. The machine park (mostly assembly fixtures) consists of a combination of old machines for old products, updated machinery used on both new and old products, and some new machines for new products. Only a fraction of the available machines are present on the shop floor at any given time; the rest of the machines are stored in a nearby warehouse and are brought to the shop floor when needed.

In 2010, the case company was acquired by a multinational automotive supplier. The multinational has a formal production system based on the principles of lean production (Liker, 2004), where the target is to "avoid any waste in the processes and to increase the added value". However, by the time of the study, only limited effort had been made to align the work organization of the Spare Parts department with the parent company's official organizational principles.

Low-priority department

Over many years, the case department had not been given priority by either local management or the acquiring multinational. The department did not become an independent economic unit until 2013 and up to recently had no dedicated department manager to monitor and control its performance. Therefore, management historically lacked incentives to rationalize production. In contrast, the Casting, Extrusion and Forming departments had all received more managerial

focus and had been rationalized and certified according to the official lean production system. In the Spare Parts department, the lean principles and tools had barely been introduced. One of the authors observed that in the Extrusion department, top managers are regularly present on the shop floor and attended department meetings. In the Spare Parts department, however, top managers are rarely observed at all.

Because of its low economic priority and lack of investment, as well as the very broad product mix, the department suffers from old machinery, some in poor condition. Correct and safe assembly of products relies on operators' practical know-how and ability to make the machines work even in the face of minor malfunctions. These skills are poorly managed, as the case department lacks a system for managing knowledge and offers no educational opportunities. In general, there have been few formal HRM initiatives contributing to skill development. This stands in contrast to other departments in the company, where employees follow a more or less structured training path.

HPWS practices in the case department

In spite of the lack of managerial priority, we find that the department has several constituents of HPWS as described in the literature. The operators on the shop floor have a high degree of autonomy, communication is open, work allocation is flexible, and operators are in fact highly skilled and committed. Additionally, the department's performance is considered to be high.

The operators have autonomy regarding work procedures and work allocation. The preference for autonomous work is also a central part of the shop-floor culture. Each day the operators receive a production plan, and they have full autonomy to coordinate production through mutual adjustment as long as they fulfil orders in time. Very rarely does the team leader use his formal authority to enforce decisions. To illustrate, in one of the team meetings a production manager said the following when presenting the day's plan:

“These are the products and quantities we aim for today, and here is a prioritized list for the coming weeks. You know the drill, so do your thing.”

There is open communication between different levels in the case department. In the daily team meetings, in which the team leader and one of the production managers participate along with operators, we observed free communication across hierarchical levels. During production hours, managers are available for questions from operators and the threshold is low for raising production-related issues. Among operators, there are few communication barriers. They are often observed in discussions with each other concerning coordination and technical issues.

Another aspect is the skills of the operators. Although there are few formally skilled operators in the department, almost all operators know how to handle most of the machinery. In the course of the day they rotate between machinery and products, which leads to high task and skill variety. The old machinery requires operators to have tacit knowledge about the machines in order to make them work safely and correctly. Operators are generally concerned with mastering different tasks, which is important in order to maintain the flexibility required in production. Nevertheless, some products are rarely produced, and only a few operators know how to use the corresponding machines. In these cases, we observed that operators take the initiative to exchange knowledge and engage in peer-to-peer learning. This indicates that the workers are eager to share their practical know-how. As a result, operators become multi-

skilled. Operators have also been highly involved in writing work and packaging instructions for the different products. Although these instructions are based on the standard operating procedure programme imposed by the parent company, operators have been enthusiastic about formalizing their practical know-how. One of the operators put it this way:

“Some of the older operators are going to retire within the next couple of years, and some have already done it. We are the ones who have to ensure that new people coming in here know what the place is all about.”

The operators in the department are committed to their workplace and the goal of delivering high-quality products. This is shown through discretionary effort. Although the shift starts at 7.00 a.m. and ends at 3.00 p.m., operators have been observed before and after work hours completing products without this being imposed by management. Operators have also been involved in developing maintenance routines. Some years ago, the company developed a system called the “TPM stairs”, based on Total Productive Maintenance (see Rolfsen and Langeland, 2012), through a highly participatory process. The parent company later put an end to this system and the operators expressed the opinion that they were missing what they referred to as “the good old team days” and suggested to management that the system should be reintroduced.

According to a master’s thesis written in 2011, the Spare Parts department had an on-time delivery rate of 98 per cent. Although this can partly be explained by high inventory levels, which in general are not desirable, operators and managers explain that high delivery precision stems from production being “up front” with future deliveries rather than producing high volumes for stock. The department manager says:

“The last few years we have increased our efficiency a lot. Performance today is good, and we strive to continue the positive development we face today.”

Customers in the automotive industry demand extreme product quality and reliability. In addition, customers are very strict in terms of packaging material and delivery notes on the shipments. Two of the authors conducted risk analysis at the department and used historical customer claims as a basis for this analysis. It turned out that during the last 10–12 years there have been very few customer complaints.

Where does the HPWS come from?

The results from the preceding section may seem paradoxical. Even though management had taken no action to create an HPWS, several HPWS practices are salient and operators displayed high commitment. These findings raise the question of how such an HPWS had emerged and how it was reproduced on the shop floor. Our analysis identified the following main explanatory mechanisms: a shop-floor culture of craftsmanship, operators’ identification with and belonging to the industrial community, high task identity and task significance, and absence of bad management.

The culture among operators is characterized by a craft mentality, a desire to “fix and make things work” in spite of machinery issues, lack of investment and poor management support. Operators seem to associate this “fixing” with a collectively shared, but largely implicit, notion of “good and interesting work”. An example highlighting this culture is taken from working with one of the central machines. This old machine is something like a legend on

the shop floor. It has a defect, requiring operators to take additional action to avoid scrapping work, and the action has to be taken for each beam produced. The operators took pride in making the machine work. In the words of an operator:

“We call her [the machine] the “German hooker”. The reason for the name is that she is originally from Germany, she serves us daily with the products we need, but she can sometimes be a bit troublesome.”

This quote also shows how the employees use humour rather than resignation to cope with troublesome working conditions (Collinson, 1988). Stories told on the shop floor reflect this kind of mentality, for instance about how operators in the “good old days” made everything work out well. Hard-working operators are idolized, and the effort displayed by these present or former colleagues is shared to boost morale. One example of such a story involves an operator who managed to run a machine with a critical malfunction for a whole day without scrapping a single product. The order was due that same day, and the operator knew that if he reported the malfunction, the machine would be shut down and the order would not be completed in time.

The industry park in which the company is located has historically played an important role, both socially and politically. Employees and their families have been supported in all phases of life through kindergartens, welfare projects and local infrastructure. Historically there has been a view among locals that if you get a job “within the walls” (of the factory) your future is secured. In many ways, it has been prestigious to work in the park. The operators are part of a larger industry community, and they may consider it their duty to deliver high-quality products and give something back to the company. In addition to this, most of the operators in the department have been born and raised in the same area. The municipality in which the plant is situated has a population of about 6000 people and the plant is a natural career choice. Many of the current employees have relatives who also work at the plant. By observing the social interaction between operators in the department, it is evident that they are close to each other on a personal level. Operators have the same way of talking, they have the same interests and shared histories. Hence, they identify based on similarity, a kind of “mechanical solidarity” (Adler and Heckscher, 2006). In the industry park, there has historically been a high focus on worker participation in organizational development. In particular, the local labour union has been active in advancing ideals of industrial democracy and worker autonomy, characteristic of the Norwegian model of partnership between employers and labour unions (Gustavsen, 2007). Although organizational development through labour–management cooperation has been less widespread in recent years (partly due to changes in company ownership), a normative ideal of autonomy and participation nevertheless remains prevalent. According to this ideal, workers are also expected to show discretionary effort and take action to coordinate production and resolve technical problems. Taken together, this normative ideal along with extensive autonomy and the sense of community and belonging is likely to raise operators’ intrinsic motivation.

High levels of intrinsic motivation can also be expected based on the “job characteristics model” (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). According to this model, skill variety, task significance, task identity, autonomy and feedback are the main predictors of workers’ motivation and commitment. We have already established that skill variety and autonomy in practice are high. Task identity concerns the extent to which a job constitutes a whole, rounded piece of work. Workers will find their job more meaningful when they can see their contribution to the final product. The assembly processes at the case department transform incoming components into finished products, making the operators see how their interaction with the components is

important in finalizing products for shipment. Most of the operators have also worked in other departments of the company earlier in the value chain. The final assembly at the department can thus be described as the completion of a well-known product. Task significance relates to the jobs' significance to other people's lives. By being part of a plant that produces original car parts for the automotive industry, operators know that they play an important role in supplying the world with well-operating, high-quality and safe products. Additionally, the operators share an interest in cars and car parts, which shows an identification with the products they make. In the production hall, several pictures of cars produced by their customers are displayed on the walls. Operators refer to the pictures with pride:

“These are the cars we make products for here [with these machines]. It is nice to sometimes have a look at those beautiful cars and know that what we do here is crucial for the end product.”

Finally, the lack of managerial priority might not be a negative factor per se. With the rapid changes in top management, organizational structure and ownership, there have been turbulent times at the case company. Lack of management intervention means that operators have been able to develop their own way of working, shielded from this turbulence. Lack of intervention also means a lack of bad intervention and flawed rationalization strategies. By having an arm's-length relationship with the shop floor, the top management can be said to have set the operators inside a vaguely drawn frame in which the workers can develop their own work organization relatively freely.

Discussion and conclusion

The case study demonstrates how an HPWS may emerge in the absence of managerial intervention and a clear HRM strategy. We propose that workers' motivation and commitment could instead be explained by reference to a shop-floor culture of craftsmanship, operators' identification with and belonging to the industrial community, high task identity and task significance, and absence of bad management. To what extent are these results transferable beyond the case department?

On the one hand, some of these favourable factors are arguably highly idiosyncratic. Workers' culture of craftsmanship and the strong social ties of the local industrial community may not be found in companies and communities marked by the Fordist legacy of alienation and antagonistic labour–management relations (Edwards, 1979; Knights and Collinson, 1987). Hence, the Norwegian model of labour–management partnership and norms of autonomous work may be seen as boundary conditions for the results. On the other hand, case studies of informal work organization have documented similar organizational dynamics.

Bélanger *et al.* (2003) show how high levels of worker commitment may be combined with independence from management. In their case study of a Canadian smelter, workers' commitment was not attributed to management's introduction of teamwork (or other HRM interventions), but rather to workers' “productive ethos”, strong social cohesion and extensive autonomy. Bélanger *et al.* (2003) associate these factors with craft traditions, which historically were reproduced more or less in tension with the official work organization. In a case study of British manufacturing, Ezzamel *et al.* describe a pattern of “unplanned responsible autonomy”, in which workers' “‘empowerment’ was not ‘planned’ or significantly conditioned by formal programs initiated by management” (2004, p. 277). This pattern evolved historically, as

management surrendered control of the shop floor to workers in return for their display of discretionary effort when needed to meet production goals. In a study of IT professionals, Chasserio and Legault argue that autonomy and commitment may be very high even though the case companies “barely have official HRM policies, and the HR department plays a very unobtrusive role” (2009, p. 1114). Although professional work is different from industrial work, the common finding is that the practices and effects of HPWS may have other antecedents than managerial interventions and HRM policies.

The main implication for future research is that the antecedents of HPWS are further explored, both through qualitative case studies and the construction of testable quantitative models. In particular, the agency of labour and social institutions beyond direct managerial control needs to be acknowledged (Godard, 2004). This requires that HPWS be conceptualized in a manner that does not make explicit or implicit assumptions about how such systems are put in place and institutionalized. Specifically, Boxall and Macky’s (2009) “acid test” is a poor definitional criterion of HPWS, since it presupposes planned change. Planned and emergent HPWS represent distinct patterns of antecedents. An interesting question is how planned HPWS change initiatives interact with the existing workplace culture and values, workers’ social identification and preferences with respect to autonomy and teamwork. In some cases these factors may be favourable to the formal introduction of HPWS; in other cases there may be tensions and contradictions (Knights and McCabe, 2000; Vidal, 2007).

The interaction of planned and emergent features of HPWS also has interesting practical implications for organizations that aim to implement HPWS. As argued by Mintzberg and Waters (1985), strategies, including HRM strategies, may be more or less deliberate (planned) and emergent. A deliberately emergent HPWS strategy would be to give leeway to workers’ self-organization and trust in them to put in place a flexible system of high autonomy, job rotation and open communication. Managerial interventions would be to remove obstacles for self-organization by simplifying control systems, removing excessive supervision (Cappelli and Rogovsky, 1994) and encouraging rather than enforcing HPWS work practices. On the flip side, such a strategy may lead to dysfunctional patterns of informal coercion and rigid behavioural norms (Barker, 1993). If a more active reorganization towards HPWS is deemed necessary, change agents may appreciate and attempt to build on existing cultures and attitudes. An important aspect is the rhetoric of change and the normative aspects of work systems (Findlay *et al.*, 2000). Normative notions of “team work”, “empowerment” and “quality” have been found to be bewildering (Knights and McCabe, 2000) and may not be needed when workers have already developed equivalent norms of “craftsmanship”, “solidarity” and “good work”. An analogy would be Wenger and Snyder’s (2000) advice to cultivate, rather than impose, communities of practice in organizations. Similarly, high-performance work systems could be carefully cultivated and nurtured. As such, the process of change would be aligned with the desired end state (Cherns, 1976), which is increased empowerment and commitment.

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