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© Yuri Mielkov  
*Interregional academy of personnel management (Kyiv, Ukraine)*

ym173@ya.ru

## **WORKPLACE DEMOCRACY AND THE IDEAL OF SELF-GOVERNANCE**

*The paper is dedicated to philosophical consideration of workplace democracy as a form of development of the theoretical conception of democracy as an ideal of self-governance. Such form of democracy is argued to present a truly realizable 'democracy of competence' that differs from the previous representative forms in that the power of each person is grounded on the extent of his or her ability to create in a specific sphere of human activity, including politics.*

**Keywords:** *philosophy of democracy; competence; self-governance; democracy as ability; workplace democracy.*

The phenomenon of democracy has long been associated with state politics, and especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tradition of democratic theory predominant in the West had mostly reduced that multilayered notion to representative and procedural models of electing government officials. Still, the development of democratic practice within the whole spectrum of the contemporary social life proved the necessity to broaden our understanding of what democracy is – and what it could be.

In this paper, I intend to consider the phenomenon of workplace democracy within the framework of theory of democracy that constitutes the grounds for our understanding of the democratic development in general. In fact, as it was long ago noted by Benjamin Barber, there are but 'two kinds of democracy': big politics with its corruption – and neighborhood associations that we do not usually describe as democratic. Barber talks here about the social life in the USA, but I think that the noted discrepancy (not to say 'dichotomy') can be visible everywhere else and even dates back to the European Medieval times, when the feudal system of state rule had little to do with democratic traditions of social self-governance of the Antiquity, but democracy was still alive – embodied and developed on other levels, particularly in municipal autonomy under Magdeburg rights and in everyday life of business corporations of city craftsmen [2].

In fact, I can argue that this 'second', almost tacit and obscure trend of democratization possesses more profound meaning than the statehood-related one as it encompasses human culture and human relations, in opposition to just alienated election procedures. As a Danish pedagogue and theologian Hal Koch had positively stated in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, prosperity or decline of democracy has nothing to do with constitutions of state bodies [11]. The origin of democracy and its heart lies in private life of the people, in the relations between family members and between neighbors, which are extrapolated then on relations in the society as a whole and the relations between all the people of our planet. It is a grave mistake to consider democracy as being only a teaching or an ideology that could be propagandized and accepted (or rejected). Democracy is not a system that could be realized, but the way of life we should adopt, – summarizes Koch. That is, it is rather a certain attitude of mind that must be passed on to each new generation.

Moreover, democracy as a culture of behavior and communication, as an optimal and humane way of social life, not only cannot be reduced to special forms of state organization, but in many aspects it opposes the kind of culture and the way of social life peculiar to (and imposed on by) both classical and contemporary nation-state. Democracy taken in the aspect of statehood, has practically no concern for each humans being and does not allow them to experience any advantages from such form of social organization in their everyday life or in their work activity, as well as to experience any possibility of governing the life of their society.

However, in order to justify 'tacit democracy' of neighborhoods and workplaces within the framework of democratic theory (and not just history or publicist perspective), we have to analyze its basic notions – and first of all, the meaning of *power*. That term within the democracy notion appears as

something that goes without saying, although the usage of that word with no accurate explication is not specific enough to comprehend the nature of democratic social organization. In fact, in Ancient Greek, there are different shades of meaning of the *power* notion. First, it is ‘crazy’ proper, – the overwhelming power, power as domination, might, and possession. Second, it is more gentle power: – ‘archy’, power as supervision, governance, and administration.

Regardless of the two terms being often used as synonyms already in Aristotle’s times, their etymological distinction is neither casuistic nor idle philological whimsy. French poet and journalist Charles Péguy (1873–1914), one of the few thinkers who had noticed the substantial difference of those two types of power, a hundred years ago used to construct a whole conception based on that distinction: power as dominance is the power *over somebody*, while power-governance is the power *to do something*; correspondingly, one should also make a distinction between the two types of freedom, ‘*acracy*’ and ‘*anarchy*’ [16, p. 1803].

And if the fundamental difference between the two notions of freedom – ‘freedom from [something]’ and ‘freedom for [something]’ – is now a generality in the contemporary social philosophy, then the distinction between, so to say, ‘power over’ and ‘power for’ still lacks its proper introduction into the common discourse of humanities and politics. It would be sufficient to mention that today’s investigations rather unambiguously treat power as ‘crazy’ [see: 15]. Contemporary French philosopher François Fédier [5, p.93] who studied Péguy’s philosophy proposes to elaborate those ‘different and hardly mixed up things’. Power-domination by its meaning is united, according to this interpretation, with power-administration (administration being more general term, by Fédier: the government power based on force is its particular case). The opposite type of power is already *power-competence* that emerges out of the need in that power experienced by a person aspiring to follow the authority of another one who possesses necessary skills and knowledge. At that, politics probably remains beyond the scope of such power – as power of competence is based, by Péguy, on rational compliance with the authority, it always encompasses only a limited sphere of a specific occupation.

I think that the power of competence is a very important notion for defining the democracy phenomenon in its contemporary workplace embodiment, but it would not be quite accurate to identify administration, with that second ‘the power for’. In order to achieve more precise understanding of power, it should be noted that there is a third Greek word for power not mentioned by Péguy or Fédier:

– power as a possibility, proper, *an ability to do something*. By the way, it is this third word that was used to designate the notion of power in the Greek text of the New Testament, in the well-known phrase by Apostle Paul: “For there is no power but of God” (Rom. 13:1). This expression, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has aroused much bewilderment of interpreters: does any power actually originate in God according to the Christian teaching, even that of Hitler or Stalin?! Such confusion is indeed an example of an unjustified (both philologically and philosophically) mixture of different meanings of ‘power’: it is being used in the Greek original, and neither ‘kratos’ nor ‘archos’: any ability to do and to create something is beyond all doubts given by God, and that is what the epistle in question states. As for the object of such power-ability, it is rather not other person nor any kind of activity carried out by him or her, but the very person who possesses that ability (Fig. 1).

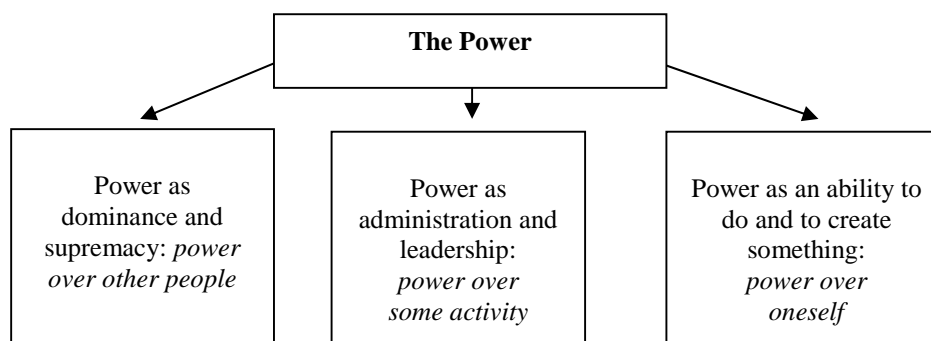


Fig. 1. The three aspects of the power phenomenon

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Thus, it is quite necessary to distinguish between the *three initial notions of power*: power as dominance ('kratos'), power as administration ('archos'), and power in the most broad and philosophical sense as human ability to accomplish something ('eksousia'). In some ways, they supplement each other, and in some other ways, they oppose each other; the current reduction of power to the first of those notions does not just fail to be correct from the theoretical point of view, it is also inadequate to the contemporary level of social development. In the process of democratic development – it is not only *the people* notion that enriches and concretizes itself, gradually including into *demos* not just 'free male citizens' like in poleis of the Antiquity, but all the human population in general, – but the notion of *power* as well that is developed as a part of 'democracy' term and phenomenon.

Democracy as the supremacy of the people, sovereignty of the people where the latter appear as the source and the bearer of the state political power – such formulation could indeed serve as an effective guideline and the ideal of social and political organization in the times of absolutism, under the historical period when usual reality was the dominance of a sole monarch or a narrow circle of persons possessing the power by the right of birth. Then, the dominance of all the people – and not a single person or an exclusive social estate – was a progressive and revolutionary slogan.

But today such an approach to understanding and defining democracy turns out to be too abstract – that is, not clear enough in order to serve as a lodestar in the semidarkness of the political life of our society: 'people's power' could be a guideline and a social and political ideal in opposition to autocracy, but not under the system that already titles itself as 'democratic'. *Demos*' supremacy in the sense of 'kratos' does not really mean all the fullness of people's power, as such approximate and rough formulations tell us nothing about who really possesses the power-administration and who has all the conditions to develop the power-ability.

Democracy, according to the distinction in notions proposed, is literally not so 'people's power', as 'people's supremacy'. However, it is a historical custom that such Greek terms as 'autocracy' (that is, self-supremacy) and 'monarchy' (correspondingly, administration of a sole person) are almost identical in their everyday use. Basing on this alternative point of view – that is not necessarily and always so: in the first case, one person (king, tsar, emperor) is the only source of power, in the second – its only bearer. Under formal supremacy of the people (in all the historical variety of the latter term, even in its broadest understanding), social administration and governance could be a monopolized property of one person or even of several social groups. A president is neither a king nor a nominal autocrat, as he or she is elected by the people as proclaimed sources of power, but such an elected representative could really be a quasi-monarch in the sense of unlimited real power in governing the state.

In this sense, one can even talk about the existence of, so to say, 'democracy-monarchy' and 'democracy-oligarchy'. In the first case, a formal supremacy of the people is realized under 'the guidance' of one single person (an excellent example of such 'democratic monarchy' is the Soviet Union under Stalin, or, say, Juan Perón's Argentina); the second case represents an élite-based form of social and state government organization (being, by the way, a much more frequent phenomenon – referring to many contemporary representative democracies). As for 'tyranny' (another Aristotle's term for denoting a sole form of government), it means not so a form of 'kratos' or 'archos', as a substantial-valuation (in negative sense) aspect of characterizing any form of government, either monarchy or oligarchy (let us remember 'Thirty Tyrants' of Athens).

If we speak of power in the first sense of that word, we should remember that already in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in most world countries the approach that considers the source of power (supremacy) to differ from 'all the people' has been anything but history: even most 'authentic' dictators and oligarchs preferred to be called democratic and governed 'in the name of the people'. But taking into account future development of democracy, concretization of democracy in respect to different forms of administration under the declared supremacy of the people, it is easy to conclude that both democracy-monarchy and democracy-oligarchy are not democracies proper in full, precise and academic meaning of the word, as there is a non-popular (and even non-elective) power of administrators hiding behind a curtain of the people's supremacy.

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Administration, governance, power-supervision in its initial sense is not equal to the power as dominance, but the state power, both in its historical and contemporary versions, usually originates from supervision. And I think that the latter in its turn is nothing else but an institutionalized expression of the power as *ability*. The supervisor, the head is historically no more than ‘the first amongst the equals’, either it is the eldest tribe member or the most skilled one of the group of ancient hunters or craftsmen who is the first one to go for hunting or to war and who can teach the others his craftsmanship or effectively lead them into a victorious battle. Gradually, however, such supervision obtained somewhat different sense: not the first amongst others, but of a higher rank... Let us remember the historical term ‘princeps’, Latin for ‘first in time or order’: the first senator, *princeps senatus*, was originally a name for the eldest amongst Senate members with the only right to start a discussion, – and later it became a title of early Roman emperors that did not imply any attributes not consistent with the republican interior. However, in the course of time, as the empire developed itself and formal rudiments of republican political life were gone for good, the Principate has been replaced by the Dominate, and supervision by supremacy, and the very word princeps was transformed into ‘*prince*’ in most European languages, meaning – *hereditary lord*.

By force of all those circumstances, the situation when administrative power-governance in society does not belong to the people as nominal multi-lord, being monopolized either by a sole person (democracy-monarchy) or by a handful of persons (democracy-oligarchy) does not really satisfy the essence of democracy, even if the people in their majority do accept and approve that situation. Oligarchy of ‘the élite’ with all the merits of, say, *Magna Charta* for the Medieval age, hardly enjoys more democracy than monarchy now.

Contemporary events make us recall rather Ancient times in search of historical precedents: for instance, the case when after a murder of a next tyrant, ‘political élite’ “occupaverant asserturi communem libertatem” (“resolved on maintaining the public liberty” by establishing the republic again), was confused in disagreement between its different groupings, while the people fearing preponderance of aristocracy starts to demand an autocratic emperor and surely obtains the desirable due to their superiority in number over the republican élite<sup>1</sup>. In principle, ‘democratic monarchies’, or ‘authoritarian democracies’, establish themselves by similar schemes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well.

One can make an objection that the only alternative to such power of both monarchy and oligarchy is the conception of freedom as absence of any power – *anarchy*. However, I think that the most complete development of democracy in the level of power notions could be not *an*-archy but rather *pan*-archy, that is, so to say, democracy as ‘*power of everybody*’ instead of ‘power of nobody’. Let me explicate that probably unclear neologism. The sense put into the word ‘power’ in the context of democracy notion, is developed in the course of history from power as dominance and power as administration (that inclines to dominance as well) – to power in its third and the most concrete and fundamental sense, as an ability to create. Moreover, I would argue that it is the most fundamental aspect of power other aspects could be grounded upon.

The power of everyone under democracy means social power of *each* person that is able to do something within the field of his or her own competence. That is what could be called the power of authority limited by a sphere of corresponding knowledge and abilities. The head, the supervisor – is not the one who is older, richer, or more famous, nor he or she is the one who holds a higher formal post, not even the one who has been elected by voting, – but the one who excels others in the concrete ability, who knows that current sphere of activity best of all. As our Ukrainian proverb says, ‘The landlord is not the one who walks the land, but the one who ploughs it’...

That is where we can finally get back from philosophical musings (philosophy does have its task in defining and clearing notions, after all) to workplace democracy – as the form of democracy based on the

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<sup>1</sup> “...the senate was dilatory in putting through its plans because of the tiresome bickering of those who held divergent views, while the populace, who stood about the hall, called for one ruler...”. – C. Suetonius Tranquillus. *The life of Claudius* // C. Suetonius Tranquillus. *The lives of the twelve Caesars*. §10(3–4). Enhanced Media, 2016. P. 126 [<https://books.google.com.ua/books?id=SCL4DQAAQBAJ>].

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‘ability’ type of power, as *democracy of competence*. That point requires some more explication. In theory, the power of competence is based on authority, which, as stated by François Fédier, is “the power to do anything because the one who does that knows what to do: he has competence sufficient for that task. Such power does not include coercion and command. The competent person orders, gives command, makes do something because he knows how to do that himself and in order to teach the one who learns” [5, p. 115]. Nevertheless, such power is legitimized by the subordinate following directions of the supervisor – due to comprehending and accepting the real authority (competence, ability, knowledge and experience) of the latter. Authority such understood differs from the old one that existed before the age of Enlightenment by its rational grounds<sup>1</sup>. In its turn, in other spheres of social activity a current supervisor and a follower could actually change their places: power as leadership by ability is limited, let us note that again, by a specific sphere of competence.

It is worth noting that those thinkers who stand for representative system of democratic governance are known to base their claims on the idea of professionalism of the élite: the people are expected to elect those who are able and called to govern. The task of governance appears as one of abstract identities and spheres of activities, which is singled out as a specific profession and alienated from all other people. As observed by Christopher Lasch, while neglecting any efforts to raise the general level of competence, which would correspond to the old sense of democracy, we content ourselves with securing the competence of the class that plays the role of a guardian who impertinently assumes the right to supervise everybody else [12, p.106]

Besides, the theory stating that the ruling class in present-day society is formed on the base of professionalism and competence remains disputable. Rather the opposite appears to be true: when ideologies and political programs of the classical age of democratic representation give way to PR, images and other marketing technologies, and real politicians are replaced by populists and rich clients of image-makers and political technologists, then ‘competence’ appears to be but another tool in the armory of rhetorical mantras.

French critic and author Émile Faguet had even written a special book on that problem with a sounding title *Le culte de l'incompétence* [4], describing French society of the representative democracy at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Democracy, as shown by Faguet, appears as an enemy of professionalization and specialization, to say nothing of professional demagoguery:

“The candidate for a permanent appointment who is not conscious of possessing any particular merit is not slow to realize that it is by his political opinions that he will succeed, and he naturally professes those which are wanted. The candidate who is conscious of merit, very often knowing very well what less meritorious competitors are about, and not wishing to be beaten, also professes the same useful opinions... First, then, we see how most of the candidates chosen by the mandates of the people are incapable... There remains a small number of meritorious persons who have never identified themselves with current political opinions, and who have slipped into public employment, thanks to some brief moment of inattention on the part of the politicians” [4, p. 50–51].

The life ‘on public’ and ‘by professions’ inevitably leads to the semblance of activity and qualities being preferred over real activity and real qualities. Moreover, “By making a man a politician, Demos takes from him his whole soul” [4, p.56]. Thus, elitist theory of democracy as a situation where the people elect competent governors out of the number of the élite is groundless already in theory: if all the people are not competent political people (demos), than they are not competent enough to elect competent leaders and governors either! Moreover, workplace democracy takes place in enterprises where could be little to no election of the administration; still, the problem of incompetence of the leaders is no less clearly evident in the today’s industry than in politics.

The situation in economy actually seems to be not very democratic at all. In spite of all the advances of science and technology in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of many discoveries that with no doubts would have impressed the imagination of our ancestors, they have not led to the expected revolution in the way of life. The working hours were reduced to eight hours in the very beginning of industrial

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<sup>1</sup> In philosophy, such statement has been clearly explicated thanks to Hans-Georg Gadamer [6].

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development, already a hundred years ago – and have stopped at that number for a long period of time. Still, a natural (though rather unexpected) consequence of mechanization was an unusual complication of the social system.

What I mean here is that, first, overwhelming majority of machinery relies on oil and gas, their production being gathered in the hands of a small number of people and/or states. That point should not be left unconsidered though it seldom serves as a subject of reflections by philosophers and theoreticians. As Karl Marx used to state in his times, “The hand-mill gives you a society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, a society with the industrial capitalist” [14, p. 49]. That could surely sound as an oversimplification today, but the sense of the statement is still very clear, and one should not underestimate the impact of industrial powers on the style of social organization: it is understandable that the matter lies not so in the mill itself as in those social relations, which come out of private property on the mill or the necessity to operate it in a certain organized way.

We can continue that list of mills and make a supposition that the true democracy is to remain an unattainable ideal (utopia) until humankind would become energetically independent (autotrophic) turning to renewable sources of energy – until the mill would again become windmill or solar mill. While ecological rhetoric is quite fashionable and widely used in today’s society, capital-oriented economics is still unable to consider nature as being anything else but a source of raw material – the means for achieving goals that have nothing to do with ecology or democracy (that is, goals and values of private enrichment). To put it in the figurative Marx-like terms, it will be solar battery that would give us a society with actual workplace democracy. Fortunately, the development of both theory and practice enables us to consider that problem with some careful optimism stating inseparable connection of democratization and ecologization as the factors in the development of contemporary society that oppose destructive tendencies of current economocentrism.

Second, scientific and technological progress led to the consequences that differ from those expected by the supporters of radical democracy, so that instead of general equality obtained due to machine labor, we have all preconditions for the rise of ‘technocracy’. As observed by Danilo Zolo, who follows N. Bobbio here,

“The classical writers on democratic thought never predicted, nor were they ever in a position do to so, that technological development would lead almost unavoidably to a rule of technicians, in direct contrast with the underlying principle of democracy which hypothesizes that ‘all are in a position to make decisions about everything’” [17, p. 105].

That observation that seems to disrepute the core ideal of democracy could be answered in the following manner. I think that democracy in fact does not suppose that “all persons are in a position to make decisions about everything” – that is not what the idea of equality is all about. Should the people be all the same, human society would then be impossible, – such interpretation of equality reflects rather archaic elements of technicism and scientism, a machine-like approach to human person. And it would not be correct to state that technical specialists rule the today’s world – rather, the opposite is true. In the contemporary world, as well as hundred or two hundred years ago, power belongs to professional politicians, managers, and businesspersons. And it would be democratic to give real power to concrete specialists in their fields of activity – the movement for ‘the revolt of the middle class’, according to the apt phrase by Boris Kagarlitskiy,

“A corporation depends on specialists who do the professional work but have no right to control it. Specialists convince themselves more and more, that those who govern them have no special qualities – they do not excel those they command in anything” [10, p. 61].

The growth of specialization has led to the incompetence of administrators who are proficient in general management but not the in the trade they are managing. I can refer to some examples of one the most vivid branch of contemporary industry – that of video games. In November 2018, USA-based Telltale Games company went bankrupt because of bad management and in spite of great creative abilities demonstrated by its employees (who like most other ‘middle class specialists’ in different trades had no right and no power over their own creations). As told by a dozen former employees many of

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whom requested anonymity, that was “the inevitable outcome of what sources familiar with the company describe as years of a culture that promoted constant overwork, toxic management, and creative stagnation... Although some of the problems were specific to Telltale and its management, many of the developer’s troubles were emblematic of the unsustainable and erratic development practices that plague the video game industry at large. These conditions almost always hit one group the hardest: the developers or the people who actually make the games”<sup>1</sup>.

It would be hard not to agree with *The Verge* in that those are not just the story of the missteps of one or another studio, but “a shocking window into the \$36 billion video game industry... and how its worst practices can grind down and burn out even the most devoted and valuable employees”<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the contemporary system of both representative democracy and economy gives birth to an abstract person *incompetent* in the field he or she tries to govern, not entitled to neither power as ability nor power as leadership (which supposes that the person is empowered by authority because he or she knows the trade better than others do). I would argue that in earlier times, even as recently as in the middle of the last century, a person could be indeed entitled to an administrative position while being competent in ‘general management’ only. Today, under the age of the growing complexity of both world and human activities, that is no longer the case: one single person cannot be proficient in any trade, and it is more necessary than ever to comprehend what one is doing.

In correspondence with the distinction of the three types of power proposed above, power as dominance correlates precisely with the ‘democracy of incompetence’. At the same time, power in the workplace could be much better described as power as *ability*, the power as ability to do something. A person could be evaluated *by his or her deeds*, and in correspondence with that evaluation, he or she takes a place in workplace and communal ‘hierarchy’, enjoying trust and respect of neighbors and colleagues. For example, in Japan, workplace democracy is usually named as one of the most important factors of social and economical development of the post-war period: all issues concerning production are dealt with exclusively by the workers of the specific company themselves. Decisions under such conditions are made by all participant of the process; workplace democracy, – as explained by Kaoru Ishikawa, Japanese expert on quality management and one of the ideologists of ‘Japanese economic wonder’, – manifests itself not in formal procedures of leader’s election, but in traditions of democratic culture of behavior: co-workers wear the same uniform, dine together, spend their holidays and vacations together, and generally consider their workplace collective as a large family for themselves [9].

Of course, that task requires not only deeds, that is, in order to achieve workplace democracy, a person has to possess not just knowledge of one’s trade, but a high level of *culture*, a high level of universal development of one’s own personality. It is that culture that enables self-organization of workplace democracy, as opposed to anarchy – co-authorship of the people in a community from the Hobbesian ‘bellum omnium contra omnes’. As Maxim Gorky used to note in his ‘Untimely thoughts’ evoked by turbulent events of 1917 in Russia,

“There are factories where workers start to pilfer and sell brass parts of machines, there are many facts that testify to the wildest anarchy amongst the working mass. I know that there are phenomena of the other order: for instance, in one factory, workers had paid off the working materials using their wages for that. But such facts are counted by units; facts of the opposite type are hundreds” [7, p. 179].

That is, both general culture (that enables self-organization of communities) and proficiency in ones’ trade are required to put into motion true democracy as *self-governance* in both economy and social

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<sup>1</sup> Megan Farokhmanesh. *Toxic management cost an award-winning game studio its best developers : How the \$36 billion video game industry burns out its best employees* / The Verge. – <https://www.theverge.com/2018/3/20/17130056/telltale-games-developer-layoffs-toxic-video-game-industry>. See also: *A post-mortem of Telltale Games*. <https://www.gamesindustry.biz/articles/2018-10-18-a-post-mortem-of-telltale-games, et al>.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, that case is rather a rule than an exception. See the story of the game development studio Her Interactive that has faced similar problems, mostly because of mismanagement: Elizabeth Ballou. *The Case of the Disappearing Nancy Drew Video Games* / Kotaku. – <https://kotaku.com/the-case-of-the-disappearing-nancy-drew-video-games-1830256040>.

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life. Such approach to democracy enables talking about democratic progress not only in the field of human creative activity and workplace democracy per se, but also in the global sphere of political power. It is in politics that the current understanding of power as supremacy over other people is being replaced by comprehension of power as an ability, using C. B. Macpherson's words, to develop one's own personality under the conditions of society that overcomes the situation of alienation: "As soon as democracy is seen as a kind of society, not merely a mechanism of choosing and authorizing governments, the egalitarian principle inherent in democracy requires not only 'one man, one vote' but also 'one man, one equal effective right to live as fully humanly as he may wish'" [13, p. 51].

That's not actually a new idea of course – understanding democracy as *the ideal of self-governance* dates back to the Enlightenment, the ideas of which were aptly summarized in Kant's famous motto of 'having courage to use your own understanding'. However, it is now when each and every person actually becomes able to follow that ideal recommendation. If in the former previous times the development of one human personality (that of a leader or an autocrat) could be achieved only through and at the expense of suppressing the others, the majorities, then now democracy could only mean universal equal development – and not just universal and equal right to choose who exactly should develop himself or herself in this society at the expense of others. The actual democracy should rather be, as I have already noted, a form of 'panarchy': administration of everyone, promoting each person's real, and not just nominal, power. Of course, that is not something that could be easily observed or constructed, but a complex process of social democratization that is oriented towards overcoming different rudiments of 'democratic' monarchy and oligarchy, towards development of real self-governance, and responsible participation of each ordinary human being in making decisions and realizing those decisions, within the spheres of activity that directly concern them and their society and the world in general.

Could such an ideal way of social organization be really achieved, or is it but a next utopia? I think that the people have now reached that stage of their development that helps them to recognize the injustice and imperfection of the historically available state of both social life and non-merit based workplace hierarchy (even if that recognition expresses itself rather through withdrawal of yesterday's masses into private individualism than in general triumph of workplace democracy). As we comprehend the people – all the population – not just as titular 'autocrats' of the power, but as actual 'governing' stewards of the social life as well, we then realize obvious social redundancy of the élite as a separate group of population professionally engaged in politics and in enterprise management. In the course of democracy development, in place of socially differentiated society there comes a situation of 'aristocracy of everyone', in Benjamin Barber's apt turn of phrase [1].

The position of such a model of democracy is based on the belief in simple human person who – due to his or her development as a personality, – just does not need any guardians and higher administrators, even the most optimal and professional ones, in order to live a full-fledged life and to govern it, and to organize one's own community in an effective way. He or she needs only colleagues and neighbors that could be organized into a democratic community. Indeed, it could be argued that such democracy of competence – substantial democracy, as distinct from formal representative democracy peculiar to nation states, – is possible in small communities only. Here one can agree with neo-classical theoreticians who state that democracy is a historical phenomenon peculiar to ancient poleis but practically unrealizable within a giant Modern nation state. Under representative democracy, especially if it is already 'developed' to the level of virtual post-democracy, elections are usually won by a person who is more competent in the issues concerning... elections themselves, and not in activities he or she is supposed to be elected for (that is what we call 'professional politics' implying that a person engaged in an abstract political rhetoric has little abilities and interests outside that sphere). And under the democracy grounded on co-existence of different levels of communities, governance is carried out by self-organization, so that there is a *natural* selection of the most capable persons for different positions within the frames of specific community like that happens in workplace democracy.



