

# Conceptualising the Quality of Working Life (QWL)

—No. II—

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## III. Defining the Concept of the "QWL"

### 2) Historical, Philosophical and Methodological Background of the "QWL".

As I introduced in the first half of this chapter (III-1), there are various viewpoints with regard to the definition of the QWL. However, apart from extrinsic differences among these definitions, I will explore briefly the points at which they meet on common ground. Furthermore, I will focus the "concept of labor" as

basically common viewpoints according to these definitions. I will also explore briefly the outlook on the labor in the QWL and how it differs from that of the former disciplines (e.g., Scientific Management, Human Relations, Human Resources, etc.).

It seems that some traditional "concepts of labor" which appeared historically in the American Personnel Management theories are as follows :

- ① "Man as a machine" which seems to be included in the broad sense of "Economic Man (Homo-Economics)"<sup>1)</sup> and was advocated by the Scientific Management theory in the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>2)</sup>
- ② "Instinctive Man" as a narrow sense of "Psychological Man (Homo-Psycho)" which appeared on the Personnel Management theories in the 1920s.<sup>3)</sup>
- ③ "A narrow sense of Social Man (Homo-Socio)" as a member of the informal group which is suggested by Human Relations theory, and the "Industrial Man" which was advocated by the Industrial Relations theory<sup>4)</sup> in the 1940s and the 1950s.
- ④ "Self-Actualization Man" which was advocated by Human Resources theories as one of the Behavioral Sciences in the 1960s.<sup>5)</sup>

**Table II. A Brief Outline of Former Discipline's Viewpoints  
on the Concept of Labor and the Model of Working  
Life in the United States.**

The name of former disciplines	The concept of labor	The model of working life
①The Scientific Management Theory	"Man as a machine" which seems to be included in a broad sense of "Economic Man (Homo-Economics)"	The Task-system which was based on Elementally Time Study and Motion Study. Differential Piece-rate Plan etc.
②Early Personnel Management Theory in the 1920s	"Instinctive Man" as a narrow sense of the "Psychological Man (Homo-Psycho)"	Aptitude Tests, Selection, Training, Promotion, etc.
③Human Relations Theory and Industrial Relations Theory in the 1940s and 1950s	A narrow sense of Social Man (Homo-Socio) as a member of the Informal Group, and "Industrial Man"	Management by Informal Group based on the logic of the total situation, and an Industrial Relations System which is advocated by J. Dunlop et al. and is applied by D. Yoder <sup>6)</sup> to the Personnel Management Theory.
④Behavioral Science in the 1960s	"Self-Actualization Man"	Participative Organization, Y Theory, System IV, Managerial Grid, Motivation Theory, etc. which are advocated by Human Resources Theory
<p>Summary (fundamentally similar viewpoints among these disciplines)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monistic (or atomism-oriented) model of labor and working life.</li> <li>2. One best way-oriented viewpoints.</li> <li>3. Closed-system model.</li> </ol>		

As I briefly mentioned above, there have historically been four famous “concepts of labor” in the United States. However, as to how the “concepts of labor” in the QWL differ from the above-mentioned four disciplines, I will merely refer the following three points.

First, the QWL does not pursue the monistic (or atomism-oriented) model of labor and working life as the above-mentioned disciplines, but pursues a pluralistic (or organicism-oriented) model of labor and working life indicating that labor has various aspects (e.g., economic, psychological, social, political, etc.) and also various phases.”

Secondly, the QWL does not pursue the normative (or one best way-oriented) model of labor and working life, but rather pursues what could be called “new models” which are affected by the Socio-Technical theory and/or Contingency theory, Systems Approach, etc.

Thirdly, the QWL explores the “environmental factors of labor and working life” which have not been investigated in former disciplines.<sup>8)</sup>

Allegedly, it seems that the QWL is one of the new tendencies and/or paradigms because of utilizing the term “humanization” and/or combining two terms ...work and life... which have been contradictory concepts in the Judeo-Christian ethics.<sup>9)</sup> In other words, the QWL intends basically to improve and/or humanize the working life through the above-mentioned new ideas (three points). That is, the QWL intends to re-enact the “meaning of work”, “total systems of work” and “voluntary motivation of worker” in the

working life which has been confused through the evolution of specialization (division of work), mechanization and monopolization.

It seems however that the QWL intends to reorganize new working systems in the advanced capitalistic countries which have been shocked by economic, social and political crises (e. g., “counter culture”<sup>10</sup>, “oil crises”, “stagflation”, etc.) since the end of the 1960s. This means that the QWL seems to be a “new efficiency movement” instituting the “new labor control system” in order that the “meaning of work”, “total system of work”, “voluntary motivation of workers”, etc. be actually forged and manipulated by the interest of managers.

In short, the main subject of the QWL (to improve the “subjective and objective” conditions of working life) is one means of increasing the work efficiency, so that there is almost no question as to the relationships among “work efficiency”, “humanization of working life” and “increase of labor’s compensation”. With the exception of B. Tietze etc.<sup>11</sup>), most researchers hesitate to refer to the fundamental problem as to whether “work efficiency”, “humanization of working life” and “increase of labor’s compensation” exist together or not, in the capitalistic countries and even in the socialistic countries.

Although the following explanation might produce misunderstandings, I fearlessly present a hypothesis on the methodological characteristic of the QWL (particularly, about the “concept of labor” or the “viewpoint of working life” in the “QWL”).

① It seems that most researchers of the QWL have organicism-oriented viewpoints due to pursuing “plural values of labor” and

“environmental factors of working life” on mere face value. However as I mentioned above, the QWL eventually regards a worker as a segment of a mechanical structure based on the “new labor control system” or the “new efficiency movement”, so that the QWL appears to have also a mechanicalism-oriented viewpoint on labor and working life.

⑥ The QWL might have a holism-oriented viewpoint as long as it pursues “meaning of work” and “work system” as a whole, since both have been lost through the evolution of specialization (division of work) and mechanization. Nevertheless, it has been definitely shown through examples in the criteria for the QWL (see III-1) that numerous researchers of the QWL have atomism (the doctrine of elements)-oriented analysis.

⑦ Though the QWL has an open system-oriented viewpoint according to the investigation on the “environmental factors of labor and working life” which have been influenced by the “Systems Approach”<sup>12)</sup> and “Ecology”<sup>13)</sup>, numerous countermeasures of the QWL have remnants of the closed system-oriented viewpoint due to the exploration of the level of workshops and enterprises.

⑧ Most researchers of the QWL have no consistency of definition in conformity with mechanistic causationism-oriented and teleology-oriented viewpoints in the strict sense of the word, but have a description in conformity with pragmatism-oriented viewpoints.

⑨ Numerous arguments of the QWL are somewhat normative due to utilizing principles or normative laws (see III-1) rather than qualitative analysis-oriented and quantitative analysis-oriented laws.

⑩ Regarding the “historical background and development” of the

QWL, very little is known in the area of diachronic analysis, because most researchers omit reference to it. However, numerous approaches of the QWL are not synchronical and analytical in the strict sense of the word, but rather functional and pragmatical.

② Although most researchers of the QWL make use of pluralism, relativism and contingency-oriented methods rather than determinism, monism and the one best way-oriented method, they are not able to escape the reality of the “new efficiency movement” due to increasing efficiency as a sort of determinism (or as a sort of the absolute value). Even on a governmental level, for instance, “the last Congress (in the United States) did establish the National Center for Productivity and Quality of Working Life, but the Center’s charter is concerned almost entirely with productivity.”<sup>14)</sup>

Footnote)

- 1) Shigetaka Mōri, *Rōmukanri no Keieigaku*, Chikura Shobō Co. 1958, p.352.
- 2) F. W. Taylor, *Shop Management*, 1903; *Principles of Scientific Management*, 1911; M. J. Nadworny, *Scientific Management and the Unions, 1900—1930, A Historical Analysis*, Harvard University Press, 1955.
- 3) O. Tead and H. C. Metcalf, *Personnel Administration*, McGraw-Hill Co., 1st ed., 1920, pp.14—19; 2nd ed., 1926, pp.17—27.
- 4) F. J. Roethlisberger, *Management and Morale*, Harvard University Press, 1941; C. Kerr, J. T. Dunlop, F. H. Harbison and C. A. Myers, *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Harvard University Press, 1960.

- 5) G. Strauss, R. E. Miles, C. C. Snow, and A. S. Tannenbaum (eds.), *Organizational Behavior*, Industrial Relations Research Association Series, 1974, pp.1—17; K. Kikuno, "Recent Organizational (or Management) Theories and Personnel Research in the U. S.", in the *Journal of Musashi University*, Vol. 24, No. 2, August 1976, pp.86—87; A. H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1st ed., 1954, 2nd ed., 1970; P. Pigors, C. A. Myers and F. T. Malm, *Management of Human Resources — Readings in Personnel Administration—*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1st ed., 1964, 2nd ed., 1969, 3rd ed., 1973.
- 6) C. Kerr, J. T. Dunlop, et al., op. cit., pp.193—233; D. Yoder, *Personnel Management and Industrial Relations*, 6th ed., 1962, pp.1—53.
- 7) In regard to the theoretical background, see as follows: D. Hellriegel and J. W. Slocum, *Management : A Contingency Approach*, Addison-Wesley Co., 1974, pp.26—27; pp.121ff.
- 8) J. Carpentier, op. cit., p.114; L. E. Davis, "Enhancing the quality of working life : development in the United States" in *International Labour Review*, Vol.116, No. 1, p.53.
- 9) C. Lévi-Strauss, *Conférences au Japon—Structure, Mythe et Travail—*, (Japanese Translation by Y. Ōhashi et al.), Misuzu Shobō Co., 1979, p.87; p.97; K. Mannheim, *Freedom, Power and Democratic Planning*, (eds. by H. Gerth, and E. K. Bramstedt), Oxford University Press, 1950—Japanese Edition, *Mannheim Zenshū No. 6*, (Japanese translation by A. Tanosaki) Ushio Shuppansha Co., 1976, The third part, "New



- Man—New Values—”, p.483 ; p.492 ; O. Kuno and Y. Hoshino, *Ningen, Rōdō, Gijutsu (Human-being, Labor and Technology)*, Sanichi Shobō Co., 1977, p.70 (English translation of the title by K. Kikuno).
- 10) T. Rozak, *The Making of A Counter Culture—Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*, Doubleday and Co., 1968, —Japanese edition, *Taikō Bunka no Shisō*, (Japanese translation by Y. Inami and T. Kazama), Diamond Co., 1972; T. Levitt, *The Third Sector*, AMACOM, 1973, — Japanese edition, *Gendai Soshiki to Radicalism* (Japanese translation by Y. Sato), Diamond Co., 1975; Y. Nagai, *Jyūkōzō Shakai to Bōryoku*, Chūōkōronsha Co., 1971.
- 11) H. Günter, op. cit., p.91; J. Carpentier, op. cit., pp.109ff; Y. Delamotte and W. F. Walker, op. cit., pp. 11ff; A. Cherns, “Perspective on the Quality of Working Life”, in *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 1975, 48, pp.155ff; K. Okubayashi, “Trend and Characteristics of Humanization” in *The Monthly Journal of the Japan Institute of Labour*, Vol. 20, No. 11, Nov. 1978, p.16; p.23; K. Okubayashi, “Some Limitations of the Humanization of work” in *Kokumin Keizai Zasshi (Kōbe University)*, Vol. 137, No. 1, Jan. 1978, pp.52—72; K. Okubayashi, “Humanization of work in USSR”, in *The Monthly Journal of the Japan Institute of Labour*, Vol. 22, No. 3, Mar. 1980, p. 24; p.33; Y. Mihara, “A Note on Humanization of work and Trade Union” in *The Keiei to Keizai (Nagasaki University)*, Vol. 58-4, April 1979, pp.19ff; K. Murasugi, “QWL Shōron no Kenkyu” in *Sangyō Nōritsu*, No. 239, Feb. 1977, pp.11ff;

S. Takezawa, "The Quality of working Life : Its Development and Dimensions as a new Labor Problem", in *QWL Research Report in Japan*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Autumn 1975, pp.5ff; R. E. Walton, op. cit., pp.99—100.

- 12) In regard to the theoretical background, see as follows: L. V. Bertalanffy, *General System Theory—Foundations, Development, Applications*, George Braziller Publisher, 1968; F. E. Kast and J. E. Rosenzweig, *Organization and Management—A Systems Approach*, McGraw-Hill Inc., 2nd ed., 1974, p. 20; pp.100—125; H. Murata "Genealogy of System Theory and Discussion of Organizational Science" in *The Journal of Musashi University*, Vol. 27, No. 3—5, Dec. 1979, pp.507ff.
- 13) J. Carpentier, op. cit., p.114.
- 14) L. E. Davis, op. cit., p.54.

#### IV. Outline of Practical Countermeasures of the "QWL"

As I briefly mentioned above (III-1), the QWL has tow factors:

- (1) the subjective conditions of the worker and working life—the worker's internal (psychological, physiological, spiritual, etc.,) situation, or rather the conditions for the worker's satisfaction;
- (2) the objective conditions of woking life—worker's environmental conditions which consist of three levels (a) the work place level, (b) management of the enterprise level, and (c) societal level). In other words, practical countermeasures of the QWL consist of three levels: ① the environmental level (or societal level) — e.g., international problems, gross national product, labor market, social security, consumer behavior, community, life style, leisure, etc.,

② the enterprise level — (a) procedural countermeasures (e.g., labor's participation in top management), (b) substantive countermeasures (e.g., flexible working hours, improvement of the compensation system, employment security, etc.). ③ work shop level (including the worker's internal situation)—job enlargement, job enrichment, job re-design, autonomous work group, morale survey, counselling, etc.. Accordingly, the QWL intends to deal with various demen- sions of the worker and working life.

Argumentatively, it is hardly possible to classify the practical countermeasures of the QWL into certain categories and/or levels for the reason that increasing complexity of political, economic, technological, social and organizational circumstances in the industrialized countries reflects the fact that there has so far been no central or common debate concerning the classification of the practical countermeasures of the QWL. Therefore, various differences in its classification exist among international agencies, nations, trade unions, industries, researchers, etc.

Given limited space and time, I will not refer in detail to such various differences, but will merely classify some major counter- measures of the QWL into certain categories and/or levels as a skeletal hypotheses. According to my viewpoint, in an attempt to improve conditions and the quality of working life, six levels (or actors) have so far existed. They are as follows :

- ① International level (practical countermeasures of the QWL by international agencies).
- ② Governmental level (by national or federal agencies),
- ③ Enterprise level (by management),

- ④ workshop level,
- ⑤ Trade union level,
- ⑥ Academic level (by universities, research institutes, researchers, etc.).

I will show briefly the practical countermeasures of each level, and will refer briefly to certain trends of the QWL in Japan.

1) International Level (Practical Countermeasures of the QWL by International Agencies).

It seems that there have so far been four major agencies (OECD, EC, NATO, ILO) on the international level.

(a) OECD (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development).

“The Manpower and Social Affairs Directorate” and “The Industry and Energy Directorate” of the OECD are concerned with internal industrial environment as a joint working party, and the latter Directorate has held several meetings to review innovations in work organization.<sup>1)</sup>

(b) EC (the European Community).

Since October 1973, the EC has suggested the new work method or the reformation of the work organization due to the abolishment of a conveyor belt system, worker's participation, etc.<sup>2)</sup> Furthermore, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and working Condition has been established by the EC.<sup>3)</sup>

(c) NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

The NATO Committee on the Challenge of Modern Society

arranged for the United Kingdom to sponsor a pilot project to inquire into problems of work motivation and satisfaction.<sup>4)</sup>

(d) ILO (the International Labour Organization).

“The International Labour Organization is concerned with the humanization of work and quality of working life on a wide front, especially conditions of work, prevention of discrimination in employment, freedom of association of workers, and the representation in decisions upon all matters that affect them, within and beyond the enterprise. In 1971, the Director-General drew attention to the need for the humanization of work through measures to provide with meaningful tasks, to be carried out in conditions of human dignity coupled with opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. In 1973, the International Labour Office began a programme of studies on the humanization of work, which will review various developments in this field”<sup>5)</sup>: e.g., in the major programme 60 (work and life conditions), there are working hours, leisures, compensation systems, work condition between manual labor and non-manual labor etc., and in the sub programme 60.2 (labor law and Industrial Relations), the office refers to “worker’s participation”. International Institute for Labour Studies deals directly with this programme.<sup>6)</sup>

On the other hand, the 59th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in 1974 adopted a resolution concerning the improvement of working environment, and the 60th session of the ILO in 1975 presented a report—“Making work more human : working conditions and environment.”

In this report, the three main points are : ① the problem of

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safety and health in the place of work, ② the problem of adding more flexibility of hours of work and of leisure and ③ the problem of the content and organization of work. "Having analysed these problems and sketched out a programme of action for the ILO, the report concludes that organization can contribute to the humanization of work organization through research, practical cooperation with member states and international standard setting."<sup>7)</sup>

Through these activities, the ILO adopted PIACT(International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment which in French initials, means Le Programme International pour l'Amélioration des Conditions et milieu de Travail) in November 1976. The general goal of the PIACT is to establish an international framework or standard toward the improvement of the working conditions and environment. The PIACT has an intimate relationship with UN, WHO, UNESCO, FAO, UNEP, UNIDO, UNCITAD, OECD, etc.<sup>8)</sup> Main activities of the PIACT are to improve ① safety and health in the working environment, ② ergonomics, ③ working hours, ④ working organization and contents of job, ⑤ relationship between working conditions and technology transfer, ⑥ work environment and life environment.<sup>9)</sup> Practical activities of the PIACT have so far been to send the interdisciplinary specialists of working conditions and working environment to the member nations, and to hold certain seminars in the member nations, as follows.

The PIACT sent advisors to Bolivia, Ethiopia, Peru, Senegal, Tunisia and Venezuela by the end of 1977.<sup>10)</sup> Major activities of the PIACT in 1978 are given as seen below.

To the Indian government : advice on safety and health in mining and petroleum industries.

In Indonesia : national seminar concerning the improvement of working conditions and environment.

In the Phillippines : Asian Conference concerning working conditions, working environment and technological choices.

In Greece : to establish the Institute and Center of working conditions and environment.

To Morocco : advice on working conditions and environment.

To the Iraqi government : advice on safety and health in factories.<sup>11)</sup>

Moreover, the International Center for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training of the ILO in Turin (Italy) has been engaged in research concerning the QWL (particularly, the reorganization of work processes and job satisfaction).<sup>12)</sup>

(e) The UN and the OECD are attempting to develop social indicators<sup>13)</sup> specifically, the QL (Quality of Life) as one of the most important backgrounds of the QWL and/or the environmental level of the QWL,<sup>14)</sup> as follows.

OECD <sup>1</sup> —	UN <sup>2</sup> Population
Health	Health and health services, social security and welfare services
Individual development through learning	Learning and educational services
Employment and quality of working life	Earning activities and the employment services
Command over goods and services	Distribution of income, consumption and accumulation
Time and leisure	The allocation of time and the use of leisure

Physical environment, housing	Housing
Personal safety and the administration of justice	Public order and safety
Social opportunity and participation	Social satisfaction and mobility

<sup>1</sup> *List of social concerns common to most OECD countries* (Paris, OECD, 1973), pp. 14-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Draft guidelines on social indicators* (United Nations Economic and Social Council, CES/WP, 34/20/Add.1, Mar. 1976).

(Source) see Footnote 13).

Footnote)

- 1) Y. Delamotte and W. F. Walker, op. cit., p.6.
- 2) European Committee, *Report on the Communication from the Commission to the Council on Reform of the Organization of Work (Humanization of Work)*, Working Documents, 1977-78, Brussels, 2 June 1977, p.7.
- 3) Commission of the European Committees, *Reform of the Organization of Work, COM (76)*, 235 final, Brussels, 3 June 1976, pp. lff.
- 4) Y. Delamotte and W. F. Walker, op. cit., p.6.
- 5) *ibid.*, p.6.
- 6) *International Labour Review (Japanese edition) = ILR,JE*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Oct. 1974, pp.62-64.
- 7) *Bibliography on Major Aspects of the Humanization of work and the Quality of Working Life*, 2nd ed., International Labour Office, Geneva, 1978, p.259.
- 8) UN (United Nations), WHO (World Health Organization), UNESCO(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural



Organization), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development).

- 9) *ILR. JE*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Autumn 1977, pp.46—49.
- 10) *ILO News (Japanese edition)*, No. 255, Oct. 1978, p.3.
- 11) *ibid.*, p.3; *ibid.*, No. 259, Feb. 1979, pp.2—4.
- 12) *ILR. JE*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Oct., 1974, p.64.
- 13) L. Scheer, "Conceptualising the Quality of Life", in *Labour and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Jan. 1978, p.66.
- 14) According to my viewpoint, the relationships between the QL (Quality of Life) and the Environmental level of the QWL closely overlapping.

**(To be continued.)**

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