

Vertical Task Sharing Sustained by Internal Promotion

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Abstract

1. French-style Overlapping of Jobs to Enhance Flexibility
 2. Horizontal and Vertical Task Sharing: A Feature of Job Structure in Japanese Organizations
- Conclusion: Two Models in Human Organizations

Abstract

Collaboration between individuals and corporations is vital for achieving high performance. Teamwork and simultaneous engineering are among the most significant measures for overcoming organizational impediments.¹⁾

The two oil crises that occurred in the 1970s had a tremendous impact on the global automobile industry and caused major structural blows, prompting the French automobile industry to make a positive shift towards teamwork to deal with this difficult situation.²⁾

Therefore, teamwork is one measure used to remove obstacles. This study examines

1) “We emphasize the shift from a ‘Tayloristic’ organization of work (characterized by significant specialization by tasks) to a ‘holistic’ organization (featuring job rotation, integration of tasks and learning across tasks). We examine four driving forces behind this restructuring process: advances in production technologies promoting technological task complementarities, advances in information technologies promoting informational task complementarities, changes in worker preferences in favor of versatile work, and advances in human capital that make workers more versatile.” (LINDBECK, SNOWER 1999: title-page)

2) “Les tentatives les plus fréquentes ont pour cadre l’organisation du travail. Il s’agit là principalement de modifications des processus et des méthodes de production dans le cadre de l’organisation du travail existante, par le recours au « job rotation », au « job enlargement » et au « job enrichment » ; il peut aussi s’agir, plus fondamentalement, d’amorces en vue de renoncer progressivement à l’organisation du travail de type formel, au profit de groupes autonomes.[...] Au cours des deux ou trois dernières années, la fraction du travail à la chaîne asservi à une cadence a constamment diminué au bénéfice d’autres formes du travail en continu ou par le transfert des travaux à la chaîne à des groupes de travail à cadence libre ainsi qu’à des postes individuels.” (WEIL 1976: 18, 19)

teamwork in French organizations and the reasons for its promotion, as well as the difficulties faced in its implementation. In addition, this study examines if and how Japanese organizations overcame these challenges.

When building teamwork and simultaneous engineering, establishing trust is the most important element. In this paper, I discuss how the difficulty in building trust can be attributed to the fact that it is implemented in a scenario similar to martial arts, called the power game. According to the observations of Japanese managers of Japanese transplants in France, real trust cannot be created if it is captured within the framework of the power game. Instead, they achieved vertical job sharing by fully adopting internal promotion in Japanese companies. This contributed to build trust among members in teamwork and subcontracting.

1. French-style Overlapping of Jobs to Enhance Flexibility

1-1 Individualism Anchored in French Organizations

Individualism poses a significant challenge to the implementation of teamwork. As evidenced by the trends in academic societies below, individualistic reasoning dominated Europe and the United States until the 1960s. This was primarily due to the Tayloristic way of thinking, i.e. specialization by tasks, which was viewed as rational.

Descriptions of task design in the early days of *JAP* [*Journal of Applied Psychology*] were rooted in the individualistic approach and advanced the idea that interdependence among workers was something that needed to be eliminated via appropriate top-down, formal design. Interdependence was seen as a source of inefficiency and errors. Johnston and Briggs (1968) concluded that team output was inversely related to member coordination and interaction. Briggs and Naylor (1965) went so far as to say “independence of operator functions, not interaction among operators, is emerging as the more desirable system engineering concept” (p. 391). Reasons why groups perform worse than individuals included problems such as inefficiency, errors, social distraction, unaccountability, pluralistic ignorance, social loafing, groupthink, conformity, group polarization, and interpersonal conflict (Campbell, 1968). Overlooked was the fact that comparing individual outcomes to those of teams required the use of relatively equivalent tasks for both. For such considerations, tasks had to be simple enough to be done by individuals alone. (MATHIEU et al. 2017: 455)

Individualistic propensity is also noticeable in French industry. During a survey visit to companies in France in the 1990s, local Japanese managers uniformly pointed out the gaps that existed everywhere within companies. These gaps are major obstacles to mass

production because they reduce the flexibility of production. The gap between jobs provoked by individualism is simply expressed as follows: “As long as I do my job properly, it does not matter to me what other people do with them. I refuse to interfere with other people’s work, and I refuse to let other people interfere with my work as well.”³⁾

1-2 Teamwork

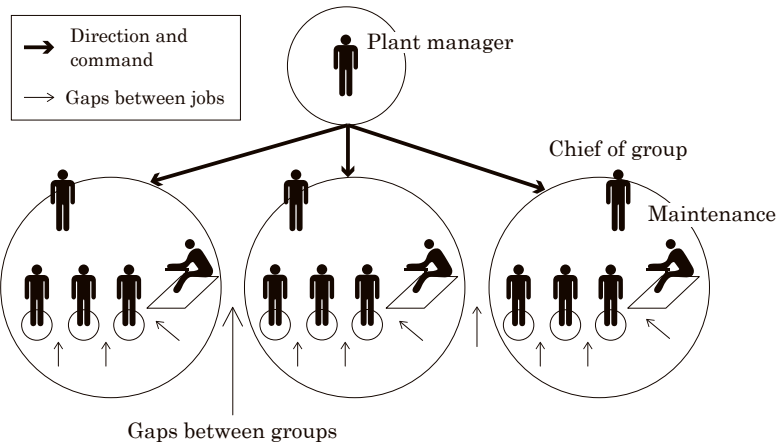
What measures can be adopted to address this lack of flexibility? According to Jean-Louis Peaucelle, three movements have influenced French companies to eliminate the inconveniences of Taylorism: (1) just-in-time production (JIT), (2) business process re-engineering (BPR), and (3) project-by-project management (PEAUCELLE 2000: 459-463). In addition to these measures, French manufacturers introduced the teamwork method on a large scale, particularly in the 1970s, to alleviate the shortage of flexibility. This approach became more widespread in French manufacturing in the 1990s, and was described as follows:

The picture in 1995 is fundamentally different. Workplaces still have a strong Taylorist flavour, but instead of isolated jobs performed by unskilled workers, the shop floor in many companies is made up of teams of polyvalent workers. (HANCKÉ 1999: 3)

A labor group is considered polyvalent and, in the end, flexible when it is composed of workers with different skills. This is a European solution to the defects of mass production, such as a lack of flexibility. However, the question was whether this lack of flexibility could be resolved through teamwork. Despite the diffusion of polyvalent worker teams, inflexibility was not yet completely resolved because gaps remained on the shop

3) A Japanese manager in a Japan-affiliated plant in France told me: “Why does this [the French individualism] happen? The education in Japan and Europe is different. In Europe, because of logical education, people are taught to do their best to assert themselves. Therefore, when a problem occurs, they emphasize how they are not responsible for it. They often blame others. As Japanese people, when a problem occurs, we must eliminate the cause of the problem by asking ourselves why it occurred and how we can prevent its recurrence. After elimination, preventive measures must be taken. For example, when assembly workers have to work overtime on their days off to cover for a mistake in quality control or something, they are not convinced. They insist that it is not ‘my responsibility.’ Self-expression must first be expressed concretely. The Western style begins with an excuse. This may hide the true cause of the problem. In the Japanese way, the important thing is to prevent recurrence by asking: How can we solve the problem? In other words, education makes the difference. I don’t think we can conduct the Japanese way of doing things in these areas.” (Interview held on November 10, 1993, in Cesson-Sévigné)

Figure 1 Gaps between jobs in French *travail en groupe*



Source: Author.

floor in the eyes of Japanese managers, as quoted in Note 3.

As illustrated in Figure 1, teamwork was conducted without horizontal or vertical task sharing. There were still apparent gaps between individual jobs, and most importantly, between groups. This implies that a higher-level job (e.g., a process manager) is required to adjust simple collaborations among workers.⁴⁾

If gaps exist between jobs, is it a simple matter to fill them? This research theme, organizational learning, or *apprentissage collective* (collective skill acquisition), indicates that European and American companies recognized gaps between jobs and attempted to find ways to eliminate them. Workers with different skills organized as a group can function in a polyvalent manner. However, the gap between jobs persisted because it was difficult to fill this gap.

1-3 Simultaneous Engineering

Simultaneous engineering is a measure recommended to reduce inflexibility. This

4) The difficulty of introducing teamwork was reported by DE BONNAFOS (1984). Even when introducing automated equipment, Tayloristic individualized work was not questioned and continued as usual. "Ainsi, quand, lors du démarrage des ateliers automatisés, la maîtrise constata que les opérateurs avaient du mal à s'organiser collectivement, elle rétablit ses prérogatives et confia aux régulateurs d'abord un rôle d'organisation du travail, puis de surveillance. De la même façon, rien jusqu'à présent, n'a remis en cause le mode de conception des agents de méthodes qui ont continué à penser l'implantation des systèmes automatisés avec une conception du travail individuel, comme le montrent les autres cas d'automatisation dans cette usine. L'immobilisme de ces acteurs a donc fait dérapé l'organisation par rapport au projet : la difficulté de travailler en groupe sur ces installations n'a fait que renforcer la conviction de la maîtrise sur l'incapacité des opérateurs et la nécessité de la présence d'un régulateur coordinateur." (DE BONNAFOS 1984: 13)

method shortens the lead-time from product conception to market launch. In contrast to handcrafted manufacturing, various corporate functions, such as concept, design, development, and manufacturing must be closely related to present-day mass production, such as passenger car production. A quick launch of the product can be carried out by simultaneously involving all specialties concerning the project, from product conception to market launch. One of the main aims of simultaneous engineering is to reduce the lead time and, ultimately, cost.

In recent years, European and American firms have established job hierarchies with overlapping jobs in concurrent engineering and labor groups. One of the main objectives of this study is to evaluate whether it was successful.

Although the benefits of simultaneous engineering are unquestionable, its application is difficult. Simultaneous engineering may provoke conflicts among participants by involving different departments and corporations, particularly in decision-making and planning, as it was sometimes difficult to conciliate different interests. A study relying on interviews with practitioners indicated that three notions—*trust*, *power*, and *control*—are crucial in leading to successful collaboration among numerous stakeholders. Trust is a key concept in the effective implementation of simultaneous engineering.

This analysis showed that although practitioners do not provide much spontaneous elaboration on trust, the majority argues that trust is an essential ingredient for successful collaboration and usually that they perceive a lack of trust in their own collaborative situations. (VANGEN, HUXHAM 2003: 8)

A lack of trust among members results in strained communication as people may be reluctant to share information or express their opinions. This may lead to a lack of collaboration, which can hinder simultaneous engineering processes. Therefore, building trust is difficult. The question is how to achieve coordination among individuals from different specialties. Adjustment involves communication that must be effective for coordination. As indicated, three notions—*trust*, *power*, and *control*—are crucial for successful collaboration. Trust-building occurs within the framework of a power game played by individuals. The rule of this power game is based on the premise: “How to control the participants with force?” It is effective to a certain extent.⁵⁾

5) “However, the relationships between *power*, *control*, and *trust* are similar. In their comparative case studies of four United States-China joint ventures for example, Yan and Gray (1994) found that a partner’s bargaining power is positively related to the partner’s management control in the joint venture. Similarly, they found a positive relationship between control and performance, but significantly, they also found that trust would moderate this. Thus, a high level of mutual trust between the partners could lead to both partners’ needs being satisfied, even if one partner is

Power struggles were also experienced. The implicit theoretical premise is that independent individuals strive to create trust in each other and that those who have decision-making power will not relinquish it. Trying to control an opponent with power may increase results but reduce a partner's trust. As long as simultaneous engineering is conducted in a power game, lower-ranking participants may be forced to act against their will; thus, true trust will not be created.⁶⁾

Is it possible to build trust outside the power game? Is there a method for avoiding power games?

As shown schematically in Figure 2, when jobs are executed simultaneously, they appear to overlap (in the upper range). However, this overlap between departments does not immediately prove the multilayered nature of jobs. Overlapping is possible even when jobs are exclusive and isolated.

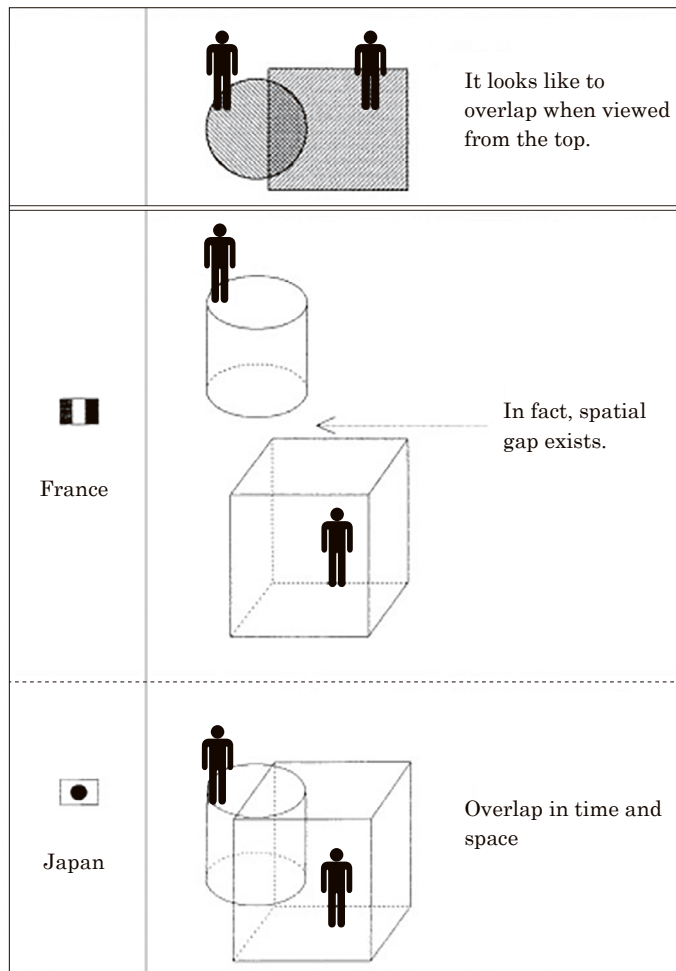
In the French model, which is characterized by job exclusivity, tasks are separated and overlap over time (in the middle range). A time-based overlap of jobs appears when viewed from the top; however, when viewed from the side, jobs are spatially distinct and exclusive. Spatially, each individual is clearly and exclusively limited, and tasks do not overlap.

In contrast, simultaneous engineering in Japanese companies is characterized by the shared areas where engineers work simultaneously; different jobs not only progressed at the same time, but also shared tasks in Japanese companies.

French organizations have defined individualism as a rejection of intervention by others in one's work. Japanese simultaneous engineering emphasizes both temporal overlap and shared tasks and responsibilities between individuals (Figure 2, in the lower range). This is the main difference between the Japanese and French concurrent engineering projects.

dominant." (VANGEN, HUXHAM 2003: 13-14)

6) "Issues concerned with power relationships seem to be significant contributors to mistrust and to the hampering of trust building. Practitioners argue for the need to deal with power differences so as to minimize interagency hostility and mistrust, and they use phrases such as 'power games,' 'power plays,' and 'power struggles,' which suggest that power issues are frequently seen to be problematic. [...] Practitioners often comment about glory seeking and perceive the claiming of credit for collaborative achievements to be a manifestation of power. They also view such behavior as a hindrance to trust building, arguing that 'claiming the credit for pieces of work implies lack of trust' and '(we need to) deal with glory seekers so as to build trust between members.'" (VANGEN, HUXHAM 2003: 13)

Figure 2 False Overlap in Simultaneous Engineering

Source: Author.

2. Horizontal and Vertical Task Sharing: A Feature of Job Structure in Japanese Organizations

In contrast to French organizations, Japanese organizations have a shared area between jobs. The characteristic feature of a shared area is that tasks (and thus responsibility and authority) are shared not only among employees who are at the same level in the hierarchy, that is, horizontally, but also among employees who are positioned differently, that is, vertically.

2-1 Horizontal Task Sharing

ILGEN et al. (2005) argued that mutual help is an important aspect of teamwork, particularly in terms of workload sharing. However, they noted that the act of helping can be a double-edged sword.

One specific aspect of adaptation that has received a great deal of attention recently is the degree to which team members actively share their workload, help, or backup each other when faced with high demands. The virtues of workload sharing are one of the critical reasons behind adopting team-based structures (McIntyre & Salas 1995). Recent research supports this position, but also qualifies it, suggesting that helping behavior is a double-edged sword. (ILGEN et al. 2005: 530)

Because there is a hypothetical danger that malicious people will abuse it, teamwork will not work unless all members participate with willingness and positive intentions.⁷⁾

Japanese small-group activities aim to fill gaps between jobs. However, even among Japan-affiliated manufacturers in France, small-group activities were not successful. A Japanese manager from a speaker-box manufacturer told me:

We tried the suggestion system and QC (Quality Control) circles, but the prize money was too small for employees, so they complained: “We do not agree that the company should take 80%. We are not motivated.” These results were unexpected. Unfortunately, the operation discouraged employee motivation. After trying it

7) Mutual help among team members is not easy. Above all, it can be a double-edged sword when trust is not established among members. “Another finding that emerged from the Barrick et al. (1998) study was that both helping behavior and flexibility were negatively related to variance in the team member’s levels of general cognitive ability, suggesting that when high-ability members are teamed up with low-ability members, workload sharing is restricted and perhaps unidirectional. Other studies employing very different samples and methods have found that the frequency of helping behavior is negatively associated with team performance (Baldwin et al. 1997, Podsakoff & MacKenzie 1997). [...] Although low legitimacy in the Porter et al. (2003) study was operationalized in terms of a factor external to the team (objective workload distribution), a help request might also be low in legitimacy if it originates from someone who is not giving his or her best effort to the team. Research on social loafing continues to demonstrate how sensitive team members are to suspected ‘shirking’ on the part of their teammates (Plaks & Higgins 2000). Indeed, LePine et al. (2002) found that potential providers of helping behavior respond very differently to team members who seem to need help because of a lack of ability, relative to team members who seem to need help due to lack of effort. LePine & Van Dyne (1998) developed a more comprehensive model of how teams react to their weakest link, noting how characteristics of the low performer influence peers, and in turn determine the form of helping intended to benefit the group.” (ILGEN et al. 2005: 531)

repeatedly, I stopped doing it. As far as Japanese-style management is concerned, I should have been satisfied with opportunities and paths for internal promotion. (Interview held on November 29, 1993, in Cestas)

Japanese-style small-group activities did not flourish in most Japanese-affiliated firms in France because the job structure of French-style organizations was incompatible with the idea of small-group activities. Additionally, the fragmented and hierarchical job structure hindered the ability to address issues that exceeded the boundaries of small groups. Further, small-group activities followed a process of problem-finding, problem-solving, and redistribution of duties, but changing the existing job structure was met with strong resistance from French managers and workers. The president of a Japanese mobile phone manufacturer told me:

We performed small-group activities for one year. For the first six months, managers and workers, they were interested in many things. But I got tired. I was so discouraged that I gave up. Everyone, from the director to the operators, wanted to know every little detail about the company. It would be nice if they could have said, 'The president thinks this way, so I'll do this too.' However, this was the endpoint; they did not attempt to incorporate ideas into their actions. When they realized what I [the president] thought, they were careful not to make mistakes; however, they won't cooperate with the ideas of the president, nor take initiative in their work. From one end to the other, everyone acted the same. (Interview held on November 29, 1993, in Rennes)

Although small-group activities are an important measure to fill the gaps between jobs in Japanese companies, they are stagnant in France because of the existence of such gaps. However, among large-scale manufacturers with a relatively large number of Japanese expatriates, we found some examples of successful operators' motivation through small-group activities. A Japanese manager at an electronic device manufacturer told me:

Workers are so conscious that they voluntarily promote *kaizen* [improvements] and are willing to do so even if they are not paid overtime. All the workers hold two or more posts. They recorded videos and conducted research. I recommended the system because it would make work easier and develop their abilities, but I feared that it might be regarded as labor-intensive. Therefore, I started with a small department at first, reassured them that it would certainly make work easier, and then gradually expanded it. Currently, the workers themselves are further developing their manuals. Thus far, they have not requested any monetary compensation and are

satisfied with the demonstration of their abilities. Once a month, I visit the shop floor of each workplace. People who had no occasion to speak in public since leaving school give presentations about their *kaizen* activities, and those around them are impressed and applauded. This is a true incentive rather than a monetary incentive. (Interview held on March 31, 1993, in Martin-Eglise)

This manufacturer improved efficiency by 20% compared to the standard hours in Japan by implementing *kaizen* at the operator's site. Motivation through small-group activities is generally incompatible with the mentality of French people, but some manufacturers, such as those cited above, have succeeded in making it a part of their daily work. The conditions for this excellent performance were, undoubtedly, a comprehension of local top management and the presence of many Japanese expatriates. Superiors played an important role in encouraging subordinates to voluntarily improve their skills in training integrated into the internal promotion system. However, a great deal of human energy was required to reach this stage.

2-2 Internal Promotion as an Organizational System

Task sharing is closely related to internal promotion, which is practiced in Japanese companies based on a particular superior-subordinate relationship. The manager of a section guides subordinates to execute correctly defined tasks to benefit the company. In Japanese companies, in addition to their management duties, managers deserving of the position are expected to bear three responsibilities towards their subordinates: teaching, motivating, and nurturing.⁸⁾

- 1) Teaching: Managers are responsible for teaching and enabling subordinates to effectively perform their job. When a subordinate commits an error or fails to accomplish a task, the managers partly bear responsibility because they have not successfully educated their subordinates.
- 2) Motivating: Managers are responsible for encouraging subordinates to work voluntarily and participate in activities, such as QC circles.
- 3) Nurturing: Managers are responsible for guiding subordinates to understand their

8) "OJT in the Japanese workplace not only involves the new employee repeating the experienced employee's actions, but 'Japanese-type OJT' can be defined as follows: "the activity by which a senior employee or supervisor trains his or her subordinates systematically and continuously through demonstrating improved working techniques, with the expectation that the subordinates will also improve their ability through their own efforts and through mutual encouragement with co-workers, in order to attain and maintain the planned level of job performance. This process includes demonstrating or elucidating the required levels of job knowledge, skills, and attitude" (Hayashi, 1994)." (HAYASHI 2008: 16)

managers' work, so that they will eventually be able to partially replace their supervisors' jobs.

Training and education integrated into internal promotions are usually conducted by employees' superiors. In on-site training, superiors first instruct their subordinates on how to work properly and motivate them to be proactive and ambitious. As stated by a Japanese manager in the transplant of an audio manufacturer:

As mentioned earlier, hiring a new director was unsuccessful. Therefore, I made him quit, and I promoted internally a younger technician to the production manager. I promoted him from non-cadre to cadre. The functions and duties are the same as those of the previous director. He is doing much better, 20% more productive, and one-third (or at least less than half) cheaper. I have two such people. They were trained individually. I taught them Japanese production methods (e.g., *single setup* and line balancing). The policy of balancing the line in this transplant is not merely to apply the ST [standard time] table of the Japanese parent company but also to construct a timetable from a blank sheet of paper. We trained the production engineers on a one-to-one basis. Now, as long as they have products in their hands, they can assemble and create STs. We taught them what was essential to practice. French people did not know that STs were necessary for practical use. The former director, who has left the company, graduated from one of the *Grandes écoles industrielles*, so he understood the production technology (*kanban*, etc.). He was knowledgeable. However, when it came to putting it into practice, he knew almost nothing. First, he did not know about the flow of work. (Interview held on July 22, 1993, in Saverne)

According to an assessment provided by the president of a Japanese mobile phone manufacturer, the qualifications indicated by diplomas in France do not consistently align with an individual's abilities.

In this organizational chart, the *Responsable Comptable et Financier* [Head of Accounting and Finance] is required to have a substantial diploma. Two girls (*Responsable Comptable* and *Aide Comptable*) are working under his direction. Contrary to my anticipations, his two subordinates performed much better than him. When I teach them things like cost accounting, they understand much more quickly than he does. However, they cannot keep up with him because they do not have diploma. (Interview held on November 29, 1993, in Rennes)

An advantage of internal promotions is that they help bridge the gap between practical

abilities and the qualifications attested by diplomas.

2-3 Vertical Task Sharing

Internal promotion is not systematic in France, although autodidacts sometimes appeared in higher positions through internal promotion. Why are internal promotions rare in France? As far as Japanese practice is concerned, internal promotion is not a simple scheme in which those in lower positions are unconditionally promoted according to their seniority.

The first requirement for internal promotion is on-site education and training conducted by superiors, which should be assessed and qualified to confirm the outcomes of OJT (On the Job Training). In French factories, subordinates are responsible for certain tasks. Superiors do not educate or train their subordinates. If subordinates cannot perform a predetermined task, they may be fired. In contrast, superiors in Japanese companies are responsible for educating their subordinates so that they can perform their jobs properly. An error committed by subordinates may be partly attributed to the superior due to a lack of proper teaching.

A distinct feature of the superior-subordinate relationship in Japanese firms is that subordinates often intervene and express their opinions on the work of superiors. The president of a Japanese mobile phone manufacturer lamented the loneliness and solitude supposedly experienced by French directors in comparison with their Japanese counterparts that enjoy assistance and cooperation from their subordinates:

In French organizations, those with higher authority work in isolation and make decisions individually and alone without any suggestions from below. The direction of power is unidirectional from the top down. In Japan, when a boss makes a decision, someone in a lower position often puts forward suggestions saying, for example: "It might not be possible" or "We'd better choose this way." The French system is based on the chain of command; therefore, orders are given quickly and easily. However, no one from below is curious enough to ask: "As for the business with company X, what is going on?" Bosses are lonely in France. In Japan, supports come frequently from subordinates to superiors. (Interview held on November 29, 1993, in Rennes)

A Japanese director of an audio manufacturer cited below noticed a large gap between engineers and technicians in French companies that mirrors the lack of support from subordinates in superior-subordinate relationships. Technicians with limited formal education can perform more advanced tasks if they are trained; however, this perspective for technical evolution of technicians is hardly accepted. This is not caused by a mere lack of communication, but by a refusal to share power.

This transplant does not hire engineers because their salaries are high (10,000 francs). Currently, only a single engineer is required for this purpose. Technical staff are technicians working on the assembly and how to improve parts from Japan. I persuaded the French directors by telling them that “Technicians are potentially talented. Therefore, they are more suitable for higher-level tasks. If we educate them, they will be good enough for new jobs.” However, those hired as technicians are only assigned predefined tasks and are not promoted to higher ranks. They are limited to their initial tasks and the company has not created a setting for their evolution.⁹⁾ (Interview held on April 7, 1993, in Honfleur)

The absence for superiors to obtain support from subordinates in a superior-subordinate relationship also applies to the subcontracting relationship between clients and subcontractors. A case of refusal to share power was also noted. The following circumstance, narrated by a Japanese director in a transplant in France, is an example of vertical job sharing. In France, it is assumed that development engineers do not require the details of the manufacturing information. Development and manufacturing, belonging to different functions, must not be violated by other shareholders.

Designers are high-level engineers who are confident in their abilities (I do not entirely agree with this assertion). They show you a drawing and say, “Make it like this.” Subcontractors do not discuss designs but build them as they are told and it usually works well. However, certain problems sometimes arise. Even if a problem is identified from a production standpoint, they generate no discussion of whether the problem is caused by design technology or production technology. French engineers simply say, “This is fine.” In Japan, if a product does not function properly, subcontractors collaborate to solve the problem. In France, production companies point out what is wrong, but do not enter the design process. Designers do not accept intervention from subcontractors. In Japan, subcontractors are accustomed to suggesting improvements to customers. I once advised a French technician of this

9) The Director continued: “Managers’ meeting is held once a week, but only university graduates were allowed to attend. The chief who is responsible for the parts provided by the parent company in Japan had not graduated from an appropriate school. So, he didn’t attend the meeting. They said, “He is not an engineer,” and they didn’t let him attend. I insisted that it was inexplicable that the person in charge of the parent company was not present because 75% of the total production was related to the parent company in Japan; so, I had him attend the next meeting. From what I observed, he was contributing as much as anyone else at the meeting. He wants his salary to increase, but it hasn’t gone up much yet. He told me: They say: if you want your salary increased, leave once this company, return to school, and then come back with a diploma.” (Interview held on April 7, 1993, in Honfleur)

company to make useful suggestions to customers. However, he firmly refused, saying “We don’t do that.” Designers are so conceited and convinced that their designs are the best, so they do not accept any suggestions from subcontractors. Human beings are not all-around and experience gives us valuable knowledge. Design engineers are isolated from manufacturing technicians and purchasing staff who do not touch the design. (Interview held on April 7, 1993, in Honfleur)

In France, subordinates do not give advice and subcontractors do not make proposals. This is the principle of exclusiveness, in which the existing job classifications are not changed and the duties of others are not invaded. By contrast, Japanese-style organizations are characterized by the fact that the default job classification can be changed as appropriate; in particular, subordinates can intervene in the duties of their superiors. Jobs are constantly reorganized and redistributed, and the transfer of authority from a higher to a lower level is permitted and even encouraged. This is because Japanese companies consider the encouragement of subordinates to intervene in superiors’ jobs to be desirable, and their goal is to share authority. In sum, duties are shared vertically in Japanese organizations.

The second requirement for internal promotion, particularly for those who expect for promotions to higher managerial positions, is the nurturing ability towards subordinates. Internal promotion sustained by superiors’ activities refer to not only teaching of techniques and skills but also to training subordinates and developing their managerial mentality to replace their superiors.

In Japanese-affiliated firms, in-house training can be a challenge for young employees with limited academic backgrounds who are ambitious for internal promotion. This involves superiors and subordinates sharing tasks, common responsibilities, and partial decision-making authority. However, the concept is hardly accepted in France. The president of a Japanese mobile phone manufacturer told me:

I tell him [the factory manager] to “take good care of people,” but I have to point out a difference between taking care and being kind. When you try to nurture subordinates, you must be accurate and explain them the reason of their misconduct. He [the factory manager] cannot do that. He has no idea to encourage subordinates. I told him, “My job is to teach and bring you up as my successor. So, you should do the same with the people around you.” He said, “Everyone has his specialty; he should be qualified to do it. If he cannot do it, he should leave the company.” He had no experience of being nurtured by someone in organizations. The French way of thinking is: “Once you left school, there is no further development. If you wish to develop yourself, you have to go to school.” (Interview held on November 29, 1993, in Rennes)

This section discussed the essential characteristics of Japanese organizations, which denotes a vertical expansion of authority and responsibility. Managing subordinates involves educating them on how to perform their duties. Nurturing goes beyond it and includes training them to take on their supervisors' tasks. This is a partial delegation of authority, which we refer to as vertical job sharing. This is an important requirement for internal promotion, as those who demonstrate competence by successfully developing their subordinates are qualified for promotion to higher positions.

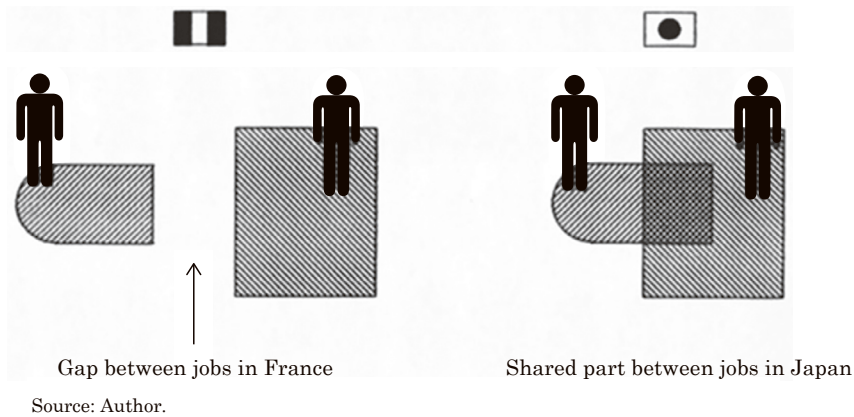
Conclusion: Two Models in Human Organizations

As we have seen, Japanese managers sent to local plants in the 1990s noticed consistent gaps both inside and outside French companies. When tasks are defined in advance and are exclusively individualized, gaps exist horizontally and vertically between jobs and in subcontracting. This is illustrated on the left side of Figure 3. The gap between jobs is indicated by an arrow \uparrow . By contrast, Japanese organizations recognize a shared part between jobs.

The gap between jobs in France is based on a series of tight, irreversible flows departing from social class (of parents' generation) \rightarrow educational background (of the individual) \rightarrow status (in the organization) \rightarrow (predetermined, exclusive) jobs. Thus, it should be qualified as a social system (NAKAGAWA 2021). Because it is based on the relationship between individuals and society, the social context contributes to the gaps. As long as gaps exist in social reality, it is necessary to address them as social issues. Therefore, it cannot be easily filled by practical measures, such as overlapping or teamwork.

HAMAGUCHI Eshun (1931–2008), a Japanese sociologist, proposed “to classify human models into two main categories, according to whether emphasis is placed on the objectification of self only, or on the objectification of relationships between self (actor) and objects (including other actors)” (HAMAGUCHI 1985: 298). He thus qualified “individual actors” for “Euro-American or Arabs” who place emphasis on the “objectification of themselves rather than relationship with others”¹⁰ and “relational actors” for “East Asian

10) “Euro-Americans or Arabs, for example, seem to be inclined to establish actorship by objectifying themselves rather than relationships with others. Establishment of such actorship is also demanded by their societies. Only when the inviolability of individual actorships is mutually confirmed and protected can people in these societies develop, on the principle of reciprocity, interactive relations. In these societies, relations are for the purpose of social gain. The widely used concept of social relations refers to the stable state of social interaction among such actors, and the term “group” has been generally considered to be a complex system comprising a number of solipsistic actors. In short, social relations and groups are secondary conceptions formed on the premise that solipsistic actors exist. Let us use the term “individual actors” to refer to this model of solipsistic actors.” (HAMAGUCHI

Figure 3 Gap between jobs in France and Shared part between jobs in Japan

people, including Japanese” who place emphasis on the relationships with other actors.¹¹⁾

According to HAMAGUCHI, the dichotomy of individuals and groups presupposes an understanding in line with the Western *emic*.¹²⁾ As long as we consider individuals and groups to be in a dichotomous relationship, we cannot understand the causes that created the gaps. It will be difficult to advance the argument on gaps if they follow only the European *emic*.

In other words, the gap refers to how social organizations are created, and it is determined by the contrast between what HAMAGUCHI calls a solipsistic view that “individual actorship alone is sufficient for survival,” and a view that “relationships with others are also essential for survival.” (*ibid.*)

In simultaneous engineering and teamwork, trust-building is essential for smooth operations. It is persuasive to argue that trust-building will be successful through enhanced communication. However, in a Western context, communication is conducted as an exchange of views between autonomous and isolated individuals, each of whom is

1985: 298)

11) “The contrasting type, which characterizes the existence of East Asian people including the Japanese, can be called “relational actors.” What is objectified in this model are the relationships of the actor with other actors (other people or organizations to which the actor belongs or refers), rather than the individual existence of the actor himself. In other words, relational actors are strongly aware of the functional relationships (roles) they have vis-a-vis other actors, and hence an actor system is formed by coupling these roles. It is through personal relations with other actors who are nearby that the recognition of self is gradually established and that the principles concerning behavior are formed.” (HAMAGUCHI 1985: 298)

12) “The ‘emic’ approach is an insider’s perspective, which looks at the beliefs, values, and practices of a particular culture from the perspective of the people who live within that culture.” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emic_and_etic)

placed within a hierarchy of power and authority. Thus, the current approach, which relies on communication, is captured by the power game and operates within its framework.¹³⁾ Power relations and the intention of each participant to protect their interests prevent trust-building.

Simultaneous engineering requires intensive collaboration and technical expertise to build and sustain the trust of both parties. Effective communication and the willingness to adapt and make changes are indispensable for facilitating collaboration. However, trust-building requires a mechanism that extends beyond the power game. According to the Japanese directors of transplants in France, goodwill and true trust will not arise as long as we play a power game.

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13) “We argue that there is a tension between the ideology that trust is needed for collaboration to be successful (e.g., Cullen et al., 2000; Dasgupta, 1988; Das & Teng, 1998; Oliver, 1997; Ring, 1997) and the pragmatic difficulties pertaining to trust building itself and the frequent need to initiate and enact collaborative agendas in situations where trust is lacking. Practitioners’ perceptions suggest that unequal power relations and the need to protect individual organizations’ interests by manipulating and controlling collaborative agendas are inevitable difficulties pertaining to the collaborative processes and that these issues in particular tend to hamper trust building.” (VANGEN, HUXHAM 2003: 26)

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