

Chapter 4

From Stalinist Paradigms to Modern Human-centered Management: Tracing the Evolution of People Management Practices in Poland



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4.1. Introduction

The evolution of human resources management in Poland, especially during significant historical upheavals, presents a compelling lens through which to view broader societal and economic transformations (*c.f.* Górski, 2018). This chapter delves into the critical period of the 1950s, a time marked by the strong influence of Stalinist ideologies on HRM practices. As we explore this era's impact on contemporary management strategies in Poland, we build on the foundational discussions laid out in the initial chapters of this monograph.

In Chapter 1, we examined the role of external environmental factors and their influence on HRM practices from a human-centric management perspective. This backdrop sets the stage for understanding the Stalinist period's emphasis on control and uniformity (*c.f.* Gregory, 1990) in contrast to the modern emphasis on individual potential and employee well-being (*c.f.* Adams, 2019). Chapter 2 focused on workplace-related factors influencing employee loyalty and job performance, underscoring the shift from transactional to relational HRM practices (Bannya et al., 2023). This evolution from viewing employees as mere tools of productivity to recognizing them as central stakeholders in organizational success (Stahl et al., 2020) provides

a critical contrast to the practices introduced during the Stalinist era. In Chapter 3, the discourse shifted to HRM knowledge transfer within multinational companies, highlighting the balancing act between global standardization and local adaptation (Stor, 2023a). The challenges and strategies discussed therein resonate with the ideological shifts from the 1950s to present-day Poland, where global influences continually reshape local practices.

A. Sajkiewicz (2007) categorizes the origins of human resources management in Poland into two distinct perspectives. The first is institutional, highlighting entities like the Instytut Pracy i Polityki Społecznej (Institute of Labor and Social Affairs) and universities that engage in research on work-related issues and provide relevant educational programs. The second perspective focuses on the scientific disciplines that study work and its organization, including work and management organization, philosophy, sociology, psychology of work, and labor economics. Notably, while there is substantial research covering various periods, the early 1950s – marked by the establishment of the Główny Instytut Pracy (GIP – Central Labor Institute) and the journal of *Ekonomika i Organizacja Pracy* – have been less explored. This chapter aims to fill that gap by focusing on this pivotal period in the history of human resources management in Poland.

In the context of the above, **the main goal of this chapter** is to critically explore the influence of Stalinist ideologies and management practices on people management strategies in Poland at that time and compare them to some contemporary concepts of HRM. By focusing on the period of Stalinism and its direct impacts, this chapter seeks to bridge the historical context with modern management practices, particularly to show some similarities between the strategies and practices of people management then and contemporary HRM. Subsequent sections will explore the evolution of management paradigms, the specific impacts of political and ideological shifts on management strategies, and the ongoing influence of these historical periods on modern practices.

4.2. Evolution of People Management within the Human-centered Paradigm

As we plunge into the historical perspective of people management during the Stalinist era in Poland, it is essential to compare and contrast these historical approaches with the contemporary trends that emphasize employee well-being (Nielsen et al., 2017), personal development (Dachner et al., 2021), and the recognition of employees as integral components of an organization (Boon et al., 2018). The Stalinist period characterized the worker primarily as a mobilizing force, a tool in the larger mechanism of state productivity and ideological conformity. Management practices were heavily influenced by political doctrines, where the individual's needs and aspirations were subordinated to collective goals and state directives (Listwan et al., 2009).

In stark contrast, today's management paradigms have shifted significantly towards a more human-centered approach. Modern theories and practices recognize the unique contributions

of each employee, focusing on creating environments that foster personal growth, satisfaction, and empowerment (Wojtczuk-Turek, 2020). Concepts such as talent management (Stor, 2023b), organizational culture (Haromszeki, 2023), and employee engagement are pivotal (Stor, 2024), highlighting a significant shift from viewing employees as mere resources to recognizing them as valuable stakeholders whose well-being directly impacts organizational success.

This historical reflection is not merely academic; it serves to underline how past ideologies and management methodologies have shaped, and in some cases, continue to influence contemporary management strategies (*c.f.* Górski, 2014). Understanding the origins and evolutions of these practices allows us to appreciate the complexities of managing people today. The lessons learned from past management practices, including their failures and successes, provide invaluable insights into the necessity of placing the human element at the center of organizational strategies. This shift is not just ethical but strategic, as studies consistently show that organizations that prioritize employee well-being tend to enjoy higher productivity, better innovation, and more sustainable growth (Nielsen et al., 2017). As we proceed to explore the specific details and dynamics of people management in the Stalinist years, keeping this modern paradigm in mind will allow us to better understand the critical importance of the historical developments and their long-term implications on today's management practices (Górski, 2020).

The historical shift from a rigid, state-driven management approach to a more nuanced understanding of human resources underscores the evolution toward recognizing the inherent value of individual contributions within organizations. Today, this is reflected in the widespread adoption of talent management systems that focus not just on enhancing efficiency but also on nurturing the potential of each employee (Cooke et al., 2022). This paradigm shift highlights a broader trend where the well-being and personal growth of employees are seen as integral to organizational success, mirroring the contemporary focus on holistic and human-centered management strategies.

4.3. The Political Background

The period 1944-1956 of Polish history historians call the „Stalinist years” (Eisler, 2018, s. 104). In the first years of this period, until 1949, Polish communists tried to gain power by all means, including terror. In the following years, without giving up terror, they began to implement their social and economic policies. Poles were faced with the task of rebuilding the economy, industry, agriculture and transport destroyed by the war, as well as developing new industrial enterprises. From the very beginning, the work of reconstruction was undertaken by workers, engineers, economists and political activists of options other than communists. Among them were the pre-war deputy prime minister, initiator of the creation of the Central Industrial District (COP) and the expansion of the harbor of Gdynia, E. Kwiatkowski, economist Cz. Bobrowski and the activists of the Institute of Scientific Organization and Management, S. Bieńkowski, Z. Rytel and W. Baliński. They believed that P. Drzewiecki's motto, formulated after World War I, that Poland needs well-organized and efficient work, was still valid.

Unfortunately, management in the enterprises taken over by the new government did not match those patterns. The author of the article published in *Przegląd Organizacji* pointed not only to the lack of qualified personnel, but also to the excess of “reports, surveys and deadlines”. This led to a decline of product quality, “scandalous delays in delivery” and more and more customer complaints (Kostecki, 1946) Such an image not only contradicted the principles of scientific organization, but even the standards accepted before the war. This was soon to become an everyday occurrence and any attempts at management according to pre-war scientific methods not only smacked of bourgeois science, but were also considered to be detrimental to the socialist economy.

Instead of these principles, the Soviet model of industrialization was implemented in long-term economic plans and the principles of selecting managerial staff based on the nomenclature system, existing in all countries of the Soviet bloc, were pushed forward. The working man was a special object of interest of the communist authorities. This was due to both political and ideological reasons. It was expressed in the belief that the communist system based on state ownership of the means of production and the power exercised by the communist party served the interests of the working class. It was believed that the most important factor determining work efficiency was the ideological commitment of workers. Therefore, it was decided that in the new political conditions the best solution of problems of work organization would be „socialist work emulation” (Wilk, 2011).

This emulation was used for political purposes. Competition in the pace of implementation of the economic plans was presented as an expression of support for the communist party policy. However, the main motives for participating in this socialist emulation concerned increasing remuneration, promotion to a higher position, opportunities for professional education and recognition from colleagues. Admiration from colleagues did not always follow, as workers feared that socialist emulation would result in higher requirements of work standards. This problem was well illustrated in the character of Mateusz Birkut in Andrzej Wajda’s film “Man of Marble”.

Polish representatives of scientific management in the interwar period were convinced that good organization based on scientific principles enabled efficient work, increased production and, as a result, increases employee salaries. This allowed for reducing conflicts between workers and capitalists (Adamiecki, 1938). Expressing their appreciation for workers’ involvement in the implementation of production plans, they believed that the way of doing work should be scientifically elaborated. They believed that conditions for safe work should be guaranteed and workers should be prevented from losing their health. (Baliński, 1948; Baran, 1948; Filipkowski, 1948; Gutowski, 1948; Wojnarowicz, 1948; Żółtaszek, 1948).

They spoke critically about the principles of economic planning proposed by the communists. Rytel even noted that “ideological planning” is unacceptable. “No vision of the future must be considered as something perfect and certain; through trials and corrections of inevitable errors we arrive at tolerable plans. (...) Otherwise we may destroy the public’s faith in all planning.” (*Z dyskusji nad referatem...*, 1946, p. 213). However, in the planning discussion, substantive arguments were not important because they did not determine economic policy in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The ideological and political choices behind them were important. They could

rightly be interpreted as at least critical of the new model of economic policy, which was an argument against the science of organization and management and the circle representing it.

In 1949, the Scientific Institute of Organization and Management was transformed into the Scientific Society of Organization and Management (TNOiK). The Society began cooperation with the newly established Central Labor Institute (GIP), and in January 1949 “Przegląd Organization” became a joint organ of both organizations (Heidrich, 1970, p. 798). In the *Przegląd Organizacji* the sections concerning following issues: methods of implementing the economic plans prepared by the communist party, socialist emulation, employee rationalization, and work standardization were divided. Ideological issues and arguments increasingly dominated the articles.

The president of TNOiK and then deputy minister, Wincenty Jastrzębski, in his speech at the General Meeting of TNOiK, declared that the capitalist economy, for political reasons, must be backward, expensive, wasteful, and the socialist economy must be progressive, thrifty, and efficient (Jastrzębski, 1949, p. 162). Balicki’s conciliatory article defending the achievements of the interwar organizers was of no avail. In such a situation, the Extraordinary General Meeting of TNOiK on December 4, 1949 decided to dissolve the Society.

In his speech, Stanisław Guzicki argued that “when the broad masses were embraced by the movement of competition and rationalization, when trade unions took over the leadership of increasing work efficiency, when scientific institutes were established to conduct research on raising the technical level and improving the organization of production processes and improving industrial administration, then The Society has fulfilled its social role, it should place all its funds completely at the disposal of the state” (Nadzwyczajne Walne Zgromadzenie TNOiK..., 1949, p. 487).

The notion of ‘socialist work emulation’ introduced during the Stalinist era, while fundamentally a tool for ideological control, inadvertently set the stage for competitive practices in modern organizational settings. Today, this concept can be seen mirrored in corporate gamification strategies where competitive frameworks are designed to enhance employee engagement and productivity (Murawski, 2021). The underlying principle of fostering a competitive yet collaborative environment helps modern organizations drive their teams towards higher efficiency and innovation, showing how historical management practices, albeit under vastly different ideologies, have influenced current corporate culture dynamics (Wibisono et al., 2023).

4.4. Scientific Reflection on Work and People Management in Poland in the First Half of the 1950s.

Przegląd Organizacji was first taken over by the GIP and then liquidated in 1950. The issue of socialist emulation, which was crucial for communist industrialization, was discussed in the journal *Myśl Współczesna*. In one of the articles, I. Epsztejn noted that in the daily press at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s there was a lot of information about labor leaders and the

production commitments they accepted (Epsztejn, 1949). In the same year, the first issue of *Ekonomika i Organizacja Pracy* was published by GIP; from 1953 it was published by Instytut Ekonomiki i Organizacji Przemysłu. Both, supporters of the new socialist work organization, such as I. Epsztejn and Ferski, and people associated with scientific organizations or psychotechnics before the war, such as B. Biegeleisen-Żelazowski or F. Jaźwiński, published their articles in this journal. B. Biegeleisen-Żelazowski was employed at GIP and organized a technical work standardization facility. These issues were a response to practical problems related to the organization of work in enterprises at that time. Over time, new ones were added, related to warehouse management and material incentives to motivate employees. They appeared as party leaders became aware of the difficulties in implementing subsequent stages of the six-year plan, when socialist emulation turned out to be an insufficient way to achieve the assumed production goals and it turned out to be an insufficient way to achieve the assumed production goals.

Instytut Ekonomiki i Organizacji Przemysłu increased its employment and conducted research on problems suggested by subsequent plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and statements of party leaders. These included:

- organizing competitions to describe the working methods of leaders participating in socialist emulation,
- counteracting bureaucratism, understood as “ossified forms of management”, a relic of the capitalist economy,
- transferring organizational experience from industry to agriculture, which allowed for strengthening the bonds between the city and the countryside, the workers' and peasants' alliance,
- fighting against waste and better use of production reserves (Posiedzenie Rady Naukowej IEOP 16-17 października 1953).

The conducted researches contributed to establishing cooperation with a textile factory in Łódź and the factory producing telephone devices, ZWUT, in Warsaw. The development of the Institute caused that the departments were transformed into independent units, such Instytut Organizacji Przemysłu Maszynowego “Orgmasz”. From the beginning, Instytut Ekonomiki i Organizacji Przemysłu carried out two tasks. One was the criticism of scientific management, the second was the development of a socialist theory of organization that would be the basis for the education of socialist managers. Researchers of that time were much more willing to carry out the first task but there was no one willing to implement the second one.

In December 1952, a Conference of Departments of Industrial Economics of Polish universities was held, devoted to education programs and the organization of studies. J. Kordaszewski, later a professor at SGPiS (Warsaw School of Economics), in his discussion of this conference in “*Ekonomika i Organizacja Pracy*”, pointed to the lack of experience in education corresponding to the ongoing changes in the functioning of socialist enterprises. He noted that basic categories such as branch of industry (branże przemysłu) and sectors of industry economics as well as the scale of planning in the national economy had not yet been

developed. Therefore, he believed that the only support in the training process could be a reference to the works of the classics of Marxism and political economy, which was also dominant in the training of economists at the time (Kordaszewski, 1953).

In Poland from the end of the 1940s, Soviet solutions were implemented in the organization of science and higher education. The bourgeois science of organization and management was to be replaced by a socialist science, completely subordinated not only to politics, but even to ideology. According to I. Epsztejn, the issues of organization and management were included in the framework of the relationship between “the technology of a given production and its economics” (Epsztejn, 1950, p. 2). This resulted from the justifications formulated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, the relationship between the base and the superstructure and the role that the organization of production plays in the historical form of social production. The Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology was treated as a dogma.

The above conclusions were based not only on historical materialism, but also on the ideological assumptions of communism, which boiled down to contrasting a capitalist economy based on exploitation of workers with a socialist economy in which class-conscious workers work for the good of the entire society. This thesis was justified by I. Epsztejn, who argued, “workers calculate what is cheaper and more economical, but they do the calculation not on the basis of the calculation of personal profits, but on the basis of the calculation of social production (...) in this way, economics is connected with the organization of production” (Epsztejn, 1950, p. 8). He believed that the organization of production was subordinated to politics, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the rule of the communist party. I. Epsztejn found the justification of this thesis in Lenin’s statement: “the new socialist organization of work is a function of this dictatorship, just as the function of this dictatorship is the new work discipline, the fight to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie, etc.” (Epsztejn, 1950, p. 5).

The science corresponding to the new conditions was to be economics and work organization. Its development required not only “the rejection of bourgeois pseudoscientific concepts and practices hostile to the interests of the working masses”, but also “a thorough and systematic assimilation of the great achievements of the Soviet Union based on the science guided by the principle of the interests of the Communist Party” (...) using the initiative and creativity of the working masses” and “criticism and self-criticism” (Epsztejn, 1950, p. 9). Translations of articles by Soviet authors published in *EiOP* served to this purpose. Some of them were discussed during scientific meetings organized at the Institute of Economics and Organization of Industry and at the Department of Economics and Work Organization of the Warsaw University of Technology.

While the Stalinist approach to people management in Poland is often criticized for its oppressive nature and its utilitarian use of the workforce (Listwan et al., 2009), it inadvertently laid some foundations for rigorous organizational practices that echo in some of today’s management strategies. Despite the primary goal of aligning workers’ efforts strictly with ideological state policies, these methods fostered a sense of efficiency and collective effort, which under different circumstances, align with the strategic goals of contemporary organizations (Barker Scott and Manning, 2024).

The emphasis on efficiency during the Stalinist era led to the development of highly organized, standardized processes. This focus, though initially driven by the need to meet and exceed production quotas (Florczyk, 2014), resembles the lean management practices widely adopted in industries worldwide today. In the modern context, efficiency and waste reduction are pivotal to operational success, demonstrating a parallel in how structured environments can lead to improved organizational outputs (Koemtzi et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the concept of 'socialist emulation', used as a tool for political indoctrination, also promoted a form of collective effort and team cohesion. Teams were motivated to outperform one another, not merely for individual accolades but as part of a collective effort to achieve a common goal (Staar, 1958). In modern organizations, this is reflected in team-based structures where collaborative efforts towards common business objectives are highly valued (Barker et al., 2024).

The rigorous demands of meeting industrial quotas under Stalinist regimes necessitated structured training programs to ensure workers were proficient in their roles (Listwan et al., 2009). Although primarily focused on productivity, this aspect of the Stalinist approach parallels today's corporate emphasis on employee development and continuous learning. Modern businesses focus on holistic benefits, including personal and professional growth, showing how foundational elements of training and development have evolved (Dachner et al., 2021).

Lastly, the adaptability demonstrated during the Stalinist period, although driven by political needs, highlights a crucial trait for contemporary business environments (Staar, 1958). Today's organizations must pivot quickly in response to changing market dynamics, similar to how historical management adapted to meet the changing needs of the state.

By analyzing these aspects, we can discern that certain foundational elements of modern organizational practices, stripped of their ideological and oppressive overtones, can be traced back to this era. Recognizing these historical underpinnings allows contemporary management thinkers to appreciate the evolution of management strategies from purely efficiency-driven approaches to more human-centered methods (Gorski, 2018).

Summarizing, the structured training programs and emphasis on efficient work practices during the Stalinist era have parallels in today's emphasis on continuous professional development and lean management techniques. Although the ideological underpinnings have dramatically shifted, the focus on optimizing work processes and enhancing employee skills remains a cornerstone of modern management practices. This historical perspective helps us understand the origins of systematic employee development programs which are now central to the strategies aiming at long-term organizational resilience and adaptability.

4.5. Soviet Patterns and Their Polish Implementation

Soviet models concerned not only the organizational forms of science, but above all the tasks it faced, the theses it put forward and their justifications. The theses about the primacy of ideology over science and politics over the economy came down to the postulate of analyzing,

describing and disseminating work methods used by workers participating in socialist work emulations. The Soviet Stakhanovite movement was accompanied by a method of training workers developed by Fiodor Kovalov, discussed in the articles published in EiOP and in the articles highlighting the production achievements of Soviet and Polish workers.

What distinguished the approach of Polish engineers to Kovalov's method was taking into account psychological aspects. It involved combining methods typical of the scientific management, aimed at optimizing activities, with an approach typical of E. Mayo's research, requiring attention to the individual employee and their relationships with others (Biegeleisen-Żelazowski, 1952; Kosmala 1952, p. 155). The Polish promoter of psychotechnics also emphasized the importance of a methodical approach to training consisting of organizing a training workshop, an individual approach to trained employees, getting to know their opinions and allowing them to share their observations with colleagues. B. Biegeleisen-Żelazowski also drew attention to the importance of preparing instructors training young workers, emphasized by Kovalov.

The increased involvement of young textile industry workers in training led, as the author wrote, to criticism of many shortcomings in work organization, poor condition of machinery and equipment, and irregular supplies of raw materials. These shortcomings caused the employees to become discouraged and disappointed that despite being well trained in accordance with the new method, they would not be able to increase their work efficiency and, consequently, obtain higher remuneration (Biegeleisen-Żelazowski, 1952). The use of Kovalov's method by Polish engineers conducting research in electrical and textile industry plants made it possible to both emphasize the ideological aspects of this method, the importance of workers' class consciousness, and point out the mistakes made in its implementation (Biegeleisen-Żelazowski and Epsztejn, 1953). These included:

- Inappropriate selection of methods for studying workers' work,
- Inappropriate selection of departments for research,
- Errors in the training methods and lack of care for trained employees,
- Incorrect calculation of wages for trained workers,
- Excessive administrative work in some plants.

The low level of awareness and lack of interest on the part of the secondary technical supervision and part of the engineering and technical staff were criticized. The researchers pointed out that these groups of personnel were more easily interested in new techniques and technologies, than while in matters of new work methods, which are an expression of the workers' creative initiative in using the techniques and tools of production.

The adaptation of Soviet organizational methods by Polish management, including the integration of psychological aspects into worker training, foreshadows the contemporary emphasis on understanding employee dynamics and fostering workplace wellness (Adams, 2019). Modern organizational theories that prioritize emotional intelligence and psychological safety can trace conceptual lineage back to these early considerations of worker satisfaction and mental health, albeit today they are employed towards more genuinely inclusive and supportive workplace cultures (Rakowska, 2021).

4.6. Implications of Historical Management Practices

The history of organization and management sciences in Poland, the years 1949-1956 were called the period of “loss of identity and efforts to survive” (Krzyżanowski, 1995). As shown in the article, it was rather a period of imposed identity, imposed by Soviet patterns subordinating science to politics and ideology. Communist ideology put working people at the center of attention. It was their class awareness and commitment that determined the effective implementation of the assigned tasks. The researchers’ task was to describe the workers’ working methods and disseminate them.

Among the researchers, some, like I. Epsztejn, saw their role in the transmission of Soviet patterns and care for their implementation. Others, such as B. Biegieleisen-Żelazowski, tried to use their knowledge and skills in researching work methods and disseminating them. With the change of the ruling team and W. Gomułka coming to power, Epsztejn abandoned promoting Soviet models in favor of French ones for a short period of „October thaw”. At the invitation of the Commissariat General a la Productivité, an organization dealing with productivity issues, he visited France. He noticed changes in the relations between workers and management staff and demanded the education of management staff. After returning from France, there was, as befits a good communist following Lenin’s words, a suggestion that, in the conditions of competition between two modes of production, capitalist and socialist, Poles should use French solutions in the training of managerial staff in Poland, especially in areas such as management techniques or streamlining administration work in the field of accounting and reporting (Epsztejn, 1957a, 1957b).

After the end of the “October thaw”, I. Epsztejn returned to a principled position, proclaiming the need to disseminate advanced methods of production management modeled on Soviet experience in order to “serve the practice of building socialism” (Epsztejn, 1960a, p. 1). He soon returned to his role. He was not only the director of GIP, but also led the Polish delegation of experts in the field of industrial management at meetings of representatives of *Council for Mutual Economic Assistance* (RWPG) countries. As a result of the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968, he lost his managerial position while still working in scientific institutions.

The Stalinist years were also a period of the building of research institutes, which, like Orgmasz, operated until the end of the Polish People’s Republic. During this time, until 1980, the idea of building a socialist theory of organization returned from time to time. Thus, the Stalinist period cast a shadow over the Polish science of organization and management for a much longer period than the first half of the 1950s. It influenced not only the connection between science, politics and ideology, but also the attitudes of some of the community, expressed in the practice of the so-called court science. It also resulted in superficial knowledge of scientific theories.

The Stalinist years and the way of practicing organization and management sciences are not of interest to contemporary Polish researchers. However, for Western researchers, the practice of socialist emulation is interesting not because of the rationalization of work organization methods, but because of its impact on the worker’s consciousness. P. Watt and

B. Costea see the influence on employees of modern corporations as a continuation of the methods developed in the Stakhanov movement. As they write: „Pursuing endless possibilities becomes central to our everyday working lives. The human type created by that Soviet ideology so many decades ago, now seems to gaze at us from mission statements, values and commitments in meeting rooms, headquarters and cafeterias – but also through every website and every public expression of corporate identity” (Watt and Costea, 2021).

The enduring influence of the Stalinist approach on contemporary management practices, particularly through the lens of worker consciousness and corporate identity as noted by researchers like Watt and Costea, highlights the complex legacy of historical management strategies. In today’s corporate world, where employee engagement and corporate culture are significant, understanding these historical contexts enriches our comprehension of how deeply embedded these practices are within the fabric of modern organizational management.

4.7. Summary and Final Conclusions

The main goal of this chapter was to critically explore the influence of Stalinist ideologies and management practices on people management strategies in Poland at that time and refer them to some contemporary concepts of HRM. The critical analysis of the Stalinist model of people management juxtaposed with contemporary concepts of HRM allows us to identify the following similarities:

- „socialist work emulation” and some contemporary management concepts and practices foster a sense of productivity and collective effort among employees,
- the emphasis on efficiency during the Stalinist era and the lean management practices widely adopted in industries worldwide today,
- psychological aspect of Kovalov method of training employees and modern organizational theories that prioritize emotional intelligence and psychological safety.

These similarities can be viewed from the perspective of the following contemporary trends in HRM:

- striving to achieve the well-being and personal development of employees,
- the recognition of employees as integral components of an organization.

These trends were related to changes in employee value systems, the transition of the society from materialist to post-materialist values. According to R. Inglehart materialistic values such as security, order, authority, work, professionalism, money, morality, and responsibility have been replaced by pleasure, entertainment, self-satisfaction, altruism, tolerance, self-esteem, and solidarity. Changes in value systems influenced the relationship between professional and personal life. However, it should be remembered that these trends also resulted from changes in work characteristics, resulting from the development of information technologies, automation and teamwork. Other important determinants of the above trends were the increase in the education level of employees and the globalization of the organization’s reach. These comprehensive conditions resulted in changes in HRM concepts and practice.

Recognizing that employees are an asset to an organization and the organizations which help their employees to achieve greater work life balance have more satisfied employees.

The Stalinist model of personnel management referred not only to employee value systems different from contemporary ones, but also served ideological purposes and subordinated the economy to political goals. Some similarities between the Stalinist model of personnel management and contemporary HRM concepts and practices can be explained by pointing to two categories of similarities, similarities of people management concepts and similarities of the language and managerial discourse.

Inspiration to explain these similarities could be seen in the following approaches. Comparing the similarities and differences between management concepts and practice from the 1950s and today a historical approach will be helpful, taking into account the contexts of the creation and use of the analyzed concepts (Górski, 2014) and/or analysis of institutional isomorphism proposed by P. Di Maggio and W. Powell (1983). Earlier theories explaining the similarities of management concepts could also refer to technological determinism introduced by Thorstein Veblen. As a theory, technological determinism points to technology as the driving force of development in society. According to its supporters, the similarity of organizational solutions and management concepts results from technical and technological conditions. These ideas were developed by representatives of Frankfurt School (Delanty and Harris, 2021). One of the critic of technological determinism was J. Habermas (1971).

In turn, the similarities and differences relating to the language and managerial discourse, as pointed out by P. Watt and B. Costea, can be explained using the inspiration proposed by S. Barley and G. Kunda (1992), distinguishing rational and normative ideologies of managerial control. The similarities of the management language used by managers in the 21st century to the management language of Stalin's times may therefore result from the attractiveness of the attitude represented by the Stakhanovites, the illusion of commitment and dedication to the implementation of the task entrusted to them.

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