

Mednarodna pobuda za demokratizacijo upravljanja podjetij z naslovom »Delo: demokratizacija, dekomodifikacija, sanacija« je nastala v akademskih krogih. Je rezultat skupnega prizadevanja skupine znanstvenikov, ki se zavzemajo za demokratične in trajnostne načine dela in organizacije, ki se razlikujejo od modela maksimiranja vrednosti zgolj za delničarje. Pobuda je nastala z željo pomagati pri reševanju krize, s katero se soočamo sredi pandemije COVID-19, tako na področju zdravja kot tudi gospodarstva, podnebja in političnega življenja. Njen cilj pa je promovirati osnovno lekcijo, ki bi se je morali naučiti iz te krize: **čas je, da demokratiziramo podjetja, dekomodificiramo delo** (opomba: vsebina tega pojma je podrobneje pojasnjena v sami pobudi) **in obnovimo okolje**.

Pobudo so sprožile tri uveljavljene družboslovne znanstvenice (Isabelle Ferreras, Dominique Méda in Julie Battilana), kmalu pa se je razširila naprej, po znanstvenih disciplinah in po svetu. V zelo kratkem času je besedilo podpisalo **več kot 3000 raziskovalcev z več kot 650 univerz** na vseh celinah. Dne 16. maja je bila objavljena v **41 časopisih** (vključno z *Le Monde*, *The Guardian*, *Die Zeit*, *Boston Globe*) v **36 državah** po vsem svetu. Akademiki, ki so podpisali pobudo, so prevzeli vodilno vlogo pri prevajanju dela v **27 jezikov** in izdajanju publikacij v svojih regijah, na spletni strani pobudnikov (www.democratizingwork.org) pa se je v samo 4 dneh po objavi pobude zbrgalo 61.000 obiskovalcev z vsega sveta. Ta mobilizacija odraža, česa se je sposobna lotiti akademska skupnost v upanju, da osvetli možne razvojne poti, ki jih bodo družbe izbrale. Danes, leta 2020, imajo znanstveniki čedalje večjo odgovornost, da pomagajo našim družbam na poti do **trajnostne in demokratične gospodarske prihodnosti**.

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Delo. Demokratizacija, dekomodifikacija, sanacija

Delovno aktivno prebivalstvo je mnogo več kot le »sredstvo«. To je eno osrednjih sporočil trenutne krize. Skrb za bolne; dostava hrane, zdravil in drugih osnovnih potrebščin; odvoz naših odpadkov; polnjenje polic in vodenje blagajn v živilskih trgovinah – ljudje, ki so skrbeli, da je med pandemijo COVID-19 življenje teklo naprej, so živi dokaz, da dela ne moremo obravnavati zgolj kot blago. Človeškega zdravja in skrbi za najbolj ranljive ni mogoče urejati samo s tržnimi silami. Če te stvari prepustimo izključno trgu, obstaja nevarnost poglobitve neenakosti do te točke, da bi žrtvovali življenje najbolj prikrajšanih. Kako se izogniti tej nesprejemljivi situaciji? Z vključevanjem delavcev v odločitve glede njihovih življenj in prihodnosti na delovnem mestu – z demokratizacijo podjetij. Z dekomodifikacijo dela – s kolektivnim zagotavljanjem ustrezne zaposlitve za vse. Ko se soočamo s strašno nevarnostjo pandemije in ekološkega kolapsa, bi nam vzpostavitev teh strateških sprememb lahko omogočila zagotoviti dostojanstvo vseh državljanov, pri tem pa združiti kolektivno moč

in prizadevanja, ki jih potrebujemo za skupno ohranitev naših življenj na tem svetu.

Zakaj demokratizacija? Vsako jutro moški in ženske vstanejo, da služijo tistim med nami, ki imamo možnost ostati v karanteni. Vso noč so v pripravljenosti. Dostojanstvo njihovih delovnih mest ne potrebuje nobene druge razlage kot tisto zgovorno preprosto besedno zvezo »ključni delavec«. Ta besedna zveza prav tako razkriva ključno dejstvo, ki ga je kapitalizem vedno poskušal prikriti z drugo besedno zvezo – »človeški viri«. Človeška bitja *niso* samo vir med mnogimi viri. Brez delavcev ne bi bilo proizvodnje, ne storitev, ne podjetij.

Vsako jutro moški in ženske v karanteni doma vstanejo, da od daleč izpolnijo naloge organizacij, za katere delajo. Delajo pozno v noč. Tistim, ki so prepričani, da delavcem ni moč zaupati, da bodo svoje delo opravili brez nadzora, da potrebujejo nadzor in zunanjo disciplino, ti moški in ženske dokazujejo ravno nasprotno. Dan za dnem dokazujejo, da delavci niso le ena vrsta deležnika med številnimi: oni nosijo ključ do uspeha svojega delodajalca. Ti ljudje tvorijo jedro podjetja, vendar so kljub vsemu večinoma izključeni iz sodelovanja v upravljanju – pravica, ki jo monopolizirajo vlagatelji kapitala.

Na vprašanje, kako lahko podjetja in družba kot celota prepoznajo doprinos svojih delavcev v kriznih časih, je odgovor demokracija. Zagotovo, zapolniti moramo zevajoče brezno dohodkovne neenakosti in dvigniti minimalno urno postavko – vendar samo to ni dovolj. Po obeh svetovnih vojnah je nesporni doprinos žensk k družbi ženskam pomagal pridobiti pravico do glasovanja. Iz istega razloga je čas za osvobajanje delavcev.

Zastopstvo delavcev na delovnem mestu v Evropi obstaja vse od konca 2. svetovne vojne, in sicer preko institucij, znanih tudi kot svet delavcev. Toda ta predstavniška telesa imajo v najboljšem primeru šibek glas pri upravljanju podjetij, pravzaprav so celo podrejena odločitvam poslovodstva, ki jih imenujejo delničarji. Niso pa uspeli zaustaviti, morda niti upočasniti neizprosne gonilne sile samopostrežnega povečevanja kapitala, vse bolj silne v svojem uničevanju našega okolja. Tem organom bi bilo sedaj treba podeliti podobne pravice, kot so tiste, ki jih uveljavljajo organi vodenja in nadzora. V ta namen bi bilo smiselno, da upravljalci podjetij (t.j. najvišje vodstvo) pridobijo odobritev dvojne večine, od delavskih predstavništev, in tudi delničarjev. V Nemčiji, na Nizozemskem in v Skandinaviji različne oblike soodločanja (*mitbestimmung*), ki so bile progresivno uvedene po 2. svetovni vojni, so bile ključni korak k zagotovitvi, da so delavci dobili svoj glas – vendar še vedno niso dovolj, da bi ustvarili dejansko državljanstvo v podjetjih. Celó v Združenih državah Amerike, kjer se organiziranje delavcev in sindikalne pravice v precejšnji meri preprečujeta, je sedaj vedno glasnejši poziv, da se delavcem dá pravica do izvolitve predstavnikov z veliko večino znotraj organov vodenja in nadzora. Zadeve, kot so imenovanje izvršnega direktorja, vzpostavitev pomembnih strategij in delitev dobička so preveč pomembni, da bi jih prepustili samo delničarjem. Osebno vlaganje dela; to pomeni, posameznikovega uma in telesa, zdravja – celo življenja – bi moralo iti skupaj s kolektivno pravico do potrditve ali dajanja veta na takšne odločitve.

Zakaj dekomodifikacija? Ta kriza nas prav tako uči, da dela ne smemo jemati kot blago, da samim tržnim mehanizmom ne moremo prepustiti odgovornosti za izbire, ki najbolj izrazito vplivajo na naše skupnosti. Že vrsto let so delovna mesta in zaloge v zdravstvenem sektorju odvisne od vodilnega načela dobičkonosnosti; danes pandemija razkriva, v kolikšni meri nas to načelo zavaja. Določene strategije in kolektivne potrebe

morajo preprosto postati imune na takšna razmišljanja. Vse višje število mrtvih po svetu je grozljiv opomnik, da nekaterih stvari ne smemo jemati kot blago. Tisti, ki še naprej zagovarjajo nasprotno, nas ogrožajo s svojo nevarno ideologijo. Dobičkonosnost je nedopustni kriterij, kadar je govora o našem zdravju in življenju na tem planetu.

Dekomodifikacija dela pomeni obvarovanje določenih panog pred zakoni takomenovanega »prostega trga«; prav tako pomeni zagotavljanje dostopa vseh ljudi do dela in dostojanstva, ki ga prinaša. Ena možnost za to je ustvarjanje zajamčene zaposlitve (Job Guarantee). 23. člen Splošne deklaracije človekovih pravic nas opozarja, da ima vsak pravico do dela. Zajamčena zaposlitev ne bi le vsem državljanom zagotovila dostop do dela, ki jim omogoča dostojanstveno življenje, ampak bi tudi zagotovila ključno spodbudo za našo kolektivno zmožnost reševanja številnih perečih družbenih in ekoloških izzivov, s katerimi se trenutno soočamo. Zajamčena zaposlitev bi vladam, ki delajo preko lokalnih skupnosti, omogočila ponuditi dostojno delo, pri tem pa prispevala k ogromnemu prizadevanju v boju proti ekološkemu kolapsu. Medtem ko brezposelnost po vsem svetu strmo narašča, lahko programi zajamčene zaposlitve igrajo ključno vlogo pri zagotavljanju socialne, gospodarske in okoljske stabilnosti demokratičnih družb. (VAR. EUROP) Evropska unija mora takšen projekt vključiti v svoj zeleni dogovor (Green Deal). Pregled misije Evropske centralne banke, ki bi zagotovil financiranje tega programa, ki je nujen za naše preživetje, bi omogočil njeno legitimno mesto v življenju prav vsakega državljanu EU. Kot proticiklična rešitev za eksplozivno brezposelnost, ki se obeta, bo ta program dokazal ključni prispevek blaginji EU.

Sanacija okolja. Tokrat ne smemo odreagirati z enako nedolžnostjo kot leta 2008, ko smo se na gospodarsko krizo odzvali z brezpogojno finančno pomočjo, ki je povečala javni dolg, pri tem pa nismo zahtevali ničesar v povračilo. Če bodo naše vlade pristopile k reševanju podjetij v trenutni krizi, morajo k temu pristopiti tudi podjetja in izpolniti splošne osnovne pogoje demokracije. V imenu demokratičnih družb, ki jim služijo, in ki jih sestavljajo, v imenu njihove odgovornosti za zagotovitev našega preživetja na tem planetu, morajo naše vlade svojo pomoč podjetjem pogojiti določenim spremembam v svojem vedenju.

Poleg zavezanosti strogim okoljskim standardom moramo od podjetij zahtevati, da izpolnijo določene pogoje demokratičnega notranjega upravljanja. Uspešen prehod od ekološkega uničenja do ekološkega okrevanja in regeneracije bodo najbolje izvedla demokratično upravljana podjetja, v katerih glasovi tistih, ki vlagajo svoje delo, nosijo enako težo kot tisti, ki vlagajo svoj kapital, kadar je govora o strateških odločitvah. Imeli smo več kot dovolj časa, da smo videli kaj se zgodi, ko se v trenutnem sistemu merijo delavci, planet in kapitalski dobiček: delavci in planet vedno izgubita. Zahvaljujoč raziskavi Oddelka za inženiring Univerze v Cambridgeu (Cullen, Allwood in Borgstein, *Envir. Sci. & Tech.* 2011 45, 1711–1718), vemo, da bi »dosegljive spremembe načrta« lahko zmanjšale globalno potrošnjo energije za 73 %. Vendar... tiste spremembe so delovno intenzivne in zahtevajo odločitve, ki so kratkoročno pogosto dražje. Vse dokler se podjetja vodijo na načine, katerih cilj je v največji možni meri povečati dobiček vlagateljev kapitala, in to v svetu, kjer je energija poceni, zakaj sploh narediti te spremembe? Kljub izzivom tega prehoda določena socialno ozaveščena ali kooperativno upravljana podjetja – ki sledijo hibridnim ciljem, ki upoštevajo finančne, socialne in ekološke vidike, in razvijajo demokratično notranje upravljanje - so že pokazala možnost takšnega pozitivnega vpliva.

Nehajmo se slepiti: prepuščeni svojim lastnim mehanizmom, večini vlagateljev kapitala ne bo mar za dostojanstvo delavcev; prav tako ne bodo vodili boja proti ekološki katastrofi. Na voljo je druga možnost. **Demokratizacija podjetij; dekomodifikacija dela; z ljudmi je treba prenehati ravnati kot s sredstvi, da se lahko vsi skupaj osredotočimo na ohranjanje življenja na tem planetu.**

Work. Democratize, Decommodify, Remediate

Working humans are so much more than “resources.” This is one of the central lessons of the current crisis. Caring for the sick; delivering food, medication, and other essentials; clearing away our waste; stocking the shelves and running the registers in our grocery stores –the people who have kept life going through the COVID-19 pandemic are living proof that work cannot be reduced to a mere commodity. Human health and the care of the most vulnerable cannot be governed by market forces alone. If we leave these things solely to the market, we run the risk of exacerbating inequalities to the point of forfeiting the very lives of the least advantaged. How to avoid this unacceptable situation? By involving employees in decisions relating to their lives and futures in the workplace –by democratizing firms. By decommodifying work –by collectively guaranteeing useful employment to all. As we face the monstrous risk of pandemic and environmental collapse, making these strategic changes would allow us to ensure the dignity of all citizens while marshalling the collective strength and effort we need to preserve our life together on this planet.

Why democratize? Every morning, men and women, especially members of racialized communities, migrants and informal economy workers, rise to serve those among us who are able to remain under quarantine. They keep watch through the night. The dignity of their jobs needs no other explanation than that eloquently simple term, ‘essential worker.’ That term also reveals a key fact that capitalism has always sought to render invisible with another term, ‘human resource.’ Human beings are not one resource among many. Without labor investors, there would be no production, no services, no businesses at all.

Every morning, quarantined men and women rise in their homes to fulfil from afar the missions of the organizations for which they work. They work into the night. To those who believe that employees cannot be trusted to do their jobs without supervision, that workers require surveillance and external discipline, these men and women are proving the contrary. They are demonstrating, day and night, that workers are not one type of stakeholder among many: they hold the keys to their employers’ success. They are the core constituency of the firm, but are, nonetheless, mostly excluded from participating in the government of their workplaces –a right monopolized by capital investors.

To the question of how firms and how society as a whole might recognize the contributions of their employees in times of crisis, democracy is the answer. Certainly, we must close the yawning chasm of income inequality and raise the income floor –but that alone is not enough. After the two World Wars, women’s undeniable contribution to society helped win them the right to vote. By the same token, it is time to enfranchise workers.

Representation of labor investors in the workplace has existed in Europe since the close of WWII, through institutions known as Work Councils. Yet, these representative bodies have a weak voice at best in the government of firms, and are subordinate to the choices of the executive management teams appointed by shareholders. They have been unable to stop or even slow the relentless momentum of self-serving capital accumulation, ever more powerful in its destruction of our environment. These bodies should now be granted similar rights to those exercised by boards. To do so, firm governments (that is, top management) could be required to obtain double majority approval, from chambers representing workers as well as shareholders. In Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia, different forms of codetermination (mitbestimmung) put in place progressively after WWII were a crucial step toward giving a voice to workers –but they are still insufficient to create actual citizenship in firms. Even in the United States, where worker organizing and union rights have been considerably suppressed, there is now a growing call to give labor investors the right to elect representatives with a supermajority within boards. Issues such as the choice of a CEO, setting major strategies, and profit distribution are too important to be left to shareholders alone. A personal investment of labor; that is, of one's mind and body, one's health –one's very life –ought to come with the collective right to validate or veto these decisions.

Why decommodify? This crisis also shows that work must not be treated as a commodity, that market mechanisms alone cannot be left in charge of the choices that affect our communities most deeply. For years now, jobs and supplies in the health sector have been subject to the guiding principle of profitability; today, the pandemic is revealing the extent to which this principle has led us astray. Certain strategic and collective needs must simply be made immune to such considerations. The rising body count across the globe is a terrible reminder that some things must never be treated as commodities. Those who continue arguing to the contrary are imperilling us with their dangerous ideology. Profitability is an intolerable yardstick when it comes to our health and our life on this planet.

Decommodifying work means preserving certain sectors from the laws of the so-called “free market;” it also means ensuring that all people have access to work and the dignity it brings. One way to do this is with the creation of a Job Guarantee. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reminds us that everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. A Job Guarantee would not only offer each person access to work that allows them to live with dignity, it would also provide a crucial boost to our collective capability to meet the many pressing social and environmental challenges we currently face. Guaranteed employment would allow governments, working through local communities, to provide dignified work while contributing to the immense effort of fighting environmental collapse. Across the globe, as unemployment skyrockets, job guarantee programs can play a crucial role in assuring the social, economic, and environmental stability of our democratic societies. (VAR. EUROP) The European Union must include such a project in its Green Deal. A review of the mission of the European Central Bank so that it could finance this program, which is necessary to our survival, would give it a legitimate place in the life of each and every citizen of the EU. A countercyclical solution to the explosive unemployment on the way, this program will prove a key contribution to the EU's prosperity.

Environmental remediation. We should not react now with the same innocence as in 2008, when we responded to the economic crisis with an unconditional bailout that swelled public debt while demanding nothing in return. If our governments step in to save

businesses in the current crisis, then businesses must step in as well, and meet the general basic conditions of democracy. In the name of the democratic societies they serve, and which constitute them, in the name of their responsibility to ensure our survival on this planet, our governments must make their aid to firms conditional on certain changes to their behaviors. In addition to hewing to strict environmental standards, firms must be required to fulfil certain conditions of democratic internal government. A successful transition from environmental destruction to environmental recovery and regeneration will be best led by democratically governed firms, in which the voices of those who invest their labor carry the same weight as those who invest their capital when it comes to strategic decisions. We have had more than enough time to see what happens when labor, the planet, and capital gains are placed in the balance under the current system: labor and the planet always lose. Thanks to research from the University of Cambridge Department of Engineering (Cullen, Allwood, and Borgstein, *Envir. Sci. & Tech.* 2011 45, 1711–1718), we know that “achievable design changes” could reduce global energy consumption by 73%. But... those changes are labor intensive, and require choices that are often costlier over the short term. So long as firms are run in ways that seek to maximize profit for their capital investors alone, and in a world where energy is cheap, why make these changes? Despite the challenges of this transition, certain socially-minded or cooperatively run businesses --pursuing hybrid goals that take financial, social, and environmental considerations into account, and developing democratic internal governments--have already shown the potential of such positive impact.

Let us fool ourselves no longer: left to their own devices, most capital investors will not care for the dignity of labor investors; nor will they lead the fight against environmental catastrophe. Another option is available. **Democratize firms; decommodify work; stop treating human beings as resources so that we can focus together on sustaining life on this planet.**

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Isabelle Ferreras (University of Louvain/FNRS-Harvard LWP), Julie Battilana (Harvard University), Dominique Méda (University of Paris Dauphine PLS), Julia Cagé (Sciences Po-Paris), Lisa Herzog (University of Groningen), Sara Lafuente Hernandez (University of Brussels-ETUI), Hélène Landemore (Yale University), Pavlina Tcherneva (Bard College-Levy Institute), Miranda Richmond Mouillot, Israr Qureshi (Australian National University), Clare Wright (La Trobe University), Isabelle Martin (University of Montréal), Neera Chandhoke (Delhi University), Lukas Clark-Memler (University of Oxford), Alberto Alemanno (HEC Paris-NYU Law), Elizabeth Anderson (University of Michigan), Philippe Askénazy (CNRS-Paris School of Economics), Aurélien Barrau (CNRS et Université 3Grenoble-Alpes), Adelle Blackett (McGill University), Neil Brenner (Harvard University), Craig Calhoun (Arizona State University), Ha-Joon Chang (University of Cambridge), Erica Chenoweth (Harvard University), Joshua Cohen (Apple University, Berkeley, Boston Review), Christophe Dejours (CNAM), Olivier De Schutter (UCLouvain, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights), Nancy Fraser (The New School for Social Research, NYC), Archon Fung (Harvard University), Javati Ghosh (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Stephen Gliessman (UC Santa Cruz), Hans R. Herren (Millennium Institute), Axel Honneth (Columbia University), Eva Illouz (EHESS, Paris), Sanford Jacoby (UCLA), Pierre-Benoit Joly (INRA -National Institute of Agronomical Research, France), Michele Lamont (Harvard university), Lawrence Lessig (Harvard University), David Marsden (London School of Economics), Chantal Mouffe (University of Westminster), Jan-Werner Müller (Princeton University), Gregor Murray (University of Montréal), Susan Neiman (Einstein Forum), Thomas Piketty (EHESS-Paris School of Economics), Michel Pimbert (Coventry University, Executive Director of Centre for

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