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Autonomy at Work

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Propositions

1. Autonomy is an individual precondition and a goal of democracy.
2. The structures of workplaces have an impact on the autonomy of employees.
3. The sphere of work is not exclusively private, but, lying at the meso-level of society, is also of concern for theories of democracy.
4. Relational conceptions of autonomy can capture the relevant dimensions of workplaces better than atomistic conceptions and are therefore suited for analysing social relations at the workplace and their impact on autonomy.
5. At workplaces with co-determination, the autonomy of employees with permanent contracts is protected better than at workplaces without co-determination.
6. Employees are differently protected by the German co-determination system depending on the employment relation.
7. The German co-determination system cannot sufficiently provide for social patterns at workplaces that foster all three dimensions of autonomy, namely self-respect, self-trust, and self-esteem.
8. For patterns conducive to autonomy, formal rights are not enough, informal workplace relations matter as well.
9. Shifts in labour regulations, market structures and organisational structures have weakened the institutions of the German co-determination system and thereby threaten to undermine its ability to protect employees' autonomy.