How Japanese soften blow of unemployment in career

Americans can reduce many of the real and psychological costs of unemployment by adapting the Japanese concept of "career employment," a University of Michigan sociologist costends.

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"Career enlargement involves the use of company resources to train, educate and ungrade the position of blue collar and lower white collar employees, and above eall, to retain them for most of their work years," says Prof. Robert E. Cole.

"Since they would continuously be acquiring new roles and new skills, the workers would have less motivation to change jobs frequently. For management, this would reduce recruitment and training costs, unemployment compensation and other expenses caused by employee turnover.

"But American managers would and training costs, unemployment compensation and other expenses caused by employee turnover.

"But American managers would show the way of the business cycle," he adds. "Career enlargement, for either blue collar or white collar workers, only makes sense in the context of a long term employment commitment."

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text of a long term employment commitment."

Cole's conslusions are drawn from a year-long study of the working environment in a Japanese auto plant. Comparing job mobility patterns in Yokohama and Detroit, he examined such issues as the Japanese work eithic, job restructuring and worker participation in quality control circless. When the participation in quality control circless. When the property of the prope

threatened they feel by a potential layoff."
But would such a policy serve the needs of management as well as the workers? "In rapidly growing firms there seems to be no problem, but in small or declining industries, or businesses subject to sharp fluctuation in product demand, it would be difficult. Dips in the economy," Cole adds, "would also have an impact.
"But we can learn from the Japanese experience. When the mid-1970s recession hit Japan, the government decided that lifetime employment was too valuable a practice to let simply disintegrate. Under the 1974 Employment Insurance Act, government subsidies belied designated firms retain employees until the economy improved."

The employeers received grants over partial may be a payments to workers patial may be a payments to workers patial may be a payments to workers pation further than the public of the

"We have the odd situation where only unionized employees have access to the developed body of arbitration to the developed body of athlustical law that says employees have property rights in their jobs. And even unionized workers have little protection from economically-based dismissals," he

workers have little protection from workers have little protection from economically-based dismissals," he adds.

"It is one of the major ironies of our time that foreign firms increasingly treat America as an underdeveloped nation. They see the lack of legal protection against dismissal as an incenticular control of the second control of the second

large firms and two-thirds in small firms. The basic approach is to treat the funds as counter-cyclical grants rather than permanent support."

ratuer man permanent support.

Cole does not imply that the Jápanese have all the answers. However, he notes, many aspects of their work practices can be adapted to fit American social and economic needs just as the Japanese have adapted Western ideas and customs.

"The kind of cyclical unemployment for which we have proposed solutions should not be confused with the unemployment arising from structural weaknesses of the economy," he adds. "Eudamentally, our economy as currently structured does not create enough jobs for everyone who wants to work.

"The solutions to structural unemployment must involve some combina-tion of monetary and tax policy, educa-tion policy, public works projects and specific programs aimed at the young, minorities and the disadvantaged."

minorities and the disadvantaged."

Japan has been able to keep low unemployment levels because its econmy has grown so rapidly, Cole notes,
However, a close analysis of the 197for ceession reveals that while government subsidies preserved the jobs of an
estimated 150,00-200,000 workers, as
many as 600,000 women lost their jobs
during the same aperiod. Many firms
resorted to dismissals of non-elite or
temporary workers and solicited early
retirements.

"In short, Japan certainly does not represent a role model for reducing age or sex discrimination," Cole says. "Rapid economic growth has allowed the Japanese to avoid facing upto past inequalities. The future holds no such laxuries for either Japan or the United States."

Ironing tip

Save the trouble of ironing large ta-blecloths by dampening them through, wringing them out slightly pinning them flat to a rug through a !srge sheet. Cover with another sheet to keep it clean.



National honor

David H. Shepherd, chairperson of the Southeast Michigan Counil of Governments, received the Tom Bradley regional leadership award recently from the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). Shepherd, mayor of Oak Park, was lauded for outstanding leadership at the local, regional and national levels. The award, named for the mayor of Los Angeles, was made at the NARC convention in Detroit.

OLHSA holds public

hearings

Public hearings in Farmington and Pontiac this week will help the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency determine its program priorities for the next three years. Hearings will be held at 2,4,7 and 9 p.m. Tuesday in St. Alexander Catholic Church, 27835 Shiawassee in Farmingston. The hearing is for residents of Boomfield and Southfield townships, villages of Franklin and Beverly Hills and cities of Farmington, Tarmington Hills, Southfield, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hillsand Lathurny Village. Hearings will be held at 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Wednesday in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

Elect road board, voters say softly

Oakland County residents were split in a recent survey on their preference for an elected rather than appointed Road Commission

for an etected rather than appointed for an etected rather than appointed Road Commission.

Slightly more (44 percent to 40 percent) indicated roads would be better under control of county elected offistate of the state of t

THE QUESTION was included in the phone survey of 900 county voting-age residents, conducted in February and March. "The county board brings up he issue (an elected Road Commission) about once a year," said Road Commission spokesman Dennis Pajot. In 1976, road commissioners proposed they be elected, but Pajot said the Board of Commissioners "poohed" the idea?

that appointed commissioners are less sensitive to political pressure than elected officials. More than one-quar-ter (28 percent), however, had no opin-ion on the matter.

The county board appoints the three-man Road Commission.
Each road commissioner has a six-year term. Chairman Fred Houghten is paid \$8,500 annually, while commissioners John Gnau, Jr. and Richard Vogt 'receive \$7,500 each.

A BARE majority (51 percent) of those surveyed believed the Road Commission was making every attempt to hold down road costs, while 71 percent agreed that the Road Commission is responsive to residents' needs.

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he Board minissioners "poolobled" the idea. "Man of the properties of the board Commissioner with the said preceding the properties of the said the Road Commissioner with the properties of the said the Road Commission of the Board the Road Commissioner "poolobled" the idea. "As adequated the majority of the budget is from state
gas and vehicle taxes.



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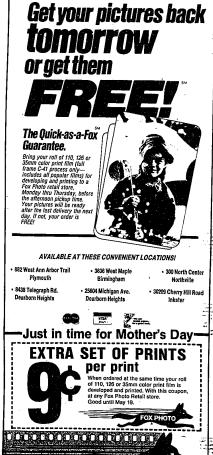
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