

INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY AND REGIONAL DECENTRALIZATION
FE EMERY

(Paper presented to 8th. Canberra Seminar on Administrative Studies, August, 1976)

To some this may seem a peculiar, idiosyncratic juxtaposition of themes. I chose the title because this is precisely what I wish to discuss. I think that in our studies of the democratization of work we have had to learn some lessons and think through some notions that are of central relevance to regional decentralization. Let me hasten to add that the 'regional decentralization' I am thinking of is the decentralization of Federal government departments and of some of the political power of the Federal parliament.

The two areas where I think a transfer of learnings is possible and desirable are: -
First, decentralization as a problem of maintaining control and coordination with respect to centrally defined objectives; a problem that is with us even if the objectives are broadly defined.

Second, decentralization as a problem of getting closer to and mobilizing controlling forces from amongst the people of the region; not just getting geographically nearer to them.

It comes as no surprise to me that in thinking about the problems of administrative decentralization these two areas emerged as focal. For just on twenty years I have been haunted, if that is the word, by Philip Selznick's observation in Leadership in Administration that organizational decentralization cannot be achieved by administrative measures alone because "institutional integrity is characteristically vulnerable *when values are tenuous or insecure*" 91957, p. 120, his italic). Selznick further observed that "This variation in the strength of values has received little scientific attention" (*ibid*, p. 120). My own work in the late fifties with the National Farmers Union (Britain), the British Prison Commissioners and organizations like Unilever and Bristol-Siddely Aero Engines powerfully confirmed, in my mind, the absolute centrality of Selznick's proposition for an adequate understanding of organizational decentralization. His solutions for defence of institutional integrity in the face of decentralization – embodiment of values in a fairly autonomous elite – bothered me. It seemed to be the best that could be done within the framework of organization theory as we knew it but only exacerbated the problems in the second area of getting closer to the administered. The techniques that such elites use to get close to the people are those of cooptation and gently nudging democratic representative processes by the exercise of favours and threats. Selznick's early study of the TVA as a grass roots exercise in planning was a classic study of the processes of cooptation. He did not confront this dilemma in Leadership and Administration.

I now think that there is a solution to the dilemma that Selznick's thoughts posed for us. A solution started to emerge when we realized that there was not just one basic organizational design and that the differences in organizational effectiveness were not just differences in ability to realize this basic design through management training, consultants or native wit. As we brought into being organizations that were patently different in nature and obviously more effective we probed for more general theoretical explanations as to why this could be so. I have not been alone in this probing but my own

conclusion is that we have in fact two basic organizational designs to choose from; we are not limited to choosing how far we will go with one design. Let me settle down to discussing the reasons for my conclusion. After this discussion I will go on to the problems of getting closer to the administered.

The two basic organizational designs.

In choosing their organizational designs people do not confront an infinite range of choice. Far from it. If their organizations are to be purposive they have to be adaptive over a wide range of evolving circumstances. The alternative is some sort of servo-mechanism with a fixed repertoire of responses and capable of surviving only within a very narrow range of foreseeable conditions. To achieve this adaptiveness redundancy has to be built into the system. This is an important property as with each arithmetic increase in redundancy the reliability of the system tends to increase exponentially (Pierce, 1974).

There are two basic ways that redundancy can be built in:

- (a) by adding redundant parts to the system; each part is replaceable; as and when one part fails another takes over;
- (b) by adding redundant functions to the parts; at any one time some the functions of any part will be redundant to the role it is playing at the time; as and when a part fails in the function it is performing, other parts can assume the function; so long as a part retains any of its functional capabilities (i.e. functional relative to system requirements) it is of some value to the system.

The first design of redundant parts has been described by Mumford as the Megamachine and he has traced its long Asian history and more recent Western debut (Mumford, 1967). Feibleman and Friend characterized the logical properties of the first design as Subjective seriality, in which “The governing relation is asymmetrical dependence. The sharing of parts is necessary to one of the parts but not to both” (1945, p. 36). The second design is characterized by them as Complementary seriality, in which “The governing relation is symmetrical dependence. The sharing of parts is necessary to both of the parts. Neither part can survive separation”. (p.36) “... parts are on a parity with respect to their relations with other parts, and each is dependent upon the other”. (p38). It is of interest that their analysis of “The structure and function of organization” revealed no more than just these two basic designs at the level of purposeful systems.

If redundancy is sought by having redundant parts then there must be special control mechanisms (specialized parts) to determine which parts are failing and have to be rendered redundant, and which have to be activated for any particular response to be adaptive. If the control is to be reliable it too must have redundant parts and hence the question of yet another level of control emerges. The more difficult it becomes to determine the failure of dependent parts, in time to make adaptive replacements, the more the levels of control tend to proliferate (compare the many levels of control to be found in an army or an oil refinery with the few that are found necessary in a car assembly plant).

One can expect a bias toward choosing the first design if (a) the costs of the individual parts is cheap and (b) there are long lead times available for the organization to learn new mode of response. Certainly, once this first basic design is chosen efforts will

be made to keep down the cost of the individual part by sustaining a pool of unemployed, obtaining access to pools of poor and preferably dispossessed peasantry (e.g. the Gastarbeiter of Germany and Australia's post-war migration scheme), or specializing and standardizing the function of the individual parts to minimize costs of training and re-training.

Regarding the second source of bias toward the megamachine it is worth starting our considerations from the oft-made observation that this is a great way to run a railway or an army:

“There are irrefutable advantages to this kind of organization. Discipline is good, errors in routine procedures rarely go unchecked, and if the very top man is an exceedingly able executive he can usually make the whole organization jump to his command very quickly. It usually takes a long time to build, and it is at its most successful when the function of the organization is to control a very large number of people all doing more or less the same thing. It is the way most armies are organized – platoon, company, battalion, brigade, division, corps, army – and if you want to make a million men advance or retreat at a few hours notice it is hard to think of a better system”. (Jay, 1967, p. 73).

Armies fight for short periods of their life under conditions of great uncertainty, great turbulence. Hence it is hard to reconcile Jay's enthusiasm for organizing armies in this way with the contention that they are only adaptive when allowed 'long lead times for learning'. It is also hard to reconcile with the organizational logic that underlies this contention, namely that this type of system is inherently error-amplifying. The governing principle of asymmetrical dependence means that errors will leak in from the environment like water from a sieve; it is in no one's interest to have himself rendered redundant because an error, or failure, can be associated with him. Even without that psychological weakness the relation of asymmetrical dependence will ensure that the flow upwards of information from one level of control to the next will take the form of $T = (1 - F)^n$. If a manager had five good people reporting to him, people who were truthful, (T) eight times out of ten, i.e. $T = (1.0 - 0.2)^5 = 0.328$, then there would be, on average, only one in three occasions that he could say to himself that this must be sound advice because they are unanimous. However, the same principle applies at all levels. If he and four others at the same level as himself have been well chosen, and hence are right nine times of ten, then the chances of their superior getting such a good straight message coming up through them from the level below are, on the same arithmetic, 0.002, twice in a thousand such communications'. (Stafford Beer, 1972). This very disturbing property of error-amplification arises in a system based on asymmetrical dependence because each manager must seek to maintain the asymmetrical dependence of his subordinates on him. Hence he will seek to ensure that each of his subordinates gives him their independent judgement and that they cannot go into collusion to influence his decision. But the mathematics of this are inexorable. The more he achieves this aim of controlling his subordinates the deeper he gets into error – even if the subordinates are not psychologically motivated to protect themselves by hiding their errors.

Given this inherent weakness a major part of the effort of utilizing cheap dependent labour by this first design has gone into control systems that will minimize the weakness. Thus Jay, in the above quote, says that in these types of organizations discipline is usually good. We suggest that in these types of organizations one usually finds good

discipline, not because they naturally create good discipline, but because they cannot function without imposing strong discipline. That they cannot function unless their individual parts are not only replaceable, but are also so threatened by punishment or withdrawal of rewards, that they will behave in a pre-programmed manner regardless of the evidence of their senses or their common-sense. Lewis Mumford has documented the vicious practices of torture and maiming that were introduced with the earliest emergence of the megamachine; poet laureate Masfield has documented the inhuman disciplinary practices of the Royal Navy up till the age of steam. Taylor and his contemporaries simply devised new sticks and carrots so that this organizational design could function within societies like USA where the Constitution forbade “cruel and inhuman punishment”. There was no change in the aim. The aim remained that of blocking the holes of the sieve, preventing error getting into the system. By elaborate pre-programming of the parts at the work face, and of the control systems, expected contingencies could be met and failure of a part quickly identified. As Jay observed, such an organization “usually takes a long time to build”. Standard operating procedures, rules, and regulations and training manuals have to be multiplied to meet the ever-newly emerging contingencies. They can rarely be wiped off the book because there can rarely be agreement in the control agencies that those contingencies might not occur again. New contingencies are slow to be recognized in S.O.P’s because it is never too certain whether they are inventions of subordinates trying to cover up mistakes that might lead to their redundancy.

We can now summarize the learning properties of an organizational design based on redundant parts. There is an optimal amount of error that is necessary for learning by any type of system. The error-amplifying characteristic of this type of system threatens to swamp it with so much error that it is reduced to the response strategy of an addictive gambler, or a cat in a Thorndike puzzle box, i.e. stick rigidly to a system, right or wrong. The major active response to error is to prevent it getting into the system, even those errors that are necessary for learning; and to eliminate or send to limbo any part that appears to be associated with the intake of error or its perpetuation. With this sort of learning where is the adaptiveness? Jay is undoubtedly correct in stating that with this sort of system it is hard to think of a better one “if you want to make a million men advance or retreat at a few hours notice”.

It is possible, with months of work, to pre-programme so many to start to advance or to start to retreat within hours of the starter’s gun. Adaptive control, however, more or less finishes after that point, unless one has pre-programmed reserve forces to be fed into the subsequent action. Field Marshall Haig released a vast pre-programmed army across the front at the Somme at 7.30 a.m., July 1st, 1916. By 3.00 p.m. that day he had precious little idea of where his many divisions were or what they were doing, although none of them had gone more than a mile or so from where they were at dawn. They had disappeared into the fog of war. This sort of information flow hardly augurs well for adaptability. When the Passchendaele offensive opened on July 31st, 1917, there was little evidence that learning had occurred in the previous year. As we said earlier this type of organization needs a long lead time for learning. So long, indeed, that Liddle-Hart said that armies normally prepare themselves to fight their last war.

The criterion of survival can be somewhat misleading in circumstances where the competing parties are all organized on the first design principle. The big battalions win the wars but lose the peace, because of the price they pay for victory.

The alternative design based on redundant functions (multi-functional parts) has been the favoured design in the western cultural tradition, if not always in practice. It also appears to have been the general preference in human societies up to the point where swidden agriculture gave way to societies based primarily on fixed cultivation and the use of metals.

The basic conditions favouring the alternative design are:-

(a) the individual parts are costly (e.g. well educated or skilled) or highly valued;
(b) adaptation has to be to a highly variable, complexly inter-correlated environment, i.e. one in which a great deal of potential error is present and it is not randomized. In contrast to the first design this one is essentially error attenuating. The system by its own functioning tends to suppress error that come into the system. The formula given by Beer is $T = (1 - F^n)$. Thus if as in the first example a manager has five people reporting to him who are each usually right in their judgement eight times out of ten then $T = (1.0 - (0.2)^5)$. Only about three times in 10,000 will they unanimously give him the wrong advice. The relation of symmetrical dependence means that they will check with each other as to the quality of the advice they were thinking of giving. We have assumed that they are no better as individual managers than those in the first example, and no better than each other. Each is assumed fallible in two occasions out of ten. They will not, however, be fallible in the same ways, and hence working to this second design they assist to suppress each others tendency to err.

With this quality a great deal of error can be accepted into the system and learned from. Rigid barriers of standing operating procedures and manuals do not have to be defensively manned as in the first design. Error is coped with by continuous learning and rearrangement of functions; not by prescription and rearrangement of parts. In this system advantage can be taken of the principle that the total sum of error in the system is equivalent to the square root of the sum of the square of the errors of each part. Attention can be directed to the weakest link, as this principle requires, and not to the specialized controlling parts as required in the first system. A further distinction between the two designs arises when the sources of error in the environment are to some extent correlated, i.e. 'it never rains but it pours'. The first design is at its best when the sources or error are independent, and only randomly occur together. Where this is not naturally the case special efforts are devoted to approximate this condition, e.g. keeping external relations in special compartments, and being very secretive about what is going on in those compartments. The second design learns better to adapt by exposing itself to the difficulties that arise for itself these external inter-dependencies.

A striking difference between the two systems occurs in the switching mechanisms. In the first design the critical decision is switching some parts to redundancy and activating others. The individual parts are probably not keen to be rendered redundant and not even very enthusiastic about being activated. These decisions are for the special control parts, and it is pretty irrelevant to their function whether the parts know why they are switched. In fact, anything that psychologically separates the special control parts off from the others would help to ensure that proper

decision rules are followed, and are not obfuscated by mere human considerations. In the second design, with its governing principle of symmetrical dependency, the switching is governed by the conditions of mutual help. The problem is that all parts, or enough parts, need to be alert and willing to bring their unused capabilities into action when the shared task demands it. Without considerable sharing of values and objectives, the potential of this design may not be realized, which may be one reason why Taylor turned to re-vamping the first design for the utilization of the multi-national work force pouring into U.S. industry in his days.

One other property of these systems was noted by Feibleman and Friend, and been frequently observed. Organizations based on redundancy of parts constantly strive to accumulate a superfluity of parts; to ensure that at any one time they have more parts than they actually need for what they are doing. These reserves of duplicated parts are essential to ordinary, day-to-day operation, and the major insurance against the unexpected. This superfluity of manning is sought at all levels except the very top. By contrast organizations based on redundancy of functions (capabilities) find their optimal level at a point where undermanning stretches their joint resources, and challenges them to frequently reallocate functions*.

In choosing this second design for their organizations, people are implicitly making choices amongst ideals. For homonomy rather than self-seeking, self-serving autonomous striving; for mutual help and nurturance rather than own survival in the system; for inclusion of the criteria of humaneness along with the usual decision rules of effectiveness and efficiency.

The argument so far has been that shared values are essential for decentralization but the basic design of the organization will determine who needs to share those values. In the first design this can only be an elite as there can be no question of the ordinary members being allowed any more discretion than is unavoidable.

In the alternative design the widest possible sharing of values and sense of mission is necessary. Only in that way mutual support be mobilized to cope with and learn from the unexpected; and to learn to better cope with the expected. Thus, in the alternative design, Selznick's dilemma does not necessarily arise from efforts at organizational decentralization. The more broadly the values are shared in an organization the less likely, in general, that they will be at conflict with community values.

The alternative design suggests a solution to another aspect of the problem that arises with decentralization. This aspect is the arrogance of the elite to whom power is devolved by decentralization; arrogance not just psychological distance. They may share a sense of mission and observe certain values but their own sense of their personal importance inevitably leads to a personal style of management: on the one hand to curry favour with the governed, on the other hand to arbitrarily suppress what is thought to be insubordination. It does not matter whether one looks at the French prefecture system, the District Commissioner system of the British Colonial Service

* Footnote: In *Logic of the living brain*, 1972, Sommerhoff tried to identify models that would explain the uniquely adaptive characteristics of that organ, and still do justice to the knowledge we have of its structure and functioning. He was led to reject the design based on redundant parts and to postulate two variants based on redundant functions. These two variants closely parallel the two discussed by Emery and Emery, (1973)

or the Indian Civil Service. The fine tradition of those bodies masked extensive and inevitable individual deviations. The impersonal but distant control from Whitehall, Paris and New Delhi was replaced by close but corruptible local dictatorship.

Decentralization within the alternated design must seek to retain the principle of 'mutual support of multi-functional parts' right down to the last point of delegated authority. Thus within a district commissioner system responsibility for a group of four or five districts would be the joint responsibility of those four or five District Commissioners. For purposes of routine operations each District Commissioner may work mostly with a particular district but it is not his district; they are not his people: it is not for him to evolve his distinctive interpretation of organizational values, policies and mission. In non-routine matters the group of District Commissioner complement each other's understandings, abilities and efforts. In the exercise of their joint responsibility they will tend to correct individual errors and deviations and the movement of individuals through these roles (by promotion, etc.) will not require anyone to hang out the sign, 'under new management'. The individual takes on individual responsibilities but in the first instance these are to his fellow District Commissioners.

In the traditional system each District Commissioner found it to his advantage to feed the center with only such information as would serve and protect his interest. Well aware of this, the Centre evolves inspectorial system and parallel channels of communication. To make his own life easier, the traditional District Commissioner builds personal networks of influence – networks that are only maintained by mutual favours. The Center reacts by shortening the term of duty in a district even though this lessens the chance of a District Commissioner coming to understand the district. The District Commissioner officially turns a blind eye to new developments for as long as he can, in the hope that they will go away or a fellow District Commissioner with a similar problem will run the risk of trying something new. He will seek to accumulate reserves of authority, resources and staff and to retain them in reserve status (i.e. relative idleness) so that he will not be seen to be caught short on the evil day when the unexpected materializes.

These tendencies can be summed up in a couple of adages:

'what they don't know can't hurt me'

'if I don't know about it (officially) it can't hurt me'

'don't go looking for trouble'

'never get caught with your pants down'

'always have more resources than problems'

In the system of joint responsibility very different tendencies are at work, provided the whole group does not go corrupt together.*

* This possibility cannot be judged on the basis of what has been observed in organizations based on the concept of redundant parts. In those organizations informal groupings usually emerge. They emerge on the basis of what can trust whom to go into collusion to work against the system (or at least independently) for their personal protection and advancement. In the alternate system no informal arrangements offer as powerful a means of protecting or advancing one's interests as the system itself unless some external system surreptitiously recruits them as a group. Penetration by a one-by-one process is the usual way of corrupting a type 1 organization. It is fraught with dangers for the individual in this type.

Communication with the center can be open and truthful without the individual getting a reputation for ‘crying to mummy’, ‘crying wolf’, ‘empire building’, ‘scapegoating’, ‘an old woman’, etc. Where an individual’s observations pass the test of his colleagues’ observation, experience and knowledge, they go to the Centre with that weight and cannot readily be dismissed by denigrating the individual’s motivations or abilities. Instead of devising inspectorial and other control systems, the Centre is much more likely to concern itself with ways to strengthen the means at the disposal of the group of District Commissioners to gather and process information and to improve the means by which they can share in the group’s knowledge of their districts. It is the difference in attitude that can be expected toward a source that is seen as a propaganda center and a source that is seen as an information center.

The group of District Commissioners will certainly wish to create a network of influence, for the same basic reasons as does an individual District Commissioner to make easier the process of governing. The nodal point in the network is not, however, an idiosyncratic individual who is here today and gone tomorrow. The mutual favours are not centred on such an individual. Instead ‘the mutual favours’ center on the furtherance of government policies, that persist despite changes in personnel, or change at Central direction despite persistence of personnel. Others can expect to be favoured members of the District Commissioners’ network only so long as they further the government policies pursued by the District Commissioners. The network could be expected to accumulate strength despite changes in the personnel of the District Commissioners’ team. It also seems clear that this network of mutual favours based on common pursuit of public ends is more likely to undermine personal corruption in the other parallel government systems than to re-enforce it, as happens in decentralized type 1 systems. Those who wish to avoid pressures to bribe the parallel systems can expect the support of the District Commissioners if they are of proven value to the District Commissioners. In the old system of personalizing favours it is better for all to turn a blind eye to all but the most flagrant breaches of public trust.

For a group of District Commissioners, with joint responsibility for their districts, new developments will generally constitute a challenge, not a threat. As we noted above, the probability of actually making an error in responding to a new situation is markedly reduced if they are pooling their knowledge. The chances of this being individually judged as unsound on inadequate evidence is also markedly reduced. I think that, on balance, such groups will be more motivated by the kudos of tackling new challenges than avoiding ‘blotting their copy books’.

The Centre, for its part, will have little difficulty in realizing that its policies and programs are best served by early warning of emergent problems and early multiple attempts to find practical solutions. Their response is less likely to be that of finding out who jumped the gun and more likely to be try to learn more, and to find out who was the ‘bright spark’ so that he or she could better help them at a higher level.

I may have seemed to have drawn to freely upon my imagination in describing the properties of a jointly responsible group of District Commissioners. The obvious critique is that human beings are human beings. If they so frequently behave one way in the traditional design then they will surely do so in the alternate design, e.g. the ‘natural urge to seek dominance’ over one’s peers. I think it would be granted that

oxygen is also a natural entity but we would be unwise indeed to make the same sort of assumption that therefore oxygen plays the same role for human survival in the combination of carbon monoxide as it does in carbon dioxide. The other line of criticism would have to be that these effects have been too infrequently observed to be given credence. In fact we have so much evidence of the negative effects of committee workings that the whole proposition must be put in doubt on purely empirical grounds. It should have been obvious that I was not suggesting a committee of 4-5 District Commissioners, each responsible for the set of territories. In such an arrangement the individual could always hope to save his own skin by pointing out that in his district he had not fallen into the misguided ways of the majority of the committee. To put it into a few words, no one goes into a committee without a commitment to protect or advance his own interests. It is of less concern to the committee man that the committee output is good than it is to ensure that their input was satisfactory, and not a reason for censure. Much more important is to ensure that the outcome of the committee's deliberations does not compromise the ends to which he or his organization are committed.

We have ample empirical evidence that when human elements are combined in organizations based on the principle of redundant functions their 'chemistry' is strikingly different from when they are combined according to the principal of redundant elements (Emery & Thorsrud, 1975).

Participation or representation at the grass roots level.

We have been dealing with only one of two aspects of decentralization – the decentralization of administration. Advances in this direction would, in a democracy, have little effect if, at 'the grass roots' level, the administrators were confronted by the political machine of Mayor Daley's Chicago or the Congress machine in some of the states of India.

We have to ask what kind of interface is needed between the people and the administration for effective decentralization.

With its orders, rules, regulations and monetary handouts an administration shows its face to the individuals. Theoretically it, the administration, could gain some insights from this multitude of contracts but in practice such is rarely the case. The officer's job is to enforce the rule not reason why. The citizen's first concern is to find a way out for himself not to accept the burden of challenging the rule itself. If a particular rule is burdensome to others as well as himself then he may well go into collision to obstruct its enforcement but this sort of collective reaction will rarely form this basis for rational consideration of the purposes intended by the rule. It is administration itself which is likely to be challenged. Hence, I think, the constant use of the 'reform ticket' to gain the elected offices of sheriff, judge, mayor and attorney in the USA.

An administration needs some way of coming face-to-face with collectives of which the individuals are members. At this level an administration can hope to get some feeling for what complement is needed to the self-regulative ability of the collective; what government interference could be tolerated without lessening of the self-regulating abilities of these collectives; what government interference would generate self-defeating opposition of these collectives.

These questions are, as it seems to me, at the heart of the art of governance.

By this I mean to condemn any system of governance that interferes when it is not needed, that reduces self-sufficiency or that generates conflict by its efforts to be helpful. The criteria I have stated are not meant to condemn a system of governance that interferes when there is a need but for some local reason the need is not perceived; enforces temporary tutelage as the best path to a higher level of conflicting interests that blocks the emergence of non-zero-sum solutions.

Just in the writing of this about politics, I have a sneaking feeling that I am writing like a politician: 'Yes to this and yes to that but never a care for where it is at'.

However, how would an administration know if needs existed but were generally unrecognized by the people concerned, that people had temporarily lost some of their capabilities for self-determination or that they had come to live with an unnecessarily exploitative structure because they could see nothing better?

I suggest that centrally commissioned social science studies cannot go far to meet these sorts of administrative requirements. To commission such studies, the central administration would have to know enough about the local affairs to know what had to be studied. The research commissioned by the AAP (Australian Assistance Plan) well illustrates how difficult it is to get precise results about the imprecisely formulated goals of a Federal agency.

In general it seems undeniable that a decentralized administration needs to be confronted with effective grass-roots organizations.

The collectives that constitute the grass roots are mostly of a number that render face-to-face contact ineffective.

This is a problem that we have been faced with in the democratization of industry. It has not been difficult for groups of from 4 to 40 to become self-managing groups, depending on their shared work culture and their proximity in working. At the plant level, where we might be considering a thousand or more people, it has not been at all obvious how such direct participation could be achieved. For many decades it had seemed that only representative democracy was possible. The chosen person was supposed to be an insurance that the concerns of the majority of workers who elected him would be duly reflected at the committee, Work Council or Board to which he was elected. There was one impassable snag in this procedure, and it has always been present in systems of representative democracy. From the moment that the ballot count is completed the elected number is one of the chosen people. This marks him out from the others who sought to be chosen and it very clear marks him out from those who voted or could have voted but did not bother. The chosen person has a sense of his own importance which he does not share with those who merely voted. As an 'elected representative' he is on a life-course that practically none of his electors will ever be on. The de-centralized administrator might well feel that interfacing with such representatives of the people brings him no closer to the people.

I suppose that I am raising the question of whether administrative decentralization can be achieved in conjunction with the Westminster style of representative democracy. I think that I am saying that they are incompatible. The Westminster style of representative democracy seems to inevitably forced toward 'maximum representativeness' – gathering power by being able to claim to represent

more people. An administration that serves such a system will also find its own best rewards in centralization, not decentralization.

Have we any alternative that is still democratic?

Several organizations have successfully experimented with ‘core management teams’ to which individuals workers are appointed by roster. Each person is on the roster in his own right and is not expected to represent anyone. It is only chance which determines when his turn comes up, and when it does, it does not connote any special distinction. It might be argued that this system would bring forward the dull and incompetent. It would in the same proportion as there are such people in the work force. This seems to matter little if the bright and competent are willing to contribute to the best of their ability.

We cannot in any case assume that the process of popular choice is very effective at wedding out the dull, incompetent and lazy or in protecting the honest and the weak.

Please let me hasten to stress that there are, to my knowledge, only a few industrial experiments along this lines. Although we have a good deal of experience with the jury system in law and some relevant anthropological and political science reports, much would need to be done to get a workable system of direct participation into local and regional government.

An example may indicate the importance I attach to making progress in this direction.

Some years after gaining independence India introduced a system of democratically elected representative councils at village level and for groups of villages – the panchayats and the gram panchayats. One study, in the Jaipur district of Rajasthan, yielded the results shown in Table 1.

Table 1: An Example of Representative Democracy

	Percent of Population	Percent of seats in Gram Panchayat
Higher castes	20	76
Middle castes	40	15
Non-scheduled lower castes	20	7
Scheduled lower castes	20	2

(Mehta, 1975, p. 44)

This is, admittedly, an extreme case. It is not, however, atypical of India (Mehta, *ibid*, p. 40-1). It indicates the frightful barriers that confronted the decentralized district commissioner system at a time when it was expected to implement laws favouring the small cultivators, the landless agricultural labourers and the scheduled castes and tribes. The figures are not to hand but I would not be very surprised to find that women and young people were grossly under-represented on the gram pachayats. A jury or roster system could not allow of such gross discrepancies if the roster roll properly reflected the population structure. Under such a system women would be rostered in roughly equal numbers to men and the poor, the weak, the young, the migrant in proportions nearly equivalent to their presence in the community. How nearly the governing bodies would thus be non-misrepresentative (i.e. meet the criterion for a fair trial jury) would depend on practical arrangements that determined

how easy it was to get out of service, and how prestigious or rewarding it was to serve, and what resources one could draw on in order to serve more effectively. About these matters we know little.

Whichever way I have looked at the concept, the bias of age emerges. There seems to be no viable alternative to a system in which one is rostered and serves satisfactorily at a local level before being registered on the roster roll for a region, and so on. Each step add years to the age of the candidates. This does not bother me. The young can obviously be outstanding in musical or mathematical achievement; I do not believe this is as possible in the social sciences or the art of governance. If the young were excluded from effective participation in the machinery of self government I would be bothered. Within a participative democracy they would be drawn into the process at a rate appropriate to their proportion in the population and numbers of them early qualified for the wider levels of government. With the present representative system the young are sadly lacking at the local levels of government and those who appear at the national level appear, more often than not, to be display items, window dressing.

Summary and Conclusion:

It has been argued that administrative decentralization depends upon the embodiment of values. These values will be embodied in an elite unless the administration is de-bureaucratized – re-organized on the principle of redundant functions.

Decentralization of administration will not achieve increase in the involvement of citizens unless there is an effective decentralization of government, and of legislative power.

However, representative forms of democracy appear to stifle and restrict the involvement of citizens. It seems worthwhile to try and evolve participative forms of local and regional government.

Beer, S. Brain of the Firm, 1972, London, The Professional Library.

Emery, F.E., and Thorsrud, E. Democracy at Work, 1975. Canberra C.C.E., ANU 1976. Leiden, Nijhoff.

Emery, F.E. Adaptive Systems for Our Future Governance, First Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Memorial Lecture, 1976, New Delhi, National Labour Institute.

Feibleman, J. and Friend, J.W. The Structure and Function of Organization in F. Emery (ed.), Systems Thinking, 1969, London, Penguin.

Herbst, P.G. Alternatives to Hierarchies, 1976, Leiden, Nijhoff.

Jay, A. Management and Machiavelli, 1970, London, Pelican.

Mehta, B. Bureaucracy and Change, 1975, Jaipur, Administrative Change.

McWhinney, W. Dual Hierarchies, 1975, Los Angeles, Graduate School of Management, UCLA.

Mumford, L. The Myth of the Machine, 1967, London, Secker and Warburg.

Pateman, C. Participation and Democratic Theory, 1970, Cambridge University Press

Pierce, W.H. Redundancy in Computers, February, 1964, Scientific American.

Selznick, P. TVA and the Grass Roots, 1949, Uni. Of California Press.

Selznick, P. Leadership in Administration, 1957, Evanston, Ill. Row Peterson.