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**DECENTRALIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT:
THE FORM AND SUBSTANCE OF
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**



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DECENTRALIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT:
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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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I. INTRODUCTION

The dominant focus of discussion concerning international assistance for development has been the issue of providing for the basic needs of the poverty stricken populations of the Third World. This concern has been reflected in the official policies of international assistance agencies and private foundations and in the work of various institutions and individual scholars. Among the more prominent of these orientations are the "New Directions" policy of the United States Agency for International Development, the "Growth with Equity" stance of the World Bank, and the "Basic Needs" strategy of some of the other United Nations agencies, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO). A similar stress on the satisfaction of basic needs is found in the proposals for "Another Development" by the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, and in what John Friedmann and Clyde Weaver have termed "Agropolitan Development."

My colleagues at the Regional Planning and Area Development Project provided valuable insights and advice during the preparation of this paper, in particular Leo Jakobson and Keshav C. Sen and our editors Mari Segall and Deborah Schmidt.

These strategies differ in many details. However, all call for extensive decentralization of political, administrative, and economic systems in the developing nations. Despite its high profile and the general acceptance of its relevance to the development debate, decentralization is surrounded by both conceptual and functional ambiguity. There is a lack of consensus over the meaning of decentralization and over the interrelations of decentralization in the political, administrative, and economic fields. Moreover, although a number of beneficial consequences are associated with decentralization, the causal process by which these benefits are produced is not clearly articulated.

Most of the development strategies mentioned above tend to approach the subject of decentralization from the perspective of the effects of the system on the surrounding environment. They diagnose the problem of development as the product of oppressive, inequitable and rigid social and governmental structures. The remedy, therefore, is to create the obverse of what they perceive conditions to be. Decentralization, for many of the proponents of these strategies, becomes at once the means to effect the remedy and the essence of development itself. The rationale for many of the recommendations for decentralization, however, derives from the ideological orientation of proponents, rather than from empirical evidence of the benefits that have been generated by decentralization.*

Despite the rhetorical allegiance given to decentralization, most development strategies are designed to enhance the ability of central authorities to mobilize and direct the employment of resources at the local level and to constrain the ability of local entities to act in ways not in keeping with the wishes of the central government. Samuel P. Huntington (1968:1) wrote in 1968 that "the most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government, but their degree of government." Current development strategies tend to give a great deal of lip service to the forms of social organization, particularly government, and justify themselves in terms of rectifying the forms of social organization. However, the substance of these strategies invariably deal primarily with the amount, rather than the form, of social organization.

A perspective that is generally neglected in discussions of development is the role of decentralization in the effective functioning of the system itself--the contribution which decentralization makes to the achievement of the objectives of the system under various environmental

* In this regard I share the view of Bengt Abrahamson who observed in Bureaucracy or Participation (1977:31): "Different theories view the functions of bureaucracy differently, and oftentimes their evaluations of the role of the administrative system vary considerably. It is precisely this fact that makes a synthesis of the debate on bureaucracy so exceedingly difficult. That is, the 'evaluations' of bureaucracy are at the center of the different theories, and it is these very evaluations which are often at variance with one another."

conditions. This perspective is the product of a body of literature, loosely termed "organization theory." This paper argues that the adoption of an organizational theory perspective will help to provide development theorists and practitioners with a more realistic appreciation of the potential of decentralization to contribute to the achievement of developmental objectives.

A major source of ambiguity in many of the current development strategies is the way in which social and behavioral reform are related to development. In some cases these phenomena are identified with one another, and in other cases social and behavioral reform are made the prerequisites for development. One frequently finds terms such as injustice, alienation and under-development used almost interchangeably. The greatest emphasis, however, seems to be placed on the necessity for achieving major modification in social structures and individual behavior before development can be realistically pursued.

A number of inconsistencies are found in many of these strategies which put their use as models for operational development programs into question. One of the most important inconsistencies centers on the role of decentralization. Decentralization is at once portrayed as a means of permitting the poorer elements of society to resist the exploitative power of the elite and as the means by which the central government can mobilize the population for developmental goals. The creation of linkages between the government and the people, which is a critical element in most development strategies, may be necessary to permit the mobilization of the people. However, it is more likely that these linkages will enhance the control of the central government over the people than that they will facilitate access by the people to government decision makers. Linkages are needed for development, but their existence does not guarantee upward communication. On closer examination, it becomes evident that underlying virtually all current development strategies is a belief in the need to enhance the capacity for social control. Related to this is the general acceptance of the need for guidance by an elite. In other words, current development strategies propose organizational arrangements which are no less paternalistic than those they seek to replace. Moreover, their claims to possess more moral and socially conscious goals do not justify the conclusion that the consequences of adopting these strategies will be any more salutary for the populations of the developing countries than maintaining the goals presently held in these societies.

Despite the contention that development must be an endogenous process, and that the goals of the Western industrial nations should not serve as models for Third World nations, most of the development strategies reflect largely the concerns which have arisen in response to the social and political problems of the industrialized nations. These strategies are no less ethnocentric than their predecessors of the 1950s and 1960s.

Most of the development strategies have as one of their components the enhancement of social solidarity, the creation of a collective mentality in place of the alienated and self-centered mentality which is alleged to be the rule in most developing countries. In these strategies a spontaneous

collective will is seen as the force that will make development occur. The awkward issue that is skirted in these strategies is the manner in which this collective will is to come into existence. For the most part these development strategies envisage an indefinite period of social learning under the direction of a moral and intellectual elite in order to engender this collective mentality. However, if the people of the Third World are so alienated that they are unable to recognize the common good, one must ask what would prompt them to adopt and submit to a tutelary elite. Since there certainly cannot be any internal motivating force, the impetus must be external. Underlying many of these development strategies is the implicit recognition that their implementation depends on a political revolution which will eliminate the existing power structure and make possible its replacement with one more socially conscious. Predicating development on the chance that a revolution will occur and that it will progress in the direction required is extremely myopic because it renders the proponents of development impotent until this one precondition is fulfilled.

II. DECENTRALIZATION AND FIELD ADMINISTRATION - AN OVERVIEW

A. DECENTRALIZATION

A useful way to characterize political and administrative systems is to describe the degree to which their constituent elements are autonomous. The term "centralized" describes a system in which one element is subordinate to another element or elements. To the extent that the elements are autonomous, the system may be characterized as "decentralized." These terms, however, are relative and describe only degrees of interrelatedness. No system could be completely centralized or decentralized.

The terms centralization and decentralization may also be used to refer to the process of transition in which there is change in the degree of interrelatedness and autonomy of the various parts of the system. Centralization would imply a lessening of the autonomy of constituent parts, while decentralization would mean an increase in their autonomy and a rearrangement in authority relations.

There is a tendency to characterize centralization and decentralization as "opposite tendencies on a single continuum" (Fesler 1968:371). Neither of these extremes can be achieved in practice, but at a particular point in time a political or administrative system may be described as tending in one or the other direction. Employing polar opposites as descriptive terms results in misleading oversimplification because it suggests that centralization and decentralization are mutually exclusive--that an increase in decentralization can take place only with a corresponding decrease in centralization. David K. Hart provides a more useful characterization (1972:605). Hart argues that "decentralization must take place within a previously centralized environment. It is not just the opposite of centralization, which would be anarchy, but represents a third alternative." Such a distinction is useful because it permits one to conceive of cases where decentralization and centralization are both occurring within the same organization. For example, an organization might decentralize one part of its operations, such as marketing, while centralizing another, such as manufacturing. However, determining whether such a change represents an increase or a decrease in the overall degree of organizational centralization would be difficult. In fact, making such a determination would likely be irrelevant in the absence of a specification of the impact of the change on the achievement of organizational objectives. There are also numerous instances where central governments have decentralized parts of their administrative apparatus for the purpose of incorporating previously autonomous jurisdictions under their control. France during the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte, Thailand in the late nineteenth century, and Japan following World War II are prominent examples of this phenomenon (Hoffmann, 1959:123; Bunnag, 1968:165-167; McNelly 1972:190). Thus decentralization of one aspect of a system may further the centralization of another aspect.

B. FIELD ADMINISTRATION

A central government may employ several modes of organization in carrying out its responsibilities. It may, like the United States Government in the early nineteenth century, rely on local governments to administer some of its functions. On the other hand, a central government could choose to administer its functions directly by employing its own officials--either sending them or stationing them where needed. The creation of a permanent "field service" composed of central government officials (Fesler 1949:50) is properly a form of administrative decentralization, whereas reliance on a subordinate or local government for the performance of a central government function is best termed delegation or devolution, depending on the degree of responsibility transferred. Throughout the world the use of a field service is the most common form of decentralization employed by national governments.

Two variants of field administration are generally recognized. These are the prefectural and functional patterns. The first is based on a division of national territory into areas and the appointment in each area of an official--the prefect--to supervise government activities within that area. The second is based on a division of governmental activities along sectoral lines and the establishment of ministries or agencies with responsibility for particular sectors. Under the functional pattern, each ministry or agency establishes a field service to suit its own functional requirements and capabilities. The areal subdivisions of one ministry often will differ from those of other ministries. In practice, a combination of prefectural and functional patterns is frequently found.

The prefectural pattern has historically preceded the functional pattern and has been associated with the establishment or maintenance of national unity and control over local elites. The prefectural pattern also tended to arise in periods when governmental activities were rather minimal--consisting largely of the maintenance of law and order, and revenue collection. However, as national governments began assuming responsibility for more functions, the predominance of the prefectural pattern was challenged. In order to function effectively, officials with expertise in various fields must be permitted to operate freely, but this inevitably interferes with the ability of the prefect to direct and coordinate the activities of the officials in the prefecture. Moreover, many functions cannot be organized conveniently within the confines of a given territorial jurisdiction. Forestry, irrigation, and disease control, for example, frequently involve areas larger than a single jurisdiction or parts of several jurisdictions. As a result, ministries and other sectoral agencies often set up areas of operation that did not conform to the pattern of prefectural control.

The tension between these conflicting objectives cannot be resolved without favoring one over the other. It frequently happens in prefectural systems that the prefect is given considerable responsibility for coordinating representatives of sectoral agencies, but is not provided with the means to fulfill these responsibilities (Meksawan 1961; Chapman 1955). Ultimately, the degree of coordination which is achieved often results from the persuasive personality of the prefect or the imperatives of local conditions. To some extent these problems can be addressed by a greater delegation of discretionary power and budgetary resources to administrators in the field, particularly the prefect, to facilitate the coordination of government activities.

Delegation of discretionary power in an administrative system, however, introduces other problems characteristic of politically decentralized systems, especially the difficulty of integrating policy along the vertical axis. The ability of the central government to implement a nationwide policy would be jeopardized, for example, if lower governmental agencies could adopt policies or practices that conflicted with those of the national government. Even in instances where subordinate jurisdictions might adopt policies that ostensibly conformed with national policy, inconsistencies would inevitably arise in the interpretation and

implementation of these policies (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). Such inconsistencies would not necessarily be due to conflicts in aims, but merely to the nature of the policy-making process. Porter and Olsen (1976: 81) have noted that because of the complexity of managerial technologies and the judgmental character of policy making, effectively decentralizing managerial and policy-making functions is very difficult "unless the intent is to divest the central level of the function entirely." Thus, while it may be desirable to decentralize responsibility in particular instances, it is not necessarily a feasible course of action.

III. STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN ORGANIZATIONS

The degree of centralization or decentralization is distinct from the scope of activity of a political or administrative system. A highly centralized system, for example, may undertake relatively few functions. The absolute monarchies of the ancient world, for example, often were responsible only for such matters as defense, external trade, or the provision of certain infrastructure. Although authority was centralized, such regimes were rarely involved in the daily lives of their populations; and local elites far from the capital city often could act with impunity.

In contrast to these earlier systems, both centralized and decentralized systems at the present time perform a vast array of functions that have a direct and daily impact on their citizens. Moreover, as the number and variety of functions have increased, the size and complexity of the

administrative systems have also grown apace. Bengt Abrahamson (1977: 92), among others, has noted that "the growth of large, complex organizations is one of the most distinctive characteristics of modern society and something which separates it from feudal societal forms." Frequently, the increased size and complexity of contemporary organizations is associated with ever-increasing centralization.* However, it is evident that change in political and administrative systems is not necessarily unidirectional. Decentralized organizations become more centralized and centralized ones adopt decentralized modes of operation. Given that change in either direction is possible in principle, it becomes important to identify the factors contributing to movement in one direction or the other.

The factors which influence change in organizational structure in the direction of greater or lesser centralization can be grouped into two categories. The first category consists of those factors concerned with organizational adaptation to changing environmental conditions in order to permit the organization to pursue its primary or explicit goals more effectively. In this case it is necessary to assume that organizations have goals and that they can be identified.** The second category consists of factors which affect structural change in an organization, not to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals, but for the purpose of bringing about social and behavioral reform in the environment which surrounds the organization. Such structural change might be a response to the spillover effects of an organization on other organizations or the society in which it exists, or perhaps the impact which the organization has on its own members.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTATION INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

The most developed discussion of the Category I determinants is contained in the literature on the theory of organizations and in the literature on business administration. Analysts working in these fields have identified a number of factors which have an important bearing on structural change, particularly on the degree of centralization.

* A significant portion of the pressure to adopt decentralized modes of administration and government stems not from dissatisfaction with the high degree of centralization itself, but rather from what is seen as excessively large organizations against which the individual is powerless. This issue will be examined in greater detail later.

** Some scholars, such as Amitai Etzioni (1964:9-12), have objected for analytical reasons to the attribution of goals to organizations. Etzioni argues that formal or initial goals of organizations are often supplanted as a result of power conflicts in organizations, and that as a result of normal organizational functioning new goals may emerge which are not compatible with original objectives.

These factors are: the environment of the organization (specifically those elements of the environment which are related to task performance; the technology available to the organization (production technologies and environment monitoring technologies); and the existing structure and goals of the organization (Thompson 1967; Aldrich 1979; Simpson and Gulley 1962; Downs and Mohr 1979; Reimann 1973; Chandler 1962). Although various opinions are expressed, there seems to be a consensus among analysts that the type of structure adopted by an organization is a function of the nature of the task environment which it faces and the nature of the production and monitoring technologies that are available to it (Thompson 1967: 71-73).

Environments may vary in their degree of complexity and in the rate and predictability with which they change. The more complex the environment is, the more it is necessary for the organization to create subunits to deal with particular portions of the environment. The differentiation of administrative systems along sectoral lines is one example of this phenomenon. By compartmentalizing concern for particular segments of the environment, organizations render it more comprehensible and enhance their ability to achieve their goals. If the environment of an organization changes rapidly or in unpredictable ways, it becomes difficult for the organization to respond in a timely fashion. Were the changes significant in nature--that is, threatening the achievement of organizational goals--the organization would likely adopt a decentralized structure in order to improve the response time of the organization and the appropriateness of responses to unique local circumstances.

A significant change in the environment, given a particular technology, would require the organization to adapt structurally in order to continue to pursue its objectives. A change in the available technology, on the other hand, may permit or require a structural adaptation better-suited to the interdependencies between the organization and its environment. For example, the use of the computer has permitted faster processing of information and better-informed decision making. As a result of this new capacity, previously decentralized organizations have been able to centralize certain aspects of their operation such as accounting, sales, and planning. On the other hand, shifts in market distribution, coupled with new production technologies, may make possible a decentralization of manufacturing--resulting in lower shipping costs or faster response to customer orders.

The importance of the organizational theory perspective briefly sketched here is that it is not biased toward centralization or decentralization. Rather, the adoption by an organization of either alternative could be appropriate, depending on the particular pattern of environmental conditions, technological capability, and organizational objectives which exists at a given time.

1. Obstacles to Change. The perspective on organizational change presented above is appropriate for explaining medium and long term change in organizational structure. It does not discount the often arduous and wrenching experience such change entails. Nor does it discount the fact

that even when a change is warranted there may be many obstacles, some potentially insuperable, to effecting the change.

Alfred D. Chandler (1962:316), among others, has observed that "historically, large corporate or bureaucratic hierarchies rarely re-form themselves." There is a wide variety of factors which inhibit adaptive behavior in organizations. Among the more frequently mentioned are the inherent conservatism of organizations; resistance by those who will be disadvantaged by the change; lack of awareness of the need for change; lack of resources needed to implement the change; the multiplicity of organizational goals; and the psychological, financial, political, and ideological investment already in the existing structure (Kaufman 1969: 9-10).

The prospect of a major change in the structure of an organization is a source of uncertainty for its members. While the appropriateness of the change for addressing a particular set of problems may be well understood, the ramifications of the change in other areas may not be perceived as clearly. Such a situation greatly complicates the decisions of organizational leaders because they are deprived of a complete standard of evaluation. While some benefits are known, the risks are not always clearly defined. The inhibiting effect of unknown risks seems to be related in part to the amount and character of the resources available to an organization. McNulty (1964:310), for example, has observed that the management of organizations with large resource bases tend to be less averse to taking risks than the management of organizations which have access to more modest resources. With a substantial resource base an organization has a better chance of responding to contingencies, rectifying misjudgments, and surviving errors.*

Uncertainty may also arise outside the context of organizational goals. Organizations develop status and reward systems in the course of their operation. Major structural change threatens to affect the distribution of these rewards in unpredictable ways. Hence, we observe the tendency of members of organizations to prefer stability, with a lower probable level of benefits, over an uncertain future which may or may not be an improvement over the present (Crozier 1964:207).

Organizations change constantly. Incremental modifications are made in policies or operating procedures, and nonpurposeful change may be introduced as people join and leave an organization. Ideas and fashions from the surrounding society may effect marginal modifications in organizational behavior. Many of these changes are subtle and may go unnoticed. However, such changes may accumulate over time until they begin to affect organizational behavior in significant ways.

* Herbert Kaufman (1971:29) suggests that the opposite may also be true. He says, "It may be added that rich organizations not uncommonly find themselves even more immobilized than poor ones because the former have invested so much in the status quo. They may be locked into the present by their assets, for their assets also represent sunk costs."

Major purposeful changes, such as structural reorganization, are less frequent. In part this may be due to resistance by those who stand to lose benefits because of the change. On the other hand, the need for change may not be apparent or may be perceived differently by different decision makers. Differences are likely to arise over the type of change needed. This condition has led a number of analysts to contend that major change can only be precipitated by a crisis that affects the entire organization in a forceful way and which threatens the survival of the organization (Crozier:196; Baum:75-81). The rationale offered is that crisis dissolves existing loyalties to the given structure because of the overriding concern for survival. In the fluid situation created by the crisis, members of the organization become receptive to new organizational relationships. Alternatively, J. Kenneth Benson (1977:7) suggest that "in crisis periods, when thoroughgoing change is possible, participants may see their interests more clearly and conform their ideas and actions closely to them."

Alfred Chandler (1962:105) makes a related point in a somewhat different way. Chandler argues that organizational structure follows organizational strategy. He cites the case of a major corporation which adopted a new strategy of diversification, but retained its original organizational structure until the corporation experienced a financial crisis. The new structure it adopted actually had been proposed a year before the onset of the crisis. However, it required the crisis to demonstrate conclusively the inadequacy of the old structure to a sufficient number of leaders to make the change possible.

Although organizational structure may follow organizational strategy, it may be as difficult for an organization to change its strategy as it is to modify its structure. Miles and Snow (1978:155), for example, argue that "there are forces in an organization's environment that inhibit major shifts in the organization's strategic behavior." As Thompson (1967:28) pointed out, an organization does not determine its domain unilaterally; each of the major actors in its environment (customers, suppliers, competitors, regulatory agencies) builds up its own expectations concerning the role that a given organization has played and will or should play in the future. For example, in a situation where people have traditionally looked to the government for the provision of certain services, the government may find it extremely difficult to introduce "self-help" alternatives to the provision of these services.

Part of the difficulty with adopting new organizational patterns also may be due to what Reimann (1973:462,471) refers to as the principle of "equifinality."* This principle suggests that there may be a number of different organizational structures ostensibly appropriate to the achievement of a given end. Thus, in the absence of clearly recognized

* The concept of "equifinality" was proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who noted with regard to the self-regulating features of biological systems that a final normal adult state may be reached through a variety of developmental paths. Problems of Life (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960) p. 142.

criteria on which to base a choice of structure, leaders may postpone a decision until the force of circumstances compels them to act.

It was noted above that the onset of a crisis crystalizes the organization members' appreciation that the existing situation is undesirable, and makes them receptive to change. The recognition of the need for change, however, is not necessarily translated into change itself. Various factors may intervene and condemn the organization to a protracted period of crisis. Though the organization leaders may appreciate the inadequacy of their existing organization, they may not perceive an alternative. Chandler (1962:299,319) also notes that major change frequently is not possible without a sweeping replacement of the old leaders with a new generation of leaders who are not conditioned to think in traditional terms and who do not have their loyalties tied to existing organization patterns. On the other hand, the proper course of action may be clear to everyone, but the organization may lack the resources required to effect the change. It should not be assumed that there is necessarily a structural modification (if only it could be found) to remedy any problem which an organization might encounter. A bankrupt corporation or an impoverished country can have a structure appropriate to its environment, yet be unable to act effectively. This point should be kept in mind in evaluations of the failure of many developing countries to decentralize their political and administrative systems despite an almost universal determination by international assistance agencies and scholars that such a change is required for these countries are to develop economically.

James D. Thompson (1967:118) recognized this problem and observed that

organizations in transitional societies may have less success in matching discretionary abilities with needs for discretion, for in such societies the educational institutions may not attach primacy to the preparation of decision makers, and only a minority may receive the appropriate education. Shortages of those equipped to exercise discretion result in a tendency for organizations in transitional societies to be centralized, bureaucratic, and inflexible. Frequently, these complaints focus on the behavior of field offices as contrasted with headquarters. In contrast with organizations in fully geared societies, these characteristics appear irrational; in their contextual realities, however, they may be quite rational.

One might add that Thompson's explanation serves to offset the commonly held view that resistance to decentralization in developing countries stems principally from the desire of elites to maintain their dominant position or from some culturally rooted inability to delegate authority.

Developing nations face another problem with regard to decentralization. That is, for decentralization to occur, first there must be a substantial degree of centralization or unity in the system. Many of the developing states are still in the process of unification, and the formation of a national identity among their populations. Precipitous

or premature attempts at decentralization might result in the dissolution of the system.* Gunnar Myrdal has referred to these nations as "soft states." In such states, he argues, there is a general lack of social discipline, and their governments are either unwilling or unable to impose on their societies the obligations which are needed for economic development and social modernization (Myrdal, Asian Drama, vol. II:779, 895-900). In other words, many Third World countries may not be able to decentralize effectively, and at the same time may be unable to exercise their central authority.

Early international assistance programs sought to attack directly the issue of resource scarcity. Major financing was provided for hydro-electric and thermal power stations, rural electrification, irrigation, transportation networks, and communications systems. Efforts were made to upgrade and elaborate administrative systems and to train the personnel to staff them. Programs also were undertaken to improve governmental revenue-generating capacity and to promote the growth of the industrial and commercial sectors in many Third World nations.

Other initiatives, involving the infusion of substantially smaller amounts of foreign assistance, sought to mobilize the resources latent in the vast rural populations of these countries. Various types of community development, basic education and self-help schemes were introduced in the 1950s and 1960s (Braibanti, 1976:74-75; Holdcroft, 1978).

More recently, particularly over the past decade, development strategies proposed by international assistance agencies and students of development have acquired a new character. Instead of stressing technological and capital inputs to improve the administrative and economic systems, these strategies have emphasized programs to deal directly with the problems of the poor and to attempt to satisfy their "basic needs." Integral to these strategies is the requirement that they be accompanied by a major decentralization of the political and economic systems of Third World nations and by the widespread participation of their populations in the process and in the benefits of development.

At a superficial level, the requirements for decentralization and popular participation may be seen as organizational modifications for the purpose of making the political, administrative, and economic systems more adaptive and enhancing the likelihood of their successfully achieving their objectives. However, the reasons for mandating these changes go beyond a desire to improve organizational performance. In fact, in many cases, the rather undisguised purpose is precisely the opposite--to inhibit the effective operation of existing organizations.

* This problem is not unique to developing states. Peter Guervich has noted with regard to France that "over the past thirty years, all the more far reaching schemes for reform of the geographical division of powers in France have failed." Guervich concludes that "the most important of the general causes of the persistence of centralization is that France remains a sharply divided country" (Guervich 1977:71).

B. SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL REFORM INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Abstractly, either centralization or decentralization could be an appropriate means to remedy the adverse effects of organizational activity. It is decentralization, however, that in recent years has most often been proposed to correct these detrimental effects.* Several streams of influence have converged to produce the widespread acceptance of the need for decentralization and popular participation in rural development.

Underlying the proposals for decentralization is a conviction that organizational structure determines the behavior of people in organizations, as well as the values they hold, and that by manipulating organizational structure it is possible to change both behavior and values in predictable ways. In these proposals there also tends to be either an explicit or implicit identification of decentralization with democracy--or, more accurately, "participatory democracy."

1. Objectives of Decentralization. Proponents of decentralization often claim that it will benefit rural development by simultaneously accomplishing two objectives. First, they claim it will lessen the influence of central authorities, who are characterized as unaware of or unresponsive to the needs of the rural population. In this instance, decentralization is considered to make possible more accurate assessment of needs, faster and more appropriate responses to these needs, and, generally, a more sympathetic concern by officials for the condition of the rural poor by bringing the focus of decision making closer to the point where decisions are to be implemented. Second, they argue that decentralization will stimulate and make possible the participation of the rural population in their own governance and in the solution to their own economic problems.

Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw (1975:XIX), for example, have argued that a policy of decentralization which includes popular participation in development efforts would accomplish three objectives:

- (1) Small producers would be enabled to raise their incomes through their own efforts.
- (2) Enough jobs would be created to employ the rapidly expanding work force.
- (3) Economic efficiency would be maximized by reliance on labor-intensive investment rather than on machine-intensive investment.

* In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries centralization was widely pursued by political and social reformers. Among the reasons given for pursuing the centralization of state administrative systems at that time were greater efficiency and a more just distribution of burdens among administrative agencies; the rationalization of the actions of increasingly interdependent agencies; and the furtherance of the social ideals of democracy by increasing administrative accountability. (See Samuel P. Orth 1968; William A. Rawles 1968; and John Archibald Fairlie 1968 on centralization in three states.)

Proponents of decentralization for rural development see other advantages as well. Among these are: improved psychological well-being for rural poor (Whar in Loehr 1977:293; Wahidul Hoque et al. 1977:15-19), strengthening the political voice of small farmers (Mickelwait 1979:147), and creation of better linkages of local communities with regional and national centers (Uphoff et al. 1979:30).

Participatory democracy, which is seen by some proponents of decentralization as a logical progression from popular participation in rural development, cannot be achieved without some form of decentralization. However, the mere fact of decentralization does not mean that democratic processes will emerge. More than decentralization is required. As David K. Hart (1972:607) has noted, "the commitment to democracy must precede the commitment to decentralization, if the latter is to be instrumental in promoting the former. To promote decentralization without that prior commitment can lead to unforeseen and sometimes anti-democratic results." It is not clear that such a commitment exists in many of the societies of the developing world. Given these reservations, it is necessary to look more closely at the origins and evolution of the emphasis on decentralization and popular participation in order to evaluate their relevance for rural development and development planning.

The rapid industrialization of Europe in the early nineteenth century, and the mass society that accompanied it, heightened the concern in intellectual circles for questions of social order on the one hand and the plight of the individual in the industrial world on the other. Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim helped to illuminate the individual alienation and the weakening of the social fabric that accompanied mass society, and the consequent need to restore order. At the same time, a philosophical orientation centering on existentialism and phenomenology was emerging which approached the question of the individual and his relation to others from a nonempirical or subjective perspective.* Though superficially opposed, these two orientations have become allies in redefining the meaning of development. Their influence is pervasive in discussions of development at both the theoretical and practical levels.

The two major issues to arise from discussions of alienation and social disintegration were an avid interest in "social control"—the means for organizing mass society--and the enrichment of the lives of individual human beings. The organizational or structural arrangements (the social control issue) which are required to make human enrichment possible have had the highest priority. Lenin saw the need for a revolutionary "vanguard" to lead the masses in the right direction. In the capitalist world as well, the deterioration of social solidarity was attributed in great measure to the absence of adequate leadership. Elton Mayo became convinced early in the twentieth century that the training of leaders

* Two writers from the existential-phenomenological orientation have been very influential in the redefinition of the concept of development. These are Martin Buber and Herbert Marcuse, and their contributions will be discussed later.

B. SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL REFORM INFLUENCES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Abstractly, either centralization or decentralization could be an appropriate means to remedy the adverse effects of organizational activity. It is decentralization, however, that in recent years has most often been proposed to correct these detrimental effects.* Several streams of influence have converged to produce the widespread acceptance of the need for decentralization and popular participation in rural development.

Underlying the proposals for decentralization is a conviction that organizational structure determines the behavior of people in organizations, as well as the values they hold, and that by manipulating organizational structure it is possible to change both behavior and values in predictable ways. In these proposals there also tends to be either an explicit or implicit identification of decentralization with democracy--or, more accurately, "participatory democracy."

1. Objectives of Decentralization. Proponents of decentralization often claim that it will benefit rural development by simultaneously accomplishing two objectives. First, they claim it will lessen the influence of central authorities, who are characterized as unaware of or unresponsive to the needs of the rural population. In this instance, decentralization is considered to make possible more accurate assessment of needs, faster and more appropriate responses to these needs, and, generally, a more sympathetic concern by officials for the condition of the rural poor by bringing the focus of decision making closer to the point where decisions are to be implemented. Second, they argue that decentralization will stimulate and make possible the participation of the rural population in their own governance and in the solution to their own economic problems.

Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw (1975:XIX), for example, have argued that a policy of decentralization which includes popular participation in development efforts would accomplish three objectives:

- (1) Small producers would be enabled to raise their incomes through their own efforts.
- (2) Enough jobs would be created to employ the rapidly expanding work force.
- (3) Economic efficiency would be maximized by reliance on labor-intensive investment rather than on machine-intensive investment.

* In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries centralization was widely pursued by political and social reformers. Among the reasons given for pursuing the centralization of state administrative systems at that time were greater efficiency and a more just distribution of burdens among administrative agencies; the rationalization of the actions of increasingly interdependent agencies; and the furtherance of the social ideals of democracy by increasing administrative accountability. (See Samuel P. Orth 1968; William A. Rawles 1968; and John Archibald Fairlie 1968 on centralization in three states.)

did not keep up with changes in the character of society. Mayo observed in 1933 that "we do not lack an able administrative elite, but the elite of the several civilized powers is at present insufficiently posted in the biological and social facts involved in social organization and control" (1946:169-170). In light of World War I, the production of this new leadership was a question of national survival, according to Mayo. He noted: "Better methods for the discovery of an administrative elite, better methods of maintaining working morale. The country that first solves these problems will infallibly outstrip the others in the race for stability, security and development" (Mayo 1946:171).

Morris Janowitz (1978:39-41) notes that by the 1920s the issue of "social control" had become a major concern in American sociology and that this concern has persisted to the present time. The objective of this concern, according to Janowitz, was to bring "into focus the regulatory arrangements of society with a complex division of labor" (Ibid, p. 9). Through the use of a holistic approach, employing a broad spectrum of variables, advocates sought to define and explain the functioning of social structure so that the undesirable and alienating aspects of society might be reduced.

The concern with enriching the lives of individuals and reducing their sense of alienation led to a search by sociologists and psychologists into the foundations of human happiness and satisfaction. Early thought saw these foundations in the associational needs of people and the work they contribute to society. Mayo clearly articulated this orientation. He argued that

it is probable that the work a man does represents his most important function in the society but unless there is some sort of integral social background to his life, he cannot even assign a value to his work. Durkheim's findings in nineteenth century France would seem to apply to twentieth century America (1946:131).

Mayo's work and that of others in the human relations school of social psychology have tended to maintain that individual and organizational goals are not necessarily antithetical, and that the attainment of organizational goals can be enhanced, if the associational needs of their members are met.* This view was countered by another which was concerned with development of the entire person, rather than merely with associational needs. Drawing heavily on Abraham Maslow's (1954) five-tiered typology of human development which progressed from the satisfaction of needs for survival, safety, association, esteem and self-actualization, adherents of this new orientation argue that large organizations with their elaborate hierarchies prevent the individual from achieving the satisfaction of higher needs. They further argue that these organizations undermine the psychological health of their members and pose

* For important examples of this school of thought see Argyris (1964), Likert (1961), and McGregor (1960), as well as Mayo (1945).

dangers for those outside of the organization. Mass society and large scale organizations are seen to generate widespread alienation, political impotence and economic deprivation (Schumacher, 1974; Riesman, 1950). The remedy proposed for these evils is extensive decentralization of social, political, and economic institutions. Decentralization would produce smaller organizations, fewer hierarchical levels, and a more comprehensible and hence controllable universe.

2. Decentralization of Political and Administrative Systems. Much of the political thought in early American history favored small government and local control of local issues. It was felt that freedom was endangered by monolithic government and that the traits of good citizenship could only be acquired when citizens participated in the politics of their communities. Such participation was facilitated by small communities.

However, as the size and complexity of American society grew during the nineteenth century, the need for expert and honest management of affairs became more apparent. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a widespread movement to reform the civil service and government in general gained strength and was highly successful in transferring many areas of governance from the political to the administrative sphere (Orth 1968; Rawles 1968; & Kaufman PAR 1969 p. 3). Centralization came to be seen as a means to protect democratic principles.

The calamities of the Great Depression and the Second World War accelerated the accretion of power to the federal government from local jurisdictions. This process gained additional strength through the civil rights and minority rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of which the autonomy of local jurisdictions was reduced substantially in the name of nationally held concepts of justice and equity.

Many of those who supported accomplishments in the area of civil rights were concerned at the same time that the individual was being subsumed in mass society and that the access of the newly enfranchised to necessary services was being impeded by a burgeoning and unresponsive administrative system (Marini 1971; Kaufman 1969 pp. 6 & 14; Harrington 1962).

This situation led to two types of proposals for decentralization, often made by the same people. One type of proposal was made by a group that has come to be known as the "radical democrats."* This group urged the democratization of all, or as many as possible, of the institutions in society. Their view was based on the expansion of the political system from its traditional confines to include all aspects of life. Of particular concern to them was the workplace, where people spend so much of their time and around which their lives to a large extent seem to revolve.

* Two of the major exemplars of this group are Peter Bachrach (1967) and Carole Pateman (1970).

Proponents of this view argue that people should be encouraged to take part in the decision processes in these institutions, and that the institutions should be changed to accommodate such participation. Participation is seen as providing people with a sense of control over their own lives, thus reducing their alienation. Furthermore, participating individuals would derive satisfaction from their achievements; this would contribute to their psychological development. It is readily apparent, however, that the solutions envisaged by this group are far from constituting a radical restructuring of the political and social systems. Peter Bachrach acknowledges that for practical reasons "participation in political decisions by the constituencies of private bureaucratic institutions of power could not be widely extended on those issues which primarily affect their lives within these institutions" (1967:95).

Proposals such as this are merely palliatives for some of the negative symptoms that arise from living in a highly organized world. They do not substantially change the structure of the economic and power relationships in society, but merely attempt to make them more tolerable. Both Bachrach (1967:103) and Pateman (1970:186-187) express the belief that as people take part in local decisions their interest in the affairs of the wider community will grow. However, this development is contingent on the prior creation of many other factors, and is actually more a prophecy than the result of their analyses. In contrast Robert Blauner (1964), another strong proponent of the position of the radical democrats, argues that most workers would not really want to take an active part in making high level decisions in their organizations, but would rather defer to the senior management.

Modification of local institutions might mitigate the symptoms of alienation, but does not necessarily reduce subordination as a fact. An important problem which is not addressed by members of this school of thought, with its focus on the impact of society on the individual, is what the effects of these modifications would be on the society at large. Would members of one local organization promote their organization's and their own interests at the expense of broader societal concerns? Would they possess the knowledge and experience to make decisions on technical issues? The complexity and comprehensiveness of the issues facing even a moderately sized organization do not differ substantially from those confronting a complex government. While participants might derive satisfaction from their participation, there are no assurances that the quality of their decisions would be better than those reached by other means, and there are no assurances that the effects would be more salutary than those obtained by the previous pattern of organization.

Another argument for decentralization is that it would promote citizen access to governmental and administrative systems which had grown too large to take account of differences in individual needs and situations. This type of proposal is represented most clearly by the War on Poverty and Model Cities initiatives in the middle and late 1960s.

In the literature surrounding the War on Poverty and the Model Cities initiatives of the middle and late 1960s, it was argued that decentralized systems would be more responsive and responsible to their clients, and that the needs of the people would be met more satisfactorily because the people would contribute to making decisions on programs and services which affected them. Moreover, as in the arguments of the radical democrats, it was expected that citizen participation would offset the feelings of helplessness, frustration, bitterness, and powerlessness which were thought to be increasing in society (Michael Harrington 1962; Adam Herbert 1972:623; Moynihan 1969, 16-17). However, the extent of participation and the areas in which it might be exercised are very indeterminate because the decentralization which makes participation lacked firm foundations. Take for example a proposal by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. The Commission proposed that "neighborhood initiative and self-respect be fostered by authorizing counties and large cities to establish, and at their discretion to abolish, neighborhood subunits endowed with limited powers of taxation and local self-government" (1968:21). It is apparent that decentralization as seen by the commission is rather insubstantial. In the first place, counties and cities must be authorized by some higher power, and then they are to establish and abolish local units as they see fit. The local entities are thus absolutely dependent on the will of at least two superior levels of government. Rather than lessening the feelings of alienation, such an arrangement could very easily engender heightened symptoms of dependency.

Owens' and Shaw's thesis in Development Reconsidered (1974) is very similar to those of the socio-psychological and radical democratic theorists mentioned above. They perceive the citizen as standing alone against the government, weak, alienated, and reluctant to work with others. The objective of their proposals is to make the individual feel well by fostering a feeling of belonging, which will then be used to induce the individual to work for the purposes of the overall society. While Cohen et al. (1978) see popular participation as a means to decentralize power and lessen the oppressiveness of elites, Owens and Shaw, in effect, argue for a means of making elite dominance more tolerable in order to generate mass efforts in the pursuit of societal goals, which are perforce elite-defined goals.

What Owens and Shaw propose is actually a reincarnation of the emphasis on stability contained in early community development efforts (an emphasis criticized by Cohen, et al. p. 2) cloaked in contemporary progressive jargon. If Owens' and Shaw's study was as influential on the revision of Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act as Donald M. Fraser (House Foreign Affairs Committee) indicates in his foreword to their book, then the contention in Mickelwait et al. (1979:2) that the "New Directions" mandate of Congress was more radical than the "War on Poverty" must be reconsidered.

IV. RELEVANCE OF DECENTRALIZATION AND PARTICIPATION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Proposals to decentralize the political and administrative systems of developing nations are strongly based on the conviction that rural populations have been the victims of exploitation and inattention by central governments and entrenched elite classes. Decentralization and participation are seen as the means to redress this situation and provide rural societies with an equitable portion of national (and perhaps global) wealth. If local power is not created, proponents of decentralization argue, then central governments and powerful elites will continue to neglect these areas (Another Development 1975:14 & 15; Cocoyoc Declaration 1974:95; Uphoff et al. 1979:28-29; Mickalwait et al. 1979:199).

The issue of decentralization and popular participation, however, is clouded by the failure of much of the development literature to distinguish between these goals as means to stimulate rural development and as ends in themselves. If popular participation is in itself desirable, and if decentralization is needed to permit this participation, there is really no need to tie them to the question of rural development, except insofar as such development can serve as a vehicle (or Trojan horse) for introducing them into developing nations. On the other hand, if decentralization and popular participation are seen as means to promote rural development, the causal connection must be defined precisely. Their necessity or relative advantage over other means of promoting rural development must also be demonstrated. It is not sufficient merely to claim that previous attempts at development--the "trickle-down" approaches--did not produce the desired results. In the case of current development strategies the order has been reversed--the requirement for decentralization and participation has preceded the demonstration of their utility for development.*

Part of the rationale underlying proposals for decentralization and participation is based on the assumption that the closer the level of decision making is to a problem, the more accurate will be attempts to solve the problem. However, also underlying this issue is a change in the way rural populations are viewed. Instead of being seen as bound by tradition, ignorant, and dependent on governmental tutelage, they are increasingly viewed by development theorists as rational and responsive to opportunities for economic advantage, and thus capable of contributing meaningfully to decision making on rural development (Moerman 1968:185-189; de Wilde 1967:64; Weeks 1970:32). That peasants generally act rationally cannot be seriously questioned. However, what actually is more important to many of the proponents of development strategies is not the rationality of the rural populations, but rather the types of choices they are likely to make, if left to their own devices. This concern derives in part from the identification of underdevelopment with alienation, the self-centeredness that attends it, and the loss of social solidarity in the nations of the Third World. Kusum Nair also sees the types of choices as most important. Arriving at this conclusion from a different direction, Kusum Nair dismisses the discussion of peasant rationality as pointless. For her the central issue is how to insure that agricultural land is used effectively. She asks, "Why then is it regarded as moral and mandatory to accord special dispensation, license, and freedom from all restraints and responsibility, to the 'tradition-bound' peasants of India and other developing countries struggling to modernize agriculture?" (1979:xxi) For Nair, compulsion, not persuasion, is the tool for changing behavior. She remains committed to economic development and to societal well-being ahead of individual well-being.

* There is considerable evidence from both domestic and foreign experience that the efficacy of decentralization and participation in engendering development must be seriously questioned. (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973; Colembiewski 1977:1501; Ingle 1979:23-24; Rondinelli 1980:68; Joel Snoff 1979:30; Moynihan 1969).

In the main, however, the rationale underlying current development strategies has shifted to an emphasis on human development--both in the sense of selfactualization and in the sense of increasing humanness or releasing the innate goodness of man. In a study of rural development sponsored by the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation* in 1977 it is noted:

The concept of development is presented in this study in terms of fundamental human values rather than narrower techno-economic notions of development. The core of this concept is the alienation of man vis à vis the material forces of production and society, and a purposeful growth of human personality (Development Dialogue 1977:11-12, and "The Perspective;" emphasis added).

Similarly, the Cocoyoc Declaration asserts:

Above all development includes the right to work, by which we mean not simply having a job but finding self-realization in work, the right not to be alienated through production processes that use human beings simply as tools (Development Dialogue 1974:91).

More recently, Friedmann and Weaver (1979:195-196) in their discussion of the basic conditions of "agropolitan development" state that

it is freely cooperative relations that are the well-spring for an active life. They release new energies, generate new ideas in practice, and are capable of transforming what would otherwise be burdensome chores into work that is joyful.

* The Dag Hammarskjold Foundation of Uppsala, Sweden, is an organization with close ties to the United Nations and affiliated agencies. Since the early 1970s it has prompted an approach to international development which seeks above all to develop the human personality to its highest state. The theory underlying this attempt at personality development rests on a process of interpersonal definition of meaning and value which is drawn to a large extent from the philosophy of phenomenology. Martin Buber, a prominent phenomenologist, has called this process "dialog" and has explicated it in numerous works. This idea is graphically represented in the title of the Foundation's journal Development Dialog. However, the connection between the Foundation's perspective and the phenomenologists becomes even clearer when its choice of name is considered. Of course, as a prominent Nordic statesman, Dag Hammarskjold might be expected to be memorialized in a manner such as this. In fact, however, Hammarskjold was a strong supporter of the phenomenological perspective. Maurice Friedman notes in his introduction to Martin Buber's Between Man and Man that "when Dag Hammarskjold's plane crashed in Northern Rhodesia, the Secretary General of the United Nations had with him the manuscript of a translation that he was making of Martin Buber's I and Thou.... Dag Hammarskjold repeatedly nominated Martin Buber for a Nobel prize in literature" (Between Man and Man 1964:XIII).

Thus for Friedmann and Weaver, it is the context of the social relations of individuals which gives significance to their work and hence to their lives. In this regard they echo Elton Mayo (1946:131) who asserted in 1933 that work was man's most important function in society.

The solution proposed by most strategies to the problem of development, whether it be seen in terms of psychological or economic issues, is to create communities and a sense of community by devising new and more meaningful patterns of social organization. Owens and Shaw (1974:xvii), in a book that was influential in changing the emphasis in United States aid policy in the early 1970s, begin their discussion by expressing their desire to seek a "humane strategy of development" (1974:xvii). According to Owens and Shaw,

the solution of the problem of those who for centuries have been "wholly overlooked" begins with organization. Hence, the first step in development is to organize the mass of the people in relatively autonomous local institutions and to link these institutions with higher levels of the economy and society. People can be expected to invest in a modern economy only when they are part of it and can benefit from it (1974:14).

Organization provides the mechanism through which the people can participate in the life of their society, and it is through participation that their sense of alienation is transformed into one of belonging.

From many of the development strategies one gets an initial impression that they are aimed at strengthening the poor so that the poor will be in a position to redress injustices that have historically been inflicted on them by avaricious or unconcerned elites. According to Uphoff et al. (1979:28-29): "The purpose of organization is to empower local people to enter into program activities and direction on more nearly equal terms with the administration than they can as unorganized individuals."

Cohen et al. (1978:2) take issue with earlier development strategies such as community development, noting that, "to some extent, an emphasis on community harmony and getting quick results led to acceptance of local power structures and continued domination of activities and benefits by local elites." The implication of this statement is that the local power structure must be bypassed or removed, and that popular participation is the means to do this.

Again, Mickelwait et al. (1979:147) observe that a bottom-up approach to development may not be a cure for all of the problems of underdevelopment, but nevertheless argue that "it can strengthen the voice of small farmers, who have all too often been 'silent partners' in what should be a dialogue with decision makers in the upper tiers of the political/administrative hierarchy. In making their voices heard, populations become subjects rather than objects (or 'targets') of development."

Owens and Shaw (1974:xx) are critical of the fact that "the tradition of the few ruling the many has been justified, however unwittingly, by Western economists." Finally, Friedmann and Weaver (1979:206), in explaining the origins of their "agropolitan development" strategy, which stresses local organization and popular participation, claim that "incipient beginnings can be found in both Europe and North America, as in Spain's regional movement or the struggle for territorial autonomy in Quebec."

Each of these strategies speaks of giving power to the masses so that they can begin to have political influence and thereby protect themselves against oppressive elites. In fact, none of these strategies has in mind the enfranchisement of the masses or permitting the masses to determine the direction in which their societies ought to proceed. In particular, the nature and operation of Friedmann and Weaver's "agropolitan districts" have nothing whatsoever in common with the regional movements in Spain or Quebec.

Most of the proponents of these strategies eventually admit that what they are advocating is not democracy. Their objective is organizing the masses in order to reestablish communal solidarity and at the same time to control the population so that each person will work for the common good of the entire society, rather than for his own selfish interest. What is really behind the prescription of Owens and Shaw is revealed by their statement that "participation is not synonymous with democratic government. Rather, participation, including a sense of belonging, is the distinguishing characteristic of modernizing governments" (1974:14).

It is also the characteristic of modernizing governments that they seek not to redress the inequality of power in the system (which is a fundamental principle in Owens' and Shaw's argument), but rather to enhance the overall amount of power (the capacity to do things) in the system (Huntington 1968:144).

The sense of belonging is vitally important to these strategies, and because this sense is a product of popular participation, participation becomes the core of their strategies. In their critique of the idea of development Owens and Shaw claim that their discussion "sets forth a new strategy of development - a strategy in which participation by all the people is both the means and the end to development itself" (1972:xix).

Drawing on Oscar Lewis' observation in La Vida (1965) that what the poor want is a "sense of belonging," Owens and Shaw (1972:7) express the conviction that*

in a modernizing society, the relationship between government and people can evolve in the direction of mutual confidence and respect. Some measure of social stability can be achieved as people begin to feel a "sense of belonging."

* One of those most responsible for generating a concern with the question of alienation in the Third World has been the anthropologist, Oscar Lewis.

Mickelwait et al. (1979:198) view popular participation primarily as a way to insure that area development projects are well designed and to facilitate two-way communication between those administering an area development project and the intended beneficiaries. However, they do not propose broad local autonomy with regard to issues not involved with the area development project.

Political autonomy is prominent in the discussion of "agropolitan development." However, in the hands of Friedmann and Weaver it becomes virtually an empty concept. "The political autonomy of agropolitan districts," they assert, "is a fundamental principle..." (1979:203). However, a qualifier is immediately attached which eviscerates any substance which might have been attributed to this fundamental principle

Where conditions of equal access to the bases of social power are established as they would be in agropolitan society, a community may rightfully express a general or territorial interest. The territorial interest, then, becomes in every case controlling over subordinate, including corporate decisions. This holds true for all levels of territorial integration (1979:204).

In other words, "territorial interest," when expressed by a more encompassing unit of aggregation, dissolves any autonomy which the agropolitan districts are alleged to possess. Friedmann and Weaver attempt to give substance to their notion of local autonomy by portraying a situation in which the interests of one territorial unit are kept in check by the autonomous status of other units in the system. One gets the impression of a federation of independent units reconciling their differences through negotiation. However, their argument (1979:204) that "the reach of territorial authority is indeterminate and only checked by the opposing territorial power of other units" is totally specious. In accordance with the agropolitan structure, the degree of

who in various works popularized the concept of the "culture of poverty." This idea was transferred to the industrialized world and became a major premise of the United States "War on Poverty," particularly through Michael Harrington's The Other America. However, Lewis's notion of alienation was applied principally to the urban setting, and Lewis himself doubted the degree to which it was valid for rural society. Moreover, the culture of poverty theory is premised on a discontinuity between the great tradition of a society and the traditions shared by the masses of common people. Those who are enmeshed in the culture of poverty are those who have accepted the values of the modern sector of their society, but cannot participate in the lifestyle of this sector. The rural peasantry who preserve their traditional value structure and way of life do not share the culture of poverty even though their living standards are lower than those of the modern sector, because they do not aspire to the way of life of those in the modern sector. For Lewis, poverty alone is not sufficient to engender a culture of poverty (La Vida:xlii and 1).

territorial power of a subordinate unit is a function of the "general will" of the most comprehensive territorial entity; it has no permanence or natural foundation of its own. This is merely another way of describing the unitary state. Since unitary states have historically found it virtually impossible to decentralize, one must question what impetus would lead them to do so under an agropolitan system.

Underlying the agropolitan approach and the other strategies as well is the objective of forging an integrated social and political system which is capable of undertaking meaningful development initiatives. Uphoff et al. (1979:30), for example, observe that "the emphasis in promoting rural development participation is not on local autonomy but on linkages between national centers, and local communities that are mutually determined." Initially, the authors envisage the creation of organizations or associations by which local people can gain better access to administrators and which can "empower [them] to enter program activities and direction on a more nearly equal footing with the administration" (pp. 28-29). Such linkages in themselves do not constitute a power base. Moreover, rather than empowering the masses, such linkages could as easily serve to enhance the ability of the state to control their behavior. Studies of clientelistic political networks in Italy and Latin America indicate that these mechanisms are reasonable effective in enabling national and local political leaders to mobilize and control large numbers of people for political purposes (Powell 1970:413-415). Since in many cases individuals participating at the local level will not have a strong resource base of their own, the manner in which the linkages perform will depend largely on the purposes and organizational skills of national and subnational leaders.

Later in their discussion Uphoff et al. (1979:69) appear to premise their objective of popular participation on the creation of autonomous political entities at the subnational level. They caution that administrative decentralization by itself is not an adequate stimulus to participation. Rather, political decentralization is the ingredient needed for popular participation to flower. The authors observe that "for increasing popular participation, devolution of authority, giving lower echelon elected officials greater power, is more promising than administrative deconcentration." The logic of this recommendation is that these elected officials would be more accessible to the people and therefore more readily held accountable. It is obvious, however, that for elected officials to be held responsible they must have discretionary power; and to have such discretionary power, they must be autonomous at least for some functions. However, autonomy in itself is not a sufficient condition either to induce participation or to promote economic development; in fact, it might just as well have the opposite effect. For local elected officials to be held accountable, it is necessary for them to have the capacity, as well as the right, to exercise their discretionary authority in an effective way. Such resources may be local or supralocal, but the greater the reliance

on higher echelons for resources, the more the autonomy of the local unit must be questioned.

Although frequently couched in terms of transferring power from the elites to the masses, all of the major development strategies have as their real objectives satisfying what have come to be called the "basic needs" of the population, as well as providing for an equitable distribution of the benefits of development. The decision to address the needs of the poor in a more direct way is reasonable given the general consensus that indirect approaches have not been successful in raising the living standards of the majority of the people of the Third World. As a policy statement, however, it differs little in its goals from earlier approaches to development (Morawetz 1977:7 and 8). The fundamental difference in the direct approach is its identification of the problem of development with inequity and alienation. Poverty, the proponents of this approach argue, is a direct product of the political, economic, and social inequality in the developing nations. Proponents also often claim that the condition of underdevelopment is perpetuated by the inequality between the Third World and the industrialized West (the dependency theory of underdevelopment) (Griffin and Khan 1972:ix; Griffin 1974:73-78, 81; Lipton 1977; Chilcote and Edelstein 1974; Jackson et al. 1979:13).*

The significance of this definition of the causes of poverty lies in the remedies which the definition implies. Since the problem of poverty and the maldistribution of benefits allegedly results from the entrenched hierarchical order in Third World societies and the powerlessness and alienation it generates, the solution largely tends to be seen in the elimination or reduction of relationships based on status and the minimizing of distinctions in political and economic power. Among the means proposed to achieve this objective are a basic restructuring of the political system along collectivist lines and the redistribution of national wealth. The poor would then be able to participate in determining their own futures. Although the various development strategies discussed here frequently raise the issues of local autonomy, power to the people, and popular participation, the inescapable conclusion in these strategies is that a high degree of state control over the behavior of citizens and residents is the sine qua non for progress toward improving the lives of the masses of the poor. Far from representing a turn away from elitism, the major approaches to development actually require elitism for their successful implementation. The difference is that the new elites are expected to have a high degree of social consciousness.

* For a provocative rejoinder to Lipton (1977) see D.W. Atwood (1979) with respect to poverty and land distribution in India. Atwood (p. 495) argues that "there has been a considerable amount of mobility, upward as well as downward, among families with all sizes of landholdings and even among families with no land at all. Some of the poor have become richer. The other conclusion is that land has not tended to become concentrated in fewer hands." This does not imply that poverty is being substantially reduced, but it calls into question some of the causative factors alleged to produce it.

This need for elite guidance and state (or 'collective') control is evident from the emphasis put on the psychological and behavioral, rather than material, aspects of underdevelopment. The "Another Development" approach draws heavily on the social-psychological literature dealing with alienation in American society in order to discredit American society as a model for the development of the Third World. In the view of the proponents of this approach, the United States has little to offer in the way of nonmaterial goods. Advocates of "Another Development" suggest that Third World societies (those which have met the basic needs of their people) have a

social solidarity and conviviality--richer than that known to most members of the lonely crowd in the affluent nations. There is no need for the Third World to imitate the impoverishing models that produce one-dimensional men and women (Development Dialogue 1975:34).

The reliance on two major critics of American society, David Riesman and Herbert Marcuse, is clearly evident in this quotation. The reliance on Marcuse is particularly revealing with regard to the likely role for an intellectual, moral, and esthetic elite in the development of the Third World.

Marcuse is particularly appalled at the waste, the garishness, the offence against "good form" which he finds in the United States and which he sees as a result of "mass" society. A culture, in his view, which protects privacy and freedom of thought (a quality of a developed personality) "can become democratic only through the abolition of mass democracy" (1964:Ch. 10 passim. and p. 244). The implication is clear that only those persons with developed personalities merit the protection of freedom of thought, and that mass democracy inhibits the emergence of a developed personality. Marcuse argues that

the goal of authentic self-determination by the individuals depends on effective social control over the production and distribution of the necessities.... Here technological rationality, stripped of its exploitative features, is the sole standard and guide in planning and developing the available resources for all... as a truly technical job, it makes for the reduction of physical and mental toil. In this realm, centralized control is rational if it establishes the preconditions for meaningful "self-determination" (1964:251).

Like Marx and Hegel before him, he holds the will of the people to be pre-eminent, but this will is to be divined by a paternalistic elite. The alienating model of industrial society should not be emulated, if one wishes to develop the capacity of the individual to appreciate the truly good things in life. Moreover, until this capacity is realized, individuals must not be left alone to satisfy their unenlightened appetites.

Friedmann and Weaver draw the philosophical inspiration for their strategy of agropolitan development from the writings of Lewis Mumford and several

other humanists, who, like Marcuse, see the suppression of human spirit in mass capitalistic society (Friedmann 1979:31-34; Mumford 1956:120,132,169). Like "Another Development," Friedmann and Weaver's theory begins with basic needs. They proposed in 1977 that "basic needs were taken as starting point for organizing the domestic economy according to a cellular principle whose smallest, self-governing unit was the agropolitan district" (1979:171). However, it is clear from their discussion that, while they want to eliminate physical suffering, they also want to ennoble human life by diverting men from the single-minded pursuit of material satisfaction. This is reflected in their discussion of the satisfaction of human needs, which closely parallels that of Maslow and Mumford. Friedmann and Weaver (1979:193) contend that "to the extent that certain needs are satisfied, higher needs come into being. Needs extend beyond survival; they are coterminous with the meaning of life." Up to this point they are merely paraphrasing Maslow. "But," they add, "the choice of priorities among competing needs is a collective one." The inference to be drawn from this conclusion is identical to that which was noted in Marcuse and which also flows from the prescriptions for participatory democracy by the radical democrats and the adherents to "Another Development." That is, while the satisfaction of human needs is a desirable goal, the ordinary people themselves cannot be trusted to choose the right course for its achievement.

Though most people are not capable of making proper choices, with training and supervision, a socially beneficial set of values can be instilled. In their discussion of "selective territorial closure," which refers to a policy of modified territorial self-reliance, Friedmann and Weaver say:

It means to rely less on outside aid and investment, to involve the masses in development, to initiate a conscious process of social learning, to diversify production, and to pool resources. It means learning to say "we" and to assert a territorial interest (1979:195).

The logical corollary to this view is that if the individual says "I" instead of "we" then he is sick--still suffering from the pathology of alienation--and hence in need of therapeutic treatment. However, it is not merely the education of individuals to comprehend the values of society that is the objective, but rather the education of an entire society to recognize what is truly in its own best interest. Only when an entire society acquires this comprehension would the process of development be successful and the need for elite guidance be eliminated. Lewis Mumford in The Transformations of Man (1956:189) has eloquently described the inevitability of this transformation at some indefinite time in the future. Mumford argues:

This basic ideological change and personal transformation have long been underway. But the obstacles in the way of a worldwide emergence of unified man are formidable; for the energies that will make it possible cannot be brought to the surface by any purely rational means. As with the early Christians one must prayerfully watch and wait.... When the favourable moment comes and its challenge is accepted, thousands and tens of thousands will spontaneously respond to it, stirred by the sense of fellowship the moment will produce.

Until this spontaneous outpouring of collective-mindedness occurs, of course, it will be necessary to maintain the tutelary and control apparatus intact.

It is common for proponents of current development strategies to warn against the mechanical transfer of Western premises to the process of development in the Third World. However, when one looks at these strategies closely, it is evident that they are rife with the philosophical premises and practical wisdom of the industrialized West. Even the claim that it is necessary to reject the experience of the West is itself a derivative of the West. This is particularly evident in the emphasis put on the need for popular participation to counteract the detrimental effects of hierarchial relationships. It is also evident in the various formulations of what Friedmann and Weaver have termed "selective territorial closure" (1979:194-195). For them territorial closure refers to "a policy of enlightened self-reliance at relevant levels of territorial integration." While in principle territorial closure would operate at the subnational level, it is, in their view, particularly important at the level of relations between states, where "it means to rely less on outside aid and investment."

The proponents of "Another Development" define development in a similar fashion.

Development is a whole; it is an integral, value-loaded, cultural process; it encompasses the natural environment, social relations education, production, consumption and well-being. The plurality of roads to development answers to the specificity of cultural or natural situations; no universal formula exists. Development is endogenous; it springs from the heart of each society, which relies first on its own strength and resources and defines in sovereignty the vision of its future (Development Dialogue 1975:7).

The implications of this orientation toward development are clear. First, development is whatever a society or its spokespersons say it is, and no outsider has the right to contest the definition. Second, since development is nonteleological, there can be no meaningful comparison of one country with another. Therefore, it is misleading to suggest that the Third World is behind or below the standard of the West. No standard exists to warrant such a judgment. Third, this orientation mandates the severance of intrusive ties with outside influences so that an authentic manifestation of the inner potential of the society may occur. It is at this point that the phenomenological orientation to development and the Marxist emphasis on class conflict coincide. According to the former, all societies have the capacity to develop. Therefore, to the extent that development does not occur, it must be because external forces are preventing it.*

* Any assertion that underdevelopment is the result of some inadequacy in cultural or psychological composition of a society--such as a lack of achievement motivation--is branded as "blaming the victim." Whatever

The Cocoyoc Declaration of 1974 asserts that the problem of development today

is not one of absolute physical shortages but of economic and social maldistribution and misuse.... Much of the world has not yet emerged from the historical consequences of almost five centuries of colonial control which concentrated economic power so overwhelmingly in the hands of a small group of nations (Devel. Dial. 2 (1974):88-89).

This control also is alleged to be reflected in the development programs of some of the major international assistance agencies. Friedmann and Weaver (1979:169), for example, literally accuse the World Bank of hypocrisy in its development policy. After noting that the members of the World Bank "could be expected to be fundamentally at odds with transnational imperialism," they observe that the World Bank adopted "a rhetoric which suggested a great affinity with radical, territorially based policies ... but adopted policies and programmes that ... were more in line with the evolving doctrine of the transnationals."

The solution to the problem of the dependency of Third World nations is structurally similar to the solution proposed for the internal problems of these nations. The solution is to subordinate each of the actors to an overarching authority that would be able to prevent any of them from behaving in a manner deemed inimical to the collective interest. This result is to be achieved by restructuring the international system and subordinating it to a global regime based on a resuscitated United Nations (Development Dialogue 1975:9-10).*

The criticisms which have been levied at earlier approaches to development--particularly those based on diffusionist or "trickle-down" principles--have pointed to the past ineffectiveness of large scale capital transfers from the industrialized to the developing world. Most current development strategies have not, however, abandoned the call for these transfers. Both the Pearson Commission Report of 1969 and the Brandt Commission Report of 1980 call for massive infusions of capital into the Third World (Partners in Development 1969; North-South 1980). Likewise, the more radical strategies, such as the "agropolitan" or ILO-related

social pathologies exist are attributed to the alienation produced by subordination within an oppressive hierarchy. Vera and Santoya criticize general development theory for calling for changes in peasant culture and attitudes. They argue that "this theory should be held suspect, if for no other reason because it allocates the blame for underdevelopment, backwardness and dependency on its best identified victims" (1978:611).

* It is hardly surprising that the proponents of this type of solution are for the most part affiliated with the United Nations itself.

approaches, make a similar demand for massive amounts of resources to be provided to meet the basic needs of the poorest strata of society. The requirements in the more radical strategies that development be endogenous and that the vestiges of external control be eliminated make it necessary that these capital transfers be in the form of untied grants instead of categorical grants or loans based on developmental requirements as perceived by outsiders.

V. CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that the role of decentralization in contemporary strategies of international development reflects the influence of Social and Behavioral Reform rather than Organizational Adaptation factors. This seems to be a direct result of the widely shared belief that the root of underdevelopment lies in the overall character of the social, institutional, and administrative structures in various societies.

The remedy tends to be seen in a fundamental revision of these social structures to prevent one portion of the population from profiting at the expense of the other portions. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that underlying these development strategies is an adherence to

what Foster (1965:296) has called the "image of the limited good."* Decentralization is put forward as the mechanism by which power (defined as the ability to acquire a share of available resources) is equalized throughout the society.

Although the various strategies emphasize decentralization, each is actually more concerned with centralizing power and increasing the overall amount of power of the state. All the strategies accept as a basic premise Myrdal's characterization of the "soft state" and the lack of civil order in these societies which Lucian Pye (1966:8) has described as "loosely structured." In this regard the development strategies of the 1970s are substantially the same as their predecessors from the 1960s in terms of the consequences they seek and the methods they deem appropriate.

The various strategies contain conflicting prescriptions which make it difficult to understand how the new systems would operate. On the one hand, there are calls for local autonomy and for permitting people in local communities to hold officials responsible. On the other hand are stipulations that local decisions not deviate from what the overall society deems appropriate, and that the most important requirement for development is the forging of linkages between the various levels of the society. What the proponents attempt to portray is a kind of federalism within the framework of the unitary state. In all cases it is the unitary principle that dominates, for local level entities are denied any source of real power. As noted earlier in the paper, experience suggests that, unless a government completely turns over a function to a local jurisdiction, it is almost impossible to decentralize responsibility for performing the function. Since decentralization has always been difficult for a unitary state, one must ask what impetus would prompt states to decentralize.

Largely unarticulated in current development strategies, but nonetheless apparent, is the virtual necessity for nations to undergo political and social revolution in order for these strategies to be implemented. One of the principal reasons adduced for employing a strategy of decentralization and participation is that this will undermine the existing elite structure. Since it is unrealistic to expect the elite to faithfully adopt a strategy designed to destroy their domination or acquiesce in their own displacement, the only practical alternative is to achieve this end by force. While revolution or social upheaval is quite likely in many countries, history suggests that the outcome of such events is highly unpredictable. Uphoff et al. (1979:67) admit as much when they note that "it takes a revolution to shift power bases significantly." However, they immediately acknowledge that even revolution may be a futile exercise, noting that "post revolutionary regimes have found the formerly powerful still enjoying certain advantages, because of their education, residual status, or political skills." Peter Guervich (1977:84) points out that decentralization tends to be promoted by factions out of power who, upon coming into

* Foster (1965:311) notes that this image is characteristic not only of peasant societies; "it is found, in one degree or another, in most of all socio-economic levels in newly developing countries, and it is, of course, equally characteristic of traditional socialist doctrine" (emphasis added).

authority, find central control too useful a tool for maintaining their position to be relinquished. In other words, a revolution may not eliminate the prerevolutionary elite; even if it does so, the postrevolutionary elite may be no more willing to share power with the masses than were their predecessors. Perhaps, as Uphoff et al. (1979:68) suggest, the elite will make concessions out of "enlightened self-interest."

Ultimately, the proponents of these development strategies, particularly those of the neo-Marxist or utopian school but others as well, can adduce no force stronger than the people's collective recognition that it is in their interest to work together. This assumption is particularly inconsistent with the notion of collectivist society, because it is through participation in this society that the people were to acquire the collectivist mentality in the first place.

Although current development strategies warn against the indiscriminate use of Western models, all of these strategies have arisen in the West. Moreover, these strategies are founded on philosophical principles which emerged from Western experiences with industrialization and mass society.* Despite their claims that development strategies must arise from the particular experience of each country, each incorporates the assumption that the causes of underdevelopment are identical everywhere.

Current development strategies also caution against employing a teleological definition of development. Nevertheless, all of them assume that Third World countries should emphasize agricultural production over industrialization. Moreover, they assume that governmental efforts should be oriented to directly satisfying basic needs. Not only are the more recent strategies no less teleological than their predecessors, they have, as Benjamin Higgins (1980:24) demonstrates, retained the same goals as earlier development efforts. The emphasis on decentralization and popular participation in the newer approaches to development is based in part on what are perceived to have been the inadequacies of earlier approaches. This emphasis does not derive from assessments of conditions and needs or from the proven contributions which decentralization and participation are able to make. Moreover, it is clear from many of the formulations that decentralization and participation are seen as ends in themselves, and that their impact in the economic sphere is decidedly secondary to their political and social consequences. However, even in the latter two areas, the benefits are presumed rather than demonstrated. The generally positive connotation of

* A conference report on the implementation of Title IX of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1966 observes: "Popular participation, the concept central to Title IX . . . is an ideal that is deeply rooted in the American culture." The report concludes that "it is no coincidence that Title IX was written into the Foreign Assistance Act at a time when Americans were trying to increase popular participation in the United States itself" (1968:19).

decentralization contributes to the widespread, and often unreflective, assumption that the more a nation decentralizes and the more participation is engendered, then the more development will be realized.

The positive connotation attached to these terms also contributes to obscuring the fact that the substance of most of the development strategies discussed in this paper is inconsistent with the rhetoric that is used to promote them. If implemented as described, these strategies will tend to enhance the centralization of decision making in the political, economic, and social spheres. Moreover, they will increase, rather than diminish, the extent of state control over the people. Participation will serve as a means for implementing, rather than for influencing, the decisions of those occupying major positions in the political apparatus. That participation should manifest itself in this way is inevitable for two reasons. First, the proponents of most contemporary theories of development are not pluralist democrats, but elitists. They have a profound distrust of the proclivities of the masses, and feel that an extended period of tutelage or mass socialization is needed to prepare them to participate in their own governance. Second, while there is in many developing nations a severe imbalance of power between the masses and various economic and political elites, this imbalance is not itself the primary reason for the slowness of development. More important is the low level of power in these nations as a whole. Their lack of organization and internal conduits for marshalling the combined power of the society prevent them from undertaking much activity at all. Mobilizing the people for joint action and providing them with a shared, even if simplistic, view of the future, offers the possibility of generating sufficient power to act.

Decentralization and popular participation are not realistic means for achieving a major restructuring of society. Most of the developing countries do not have the means to bring about significant decentralization and widespread popular participation because their resource base could not sustain these changes. However, in many developing countries, modest decentralization in selected areas, coupled with structured participation, could help to fill some of the interstices in development programming at the local level without undermining the advantages possessed by national line agencies for articulating and undertaking certain large scale development initiatives.

Despite the rhetoric which suggests the need for fundamental restructuring of power relationships, it is this more modest form of decentralization that is ultimately at the core of some of these development strategies. According to Uphoff and Esman (1974:67), decentralized local organizations, the vehicles for engendering popular participation, are meant to serve as channels through which state-supplied inputs, such as information, fertilizer, and credit, can be made available to the people.

This paper has suggested that looking at the question of centralization and its relationship to development in terms of Social and Behavioral Reform factors leads to confusion and inappropriate expectations about the course of development in the Third World. These factors are based on

assumptions of doubtful validity which are applied universally to developing countries. Looking at development in terms of Organizational Adaptation factors, on the other hand, helps to sensitize the observer, as well as those wishing to assist in the development process, to the variations among nations in terms of their legitimate goals, needs, and capacities. Since Organizational Adaptation factors are nonteleological, they do not require one to posit the goals which a nation must pursue, but allow that the meaning of development must inevitably change over time, just as the means for pursuing development must be amenable to change. In contrast to the Social and Behavioral Reform factors, which tend to identify means with ends and thus provide little guidance for effective action, looking at development in terms of Organizational Adaptation factors promotes the realization that there are various routes to this objective depending on where the journey begins and the type of transportation available.

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