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# Some Reflections on Participative Management in Libraries

*Participative management is highly touted as a panacea for the ills—real and imagined—afflicting libraries. Apologists for this managerial strategy often fail to define it adequately, proceed from a number of unwarranted assumptions and suppressed premises in their arguments for it, and overlook some of the consequences that would follow from its implementation. This article examines these assumptions, draws out the premises, and considers some of the possible ramifications of participative management in its various forms in order to arrive at a clear and workable, albeit restrained, understanding of the concept.*

At least since the 1960s there has been a growing realization that the values, needs, and motivations of the work force in this country have been changing. Persons who make up this force are, on the average, better educated, more politically aware, and more socially and economically demanding than their predecessors, i.e., generally more sophisticated and, therefore, less easily managed by traditional controls.[1] The staffs of libraries, which as institutions have more in common with other service and production organizations than many librarians are willing to admit,[2] certainly have not been exempted from this general trend.

At the same time that library managers have been attempting to devise strategies to deal with the changing nature of their labor force, there have been pressures from other quarters as well, the cumulative effect of which is manifest in a new and growing emphasis on library management. Among the problems with which library managers must deal are serious financial shortages; an increasing concern on the part of institutions in authority over libraries with efficiency, cost-benefit ratios, and accountability; and growing patron dissatisfaction with library services.[3] Concurrently, many library administrators face demands from staff members for a more active role in the administration of the library.

It is perhaps indicative of a failure to cope adequately with the circumstances described above that a number of articles have appeared in recent years deploring the present state of library management. Blame is fixed variously on library schools that fail to prepare students for administrative duties; the dearth of literature pertaining to the management of institutions employing large numbers of professionals; the fact that library administrators shirk their responsibilities for providing goals, direction, and leadership in library management.[4]

## Participative Management

Perhaps the most commonly offered solution for such problems is one or another form of staff participation in the management of libraries. One of the first presentations of the case for "democracy in libraries" was made in 1934,[5] and the number and variety of such arguments have been increasing ever since, resulting in a hodgepodge of disparate proposals generally glossed under the rubric of "participative management." One definition of this chimeric term is given by Flener, who states that participation

> . . . basically involves representatives of the staff working in task-oriented groups to recommend possible solutions of library problems to the li-

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brary administrators, to provide for a prescribed system of communication throughout the library, and to promote the means for orderly change within the library system.[6]

But this is by no means universally accepted and, indeed, many writers on the topic do not define the term at all. This mere lack of definition does not, however, dissuade the proponents of participative management from making a number of claims for its efficacy in improving both the lot of librarians and library service as well.

One problem, of course, with using any term as ill-defined as "participative management" is that it is made to carry a tremendous amount of semantic baggage, and persons using such a term will unpack from it just what they want and no more. This has the unfortunate result that any number of people may use the term in question but mean very different things by it, even though at least some of the definitional sets will intersect to a greater or lesser extent.

Thus "participative management" has been used indiscriminately to mean everything from a situation wherein the library management simply seeks information and/or advice from staff members to one wherein the library is governed by plebiscite. To avoid the ambiguity, confusion, and emotion engendered by the term itself, it is advisable to do as Kaplan has done and speak of power sharing when one intends something less than an autocratic or dictatorial managerial style,[7] realizing that the exact nature and extent of such sharing must be specified on a case-by-case basis.

Power sharing always involves delegation, which may range from merely asking for a presentation of the facts concerning a given matter, on the one hand, to instructing a subordinate to take completely independent action on the other. It is important to bear in mind that even though one must delegate both the responsibility for a particular job and the authority necessary for its accomplishment, the delegator remains accountable for the job being done. Since that individual retains the right to retract this delegation, he or she is not completely divested of authority either. Power sharing or delegation, therefore, results in the division of work between vertical levels of an organization and in shared accountability for such work between the delegators and delegates. Delegation emphatically does not, however, simply transfer accountability from the former to the latter.[8]

## Theory Y as a Means of Sharing Power

Power sharing, since it necessarily involves superior/subordinate relationships, may properly be seen as an organizational overlay on the super structure provided by the traditional, pyramidal, administrative structure of libraries;[9] and it is naive to believe or hope that it can extend to the complete abandonment of traditional, hierarchical structure for a one-person/one-vote rule of management as advocated by some.[10] Put another way, "participatory management must become more than a euphemism for shifting responsibility to the members of a committee, or the science of management will not even be an art."[11]

Fortunately, there is available a managerial theory that is fairly specific and steers a middle course between autocracy and anarchy. This so-called "Theory Y" is described as a liberalized managerial philosophy predicated on the assumption that most employees are motivated and responsible workers who will more likely respond to opportunities for satisfaction of personal goals and ego needs than to the conventional carrot-stick management approach. The basic tenet of Theory Y is that such internal self-motivation can, in the proper context, satisfy the employer's organizational objectives more effectively than the usual external threats and inducements of conventional management, while increasing job satisfaction at the same time.

The Theory Y environment is said to encourage employees to feel trusted, appreciated, and responsible, and thereby predispose them to motivation toward accomplishment of organizational goals. To a considerable extent this environment is created through the delegation of as much of the organization's decision-making process as possible, i.e., a form of power sharing. However, any assumption that a Theory Y managerial approach represents a laissez-faire type of administration is contrary to fact, since management by Theory Y necessitates the same authority structure

required by conventional, hierarchical, and top-down strategies. The difference between the two strategies is that in a Theory Y approach the exercise of administrative authority is more remote, subtle, and carefully planned to insure an optimum balance between authority and freedom so employees do not feel overly constrained in their pursuit of personal and professional goals.[12]

## Strengths and Weaknesses of Committees

Although staff morale may improve with the introduction of some form of power sharing, as assumed by Theory Y, it does not follow that high morale will automatically result in improved organizational efficiency; and there is more than a little indication that librarians are experiencing difficulty in dealing with their newfound freedom to participate in library administration, particularly in policy making. In large part, this difficulty may be due to the mechanism often used to achieve such sharing, i.e., the ubiquitous committee.

This is particularly apparent in institutions undergoing a shift from a more or less autocratic regime to some sort of power sharing; for, even though many libraries have traditionally used committees to some extent in seeking solutions to library problems, many librarians are neither familiar with nor comfortable in a group problem-solving situation. The result often is that the product of a committee effort is of lesser quality than what might be desired and what, in fact, could have been more easily achieved through other means.[13]

Even taking what may be the most successful task-group in many libraries, i.e., the personnel or search and screen committee,[14] management by committee is not without its drawbacks. It has been suggested that through serving as members or chairing committees individuals are honored and gain the recognition of their peers. But the process not infrequently suffers from lack of interest, knowledge, and administrative ability on the part of committee members. This lack prevents them from carrying their assigned task to a satisfactory conclusion, even though committee members may spend much time at meetings and away from their primary library assignments.

In spite of the acknowledged costs to the library in hours lost and services not rendered, Harvey and Parr admit that they found no evidence that appointees selected by a search-and-screen committee were in any way superior to those selected by some other means. In fact, it is alleged that some search-and-screen committees, rather than selecting the person best qualified for the position to be filled, opt for a candidate who displeases no one.[15]

In addition to slowing down the selection process while ostensibly doing nothing to improve the result, Harvey and Parr remark that, like other committees, search-and-screen committees serve to diffuse responsibility as well.[16] This is especially interesting when one considers this statement.

> Unless a person can unmistakably identify with the fruits of his labor, there is little chance that any of his higher-level needs will directly motivate his productivity. Any sharing of responsibilities between employees dulls this motivation and increases the opportunities for dissatisfaction.[17]

The above is of particular importance, for it suggests there is a very real danger that the alleged salutory effects of power sharing (i.e., higher staff morale, job satisfaction, and, hopefully, productivity) may well fall victim to the virtually universal committee structure employed to implement it. This seems likely, since if there is anything they consistently do, it is to diffuse responsibility.

The literature on participative management in libraries seems conveniently to overlook the counterproductive force that governance by committee can exert on a library staff. It does not take adequate account of the fact that the product of committee work often may not completely please anyone on the committee, and no one can—nor in some cases would be willing to—take individual responsibility for the outcome.

Thus the committee structure, while it facilitates consultative and advisory processes between staff and administration,[18] nonetheless, carried far enough, denies the feeling of individual responsibility and accomplishment so important to morale and motivation. But, more than that, it places effective administration in double jeopardy. In addition to increasing opportunities for

staff dissatisfaction, such collectivization makes accountability impossible. In the usual case there is no way in which a higher authority, such as a college or university administration, can effectively hold a committee as such responsible for the consequences of its decisions, however unfortunate.

This latter problem is particularly apparent in an especially pernicious model of power sharing whereby the professional staff of a library, acting as an assembly, would set policy but then formally turn over responsibility for its implementation, i.e., accountability, to the library administration.[19] The effect of such a plan is, of course, to create a situation wherein the policy-making body can act with complete impunity since it will not and cannot be held accountable for the policies it sets. I shall not trot out the parade of horribles that contemplation of this proposal brings quickly to mind. Anyone with a modicum of intelligence and imagination can, without effort, conjure up the dire consequences of such a strategy.

## Librarians as Professionals

One reason why these arguments seem to have been consistently swept under the rug is that some form of power sharing is, at present, widely believed to be the only means of dealing with problems engendered by the presence of large numbers of "professional" employees in a heteronomous organization. The mystique of professionalism serves as a cornerstone for most recent discussions of managerial style in libraries.

"Professional," like "participatory management," is a term without a clear and univocal definition. Drucker, however, gives what is probably as useful a definition of "professionals" as any when he asserts that they are "people who are more interested, and should be, in their profession than the institution—people who look upon the institution very largely as a place that enables them to practice a profession."[20]

In the same vein, Shaughnessy points out that professionals desire autonomy in matters affecting their work and career and seek to identify with their occupational group as opposed to the institution or organization within which they practice. Attainment of these objectives, he points out, would necessarily give professionals "a real, as distinguished from symbolic, voice in determining some of the policies of the organization in which they work."[21]

If librarians are, in fact, professionals, then it follows that some considerable amount of power sharing will constitute a necessary condition of their successful employment in libraries. However, the major premise is at least open to question. Some authors[22] argue that there are real and significant differences between the training required of a librarian and that of professionals in most other fields; e.g., to be a "professional" librarian one needs only complete a relatively brief formal training program, is not required to participate in an internship, and does not need to pass standardized examinations before being admitted as a full-fledged member of the occupational group.

When one considers the foregoing in conjunction with Drucker's judgment that, in general, many individuals in so-called professions are overtrained given the nature of their actual responsibilities, and specifically that librarianship may well have overdone the formal qualifications for membership,[23] then there is considerable justification for the view that librarianship, along with such fields as education, nursing, and social work, might better be categorized as a semiprofession. This argument is based on the fact that the vast majority of practitioners in these fields work in organizational settings and are not independent, autonomous agents as are those who have traditionally been accepted as professionals.[24]

The claim of librarians to professional status seems still less valid when one realizes that much of the work required to operate a library is little different from that which goes on along most assembly lines. Drucker speaks of the incredible amount of "donkey work" required to maintain order in a library,[25] while others have taken note of the routine, repetitive, detailed procedures that make up the bulk of work in most libraries.[26] Although Drucker's characterization of library work is, perhaps, unnecessarily pejorative and provocative, there is a good deal of truth in his assertion.

Support for this heretical view of library work appears in a recently published study of the ways in which academic librarians are

perceived by students. A survey of students at a midwestern university disclosed that they generally associated librarians with a reference function and most often believed that "the librarian is 'trained' or 'skilled' rather than 'educated' or 'professional.' "[27] In addition, the authors learned that although students assume that there are educational requirements for academic librarianship they most often do not perceive librarians as possessing a specialized educational background or subject expertise. Given this view, it is not surprising that the investigators also learned that students generally found it difficult to differentiate between professional and other staff in the library and were indifferent to the distinction so long as their needs were met.

It is also significant that even though the students in this study generally equated librarians with reference librarians—perhaps the paradigm of librarianship in the minds of librarians themselves—they still did not see librarians as "professionals."[28] This sort of evidence lends credence to the view that the professional status of librarians is largely only self-ascribed.

## COLLEGIALITY

But whatever the merit, or lack thereof, of arguments proceeding from the premise of "professionalism," the movement toward power sharing of some sort in libraries continues. One of the common strategies for achieving this end in academic libraries is that of a collegial organization of the library, wherein it becomes an academic unit of the parent institution and is organized accordingly, usually as prescribed by the faculty constitution or some other like document. While it is easy to understand why academic librarians might want collegiality as an organizing principle—being immersed, as they are, in an institution the most prestigious elements of which are so organized—this approach is nonetheless not without problems. The collegial model represents a radical departure from organizational principles which have governed and continue to govern libraries of all sorts (i.e., a hierarchical, bureaucratic model) and will, therefore, place a good deal of stress on the institution that must adapt to it.[29]

Generally, the push toward collegiality is predicated on the assumption that faculty in academic departments have considerable autonomy and exert a significant and direct effect on the administrative decision making of the parent institution as well as their own departments. Evidence indicates that faculty members already operate in an environment that is hierarchical and considerably less than completely democratic,[30] and, moreover, that heteronomy in institutions of higher education is increasing.[31]

From this it may be argued that librarians who look to the collegial model as a replacement for hierarchical, bureaucratic structure and a mechanism for assuring individual autonomy in matters pertaining to their employment will almost inevitably be frustrated and disappointed. On the other hand, insofar as the collegial model does facilitate individual autonomy, it has been argued that the effects can be deleterious even to the teaching function of an academic faculty. This comes about since such autonomy can, and often does, result in the student's exposure to an unintegrated body of information that he or she is left to turn into a liberal education.[32]

Consider then for a moment the consequences of imposing a mode of organization on libraries that may have essentially the same effect on their mission as it has on the teaching faculty's. As a group the latter can function, to some extent, in a haphazard and uncoordinated manner, as most students are able to make up for themselves what is lacking in the system; i.e., they can, perhaps with the help of knowledgeable librarians, fill in the gaps in the information with which they are presented in their various courses and integrate the separate elements into what can reasonably be called an education.

The stuff of which libraries are made, however, i.e., nonsentient records of knowledge, are inert in this respect and can do nothing to make up what may be lacking in the library's processing system, for example, nor to coordinate and integrate the manifold subsystems of which a modern library is composed. Libraries are essentially complex and sophisticated logistic systems, and library materials are passive objects, not active subjects. This being the case, either materials are moved through a coordinated

and integrated system from publisher to patron, or nothing happens at all.

Libraries, then, are nothing if not organizations; i.e., a library is or should be a "systematized whole . . . a body of persons organized for some purpose."[33] Thus, "organization" as it applies specifically to libraries may be defined as "the means by which management channels and directs work flow through operating units; establishes lines of authority, supervision, and control; and coordinates relationships for the accomplishment of the goals for which the library exists."[34] Such a definition is inherent in the description of library management as "all those administrative and supervisory activities in which goals and policies are formulated for the organization or its subdivisions, in which organizational plans are made, and in which the work of others is directed, monitored, and corrected as needed."[35]

But the above can seemingly only be achieved by centralizing ultimate decision-making responsibility and authority; for, given the complexity of libraries, it is only persons occupying relatively high-level administrative positions who can perceive and understand the organization as an integrated whole. Such perception and understanding are necessary for realistic definition of the library's goals and objectives and for informed assessment of what each element must do to achieve these goals. Therefore, except for very small libraries, only centralized decision making can provide the consistency, leadership, and direction necessary for the establishment and attainment of a library's goals.

The requisite coordination and integration of the systems which taken together make up a library can only be achieved through a hierarchical authority structure; and it follows from this that collegial organization is inappropriate to libraries since persons filling positions within a chain of authority as is required for effective administration of a library must submit to decision making, coordination, and control from above in the interest of organizational efficiency.[36] This is, of course, the antithesis of collegiality as usually understood.

## Managing Change

Yet another reason for centralizing the goal-setting and decision-making functions in libraries lies in the fact that the setting of goals, if they are meaningful, will necessarily involve some potential organizational change. Such change often poses a threat to staff members since, like many service organizations that need not show a profit, libraries tend to concentrate on adding new activities without giving commensurate attention to the elimination of old ones. Thus, especially in times of declining financial resources, the primary responsibility of an administrator should be to determine which activities in the organization need to be supported more adequately, which can be downgraded or completely eliminated, and where the resources gained through the latter can be most effectively invested.

A cardinal rule of administering service organizations should be that "one doesn't start anything new unless one phases out something old." But if a staff member has spent a significant amount of time performing a particular function, the natural, human tendency will be to argue for its continuance even if it has become obsolete from the standpoint of the organization;[37] and there is reason to believe that an occupational group that considers itself "professional" will be especially vigorous in resisting any change that threatens its autonomy or security.[38]

This understandable but unfortunate tendency to retrench when threatened with change is aggravated by the disparity between the number of possible tasks in a library on the one hand and the number actually necessary to the operation of a library on the other. Gore avers that the possible tasks are infinite while the number of tasks necessary to operate a library efficiently is always less than the staff believes; and that, given this fact, it is not surprising that in a large number of libraries many necessary functions remain undone or done badly because there is no differentiation of what is necessary from what is merely possible.[39]

What it is necessary to accomplish can, of course, only be determined in light of the full scope of the library's goals, operations, and resources; and this decision-making context is, as pointed out above, only available to library administrators. They are paid to be informed in these matters and to have the vision, leadership ability, and practical

good sense to direct the library properly, as indeed many chief administrators' titles would imply.

Not only do the various operations, functions, and tasks which constitute elements of the formal structure of a library need periodic review and revision, but persons who fill the positions represented on an organizational chart and perform the tasks displayed in an operations algorithm should likewise be subjected to periodic review. Without the latter, the most carefully orchestrated library system will function at less than maximum efficiency, not due to any design defect in the system itself, but to the fact that some persons on the staff cannot or will not perform in a way required by the position they hold and its relationship to the rest of the organization.

That libraries have not been notably successful in pre-employment screening of applicants, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of incumbents, providing in-service training and development programs, devising strategies for placing employees in jobs for which they are suited, or, as a last resort, discharging those few individuals not suited for library work at all, is an acknowledged fact.[40] To the extent that they continue to be unsuccessful in developing effective programs for recruiting, assessing, and developing a competent staff, libraries will be prevented from achieving their goals or will achieve them only at an excessive cost.

In a recent article, a member of the British House of Commons and management scientist, commenting on the poor performance of British industry, lays much of the blame for the striking inefficiency of the latter on the lack of a systematic review and development program for managers in most British companies and the fact that, once recruited, an individual's promotion too often depends solely on "seniority and performance which is not unsatisfactory."[41] There can be little doubt in the mind of anyone familiar with American libraries that this same analysis, mutatis mutandis, applies equally well to their problems also. As Drucker points out, there is a small number of people on any staff who perform well, and there is, consequently, a pressing need to identify these individuals and place them in positions that will make the most of their abilities.[42] Libraries have, in the main, simply failed to do this.

It seems clear, then, that a fairly strong, centralized administration will be required to plan, initiate, and direct the process of change. However, it is often argued by proponents of participative management that any administrative structure, as distinguished from line librarians, becomes isolated from the realities of day-to-day library operations, that a strong, centralized administrative structure automatically excludes librarians who are not part of the management elite from any voice in setting goals and determining policy for the library, and that such exclusion will and does preclude meaningful change in or adjustment of library policy and procedure to bring the services offered into conformity with the needs of library clientele.[43]

But there are indications that such statements are actually contrary to fact and reasons to believe that in most libraries staff recommendations and advice on a wide range of problems are actively sought and exert considerable influence on eventual decisions, even though there is a high total amount of control.[44] From the evidence available, then, it begins to appear as if the ills that power sharing is designed to cure are very likely only psychosomatic.

There is also a counter argument to be considered that holds that libraries, especially large ones, are not now providing effective information services to their clientele because of a lack of congruence between the aims and attitudes of librarians and what should be the goals of libraries as organizations.[45] The Theory Y approach to management, outlined above, offers one possibility for bringing these into coincidence; but however closure is accomplished it will, again, require significant changes in the situation and status of many librarians.

Hence, the argument that increasing staff participation in management is the best means of improving service to library clientele is of questionable validity since the tendency on the part of staff members will be to make just and only such changes as would not diminsh their own autonomy, security, or self-ascribed status. Very little real change and virtually no radical, organizational change would likely come about given the primacy of a desire on the part of staff members to secure the status quo.

This line of thinking is reflected in statements such as that of Pierson, who asserts:

> Status comprises roles, symbols, and rewards, not just symbols and rewards. . . . Roles, symbols, and rewards should be judged in terms of institutional goals—not in terms of librarians' aspirations. One possibility is to identify those elements of work which need doing and merit desired symbols and rewards and to confine librarians to those elements, thereby simultaneously achieving institutional goals and raising librarians' status—while, perhaps, reducing librarians' numbers.[46]

It is certainly true that there are even yet many repetitive, clerical tasks necessary to the effective and efficient operation of a library, and, in many instances, these tasks are assigned to librarians who are quite comfortable with them. However, what Pierson is proposing is to propel librarians out of low-level, routine functions and confine them instead to a considerably smaller number of jobs deserving of the perquisites and status they seek. But expecting this kind of change—which would, in spite of Pierson's cautious phrasing, surely result in a substantial reduction of available professional positions—to come about in any library through the actions of just those people who would be adversely affected by it is much like expecting a hog to guard the cabbage patch.

While change is necessary to the continued viability of libraries, care must be taken to provide job security for persons displaced by technological or organizational changes that achieve economies in the library's operations. This would be required for humanitarian reasons if for no others, but there is a practical aspect to such precautions as well. That is, although initially most or all changes that will potentially displace staff may have to be at the initiative of management, the hope and expectation should be that staff members themselves may eventually become secure enough to suggest such changes; and one way—perhaps the only way—of fostering this feeling of security is to create an environment wherein staff members can be sure that they are not crawling out on a limb and sawing it off when they offer a suggestion that will improve operational efficiency but may, in the process, eliminate or significantly alter their own job.[47]

## Minimizing Bureaucracy

There is a danger, however, that while overall staff size may be reduced through a strong, central administration, that very administrative structure may grow disproportionately large through the addition of associate and assistant directors, administrative assistants, and specialized staff positions, etc.[48] The effect of such an increase in bureaucratic echelons is, more often than not, to simply remove the director from contact with the day-to-day operations of the library; and, continued long enough, this will indeed have the effect predicted by some advocates of participative management, i.e., the library director will be insulated from the realities of the organization he or she is charged with directing. Therefore, the hierarchical structure should have as few managerial levels as possible but still enough to insure a workable span of control at each level.

The same problems of complexity and scale, which render it impossible for a complete and equal sharing of power in the management of a library to succeed, likewise give the lie to any claim that it can be run singlehandedly. No administrator can know enough about the details of each operation in a library to make informed decisions without considerable advice from persons more intimately involved with the operations in question. Thus to be successful, a minimal administrative hierarchy will require frequent consultation with and considerable delegation of authority and responsibility to subordinates. Such a strategy will avoid the extremes of uninformed autocracy on the one hand and an acephalous, popular democracy on the other, while insuring that ultimate decision-making power and accountability remain squarely with the library administration.

## Conclusion

Some library managers are unwilling to admit that they want and need control over the operations for which they are accountable, while subordinates are usually desirous of more influence on the decision-making process in the organization than is actually

permitted, no matter what the managerial strategy employed.[49] This combination of a manager's unwillingness to express undemocratic opinions and realization that staff members desire more influence on decision making within the organization than is or should be allowed combine to create a situation in which management may turn to some form of putative power sharing in hopes of mollifying the staff without granting them any actual decision-making power.[50]

Such duplicity serves no purpose, of course, as staff members quickly see through the sham and become variously disenchanted, cynical, and/or hostile, and with the inevitable result that the attempt at mere passification will not only fail, but will prove dysfunctional for the organization as a whole when staff members' negative feelings manifest themselves in actions or inaction, as the case may be.

The extent to which power will be shared in the organization will be influenced by a number of personal and organizational factors,[51] but it needs to be carefully spelled out to all concerned. The library staff should never be led to believe that they have or will receive more decision-making authority than the chief administrator is, in fact, willing and able to grant. It should be made clear in both policy and practice that the overall managerial style is one of consultation and coordination, with decision-making authority being delegated to particular individuals for specific purposes when dictated by circumstances.

This strategy should satisfy the needs of librarians for participation in the management of their institution as it will perforce require a great deal of delegation on the part of the library administration. It will do so, however, without a full surrender of decision-making authority or abdication of responsibility on the part of the director who will ultimately be held accountable for the performance of the organization as a whole.

None of these remarks should be taken as in any way an argument for a dictatorial, autocratic, or oligarchic management style in libraries. Rather, what I have attempted to do is to provide an antidote for some of the more extreme and sometimes naive interpretations of participative management that appear from time to time in library literature. That is, participative management or power sharing should not—and cannot, if it is to be successful—mean an abdication of responsibility for the library on the part of administrators and managers in the name of democracy. For all of the reasons mentioned above this simply will not work. What seems to be required instead is extensive and intensive consultation between administration and staff, but with the ultimate decision-making authority and attendant accountability unequivocally lodged with the library administration.

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