

Solutions: Powers

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Key Points

- Policy solutions that entail reforming a decision-making process: constitutional engineering
- Arguments based on the metaphor: mechanisms (content of the decisions shaped by structure of a process in automatic fashion)
- More just, more efficient, public interest, more consistent with liberty, more safe (NASA) *BRI & removal of Corporal Punishment*
- “Who” is making the decision? Empowering a different set of people making decisions and who has jurisdiction over something
- Power to control a sphere of policy
- Restructure = Reallocation of power *BRI*

Two Perspectives

Does it make the train run on time?

Does it “work” to solve the nominal problem? *BRI*

What is the nature of the community that is constituted by the type of authority structure used to “solve” the problem?

Who is given the right to make decisions about the problem? Whose voice counts (choosing leaders/policies)?

What does this have to do with The Blue Ribbon Initiative?????

- Redistribution of power...
- Superintendent proposes new form of discipline to decrease behaviors and increase effective teaching to raise student achievement
- Board members pull for power
- Teachers pull for power
- Parents “give away” power
- Change in membership, change in size, shifting of locus

Change the Membership

Qualities and interests drive the decisions

- Electorate – Change voter qualifications
- Officeholders – Change system of representation
 - Descriptive Representation – Representatives who share demographic characteristics
 - Substantive Representation – Representatives who share policy beliefs and goals *BRI*
 - Accountable Representation – Representatives are accountable to constituents if constituents have ability to influence representatives/remove them from office
BRI

Changing the Size

Smaller is Better

- Face to face knowledge, empathy, decisions based on intimate knowledge of community
- Flexible and informal solutions using loyalty and empathy to resolve conflict, rational deliberation
- Easier to form unified majority, government action possible, less chance of deadlock
- Greater opportunity for participation

Larger is Better

- Greater selection of possible representatives, greater chance of finding competent ones
- Difficult for demagogues to persuade larger #'s of people, decisions based on reason, not emotion
- Less likely for unifies majority, less likely to be dominated by a faction or special interest
- Difficult for small elite to capture government...have power

Shift the Locus

Arguments for Decentralization (moving control from a single focal point to several smaller ones)

- Gives authority to local officials with better knowledge of community
- Allows for differentiated solutions thus meeting the local needs
- Localities and states can experiment with policy ideas and develop knowledge about what works
- Communities gain more autonomy, enhancing liberty of members

Arguments for Centralization (consolidating power under central control)

- Authority to national officials, less parochial, less likely to share prejudices, more broad view
- Stimulates policy decisions based on technical issues – not self-interests
- Standardization of policy in all jurisdictions and enhances fairness
- Allows central officials to redistribute power and resources among smaller jurisdictions, promoting equality

Concluding Remarks



Different structures of authority
produce better outcomes

Competing interests

Efforts to change the
balance of power

The hope in proposals for structural change... Split up old or potential alliances, establish new ones... placing a favored interest in a position of dominance