INTRODUCTION

There are numerous uses of the term "network" to describe features of the psychological system. However, although this calls attention to the complexity of the system, it denotes a static structure and contains no reference to the essential dynamism of networks. Networks are dynamic both in terms of the flux between the nodes but also because of the evolution of the network itself over time in response to new challenges and opportunities. This dynamic feature could well be highlighted by using "network" as a verb as well as a noun. "Networking" becomes therefore the process of operating in an (inter-organizational) network, including the progressive evolution of this network over time.

In the following section an attempt is made to list together a variety of social networks to give some idea of the areas in which the concept can be used. Thereafter an attempt is made to sketch out a set of networking principles. In the final section some of the problems raised by networks are considered for the practical areas of legislation, programme administration, financial control and personnel policy.

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK

Each of the following networks is characterized by one or more of the following:

- movement of personnel or staff between centres in the network;
- movement of goods between centres in the network (possibly on the basis of reciprocal membership);
- reallocation of personnel or resources between the centres;
- movement of information between centres;
- movement or reallocation of funds between centres.

1. Knowledge storage

Library networks characterized by inter-library lending; catalogue card exchange; reciprocal right of access for approved users.

Museum networks characterized by inter-museum transfers and exchanges of exhibits and exhibitions; reciprocal right of access for approved scholars.

2. Knowledge advance

Research institute networks characterized by inter-institute movement of researches and lectures; exchanges of ideas and new program areas; switching of external fund allocations to different parts of the network.

3. Community

Kibbutzim networks characterized by exchanges of produce, and occasionally services, between individual kibbutzim; also functions as a network of defensive positions.

Commut networks characterized by movement of people between a variety of modes of life style expression.

4. Exoteric

Church networks characterized by movement of clergy-preachers between churches; occasional movement of parishioners.

Menorah networks characterized by occasional movement between centres; originally

Art gallery network characterized by inter-gallery transfers and loans of art works and art exhibitions.

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reception points (or travellers and pilgrims).

5. Social
Youth hostel networks characterized by movement of hostellers around the network. Sports club networks characterized by exchange matches between clubs which result in each club receiving and visiting most others in the network.
Holiday resort networks characterized by movement of staff between centres; alteration of holiday-makers between resorts.

6. Professional
Business club (Fraternity club, Country club) networks characterized by reciprocal memberships between clubs in geographically isolated centres.
Trade union (Professional association) networks characterized by movement of key people between centres; preference to existing members if they move to a new geographical location.

7. Development
Mission network characterized by movement of missionaries or officers of the order which instituted the network.
Work camp network characterized by alternation of volunteers between centres.
Program site network characterized by movement of experts and program evaluators between centres.

8. Entertainment
Theatre (Nightclub, Circus, Dance hall) networks characterized by movement of performers between centres.

9. Education
University networks characterized by inter-university movement of lectures and students.
School networks characterized by movement of officials and teachers between centres; exchange sports matches between centres.
Hospital (Medical centre) networks characterized by movement of doctors and patients between centres.

10. Health
Hospital (Medical centre) networks characterized by movement of doctors and patients between centres.

11. Commercial and Industrial
Chain store networks characterized by reallocation of stocks and personnel between centres.
Corporate networks characterized by networks of holding companies and subsidiaries between which resources and personnel are reallocated; cross-linking directorships and stockholdings.
Factory networks characterized by movement of materials and parts between centres at different stages of processing and assembly.
Hotel (Small) chains characterized by movement of customers between centres; reallocation of personnel around the network.
Calo (Bus) networks characterized by movement of customers between centres.

12. Economic
Stock (Commodity) exchange networks characterized by transfers of funds between centres.
Bank networks characterized by transfers of funds between centres.

13. Official
Military base networks characterized by reallocation of personnel and material between centres; movement of information between centres.
Embassy networks characterized by reallocation of diplomatic personnel between centres; movement of information between centres.

14. Communication and Transport
Airline networks characterized by reallocation of planes between travel routes; movement of customers and goods through the network.
Railway networks characterized by reallocation of wagons between routes; movement of customers and goods through the network.
Postal network characterized by movement of letters and parcels through the network.
Telex (Wire services; Telephone) network characterized by movement of messages through the network.

15. Criminal

NETWORKING PRINCIPLES : an attempt at a set of guidelines (*)

The problem for transnational organizations is to develop a way of increasing the dynamism and strength of their networks without retreating to the unsuccessful formula of the coordinating omnivore body - which is probably following the dinosaurs into social history.

The following sections attempt to identify some characteristics of the new approach required. The challenge is to develop information systems which facilitate and catalyze (rather than organize) the development of such networks to the benefit of all participating bodies and the social system within which they function.

Principles :
1. Networks of information and other flows tend to develop whenever there is a need for contact between existing social actors or not the action or the communication is approved. The network is a more adequate response to a complex environment than a minimally and formally connected set of hierarchical institutions. If necessary networks become unofficial and bypass or undermine accepted channels to create adequate contact.
2. Networks decrease in effectiveness and in attractiveness to potential participants to the extent that any particular body or group of bodies within the network attempts to structure it to favour its own ends or its own conception of the nature of the programmes which participants should undertake.
3. The budget load of operating a network for the benefit of one body or group of bodies increases with the number of organizations encoded in the data system, unless means are found to involve such organizations as full participants so that it is in their own interest to ensure the dynamism of the network's operations to contribute data and powerfully funds.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, 1974
The network is not « coordinated » by any body rather it is « self-directing » and self-adapting. Similarly, the network is not « controlled » by any body rather it is « autocoordinated » rather than coordination. The network permits all the decentralization necessary to satisfy the need for autonomous organizational development and individual initiatives. It also provides for very rapid centralization, canalization, and focusing of resources the moment any complex problem for natural disaster (or other body). The centralization is only binding on the transnational organizations concerned with the problem in question, and for the period during which they have « common cause » and in no way affects others in the network. The network is, furthermore, more multidimensional in character since transnational organizations may « decentralize » to different extents in many different partial networks and all the same time decentralize for (heterogeneous) themselves on other issues. The network is not « coordinated » by any body the participating bodies coordinate themselves so that one may speak of « auto-coordination » rather than coordination. Similarly, the network as a whole is not « directed » or « controlled » by any body rather it is « self-direcing » and self-adapting.

Implications

The concept of networking, if it is to be useful in social organization as well as in the sociology of organizations, must be extended to the structures and procedures which govern the day-to-day operations of organizations. Some of the problems and possibilities of achieving this are noted below.

1. Legislation

Organizations are subject to the legislative measures of the countries in which they are established. They may even more precisely be characterized by the provisions which permit them to be created and which govern the manner in which they function. It is the legislative measures which give organization's « existence » in society today. Whilst « de jure » organizations may appear to exist, it is as though they existed on the borders of the social unconscious in a dim twilight realm. « De jure » organizations are much more real and solid, particularly to the world of officialdom which controls much of the social policymaking. The following problems of giving legal recognition to networks of organizations and the networking process are indicative:

— to date legal status has only been accorded to distinct social entities with well-defined boundaries. A network is by definition made up of many entities whose degree of interrelationship erodes this absolute distinction: there is a degree of blurring of each component organization.

— again legal status depends upon being able to identify a well-defined group of persons or bodies which is responsible for the actions of the recognized organizations. Networks involve constant movement of people bringing them successively into association with many nodes, and occasionally several at the same time. People are mobile within networks — legislative measures cannot respond easily to this dynamism. They depend on fixed memberships which persist over significant periods of time.

There are however approaches which could be explored which would make it possible to give legal reality to networks:

— current legislation lies the responsibility for an organization to its directors as representing the stockholders or subscribing membership. In the sociological perspective the « membership » may include the following however: directors, subscribing membership (stockholders, clients, individuals purchasing the products of the organization (e.g. journal subscribers) other than membership).

A multi-level principle of responsibility is required. This is in fact corresponsive to our present awareness that. For example, employees of the defense.
se industry do bear some responsibility for those killed by the products they produce.

— the procedure whereby bodies are registered and recognized by the law could be considerably speeded up, to the point at which an ad hoc organization can be registered for a day as easily as a car can be legally licensed, or a passenger for a single flight.

2. Personnel Policy
In this case the difficulties are as follows:

— employment in most organizations binds the person into a particular position and career line with the aid of many pension and other benefits which make any break fairly traumatic. This reduces mobility across career lines and between organizations and perpetuates rigid operational procedures.

— changes of programme policy can make personnel in smaller organizations redundant with no means of relocating themselves to other organizations within the network. This forces people to select secure long-term positions and reduces the ability of the network to allocate personnel to the short-term programmes and organizations which may be tactically useful.

— frustration of natural creativity and lack of variety of experience obliges many to indulge in departmental « empire building ». This ensures that new programme decisions are based more upon their value in inter-departmental races than in conformity with any real problems.

As before, a networking approach to personnel policy could facilitate the elaboration of new procedures. Some possibilities are:

— make it easier for personnel to relocate, temporarily, to short-term programmes and small organizations within the network where they can be given greater freedom and creative opportunity.

3. Programme Administration and Finance
In this case, the difficulties are as follows:

— most organizations in society work to a budget which is prepared and approved once a year. It is often very difficult indeed, if not impossible, to undertake actions outside the budget framework which is often very elaborate. This rigid procedure causes the organizational network to respond specifically to those crises which are most prominent at the time the budget is approved, and most inadequately to those which emerge during the course of the budgetary cycle.

— the more complex the organization, the longer the programme cycle. Programmes have to be initially prepared several years before their period of implementation. The response time to new issues is very slow.

— it is only with great difficulty that funds allocated to one programme can be reallocated to another in the event of need. It is even rarer for this reallocation to be made to the benefit of other organizations in the network, better placed to undertake the programme required immediately.

The rigidities noted above are in part a consequence of the lack of a networking concept to provide the conceptual framework for a network response to crises. Some approaches which could be explored are:

— some form of « dynamic fund reallocation » whereby funds can be pledged for a time period giving latitude as to where amounts are called (the various time interest formulas for fixed deposit accounts are suggestive) or allocation of funds to a broad programme area with latitude as to where the funds are allocated within that area, or outside it, but in relation to it.

— an « international programme stock market » in which each programme is supported by » shares « representing the priority or percentage call it has upon a fund pool. Those feeding funds, into the pool, concerned as s holding fund, or into a given programme, change the value of the shares on a daily basis in response to the crisis profile and the programme’s perceived utility.

A.J.


(2) Extracts from: Webster, Third New International Dictionary of the English Language (unpublished).