Assessing the impact of international associations*

Introduction

This paper considers various aspects of the significance and nature of the impact of international associations on their environment, and particularly the impact of international scientific and professional associations on the international system. In approaching this matter, it is first useful to examine why the question of impact is important, what is meant by impact, and the questions raised by the process of proving impact. This establishes an appropriate context within which to comment on the progressive increase in the number of international associations and their interrelationships and the manner in which networks of organizations may diffuse impact and act as vehicles for its transference.

Assessment of impact of INGOs on IGOs

Justification for assessing impact

The following points indicate the major reasons for assessing impact :

1. Policy concern : In order to justify an existing policy with regard to an international association, it is appropriate to assess the impact of the body on its environment. Of a slightly different nature is the need for an organization to assess the general impact of such a body on its environment before responding to an unprecedented attempt by such an association
. to influence the organization's policy.

2. Resource allocation : To the extent that the allocation of resources in support of project proposal of a particular association is a program rather than a policy decision, then it may be important to evaluate the actual or potential impact of the association on its environment

3. Acknowledgment of recommendations : Many associations produce recommendations, resolutions or declarations which may be directly or indirectly transmitted to parts of the intergovernmental system. In order for IGOs to justify attention to such recommendations, they must prove that the association has adequate political impact to give credibility to such positions, irrespective of their content.

4. Suspension of relationships : Under certain circumstances (e.g. ECOSOC's positions in relation to Spain, South Africa and Taiwan and channelling of CIA funds through INGOs), an IGO may need to prove inappropriate impact in order to justify suspension of relationships with an INGO, or some other form of sanction or censorship.

5. Provocation : Since there is a range of INGOs associated with the ideology of each major power bloc, the IGOs associated with a power bloc may wish to prove the negative impact of the equivalent INGOs on any other power blocs as a justification for some form of tacit or overt support. (Where the impact is shown to be positive, this then becomes justification for some form of sanction or censorship as under the previous point.)

6. Value elaboration : Where national or international assocations have built up a climate of opinion superior in some values to those with which the intergovernmental system is associated, IGOs may wish to recover lost ground by proving the positive impact of selected INGOs in order to justify binding them into IGO programmes (the UN approach to the environment issue is a case in point).

7. Reinforcement of constituency : Where IGO member states have for political reasons generated resolutions initiating programmes which alienate much of its usual constituency, it may seek to prove the impact of INGOs on such programmes in order that by so associating them it may establish a favourable climate of opinion

for the programmes amongst the INGOs constituencies.

8. Tradition, prestige and public relations : Where an IGO wishes to maintain relations with a particular INGO for special reasons, it may prove impact to justify such a position (the relation between the UN and the World Federation of United Nations Associations is a case in point).

The different types of impact can be grouped as follows :

1. Physical, including violent demonstrations, occupation of offices, physical damage to buildings or equipment, violence or threats of violence to personnel, physical assistance (manpower), etc.

2. Affective, including non-violent demonstrations, emotional propaganda, smear or hate-campaigns, supportive campaigns, etc.

3. Procedural, including strikes, lockouts, restraining orders, procedural and regulatory devices (legal, administrative, financial, safety, health), resolutions, declarations, etc.

4. Programme content, namely conceptual or information inputs contributing to the elaboration of programme content, within its predetermined framework.

5. Organization policy, namely political, financial, statistical, conceptual and similar inputs affecting the formulation, selection and rejection of programmes.

6. Policy coordination, namely political and other considerations affecting the coordination of programmes of semi-autonomous organizations acting on interrelated problem areas.

7. Research, namely conceptual and methodological advances which effectively question the utility and significance of the problems addressed by existing programmes and policies.

8. Socio-political, namely political, ideological and philosophical advances which

effectively question the utility and significance of : (a) the organizational structures used to direct existing programme and policies, and (b) the research by which the problems and remedial action are defined. The above grouping reflects a primarily western approach to the varieties of impact. The situation is more complex as has been remarked by authors such as Stafford Beer and J. Forrester :

« Le Chatelier's Principle : *Reformers, critics of institutions, consultants in innovation, people in short who « want to get something done », often fail to see this point They cannot understand why their strictures, advice or demands do not result in effective change. They expect either to achieve a measure of success in their own terms or to be flung off the premises. But an ultrastable system (like a social institution)... has no need to react in either of these ways. It specializes in equilibrial readjustment, which is to the observer a secret form of change requiring no actual alteration in the macro-systemic characteristics that he is trying to do something about » (1).*

Some eastern philosophies might even be described as philosophies of « non-impact ». They have influenced, and continue to influence, the Gandhian non-violent approach and some aspects of the Chinese approach to social change. It should be stressed that the western perception that such attitudes constitute a form of passivity are but ill-informed simplifications, particularly since such philosophies underlie the eastern martial arts. Such a point could well be supported with citations from Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu or similar authors. It is more appropriate however to note the study made by Scott Boorman on the implications of this kind of thinking for Mao Tse Tung's revolutionary strategy (2). It could be argued that a similar approach partly underlies the evolution of the Vietnam situation and that in other arenas. Conventional billiard-ball models of impact are likely to be insensitive to such strategies. It is no coincidence that Scott Boorman himself has specialized in the study of formal social networks. (3)

The utility of the conventional approaches may also be questioned in the light of comments such as that of Peter Drucker : « *The correct figures could perhaps have been forecast; but what today, only ten years later, controls America's mood and shapes its policies - not to mention its picture of itself- would have been quite unpredictable to any statistical, protective method :* there has been a change of meaning, *the quality, the perception of our experience. In 1959 the accent was all on our affluence. In 1969 it is all on the poor».* (4, emphasis added). And as he predicted, the meaning has again changed unexpectedly since then. This point is made even more strongly by Alvin Toffler (5). It could be argued that many international associations function in order to change

meaning, to support or facilitate any such change, or to maintain continuity through such changes. Their success in doing so is not necessarily detectable by the methods of evaluation normally recommended. Moreover alternative philosophies may well change the significance, if any, of « success » as determined in this way and the legitimacy of actions based on conclusions of « low impact ". Related to the indirect forms of impact noted above is the static impact which in its most extreme form is now termed structural violence.

« *Basically, what seems to be behind it is a pattern of human interaction, of social order that is so prevalent, so all-pervasive that it seems to be present as an archetype at all times and all points in space. The moment one believes a more egalitarian structure has been created the same social order seems to come in by the back door. It seems to survive very well the changes from a slave society, via a feudal and capitalist order, towards a socialist society »* (6). This *« structural impact »* may also be significant in the activities of an organization and of the international system.

Issues raised in assessing impact

The process of proving and assessing impact raises a number of issues which are briefly reviewed here :

1. The situations in which a demand is made for an assessment of impact tend to be structured such that impact must effectively be proven before attention is directed towards the bodies giving rise to the impact. The « existence » of such bodies is deduced from the recognition of the impacts to which they give rise. If no impact can be detected then the question of whether such bodies exist is considered irrelevant. The convenience of this approach does not eliminate the question of whether the organizational system has an adequate concept of its environment, in that some impacts may be undetectable by the methods or criteria used, and some external unrecognized bodies may suddenly give rise to impacts for which the organization is unprepared.

2. Related to the previous point is the assumption of absence of impact on an organizational system unless impact can be proven. It is certainly debateable whether this is an appropriate attitude for an organization (as noted above) or for the intellectual disciplines associated with the assessment and its methodology. It is particularly unfortunate in that the assumption places the burden of proving impact on the external unrecognized body (in a manner somewhat analogous to that of a legal system in which innocence, rather than guilt, has to be proven).

3. The demand for proof and assessment of impact places the body making such

demands in a special position in relation to those who may be perceived as having impact. Where such bodies have a special place in the international system (e.g. the United Nations), the conclusions of any such evaluation effectively contribute to the definition of the reality of the international system. Those bodies excluded from this reality by this process have no method of appeal, since the effects of the evaluation process are not of interest to the bodies demanding it. Such evaluations may usefully be termed » directive assessments » because of the by-products of the evaluation process. It is important to render explicit (or whom a particular set of impacts is considered significant and in whose interest.

4. Impact studies are organized in terms of impact on a focal organization or group (known as the point of anchorage in social network analysis where it is usually taken to be some specified individual whose behaviour the observer wishes to interpret). This raises the question of what bodies are undetected or ignored by this approach, whether such bodies may have some indirect impact on the focal organization, and whether the behaviour of the whole set of bodies in a network does not effectively result in diffusion of all impacts throughout the network.

5. Current impact studies necessarily pre-define what processes are to be conside-, red as conveying valid impacts. This raises the question of what other processes are undetected or ignored by this approach and the consequences of inability to focus on them.

6. Impact studies raise the question of how the thresholds are selected below which impacts of a particular kind are considered insignificant. (The physical sciences are fortunate in having established how « weak » and « strong interactions " should be taken into consideration, thus enabling them to give appropriate attention, for example, to the impact on an object (a) of a falling weight, (b) of a mass any specified distance from it, and (c) of weak electromagnetic forces such as the magnetic field of the earth. The question may be asked whether impact studies in the social sciences are able to focus on impacts analogous to (b) and (c) where there is no direct impact as such merely the influence of forces, which under some conditions, in the case of physics, may be of considerable significance aside from being necessary to any adequate understanding.) Studies of association impact on the intergovernmental system raise the question as to how relevant the impact of one organization on another is to an understanding of their separate or combined impact on the problems for which they were established. The approach loses sight of the fact that society's available institutions are failing to contain the complex of problems on which they purport to focus.

It is difficult to avoid the general impression of a series of continuing sterile debates about " pseudo-issues » effectively (although not deliberately) structured to avoid converging on conclusions which could legitimate any recommendations for remedial projects to increase the value of organizations and associations separately and as linked in networks. Such issues can be termed « pseudo-issues » because, from a very realistic and practical point of view, there is little that can be done about any of them individually at this point in time. Such issues should better be seen as constraints on any action strategy, rather than the prime policy concern in connection with INGOs, as tends to be the case in IGO, 1NGO and academic circles. Hopefully many of these problems will be overcome at some stage, but it would seem to be unnecessarily short-sighted to allow them to constitute delays to effective development of the full potential of the INGO network. The organizational instruments for action may in many cases be imperfect, but concentrating attention on their imperfections may simply obscure the fact that they are already quite adequate for many tasks and that the specific imperfections are in large part a circumstance of the times rather than of their nature. Practical approaches to improving their ability to perform their functions may well be the quickest method of reducing their imperfections. The point made here has been explored elsewhere (7).

Conventional evidence for impact

As noted earlier, there are problems in obtaining satisfactory evidence of the impact of international associations on the intergovernmental system, particularly since within the IGO system such evaluations tend to be tied to programme themes such as development, environment, peace, human rights, etc. The category of scientific and professional associations is not used by the IGO
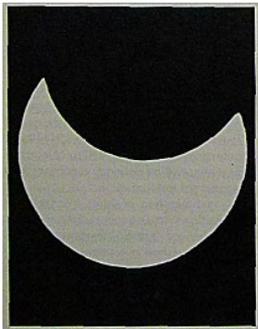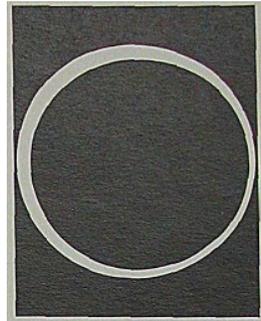
system, although occasional references are made to technical assocations. It is interesting that probably some white collar trade unions coming within the parview of ILO could also be considered as professional associations.

There have been numerous positive stalements concerning international associations in general, produced by officials from the UN Secretary-General downwards on appropriate occasions, as well as from government delegates. Official resolutions frequently call upon such bodies for some action or support. Unfortunately none of this constitutes " evidence " of impact, because such statements may always be interpreted as having a public relations component. Although if this is the case, the obligations felt by parts of the IGO system to maintain good relations with such associations may perhaps itself be considered as stronger evidence of impact. Assessments by scholars do not in general, for reasons noted earlier, provide good evidence for the presence or
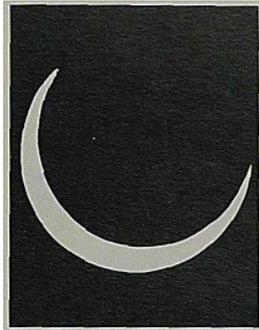
absence of impact, except in the case of intensive study of particular associations or groups of associations (cf. the studies of Edward Miles of space, telecommunications and sea-related bodies). IGO secretariat assessments, such as those of ECOSOC and UNESCO, of NGOs in consultative status are basically descriptive rather than evaluative. Thus, although it would be possible to select, sift and cite specific statements of positive impact, the question remains as to whether this would be considered positive proof (and by whom) or merely circumstantial evidence of little relevance to . current theory in the field of political science or policy studies. Current theories are indeed indifferent to such evidence. For example, Keohane and Nye note that the impact of inter-societal interactions and transnational actors in international affairs has been ignored in both policy-oriented writings and more theoretical works, and that when they have been recognized they have often been consi-

gned to the environment of inter-state politics, and relatively little attention has been paid to them in their own right or to their connections with the inter-state system (8). Singer and Wallace are quite explicit about exclusion of NGOs from their analysis: «our interests (and, we suspect, those of most of our colleagues) are more concerned with IGOs than with nongovernmental organizations » (9). Finally there is the question of what criteria to use in evaluating the evidence for possible impact of ISPAs on IGOs. Should the criteria relate purely to the transfer of scientific knowledge and considerations ? Should they relate to science policy and use of resources for science ? Or should they simply relate to political clout irrespective of the scientific and professional component ? Curtis Roosevelt, former Chief of the NGO Section of the UN Secretariat, makes the point (10) that IGOs are political institutions and an NGO can only be effective in relation to them by relating to such bodies politically. The reality of the situation is that governmental delegates assess the potential value of an NGO primarily in terms of the political power of the constituency it represents. Scientific or professional expertise does not necessarily imply political power. Furthermore, most expertise, however technical, is now held by IGOs to have political overtones. Even NGOs concerned with astronomy, cardiology or sanskrit literature, for example, are not effective in IGO terms unless they take positions on issues such as peace, human rights, etc. Clearly an ISPA low on expertise might therefore be perceived as having more impact than one having high expertise and little political sensitivity. What would be a good indication of political impact in this context ? For example, the ability to influence the wording of a resolution is an indicator of impact, but what if the resolution is never effectively acted upon by the IGO (as can be frequently argued). The ability to influence allocations of funds ist also important, but what if the resources are small relative to the expenses of the lobbying activity necessary (as is the case

with many programmes of interest to ISPAs) ?

The disadvantages of following this route seem clear enough, and in the light of the argument of the previous sections another approach seems more appropriate.

Characteristics of impact-oriented associatons

It is perhaps useful to distinguish a category of international associations whose operations are strongly influenced by the desire to impact directly upon the intergovernmental system. Such associations tend to have characteristics such as the following :

- a relatively high proportion of resources is devoted to face-to-face contact with government delegates and IGO secretariat officials. In addition to funds of the association, such resources may effectively include the time of international personalities linked to the association (but funded through other channels) or willing to act for it in any lobbying role, whether discreet or overt.
- the people used in the lobbying role tend to have past experience as part of

the intergovernmental system, whether as diplomats, as IGO officials, or as national government delegates or experts. Where this is not the case, the people and the association tend to adopt an activist stance relying on their energy, expertise, and/or ability to feed politically embarrassing information to the media, rather than rely on the fruits of subtle lobbying.
- considerable attention may be given to actual and potential links with the news media to maintain an image of strength with respect to the intergovernmental system (and possibly to association membership). Such links may be based on the release of well-researched reports of value to the media or by the ability to generate news by triggering demonstrations. Alternatively, or possibly in addition, links may be obtained with influential national power bases with their own contacts to national delegations.
- considerable attention is given to the rights and procedures by which international associations may be physically represented at intergovernmental conferences or in IGO secretariats, particularly over matters such as the right to make or circulate statements.

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- almost by definition, the existence of such associations tends to be justified and maintained by the existence of intergovernmental entities with which they can interact. There is a relationship of dependency.

Characteristics of non-impact-oriented associations

A category of international associations whose operations are not strongly influenced by the desire to impact directly upon the intergovernmental system may also be distinguished. Such associations tend to have characteristics such as the following :

- a relatively high proportion of resources is devoted to the activities and programmes of the association, irrespective of how they are appreciated by the intergovernmental system.
- the activities tend to emphasize : relationships between members, member or association activity on identified problems, the convocation of meetings to clarify the domain of interest to the association, or the collection or generation of information reflecting the content of that domain. Such activities may only incidentally involve or be of interest to the intergovernmental system.
- the attitude of members may not be oriented towards achieving or accomplishing specific programme objectives but rather of developing a certain climate of opinion amongst members and others, possibly including the general public. The evaluation of the effectiveness of such activity may even be considered destructive of its quality and as such undesirable as well as unnecessary. Members concern for the effectiveness of the association may be limited to its impact on themselves and those with whom they associate.

Limited validity of conclusion from impact studies

Some studies of the impact of international associations on the intergovernmental systems employ a procedure which results in misleading, if not erroneous, conclusions. An impact study may be organized in terms of one of the following, for example :

(a) - investigation at a major intergovernmental meeting (e.g. UN Environment Conference, Stockholm 1972; UN Habitat Conference, Vancouver, 1976) of international association action and contact with government delegates.

(b) - investigation of those international associations having consultative status with one or more intergovernmental bodies (e.g. Unesco, Ecosoc. ILO. etc.)

(c) -interviews with secretariat personnel of one or more intergovernmental bodies concerning their contact with international associations.

(d)- investigation of field level activities of international associations and their relation to the representatives of one or more intergovernmental bodies in the countries in question.

Such studies tend to have one or more of the following unstated assumptions :

(1)that because part of the intergovernmental system has given rise to an organization, a programme or a conference to focus on a particular subject or problem, then any international association which attempts to act on that issue would want to interact with the structure in question. This is incorrect because a significant number of international associations may consider that the particular structure (i) can itself only be relevant to a (possibly minor) aspect of the issue, (ii) has been prepared, or operates, in such a way that most decisions of any significance are either taken in advance or in other arenas, (iii) is conceived mainly as an exercise in public relations to focus public support and the attention of some governments insensitive to the issue, (iv) is conceived as a political compromise substituting for any effective action on the issue.

(II) - that because an international association is represented at some intergovernmental organization, programme or conference, then the association is necessarily attempting to have an impact on that intergovernmental structure. This is incorrect because a significant number of international associations may consider that the structure suffers from the defects identified under the previous point. In order to maintain a line of contact with the intergovernmental body, whilst minimizing the resources engaged, they may effectively employ any of the following strategies : (i) ensure that any list of participants or contacts produced by the intergovernmental body identifies the association, even though its representative departed immediately after having accomplished this, if it could not bedone by post; (ii) allow the association to be represented whenever necessary or convenient by whatever member happens to be living in the area or passing through; (iii) allow the association to be represented by any enthusiastic member interested in the activity for personal reasons (including personal status and prestige, etc.); (iv) allow the association to be represented by a non-member with some special interest (e.g. conducting interviews for a research project). Some associations may only be represented because of the convenience of the setting for maintaining contact with other associations interested in the issue (and irrespective of the intergovernmental activity). Note that questionnaire research is based on mailing lists of association representatives of the type identified here. (III) - that because a representative emphasizes the interest of his association in having impact on some intergovernmental organization, programme or conference, that the association necessarily
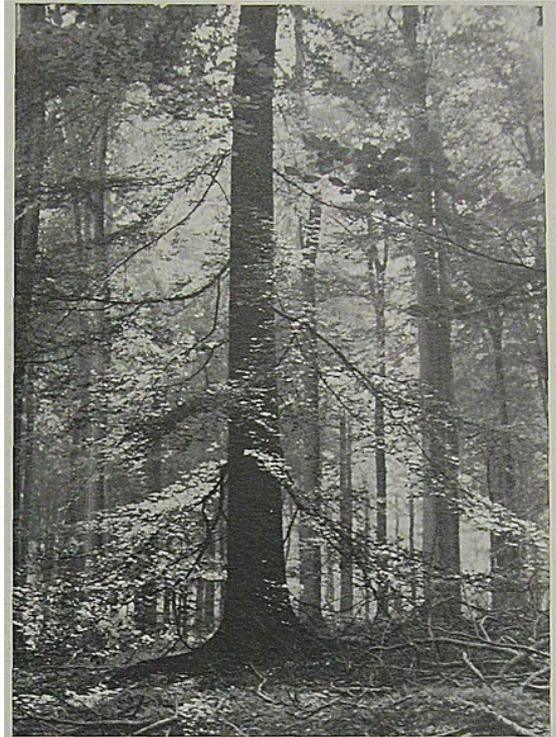
has such an interest or that any of its efforts at impact are related to the representative in question. This is incorrect because (i) the representative may sincerely believe that the association has given him a responsible role, when it has merely responded passively or minimally to his availability; (ii) the representative may feel obliged to disguise the minimal response of his association, if he is aware of it, to avoid negative consequences for his association; (iii) the association may feel obliged to be represented to ensure that it is still recognized as « in the game », by its peers, by any part of the intergovernmental system which makes later use of the mailing lists, and possibly even some of its own members or by those conducting studies of representation which may be widely distributed; (iv) the association may participate not in an attempt to have impact on that intergovernmental body but in order to counteract any impression of bias ari-

sing from its special interest in interacting with some other part of the intergovernmental system (e.g. with a different ideological orientation).

(IV) - that because information or impact has been supplied by a person in one part of an association secretariat, that this necessarily reflects the official position of the association.

This is incorrect because (i) the person in the secretariat may have such responsibilities for reasons similar to those of the external representative identified in the previous point; (it) the association may not have a position on the matter as well-formed as is implied by the ability to respond to questions about it in particular (iii) the association may not conform to a conventional structure and be easily comparable with its peers;the structure may be so loose that it is not possible for an individual to speak on behalf of the association as a whole;

Photo : S. Jakovljevic

(V) that because information on impact has been supplied by a person in one part of an intergovernmental secretariat, that this necessarily reflects the official position of the organization. This is incorrect because an intergovernmental secretariat has a number of offices (in the case of the larger agencies) or positions via which it interacts with associations. The lack of coordination between such offices is well recognized. Such offices may include : (i) public information office charged with mobilizing association support for agency programs, unrelated to (ii) a bureau responsible for consultative relations with NGOs, in support of (iii) a governmental committee defining which bodies shall be called NGOs, and defining policy on them, which may be ignored by (iv) departments concerned with substantive programme areas working with useful associations, irrespective of whether they are " NGOs " or international, (v) departments emanating, receiving or exchanging information with associations (vi} the agency conference environment in which a particular assocation may get considerable air-time through several government delegates.

Thus when an intergovernmental representative complains that the associations with which he has any contact (possibly at agency-convoked meetings) are naive, he may well be correct. Agencies have set up such an unfruitful environment for contact with associations that the latter avoid contact because there are more effective forms of action. Those that do not either have special introductions to contact (and are therefore assessed as « effective ») or are in the process of learning what a waste of effort such contacts can prove to be.

Conclusion

It is unfortunate that the process by which the social and policy sciences accord attention to organizations (or problems) in society appears to be so strongly governed by the information handling capacity of those for whom the conclusions are hopefully intended, rather than by any desire to explore the numerous existing organizations and interactions in all their rich variety. This question has been explored elsewhere in connection with the per-

ception of world problems (II). In attempting to articulate their dissatisfaction with current studies of International organizations in 1968, Koohane and Nye « felt that an « Everest syndrome » prevailed. Scholars studied organizations simply because "they are there" . We agreed that new approaches were needed. « Their book is testimony to their success (8). The remark remains valid however. Big impacts on big organizations are studied because they are so visibly there. The reluctance to consider less visible phenomena is strengthened and supported by a posture requiring unequivocal proof that the phenomena are there before any such inquiry can be entertained. It is an interesting question as to how much national and international NGO activity is required before it becomes theoretically interesting or of significance to policy formulation, and how much an adequate response to problems is delayed by such conceptual lags on the part of those who should be ensuring the necessary conceptual leads to anticipate emerging structural changes.

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11. YEARBOOK OF WORLD PROBLEMS AND HUMAN POTENTIAL Brussels. International Associations. 1976, [See Section P].

Footnotes to David Horton Smith's article continued from page 434 :

(2) The Union of International Associations. Rue aux Laines 1, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Transnational Associations a monthly periodical, formerly titled International Associations, has published many articles discussing networks, their nature, structure, dynamics, problems, modes of internal communications, etc. Issues No. 9, 10, and 11 for 1977 are particularly rich in such material, although there are a/so excellent and relevant articles in earlier issues (for instance, the article, « Principles of Transnational Action », in issue No. 3, 1973 of International Associations).

(3) Coordinating Human Services : A Sociological Study of an Interorganizational Network ». Research Series, No. 6. Benson, J. Kenneth, et al. Missouri Univ., Columbia, MO., Regional Rehabilitation Research Inst (Sponsor: Social 8 Rehab. Serv., DHEW) 1973. (160pp.) Available from: U. of Missouri, Reg. Rehab. Research Inst, Columbia, MO. 65201.

(A) « The Development of Interagency Cooperation». Aram, John D. and Stratton, William E. (Case Western Reserve U.), Social Service Review, 1974, 48, 3, Sept. (412-21).

(5) « Issues and Patterns for Community Networking». Goddu, Roland. N. England Program in Teacher Education, Durham, N.H. 1976. (13pp). (EDRS Price NF-S.83; HC-$1.67 plus postage).

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(7) Strategies for Expanded Interagency Linkages: Rehabilitation Implications ». Roessler, Richard and Mack, Greta. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 19. 1:344-51, Sept. 1975.

(8) « The Coalition Approach to Improved Services for Handicapped Children in the Baltimore Region. Final Report ». Wickey, Jane M., and Hartman, Barbara L Models of Delivery Systems, Inc., Baltimore, MD; Regional Planning Council, Baltimore, MD. April 1976. (80pp.) EDRS Price MF-$0.83, HC-$4.67, plus postage.

(9) « Organizational Structure and Interorganizational Dynamics". Aiken, Michael and Hage, Jerald. 1967. (36pp.) (EDRS Price MF-$0.76; HC-$1.95, plus postage).

(10) « Common Purposes as a Prerequisite for Networking ». Devaney, Kathleen. Far West Lab. for Educational Research & Development, San Francisco. April 1975. (9pp.) Paper presented at the American Educational Research Assoc. Annual Meeting, 1975. Best copy available. (EDRS PriceMF-$0.75HC-$1.58plus postage).

(11) «Networking: A Survival Mechanism for Urban Superintendents », Merrow, John, et al. Phi Delta Kappan, 56, 4 : 383-85, Dec. 1974.

(V) that because information on impact has been supplied by a person in one part of an intergovernmental secretariat, that this necessarily reflects the officiai position of the organization. This is incorrect because an intergovernmental secretariat has a number of offices (in the case of the larger agencies) or positions via which it interacts with associations. The lack of coordination between such offices is well recognized. Such offices may include : (i) public information office charged with mobilizing association support for agency programs, unrelated to (ii) a bureau responsible for consultative relations with NGOs, in support of (iii) a governmental committee defining which bodies shall be called NGOs, and defining policy on them, which may be ignored by (iv) departments concerned with substantive programme areas working with useful associations, irrespective of whether they are " NGOs " or international, (v) departments emanating, receiving or exchanging information with associations (vi} the agency conference environment in which a particular assocation may get considerable air-time through several government delegates.

Thus when an intergovernmental representative complains that the associations with which he has any contact (at agency-convoked meetings) are naive, he may well be correct. Agencies have set up such an unfruitful environment for contact with associations that the latter avoid contact because there are more effective forms of action. Those that do not either have special introductions to (and are therefore assessed as « effective ») or are in the process of learning what a waste of effort such contacts can prove to be.

Conclusion

It is unfortunate that the process by which the social and policy sciences accord attention to organizations (or problems) in society appears to be so strongly governed by the information handling capacity of those for whom the conclusions are hopefully intended, rather than by any desire to explore the numerous existing organizations and interactions in all their rich variety. This question has been explored elsewhere in connection with the perception of world problems (II). In attempting to articulate their dissatisfaction with current studies of International organizations in 1968, Koohane and Nye « felt that an « Everest syndrome » prevailed. Scholars studied organizations simply because "they are there" . We agreed that new approaches were needed. « Their book is testimony to their success (8). The remark remains valid however. Big impacts on big organizations are studied because they are so visibly there. The reluctance to consider less visible phenomena is strengthened and supported by a posture requiring unequivocal proof that the phenomena are there before any such inquiry can be entertained. It is an interesting question as to how much national and international NGO activity is required before it becomes theoretically interesting or of significance to policy formulation, and how much an adequate response to problems is delayed by such conceptual lags on the part of those who should be ensuring the necessary conceptual leads to anticipate emerging structural changes.

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11. YEARBOOK OF WORLD PROBLEMS AND HUMAN POTENTIAL Brussels. International Associations. 1976, [See Section P].

Footnotes to David Horton Smith's article continued from page 434 :

(2) The Union of International Associations. Rue aux Laines 1, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Transnational Associations a monthly periodical, formerly titled International Associations, has published many articles discussing networks, their nature, structure, dynamics, problems, modes of internal communications, etc. Issues No. 9, 10, and 11 for 1977 are particularly rich in such material, although there are also excellent and relevant articles in earlier issues (for instance, the article, « Principles of Transnational Action », in issue No. 3, 1973 of International Associations).

(3) Coordinating Human Services : A Sociological Study of an Interorganizational Network ». Research Series, No. 6. Benson, J. Kenneth, et al. Missouri Univ., Columbia, MO., Regional Rehabilitation Research Inst (Sponsor: Social 8 Rehab. Serv., DHEW) 1973. (160pp.) Available from: U. of Missouri, Reg. Rehab. Research Inst, Columbia, MO. 65201.

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(5) « Issues and Patterns for Community Networking». Goddu, Roland. N. England Program in Teacher Education, Durham, N.H. 1976. (13pp). (EDRS Price NF-S.83; HC-$1.67 plus postage).

(6) Communication and Interorganizational Relationships Among complex Organizations in Social Service Settings ». Wigana, Rolf T. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Portland, OR, April 1976. (81pp.) (EDRS Price MF-$.83; HC-$4.67 plus postage).

(7) Strategies for Expanded Interagency Linkages: Rehabilitation Implications ». Roessler, Richard and Mack, Greta. Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 19. 1:344-51, Sept. 1975.

(8) « The Coalition Approach to Improved Services for Handicapped Children in the Baltimore Region. Final Report ». Wickey, Jane M., and Hartman, Barbara L Models of Delivery Systems, Inc., Baltimore, MD; Regional Planning Council, Baltimore, MD. April 1976. (80pp.) EDRS Price MF-$0.83, HC-$4.67, plus postage.

(9) « Organizational Structure and Interorganizational Dynamics". Aiken, Michael and Hage, Jerald. 1967. (36pp.) (EDRS Price MF-$0.76; HC-$1.95, plus postage).

(10) « Common Purposes as a Prerequisite for Networking ». Devaney, Kathleen. Far West Lab. for Educational Research & Development, San Francisco. April 1975. (9pp.) Paper presented at the American Educational Research Assoc. Annual Meeting, 1975. Best copy available. (EDRS PriceMF-$0.75HC-$1.58plus postage).

(11) «Networking: A Survival Mechanism for Urban Superintendents », Merrow, John, et al. Phi Delta Kappan, 56, 4 : 383-85, Dec. 1974.