

Summary of Motivation and Fields of Interest

The paragraphs below list the areas in which I am interested. Whilst the areas mentioned cover a rather broad field, I consider that they have a focal point in certain practical possibilities in connection with international relations. In my opinion, intellectual interests are not sufficient - there must be some attempt to follow through these interests into practical applications, and in so doing to achieve some measure of feedback on their value.

My basic motivation or purpose stems from the need to unify my concepts of the total system or functional whole formed by the interrelationships of the many functional units that make up present day international society - not as an intellectual exercise, but in an attempt to seek a model for such a system which would demonstrate the functional importance of the link between decisions and purpose at the grass roots level and those at the highest level of social organization. Such a concept, if communicable through a specific and meaningful model, would provide a physical representation of a context or framework for inter-nation, inter-business and inter-interest group relationships. It would thus provide a means of showing the relevance of increasing commitment of local groups to supranational goals, whilst at the same time showing the significance of the groups peculiar characteristics to the functioning of the total system.

There appear to be three sides to the question of establishing the relevance of the different functional units within the total international system to one another.

- there is the concept of each organized intellectual discipline and interest group as functional units within international society. In terms of this concept, schisms between different interest groups are, to an increasing extent, dysfunctional to the successful integration of society as a whole. Such schisms are a prelude to a form of intellectual 'nationalism'. There is, for example, a tendency for each discipline to develop its own purpose, values and coherent picture of the world - all in a manner increasingly unrelated and uncommunicable to other disciplines or to the society of which it is a part. There is no effective mechanism for the transfer of functionally valuable concepts to other units of society which could put them to good use.

This tendency could be counteracted by providing a framework within which the interaction, or lack of interaction, between interest groups could be evaluated. At the present time, NGOs are highly representative of the majority of interest groups (although there is an extremely large pool of organized interests at the local or national level, which do not have a functional counterpart at the international level). The key to this problem therefore appears to be partly through the local, national and international NGOs and the representation of their interrelationships, and partly through the representation of the conceptual relationships between disciplines and between psychological attitudes.

- from another angle, the international NGOs represent the combined effect of decision processes originated from specialized interest groups at the local level. Yet due to the conceptual problem of visualizing the functional importance of an NGO in international society, the value of the NGO decision-making channel is not recognized as a counterpart to those of diplomacy and international business. For this reason, the NGOs are, in general, very poorly organized, financed and supported. They are not orientated toward the variety of organizational concepts and techniques employed in the commercial and government sphere to improve efficiency and effectiveness. One could cite the relevance of operations research, systems engineering, procedures analysis, business policy concepts of purpose and strategy, functional concepts in management theory, concepts in organizational psychology, decision-making theory, simulation techniques, management techniques for the evaluation and implementation of organization strategy, etc.

One explanation could be the lack of conceptual techniques to effectively display and draw attention to the inefficiency of decision-making and interaction between social units at and between different levels in society. This inefficiency has a cumulative effect as one moves toward the level of the total system. Models developed to display the interplay between governments and interest groups and their participation in decision-making, would have great value and could eventually be used as a means of portraying, for educational purposes, the place of the individual in an increasingly complex society. They would give the individual, and organizations, a means of choosing the points in the total system at which he, or they, could act most effectively. This has important implications for career planning and vocational guidance.

- the third point is the importance of the free flow, availability and useful display of relevant information. The detection of problems and their optimal solution cannot be achieved unless the best selection of relevant information can be conveniently retrieved and displayed in a meaningful manner. This factor is particularly important to decision-making within the total system of international society. As with a large commercial organization, it would appear to be essential for the effective operation of the total system that an information flow-chart or model should be constructed. Duplication can be avoided and, most important, such a model would show the degree of interaction, or lack thereof, between the functional units of the total system and the points in the network which could be most beneficially linked for a minimum outlay. Only by representing the links between the organs of society can the health of the body social be judged and cared for.
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Using hindsight, I view my background as being consistent with the above purpose, and with my conceptual and financial resources and the information at my disposal at each stage of my career:

- chemical engineering, because of my interest in systems and in a spread of specializations.
- international organizations, because of a need to get a perspective on the international scene and on where and what decisions were taken.
- computers, because the flow, availability and display of relevant information itself proved to be of critical importance.
- business methods, because management techniques offer the only practical and accepted methods (with the exception of individual psychology) for consciously and systematically relating different functional units toward the accomplishment of a stated and evaluated purpose. The most modern techniques, embracing a wide variety of disciplines, are integrated into the managers approach to decision-making.

- simulation, hopefully, because this would allow me to relate the above concepts to current advances and determine to what extent such models are practicable or whether the problem in fact lies elsewhere.