

POLICY ANALYSIS SERIES

ISSUES RELATED TO WELSCH v. NOOT / NO. 3

INTERAGENCY COOPERATION: THE UNDERLYING CONCEPTS OF TRUST,
INCENTIVES, BARRIERS, AND FORMS OF LINKAGE.

As noted in the first paper of this policy analysis series, Taxonomy of Issues Surrounding Implementation of the Welsch v. Noot Consent Decree, inter-agency cooperation will be an essential element in the implementation process. Cooperation is needed between agencies on each level of government (county, state, and federal), between levels of government, and with organizations such as advocacy groups and service providers. Two factors are responsible for this need for cooperation: 1) the necessity of clarifying roles and responsibilities in a system where services are provided by several agencies, and 2) the need for developing "policy linkages" that will combine statutory and regulatory functions with policy intent.

The purpose of this paper is to explore both the processes which facilitate and those which discourage interagency cooperation in an effort to encourage cooperation among the parties responsible for implementation of the decree. With that aim in mind, this paper discusses relevant research on the concepts of trust, the difference between cooperation and competition, barriers to cooperation, incentives for cooperation, and program linkage structures.

I. ON TRUST

In 1948, Morton Deutsch published his doctoral dissertation on the topics of cooperation and conflict. Since that time, he and others have published extensive research findings on the variables that affect trust and communication in a cooperative relationship. The research studies regarding the Prisoner's Dilemma Game¹ were particularly popular during the late 1960s.

¹The Prisoner's Dilemma Game is a two person, non zero sum game in which the gains or losses incurred by each person are a function of the choices made by each partner. The game situation is presented as follows:

Two suspects are taken into custody and separated. The district attorney is certain they are guilty of a specific crime, but he does not have adequate evidence to convict them at a trial. He points out to each prisoner that each has two alternatives: to confess to the crime the police are sure they have done or not to confess. If both do not confess, then the district attorney states that he will book them on some very minor trumped-up charge... If both confess, they will be prosecuted, but he will recommend less than the most severe sentence; but if one confesses and the other does not, then the confessor will receive lenient treatment for turning state's evidence whereas the latter will get the "book" slapped at him.

The essential psychological feature of the game is that there is no possibility for "rational" individual behavior in it unless the conditions for mutual trust exist. If each player chooses to obtain either maximum gain or minimum loss for himself, he will lose. But it makes no sense to choose the other alternative which could result in maximum loss, unless one can trust the other player. If one cannot trust, it is, of course, safer to choose so as to suffer minimum rather than maximum loss.

Initial research work by Deutsch began with possible motivational orientations that an individual could have in any interpersonal situation. The initial set of orientations² were (1) cooperative - the person has a positive interest in the welfare of the others as well as his own welfare, (2) individualistic - the person has an interest in doing as well as he can for himself and is unconcerned about the welfare of others, and (3) competitive - the person has an interest in doing better than the others as well as in doing as well as he can for himself. Trust comes from the development of a shared cooperative orientation and is enhanced by factors such as bonds of friendship, awareness of similarity in values, common group membership and allegiance, normative pressures to be cooperative in the situation or broader environment, and personality predispositions favoring cooperation. In some cases, trust can be ensured by commitment of individuals to a contract or arranging the contract to be enforceable by superior powers.

The implications of Deutsch's research work indicate:

1. There are social situations that, in a sense, do not allow for the possibility of rational individual behavior as long as the conditions for mutual trust do not exist.
2. Mutual trust is most likely to occur when people are positively oriented to each other's welfare and least likely to occur when they are negatively oriented to each other's welfare.
3. Mutual trust can occur even under circumstances in which the people involved are clearly unconcerned with each other's welfare, provided that the characteristics of the situation are such that they lead one to expect one's trust to be fulfilled. Some of the situational characteristics that may facilitate the development of trust appear to be the following:
 - a. The opportunity for each person to know what the other person will do before he commits himself irreversibly to a trusting choice.
 - b. The opportunity and ability to communicate fully a system for cooperation that defines mutual responsibilities and also specifies a procedure for handling violations and returning to a state of mutual cooperation with minimum disadvantage if a violation occurs.
 - c. The power to influence the other person's outcome and hence reduce any incentive he may have to engage in untrustworthy behavior. It is also apparent that exercise of that power, when the other person is making untrustworthy choices, may elicit more trustworthiness.
 - d. The presence of a third person whose relationship to the two players is such that each perceives that a loss to the other player is detrimental to his interests vis-a-vis the third person. (Deutsch, 1973, p. 216)

²Since the initial set of orientations were outlined, Deutsch has added the following types:

- (a) individualistic - S is concerned with maximizing own satisfactions
- (b) masochistic - S is concerned with minimizing his own satisfactions
- (c) altruistic - S is concerned with maximizing O's satisfaction
- (d) hostile - S is concerned with minimizing O's satisfaction
- (e) collectivistic - S is concerned with maximizing total satisfactions of S and O
- (f) rivalrous - S is concerned with maximizing difference between himself and O
- (g) egalitarian - S wishes to minimize difference (in his favor) between himself and O
- (h) self-abasing - S wishes to maximize differences between O and S, in O's favor
- (i) defensive - S wishes to prevent O from doing better than S.

S = subject O = other person
(b), (c), (e), and (g) are common elements to a cooperative orientation;
(a), (d), (f), and (i) are common elements to a competitive orientation.

II. ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COOPERATION AND COMPETITION

Research results on the processes involved in cooperation and competition reveal four major dimensions of difference: (1) communication, (2) perception, (3) attitudes, and (4) task orientation.

1. Communication

- a. A cooperative process is characterized by open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants. Each is interested in informing, and being informed by the other.
- b. A competitive process is characterized by either lack of communication or misleading communication. It also gives rise to espionage or other techniques of obtaining information about the other that the other is unwilling to communicate. In addition to obtaining such information, each party is interested in providing discouraging or misleading information to the other.

2. Perception

- a. A cooperative process tends to increase sensitivity to similarities and common interests while minimizing the salience of differences. It stimulates a convergence and conformity of beliefs and values.
- b. A competitive process tends to increase sensitivity to differences and threats while minimizing the awareness of similarities. It stimulates the sense of complete oppositeness: "You are bad; I am good."

3. Attitudes toward one another

- a. A cooperative process leads to a trusting, friendly attitude, and it increases the willingness to respond helpfully to the other's needs and requests.
- b. A competitive process leads to a suspicious, hostile attitude, and it increases the readiness to exploit the other's needs and respond negatively to the other's requests.

4. Task orientation

- a. A cooperative process enables the participants to approach the mutually acknowledged problem in a way that utilizes their special talents and enables them to substitute for one another in their joint work, so that duplication of effort is reduced. The enhancement of mutual power and resources becomes an objective.
- b. A competitive process stimulates the view that the solution of a conflict can only be one that is imposed by one side on the other. The enhancement of one's own power and the minimization of the legitimacy of the other side's interests in the situation become objectives. It fosters the expansion of the scope of the issues in conflict so that the conflict becomes a matter of general principles and is no longer confined to a particular issue at a given time and place. The escalation of the conflict increases its motivational significance to the participants and intensifies their emotional involvement in it; these factors, in turn, may make a limited defeat less acceptable or more humiliating than mutual disaster might be. Duplication of effort, so that the competitors become mirror-images of one another, is more likely than division of effort. Coercive processes tend to be employed in the attempt to influence the other.

III. BARRIERS TO AND INCENTIVES FOR COOPERATION

The following "Barriers to Cooperation" and "Incentives for Cooperation" were adapted from the Jewish Vocational Service's Guidelines for Inter-agency Cooperation and the Severely Disabled (1978).

BARRIERS TO COOPERATION

A. FEARS

1. Fear of being absorbed into or controlled by another agency.
2. Fear that failures or inadequacies will be discovered and exposed.
3. Fear that funding sources will not approve such arrangements and will cut off funds.
4. Fear that exchanging resources will mean losing them or receiving less than you give.
5. Fear of innovation or change.

B. LACK OF COMMUNICATION

1. Lack of awareness and understanding of other agencies, their functions, and resources.
2. Lack of broad understanding of needs/options because a particular group is too specialized.
3. Energy drained by dealing with large, complex bureaucracy (e.g., Reduction in Force problems).
4. Staff do not plan for cooperation or see possibilities for cooperation because job demands exceed time and resources.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

1. No funds available for cooperative ventures.
 2. Feuds due to personalities, tradition of agency, prejudices, broken trust.
 3. Competition for same clients and resources.
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INCENTIVES FOR COOPERATION

A. OUTSIDE PRESSURES

1. Change in priorities of the funding source.
2. Scarce resources or reduction in funding levels which necessitates streamlining/cooperation/greater efficiency.
3. Outside demand for cooperation necessary to provide new services to fill gaps or improve old ones.
4. Emergencies, external threats, natural disasters.

B. PREVAILING ATMOSPHERE

1. General interest in innovation.
2. History of past cooperation among agencies.
3. Mutual desire and decision to decrease overlaps and increase maximization of resources.
4. Objectives of agencies are mutually compatible.

C. SELF-INTEREST

1. Status gained from cooperating with a more prestigious agency.
2. Gain of tangible benefits.
3. Surplus resources are available for trade.

IV. PROGRAM LINKAGE STRUCTURES

The variety of possible program linkage structures to facilitate inter-agency cooperation is quite extensive. Such linkages may range from a minimal effort by two or more agencies in such areas as information exchange and problem identification, through projects which display varying degrees of system development, to comprehensive systems which involve central planning, management, client flow, and other such functions.

Gans and Horton first identified a list of commonly adopted program linkages and definitions. This list has subsequently been added to and modified by others. This version, which is accepted in practice as the conventional array of program linkages, is taken from Project Share's Dimensions of Services Integration; it is presented here to provide concrete examples of the numerous ways linkages between programs can be developed and maintained.

Joint planning:

The joint determination of total service delivery system needs, priorities and structured planning process.

Joint development of operating policies:

A structured process in which the policies, procedures, regulations, and guidelines governing the administration of a project are jointly established.

Joint programming:

The joint development of programmatic solutions to defined problems in relation to existing resources.

Information sharing:

An exchange of information regarding resources, procedures, and legal requirements (but not individual clients) between the project integrator and various service providers.

Joint evaluation:

The joint determination of effectiveness of service in meeting client needs.

Coordinated budgeting/planning:

The integrator sits with all service providers together or individually to develop their budgets but without any authority to ensure the budgets are adhered to or the traditional service agencies develop their budgets together.

Centralized budgeting:

A centralized authority develops the budgets for the traditional service agencies with the authority to ensure that they are adhered to: may or may not include central point funding.

Joint funding:

Two or more service providers give funds to support service; most often in a broad programmatic fashion.

Purchase of service:

Formal agreements that may or may not involve a written contract between the integrated system and some other party or among agencies to obtain or provide service; generally a fee-for-service arrangement.

Transfer of budget authority:

Funds are shifted from one agency within the integrated system to another agency in that same system.

Consolidated personnel administration:

The centralized provision of some or all of the following: hiring, firing, promoting, placing, classifying, training.

Joint use of staff:

Two different agencies deliver service by using the same staff; both agencies have line authority over staff.

Seconding, cross-agency assignment:

One or more employees are on the payroll of one agency but under the administrative control of another.

Organizational change across agencies:

Service agencies in the integrated system or newly created agencies receive staff or units from another agency in the system and/or an umbrella organization is created.

Organizational change within the agency:

Reorganization of agency staff or organizational units involving changes internal to each organization only (may be similar changes in each agency).

Colocation of central offices:

Central administrative offices for two or more agencies at the locale are relocated at a single site.

Colocation of branch functions:

Several agencies colocate personnel performing branch as opposed to centralized administrative functions at a single site.

Outstationing:

Placement of a service provider in the facility of another service agency; no transfer of line authority or payroll responsibility takes place.

Joint record keeping:

The gathering, storing, and disseminating of information about clients.

Joint grants management:

The servicing of grants.

Central support services:

The consolidated or centralized provision of services such as auditing, purchasing, exchange of material and equipment, and consultative services.

Satellite services:

Services provided whenever personnel from one service agency are restationed so as to increase the number of site agencies in the integrated network.

Joint outreach:

The systematic recruitment of clients.

Joint intake:

The process resulting in the admission (including determination of eligibility) of a client to the provision of direct service.

Joint transportation:

Provision of transportation to clients on a joint basis.

Referral:

The process by which a client is directed or sent for services to another provider by a system that is in some way centralized.

Diagnosis:

The assessment of overall service needs of individual clients.

Followup:

The process used to determine whether clients receive the services to which they have been referred and to shepherd the client through the service delivery system.

Case conference:

A meeting between the staff of two or more agencies who provide service to a given family for the purpose of discussing that family either generally or in terms of a specific problem, possibly determining a course of action and assigning responsibility among the agencies for implementing the solution.

Case consultation:

A meeting of staff members of agencies who provide service to a given family for the same purposes as specified in "case conference" above.

Case coordinator:

The designated staff member having prime responsibility to assure the provision of service to a given client by multiple autonomous providers.

Case team:

The arrangement in which a number of staff members, either representing different disciplines or working with different members of a given family, work together to relate a range of services of autonomous providers to a given client. The primary difference between case conferences and case teams is that the former may be ad hoc whereas the latter involve continuous and systematic interaction among the members of the team.

Joint data system:

A multiagency machine or computerized recordkeeping system containing at a minimum information regarding patients contacted and clients treated. (Project Share, 1979, pp 48-51)

During the forthcoming period of declining resources devoted to human services, there should be greater interest in creative methods of interagency cooperation. This paper summarizes several aspects of trust, incentives, and barriers that underlie such cooperation.

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The Policy Analysis Series is published by the Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Developmental Disabilities Program, Department of Energy, Planning and Development.

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The purpose of this series is to enhance communication among state and local agencies, service providers, advocates, and consumers on timely issues. We encourage reader participation by giving us feedback on your ideas and perceptions of this problem. This paper may be cited:

Developmental Disabilities Program. Policy Analysis Series #3: Interagency Cooperation: The Underlying Concepts of Trust, Incentives, Barriers, and Forms of Linkage. St. Paul, MN: Developmental Disabilities Program, Department of Energy, Planning and Development, August, 1981.