

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

by Yehzekel Dror

1. The Nature of Coordination

Coordination is the administrative process which deals with the integration of the activities of various officials and administrative units. Its purpose is to achieve unification of the functions of various units in order to enable the administration to realize its general and inclusive goals.

Generally speaking, the term "coordination" refers to the integration of activities which take place in different units at more or less the same time; the integration of activities of the same administrative units in different periods of time is the task of planning. It is, therefore, possible to regard the process of coordination as part of a more general synchronization process in which planning and coordination, together with several other processes, work toward inclusive integration of the activities of the various administrative bodies, occurring at the same time as well as at different periods of time.

Coordination implies the existence of at least three elements: mutual knowledge about planned and executed activities (i.e., good communication); willingness to cooperate and an objective possibility to find a coordinated mode of operation. If one of these is missing, full co-ordination cannot be achieved. To be more accurate, as "co-ordination" and "non-co-ordination" are the opposite roles of a continuum and what we really mean is "more co-ordination" or "less co-ordination", we may state that, the more these three basic elements are present, the greater the degree of coordination.

Within the framework of this paper we shall discuss first the factors which determine the required degree of coordination and the main types of co-ordination; we shall then examine the major variables which determine the degree of achieved co-ordination finally, we shall explore some of the main methods for improving co-ordination.

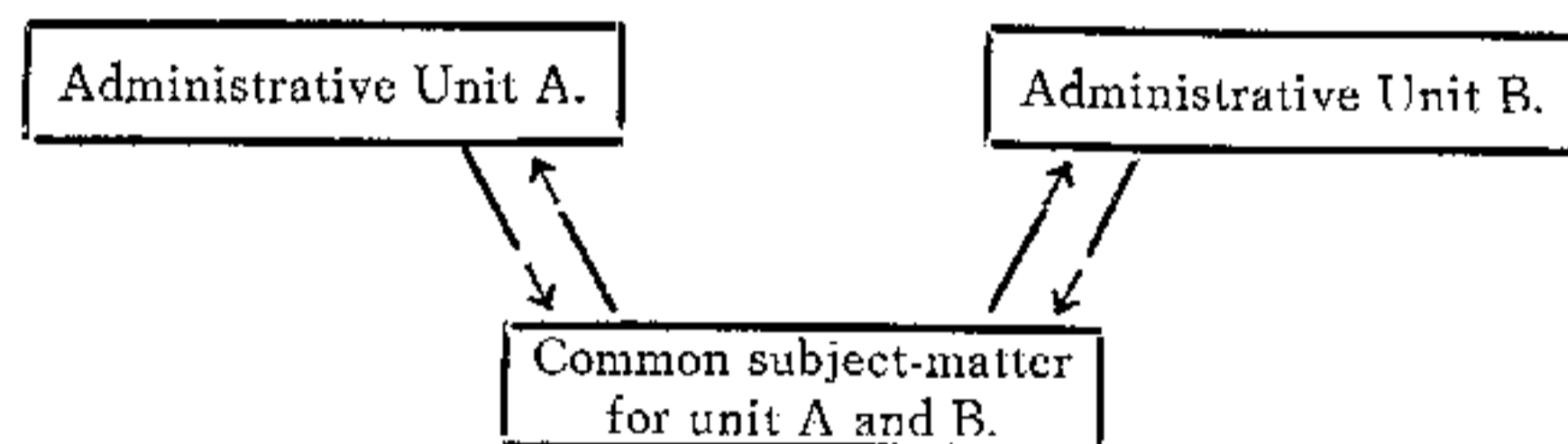
2. The Need for Co-ordination

The need for co-ordination is a direct result of the very idea of the division of labor, upon which the definition of functions and allocation of tasks in every administrative body is based. To the extent that the subject-matter or the range of activity of a certain administrative unit are self-contained, there is no need for co-ordination with other functionaries and administrative units. However, one official, or even one administrative unit, is hardly ever in full control of all the factors which influence his subject-matter; hence, the need for co-ordination with other officials and other administrative units, which affect that same subject-matter.

It is possible to distinguish between two prototypes of relationship between officials (or administrative units) to their subject-matter, which necessitate co-ordination: the first—where the same subject-matter is dealt with by more than one unit. In this case there is a clear need for co-ordination between the various officials who deal with the same subject-matter, in order to prevent contradictory actions and to achieve a satisfactory degree of integration, which will ensure efficiency and optimal economy.

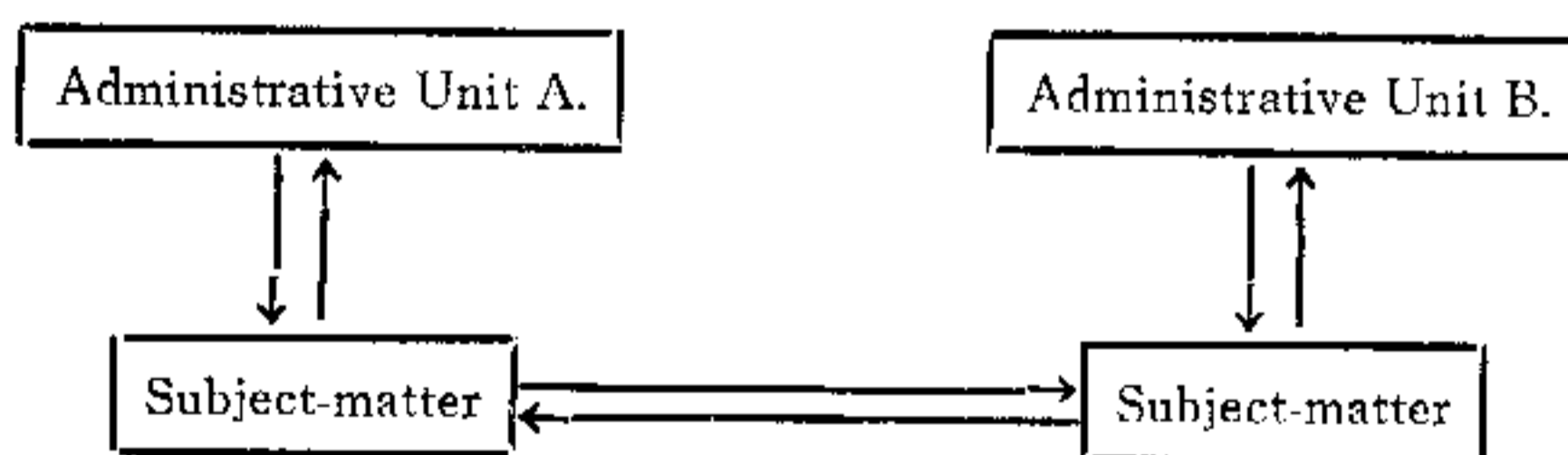
The second case is somewhat more complicated: even when different officials, or administrative units, are in charge of apparently different and unrelated subject-matters, which do not overlap directly, the question still to be faced is, to what extent these different subject-matters do in fact influence one another. The more these various subject matters are relatively autonomous and the less they interact—the smaller the need for co-ordination between the different units in charge of them. However, in fact, many subject-matters are closely interrelated. If this is the case, then lack of co-ordination between the different administrative bodies will result, in spite of the apparently unrelated subject-matters of those bodies, in unexpected and undesirable consequences, because of the actual interaction between those subject-matters (see diagram I).

DIAGRAM I



Type A

Subject-matter common
to more than one official
or administrative unit



Type B

Distinct subject-matters
which interact

An important difference between these two types of relationships between administrative units and their subject-matter lies in the possibilities for minimalizing the need for co-ordination: to the extent that the need for co-ordination stems from partial identicalness or overlap of the subject-matter (type A), it is possible to deal with the problem by a sharper definition of the subject-matters of the different administrative units, directed at preventing, as much as possible, cases in which one subject-matter is directly dealt with by more than one administrative unit. On the other hand, insofar as the need for co-ordination stems from inter-relationships and interdependence between distinct and well-defined subject-matters which are directly dealt with by different administrative bodies, there is in general no way to increase the autonomy of the subject-matter and, thus, reduce the need for co-ordination. Therefore, in such a case, the only solution lies in improving co-ordination between the administrative bodies which deal with the inter-related subject-matters.

In fact, there are rather few autonomous subject-matters. Rather, most subject-matters dealt with by various officials and administrative units, are more or less inter-related and do constantly interact. This is a basic phenomenon making necessary much co-ordination, which constitutes the main reason for the importance of the quality of coordination as a major factor determining the quality of administrative action in general.

We may summarize our examination of the need for co-ordination as follows: the more one subject-matter is directly dealt with by more officials or administrative units and the more intensive the inter-relationship between subject-matters dealt with by different officials and administrative units—the greater the need for co-ordination between those officials and administrative units.

3. Main Types of Co-ordination

There are three main types of co-ordination which, although similar in their basic nature, differ in various important characteristics. These are: co-ordination between superior and subordinates; co-ordination between parallel officials and units having an effective common superior; and co-ordination between parallel officials and units having no effective common superior.

It is necessary to recognize explicitly the crucial importance of the process of co-ordination between superior and subordinate as one of the basic factors determining the hierarchial relationships in every administrative structure. Although accepted administrative theory tends to neglect this phenomenon, it seems that one of the more important problems—from the point of view of co-ordination of different activities on one

hand, and the proper understanding and shaping of the relationship between superiors and subordinates on the other—is the co-ordination between the superior and his subordinate. It is true that the specific characteristics of the framework of formal authority and subordination in which the co-ordination between superior and subordinate takes place tend, at times, to conceal the importance of the process of co-ordination in these relationships. But, as a matter of fact, one of the main purposes of most activation systems, systems of reporting and control, etc., is the achievement of co-ordination between the actions of superiors and subordinates. From this point of view, our analysis, in this article, of administrative co-ordination applies to a major portion of the hierarchial relations, and added knowledge on the process of co-ordination can make an important contribution to the understanding of superior-subordinate relationships and their improvement.

Co-ordination between officials, or administrative units, which are on a more or less parallel functional level (which does not necessarily imply identity of formal rank) includes two main types: co-ordination when there exists an effective formal superior, i.e., within the framework of a more monolithic administrative unit; and co-ordination in the absence of an effective formal superior, that is to say among officials and units which belong to different and non-integrated administrative units.

Again, to be accurate, one must point out that these are not absolutely distinct situations, but rather this is a relative classification, depending on the presence of a more or less effective common superior. This is extremely important with regard to public administration, since a formal common superior of all government units does often exist, in the form of the cabinet itself. Yet, in many respects, the cabinet often does not constitute an effective superior and, therefore, in many cases, different government departments must be regarded—from the point of view of co-ordination at least—as different units having for most purposes no common effective superior. Nevertheless, the very existence of the cabinet and the very possibility that it might discuss and decide problems which have not been co-ordinated at a lower level, does constitute an extremely important factor which imparts to the problem of inter-departmental co-ordination in government administration a character differing in many respects from the problems of co-ordination between units with no common superior at all, such as various local authorities, independent administrative agencies, etc.

4. Variables Determining the Degree of Co-ordination

After our short survey of the nature of co-ordination, the need for co-ordination and its main types, we arrive at the central point of our enquiry, i.e., an examination of the

main variables which determine the degree of co-ordination. These variables constitute the basis for understanding the problems of co-ordination and supply the main key for improving the co-ordination process since, if we succeed in manipulating these variables so as to reinforce those which facilitate co-ordination and weaken those which hinder co-ordination, co-ordination—all other factors being equal—will improve.

It is possible to distinguish seven main variables determining the extent of co-ordination. We will now discuss these variables one by one.

A) The Organizational Framework One of the most important factors determining the degree of co-ordination is the organizational framework. This includes, first of all, the already mentioned existence of an effective common superior. It also includes the existence of formal co-ordinating devices, such as inter-unit committees, regulations for transmittal of material etc., which we shall later discuss in more detail. At present, it is sufficient to state that the organizational framework is doubtlessly one of the major factors determining the degree of co-ordination. The establishment of suitable organizational structures and arrangements is, therefore, a major means of improving co-ordination.

B) The Communication Network We have pointed out in the discussion of the nature of co-ordination the importance of the existence of a satisfactory communication network as an essential, though in itself insufficient, prerequisite for co-ordination. In the absence of a constant flow of information between the different officials and administrative units, co-ordination cannot be effective (unless by accident). In this regard, any disruption of communication constitutes a co-ordination barrier, while any improvement in communication may also contribute to co-ordination.

In fact, even in cases where the willingness for co-operation and the other variables which encourage co-ordination are not too strong, the advantages of some co-ordination for all involved parties are generally numerous enough to cause a considerable improvement in co-ordination as a direct result of improved communication. On the pragmatic level, improving the communication network is therefore one of the relatively easiest and most effective means for improving co-ordination.

C) Personal Relations Personal relations between the officials who have to co-ordinate constitute one of the major variables determining the willingness to cooperate, which in itself is a vital condition for successful co-ordination. In the absence of willingness to cooperate, which is affected greatly by personal relations, neither elaborate organizational systems, nor effective communication, can ensure the necessary co-ordination. Officials may know what the other party intends to do and may participate in many sessions of co-ordination committees, but, if unwilling, they will neither give-and-take nor seek a common solution, thus preventing any successful co-ordination.

In addition to the tone of inter-personal relations, the frequency of the personal contact between the various officials is also of importance, since frequent personal contact encourages co-ordination both by providing more opportunity for two-way communication and by promoting the willingness to cooperate.

One can therefore regard considerable improvements in co-ordination as one of the outcomes of improvements in personal relations among different officials. It is interesting to note in this connection that one of the unexpected, but highly desirable, results of inter-departmental residential courses and seminars is the improvement in inter-department co-ordination resulting upon development of positive personal relations among the various officials who spent their time together at the residential training activities.

D) Unity or Diversity of Orientations A variable with considerable influence on co-ordination, both in regard to the willingness to cooperate and the ability to reach agreed-upon co-ordinated solutions, is the degree of unity or diversity in the orientations of the various officials and administrative units. Should the orientations of the various sides differ—because of differences in ideology and outlook, conflicting interests, different socio-cultural backgrounds, etc.—both a decrease in the willingness to cooperate and actual inability to find mutually accept solutions may be envisaged. One of the major advantages of a common “doctrine”* is its positive influence on co-ordination, even when lack of time may prevent thorough discussions and exchange of opinions. Typical examples are military doctrines in armies and surgical routines in operating rooms. Although generally we do not find such well developed “doctrines” within administrative bodies, every administrative body does evolve an “approach” or “attitude” of its own, which facilitates co-ordination within it. On the other hand, this phenomenon complicates co-ordination between different bodies having different “doctrines”. It is important, therefore, to encourage the generation of a common “doctrine” for those units which require a great deal of co-ordination between them. This may be achieved through more frequent personal contact, rotation of man power, etc.**

The degree of conflict, identity, or mutual complementarity of the goals (overt or covert) of the different officials and administrative units is similar in its effect on co-ordination. “Departmental orientation” vs. “inclusive orientation”, “building of empires” vs.

* The concept of “doctrine” is used here as referring to commonly accepted modes of operation and operational goals, and not as referring to basic ideological beliefs. Cf. Lyndall F. Urwick, *The Pattern of Management* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956), p. 81.

** On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind the dangers of over-development of “unit doctrines”, which may prevent initiative and innovation and regard “adaptation” as being of supreme importance. Compare William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).

“advancing the formal organizational goals”, the “public interest” vs. “group and sectional advantages” — these are some of the contradictory attitudes which determine the extent of conflict between the goals of various officials and administrative units. We must admit, though, that the very division of labor among different officials and administrative units together with the necessity to ensure their devotion to their specific goals, must by their very nature bring about differences in approach and in emphasis. This is not necessarily an evil; the administrative structure and the division of labor in it are designed so as to reach the overall goals through friction between different units which pursue different secondary goals. But, if the differences in interests and approaches and the extent of friction go beyond a certain point and begin to overshadow the more general goals lying beyond the narrow roles of the various units, it becomes too difficult to achieve the required co-ordination and the very attainment of the overall goals is endangered.

Achieving a proper balance between devotion to a limited role and readiness to see the more general goals beyond it, is a most difficult task indeed. Such a balance involves a considerable inner tension and may easily lead to one of two extremes: apathy toward the concrete and limited role, or unwillingness to adjust the mode of operation to the overall goals. Constant efforts in educating the high officials, in having them participate in the problems of the administration as a whole, and rotation—these are but some of the means which may help create a common basic orientation directed at common goals, which is vital for optimal co-ordination.

E) Distribution of Power Among the basic factors determining the degree of co-ordination, we must mention the distribution of power among different units. There are three main possibilities in this regard, which considerably affect co-ordination. One, is a state of balance of power accompanied by interdependence among the various officials or administrative units. A second possibility is balance of power with no inter-dependence. The third possibility is a concentration of power in the hands of one of the officials or administrative units.

In case of mutual dependence, the prospects for co-ordination are relatively good, since every side knows that if it does not co-ordinate its activities with the other units, the other units will reciprocate in the same way. Hence there are good chances for the development of a mutually agreed-upon relationship with a relatively high degree of co-ordination.

On the other hand, in case of a relative balance of power without interdependence, the prospects for co-ordination are rather low, since the incentive for reciprocity is lacking.

The situation where a stronger concentration of power exists is somewhat different. We may expect co-ordination on behalf of the weaker units with the center of power. On the other hand, the degree of co-ordination on behalf of the center of power with the weaker units depends on its goodwill. In such cases we generally have monodirectional co-ordination, i.e., only partial co-ordination.

In spite of the high significance of the balance of power in regard to the system of co-ordination, we have here a factor which it is difficult to examine and even more difficult to influence. To the extent that the power involves formal authority, it may be possible to promote a situation with interdependence. However, if the power stems from personal factors or the backing of external forces, it is scarcely susceptible to control and it is necessary to operate with other variables influencing co-ordination, in order to stimulate the center of power to co-ordinate with the weaker units.

F) The Expected Results of Co-ordination and Nonco-ordination The positive and negative aspects, from the point of view of the concerned parties, of the expected results of co-ordination and nonco-ordination considerably influence the degree of co-ordination achieved. The more the expected results of co-ordination are convenient for any one official or administrative unit, the more will that party co-ordinate. On the other hand, the more the expected results of co-ordinations are undesirable to an official or administrative unit, the less will that party co-ordinate.

Establishment of systems of external supervision and internal control which provide negative sanctions for nonco-ordination and positive sanctions for co-ordination, is therefore an important means for shaping this variable in the direction of encouraging co-ordination and decreasing nonco-ordination.

G) The Objective Possibility of Co-ordination The degree of difficulty or ease of the process of co-ordination, from the point of view of the parties involved in it and the complexity of the subject-matter which is to be co-ordinated, constitute another significant variable. The number of parties which has to be co-ordinated, the size of the data which must be taken into consideration and the complexity of the subject-matter dealt with—these are some of the factors which determine the objective difficulties of co-ordination.

In fact, we deal here with the limitations of the individual and the administrative unit in integrating more than a certain amount of factors and data. If the amount of factors and data requiring co-ordination approaches the limit of the human or departmental integrating ability, the only solution is to break the subject-matter up into simpler and smaller units, which may be more easily co-ordinated. As an example we may cite the problems of comprehensive national planning, where the vast amounts of data prevent, at times, rational central processing and necessitate subdivision of the planning function by branches according to territory, and so on. The development of modern equipment for

data processing, such as electronic computers, greatly increase the potential for integrating large quantities of certain categories of data, thus providing novel solutions for certain co-ordination problems. This does not, however, eliminate the concept of co-ordination overload, but only somewhat shifts its limits.

Recognition of the limits of personal and departmental co-ordinating and integrating abilities is vital in order to prevent the establishment of administrative operations and administrative structures which cannot achieve the required co-ordination because of inherent co-ordination overload.

We have now concluded our examination of the seven main variables determining the degree of co-ordination, and will proceed to a short examination of some methods for improving co-ordination. (See Diagram II for a summary of the main factors facilitating or hindering co-ordination).

DIAGRAM II

Main Factors Facilitating or Hindering Co-ordination

<i>Factors facilitating co-ordination</i>	<i>Factors hindering co-ordination</i>
Presence of an effective common superior	Absence of an effective common superior
Presence of organizational co-ordination devices, such as: co-ordinating committees, co-ordination procedures, co-ordination units	Absence of organizational co-ordination devices
Good communication system; no disruptions of communication	Poor communication system; disruption of communication
Much personal contact	Little personal contact
Positive personal relations	Negative personal relations
Presence of a common "doctrine" and goals	Presence of different approaches and lack of recognition of common goals
Presence of mutual interdependence	Absence of mutual interdependence
Presence of a single center of power that is not interested in co-ordination	Presence of a single center of power that is not interested in co-ordination
Co-ordination has desirable results, nonco-ordination has undesirable results	Co-ordination has undesirable results, nonco-ordination has desirable results.
Low co-ordination load	High co-ordination load
Co-ordination required between few parties	Co-ordination required between numerous parties

5. Methods for Improving Co-ordination

To a certain extent the methods for improving co-ordination can be deduced from our analysis of the main variables shaping co-ordination. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to elaborate this subject somewhat and discuss on a more pragmatic level some major methods for improving co-ordination. We shall first discuss a few general principles and, then, briefly, point out several basic devices for improving co-ordination.

In respect to general guidelines designed to improve co-ordination we can mention three basic principles* :

- a) co-ordination at an early stage;
- b) co-ordination at a low level;
- c) co-ordination through personal contact.

The principle of co-ordination at the earliest possible stage is based on the assumption that the more a certain unit crystallizes its mode of operation, the more difficult it becomes to change its decisions later on and once a unit acts in a certain line and invests funds in a certain program it becomes practically impossible to change the line and have the unit pursue another course of action, which is more desirable from the point of view of co-ordination. Therefore, the chances of co-ordination are greater at an early stage of action and especially during the planning phase. Co-ordination during the planning phase is, thus, an important principle for improving co-ordination. This, of course, does not imply that co-ordinating at any one stage is sufficient; rather, co-ordination must be regarded as a permanent, continuous process.

The second principle, co-ordination at the lowest possible level, is based on general considerations of the vertical division of labor (among different hierarchial levels) in the administrative structure. In order to prevent overload of the higher echelons and to make sure that any official deals with all the aspects of his task, co-ordination with other officials and administrative units must be regarded as an integral part of the duties of each level, within the framework of its overall authority. Of course there are exceptions to this principle, especially where co-ordination with an outside administrative body contains the elements of "foreign relations" which may require the attention of a more senior level.

Concerning the advisability of co-ordination through personal contact, no such reservations are needed. The need for mutual give-and-take before premature freezing of positions through correspondence and memoranda make retreat difficult, certainly calls

* Cf. Henry C. Metcalf and L. Urwick (ed.), *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett* (Bath, Eng.: Management Publications Trust Ltd., 1941), ch. 14.

for an attempt to achieve the required co-ordination through personal contacts. Experience may well justify an even more far-reaching conclusion: co-ordination involving give-and-take is nearly never achieved through written contacts alone. It seems, therefore, that the principle of co-ordination through personal contact is nearly always valid. The needs for formal records can easily be satisfied by preparation of a written records after agreement is reached through personal contact.

These three general principles are extremely important but cover only some facets of the co-ordination process. Improvement of co-ordination requires manifold activities designed to influence the various, already discussed, variables so as to improve co-ordination. The detailed methods for improving communications, building good personal relations, shaping the balance-of-power and so on are the subject-matter of other chapters of administrative theory and cannot be dealt within the scope of this paper. Here we will limit ourselves to briefly examining some specific techniques and devices for improving co-ordination.

a) **A Comprehensive Plan** A formal ruling on the duty to prepare a plan which covers the work of several officials or administrative units, constitutes a very significant and effective means of co-ordination. In fact—planning being directed at “co-ordinations in time” (see above, section 1) and planning being one of the earliest phases of administrative action—having a predetermined comprehensive plan is essential for co-ordination of complex activities. The effectiveness of this device depends on several factors, such as the detailedness of the plan, the form of the plan, strict insistence on performance according to plan and more, which are beyond the scope of this paper. For our purpose it is enough to note that a comprehensive predetermined plan is, *inter alia*, an extremely vital and effective co-ordination device.

b) **An Effective Common Superior** At this stage of our paper we need not discuss in detail the importance of the existence or nonexistence of a common superior as a factor determining to a major degree the extent of co-ordination. We shall merely add that, as a rule, it is impossible to reach highly intense* co-ordination in the absence of an effective common superior, who is, therefore, vital in most cases where complete co-ordination is required.

*This distinction between different intensities of co-ordination applies to other co-ordination mechanisms as well. Generally speaking, the higher the intensity of required co-ordination, the more will their establishment be met by resistance. Determination of the optimum intensity-level of co-ordination devices depends on the conditions of each case, including especially the need for co-ordination on one hand and the expected resistance on the other. Generally speaking, the lowest intensity-level satisfying the minimum co-ordination needs will often be the optimal one.

c) **Inter-unit Committees** This is one of the most popular formal co-ordination devices. It is necessary to distinguish inter-unit committees whose main purpose is co-ordination from committees aimed at attaining other goals, such as recruitment of support, public relations, etc. Inter-unit co-ordination committees may be constructed along different lines, in accordance with the intensity of co-ordination the committee must achieve. The use of committees is often highly problematic and the technique of setting them up, their internal organization of work and so on, constitute a subject by themselves. There is one additional point which should be mentioned here: committees, as a rule, are an extremely time-consuming device and it is, therefore, necessary to examine carefully the possibilities of attaining the same degree of co-ordination through more economical devices (e.g. clearing arrangements).

d) **Clearance Arrangements** Clearing arrangements are a very convenient device, which provide for a duty to furnish certain information (often in the form of copies of certain material) to units with which co-ordination should be achieved. Clearance arrangements can achieve co-ordination at various levels of intensity, from simple transmittal of information, to consideration of comments and up to a formal requirement to receive approval from the other unit.

When clearance arrangements are established, care must be taken to consider the dangers of overloading the communication network, which must be balanced as against the expected advantages.

Generally speaking, such procedures are best developed in military staff work and there seems to be much scope for their increased utilization in administrative practice. Most effective in many cases is the use of clearance arrangements together with co-ordination committees, when the clearance arrangement is designed to ensure a smooth flow of informative material and its preliminary processing before the meetings of the committee, while the committee limits itself to negotiations, a process in which personal contact is essential.

e) **Special Co-ordinating Roles** Various liaison officers and co-ordinating staff officers illustrate the use of special co-ordinating roles, which are also particularly developed in military administration. In many respects this is a device intermediate between co-ordination procedures and co-ordination committees, the advantages of which in co-ordination are numerous, but which raises new problems, including co-ordination between the special co-ordinating official and the unit, or official, which he represents.

f) **Conflict Resolving Devices** Another type of co-ordination device, which functions to a certain extent post factum, but is designed to prevent the recurrence of cases of nonco-ordination in the future, deals with conflict resolving. A common superior or

inter-unit committee may serve as a conflict resolving device and, thus, further co-ordination. There are cases where the court acts as a co-ordinating factor between different units. The significance of conflict resolving device as a co-ordinating factor has not yet received due attention, and available material does not permit identification of its characteristics. We have, therefore, to limit ourselves to mentioning this device and pointing out its potential importance.

We have enumerated several devices for the improvement of co-ordination. In fact, the quality of co-ordination depends on a complex set of variables and arrangement, therefore the improvement of co-ordination requires multidimensional action. It is possible to try, on one hand, to lower the need for co-ordination by a sharper allocation of subject-matters. On the other hand, it is necessary to act with respect to all the variables shaping co-ordination and to establish devices of different kinds in order to improve this basic administrative process and to attain optimal co-ordination.

6. Conclusion

The complex and manifold activities of modern public administration make co-ordination among various units and activities absolutely essential. Especially when the public administration machinery engages in socio-economic development activities, co-ordination becomes one of the more essential administrative processes, failure of which can have most damaging consequences for the whole set of development activities. Therefore, the problems of co-ordination require more attention and study, directed at providing better understanding of the process and better methods for its improvement. In this article an effort was made to deal with some facets of co-ordination in the hope that it will serve as a stimulus to further research and investigation and contribute to the improvement of administrative practice.

ย่อเรื่อง

การประสานงานด้านบริหาร

ของ

ยี่เฮซเคล ครอร์

1. ลักษณะของการประสานงาน การประสานงานคือกระบวนการทางบริหารซึ่งเกี่ยวกับการรวมกิจกรรมของเจ้าหน้าที่และหน่วยงานต่าง ๆ เข้าด้วยกันโดยมีวัตถุประสงค์จะให้ งานต่าง ๆ เป็นอันหนึ่งอันเดียวกัน อันจะทำให้การบริหารงานประสพผลสำเร็จตามความ มุ่งหมายทั่วไปและความมุ่งหมายเฉพาะ การประสานงานนั้นอย่างน้อยจะต้องประกอบด้วยสิ่ง ต่าง ๆ 3 ประการด้วยกันคือ ความรู้เกี่ยวกับการวางแผนและการดำเนินงาน (เช่นการติดต่อ ทั่ว) ความมีเจตนาที่จะให้ความร่วมมือ และความพยายามที่จะให้การประสานงานมากที่สุด ฉะนั้นบทความนี้จะได้กล่าวถึงปัจจัยในการกำหนดองค์ประกอบของการประสานงาน ชนิดของการ ประสานงาน และวิธีปรับปรุงการประสานงาน

2. ความต้องการการประสานงาน ความต้องการการประสานงานนั้นเป็นผลโดยตรงจาก ความคิดในเรื่องการแบ่งงาน เมื่อมีการแบ่งงานก็ย่อมก่อให้เกิดความต้องการในการประสาน งานขึ้น เราสามารถแยกประเภทความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้ปฏิบัติงาน (หรือหน่วยงาน) ออกได้ เป็น 2 ประเภท ประเภทแรกคืองานอย่างเดี่ยวปฏิบัติจัดทำโดยหน่วยงานมากกว่าหนึ่งหน่วย ในกรณีนี้จะเห็นได้ชัดในความต้องการให้มีการประสานงานกัน ประเภทหลังการปฏิบัติงาน ของแต่ละหน่วยงานแตกต่างกันไปไม่สัมพันธ์หรือเหลื่อมล้ำกันโดยตรง แต่ต้องการการ ประสานงานเนื่องจากผลงานจะเกี่ยวข้องของซึ่งกันและกัน

3. การประสานงานประเภทใหญ่ ๆ อาจแบ่งออกได้เป็น 3 ประเภทที่สำคัญ คือ การ ประสานงานระหว่างผู้บังคับบัญชา-ผู้ใต้บังคับบัญชา การประสานงานระหว่างเจ้าหน้าที่หรือ หน่วยงานในหน่วยงานระดับเดียวกันซึ่งอยู่ภายใต้การบังคับบัญชาเดียวกัน การประสานงาน ระหว่างเจ้าหน้าที่หรือหน่วยงานในระดับเดียวกันซึ่งไม่ได้อยู่ภายใต้การบังคับบัญชาเดียวกัน

4. องค์ประกอบซึ่งกำหนดองค์การประสานงาน องค์ประกอบเหล่านี้มี 7 ประเภทด้วยกัน คือ

ก) โครงสร้างของหน่วยงาน นับว่ามีความสำคัญต่อการประสานงานมาก ทั้งนี้ เพราะการจัดโครงสร้างหน่วยงานที่เหมาะสมนั้นเป็นการช่วยให้เกิดการประสานงานที่ดี

ข) ระบบการติดต่อ อาจจะกล่าวได้ว่าการประสานงานจะไม่สามารถมีขึ้นได้ หากขาดระบบการติดต่อ สำหรับในระดับปฏิบัติการนั้น การปรับปรุงระบบการติดต่อเป็นสิ่งทำได้ง่ายที่สุด และจะยังผลในการปรับปรุงการประสานงานได้มากที่สุด

ค) ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคล ความสำคัญอย่างยิ่งประการหนึ่งในการประสานงาน คือความเต็มใจในการร่วมมือปฏิบัติงานซึ่งจะเกิดขึ้นได้โดยความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคลเป็นเหตุ ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคลนั้นนอกจากจะช่วยให้มีการร่วมมืออย่างเต็มใจแล้ว ยังช่วยให้มีการติดต่อทั้ง 2 ทาง คือ จากผู้บังคับบัญชา - ผู้ใต้บังคับบัญชา และผู้ใต้บังคับบัญชา - ผู้บังคับบัญชาเพิ่มขึ้น ข้อสังเกตประการหนึ่งคือความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างบุคคลที่เกิดขึ้นจากการอยู่ร่วมกันระหว่างการผลิตจะช่วยให้การประสานงานได้เป็นอย่างดี

ง) การอบรมปฐมนิเทศก็อย่างมีเอกภาพและพหุภาพ สิ่งที่สำคัญยิ่งก็คือจะพยายามให้ผู้ปฏิบัติงานร่วมมือกันมีแนวคิดในการปฏิบัติงานอย่างเดียวกัน หมายถึงการยอมรับวิธีการปฏิบัติและจุดประสงค์ของการปฏิบัติงานอย่างเดียวกัน ซึ่งจะเป็นประโยชน์อย่างยิ่งต่อการประสานงาน ทั้งนี้ทำได้โดยการจัดให้เจ้าหน้าที่ได้มีการอบรมปฐมนิเทศกัน

จ) การแบ่งอำนาจ การแบ่งอำนาจระหว่างหน่วยงานต่าง ๆ ซึ่งจะมีผลต่อการประสานงานนั้นมี 3 ประการด้วยกันคือ ประการที่ 1 กำหนดศูนย์แห่งอำนาจระหว่างเจ้าหน้าที่หรือหน่วยงานต่าง ๆ ซึ่งต้องทำงานพึ่งพาอาศัยกัน ในกรณีนี้ผู้ที่ปฏิบัติงานได้ก็เนื่องจากต่างฝ่ายต่างต้องพึ่งพาอาศัยกัน ประการที่ 2 กำหนดศูนย์แห่งอำนาจระหว่างหน่วยงานซึ่งเป็นอิสระต่อกัน ในกรณีนี้ผู้ที่ปฏิบัติงานมักจะมีน้อย ประการที่ 3 การรวมอำนาจอยู่ที่ผู้หนึ่งผู้ใดหรือหน่วยงานใดเพียงแห่งเดียว จะทำให้เกิดสภาพที่เรียกได้เพียงว่าเป็นการประสานงานส่วนเดียว

ด) การคาดหมายผลของการประสานงานและไม่ประสานงาน การประสานงาน จะเพิ่มขึ้นและการไม่ประสานงานจะลดลงโดยการจัดให้มีระบบการดูแลจากภายนอก และมีระบบการควบคุมภายใน มีฉนวนกันภัยต่าง ๆ จะประสานมากหรือน้อยตามที่ตนเห็นว่า จะได้ประโยชน์มากหรือน้อย ซึ่งอาจไม่เป็นผลดีต่องานโดยรวม

ข) โอกาสที่จะให้มีการประสานงานได้สมความตั้งใจนั้นจะพิจารณาได้จากว่า การประสานงานจะมีได้มากน้อยเพียงใดขึ้นอยู่กับจำนวนผู้ปฏิบัติงานและปริมาณงานด้วย หากปรากฏว่ามีมากเกินไปก็ตั้งพยายามแยกให้เหลือน้อยลงเพื่อสะดวกแก่การประสานงาน

5. วิธีปรับปรุงการประสานงาน วิธีปรับปรุงมีมากมายหลายอย่างด้วยกัน แต่อาจสรุปเป็นหลักเกณฑ์ที่สำคัญได้ 3 ประการด้วยกัน คือ

ก. การประสานงานในระยะเริ่มแรก มีผลดีกว่าการเรียงกันรูปร่างมากขึ้นเพียงคิด การเปลี่ยนแปลงดังที่กระทำมาแล้วด้วยอ้อมยากลำบากขึ้นเพียงนั้น ฉะนั้นการประสานงานจึงควรกระทำตั้งแต่เบื้องต้น โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในขณะวางแผนงาน และจะต้องทำการประสานงาน โดยถาวรและต่อเนื่องกันตลอดไป

ข. การประสานงานในระดับต่ำ ทั้งนี้เพื่อเป็นการแบ่งเบาภาระเจ้าหน้าที่ชั้นสูงและเพื่อให้เจ้าหน้าที่แต่ละคนทำงานของตนโดยสมบูรณ์

ค. การประสานงานโดยการติดต่อระหว่างบุคคล เราจะเห็นได้ว่าการติดต่อระหว่างบุคคลนั้นเป็นผลดีต่อการประสานงาน การติดต่อต่าง ๆ ซึ่งเป็นทางการจะได้รับผลดีเร็ว ง่ายขึ้นถ้าได้มีการติดต่อระหว่างบุคคลไว้ก่อน

หลักเกณฑ์ 3 ประการข้างต้นนั้นเป็นแต่เพียงหลักกว้าง ๆ ในการประสานงานเท่านั้น ในขั้นต่อไปจะพิจารณาดังเทคนิคบางประการ ในการปรับปรุงการประสานงาน

ก) แผนงานโดยละเอียด เป็นเครื่องมือที่สำคัญประการหนึ่งของการประสานงาน เนื่องจากเป็นการกำหนดการกระทำต่าง ๆ ในอนาคตให้สอดคล้องกัน

ข) การมีผู้บังคับบัญชาพร้อมกันที่มีประสิทธิภาพ การปราศจากผู้บังคับบัญชาพร้อมกันซึ่งมีประสิทธิภาพนั้นย่อมเป็นการล่อลวงที่จะก่อให้เกิดการประสานงานที่ดี

ค) ควรจัดตั้งคณะกรรมการประสานงานขึ้นภายในหน่วยงาน คณะกรรมการนี้จะแตกต่างกับคณะกรรมการอื่น ๆ ซึ่งมุ่งปฏิบัติแต่งานเฉพาะอย่าง คณะกรรมการนี้อาจประกอบด้วยเจ้าหน้าที่ในด้านต่าง ๆ กันเพื่อส่งเสริมให้งานประสบผลสำเร็จ

ง) การจัดให้มีการตรวจชำระงาน การตรวจชำระงานนี้เป็นเครื่องมืออันมีความสะดวกอย่างมากต่อการให้ข้อมูลแก่หน่วยงานซึ่งจะต้องประสานงานกัน แต่ข้อที่ควรระวังก็คืออย่าให้มีภาระในการติดต่อมากเกินไป ซึ่งอาจทำให้เกิดผลเสียหายมากเท่าเทียมกับผลดีที่คาดว่าจะได้รับ

จ) การมีกรรมการประสานงานเป็นพิเศษ โดยจัดให้มีเจ้าหน้าที่ติดต่อประสานงานเป็นพิเศษ

ฉ) การแก้ปัญหาข้อขัดแย้ง เช่นตั้งคณะกรรมการภายในหน่วยงานเพื่อแก้ไขข้อขัดแย้งหรือหาข้อยุติ แต่วิธีการนี้ยังไม่ได้รับความนิยมโดยกว้างขวาง

จากที่กล่าวมานี้จะเห็นได้ว่าการปรับปรุงการประสานงานนั้นขึ้นอยู่กับองค์ประกอบต่าง ๆ มากมายหลายประการ จึงจะต้องพยายามปรับปรุงองค์ประกอบเหล่านั้นก่อนเพื่อให้การประสานงานดีขึ้น

6. สรุป ความยุ่งยากซับซ้อนของกิจกรรมต่าง ๆ ในการบริหารงานในปัจจุบัน ทำให้การประสานงานมีความสำคัญยิ่ง โดยเฉพาะในจักรกลของการบริหารในการพัฒนาเศรษฐกิจและสังคม และการบริหารงานขนาดใหญ่ ๆ หากการประสานงานไม่ดีพอแล้วยังมีผลเสียหายต่อการพัฒนาทั้งหมด ดังนั้นปัญหาในการบริหารงานจึงจะต้องมีการศึกษาอย่างถ่องแท้เพื่อให้เข้าใจในกระบวนการ และวิธีการในการปรับปรุงการประสานงานให้ดีขึ้น.

ย่อโดย วีรวัฒน์ กาญจนกุล