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ABSTRACT

This report studies the transactional style of organizational processes which emphasizes the interaction of both role expectations and requirements of the institution, and of need-dispositions of the individual. This paper uses the Ford Training and Placement Program as a specific means of illustrating: (1) the reasons for adopting a transactional process; (2) the characteristics and effects of the process; and (3) considerations for making it successful. The study investigates such characteristics of the transactional style as: (1) structures based on the concept of parity; (2) roles defined as interfaces between groups; and (3) the prevailing process of negotiation. The report cites organizational constraints, the need of a new vehicle for feedback and change, and the value of the method itself as reasons to develop a transactional style of organizational process. (Author/LAA)

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TRANSACTIONAL PROCESSES IN THE
FORD TRAINING AND PLACEMENT PROGRAM

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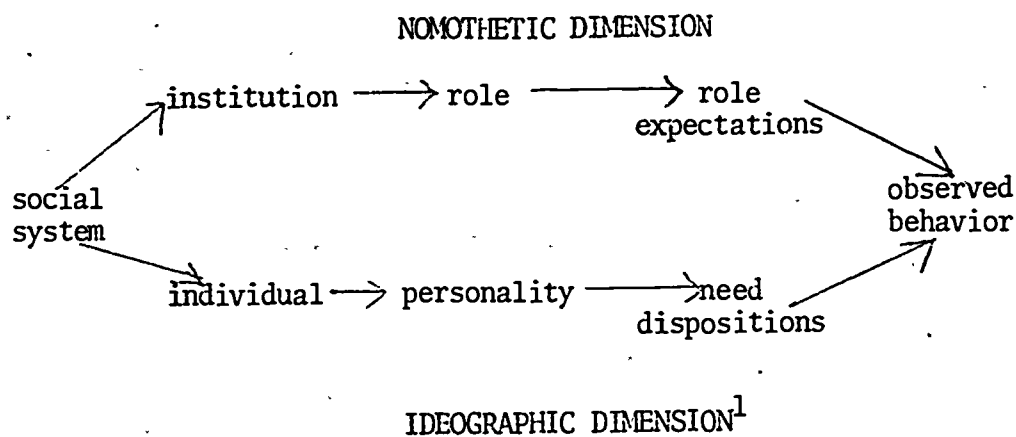
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The Concept of Transactional Process

Any organization can make choices about the style that will govern the interaction of the people and roles within the organization. The thesis of this paper is the Ford Training and Placement Program housed in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Chicago exemplifies a transactional style of interaction and illustrates the values of such a style.

Getzels and Guba define three leadership-followership styles on the basis of their socio-psychological theory of social behavior.

Social behavior may be apprehended as a function of the following major elements: institution, role, and expectation, which together constitute the nomothetic, or normative, dimension of activity in a social system; and individual, personality, and need-disposition, which together constitute the ideographic, or personal, dimension of activity in a social system.



The three styles of leadership-followership which the theory defines are nomothetic, ideographic, and transactional. The nomothetic style emphasizes adherence to role expectations and the requirements of the institution; and assembly line is an example. The ideographic style emphasizes the need-dispositions of the individuals; often the organization of a basic research division in industry is a good example. The transactional style emphasizes the interaction of the two; the Ford Training and Placement Program is a good example. As Getzels and Guba emphasize, all three leadership styles are goal-oriented. The difference in style emphasizes a particular method of arriving at the goals of the organization, but no style is less or more goal-oriented than the others.

This paper adheres to the Getzels and Guba definitions with one exception. Although the theory describes leadership style, this paper will instead describe organizational process. This distinction is probably only a matter of emphasis; it does not, in my estimation, weaken the theory. And it may be a distinction without a difference. Getzels and Guba neither deny nor confirm explicitly the emphasis that I am now developing. The term organization is chosen in contrast to institution because the term institution has formal and length-of-life implications that the term organization does not have. Obviously, small groups may form to accomplish goals, develop a style of interaction, reach their goals, and disband without becoming an institution. The word organization is used here to broaden the application of the theory slightly - not so much as to include informal groups, but enough to include social systems with which we would be uncomfortable with the title of institution.

The word process is chosen in contrast to leadership because of the close association of the word leadership to the word leader. The leader is the head of the organization, and from this fact follows the implication that leadership style is the prerogative and the concern of the administrator. This is true of course. But it ignores the fact that other members of the organization may have powerful influence on the choice of style and that the leader may

be powerfully influenced by the style. In other words, both the prerogative and the concern is very often much more pervasively shared than the word leadership implies. It should be emphasized again that Getzels and Guba do not deny this pervasiveness. Their intent is to examine administrative process. They describe administrative process "as a series of superordinate-subordinate relationships within a social system" and state that the terms leader and follower are relative, "for the follower is not altogether passive . . . and the leader is by no means always dominant." They are emphasizing institutional leadership. The present emphasis on organizational process is not their responsibility. Again, it does not, in my estimation, weaken the theory.

The transactional style of organization process might be seen as an ideal, since it represents a mean between the extremes of nomothetic and ideographic organizational styles. But there are two factors that militate against such an easy assumption. The first of these factors is that the ethos with which we have lived for a long time has placed the highest value on the nomothetic organizational style. The automobile assembly line has been, since the days of the first Henry Ford, the ideal toward which organizations have strived. Functions are defined explicitly, they are analyzed by time and motion studies, roles are determined on the basis of the analysis, and the requirements of the roles are minimized and specified so that the actors are replaceable with a minimum of training. Even in education, where the goals are qualities of people rather than the production of machines, a major effort has been the specification of behavioral objectives and the preparation of explicit materials and procedures of instruction so that the personality of the actors (teachers in this case) can be ignored and teachers will be interchangeable. The idea of "teacher-proof" materials captures the essence of this ideal and shows how strongly we have been influenced by the nomothetic ideal which pervades our times. The second factor that militates against considering the transactional style of organizational process as an ideal is the obvious inadequacy of such a simplistic assumption. Organizational style is partly a function of situational constraints. There are many situations in which one style or another may be clearly impossible. It would be clearly impossible to operate an air-transport system without very strong nomothetic elements of style. Air transport requires the explicit and precise coordination of an overwhelming number of elements in particular time and space distribution. For success, the musts are very powerful and dictate a strongly nomothetic organizational process. At the opposite extreme, it is clearly impractical to operate a community action program without major ideographic elements of style. In both cases there are powerful situational elements that dictate major aspects of organizational style. To fly in the face of such elements would only insure failure.

In many instances where the situation does not dictate the organizational style, there are still factors which make a particular

style intuitively an obvious preference. Thus the mass production of radios for profit seems to require a highly nomothetic style. It seems intuitively obvious that predominantly transactional or ideographic styles would be less successful. On the other hand, there is the evidence of recent changes made in some such organizations. It also seems intuitively obvious that creative artists should be coddled and given great freedom. On the other hand is the evidence of the success of the advertising industry. However, in this paper I do not wish either to define the requirements for creativity or to take on the radio and TV manufacturing industry. Rather, I would like to study the transactional style of organizational processes in greater detail.

The purpose of the Ford Training and Placement Program is to train and place groups, or cadres, of teachers in particular schools of the Chicago Public School system.

The program views the isolation of trainer, user, and client system, and the isolation of professionals within the school social system as major constraints to the development of improved teacher training, improved school functioning, and ultimately improved education. Its theoretical basis derives from viewing the school as a social system in the terms of the above theory,² and leads to the vehicle of cadres training professional educators to work as teams in complimentary roles.³ This paper will use the Ford Training and Placement Program as the specific instance which illustrates the four points to be made - the reasons for adopting a transactional process, the characteristics of the process, its effects, and considerations for making it successful.

Reasons for Adopting a Transactional Process

A first reason for adopting a transactional process was indicated above. There are often situational constraints that limit the style of organizational processes. This is the case with the Ford Training and Placement Program. It trains educators at the Graduate School of Education of the University of Chicago. It places teams of educators in the urban schools of the city of Chicago. To operate, it requires the cooperations of both institutions but clearly has no direct power over them. While the program offers advantages to both, it is also

clearly subordinate to both. If there is conflict between the norms and regulations of these two institutions, those conflicts must be resolved for the program to operate successfully. The program is constrained, in this instance, to operate transactionally. It does not have the power to require these institutions to conform to the roles that will make the program successful. Nor can it be successful by each institution following its own interests. It must operate transactionally, assisting the two institutions in finding ways to operate in concert in their roles in accomplishing the goals of the program without in any way damaging the functions that are basic needs of the two institutions.

A second set of constraints operate. There is relatively low risk involved for most actors in not involving themselves with the program. University professors' major activities can be carried on successfully without the program. The same is true of Board of Education personnel. They find their duties increased with very little reward for their additional work. Neither their pay nor their promotion depend upon the program. Although the principal and staff of a public school receive a small honorarium for participating, the only major benefit they derive is a sense of improved competency and better results. Belief in these outcomes is not, of course, a necessary perception on their part. The interns from the University typically have a variety of other placement alternatives available to them. In all these instances, individuals risk very little by opting not to join in the program. To accommodate to this constraint, an ideographic style might seem most appropriate. But combined with this constraint of low risk is another constraint - the relatively specific charge to the program which requires that it include the above actors in specific roles. The tension between these two constraints requires creating a match between the roles people will play in the program and the needs that control their own self interests. The result is a transactional style.

A second reason for adopting a transactional style of organizational process is that foresight suggests that a new program's project structure and mechanisms will probably have to undergo major adjustments before the program runs smoothly. In the process, it needs all

the feedback it can get from as many sources as possible. Again, this situation holds for the Ford Training and Placement Program. It was originally funded in early 1968 in a period of time that was fraught with discontents - about schools, about whites in Black schools, about Universities in Black communities, about teacher education, and about the responsiveness of nearly all institutions to the people they serve and to the people who serve them. In this ethos, it was clear that an experimental program attempting to improve the training and secure the placement of educators for urban schools had much to learn, and must be prepared to make major adjustments to adapt to the needs and criticisms of all the actors. The major regard that the program has given to research and evaluation has helped to formalize and objectify this search for feedback. The many efforts to change and adapt the program are evidence that it has been responsive to feedback and, self-correcting.

A third reason for adopting a transactional style of organizational processes is that it can be a valued end in itself. This is the case for the Ford Training and Placement Program. The value comes from several sources. First, in the cultural ethos of Hyde Park, Chicago, it is the valued style. Reacting to the top-down hierarchical structure and functioning of the Chicago Public School system, Black communities demand that they be involved in decisions about the schools and that school programs be adapted to the unique needs of the particular community that they serve. The liberal persuasion of many members of the University community makes them sympathetic to and supportive of the efforts of Black communities to have a voice in the affairs of their schools. Second, the belief of members of the Graduate School of Education in education as a humane endeavor leads them to be sensitive to the needs of individuals and to try to develop a training program which will be a model of humane interaction among the members of the social system. Third, a transactional system is clearly valued by the statement of the program's objectives. The basic concept of a team or cadre implies a transactional style, as do the following specific objectives:

Develop an aura of shared responsibility among the school staff for the educational program of the school.

Promote closer school/community relations.
Identify school/community problems and act on them within individual
and group competencies.

Fourth, many members of the program staff, including the director, value a transactional style and feel most comfortable operating in that manner.

For all three reasons - because situational constraints have required a transactional style, because a new organization can expect to require much feedback and many changes, and because the style was a valued method in itself - the Ford Training and Placement Program has developed a transactional style of organizational process. One caveat should be added. These reasons, viewed through a rhetoric of retrospect, imply a level of consciousness about our efforts that is incorrect. The present clarity of these forces was not so evident at the time. The phrase "transactional organizational process" is a new invention for us. It brings clarity and understanding to processes that were not so unambiguous or well-defined at the time when we were muddling through. Through the lens of this concept we can see several characteristics of the transactional style exemplified in the FTTP.

Characteristics of a Transactional Process

Adopting a transactional style of organizational process will effect several aspects of an organization. The most obvious example is the structure. Here parity is a key concept. In the structure of FTTP, action is initiated by the planning committee. That committee is made up of two representatives each from each of the three cadres and from the FTTP staff. The planning committee initiates action by defining the problems and needs of the training program. Notice that this function is essentially ideographic. The people who are the participants in the program are saying what they need and what must be done to meet those needs. The proposals of the planning committee are evaluated by the coordinating committee which is made up of the program director and a representative from each of the major teacher training programs at the university - the secondary MAT program, the elementary MST program, the TTT program, and the teacher leadership program. This group either accepts, or rejects with recommendations.

Obviously, the interaction of the two groups is transactional. The instigation of change by the participants guarantees the ideographic dimension. The judgment function of the coordinating committee guarantees the nomothetic dimension. Parenthetically, this structure has a bonus effect. Quite often, members of the coordinating committee volunteer their services to assist in the training function. Their involvement becomes a commitment, and thereby improves the program.

The training program which the planning committee criticizes and modifies was originally formulated by FTTP staff and approved by the executive committee. That committee, which is responsible for setting general policy, represents the University and the Chicago Board of Education. Each training program - administration, adult education, reading, psychological specialist, social worker, and teacher - and each school district involved in the program is represented in addition to the Dean and the Area Associate Superintendent. Thus the design of the program evolves from the interaction of the staff which is directly responsible for it and the institutional groups which will be affected by it.

In a staff of sixteen people, six are called liaisons. The pervasiveness of this term to describe our functions indicates the effects of a transactional organization process on the definitions of roles. Three of these are the community liaison, the University liaison, and the Board of Education liaison.

There are many interfaces in the program; these three staff members stand at three important ones. Their task is to interpret the program to the involved people in these institutions; gain their understanding, sympathy, support, and assistance; and to accomplish the administrative work necessary to make the relationship functional and smooth.

The other three are cadre liaisons. Their task is perhaps the most crucial to the success of the program. They are members of the staff, but they are also members of the cadres. They are truly liaisons, and they always wear two hats. To the staff, they explain the constraints of the cadre and work for revision of constraints or extension of benefits as seen by the cadre. To the cadre, they explain the constraints of the program and work for revision of constraints and extension of benefits as seen by the staff. They live in two

worlds and very often suffer from schizophrenia as the differences between the two worlds create role conflicts for them. Their loyalties are often torn.

The cadres themselves evidence the transactional organizational process. Members are selected to accomplish a representation of the social system of the school. Although the University trains teachers only for the academic disciplines, the experienced teachers in the cadre also represent the other teaching areas such as physical education and industrial arts. The principal of the school is always a cadre member. Others such as counsellors, librarians, and teacher aids are also members. There is always a community representative in the cadre. The charge to the cadre is to learn to work together in such a manner that each member is recognized for the unique set of resources he brings to the group, and problems are solved by using the available resources of all the group members. Clearly, the role of each cadre member is defined by the particular nature of the cadre's agenda. When problems are being identified, individual needs must be weighed against benefits to the group. When resources are being identified, roles shift as cadre requests for services are weighed against individual's commitments. During problem solving, each project places different individuals in different roles as befits their talents vis-a-vis this particular problem.

Of course, the transactional process differs from both the ideographic and the nomothetic. In the nomothetic style, it is clear who gives the orders; in the ideographic, it is clear who should stay out of who's way. In the transactional process, interdependence and interaction replace authority and independence as key concepts. If parity is a key term in transactional structure, and interface a key to transactional role definition, then negotiation is a key term for transactional process. Three very good examples are a cadre, the FTTP staff, and our research and evaluation effort.

In a cadre, a group of approximately twenty people meet regularly over a two-year period to establish mutual support and to improve education at the target school. Each individual has idiosyncratic needs he wishes to fulfill. Those needs may involve his personal competencies

or they may involve school-wide problems. Each individual brings resources which may or may not be competencies directly related to his profession or role. A major problem of the group is, then, to establish priorities that will achieve the greatest satisfaction. The group tries to formulate goals that will most inclusively meet the needs of the member and best use the resources of the members. In addition, the group must reach out to find those resources which it needs but does not have. To do so, it must be able to create a match between its needs and the needs of those whom it asks for help. Both within the cadre and in the relationship between the cadre and others, goals and resources must be arrived at by negotiation.

In the Ford Training and Placement Program staff, there are three major components besides the liaisons who have already been mentioned - general administration, dissemination and demonstration, and research and evaluation. As units within the staff organization, each represents the ideographic level with its own needs and dispositions. The staff as a unit represents the nomothetic dimension. Again, the organizational process is transactional. The fact that decisions are most frequently made in a total staff group rather than between director and subsection of staff indicates once again the transactional process. Conflicting desires are negotiated and lead to a set of relationships. The relationships change with conditions. Each subgroup is responsible to and responsible for the staff as a whole.

The director of research has detailed elsewhere the transactional nature of the program's research effort.⁴ The goals of research, the nature of the instrumentation, the feedback, and the contents of reports have all been effected by the transactional process of negotiation. It should be mentioned that the program can take only a small part of the credit for the fact. A greater part must be given to the teachers and other school people who demanded that research be valuable to them before they would consent to participate. But in the four years of the program, cause and effect have interchanged. Early, hostile attitudes caused us to adopt a transactional process. Now, the transactional process causes cooperative attitudes. We have learned.

In summary, then, the Ford Training and Placement Program exemplifies in one way or another three characteristics of transactional organization - many of its structure are based on the concept of parity, many roles are defined as interfaces between groups, and the prevailing process is negotiation.

Effects of a Transactional Organizational Process

Obviously adherence to a transactional style has considerable effect on our organization. Patterns of communication are different. When we seek a school to be a cadre school, we communicate with everyone involved; not just administrators, but the entire professional staff and community organizations. When we interview prospective candidates our goal is not just to evaluate them, but also to give them as much information about the program as possible so that they can evaluate us. The question, "Who should know?" is consistently answered in the broadest terms. Communication is consistently a two-way street, originating as much with the cadres as with staff, and carried on among cadres as well.

Decision making also is more diffuse in the transactional style. The pre-planned program has built into it considerable responsibility to be taken by participants. One of the first steps is the evaluation of the planned program by the participants. The charges to the participants are that they:

- 1) become familiar with both the resources and problems of the roles represented in the cadre, and
- 2) learn to work together as a mutually supporting problem solving group.

They are given resources to accomplish these goals, and particular training is provided, but they must assume responsibility for the final specific definition of the problems they will try to solve.

Often an effect of the more diffuse decision-making structure is ambiguity and its attendant frustration. The staff is often asked in the early stages of the training to be more direct. "But what are we supposed to do?" is often the form that the plea for direction takes. When cadre members become convinced that they must take

responsibility for identifying their own direction, the frustration often continues as they find that they have difficulty agreeing on priorities and organizing to get things done. The process of negotiation and development of mutually complimentary roles in the work group is not an easy task.

But in the long run, the frustration and ambiguity results in a better utilization of resources. Because neither individuals nor roles can be caricatured in a preestablished easily accessible hierarchic structure, the group members must learn about each other. They become more sensitive to each other and gain greater knowledge of the possibilities that are inherent in the resources of the group. They are better able to adapt and adjust.

Another benefit of the transactional process is that functional change is more likely to occur. When the methods and roles are both under constant scrutiny, and when all groups involved in the program feel free to request changes in the model in response to their needs, it is very likely that the program will constantly improve its responsiveness and keep itself in touch with reality. The FTTP has been self-correcting in this manner. Every year's training program has been different from the previous one, not as a polishing of the model and not just as change for change sake. Each year has shown major changes in response to the needs expressed by program actors in response to the training. The consequences are that the program has improved its training model and adapted to changing conditions.

A final effect of transactional organizational process is a higher level of satisfaction. Getzels and Guba state that:

(The administrator's) dilemma would be resolved if the needs and the expectations could be made to coincide. . . In that case, the behavior of the role incumbent would simultaneously meet situational expectations and personal needs. The relation of the individual to the organization would be ideal and presumably would produce maximum satisfaction for all concerned. In the terms of the model, satisfaction is a function of the congruence of institutional expectations with individual need disposition.⁵

With two caveats, I would like to state that the transactional organizational process which permeates the FTTP leads to greater satisfaction. First, satisfaction is clearly not the same as trust. The level of trust that is developed in the close interaction of the transactional process is probably higher than less close interaction would accomplish. But in our day, there are many hostilities among the groups involved in the program. The black community distrusts the schools; school people are suspicious of a research-oriented University; University and school people are often apprehensive about the black community. It would be unrealistic to expect these attitudes to evaporate overnight. What does happen is that individuals and groups, through close intimate transactions, learn to make more realistic judgments about what they can and cannot gain from each other. Satisfaction is greater because the interaction does improve the match between needs and expectations.

The second caveat is that satisfaction is a very difficult thing to prove. But the following quotation from our research and evaluation staff does support my contention.

The perceived value of the summer training experiences is quite high among the participants as compared to other years. These findings are suggestive that when training experiences are directed toward releasing the students' potential . . . the outcomes are perceived as highly beneficial by the participants.⁶

Considerations for Establishing Transactional Process

Let me close by mentioning some considerations that are helpful in establishing transactional processes in an organization. The first is to introduce the process a step at a time. Throwing all the procedures of the organization open to criticism and change from all the actors can only end in disaster for the organization. Such immediacy will escalate feelings and halt activity so absolutely that everyone will be frustrated. The victim of that frustration will be the persons who let it happen, and it is not unlikely that everyone else will rally forces for the benefit of the organization,

and evict those responsible. For transactional processes to be effective, they must be introduced step by step so that the attendant frustrations are obviously outweighed by the advantages.

As was mentioned above, parity in structure, interfaces as the definition of roles, and negotiation as the basis of process are ideals to be aimed for. In working toward these goals, it is important to recognize that they introduce ambiguity and frustration at a higher level of consciousness. The actors' recognition of these feelings as appropriate and valuable will do a great deal to help the organization move toward the goals with equanimity.

Of course, conflict is often involved overtly in transactional process as opposed to nomothetic and ideographic in which the conflict is usually covert. For transactional process to be successful, conflict must be viewed as potentially positive. Turning the potential into an actuality depends upon the skill of the actors in negotiation and conflict management.

Finally, it is important to have a clear sense of your priorities in order to make the transactional style work. The actors in a transactional process organization can never stand back and admire the product. Since they are also interested in the process of interaction between needs and expectations, they cannot concentrate only on the effectiveness of the organization. They must also consider efficiency and satisfaction as measures of success, and these are far less objective and specific than the product-focused concept of effectiveness. Because the task is more complex, it is easy to give it up for easier methods of operating. But as this paper has indicated, the rewards that accrue to the transactional organizational process make it well worth the effort.

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FOOTNOTES

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