

Governance of occasional multi-sector networks

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ABSTRACT

Large-scale safety and security incidents typically require the coordinated effort of multiple organisations. A networked organisation is generally seen as the most appropriate structure for coordination within safety and security collaborations. Such networks generally are mixed-sector networks in the sense that the strategic orientations of the contributing organisations differ. Our research focuses on how to prevent, overcome and cope with the tensions resulting from this mixed-sector nature. We studied cases of three major Dutch events and our preliminary findings were that an active network governance approach contributes to a more decisive and more purposive organisation. The flexibility and decisiveness of the networked organisation can be enhanced if in addition informal network governance measures are applied. Moreover, a purposive information infrastructure, directed towards a limited number of clear priority issues, is a key enabler of the functioning of the network.

Keywords

Networked organisations, network governance, event security, occasional networks

INTRODUCTION

Because of their complex and multi-faceted nature, large-scale safety and security incidents typically require the coordinated effort of multiple organisations, often collaborating in an occasional structure (Kapucu, Arslan, & Collins, 2010). For coherent performance by these multiple organisations, coordination of the work is required. Coordination should at least help to avoid adverse cross-impacts but may also contribute to mutual support (Alberts, Huber, & Moffat, 2010) of the work being carried out.

A networked organisation is generally seen as the most appropriate structure for coordination within safety and security collaborations (Hayes, 2007; Kapucu et al., 2010). Examples of application domains for such collaborations are crisis response and event security. With the term ‘networked organisation’ we refer to organisations with a dominant focus on emergent dynamics in collaboration and less reliance on formal hierarchical structures. But we also use networked organisation to indicate partial organisations as defined by Ahrne and Brunsson (2011). A partial organisation strikes a balance between being fully informal or fully formal. Partial organisations are structured using only a limited number of structuring measures out of the full repertoire. Such organisations are included in our concept of networked organisation, when they have a dominant focus on emergent dynamics in safety collaboration. In other words we look at safety networks as a meta-organisational phenomenon involving organisations with a variety of structuring mechanisms and rules for membership (Gulati, Puranam, & Tushman, 2012). The set of organisations working together within the safety and security network are also heterogeneous in the sense that their values and strategic orientations differ (Ekbja & Kling, 2005; Herranz, 2008). Following Herranz we distinguish three ideal types of organisations. One type of organisation is primarily *bureaucratic* and politically controlled by nature. Think of a municipality, for example, for which stability, accountability and equitable treatment are important values. A second type, called *entrepreneurial*, consists of organisations that have a market orientation. For such organisations initiative, pursuit of opportunities, value maximisation and business continuity are important values. A third type is

characterised by a *community* orientation – think of volunteer organisations or neighbourhood associations, for example, for which social balance and equitable outcomes are important values.

Differences in the strategic orientation and values cause tensions in the networked collaboration.

Acknowledgement of the other party's interest and handling it correctly is often problematic due to a lack of experience of working with ad hoc network partners (Kapucu, 2008) or differences in authority between parties, for example (Garner, 2006). Tensions of this kind can be found in the Dance Valley 2001 event that took place on 4 August 2001 near IJmuiden, in the Netherlands. The event started off in warm, sunny weather but was unexpectedly struck by bad weather, which brought with it a big drop in temperature. We highlight two examples of networked collaboration tensions. The first example shows tension between the bureaucratically oriented part of the event organisation and entrepreneurially oriented taxi drivers. "The large number of taxis looking for customers in the port area obstructs the passage of buses. The [...] invited guests are transported by charter buses and taxis hired by the organiser. This raises frustration with the regular taxi drivers. Taxis located between the enclosure and the event venue are not removed from that zone, neither by the police, nor by the private security company, and these taxis provide shuttle services against extortionate prices. [...] The operational commander of the police gives the order to remove all taxis except the ones contracted by the organiser. Taxi drivers and visitors react angrily." (NIBRA & ES&E, 2001, p. 73) The second example shows tensions between the entrepreneurially oriented private security organisation and the bureaucratically oriented part of the event organisation. At a time when the situation had got quite out of hand "... the duty period of many employees of the private security organisation is over and only a few of them are still available for guidance of the public flow and for traffic regulation." (NIBRA & ES&E, 2001, p. 101).

Our research focuses on how to prevent, overcome and cope with these types of tensions in the governance of occasional mixed-sector networks. This work-in-progress paper presents some preliminary insights.

We analysed a number of event security cases from the perspective of whether the strategic orientation of the network partners are compatible with the applied network coordination measures. In case of incompatibilities we determine whether these incompatibilities can be related to tensions and frictions in the collaboration among network partners with differing strategic orientations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the introductory section we have already mentioned the three ideal-typical strategic orientations distinguished by Herranz (2008): *bureaucratic*, *entrepreneurial* and *community*. Herranz also formulated a number of propositions regarding the governance of mixed-sector networks – i.e. networks in which two or more different strategic orientations can be identified. These propositions take the form of a mapping between the ideal-typical strategic orientations of network partners on one hand, and ideal-typical network governance approaches on the other. The network governance approaches can be thought of as stepping stones in a passive-to-active continuum: *reactive facilitation*, *contingent coordination*, *active coordination*, and *hierarchical-based directive administration*. In essence, Herranz states that the most passive approaches are appropriate for network partners with a community orientation; the most active approaches are appropriate for network partners that are rather bureaucratic; and network partners with an entrepreneurial orientation are best supported with one of the two coordination approaches.

The scientific contribution of our research is to build on and substantiate the theory on the relationship between strategic orientations and network governance approaches. To operationalise this we use a slightly adapted version of the five dimensions of network analysis distinguished by Whelan (2012): *design*, *culture*, *policy*, *information infrastructure*, and *relationship*. We adapted the five dimensions of Whelan by replacing *technology* with *information infrastructure* because this is a more appropriate label. Table 1 proposes a number of network governance considerations differentiated to Herranz's strategic orientations and Whelan's dimensions of network analysis.

METHODOLOGY

We studied three Dutch event cases (Eisenhardt, 1989), being typical examples of occasional multi-sector networks: Concert at Sea, the royal succession (Amsterdam) and the Four Days Marches (Nijmegen). Concert at Sea is a yearly event at the Brouwersdam in the Province of Zeeland. The event was initiated in 2006 by BLØF, a Dutch pop group from Zeeland, and since 2008 it has been a two-day summer event. It is very popular, attracting around 70,000 visitors each year, and up to 40,000 visitors each day. The event consists of performances of several famous bands, pop artists, and comedians. The *Royal Succession 2013* celebrated the succession of the former Queen Beatrix by her son Willem Alexander, who now is King of the Netherlands.

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This was a unique event, as the previous succession took place in 1980. It took place on Queen's Day, the yearly public celebration of the Queen's birthday. The *Four Days Marches* of Nijmegen occurs annually, and draws up to 45,000 walkers from over twenty countries who follow routes of 30, 40 or 50 km each day. The focus of our research is primarily on the summer festival organised as part of the Four Days Marches.

Table 1 – Propositions on network governance considerations

<i>Strat. orientation, after Herranz (2008)</i> <i>Dimensions of analysis, after Whelan (2012)</i>	<i>Bureaucratic</i>	<i>Entrepreneurial</i>	<i>Community</i>
<i>Dimension 1: Design</i> Network design (static) and development (dynamic); who to involve?	Active or even authoritative influence by government managers or policy makers. Very centralised, hierarchical/departmental	Increased influence by business representatives; opportunistic or active coordination of the network; quasi-centralised, reliance on quasi-autonomous units (often hierarchically structured)	Increased influence by community representatives; less centralised, loosely coupled units
<i>Dimension 2: Culture</i> Tension between organisational cultures and network culture	Based on public sector values such as stability, accountability, equitable treatment	Based on market sector values such as value maximisation and efficiency	Based on non-profit sector values such as social balance and equitable outcomes
<i>Dimension 3: Policy</i> The logic of network control; between governance and guidance	Reliance on rules, enforced by regular accountability reports concerning governmental policy/programme objectives; decisions are procedural/rational and made top-down.	Consumer- and stockholder-focused mechanisms such as performance goals and integrated use of CQI processes; decisions are technical, opportunistic and made middle-out.	Informal, based on personal ties and knowledge; decisions are situational, participatory and made bottom-up.
<i>Dimension 4: Information Infrastructure</i> ICT as an enabler, including information management	Standardised, equitable service delivery. Most likely centrally managed and accessible to a limited extent for some network actors; exchange limited by rules/procedures.	Service delivery responsive to consumer needs, most likely also linked to the policy and design of the network; extensive and systematic exchange.	Personalised service delivery, with equal access for all network actors; ad hoc exchange.
<i>Dimension 5: Relationships</i> Informal (social) relationships and formal (organisational) relationships; relational trust	Formalised inter-organisational relationships	<i>Quid pro quo</i> inter-organisational relationships with a substantial focus on financial aspects	Inter-organisational relations embedded with interpersonal relationships; strong social and professional ties with groups or networks of community-based non-profits.

The three events are studied with two different perspectives. The first is an analysis of the planning and evaluation documents for the events, which provides insights in the set-up of the networked organisations, the strategic orientation of the network partners and the division of responsibilities. It also gives an initial impression of bottlenecks and issues in the execution of the work. This document analysis is then complemented by our second perspective: eight semi-structured interviews with practitioners involved.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Analysis of evaluation reports show that the network of *Concert at Sea 2012* can be regarded as effective.

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Additionally, the research shows that this effectiveness can also be related to the fact that both the network governance approaches and the sectorial basis of the network can be characterised as a combination of bureaucratic and entrepreneurial on all dimensions of analysis. Our analysis shows that the network governance exhibits a combination of bureaucratic and entrepreneurial characteristics shown in the second and third columns of Table 1, on all five dimensions of analysis. One of the interviewees summarised: *“The sub-cultures of the different network actors are apparent and some actors do not naturally want to work together. However, because of the overarching network culture of formality and rule adherence, the network actors are forced to work together. The ideas that “a deal is a deal” and that “rules are rules” are prevalent within the network. The relationships between the network actors are clearly stipulated in the formalised documents and the roadmaps that guide the network”* In the first years of the event the Dutch Red Cross (DRC) was part of the networked organisation. This did not work out because the values, goals, cultures, and relationships of DRC were fundamentally different from those of the rest of the networked organisation. As one of the interviewees stated: *“The Red Cross was a totally different organisation than the other organisations within the network and working together with an actor that is not used to formal procedures, structure and clear rules, seemed very, very difficult”*.

The security network for *The Royal Succession 2013* was, in general, a successful network. The common network goals were achieved, as the event was regarded by all relevant stakeholders as festive, open, undisturbed, and safe. The interviewees argued that the strategic orientation of the network was largely bureaucratic: *“the relationships between the network actors were formally established, with an eye on evaluation after the event and thus on transparency and accountability. Hence, the choices for the position of each network actor were based upon their formal function”*. Indeed, our analysis shows that the network governance shows characteristics that are predominantly from the ‘bureaucratic’ column of Table 1, on four out of five dimensions of analysis. Only on the information infrastructure dimension is there evidence of some *ad hoc* exchange behaviour. The interviewees agreed, however, that the event security network could have been more effective if the information exchange had been more structured and purposive throughout the entire network.

The analysis of the security network for *The Four Days Summer Festival 2012* showed that a multi-sectorial network that consists of organisations from all three sectors functions best when the coordination techniques are also a mix between all three types of coordination styles. As one of the interviewees put it: *“In order to organise a truly successful event the relationships between the network actors are not only based upon trust in each other’s professionalism but also upon mandate, expertise, decisiveness, and understanding each other’s interest because of personal relations. Hence, for this network we need a mix between all these characteristics in order to let go of our own interests and serve the larger interest.”* The network is very effective as the approval rates have risen over the years. The event attracts the largest number of visitors of any event in the Netherlands, the partners and the government are very positive about the level of cooperation between the network actors, and there are serious national- and international interests from outside the network in the workings of this specific network.

DISCUSSION

In the Theoretical Framework we referred to the four ideal-typical network governance approaches distinguished by Herranz (2008): *reactive facilitation, contingent coordination, active coordination, and hierarchical-based directive administration* as stepping stones in a passive-to-active continuum. In all three cases, the event organisation inclines towards the active end of this continuum. A more active network governance approach contributes to a more decisive and more purposive organisation. In a mixed-sector situation, an active network governance approach requires thorough preparation. The division of responsibilities, roles and tasks should be unambiguous. Moreover, the applied network governance criteria should have been made explicit to the network partners. This thorough preparation provides an adequate level of trust for active network governance.

The longer the history of a network is, the richer the repertoire of its network governance measures. If the organisations involved and individuals have a better knowledge of one another and of their respective capabilities, more seat-of-the-pants and informal network governance measures emerge and are applied. These measures enhance the decisiveness and the flexibility of the networked organisations and they are only effective against the background of the more active measures and formal arrangements.

The information infrastructure perspective proves to be a key enabler of the functioning of the network. All three cases show that it is crucial to direct the information-gathering processes, throughout the whole network, by focusing on a limited number of clear priority issues. These priority issues should be formulated upfront and

maintained continuously during the course of the event.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The initial findings that became apparent are outlined in the previous discussion section; firm conclusions can be drawn only after full case analysis. In sum, a more active network governance approach contributes to a more decisive and more purposive organisation while the flexibility and decisiveness of the networked organisation can also be enhanced by the application of more seat-of-the-pants and informal network governance measures. The latter measures can only be successful when there are formal arrangements in place. Having a purposive information infrastructure is also key in allowing the network to function effectively.

Future research is needed to determine how far the findings can be generalised. This generalisability issue can be related to a broader range of event cases, but also to other occasional networks, such as emergency response networks. There is a lot of similarity between event security networks and emergency response networks. A major difference is that the ad hoc nature of emergency response networks is even more profound. Further research could also be focused on translating the findings into recommendations and guidelines for designing occasional networked organisations.

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