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Double Rule and Multiple Roles:

A Structural Principle for

Successful Interorganizational Collaboration

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This paper deals with the special structure of a particular example of interorganizational cooperation (IOC), a structure that helps to overcome many of the problems found in an IOC, thereby enabling it to function smoothly and to achieve its goals. This study is a case analysis in which we examine the underlying issues, relationships and causes that can be generalized beyond the case. The main finding is the structural principle of double rule and multiple roles in which, for every individual within the IOC, there are several formal decision-making positions —i.e., several roles— at different hierarchical levels. The advantage of this unique structure and its contributions to the success of this example of IOC are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it is difficult to think of an organization, especially an organization providing services, that does not cooperate at some level with other organizations. Different organizations can contribute different skills and know-how, which, when brought together in a common framework, can provide answers and solutions that none of the participating organizations can provide separately (O'Sullivan, l977; Mulford and Rogers, 1982; Rogers and Whetten, 1982; Merritt and Neugeboren, 1990; Walden, Hammer and Kurland, 1990; Weiner 1990; James and Glisson, 1992; Waysman and Savaya, 2004).

A successful interorganizational cooperation (IOC), however, will not only accomplish its assignment successfully —as we can see from the flourishing Early Childhood Center, the case presented here—, but it will also function as smoothly as clockwork, and is worthy of our attention (Pitsis, Kornberger and Clegg , 2004). The aim of this paper is to analyze an example of just such a successful IOC in order to obtain a better understanding of how it has managed to overcome the challenges, as well as contributing to the knowledge of how the processes of strategizing and organizing can organize themselves (Whittington, 2003).

This article consists of four sections. It begins with a review of the literature on IOC definitions, functions and difficulties. The case study methodology is discussed in the second section, and the article goes on to present the findings and their meanings in the third. It concludes by discussing the implications of the study for furthering the understanding of IOC structure and function.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTERORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION DEFINITION

The most common definitions of an IOC refer to a number of organizations cooperating at different levels of coordination in order to achieve a common goal. Despite the large body of research on IOC, there is no IOC theory and the literature offers different names for this phenomenon, as well as numerous definitions and conceptualizations, many of which overlap (Clegg, Pitsis, Rura-Polley, and Marrosszeky, 2002). The IOC phenomenon appears in the literature as a joint venture (Aiken and Hage, 1968), resource exchange (Levine and White, 1961), interorganizational alliances, networks, or coalitions (Roberts-DeGennaro, 1997; Waysman and Savaya, 2004), and interorganizational cooperation, coordination or collaboration (Mulford and Rogers 1982; Davidow and Malone, 1993; Rosenkopf, and Tushman 1998; Rosenkopt, Metiu and George, 2001).

Emphases between definitions are varied as well. Levine and White (1961: 583), for example, conceptualized cooperation as «any voluntary activity between two organizations or more, which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals or objectives.» Mulford and Rogers (1982: 12), who viewed coordination as a decision-making operation, defined it as «the process whereby two or more organizations create and/or use existing decision rules that have been established to deal collectively with their shared task environment.» More recently, Roberts-DeGennaro (1997: 92) defines a coalition as «an interacting group of organizational actors who (a) agree to pursue a common goal, (b) coordinate their resources in attempting to achieve this goal, and (c) adopt common strategy in pursuing this goal.» The functions described for the IOC are as varied as the definitions.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION FUNCTIONS

Analyzing the vast amount of literature on the subject results in IOC that act as a clearing-house (Roberts-DeGennaro, 1997), deliver technical assistance (Rosenkopf, Metiu and George, 2001), set common standards (Rosenkopf and Tushman, 1998), and act as service coordinators or social change agents (Sakakibara, 2001; Waysman and Savaya, 2004). The IOC is also presented as having different structures, such as an imaginary organization (Hedberg, Dahlgren, Hansson and Olve, 1997), which views IOC as all the «actors and resources that appear both inside and outside the legal unit of enterprise» (Hedberg and Olve, 1997: 2), or a virtual corporation, which «to the outside

observer will appear almost edgeless, with permeable and continu-
ously chancing interface between company, supplier and customers»
(Davidow and Malone, 1993: 5).

The literature in the field of the social services show IOC as being cre-
ated for the purpose of information or resource sharing (Merritt and
Neugeboren, 1990), for technical assistance (Roberts-DeGennaro,
1997), for self-regulation and maintenance of standards (James and
Glisson, 1992), and for planning and coordinating services, including
social services (Weiner, 1990; Walden et al., 1990). We can also find
coordination of advocacy coalition acting toward social change
(Waysman and Savaya, 2004). IOC usually have definite advantages,
such as efficiency, the pooling of resources and exchange of informa-
tion, but they also pose several difficulties.

INTERORGANIZATIONAL COOPERATION DIFFICULTIES

Forming an IOC is like harnessing a swan, a crab and a pike to a
wagon and letting it go[1]. The literature on IOC deals with failures, dif-
ficulties and threats, such as partial loss of organizational indepen-
dence, additional red tape and bureaucracy, power struggles between
the organizations that can paralyze the entire framework, financial loss
or budget flight, and incompatible norms and methods that can prevent
the IOC from functioning (Mulford and Rogers, 1982; Honadle and
Cooper, 1989; Cousins, 2002). Additionally, The literature reports high
failure rates, attributed to managing difficulties (Ireland, Hitt and
Vaidyanath, 2002), mistrust (Cousins, 2002), failure to fulfil basic goals
(Maron, 1987; Merritt and Neugeboren, 1990; Soeters, Hofstede and
Van Twuyver, 1995), and differences in organizational culture (Soeters
et al., 1995). In light of these obstacles, it would be interesting and
fruitful to look at an example of IOC that had managed to overcome the
difficulties and succeed.

1. The swan strives to reach the heav-
ens, the crab crawls backwards, and
the pike pulls towards the water
(Krylov, 1977).

METHODOLOGY

In order to explore IOC success mechanisms, we draw on evaluation
data collected by the first author of this paper during a five-year study
(1994 to 1999) of the Early Childhood Center (ECC) in southern Israel,
an IOC comprising more then 15 organizations. The evaluation study
lasted from the planning stage of the ECC through all the phases of its
construction and development. This paved the way for an instrumental
case study aimed at investigating IOC success in a real-life context,
when the boundaries between IOC and surrounding are not clearly evi-
dent, a study in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin,
1989). The ECC was chosen as an extreme case for demonstrating
best practice (Merriam, 1990).

A variety of techniques were used to investigate the mechanisms con-
tributing to the success of the ECC, including attending the meetings of the
various committees (about 100 meetings), interviewing and talking with all
the participants (dozens of interviews and conversations with about 30 peo-
ple), and monitoring and documenting the processes (Levin-Rozalis, 1997).

All the observations, interviews and meeting minutes were analyzed according to the first research question —What explains the IOC's success?— and narrowed down to more precise questions as the data were unfolded. For this we used the constant comparative method suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and the open coding suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), which is based on two analytic procedures: making comparisons and asking questions regarding the phenomenon's dimensions and levels, and its relationship with other phenomena. Incompatibility and contradiction were solved by going back to the original interviews and the raw data, and by consulting with the second author of this paper —who was not otherwise involved).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

PROLOGUE
The 'D' neighborhood in the southern town of Israel is very poor and neglected. But hiding behind a large parking lot is a place that doesn't seem to belong to its surroundings. Anyone coming through its gate from very early morning to late in the evening will discover a beautiful square yard surrounded by buildings and bustling with activity: the Early Childhood Center (ECC). The ECC changes its face all day long. In the early morning, children from the age of three months to four years arrive and are distributed to their rooms and colorful yards. The voices of these young children playing can be heard until the afternoon, when they change places with children and parents coming to all kinds of afternoon activities. In the early evening, the population changes yet again and young parents as well as educators come to learn, to be guided or to listen to a lecture.

THE BEGINNING
The Early Childhood Center was established in 1993 as a small daycare center, with only a handful of children attending. A very large donation, intended to create an ECC model, brought together the Jewish Agency and the city municipality for joint management of the ECC and to promote services related to early childhood and young parents. But they were not left alone: two years later almost every organization that had something to do with early childhood was part of this IOC.
The establishment of this large IOC began at the inauguration ceremony of the ECC's beautiful new building. All the organizations in the city that might have an interest in any aspect of early childhood (**Appendix 1**) were invited to this ceremony and to a meeting of the "Advisory Council for the Early Childhood Center," a body that did not yet exist. In the high spirits of the successful celebration, they all agreed to contribute to the success of the ECC, which they all perceived as being a very important institution in the city, and especially in the poor neighborhood in which it is located. An alternative explanation could be what one of the participants mentioned sarcastically to the researcher, to the effect that «None of these organizations dare stay out of any initiative that the others are part of.» As we will see, both explanations are accurate.

Everybody was very happy, except the ECC manager. In an informal comment to the researcher, she noted that «Five thousand new bosses that I'll have to nourish have just been born.»

The principal role of this enlarged IOC was to help to recruit all kinds of resources for the ECC, to coordinate the allocation of resources and to convert them into efficient high-quality programs. In other words, it was meant to become the decision-making mechanism of the ECC.

THE SUCCESS

In only two years from this constituent assembly, the ECC became a unique establishment, intended for families, young children and early-childhood educators. Throughout the years of our research, the ECC expanded its activities and provided services to thousands of families through conventional programs such as a daycare center, a long-day kindergarten, a large range of activities for parents and children and in-service courses for early-childhood educators. But more important are the unique, highly professional and demanding programs, such as a class for children with special needs, a program for parents and children for overcoming domestic violence, study groups for nonfunctioning parents, integrating children with borderline developmental problems into ordinary pre-school classes or a multidimensional-treatment nursery group (Levin-Rozalis and Bar-On, 1993). It is important to note that these special programs were initiated by and materialized with the actual help of the members of the IOC that run the center. They came with the ideas; they helped to plan the programs, to recruits the staff and to raise the money. Being high-level professionals themselves, they followed the everyday routines of these new and, often, innovative programs.

Over time it became evident that the ECC was getting maximum benefit from the complex structure. One immediate benefit has been the constant contact with the municipal and governmental systems; another is that the people who are representatives in the IOC in turn represent the Center's interests in their own organizations. Thus, an awareness of the existence of the Early Childhood Center has become part of the organizational consciousness of the institutions from which the IOC representatives come. When a senior representative actually plans and supervises activities, hears about innovations and difficulties, and has both the right and the opportunity to make decisions and set policy, he or she becomes more committed and more involved than if s/he merely hears reports about the happenings. Since these people represent organizations that are relevant to the operation of the Center, they give the Center a much broader outlook. In addition, there is actual professional input from the executives of these organizations on a personal level.

THE STRUCTURE

The participants in the constituent assembly of the enlarged IOC answered a short questionnaire in which they were asked to indicate in what areas they wanted to contribute to the ECC. Following this meeting and in light of the responses of the participants, a complex

structure was established. At the top of the hierarchy is the Advisory Council for the Early Childhood Center, which includes the people who wanted to take part in supporting the Center —either personally or as representatives of their organizations of origin. The Advisory Council's role is to decide about the Center's overall policy and budget. It meets three times a year.

Next, and subordinate to the Advisory Council, are the Executive Committee, which is the executive body of the IOC. Its role is to convert the Advisory Council's policy decisions into operational actions and to monitor the ongoing processes of actualizing these decisions. The Executive Committee, as stipulated in the contract among the participating organizations, has the prerogative of making binding decisions on matters of distributing funds, developing programs, hiring and firing staff, and many other aspects of operating the Center —within the policy guidelines and budget set by the Advisory Council.

At the bottom of this structure are the professional committees (**Appendix 2**), which are responsible for specific areas of the Center's activities and report to the executive committee. There are also ad-hoc committees, which are formed to oversee special programs. The Executive Committee and its sub-committees are all made up of members of the Advisory Council, and all members of the Advisory Council participate in these committees, in some cases in more than one.

Being a product of IOC, the ECC is not an independent entity. Every decision concerning policy, ways of operation, budget allocation, new programs, target populations, new staff or any other managerial decision, is made by a group of representatives from the organizations comprising the IOC.

In no time at all, this group of representatives created a unique organizational structure, which we call a decision-making organization, or DEMO. The DEMO under study is not the IOC, nor is it the ECC; rather, it is the interconnecting decision-making organizational link between them (**Figure 1**). This particular DEMO is the subject of this paper.

## FINDINGS AND INFERENCES

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEMO

In line with Lamming (1993), who referred to IOC as a quasi firm sitting between the organizations of origin, and alongside Cousins (2002), who suggests viewing IOC as a process and not an entity, we claim that the DEMO has the characteristics of an organization. It is the special characteristics of this organization that are the focus of our discussion here. In addition, we want to convince the reader that despite its very complicated organizational structure, the DEMO functions successfully. And finally, we present the principle of double rule and multiple roles. The phenomenon of multiple roles is seen as an unavoidable but very problematic aspect of organizational life and is one of the most troublesome ethical burdens to be tackled in organizations. This

paper shows that multiple roles are not necessarily problematic, at least not when they are formalized.

THE DEMO AS AN ORGANIZATION

If we examine the essential qualities of the DEMO, we can easily see that it fulfills all the main criteria for the existence of an organization:

— *the DEMO is a complex of roles*. In spite the fact that the people who make up the DEMO are there mainly because of their roles and positions in their organizations of origin, the roles of the DEMO members are defined and understood, and the role of the committees and the ECC director have been formally established;

— *the DEMO is a differentiated and well-defined entity*. The boundaries of the DEMO are clear, as well as who is part of it and who is not. «With all due respect to your boss, she is not part of this committee,» was the response of one of the representatives to disapproval tabled by a colleague. The DEMO adopted the name of "the management of the Early Childhood Center" and each of the committees, as parts of this structure, has a name of its own that describes its function;

— *the DEMO is a permanent structure.* When participating members leave the DEMO, they are replaced, and the cooperation has continued smoothly;
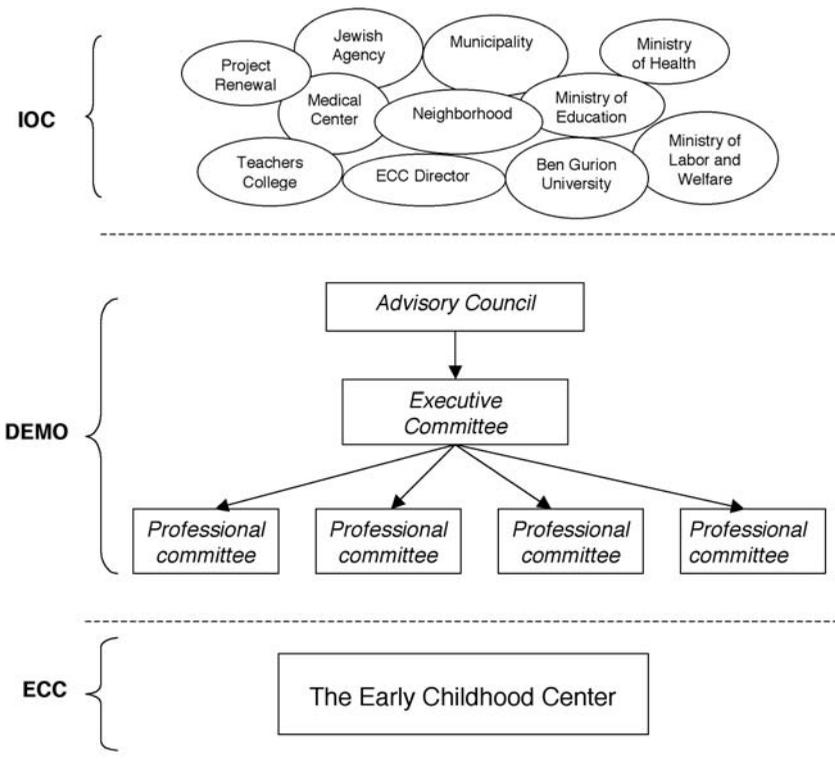
Figure 1. The IOC Organizational Structure

Notes. IOC: Interorganizational Cooperation; ECC: Early Childhood Center; DEMO: Decision-Making Organization

— there is a relationship of supply and demand between the DEMO and its environment. The DEMO links the organizations responsible for the budgeting and functions of the ECC. It is responsible for the exchange of resources, on the one hand, and the prestige and sense of accomplishment, on the other. As to the latter, in no time at all, the ECC became a sort of pilgrimage site where many official visitors to the city were taken.

The adoption of the qualities of an organization have enabled an effectively functioning framework, which contributes to the autonomy of the organization and thus helps to overcome threats and difficulties. It has also enabled the participants to formalize their multiple roles in the DEMO.

HOW THE DEMO HAS SUCCEEDED

Besides achieving its goal in managing the ECC in a satisfactory form, as shown above, it seems that the DEMO has managed to successfully overcome most of the threats and obstacles that we so frequently find when dealing with IOC (Levin-Rozalis, 1997).

The high rate of long-term participation and high percentage of attendance —over 80%— at the Advisory Council, the Executive Committee, and all the other committees is one way it has succeeded. Of about 100 meetings, there was never a meeting that was canceled because of insufficient participation.

Development of efficient working norms is another. As we can read in the observer's notes on a typical meeting: «All participants arrived more or less on time or a little late. Small talk and informal business talk took place while everybody prepared coffee or tea. Then the meeting formally began, twelve minutes late. The agenda had been set in advance and was distributed to the participants, who arrived prepared with information and documents. The chairperson raised item after item. A short discussion, some questions to the ECC manager, and decisions were made unanimously. Each decision was recorded in the minutes and read aloud for confirmation by the participants.

«A problem arose: it is impossible for the municipality to provide funds for one of the programs because of its administrative definition. A solution was found. The Jewish Agency will cover the expenses while the municipality will fund something the Jewish Agency is responsible for. The two representatives will continue the formal arrangement in a meeting between them that was arranged on the spot. As time passed, glances at watches became increasingly frequent. The meeting ended on time. None of the participants has too much free time. Some more informal exchanges, some questions to one another, and within minutes the room was empty. The ECC manager heaved a sigh.»

Overcoming structural and functional threats has also contributed. At one point, a representative of an organization told the other representatives that her superior on the national level disagreed with an Executive Committee decision. This organization refused to be bound by any decision it had not ratified. The issue was analyzed by the group: in short, they said, «your boss is demanding power of veto. If one organization gains this right, the others might insist on parity. This demand

would make the committee's work impossible and might completely paralyze it.» The subject was brought up for discussion, outside the Executive Committee, to the national level of the relevant organizations. The issues were clarified and the organization withdrew its demand.

Taking into account the threats and difficulties that can arise in an IOC, the successful functioning of the DEMO is not inherently self-evident. How does it contribute to the success of the IOC or the ECC? How does it avoid destroying the delicate balance between the partners by trying to position itself on their behalf? We claim that the success in creating a functioning DEMO stems from the fact that the participants formed a special structure, which can be summarized in the principle of double rule and multiple roles.

DOUBLE RULE AND MULTIPLE ROLES

By double rule, we refer to the fact that there are two different sets of formal rules that are applied at the DEMO, one for the structure and the other for the people occupying its different positions. The structure is well defined, with a clear hierarchy, division of labor, and clear definition of roles and positions. On the other hand, the people operate within a democratic egalitarian structure. This is possible because of the situation in which each and every participant has more than one formal role in the organization and occupies different positions in the hierarchy. We want to make this claim very clear—we are not talking about informal relations based on cultural or social norms that tacitly control workers' behaviors (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1956; Schein, 1990), nor are we dealing with role enlargement. The DEMO is comprised of three decision-making levels (Figure 1) that contain a definite number of formal positions. There are, however, far fewer people than positions. The number of people is actually the number of participants in the Advisory Committee. The two other levels of the hierarchy —the executive committee and the professional and ad hoc committees— are comprised of the same people. It has been formally set up in such a way that every person has at least two roles, in many cases three and even more, and always at different hierarchical levels.

The concept of multiple roles is the actualization of the double rule, which —besides the obvious meaning of more than one formal position in the organization— takes on other forms, which we will discuss below. We can find many cases in which people fill more than one role, or even more than one position, in their organization. The unique situation in the DEMO is that this is the general rule. It was planned in advance to have more positions than people so that each member would have to fill at least two different positions. It also differs from ad hoc projects in which individuals participate as members of temporary project teams in addition to their regular roles. The DEMO is supposed to be a permanent entity that continuously demands members' participation.

THE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE DOUBLE-RULE MULTIPLE ROLES TO THE DEMO'S ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

There is broad agreement in the literature regarding the main characteristics of organizations, which include formalization, division of labor,

hierarchy of authority, centralization, specialization, and coordination (Blau and Scott, 1962; Samuel and Mannheim, 1970; Braverman, 1974; Mintzberg, 1979; Eisenhardt, 1989; Daft 1995; Scott, 2003). The structural characteristics of the DEMO help it to establish the building blocks of organizational synthesis, as suggested by Pitsis et al. (2004). In this section, we seek to use these characteristics to analyze how the DEMO structure contributes to the synthesis of the IOC and to the success of its product —the ECC.

Formalization takes a special form in the DEMO structure. Although the general role of the partner organizations was defined by contract, this covers only the financial relationships and, then, only between some of the participants —not all of the partners contribute money. It says nothing about the DEMO structure and means of operation, which are so essential to the whole idea of the DEMO. These were actually decided by the people —the representatives of the organizations— themselves and demonstrate Pitsis et al.'s (2004: 64) idea of a simple contract that is based «on mutual understanding, trust and a commitment to the vision.»

In addition to this partially contracted and partially defined formalization, the DEMO structure contains a paradox: on the one hand, the structure and roles of the different committees, having been established by the DEMO members, are well defined and binding; on the other hand, the creation of the specific committees was voluntarily set according to the members' own wishes —most IOC steering committees have settled for one steering committee, so their members do not create extra work for themselves in the form of more committees. It is worth noting that while the DEMO participants are all very busy in their organizations of origin and they participate in more than one committee, they have also fulfilled the tasks they have taken upon themselves.

Allocation to the professional committees is by participants' choice, in most cases according to their profession or area of interest —the health committee, for example, is mainly comprised of pediatricians and people from health services. Even though they are voluntary, once they were built, the committees became an obligatory part of the DEMO and participating in committees became compulsory for each new participant, as it was for the veterans (Levin-Rozalis, 1997).

This reveals another aspect of the multiple roles principle, which enabled the members to play with their two facets as DEMO members. One facet is their role at the formal and contractual level, as representatives of their organizations of origin, while the other is the chosen one, in which the participants play the role of their profession —physician, social worker, educator, etc. This is, of course, in addition to the two hats they all wear as members of the DEMO and of their organizations of origin. We will see the importance of this later.

This jigsaw-like structure of double rule has become part of the formal DEMO and has enhanced the success of the ECC. This success, in turn, has become an important incentive for continuing the work because it reflects well on the organizations of origin, in addition to the personal satisfaction the participants feel because of their professional contribution.

DIVISION OF LABOR

The DEMO's organizational framework was constructed to channel the many participants into well-defined positions and roles in the various committees and decision-making levels. Once established, division of labor in the DEMO was clear and agreed upon. There is nothing unique in this. The unique aspect is that unlike Simon's (1957) means-end chain, in which different people made strategic decisions at one level and others implement them at a lower level, in the DEMO the same people serve in several positions —multiple roles.

We assume that this structure keeps the representatives from interfering with the day-to-day decisions of the ECC. The professional committees enable them to keep the first-hand reality of the ECC in mind, which enables them to use their abilities where they can best serve the ECC. It also enables them to use the decision-making process in the executive and advisory committees and make it more efficient and knowledge based.

THE HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY

The hierarchy of authority channels, regulates, and organizes the influence of the participating organizations through the mechanisms of the Advisory Council, the Executive Committee and the professional committees. This mechanism succeeds in sustaining the complex matrix of powers in the DEMO and also helps bridge differences management styles and decision-making procedures between the different organizations comprising the IOC.

However, the DEMO's hierarchy of authority is, again, unusual. It exists at the structural level but not at the personal one. As described above, the hierarchy is well defined at the organizational level. When we come to the people themselves, they are governed by the multiple-roles principle and the same people are placed at all levels of decision making.

This has two immediate consequences. First, the DEMO's members have a broad view of the ECC, the different types of decisions that have to be made, and the reason behind every decision. In that sense, all of them are full and equal members of the decision-making procedures at all levels. We believe that this unique division of labor also helps to inhibit power struggles by creating a holographic organization in which individuals share a common identity across subunits (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). On the other hand, this structure can intensify blindness and shared ignorance as part of group thinking. The fact that the people come from so many organizations and professions helps to reduce this danger. Second, the participants have to juggle roles and navigate between the variety of hats they wear: their role in their organization of origin and their multiple roles at the DEMO. This structure enriches the decision-making process and enables in-depth discussions, serious consideration of problems and distinctions that must be made between different kinds of decisions. This is especially true for the professional committees, which, allegedly, are the redundant part of the structure because all the important managerial and political decisions are made in the Advisory Council and the Executive Committee.

We found that the main reciprocal contribution of the participants results from the work of the professional committees. The ECC gains a real contribution from experienced professionals, and they were very happy to have the opportunity to contribute: «It was years since I last worked with a group of children, and oh how I have missed it,» said one of the representatives. «I was so happy to discover that being a social worker is like riding a bike: you never forget it. I was sure I was totally rusty. I am so satisfied.» In turn, the professional committees enable the participants to deal with actual professional decisions that they would otherwise be detached from because of the nature of the decisions expected from the Advisory Council and the Executive Committee, and their high rank in their own organizations.

The multiple-roles principle also reveals itself in the ECC manager's role. The manager simultaneously wears three different hats: she sits on all the committees —advisory, executive and professional— as a member with input equal to that of all other members; she must follow the decisions of these same committees; and she is the one who coordinates the committees because her role as ECC manager is to convene the committees, synchronize their activities, and be in ongoing communication with the committee chairpersons.

CENTRALIZATION

The DEMO plays the role of decentralizing power. Even though there is a decision-making hierarchy, it has really been defragmented among the numerous committees. Everyday managerial power is in the hands of the Executive Committee and the professional committees. Each professional committee has the responsibility for one area of the ECC, while the ECC director controls the pace of the committees' activities and the pace of implementing their decisions. The Executive Committee balances all the different, detailed decisions and gives them a coherent structure. Besides this spread of power, the fact that most people sit in at all three levels of decision-making actually decentralizes the power and distributes it among them all. In other words, this matrix contributes to the importance, influence and prominence of every actor in the network (Pitsis et al., 2004).

In spite of the centralized structure, this decentralized power creates a power matrix that balances the powers of the many partners of the DEMO and prevents the possibility of one part or organization taking over and overpowering the others (Weick, 1979; Bachrach and Lawler, 1980; Pfeffer, 1981, 1997; Mintzberg, 1983).

SPECIALIZATION

The ECC was established with the aim of becoming a model for an early childhood center, so two main areas of specialization are important to the DEMO —management and early childhood— and both exist within the organization. All participants in the DEMO hold a high rank in their organization of origin, and we can assume that high-ranking people have at least some managerial capacity. In one way or another, all the participant organizations have something to do with early childhood —which is why they became part of the IOC in the first

place—, but in different areas: health, welfare, education and so on. Thus, the participants were divided, usually by their own choice, across the different committees, which is yet another dimension of the multiple-roles principle: they serve in both managerial and professional decision-making roles.

COORDINATION

The DEMO has synchronized not only the different participant organizations, but also the double rules and multiple roles. While the latter are synchronized by the people who play the different roles, the former is done mostly by the ECC's director acting as a case manager (Walden et al., 1990). The director is responsible for coordinating the provision of services to a specific client and for mediating between the bodies that provide these services (Weil and Karls, 1985). She is responsible for liaison with the organizations, coordination, invitations to meetings, distribution of the minutes of those meetings, giving advice —both formally and informally—, and anything else involved in maintaining the connections between the participating organizations and the smooth functioning of the DEMO. She facilitates transference between roles by enhancing their segmentation and keeping them in different settings and times (Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate, 2000).

The task of a case manager is to initiate and propel the entire system. Without such a person there is always the possibility that the organization will become ossified and degenerate. This is true of any organization, but in the case of the DEMO, the director is the only link between the double rules. By cultivated understanding and mutual feelings of partnership and commitment, she has developed a link between the structural rules, which coordinate the participating organizations, and the personal rules, which coordinate the participants within their multiple roles.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In many ways the DEMO acts like an independent organization, a decision-making organization, which has its own structure, aims, agenda, division of labor, organizational culture and work procedures, none of which are similar to those of the organizations from which the representatives come. This has helped people change hats in meetings, to see themselves —and to function— as ECC executives and not as representatives of their own organizations (Ashforth et al., 2000).

This structure has several clear benefits: it enhances the commitment and good will of the participant organizations; it enables the tangible personal contributions of the participants; it helps to overcome differences in organizational culture, organizational procedures and competition, which can be destructive to the ongoing operation of interorganizational systems (Soeters et al., 1995); and it reduces the power struggles that are so commonly seen in IOC (Cousins, 2002). And of course, the more successful the center has been, the more the partners —people and organizations— are prepared to contribute.

The DEMO invented itself in the sense that its complex structure and the roles combined within it had not been planned in advance, nor were they part of the contract. Both our experience and the literature tell us that very busy people usually run away from the additional responsibility accompanying IOC in general, while here, not only have they not run away, but from the outset they have created extra work for themselves with all the professional committees. What is different in this case?

The difference is the very unique organizational structure, a structure we describe as double rule and multiple roles. The phenomenon of multiple roles is well known in regard to individuals within organizations, but it is not so well known in regard to a phenomenon in which multiple roles are the formal rule for all participants in the same way —a way that puts all of them at all levels of the organizational hierarchy. The phenomenon of double rule enabled by multiple roles is, at least as far as we know, unique.

In our opinion, this complicated process runs smoothly because the DEMO's almost Weberian configuration applies only to its structure. The whole idea of one person-one job —where the one job is the whole organizational identity of the person (Ashforth and Mael, 1989)— is changed here. The rule of the well-structured organization does not apply to the people it comprises. Within a well-defined framework, they have created a formal egalitarian and democratic network that enables them to use both their administrative and professional qualifications. Almost every person is a partner in all management tracks, and while the roles are built hierarchically, the people themselves are not subordinate to each other.

By creating the extra work, what was actually created were additional organizational positions, more positions than people. And, like a children's game, they can jump from role to role and plant their stakes in the roles most suited to them. The extra positions have enabled multiple roles, while double rule has enabled the participants to express their multiple abilities, enhance their commitment and contribute to the IOC's success.

It is important to state that this unique organization, the DEMO, was almost a must —and, in a way, the perfect solution— for the context in which it operates. The creation of such an organization has enabled the representatives to maintain their autonomy from the many organizations they come from —in addition to the benefit of a well-structured organization to channel the decision-making process. This autonomy is essential. Without it, it would be impossible for them to function. The numerous contradictory interests of the organizations of origin would paralyze them. At the same time, they have to maintain an egalitarian structure. No organization of origin would stand for a situation in which its own representative occupied a lower position in the hierarchy. The double-rule and multiple-roles principle satisfies all these demands.

Our findings and explanations have raised additional questions. Is it possible for such an organization—with double rule and multiple roles —to be an independent one? This is a question for further exploration; however, our hypothesis is that this kind of organization can only exist

as an extension of —or built on the back of— an IOC. In the sense that it has no responsibility to implement its own decisions, it is not a complete organization, nor does it possess any actual resources to be distributed. Its only products are its decisions. Its resources come from the IOC, and the ECC implements the decisions. The DEMO is only a link between resources and implementation. Even though it produces decisions, it has no power of its own. The DEMO obtains its decision-making power from the legitimacy it gains from these two aims, links in the chain in which it is the connecting link.

As optimistic and humanitarian as it may be, this new kind of organization may not represent the next generation of organizations in the 21st century. It does provide, however, some answers to the unsolved problems of interorganizational cooperation and organizations in general (Pitsis et al., 2004). The approach of double rule multiple roles changes the rules of functioning within the organizational arena. It creates an open space for its participants to express a wide range of abilities and fields of interest. In so doing, the nature of the organizational arena is also changed from a cohesive structure where people's actions are limited to a well-defined set of pre-planned activities to a mechanism that enables and encourages them to develop their own roles, activities and interests, which makes all the difference in the world.

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Appendix 1. Members of the Advisory Council

Chairperson: The Director-General of the Canadian Jewish Appeal, Keren Hayesod

Members of the Advisory Council include the chairpersons and members of all the committees, the members of the Executive Committee, representatives of the "D" neighborhood, and representatives of other organizations concerned with early childhood (most of them also members of professional committees).

The Deputy Mayor of Be'er Sheva

The Director of the Department of Welfare, Municipality of Be'er Sheva

The Director of the Department of Education, Municipality of Be'er Sheva

The Director of the Department for Strategic Planning, Municipality of Be'er Sheva

Additional representatives of all these municipal departments

The Director-General of the "Kihila" Education and Culture Center Association

The Regional Director, Ministry of Labor and Welfare

The Head of the Children's Division, Soroka Medical Center, Be'er Sheva

The Director of the Be'er Sheva Region, The Jewish Agency, Southern Region

A lecturer in Psychology, Ben-Gurion University

The Regional Inspector of Nursing, Ministry of Health, Southern Region

The Director of the Clinic for Diagnosis and Rehabilitation for Children, Ministry of Health

The Coordinator for the Early Childhood Education Track, Kay Teachers College, Be'er Sheva

A representative of the Ministry of Education

The Head of the Project Renewal Administration

Four representatives of the residents of the "D" neighborhood

An ex officio representative of the evaluation team

The Director of the ECC attends all the meetings of the Advisory Council ex officio in order to report on the Center's activities and to observe the proceedings.

Appendix 2. Committees

The evaluation committee

The marketing committee

The health committee

The finance committee

The committee for the "Integration of Children with Border-line Developmental Problems" Program

The committee for educational contents

Example of the structure of a committee:
The committee for educational contents

Chairperson: The Director of the Department of Education, Municipality of Be'er Sheva

The Acting Director, Department of Welfare, Municipality of Be'er Sheva

The Regional Inspector of Nursing, Ministry of Health, Southern Region

A representative of the "Kihila" Education and Culture Center Association

A representative of the Montreal Jewish Community

A representative of the neighborhood

The Inspector for Children and Youth, Ministry of Labor and Welfare

The Inspector of Family Day-Care Centers, Ministry of Labor and Welfare

The Inspector of the Kindergarten Section, Municipality of Be'er Sheva

The Director of the Early Childhood Center

An ex officio representative of the evaluation team