

Network of Terror: Management Experts Untangle Web of Control

Terror organizations can only be dismantled if we understand how to control the shadowy networks that link them, according to the reports of experts in the latest issue of the *International Public Management Journal* (Volume 9, Number 3). A special issue focuses on the control of networks – both legal and illegal – to help understand the workings of both the international system and of terrorist organizations.

“This special issue, called *‘The Control of Legal and Illegal Networks’* brings together an international group of scholars who present a very interesting and diverse set of articles with the issue of network control as the centerpiece,” says journal Editor Steve Kelman of Harvard University.

Edited by H. Brinton Milward, Patrick Kenis, and Jörg Raab, the articles in the special issue explore network control in the context of health care, education, national and homeland security, and what occurs when governments seek to control and destroy illegal and covert networks.

“In the field of Public Management, interest in the governing and managing networks of public, private, and nonprofit organizations is very high,” says Kelman. “However, because networks are viewed as an alternative to hierarchy, study of network control and governance has not been emphasized in most research, which has instead focused mainly on the emergent and collaborative qualities of networks.”

Networks consist of three or more organizations that consciously agree to coordinate and collaborate with one another for common purposes. Many of the most important activities of the international arena - from law enforcement to international aid, to intelligence gathering to terrorist attacks - are organized within formal or informal networks. Despite the absence of central authority, actors within the networks find ways to exert control over other actors.

“We view control as an essential aspect of networks,” say the editors of the special issue, “even though the defining characteristic of networks is that they don’t have a hierarchy of authority.”

Scholars in the special issue tackle this paradoxical issue by asking a number of intriguing questions:

- How did Al-Qaeda’s structure adapt to massive international pressure and reconstitute itself to launch attacks in Bali, Madrid, and Iraq?
- What is wrong with the networks of intelligence and security that the U.S. uses to root out terrorist plots?
- How do networks define their goals in the absence of central authority?
- How are the networks that link legal and illegal networks alike and different?
- Can terror networks be controlled through military might?

“With increases in globalization and the continued retreat of the state, the activities of transnational criminal networks in such areas as human trafficking, organ transplantation, illegal drugs, and illegal weapons trade will very likely intensify,” say special issue editors Milward and Raab. “The advantage of networks for legal purposes is also apparent for illegal purposes.”

Published quarterly, the *International Public Management Journal* is a forum for high-quality empirical and theoretical work on managing large organizations, particularly public organizations. The editors seek work from scholars around the world who conduct research in the areas of public management and government reform, comparative public administration, organizational theory, and organizational behavior. They also welcome scholarship growing out of the disciplines of political science, social psychology, sociology, economics, and public law.

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