A theory of interorganizational relationships stressing the fundamental importance of the struggle for resources (especially money and authority) is proposed. Interaction between organizations, including both coordination and conflict, grows out of their positions within a political economy channeling the flow of money and authority. In this way I linked two levels of analysis—one concerned with interactions and sentiments of personnel at the level of service delivery and the other with the interests of organizations in political economies. I tried to establish the interorganizational network as a unit of analysis encompassing these two interrelated levels.

This paper, along with similar arguments advanced by others (e.g., Aldrich, Pfeffer) at about the same time, pushed interorganizational studies toward explanations grounded in political-economic structure and resource dependence relations. The structural positions of organizations in multorganizational political economies became the focus of much succeeding work. A part of the continuing interest in the present paper is that, while it contributed to a school of thought stressing the structural position of organizations, it also suggested actionistic strategies that organizations might adopt to capitalize upon their positions, to change their positions, or even to alter the structure of the political economy.

Subsequent developments moved in several directions. Some refined the measurement of predictor variables for outcomes such as work coordination. Many pursued the practical implications of network studies for the solution of practical problems ranging from community development to the nonhierarchical integration of public policy implementation of nation states. The theoretical focus on political economies opened the possibility to link interorganizational analysis to several other lines of inquiry including population ecology, urban social structure, public policy arenas, economic structure, and theories of the state. A current agenda for interorganizational analysis is to work out the theoretical linkages between these diverse lines of inquiry.