Network Governance of Migration Profile in Palestine

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Abstract

The rapid growth in international migration during the last decades triggers governments to achieve an effective management of migration profile. Countries and international organizations have more interest in migration governance as an optimal method to address migration issues. This study provides an exposition on the network governance of migration profile in Palestine, and the convenient form to be adopted to govern it across the Palestinian institutions working with the issues of migration. This study has used logical analysis and respective criteria to adopt the best form of network governance of migration profile. The degree of trust between network members, the level of goal consensus, and the number of participating organizations are important factors that determines the way in which authority is shared and which form of network governance to adopt. The findings revealed that there is a significant impact of network governance on the level of collaboration between the individual organizations to operate and achieve the common activities. Moreover, the main outcome of this article is that the suitable form of network governance of migration profile in Palestine is that of lead organization; in fact, it is more efficient than shared network governance and it is reasonably flexible than network administrative organization (NAO). The implications of the findings for practice were also highlighted.

Keywords: Network governance, migration profile, government, non-governmental organization.

Introduction

The growth of international migration during the last decades has increased the need for a more effective management of migration. The present article aimed to study the best practices and forms of the management of migration, performed from the point of view of network governance of migration

In fact, the contemporary governments have become more concerned about migration governance in order to control the migratory flow and to ensure the safety of migrants on the one hand, and to increase the positive impacts of migration on the other hand. To address this

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topic, governments have started to adopt network governance. Policy network is the name given to the formal and informal links and exchanges that develop between governments and civil society associations, NGOs and interest-groups in specific policy arenas (Marsh & Rhodes as cited in Bell & Hindmoor, 2009: 4). The advantages of network governance are rather definitive in improving the performance of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. "Networking and coordination that can be used in an innovative form include capacity-building & mobilization, various forms of problem-solving and conflict management; adaptation and learning may also be mentioned here" (Kaiser, 2016). At the same time, one of the positive impacts of a network governance approach is that "coordinated solutions to common problems are sought through a constant exchange of information, the development of best practices, and the formulation of non-binding codes of conduct" (Newland, 2005). In a similar vein, "Enhanced coordination across government departments is an important potential outcome, from these relationships, which can mainstream migration into other portfolios such as development and ensure that officials have a common understanding of the force behind migration" (Papademetriou, 2011: 10).

To build inter-institutional networks between individual organizations is not an easy task, especially when it comes to the government and public administration. Coordination becomes more difficult as the number of member organizations and the level of diversity between them increases, which, in turn, "creates a greater coordination burden than faced by small homogenous networks" (Provan & Milward, 2001: 418).

In Palestine, there are many bodies involved in migration profile management. These include governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Reviewing the pattern of communications, structures, and responsibilities of these governmental institutions and ministries revealed that they have no holistic approach to migration, and each one of them performs its functions separately without any coordination with others. Although a national team was formed in order to rebuild and reorganize the migration profile in a way to ensure no overlapping in tasks and to increase the level of cooperation between these organizations, unfortunately, the result is still below the level of expectations.

Generally speaking, the main problems of migration profile in Palestine can be summarized as follows: (1) The absence of coordination and cooperation among ministries and institutions, especially those related to data collection and data exchange about emigrants and expatriate. (2) Overlapping of function and mandates: In general, the Organizational

structures define both responsibilities for functions and line of authority. However, this is not clear in case of migration profile. The existing organizational structure of these ministries and institutions are developed individually in the absence of any national policy or plan to manage this profile, which sometimes causes overlapping in functions and conflict of responsibilities. (3) Some of the actors in this field such as universities and non-governmental organizations were not included in the national team of migration profile, which was formed two years ago.

The main impact of the mentioned predicaments is shortage of data with regards to Palestinians living abroad. No doubt that the absence of efficient governance and best practices heavily contributed to the mismanagement of this profile. This article tries to formulate a conception of how to restructure the relationship amongst the institutions working on the migration profile to ensure effective and efficient governing of this profile. The study further addresses these problems by using network governance approach.

Purpose and Scope

This paper argues that most of the studies concerning migration in Palestine focus on the social patterns and other social variables rather than governance approach. The study is considered to be the first and leading of its kind. In fact, it is a step towards filling the gap in this field by which a new approach in governance based on network perspective is proposed. Therefore, this study will contribute to the body of the knowledge and will aid further academic research in the field in question. The article addresses two main questions: How to achieve efficient network governance of migration profile in Palestine? What is the most convenient form of network for the governance of migration profile in Palestine?

Background and Theoretical Framework

Network Governance and its Role of in the Success of Joint Profiles

Network governance is a popular topic of debate in the field of management. Several studies which have been published has researched this topic as a multidimensional phenomenon, as well as addressed it theoretically and through applied research. The approach of network governance views organizations as structures that perform various, but inter-related functions. Therefore, any defect in one of them leads to an imbalance of the others. In their study,

Möller and Halinen (1999) provided a basic explanation of networks as relationships between entities that collaborate among themselves for strategic purposes. On the same note, Creech (2008) stresses that there is an added value which a network can have via governance outcomes because partners from different backgrounds can contribute complementary skills and resources to the solution of intricate problems that no organization could effectively address on its own (Huppe et al., 2012). Meanwhile, Dedeurwaerdere (2005) pointed out that the aim of network governance is to create a synergy between different competencies and sources of knowledge in order to deal with complex and interlinked problems. Therefore, "the ultimate goal of these efforts is to produce the maximum possible public value, greater than the sum of what each lone player could accomplish without collaboration" (Goldsmith & Eggers, 2004: 8).

Different studies explained different types of networks that can be found, based on the interaction the network has. Oparaocha and Ricardo (2011) reported three main types of networks: institutional network such as governments, NGO's and international agencies; business network such as suppliers and customers; and social network such as employees and one's family.

Since the focus of the current study is the network among ministries and institutions, more attention will be paid to institutional network. "It takes into account the mixture of government support programs, international development agencies, innovation centres, research institutions and professional support institutions which provide support services which may enhance firm's knowledge transfer and internationalization propensity" (Séror, 1998: 39-40). However, some other authors and researchers refer to institutional networks as "the mix of network relationships a firm may have with various formal institutions such as the ministry of foreign trade, export promotion councils, independent export assistant organizations" (Oparaocha & Ricardo, 2011: 15).

Due to specialization and division of labour, "all organizations rely to some extent on other organizations and collectivises for the fulfilment and regulation of some of their functions" (Etzioni, 1964: 91). Institutional networks have become increasingly prevalent in areas of public management, the industry, and in health services. In general, some activities such as multiple programs or large crises cannot be effectively addressed by individual organizations acting on their own. In keeping with this trend, research on networks has increased dramatically since the early 1990s (Provan et al., 2014).

Networks have become a critical component of good governance and best practices. In fact, "network has been recognized by both scholar and practitioners as an important form of multi-organizational governance" (Provan & Kenis, 2008: 229).

In general terms, networks are characterized by informal social systems rather than by bureaucratic structures within the organization. Due to the lack of benefit of ownership and absence of hierarchy, network participant organizations have limited accountability to the network-level goals and, additionally, the conformity to any rules, procedures, directives are purely voluntary" (Antivachisa & Angelis, 2014). With some exception, most of the networks are formed on a voluntary basis not based on coercive power, but on persuasive and common interests. This utilitarian power implies rewards and more ability to achieve common goals and deliver services, which are very important as an incentive for the members of the network governance. Notwithstanding, network is not always the panacea that give the same result. A series of studies of mental health networks by Milward and Provan found that those networks that develop long term relationships that mimic the stability of bureaucracy actually perform better than those that remain more fluid (Lynn, 2010: 16).

Forms of Network Governance

Although governance in public management focuses on the enhancement of the performance of individual organization, "for goal-directed organizational networks, however, some forms of governance is necessary to ensure that participants engage in collective and mutually supportive action, that conflict is addressed, and that network resources are acquired and utilized efficiently and effectively" (Provan & Kenis, 2008: 231).

Consequently, there is no one specific form or approach which can be prescribed to govern joint institutional profiles. Hence, each case has its own specificity and its own optimal form. In effect, more than one form of networking has been discussed and a number of proposals and models have been proposed to fill the gaps in this regard. Newland (2005) proposed several policy options on how to strengthen national, regional, and global governance of international migration, which included creating a new agency, designating a 'lead agency' from among existing agencies, bringing international organization of migration (IOM) into the UN system, which is a leadership model that requires the establishment of a small, high-powered unit within the Office of the Secretary-General, and WTO model. Unfortunately, up

to date, there is no international consensus on which policies should be adopted to address migration issues.

In their analysis of the concept of network governance, Schout and Jordan (2003) distinguished between two models of network governance: one that focuses on networks as self-organizing systems and the other involving active steering.

To sum up, several years later, Provan and kenis (2008: 233) proposed three forms of network governance: participant (shared) governed network, a lead organization governed network, and network administrative organization (NAO). The current article uses the methodology of Provan and Kenis to analyse the case of migration profile governance in order to discover the optimal forms of network governance in Palestine.

Discussion

How to Achieve Efficient Network Governance of Migration Profile in Palestine?

Before determining which form is better to govern migration profile in Palestine, there are some points that must be taken into consideration. First, the process of network governance of migration must seek to create a common national strategy on migration and Diasporas that guarantees avoidance of conflicts of interest, overlapping of function, and which facilitates the exchange of information among the member institutions of the network.

Secondly, non-governmental organizations must be involved in the process on the medium and long-term run to become members of the network. The inclusion of NGO's in the formulation and implementation of migration policies represents an additional benefit to the network. Indeed, these organizations have the knowledge and resources that governmental institutions typically lack. However, the increase in the member of the network creates one basic tension, which is between the need for administrative efficiency and the need to engage as many actors as possible in the network. As the members of the network increase, the process of coordination and decision-making becomes more subject to negotiation and bargaining, and the level of consensus thereby decreases. Ultimately, this negatively affects the quality and speed of decision-making and the level of trust among the members of the network. On the long run, it may decelerate the evolution of the network.

The supposed network governance form should balance between the need to involve new members in the network in order to increase diversity and legitimacy on the one hand, and the increase in the demand on resources and time cost on the other hand. Case evidence supports the view that shared authority is subject to ambiguity and disagreement. "In the majority of cases, the crucial questions of who was in charge and how authority was transferred were a source of contention and negotiation between members" (Moynihan, 2009). Even the current national team, which has been formed to manage this profile, did not meet on a regular and disciplined time basis, and did not, at times, possess an appropriate delegated authority to make timely decisions.

Thirdly, one of the characteristics of the political and administrative system in Palestine is its instability. In reality, sometimes there is uncertainty and discontinuation in implementing policies and programs. As a result, the selected network governance should be flexible and respond to any changes in the administrative and surrounding environment. At the same time, it must be scalable and has the ability to change from one form of network governance to another.

The last point pertains to the cost-effective aspect of the institution, "for many governments, one of the most pressing challenges to diaspora engagement is how to initiate programs that do not drain the already limited public coffers while bringing in critical financial resources" (IOM & MPI, 2012: 39). Working with existing structures rather than creating a new one may be the most realistic approach for many countries of origin. Reinventing the wheel, although is necessary in some situations, may be a waste of resources in others. Thus, this is especially true for government with limited resources at the outset (IOM & MPI, 2012: 45). In Palestine, the resources are limited and are dependent to a certain extent on external support. Therefore, the budget of the Palestinian ministries is not large enough to allow for additional expenses. The potential network governance should be efficient either in time-consuming or financial expenditures.

What is the Convenient Form for the Governance of Migration Profile in Palestine?

The network governance in Palestine should depend on the involvement of all organizations in the network to increase diversity and integration of the profile, which is very crucial in the evolution of the process. Yet, as mentioned earlier, this may affect the decision-making process, the level of trust among member, the level of consensus, and how to develop

network competencies. The following is a clarification of how the four key structural and relational contingencies can explain which form of network governance might be adopted in Palestine over the other forms.

1. Trust is narrowly shared among the network members of the migration profile. This is evident from the poor level of data and knowledge exchange among partner ministries, which is also evident through the results of the interviews. According to Provan and Kenis (2008: 237), "it is low-density trust, highly centralized". Shared network governance and NAO are inconvenient because they are well effective when the level of trust is high or moderate respectively, as indicated in Table 1. The most applicable form in this case is lead organization.

2. The current members of the network are eleven; all of them are governmental institutions. In fact, this number is expected to increase with the inclusion of more institutions from civil society. Although when there are more than a handful of network participants, some administrative and coordinative activities may be performed by a subset of the full network (Kenis et al., 2009). Therefore, the current number or the potential one will not be too high; it will be a relatively moderate number. Regarding the number of participants, the most convenient form will be either lead organization, or to a lesser extent NAO form, as indicated in Table 1.

3. The network-level goal consensus is significantly high. As a matter of fact, the results of the intreviews showed that the national team of the migration profile in Palestine agreed on a set of goals that constitute a common vision of the network during the next phase. Such goals included minimizing conflict and functions that address Diasporas needs, attracting funds and more resources. Consequently, the most convenient option is shared network governance and to a lesser extent the NAO network form, as indicated in Table 1.

4. The need for network-level competencies is related to the nature of the task being performed by the members of the network. As the need for network-level competencies increased, the movement towards centralization in governance network also increased. In this case, the network tasks require a kind of interdependence among members, and the need for network-level competencies is quite moderate. The results of the interviews revealed a moderate need to provide the members of the network with certain kinds of skills such as teamwork, communication skills, and project management. Thus, the convenient option here is the lead organization, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. The relation between the four key structural and relational contingencies and network governance forms.

Governance form	Trust	Member of the network	Goal consensus	Need for network-level competencies
Shared network governance	High density	Few	High	Low
Lead organization	Low density	Moderate number	Moderately low	Moderate
Network administrative organization (NAO)	Moderate density	Moderate to many	Moderately high	High

Source: (Provan & Kenis, 2008: 237).

The above-mentioned data indicates that in order to increase the efficiency of governance of the migration profile, the first best option is lead organization and to a lesser degree shared network governance. In the lead organization form, all activities and decisions are coordinated by one member of the network. Generally, the lead organization form assumes this role because of its central position in the provision of services or key resources. "Thus, network governance becomes highly centralized and brokered, with asymmetrical power" (Provan & Kenis, 2008: 235).

Although the lead organization form might be more suited than other governance forms to govern the migration profile in Palestine, the risk in adopting this form lies in the low level of commitment from the network members as a result of their sense of being marginalized due to the retention of resources and decisions taken by the lead organization. The ability of the coordinator and the lead organization to overcome the problem of alienation of some members of the network is very crucial for the success of the network. In other words, the positive effects of the lead organization form were achieved if it is not obscured by negative practices of either the lead organization or the network members.

Finally, based on the literature review, the typology was proposed by Provan and Kenis (2008). Based on the analysis above, the lead organization governed network is the most realistic form that ensures efficient and effective governance of migration profile in Palestine. It is relatively more flexible than the NAO form and more applicable and efficient than shared network governance. Also, it is more capable to address the needs of the network and secure resources.

A Proposed Model for the Migration Profile in Palestine

Migration profile governance in Palestine comes as a response to the need for improving access to migration data for evidence-based policy-making in a constantly evolving migration landscape. The suggested model of governance of migration profile in Palestine is formulated and designed taking into account the peculiarity of the Palestinian status and the lessons learned. This model is based on a culture of cooperation and on the engagement of all Palestinian actors in this field, as they are the main drivers of this process. Moreover, the model creates an environment of an inter-institutional coordination mechanism to support sustainable process.

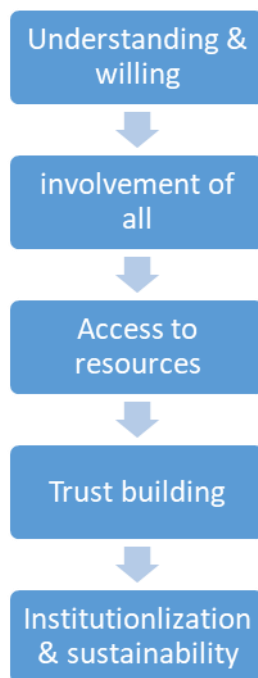**Figure 1. Network governance of migration profile model in Palestine.**
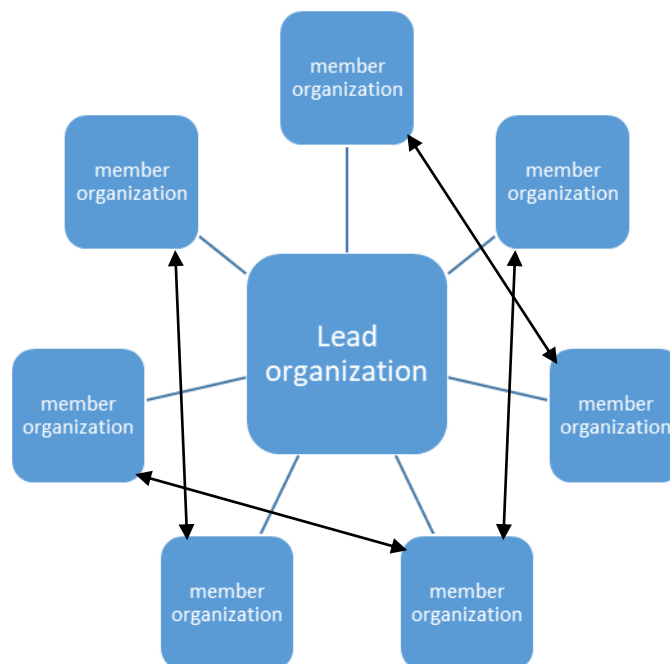
Source: Author's Figure.

For the success of this process, the migration profile should be built and articulated around a systematic manner. A group of essential steps must be implemented, each complementing the other. These steps include understanding and awareness, the involvement of all actors, access to resources from the network, trust building and institutionalization and sustainability, as indicated in Figure 2.

1. Understanding & Willing: It is vital that institutions and ministries leadership understand the crucial role of migration profile governance in enhancing the quantity and quality of data about migrants and in organizing the relationship with the diaspora. Moreover, the awareness about the potential benefit from networks and data exchange and coordination among national institutions dealing with migration and Diasporas are considered essential in building this profile. The related institutions and ministries need to be willing to prioritize migration as a topic of primacy.

2. Involvement of All: There is a direct correlation between the success of the process and the participation of all related national institutions in this profile. Dialogue and persuasion are necessary to involve all relevant institutional stakeholders. Involvement of these institutions facilitates shaping the migration profile governance according to national priorities and their individual priorities at the same time. In many cases, initiatives of Diasporas associations as well as professionals and highly skilled migrants play a vital role in contributing to the knowledge transfer and development of their home countries.

3. Access to Resources from Network: It is an incentive to encourage the willingness and support of the leadership and senior management in related institutions to join the network. Resources are very important to assure the success of the network and to facilitate its various activities.

4. Trust Building: It is important for the progress of the network. Partnership is a two-way process, in which all parties feel that they are equal and are achieving their individual goals and gain some benefits from this relationship. The presence of good governance practices like transparency and accountability enhance the level of this trust. Meanwhile, building trust with Diasporas requires creating an attractive environment to encourage emigrants to engage in development activities and investments in their home countries. Dialogue, openness, and transparency boost trust and lead to cooperation among all actors and institutions.

5. Institutionalization and Sustainability: Ensuring sustainability and evolution of migration profile must be the most important goals in the long run. This can be achieved by

enhancing national ownership, improving the level of coordination and cooperation, supercharging the relationship with the Diasporas, building correct and adequate database about the Palestinian migrants and expatriates, enacting laws that regulate migration profile, preparing and setting up studies on migrants and expatriates. Last but not least, continuous learning and capacity building are both substantial issues for institutionalization and sustainability.

Figure 2. The steps of migration profile governance in Palestine.

Source: Author's Figure.

Conclusion

The article provided an exposition on the network governance of the migration profile in Palestine, and tried to derive the convenient form to be adopted to govern this profile. In fact, the paper used logical analysis and respective criteria to adopt one network governance over the others and to reach the final conclusions.

The focus of this paper was not on the individual organizational level of analysis, but rather on the network governance of migration profile in Palestine as a whole. Generally, the network organization is an integrated system that provides many advantages such as collaboration, exchange of data, interdependence, coordination, access to more resources, and

decrease overlapping and thereof. It is crucial to remember that the Palestinian participation in the Euro-med migration program is important for the governmental and non-governmental organizations because it provides actors with important training and experience. Also, it helps Palestinian organizations exchange best practices and promote migration profile in Palestine.

Based on the analysis of the study, lead organization network governance seems to be suitable for achieving effective network governance of the migration profile in Palestine. As the number of network participants is moderate, the level of trust is narrowly shared among them, the goal consensus is moderately low, and the need for network-level competencies is moderate.

Determining which types of network governance are more suitable for the governance of migration profile in Palestine is not an easy task. In fact, it needs profound discussions and consultations with the Palestinian elite and experts. This study attempted to present an initial conception about this issue, hoping for more discussions in the future.

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