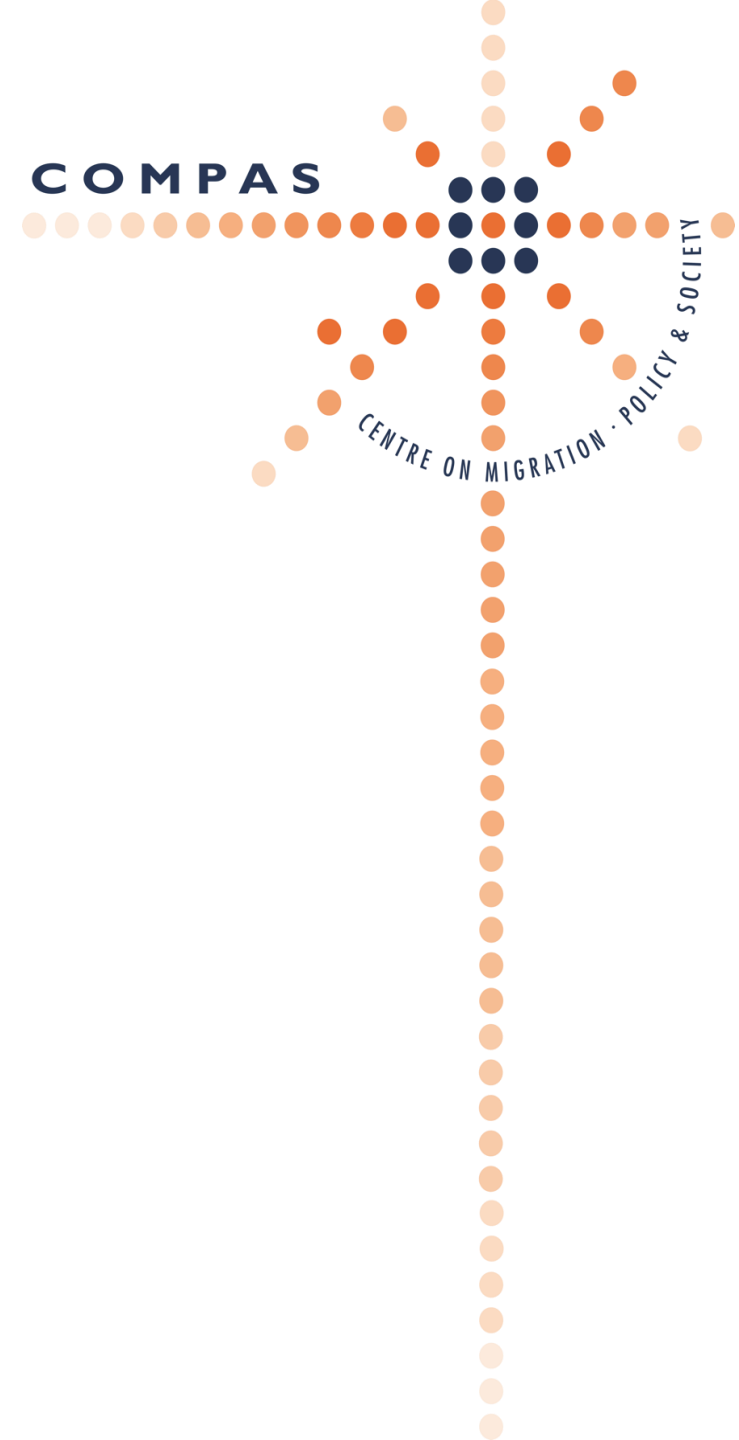


CENTRE ON MIGRATION, POLICY &
SOCIETY

University of Oxford

Cooperation between governmental authorities and NGOs in the field of migration

Nicola Delvino and Sarah Spencer
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Trends in cooperation



- Growing, if varying reliance on NGOs, in & beyond migration field
- Range of functions, particularly service provision
- Why?: Neo-liberal reforms curtailing role of state, & austerity
- Also reflects mode of government, of welfare state, & (for faith-based NGOs) relationship between state & religion
- Greater NGO role in implementation of policy than in its development
- Most evident (but not only) at regional & local level
- From distant, instrumental, contractual relationships to co-production & co-delivery
- Working relationships bring challenges – here to explore!
- Codes of Practice: ground rules - stronger on good intent than delivery?

Differing roles and priorities

- NGOs differing vision, goals, roles, mandates, sources of legitimacy, from those of government
- Value to government: flexibility, innovation, informality, proximity to target groups, cost efficiency
- NGOs can do what governments unwilling or unable to do, or do insufficiently
- Cooperation brings significant benefits for both parties
- But goals, interests & priorities necessarily in tension
- Power asymmetry – but quality of relationship is outcome of decisions by NGOs as well as of government

Categorising relationships

FOUR IDEAL TYPES ON BASIS OF AGREEMENT/DISAGGREEMENT ON ENDS & MEANS

Cooperation: shared vision of ends and means.

Harmony!

Confrontation: disagreement on both ends and means, hence each can feel threatened by intentions and actions of the other

Complementarity: desire similar ends achieved through dissimilar means by NGO – working separately but not antagonistically

Co-optation: agree on the means but not for the same ends; a potentially transitory and unstable relationship

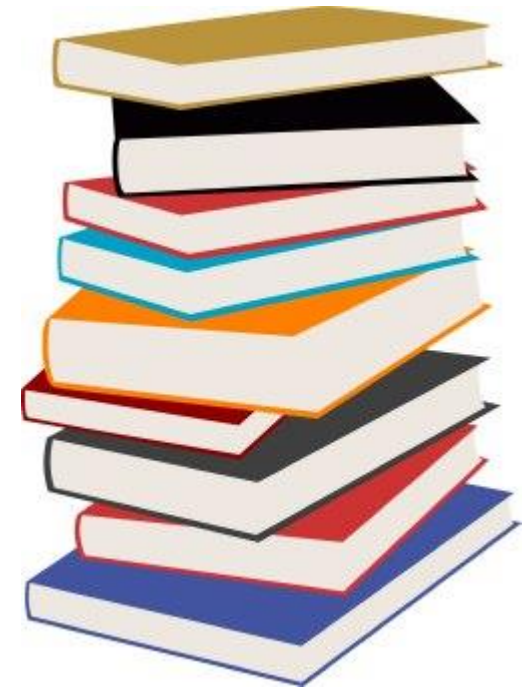


Figure 1. The Four-C's of NGO–Government Relations

Goals (Ends)

Similar

Dissimilar

*Preferred
Strategies
(Means)*

Similar

Dissimilar

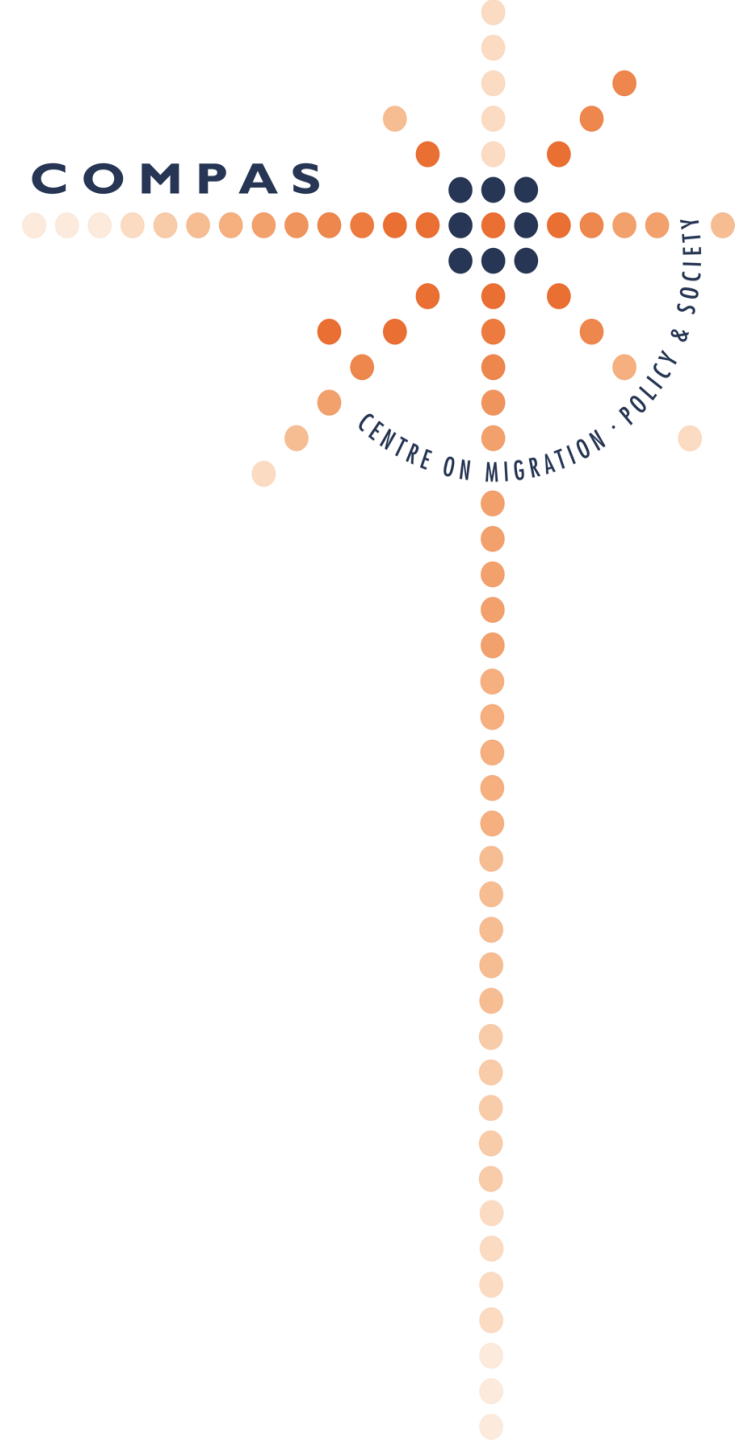
Cooperation

Co-optation

Complementarity

Confrontation

COOPERATION IN THE MIGRATION FIELD



Cooperation in the migration field is extensive and diverse

Examples of cooperation can be found:

- **In many different areas of migration management**

e.g. resettlement, sponsorship schemes, integration and reception, SAR, border, service and counselling provision, SAR, voluntary returns, policy-making (?), etc.

- **At all levels of governance**

National, local, EU, international (and intertwining of different levels, e.g. Italian SPRAR)

- **In different forms**

Formal/informal. Relationships based on funding, contracting. A simple authorisation.

Outsourcing of services. Consultations, etc.

- **In different contexts**

Well-established/formalised/diffuse cooperation (Canada) – cooperation ad-hoc/in

emergency – on-off cooperation with NGOs (US refugee resettlement vs. laissez-faire)

Special features of cooperating in the migration field

- Immigration control is a national (highly centralised) prerogative
 - *The activities of NGOs depend on cooperating with the authorities* (e.g. disembarkations in Greece and Italy; private sponsorship; services to irregular migrants)
- Immigration is a very sensitive topic
 - *Political support is highly volatile* (Italy SAR; US resettlement)
 - *Reputational risk in cooperating*
 - *for NGOs* (with civil society e.g. refugee action in UK; SAR NGOs in Italy)
 - *for government* (with electorate, e.g. previous Italian government & SAR NGOs)
 - *Reputational advantage in cooperating*
 - For authorities (e.g. externalising services for irregular migrants).

Cooperating in different areas of migration management

SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) AT SEA - ITALY

- **Cooperation is a *condicio sine qua non*:**
governmental agreement to disembark in Italy
(as opposed to Greece threatening prosecution)
- 9 NGOs in the Central Mediterranean; activities
under coordination of Maritime Rescue
Coordination Centre (MRCC) Rome; part of an
institutionalised SAR framework.
- NGOs doing the job of authorities? From *Mare
Nostrum* to Triton to NGO SAR.



SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) AT SEA - ITALY

- **A deteriorating relationship: from cooperation to confrontation (Najam)**
 1. COOPERATION (2016): NGOs authorised to disembark; praised by the Italian state
 2. CO-OPTATION (2017): Code of Conduct; co-opting NGOs in immigration control; police operations; (temporary situation)
 3. CONFRONTATION (2018): NGOs accused of being a pull-factor, colluded with smugglers; new government; authorisation to disembark withdrawn; confrontational relationship; NGOs leaving the Central Med.



#chiudiamoporti

Cooperating in different areas of migration management



SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) AT SEA - ITALY

- **Volatile political support;**
- **Reputational risk (“the taxies of the sea”).**
- Increased capacity for SAR activities (**NGOs doing the job for the state**) vs Offloading of responsibility (**NGOs doing the job of the state**)

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN – UK



- **Example of cooperation between UK Home Office and Refugee Action.**
- **CO-OPTATION (McGhee et al.):**
 - Same means: providing assistance to migrants who want to return voluntarily
 - Contrasting goals:
 - Home Office: increase the number of returned people
 - NGO: meet its clients' need for an independent, confidential, non-coercive service; determine how the service was provided (e.g. they refused to try to persuade anyone to leave the country); obtaining evidence on a national scale, and from regular contact with clients, that bolstered its authority in its advocacy and internal influencing work.
- GRANT (more autonomy and independence) vs. CONTRACT (penalties: dependency)
- Co-optation a temporary situation: In 2015 the Home Office took the service back under its direct control.

Cooperating in different areas of migration management

US RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

- Based on '**public-private partnership**' - NGOs contracted and funded by fed. government (vs highly centralised in Europe)
- 1980 US Refugee Act mirroring **historical role of NGOs**
- NGOs involved before (RSCs) and after (9 resettlement agencies) arrival to the US (support during first three months)
- UNHCR (and NGO) referral to RSC > Government vetting and admission > assignment to a resettlement agency

National Refugee Resettlement Agencies or "Voluntary Agencies" (VOLAGS)

Nine VOLAGs resettle refugees via their networks of affiliates / local offices across the U.S. that welcome refugees and provide them initial services:



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS



U.S. COMMITTEE
FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS



Cooperating in different areas of migration management

US RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

Towards confrontation?

Political support is highly volatile -> sustainability is threatened by political developments (change in government).



"The State Department has said the drop in refugee numbers, from the 110,000 ceiling set by the Obama administration to 45,000 for 2018, means the country no longer needs all of the 324 resettlement offices that were operating at the end of 2017. This year's cap on refugees is the lowest since 1980."

Source: Reuters (2018), Exclusive: Dozens of refugee resettlement offices to close as Trump downsizes program

Cooperating in different areas of migration management

COMMUNITY-BASED OR PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP

Allows private groups, community organisations and NGOs (sponsors), who commit to take financial responsibility for a refugee (or a refugee family), to identify refugees from abroad and seek governmental approval for their resettlement to the country where the sponsors reside - (different forms of sponsorship).



- **Cooperation a *condicio sine qua non*:** The intertwining of civil society and government is intrinsic to the nature of sponsorship schemes.

Cooperating in different areas of migration management

COMMUNITY-BASED OR PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP

The **Canadian model** (since 1978; 200K sponsored refugees; a model for the world)

- Sponsors Agreement Holders (SAHs), 'Community Sponsors' and 'Groups of five'.
- Sponsors provide the refugees with care, lodging, and settlement assistance for a period (1 yr/6 months/ economic independency) (food, clothing, rent and household utilities; doctor, interpreters, children at schools, employment, etc.)



Cooperating in different areas of migration management

COMMUNITY-BASED OR PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP

Since 2013, increasing number of private sponsorship initiatives in Europe



Cooperating in different areas of migration management



COMMUNITY-BASED OR PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP

- The involvement of communities has the potential to improve **social cohesion** with refugees, and **people's ownership over migration management**.
- authorities **offloading their responsibilities on civil society** ('co-optation' rather than 'cooperation') – especially when sponsorship counted for resettlement quotas.

Cooperating in different areas of migration management



INTEGRATION AND SETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES

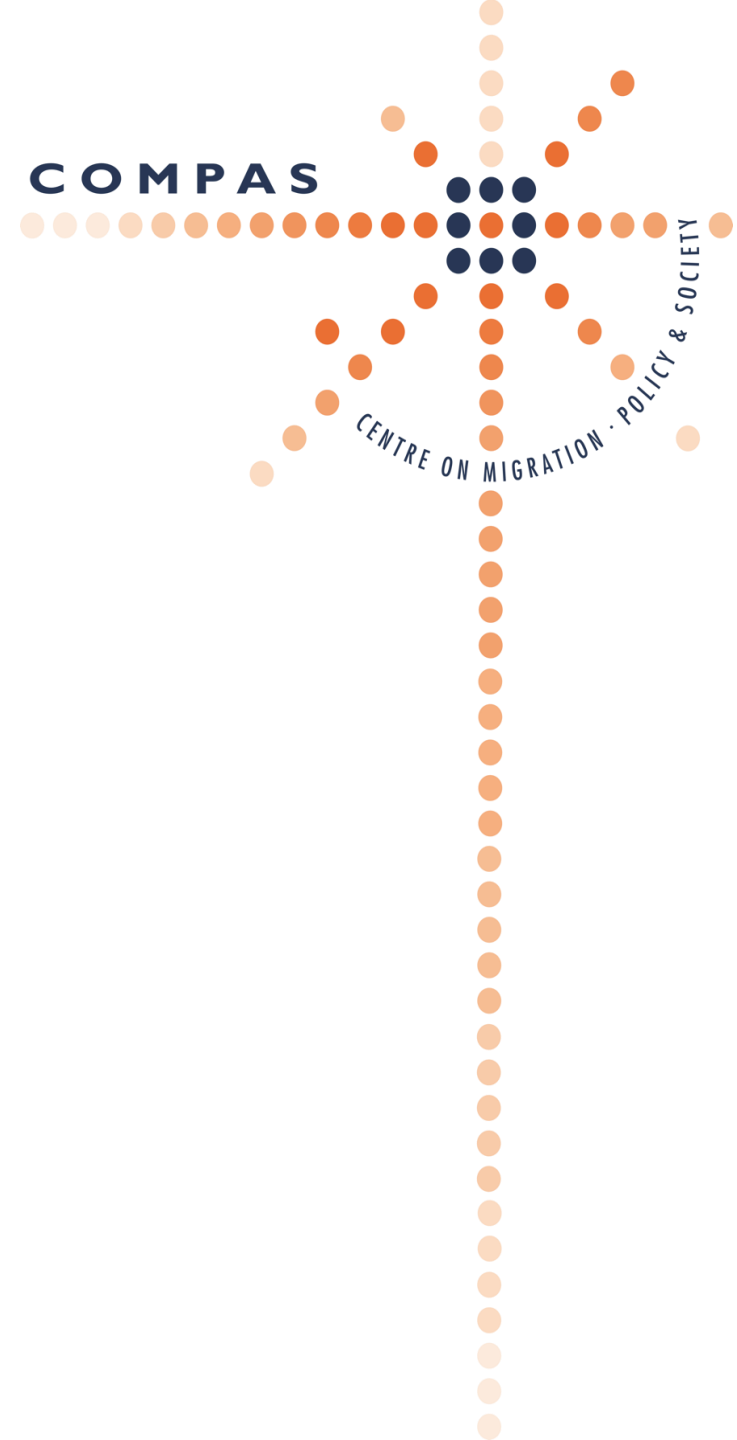
- Cooperation found in most, if not all, countries in the Western world. Thousands of examples with different tiers of governance.
- More common agreement (but not for some target groups: asylum seekers; irregular migrants)
- Trend towards an increasing role of NGOs in the provision of integration and settlement services.
- implementation mostly decentralised to regional or local authorities, who may in turn turn to civil society in the implementation of programmes and service delivery; but also national partnerships, eg US resettlement agencies.
- NGO providers may be contracted to offer a very diverse range of services (support for language acquisition, counselling on labour market inclusion, support in relation to housing, health care, education, access to recreational activities, family counselling, community engagement, civic education, naturalisation procedures, and so forth).

Cooperating in different areas of migration management

INTEGRATION AND SETTLEMENT PROGRAMMES

- Government-NGOs relationship shaped according to the **model of integration & level of intervention** chosen in each state. *Eg.* difference within North-America:
 - *US laissez-faire* (cooperation develops at local level → municipal activism-Welcoming America; no federal coordination apart from resettlement).
 - *Canadian settlement programme*: partnership with 700 organisations
- [Same in Europe: countries with national integration strategies involving NGOs (eg Portugal, Ireland) & countries with no integration strategy, or that largely only cover refugee reception (eg. UK, Italy)]

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES



Opportunities for Government



Financial, political, reputational, capacity & outcomes

- NGOs' capacity for flexibility, innovation, awareness of migrants' needs & to earn their trust; informality
- Cost effectiveness – lower costs, use volunteers, subsidised by core funding, draw in community support in kind
- Reduce size of bureaucracy, out-source functions
- Enhance international reputation through greater capacity to meet commitments
- Community engagement builds ownership & support
- Better integration outcomes – social connections, labour market
- Provision at arms length where politically sensitive
- Close working brings ideas & expertise into the authority, revitalizing more ambitious approach

Challenges for Government



MANAGEMENT, COORDINATION, TRUST, PERFORMANCE

- Lack of shared perspectives on how service should be delivered
- Management and coordination of NGO partners with differing priorities, more difficult than in a hierarchical management arrangement, & calling to account if performance poor
- Finding a balance between oversight to ensure standards and NGO ownership
- Non-disclosure of sensitive information, relying on a level of trust that may not always be present
- Changes in political leadership or policy leading to changed requirements - so that the NGO is not needed or relationship becomes strained and conflictual
- Competitive environment among service providers a barrier to effective partnerships
- Shortage of potential partners in new destination areas requiring investment to build capacity
- Time and resources needed to consult NGOs meaningfully on future policy development; risk that NGO views not compatible with more pressing political demands.

Opportunities for NGOs



FINANCIAL, CAPACITY, POLITICAL

- Funding enables build capacity to provide a service on a larger scale / responding to demand
- Authorisation to carry out activities deliverable only with governmental agreement or cooperation
- Ability to provide service in the way that they feel is most appropriate and sensitive to migrants' needs
- Access to government networks that can provide knowledge & channels of influence over forms of service provision and/or policy development
- Access to evidence that strengthens their internal and external advocacy for policy change
- Opportunities for immigrants and other members of the community to engage in civic affairs

Challenges for NGOs



REPUTATIONAL, LOSS OF AUTONOMY, POLITICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE

- Power imbalance that requires them to provide a service, or to undertake tasks, in ways that do not accord with their values, having to accept an uneasy compromise or withdraw
- Facing criticism for complicity if the government programme is controversial, or for enabling government to abdicate its responsibility
- Feeling constrained in the extent to which they can be a critical voice, if they fear loss of government funding, or the perception that they have lost that independence
- Skill needed to manage tensions in working relationships, & the balance between insider and outsider relationships with government
- Contracting process marginalises NGOs that cannot meet the procedural requirements; and bureaucratisation can reduce the flexibility, use of volunteers, and innovation for which NGOs prized
- Precarious short time funding - negative effect on staffing & threatens sustainability
- Marginal role in policy making despite a central role in implementation / service provision

CENTRE ON MIGRATION, POLICY & SOCIETY

University of Oxford

58 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 6QS
United Kingdom

www.compas.ox.ac.uk

Sarah.spencer@compas.ox.ac.uk
Nicola.delvino@compas.ox.ac.uk

