

Autumn Academy 2018

**Cooperation between
government and civil society in
the management of migration:
Trends, opportunities and challenges
in Europe and North America**

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COMPAS



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Introduction

Across Europe and North America, government at all levels is cooperating with civil society organisations in the management of migration and in the resettlement and integration of refugees and migrants. This paper explores some of the issues that are raised by these relationships and are addressed in the academic and policy literature. While cooperation between government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) *per se* has long been the focus of scholarship, cooperation in the migration field is far less well explored. Yet, notwithstanding significant variation in the extent and forms of cooperation, governments rely on NGOs to fulfil a range of functions in the implementation of migration, resettlement and integration policies and to a certain extent in the policy development process. Collaboration, moreover, can bring significant challenges: working relationships can be harmonious and long standing, but can equally be fragile and carry economic and political costs for both parties.

This paper addresses what we know of recent trends in relation to cooperation in the migration field; the tiers of government where it is found and the dimensions of migration that it addresses; setting that in the context of what is known more broadly of recent trends in government-civil society relationships. It explores what motivates governments and civil society to work together, the forms of cooperation, and the challenges that arise in their working relationships.

We focus here on one section of civil society, using the term NGO (non-governmental organisation) as a synonym for the broad spectrum of organisations that are variously referred to as non-profits, voluntary, community, charitable, or third sector organisations.

We shall clarify what we mean by ‘cooperation’ when we explore, in the next section, the way in which the term (and related terms such as partnership and collaboration) are used in the literature.

Cooperation between tiers of government and NGOs

Government cooperation with NGOs in many parts of the world is a long-standing theme in academic research, providing insights that are helpful when we come to look at such relationships in the migration sector.

In recent decades, there has been a global trend towards partnership arrangements between NGOs and governments, not least in relation to delivery of welfare. This trend, in which there are exceptions, has been particularly pronounced at the regional and local level. Contractual arrangements for delivery of services by NGOs are commonplace, in some countries public services largely being provided by them (Bode and Brandsen 2013). While in some cases the contracted working relationship is not close, elsewhere governments engage providers in the co-production of policy and programme design. Given the social

challenges and the budget austerity with which governments have been wrestling during recent years, the concepts of 'co-creation' or 'co-production' of public goods with citizens, particularly in areas of health and education, have been embraced as a reform strategy for the public sector. Citizens are involved in the co-production of public goods and social innovation as co-designers, co-implementers or initiators themselves of public initiatives (Voorberg et al. 2014). Processes of devolving services to NGOs are, as we shall see, underlying trends also in the areas of immigration and integration policies in much of the Western world (Shields et al. 2016).

Cooperation can extend to the regular inclusion of NGOs in the policy planning and decision making process, but elsewhere the potential for such relationships (as Myers and MacDonald reported in Canada, 2014) is not fully realised. Non-governmental organisations can remain structurally marginalised in both design and implementation of social policy.

In some countries, faith-based organisations (FBOs) play a significant role in the delivery of social welfare systems where the state has never claimed, or has relinquished, a social welfare provision role. The role played by these organisations reflects the history of the relationship between the state and religion but also of the mode of welfare state, so that comparative analysis in this area is also revealing of the role of the voluntary sector *per se*. In Germany, for instance, the Catholic and Protestant churches (through Caritas and Diakonie respectively) are long standing institutionalised partners in provision of welfare, to which Muslim organisations and those of other faiths are a relatively recent addition. In the UK, the role of FBOs has not been institutionalised. Rather, as with other NGOs, they fulfil a supporting role to the state as main provider. As the state has curtailed its role in recent years, however, through neo-liberal reforms and public expenditure cuts, the contribution of the voluntary sector has grown (Zimmick et al 2011:23) and with it the contribution of faith-based organisations. In contrast, the Swedish welfare state has not incorporated voluntary organisations as service providers so that their role, and that of FBOs among them, has a stronger focus on advocacy than service provision (although the latter is changing at the local government level). Again in contrast, France has only in the past two decades shifted responsibility from a highly centralised system, which largely rejected the role of the voluntary sector in service provision, to local government tiers which have provided a greater role for the NGO sector (Göçmen 2013).

In the United States, non-profit organisations have, since the 1960s, increased their role in government funded service provision within a process of state restructuring towards the devolution and privatisation of the welfare state, a process that was further fostered by the 1990s' welfare reforms. In this context, government agencies have found in non-profit organisations (NGOs) a partner for shifting responsibility for social service delivery closer to the local level and the people, and for limiting the size of the public payroll, minimising bureaucratic red tape, and increasing cost-efficiency. The NGO sector has come out of this process in a financially empowered position, but at the same time the devolution of the

welfare state to non-state actors has provoked concerns about the creation of a shadow state and the 'dilution' of citizens' entitlements through the devolution of services to entities that cannot be expected to substitute for state provision. Moreover, in the case of migrants this pattern has taken a different direction, as the welfare reforms of the 1990s have largely excluded non-nationals from a range of public services (Trudeau 2008).

Any generalisation on the role of NGOs in relation to service provision and policy development in relation to migration will thus be hazardous given the significant variation in the role played by NGOs more broadly in different government and welfare systems.

Goals and priorities

NGOs are distinct in not being motivated primarily by commercial concerns, as is the private sector, but by a social vision towards which their work and policy entrepreneurialism is directed. While governments also partner with private sector agencies in the delivery of public services, NGOs differ in how they connect to society: more able to identify the needs of individuals; to be innovative; and, in their less formal approach, better able to bridge the gap between the private intimacy that individuals would prefer and the anonymity of public service provision. They can also deliver more cost-effectively through use of volunteers and by covering core costs through donations. Beyond those functional benefits, engaging these organisations represents opportunities for citizen participation; thus, partnership with civil society organisations can bring both functional and democratic added value (Bode and Brandsen 2013).

In contrast, the state's primary goal, it is argued, is the maintenance of social order, to which end it can use its legitimate authority and coercive sanction. Much NGO activity is, in essence, NGOs doing, or urging governments to do, things that government is unwilling or incapable of doing, or does insufficiently (Najam 2000:380). Thus, the goals, interests and priorities of NGOs and governments will always be in tension even if, in a particular relationship, there is agreement on ends and means:

"This tension—sometimes latent, sometimes patent; sometimes constructive, sometimes destructive—is always present, and is in many ways a defining feature of all NGO–government relations. Arguably, if it were to somehow disappear, it would mean only that at least one of the two has ceased to be what it essentially is" (Najam 379).

Differing levels of cooperation

While the concept of partnership connotes equality and positive working relations, the research literature has critiqued the reality of such relationships on a number of grounds including poor performance; a tendency towards bureaucratisation that marginalises smaller, less formal and minority-led organisations; and the replacement of volunteers with professionals. There are power asymmetries between government and NGOs that can lead to an inequality at all levels in the 'partnership' relationship, and loss of autonomy and

radicalism if NGOs are too close to government or dependent on them. NGOs can fear implications for future funding (often precarious and short-term project focused) if they are critical of government, or fear being marginalised from insider discussions. While the growth in partnership arrangements is opening up new opportunities for NGOs to have influence, ending their exclusion as 'outsiders', it has also created new dilemmas as they struggle to maintain their autonomy when operating as insiders. Many NGOs become adept at managing their bilateral relationships with government, but studies on the micro-dynamics of partnerships and their effect on the work of NGOs have nevertheless questioned whether the terms under which partnerships develop enable them to realise their potential added value (Craig et al 2004; Myers and MacDonald 2004; Bode and Brandsen 2013; Powell 2013).

Governments have differing approaches to working with NGOs: scholars identifying a continuum from supportive and facilitative to regulative and repressive; or from ignoring NGOs through co-option to genuine collaboration (Najam 2000). In relation to policymaking, government may distinguish, in effect, between 'core insiders' and 'peripheral insiders' whom it is safer to include on the margins than to exclude altogether (Craig et al 2004).

Where ideas of market-inspired New Public Management are particularly prevalent, NGOs can be seen by governments as providers with whom to bargain only on a value for money basis, simply changing NGO 'partners' when value for money is not seen to be delivered. Competitive contracting prioritises large organisations over small, and can lead to less innovation or inclusive modes of operation, as the organisations adapt to output control schemes and standardization. Overall, research on the 'dark sides' of state-NGO partnerships 'suggests that these may be self-defeating, by diminishing those features of the sector that made it attractive in the first place' (Bode and Brandsen 2013).

The literature makes clear, however, that modes of relationship and their impact on NGOs differ greatly in different contexts. It depends on the governance and funding arrangements chosen for the partnership and the institutional context in which they are implemented. While there is a trend towards marketization, there is simultaneously a counter trend towards more relational partnerships including co-production in which government is looking for a qualitative contribution, not only service at the lowest price (Bode and Brandsen 2013). The shape of the relations, which not only differ within each policy field but for each NGO in its differing relations with government actors, is the outcome of decisions taken by both government and NGOs rather than, as often suggested, governments always being the overwhelmingly dominant player (Najam 382-383).

Categorising relationships

Attempts have been made to categorise differing types of partnership. Coston (1998) proposed a spectrum of relations from repression and rivalry through to cooperation, complementarity and collaboration. Najam's later typology (2000) identifies four types of relationship on the basis of differing combinations of institutional interests and preferences

for policy goals and means, which we can see reflected in the examples of cooperation cited in this paper. These are:

- **Cooperation**, where government and NGOs share similar views on the desired ends and on the means to achieve them, and work together to do so. Najam uses cooperation synonymously with ‘collaboration’ and ‘coproduction’ but notes that to some scholars those terms imply greater equality or power symmetry in the relationship. For Najam, the key criterion for harmonious cooperation is a shared vision of ends and means, not whether there is a power balance in the relationship.
- **Confrontation**, where government and NGOs do not share either desired ends or means, so that each feels threatened by the intentions or actions of the other. Either side may then be confrontational in its approach.
- **Complementarity**, where they desire similar ends but to be achieved through dissimilar means. He applies this to situations where government desires a goal it cannot itself deliver and funds NGOs to do so, using means that differ from a traditional government approach, so that they are working separately, but not antagonistically; and
- **Co-optation**, a potentially transitory and unstable relationship where the organisations desire dissimilar ends but deploy similar means. Here NGOs and government engage at least in part because they seek to influence the goals of the other; power asymmetry determining what alternative form of the relationship emerges.

There is the additional possibility of non-engagement. Advocacy is a function NGOs may undertake within each kind of relationship, taking different forms in those differing contexts and likely to secure different outcomes.

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

		<i>Goals (Ends)</i>	
		Similar	Dissimilar
<i>Preferred Strategies (Means)</i>	Similar	Cooperation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complementarity	Confrontation

Source: Najam 2000, page 383

Codes of practice

Some governments have acknowledged the importance of optimising relationships between the public sector and NGOs through policy documents or some form of code of practice. The exercise is relevant to any future attempt to strengthen cooperation in the migration field.

The UK government introduced a Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England in 1998, revised in 2010. The Compact “aims to create the right environment for partnership working” and a platform for the government and the representative voice of civil society for this purpose (Compact voice) to work together to embed the compact in day-to-day relations between government and civil society.¹ The Compact (Cabinet Office 2010) consists of 32 undertakings which government actors are encouraged to make, and 16 for civil society organisations (CSOs), as the basis of effective partnerships. The goal is: to help achieve a strong, diverse and independent civil society; effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services; responsive and high-quality programmes and services; clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services; and an equal and fair society. The undertakings for government to achieve a strong, diverse and independent civil society, include:

“Respect and uphold the independence of CSOs to deliver their mission, including their right to campaign, regardless of any relationship, financial or otherwise, which may exist”.

And to:

“Ensure CSOs are supported and resourced in a reasonable and fair manner where they are helping the Government fulfil its aims”.

Undertakings for civil society organisations include:

“When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided, including information about the source and range of people and communities represented”.

“Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented, regardless of any relationship they have with the Government, financial or otherwise”.

In relation to effective and transparent design and development of policies and services, government actors are urged to:

“Work with CSOs from the earliest possible stage to design policies, programmes and services. Ensure those likely to have a view are involved from the start and remove barriers that may prevent organisations contributing”.

The Compact is clearly intended to address some of the challenges that have arisen in partnership arrangements, raising the question whether this codification of expectations is effective. According to the National Audit Office, all local authority areas now have a

¹ See press release on launch of the revised Compact: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-and-voluntary-sector-agree-new-compact>

Compact, based on the national Compact but tailored to take account of differences between areas. All signatories “have a responsibility to work in line with its principles and commitments”.² Nevertheless, an independent review in 2011 cast doubt on the effectiveness of the Compact and had limited hopes for the revised, slimmed down 2010 text, not least following the cull of its official monitoring body, the Commission for the Compact:

“Despite widespread belief that the Compact is a “good thing”, at least in principle, the substantial effort devoted to translating it into reality, and its positive impact, the Compact is currently at low ebb and is in danger of being ignored to death”.
Zimmick et al 2011:10)

Weaknesses that were identified included limited Ministerial leadership and an over-stretched unit responsible in government; weak mechanisms for liaison between government and the sector; lack of specificity in the Compact’s provisions and means of monitoring implementation; and considerable variation in local compacts. However, ‘the best of these have made significant and valuable contributions to improving relationships, and it is at local level that the future of Compact working looks most promising’ (Zimmick et al 2011:6). While the Compact had been a world leader when first introduced in 1998, offering a new relationship based on mutual respect, there had since been a change in government expectations of the relationships, reflected in a change of language from ‘partnership’ to ‘contracting’ and then to ‘commissioning’ and with it a perception that the primary role of civil society is service provision. If the relationship is merely one of contracting services, then a code governing funding and procurement would make a Compact envisioning partnership irrelevant (Zimmick et al 2011:7).

A review of similar initiatives (or their absence) in the US, Canada and a number of European countries finds great variation – from no compact (US) through short statements of principle to lengthy texts; informal or legally binding (as in Estonia); covering a narrow or broad swathe of government agencies; and in the capacity building and monitoring arrangements. Most documents were agreed between 2000 and 2003 since when activity has ‘waned’, funding for Canada’s Accord (2001), for instance, having ended after five years and it is now mentioned only in the past tense. A change of government affects the fortune of such agreements (whether promotion or relegation). In essence, the potential of such codes of practice to strengthen relationships, evident particularly at the local level, is often not realised through inadequate implementation (Zimmick et al 2011:23, 132, citing Casey et al 2010).

² <https://www.nao.org.uk/successful-commissioning/general-principles/the-compact>

Cooperation in the migration field

Cooperation with NGOs is extensive in the migration field at all levels of government, if most prominent in relation to resettlement, settlement and integration, and in relationships at the local level. In this section, we focus on significant examples of cooperation, in Europe and North America, engaging government at national/federal, regional/state and city level.

NGOs that work on migration issues are highly diverse, ranging from international organisations that include migrants within their remit (such as the Red Cross and Médecins du Monde), through national mainstream NGOs and those that work exclusively on migration issues, to locally based, migrant-led, community and faith-based organisations. Many focus on providing support to the most vulnerable migrants and/or on advocacy for policy change. NGOs, through their service provision and advocacy, may support or alternatively seek to counterbalance the effects of government policies on migrants. They may provide services without financial or other support from state authorities or, as in our focus here, in some form of association.

National and federal governments have primary responsibility for migration control, including programmes for the resettlement and community sponsorship of refugees and for integration and settlement where they are designed or managed at that level. In relation to migration control, governments collaborate with private sector and intergovernmental organisations to a greater extent than NGOs: in checking eligibility to travel, for instance, in running detention centres and in transport of detainees. There are nevertheless instances of NGOs being embedded in national migration plans; and of involving them in the management of migration flows such as in assisted voluntary return schemes, and in the uneasy cooperation in search and rescue missions in the Mediterranean, which we address below.

Portugal is unusual in Europe in the extent to which NGOs are systematically built into the country's national Strategic Plan for Migration (most recently, 2015-2020) as well as in its implementation, and are consulted in its development. The plan, which covers the design and management of migration flows as well as the integration of new migrants and new citizens, includes as one of its five core objectives:

“To strengthen the cross intervention capacity in the implementation of migration policies, by strengthening the network of partnerships with public and private entities...” (ACM 2015: Axis IV)

The anticipated contribution of non-governmental organisations, including immigrant associations, in delivery is spelt out in the detailed provisions in the plan.

Notwithstanding any responsibility for planning and funding undertaken at the national/federal level, most of the actual collaboration in the migration field is at the local level, delivering settlement and integration programmes. We look at the opportunities and

challenges that arise for governments and NGOs in these arrangements but look first at the particular issues that arise at the national level in relation to search and rescue at sea, and in voluntary return schemes.

Cooperation at the sea borders of the EU during the ‘refugee crisis’

The heavy migratory pressures faced by southern European countries during the years of the ‘refugee crisis’ opened spaces for cooperation between national authorities struggling to cope with the management of migration inflows through the Mediterranean and external entities, including international agencies and NGOs, willing to help those migrants and refugees risking their lives at sea to reach Europe. The trajectory of this relationship is worth considering at some length as, at different stages, it aptly illustrates the different kinds of relationship that Najam identified (above).

In Italy, the evolution of the relationship between national authorities and NGOs carrying out activities of search and rescue (SAR) of migrants and refugees at sea is illustrative of the intrinsic tension in government-NGO relations, and of the opportunities and risks that can arise from cooperation in a highly sensitive area such as that of the management of immigration flows. From the beginning, the intervention of NGO boats to save lives in the central Mediterranean followed the scheme set out by Najam: NGOs doing something that the government is unwilling or incapable of doing, or does insufficiently. When the Italian state implemented in 2013-2014 an extensive naval military and humanitarian operation (*Mare Nostrum*) whose goals included saving lives at sea, NGO SAR activities were absent (or very limited).³

Following EU pressures, however, Italy closed down *Mare Nostrum* in late 2014. It was replaced by a significantly smaller EU-led operation (*Triton*). Triton was eventually complemented by another EU military mission (*Operation Sophia* or EUNAVFOR Med) in May 2015. Besides having a much smaller operational area than *Mare Nostrum*, neither of these new operations’ included proactively carrying out SAR activities in their official goals, which focused on patrolling the external sea borders of the EU and fighting smuggling and other illegal activities at sea. It was following the closure of *Mare Nostrum* and the exponential increase in people dying at sea that NGOs increasingly deployed their boats to do what governmental authorities were no more ‘willing to do’ (at least officially) or ‘doing insufficiently.’ By late 2016 at least nine NGOs were operating with the aim of saving lives at sea in the Mediterranean⁴ (Cusumano 2017a), thus constituting – together with ships deployed within the operations Triton and Sophia – the backbone of the post-*Mare Nostrum* SAR framework.

³ Only one NGO (MOAS) started SAR activities right before the closure of Mare Nostrum, between August and September 2014.

⁴ These include: MOAS, MSF, Sea-Watch, Sea-Eye, Pro-activa, SOS Méditerranée, Jugend Rettet, the Boat Refugee Foundation, and Save the Children.

Risk and opportunity

The risk, as articulated by some NGOs involved in SAR operations, in doing something that the state is not willing to do or do sufficiently, is that NGO provision of SAR activities could be conducive to an abdication of state responsibilities; and even allow international organisations, here the EU, to offload the duty to address migrants' suffering on civil society (Cusumano 2017a:97).

Since the inclusion of NGOS in the SAR framework, the nature of the relationship between the Italian government(s) and the NGOs however, has been critical to the implementation of SAR operations in the Mediterranean. NGOs would not have been able to carry out any SAR activity without the accord and coordination of Italian authorities. What made it legally feasible for SAR NGOs to operate in the central Mediterranean was the Italian government's commitment to permit the disembarkation in Italian ports of all migrants rescued in the Maltese and Libyan SAR zones without risking prosecution for facilitating irregular migration (Cusumano 2017a). Any SAR activity in those areas is coordinated by the Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC Rome), and NGOs have been operating under the instructions of MRCC Rome. In contrast, the Greek government made it illegal to patrol Greek territorial waters and repeatedly threatened prosecution against NGOs operating rescue missions (Cusumano 2017a).

Using Najam's categorisations of NGO-government relations, the first phase of the SAR NGOS-Italian government relation fell within a harmonious '*cooperation*'. Thanks to the agreement on disembarking people in Italy to avoid tragedies at sea, SAR NGOs and the Italian government shared ends and means. NGOs were incorporated within an institutionalised framework, in constant contact with MRCC Rome, and were repeatedly invited to cooperate with the Italian Coast Guard and attend institutional meetings on SAR issues. NGOs were eventually praised for their operations, including being given an award by the President of the Italian Republic.⁵

Yet in this relationship, challenges for the actors involved could be found. The provision of SAR was 'fraught with tension and trade-offs, and has confronted NGOs with a host of ethical and operational quandaries' (Cusumano 2017b: 391). The arrangement of SAR operations under the instructions of the Italian government was found to be incompatible with the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality that should lead NGO's humanitarian interventions (Cusumano 2017b: 391). That arrangement was because SAR cooperation could only happen through a top-down coordination, where for each operation the MRCC Rome would instruct NGOs on where, when and how to conduct operations, and the Ministry of Interior would authorise disembarkations in an Italian port. The risk for NGOs was a loss of independence, and the embedment into the European border control policies that they had been forcefully criticising; a risk made particularly evident by NGOs operating side-by-side with military and law enforcement actors conducting anti-smuggling

⁵ See press release from the Presidency of the Italian Republic: <http://www.quirinale.it/elementi/1898>

and border control activities, and by requests from them to cooperate on anti-smuggling and migrant identification activities (Cusumano 2017b:392). Cusumano (2017b) found that NGOs in the Mediterranean were facing the same dilemmas NGOs face when they have to accept uneasy compromises in terms of neutrality, impartiality and independence from political actors to operate any other humanitarian intervention 'on land'.

Deteriorating relationship

These dilemmas became increasingly evident with the progressive deterioration of relationships between SAR NGOs and succeeding Italian governments. Following a change in government in late 2016, the new Italian Minister of Interior Marco Minniti's approach to Mediterranean immigration flows was more strongly set on preventing departures, and arrivals to Italy, rather than on avoiding tragedies at sea. Since the beginning of 2017, a climate of suspicion increasingly replaced the praising of the operations of SAR NGOs: several allegations were made against them by European and Italian authorities, including that NGOs' SAR operations constituted a *pull-factor* for refugees and migrants, encouraging more departures and increasingly unsafe journeys, and thus indirectly contributing to deaths at sea. Allegations were also made that some rescue NGOs might have colluded with smugglers from Libya and investigations were opened in Italy and Malta, although two parliamentary inquiries in Italy failed to uncover any wrongdoing by NGOs dedicated to rescues at sea (Amnesty International, 2018). While the new Italian government and NGOs still somewhat shared the aim of avoiding tragedies in the Mediterranean, disagreement grew in relation to both the ends and the means of their actions. The Italian government's *ends* increasingly lent towards reducing irregular arrivals, while the *means* shifted towards reinforcing Libyan authorities' capacity of preventing departures. However, the policy of allowing disembarkations in Italy was not interrupted at that stage, nor the cooperation between MRCC and NGOs in the activities of SAR.

Responding to suspicions of NGOs' wrongdoing, in 2017 the Italian Government imposed a 'Code of Conduct' for NGOs in the Mediterranean to regulate their operations and embed them in migration control and anti-smuggling operations. One point in the code in particular made the incompatibility between state-led operations and the neutrality of NGOs particularly relevant. NGOs were asked to accept that armed Italian police could access NGOs' boats at any time for investigation purposes, but the statutes of several international NGOs involved prohibits cooperation with the military forces of any country anywhere. Eventually, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was the only NGO that did not subscribe to the Code of Conduct, but as an effect of increasing tensions between the Italian government, and legal cases brought against the NGOs, half of them stopped operating in the Mediterranean in 2017.⁶

⁶ La Stampa (November 25, 2017), *Ong, cosa è rimasto nel Mediterraneo dopo la bufera sui migranti dell'estate scorsa*, available at: <http://www.lastampa.it/2017/11/25/esteri/ong-cos-rimasto-nel-mediterraneo-dopo-la-bufera-sui-migranti-CF2ncbLySAAhjkUZtZvLyL/pagina.html>

In a statement from MSF on why the organisation did not sign the code of conduct, the evolution of the relationship is evident:

“The Code [...] does not have saving lives as its sole core objective. We recognise that Italy is facing the arrivals of migrants largely alone, and it is legitimate for Italy to seek systems of solidarity with other EU Member States; but it is not legitimate to co-opt the life-saving humanitarian rescue response into a larger project. The life-saving job should be just that, and that alone.’

And:

“We asked for the Code to be introduced and framed as a tool specifically to ensure SAR would be effective and efficient, with acknowledgement of the difference between humanitarian SAR activities on the one hand and border control or migration policy on the other; but the Code remains essentially framed as a migration policy tool, to which we are very uncomfortable in subscribing”⁷

The Code of Conduct was in effect seen by the NGO as a way to transform the relationship with the government from ‘*cooperation*’ to one where government and the NGO would have the same means, but different ends (‘*co-optation*’).

In 2018, this relationship further worsened after a new government took office in June, as the newly appointed Italian Minister of Interior interrupted the policy of allowing disembarkations of rescued people in Italy, thus disrupting the SAR framework previously established. The Minister has also been using openly confrontational language against NGOs, whose altruistic motives have repeatedly been put into question (Amnesty International 2018). During summer 2018, only three NGOs operating SAR were left in the Mediterranean – still in coordination with MRCC Rome and the Italian Coast Guard – but without a stable reference framework for disembarkations. While some disembarkations were occasionally authorised by Italy, the relationship with the Ministry of Interior further deteriorated with reciprocal accusations, and cases of NGOs being refused disembarkation of rescued people in Italy and having to seek disembarkation in other EU countries.⁸ The relationship became openly ‘*confrontational*’.

Cooperation in the return of migrants

Relationships in the context of return of migrants to their country of origin also bring opportunities and challenges for both sides. Analysis of a partnership in the UK between the Home Office and Refugee Action in relation to part of its Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme for asylum seekers and irregular migrants is revealing of some of the drivers and tensions in such contractual partnerships and on the relationship between the NGOs’ insider

⁷ See MSF (2017), Q&A: Why MSF didn’t sign the Code of Conduct for Search and Rescue, available at: <http://www.msf.org/qa-why-msf-didnt-sign-code-conduct-search-and-rescue>

⁸ e.g: Adnkronos (July 18th, 2018), *Open Arms rifiuta sbarco in Italia*, available at: http://www.adnkronos.com/fatti/cronaca/2018/07/18/open-arms-rifiuta-sbarco-italia-non-porto-sicuro_pP6ZjlCxCb1JpHz193sXfJ.html

influence as a partner and outsider advocacy roles. It explores the familiar concern whether government funding has the effect of silencing critical voices in NGOs and whether there are factors, such as the size of the NGO, that provide protection against co-option.

The study found that the financial arrangement involved in this case, a grant rather than a contract, was significant in allowing the NGO to use evidence from its delivery of the AVR service for its advocacy for policy reform; and that its provision of a service for the Home Office did not prevent the NGO advocating on a broader platform, including take court action against it; while simultaneously having a relatively high degree of insider influence (McGhee et al 2016). A grant contrasts with the target-driven, performance-managed approach in a contractual relationship (where failures to deliver to agreed levels can be penalised), providing greater autonomy in how the service is delivered and in how evidence and learning from it can be shared. This means of financing prevented the NGO being dominated and incorporated into the department's institutional framework. The size of the organisation relative to the significance of the grant was also a factor in its internal influence and in its confidence to exercise a critical voice (McGhee et al 2016:36). Significantly, perhaps, the Home Office subsequently (2015) decided to take the service back under its direct control.

In relation to AVR, the advantage to government of engaging an NGO to provide an independent service was reported to be that irregular migrants were more likely to contact them as a trusted intermediary, and to retain that trust, than a government department of which they were fearful (whether because of their treatment in their own countries or fear of detention because of their immigration status). A compliant return was also more likely to be successful. Delivery through an NGO was also a cost-effective way to achieve their goal: a high volume of returns. Refugee Action reported its own motivation as being to meet its clients' need for an independent, confidential, non-coercive service that enabled their clients to consider options before the actual application was made. Providing the service enabled them to determine how it was provided (e.g. they refused to try to persuade anyone to leave the country); and the experience gave it evidence on a national scale, and from regular contact with clients, that bolstered its authority in its advocacy and internal influencing work. Noting these contrasting aims, but aims achieved through an agreed means, McGhee et al. suggest that the relationship falls under Najam's category of co-optation. Downsides for the NGO of its involvement were being associated by external critics with an unpopular government measure and a perception that they were no longer independent (2016:34; 40).

Refugees resettlement and community sponsorships

An area where NGOs have been playing a crucial role in facilitating the admission and orderly arrival of non-nationals in cooperation with governmental authorities is the resettlement of refugees, *i.e.* the process of relocation of particularly vulnerable refugees from an asylum country to another country of asylum that has agreed to admit them and

where they could find better and more stable protection. In the UK Syrian Resettlement Programme, for instance, the Home Office funds NGOs such as the Refugee Council to provide support to resettled refugees for 12 months, working in partnership with local municipalities. Services include orientation on arrival, support in finding accommodation and employment, assistance accessing volunteering opportunities and healthcare, education, language classes, banking services and welfare benefits.⁹

In this field, the experience of the United States, the world's top resettlement country, is particularly relevant. NGOs were central in the birth of the US Resettlement programme itself and today are an institutionalised component of the resettlement process. By contrast, asylum and resettlement schemes in Europe are traditionally highly centralised government functions (Fratzke 2017) and rely on international organisations, such as UNHCR, rather than NGOs (with the exception of community sponsorship schemes, as we shall see below).

US experience: NGOs an institutionalised part of the resettlement process

Since the interwar period, faith-based and secular humanitarian groups in the USA have been actively identifying refugees and supporting them in resettling to the North-American country, starting with displaced Jews escaping persecution in Europe. In the post-war period, the voluntary initiatives of humanitarian NGOs have been increasingly formalised in US legislation and in the implementation of *ad-hoc* programmes to support the orderly arrival of refugees from different areas of the world (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017). These programmes fully relied on international NGOs for the identification and screening of potential applicants to be resettled from overseas. In the 1980s, the US Congress passed the Refugee Act with the aim of finally abandoning the *ad-hoc* approach and regulating a standardized system for identifying, vetting, and resettling prospective refugees. Since then, resettlement has constituted a distinctive feature of immigration management to the country. Reflecting the history of resettlement, the Refugee Act fully incorporated the role of NGOs in the resettlement framework, which is indeed based on a scheme of public-private partnerships with select NGOs, often referred to as 'resettlement agencies' (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017). The idea at the basis of public-private partnerships is that NGOs are expected to mobilise significant cash and in-kind donations from non-governmental sources to supplement public funds. These extra resources are also quantified and tracked as part of government monitoring (IRIN news 2017).

NGOs' key players pre departure and post arrival

NGOs are involved both in the 'US Refugee Admission Programme' (USRAP) before the departure to the US, and in the Reception and Placement Program after arrival. Before departure, eligible refugees overseas must be identified through a system of referrals made by the UNHCR, and occasionally by a US Embassy or a 'specially trained' NGO to an overseas 'Resettlement Support Centers' (RSC). There are nine RSCs around the world, and they are

⁹ See www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/refugee_resettlement/syrian_resettlement_programme

operated by four NGOs¹⁰ (and the International Organization for Migration) under the supervision and funding of the US Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM).¹¹ RSCs officials prepare applications for resettlement consideration, interview applicants, verify their personal data and submit their information for background checks by a suite of US national security agencies. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has the ultimate authority to admit refugees. Historically, before the mid-1990s, NGOs such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) were the exclusive frontline screening agents, with little involvement of international organisations. They had developed a vast expertise and capacity, which could hardly be met by inter-governmental agencies, which thus had to turn back to NGOs for support in the identification and referral of eligible applicants (Slaughter 2017), a circumstance revealing of the advantages of working with flexible NGOs with a strong international network and historical expertise.

Upon arrival, resettled refugees are assisted through the Reception and Placement Program, which is largely based on public-private partnerships between the US government (BPRM) and nine NGOs,¹² known as 'domestic resettlement agencies', contracted to facilitate the initial settlement and integration of resettled refugees. The 'cooperative agreement' with each NGO specifies the services that the agency must provide to refugees. The NGOs are involved from the planning stage of the redistribution of refugees in the US. They regularly sit with governmental authorities in a special committee defining where refugees will be finally resettled within the country according to *e.g.* the NGOs' capacities on the ground, and the particular needs of the refugee. Once allocated to an NGO-resettlement agency, the latter is responsible for the logistics and for providing housing, clothing, food, and other necessities during the first three months in the US, including orientation in the city and the local culture, and support in relation to documentation, enrolment in school, English classes, appointments with medical doctors, and in finding employment. The aim of this support is to foster economic independence in the shortest possible time. Contracted NGOs receive a lump sum per refugee, an amount often supplemented by contributions from other public and private sources since grants often prove inadequate to cover costs fully. Additional programmes funded by the US Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) further support cash and medical assistance to resettled people for up to eight months from their entry into the US (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017). The resettlement agencies operate through their extensive network of affiliated local offices to provide their services in about 190 communities throughout the country.¹³

¹⁰ Including HIAS, CWS, ICMC, and IRC.

¹¹ See US Department of State at: <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/admissions/index.htm>

¹² Including: Church World Service, the Ethiopian Community Development Council, the Episcopal Migration Ministries, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the International Rescue Committee, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services, and World Relief.

¹³ See US Department of State at: www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/receptionplacement/index.htm

Nine agencies dominate resettlement work for the US government

Agency ▼	Total Income	Government Income	Percent government	Tax year
Church World Service	77.8	50.1	64	2014
Episcopal Migration Ministries (DFMS/EMM)	N/A	N/A	-	-
Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC)	17.8	17.0	96	2014
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society	39.9	19.5	49	2014
International Rescue Committee (includes unrelated overseas work)	562.0	378.3	67	2013
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service	50.4	46.4	92	2013
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)	N/A	N/A	-	-
US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants	51.5	46.6	90	2014
World Relief	62.6	42.6	68	2014

* The Episcopal and Catholic churches are not obliged to submit tax filings

Source: [Internal Revenue Service \(latest available\)](#).



Source: IRIN News (February 3, 2017), *US refugee resettlement system reels from Trump ban* [online]

It has been argued that the US' world record on resettlement is due in particular to the long-standing active engagement of civil society in resettlement, with particular consideration of the role played by faith-based organizations (FBOs) and communities of faith, and that without public-private partnerships the US refugee resettlement would have been impossible on the scale that exists today (Elby et al 2011). The value-added role of involving FBOs is considered to be attributable to several factors, although some of these are in large part extendable to secular NGOs. These include their long-term community presence and established local networks, which in effect co-sponsor resettlement activities and actively engage to facilitate a smooth integration in local communities. This enhances the newcomers' social connections that have positive impacts on integration and in securing employment. Moreover, voluntary organisations bring a strong motivation for service, which in the case of FBOs is based on core beliefs and values enshrined in various religious traditions (Elby et al 2011). At the same time, as the resettlement agencies operate on behalf of, and with funding from, the government, the cooperative agreements prevent FBOs from proselytising and provide that religious activities must be kept separate from resettlement activities. That condition is revealing of secular governments' concerns when working with FBOs, and of the compromise for FBOs in working with governments *vis-à-vis* their missions.

Financial risks for NGOs

The US experience on resettlement – particularly after the events of 9/11 in 2001 and the election of Donald J. Trump in 2016 – is also illustrative of the risks for NGOs in cooperating with governments that derive from changes in political circumstances and of governments. As in the case of SAR NGOs in the Mediterranean, a change of government may lead to a significant restriction of NGOs' scope for action and in their relationship with the

government. After both the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and the Trump election there has been a backlash against the resettlement system, which as a consequence has led to a significant reduction in the number of people admitted through the US resettlement programme (Scribner 2017). As the level of federal funding distributed to resettlement agencies is tied to the number of refugees being resettled, the drop in numbers significantly affected contracted NGOs. Already following the 2001 events, 58% of resettlement agencies had been forced to cut staff and 25% had had to release more than a quarter of their employees (Brown & Scribner 2014 citing Nawyn 2006).

The impact of the Trump administration on NGOs could be much stronger. The new administration imposed several restrictions. Besides a yearly cap number of 50,000 resettled refugees, in 2017 these included a 120-day halt to any resettlement and a 90-day ban on the issuance of visas and resettlements from seven Muslim-majority countries (Scribner 2017). Together these dramatically impacted on the work and finances of NGOs unable to resettle according to previous rates (IRIN news 2017). In 2018, it is expected that the US will admit the fewest number of refugees since the start of the resettlement programme (CNN 2018).

Community-based (or private) sponsorship

Community-based (or private) sponsorships of refugees is one of the most sophisticated forms of cooperation between private citizens and civil society with governmental authorities to facilitate the admission of a third-country national. Private sponsorships allow private groups, community organisations and NGOs (sponsors), who commit to take full 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. Private sponsorship provides an opportunity for civil society, private citizens, volunteers and communities to come together and play the lead role in welcoming and supporting refugees. These schemes may take different forms, including programmes that allow the private group to identify and name a refugee from abroad, or schemes that leave governmental authorities the prerogative of identifying the refugees to assign to a community sponsor (Fratzke 2017).¹⁴ The intertwining of civil society and government is therefore intrinsic to the nature of these schemes.

The Canadian model

The largest and most emblematic scheme of community-based sponsorship of refugees is found in Canada, the first country to regulate a private sponsorship programme (in 1978) and for a long time the only country to have done so. Today, Canada allows different kinds of sponsorships, including the Canadian Private Sponsorship of Refugees programme (or PSR) which is complementary to the governmental resettlement programme, meaning that sponsors can directly identify and name refugees from abroad, and sponsored refugees are

¹⁴ Other schemes may allow private individuals to simply support the reception of already present refugees and asylum seekers within government-run reception processes (by e.g. supporting housing or providing mentorship), without allowing the admission of a refugee from abroad (Fratzke 2017).

admitted in addition to governmental resettlement quotas. The Canadian Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Programme instead only allows private groups to sponsor refugees from within the quotas for governmental resettlement, and the matching between sponsors and refugees is made by the government. In the first case, sponsors take full financial responsibility for the sponsored refugees for one year since admission to Canada (or until the refugee is economically self-sufficient, if earlier), while in the second case support is provided in equal parts by the sponsors and the government (IRCC 2016a). In both cases, vetting and final admissions of indicated refugees to the host country stay prerogatives of the government.

In Canada, sponsors can be civil society organisations which have formal agreements with the federal government (known as ‘Sponsorship Agreement Holders’ or SAHs); any other organizations (for-profit or non-profit) that make an organisational commitment to sponsor a refugee and undergo financial and settlement plan assessments by federal authorities each time they wish to sponsor (known as ‘Community sponsors’); or any other ‘groups of five’ Canadian citizens or permanent residents who arrange collectively for the sponsorship of a refugee, commit to act as guarantors that the necessary support will be provided for the full duration of the sponsorship, and undergo a financial and settlement plan assessments by federal authorities (IRCC 2016a). Refugees in the PSR programme are mainly sponsored by SAHs or by constituent groups that fall under the auspices of the SAHs. About 75% of SAHs are FBOs, and consist of ‘constituent groups’ of at least five sponsors which contract to assist a refugee family for 12 months. A smaller number of refugees are sponsored by ‘groups of five’ (Hyndman et al. 2017).

Sponsoring groups in Canada are responsible for providing the refugees with care, lodging, settlement assistance and support for the duration of the sponsorship period. They provide food, clothing, rent and household utilities; assist in selecting a doctor, in locating interpreters, in enrolling children at schools and adults in language trainings, in integrating the refugee in the community, in seeking employment; and so forth (IRCC 2016a).

More than 200.000 refugees have been sponsored by private groups in Canada. The Canadian scheme is often seen as a model to follow, and a reason of pride for the Canadian government which, at the 2016 UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, pledged to ‘export’ its model to other interested states, and launched the ‘Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative’ to make good on the pledge (Hyndman et al. 2017).

Community-sponsorship in Europe

The Canadian experience has inspired the adoption of similar programmes elsewhere, including in Europe where since 2013 a number of sponsorship initiatives (*ad-hoc* and smaller in scale) have emerged, such as the ‘Humanitarian corridors’ in Italy and France, the UK Community Sponsorship programme, the sponsorships of Syrian refugees initiated by Germany’s states (Länder) and Portugal’s sponsorship programme through its Refugee Support Platform. Resettlement in Europe has historically been a highly centralised

government function, but a number of pilot projects and new initiatives have tried to capitalise on the wave of civil society engagement spurred by the refugee crisis to include elements of private sponsorship and partnerships with communities to supplement traditional settlement systems (Fratzke 2017).

Opportunities and challenges in sponsorship arrangements

Engaging communities in sponsorship programmes provides a range of opportunities for all the actors involved. The involvement of communities has the potential to improve social cohesion and refugees' integration by facilitating stronger relationships between refugees and the sponsoring community. Data from Canada suggests that labour market integration is also better facilitated through private sponsorship rather than governmental resettlement, as privately sponsored refugees find employment more quickly and are less likely to use public benefits (IRCC 2016b). At the same time, communities are given a sense of ownership over immigration and asylum, potentially increasing support for governmental policies on immigration. Cooperating with civil society networks, and particularly with faith-based organisations deeply rooted in local communities, allows the resettlement process to rely on extensive domestic and international networks, a wide volunteer base, and existing infrastructures for services provision (Fratzke 2017).

The difference between whether the sponsorship operates in addition to or within national resettlement commitments is particularly relevant for our analysis, as the opportunities and challenges in cooperating between civil society and governments can differ. In the recently launched UK Community Sponsorship programme, for instance, it is the Home Office that matches refugees with community groups, and sponsored refugees are admitted not in addition to (but counted within) the government's existing resettlement commitments (Fratzke 2017).

In the first scenario, one main opportunity for civil society is to increase the number of refugees admitted to the country, in line with the mission and humanitarian aims of certain organisations, but there are no savings for governments vis-à-vis their international commitments towards resettlements. Governments which have an interest in strengthening their humanitarian support by admitting more refugees may find support for their policy in engaged communities. Community sponsorship offers an additional legal pathway for migration, which some see as a means to reduce spontaneous and irregular arrivals (especially when sponsored individuals are the family members of an already present community which they would try to reach in other ways).

In the second scenario (where sponsorship does not operate in addition to resettlement), governments benefit from sharing with civil society the costs of meeting their international commitments vis-à-vis their quotas for resettlement. However, it is unclear to what extent private sponsorship does effectively allow cost savings, as the oversight of admissions and sponsorships can itself be resource intensive for authorities (Fratzke 2017). In this case,

there is a risk of seeing authorities offloading their responsibilities on civil society, and the partnership may result in a 'co-optation' rather than 'cooperation'.

On the basis of the successes and failures of Europe's diversified initiatives and the long-standing experience of Canada, Fratzke (2017) suggests what is key to engaging communities successfully in refugee protection. This includes:

- Striking the right balance between communities' ownership of the process and governments' oversight. On one side, governments must retain oversight of sponsorship arrangements to avoid the risks that sponsors or sponsorship plans are not adequate or below necessary standards, but at the same time '*Sponsorship programmes thrive on the creativity and generosity of civil society*'. One solution is the provision of training for sponsors and oversight of settlement plans, as happens in Canada.
- Building strong and trusting working relationships between governmental agencies and civil society, through 'open lines of communication' that allow communities to address their concerns and feel invested in government's decisions. Again, Canada offers an example with its Coordinating Council for Sponsorship Agreement Holders, which facilitates communication between sponsors and the government. In Portugal, the Refugee Support Platform similarly serves as the official coordinating body for sponsor organisations and the Portuguese government.
- Balancing thorough preparation with timely action, as on one-side sponsorship initiatives should move quickly to engage civil society to capitalise on public support, which can be highly variable, but at the same time, successful initiatives require thorough planning (Fratzke 2017).

Integration and settlement services

Settlement and integration programmes are aimed at providing various forms of support and assistance to immigrant populations: to help newcomers get established in their host country, meet their core needs and the requirements for their adaption into their new homeland and ultimately, if eligible, to become citizens of that country (Shields et al. 2016). 'Settlement services' is often used in North America to refer to support for newcomers, in particular, while the term integration is most commonly used in Europe to refer both to that early phase after arrival and to the longer term process.

Most countries in the Western world rely heavily on the services of municipalities and state/regional governments to deliver social services tailored to the local immigrant community's needs. Central governments may fund the implementation of settlement services at the local level or decentralise responsibility for integration policies to regional or local authorities (Shields et al. 2016). Those authorities may in turn rely on civil society in the implementation of their programmes and service delivery.

Overall, there is a trend towards an increasing role of NGOs in the provision of integration and settlement services. Although the level of public intervention to support integration

varies significantly from country to country, examples of settlement and integration services provided by NGOs are numerous and can be found across Europe and North-America. (Shields et al. 2016). The Canadian government, for instance, has a significant programme to promote settlement that involves NGOs, and that is also the practice in some European countries, such as Portugal and Ireland. Elsewhere, national/federal governments do not take a programmatic lead in that way, as in the US; or, as in England, largely does so only in relation to asylum seekers and refugees rather than migrants as a whole.

NGOs can also be engaged in the reception and care of asylum seekers, prior to (and indeed after) their receiving a decision on their application for refugee status. In the UK, the dispersal of asylum seekers (following legislation in 1999) resulted in a major programme of contracting of accommodation and support services by the Home Office's National Asylum Support Service to large national and small NGOs (and private sector providers), in line with a wider programme of contracting-out services by national and local government. Subsequent studies argued that these arrangements had redefined the relationship between NGOs and government, a partnership that on the one hand increases the capacity of the NGOs to act but on the other hand limits their autonomy to do so, despite the highly controversial nature of government policy in this area (Zetter et al 2005; McGhee et al 2016).

A cross-national analysis in 13 developed countries with significant inward migration flows¹⁵ has found that all of the countries make use of NGO providers for integration and settlement services for a number of reasons. NGOs allow for greater immigrant accessibility to settlement programming; add variety to integration services; and can offer services tailored to individual circumstances (Shields et al. 2016). Devolving the provision of services to NGOs also reduces the size of government bureaucracy in provision of immigrant services (Shields et al. 2016 citing Trudeau 2008) with considerable cost savings for the state. Italy and Spain managed to save around 3 billion EUR worth of public salaries by devolving settlement services to NGOs in the 2000s (Shields et al. 2016 citing Carella et al. 2007). Moreover, NGOs that are often rooted in immigrant communities are deemed to be better placed than the state to provide integration and settlement services (Shields et al. 2016 citing Trudeau 2008).

NGO providers may be contracted to offer a very diverse range of services, including 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.

¹⁵ Australia, New Zealand, United States of America, United Kingdom/England, Ireland, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Italy and Spain

Within North-America, the cases of Canada and the United States differ significantly in relation to perceptions of the appropriate role of the Federal government in fostering settlement and integration and of the embedding of NGOs in that process.

Canada: partnership embedded in national programme

Canada's Settlement Programme is run in partnership with around 700 organisations including NGOs, which also deliver pre-arrival information and orientation services. They do so in over 40 countries to refugees, economic and family migrants approved for permanent residency. The overall goals of the settlement programme are to provide migrants with the information required to make informed decisions, language skills and assistance in finding and retaining employment; and to build networks in communities. Settlement services are delivered by 'service provider organisations' funded by IRCC typically for three years following a national call for proposals for all provinces except, in recent years, in Quebec.

Service providers include immigrant-serving agencies, social service agencies and education providers. They range from organisations providing settlement services to fewer than 100 people a year (15%) to those serving more than 5,000 (12%). 79% of the organisations used volunteers to support their provision. The programme also funds capacity building and the development of networks for planning and coordination across public and private providers, known as Local Immigration Partnerships. They provide a means to identify gaps in provision, share information and leverage lessons learned across communities (although it is not clear to what extent this is fed back effectively into policy making). Provinces and municipalities may also fund complementary settlement services (Government of Canada 2016).

An internal evaluation (of years 2011/12 to 2015/16), that characterised Canada's approach as a public-private partnership model, noted that the research literature (Shields et al 2016; Trudeau 2008) had cited the benefits of such a model to be that it reduces the necessary size of the government administration, allowing government to promote consistency in service delivery while still allowing flexibility to meet needs at the local level. NGOs are also often best placed to have connections in the migrant communities that mean that they are aware of their needs. The downside is that it can lead to a competitive environment among service providers that is a barrier to effective partnerships, coordination, and to sharing of information and best practice. NGOs themselves reported high levels of collaboration with the other public and NGO partners in the programme (Government of Canada 2016).

US: laissez-faire but reliance on NGOs at local level

By contrast, in the US, policy on integration has in theory turned on the concept of *laissez-faire*: that migrants are left largely responsible for their own integration and thus the federal government does not significantly intervene to facilitate that process. No single federal entity has been mandated to implement or coordinate a national integration programme, and immigrants are expected to count on their own resources, on the help of family and friends, and occasionally on assistance from local community organisations (De Graauw and

Bloemraad 2017). Legal immigrants should access social benefits and support through general welfare policies designed for the general population in the US, which compared to other Western states is minimalist (Shields et al. 2016). Nevertheless, even access to general services has been restricted during the welfare reforms of the 1990s (Trudeau 2008).

The few integration initiatives targeting non-nationals mostly concern refugees, not labour or family migrants. These initiatives are all based on a public-private partnership scheme with NGOs and community organisations which since the interwar period have been the bedrock of local immigrant and refugee resettlement initiatives. These include the aforementioned support provided by NGOs to resettled refugees in the first three months from arrival to the US, and the additional programmes to support cash and medical assistance to resettled people for up to eight months from their entry in the US, offered by NGOs that are funded by the US Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Other initiatives include support in the naturalisation process funded by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). This remains small in scale: less than \$10 million was granted to 46 organisations across the whole country in 2016 (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017). However, in spite of this largely non proactive federal context, it is at the local and regional/state level where the partnerships are primarily developed and sustained.

At the local level, partnership initiatives are coordinated by municipal offices (departments) dedicated to immigrant affairs or immigrant communities (41 cities having these by 2016) and in a further 90 plus municipalities by commissions, committees, councils, task forces, boards or programmes focusing on that task. The NGO 'Welcoming America' is credited as having providing support since 2009 to over 70 municipalities and 40 NGOs to facilitate the burgeoning of many local initiatives. A common feature of the dedicated municipal offices is that they convene, encourage and invest in local stakeholders, including NGOs (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017).

Annual convenings of local tiers of government, philanthropy and NGOs to share best practices are now a regular feature in the US. In the absence of a federal agency to coordinate integration more widely for migrants, nor vertically through tiers of government and horizontally across non-governmental partners, it is argued that cities, states and civil society organisations need to continue to work together to build the integration infrastructure from the bottom up (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017).

The benefits for municipal and regional governments of cooperation with NGOs in the US (beyond access to knowledge of the needs and cultures of immigrant communities so that appropriate programmes can be designed) is that it reduces the risk of paternalism and of measures to erase immigrants' culture. A shortage of community organisations in new immigrant destinations, however, limits the number of potential partners available so that investment is needed to enable them to develop. For NGOs, cooperation provides access to municipal and regional/state decision makers and, potentially, funding for their work. They

also offer immigrants opportunities to become engaged in civic affairs (De Graauw and Bloemraad 2017).

Ireland: church role among NGO partners in integration strategy

As we noted in relation to state-NGO cooperation beyond and within the migration field, faith groups and churches in particular can play a significant role in some countries. Ireland is one example where the Catholic Church, despite its declining influence in recent years, has retained its role in the provision of education and of social services. This includes a long-standing role in migrant welfare that, having focused on emigrants until Ireland transformed from a sending to a receiving state in the mid-1990s, then shifted its focus to migrants and refugees.

Philanthropic funding became available to build the service and advocacy role of church-run and church-initiated NGOs, including those inspired by returned missionaries and diaspora chaplains. These include the two most prominent national migration NGOs over the past two decades, the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) and the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI), as well as their counterparts in regional cities. While their mission statements make no reference to Catholicism, and their staff are lay professionals, senior members of the church were central to their establishment and management. They operate alongside organisations that are more visibly church related such as the Jesuit Refugee Service (Gray 2015). Some of these organisations are in turn contracted by the state to deliver services, the government identifying a central role for faith groups in its 2008 integration strategy, perceiving them to have positive associations for many migrants and to be able to play a particular role in fostering social cohesion.

Faith groups were nevertheless only to be one feature of:

“A partnership approach between the Government and non-governmental organisations, as well as civil society bodies, to deepen and enhance the opportunities for Integration”.

Integration was seen as a shared challenge for society as a whole in which each sector plays an active part. While government must play a leading role, successful integration hinges on a vibrant civil society. “Non-governmental organisations are a valuable resource in this as in so many other areas of life, precisely because they are non-Governmental”. In the debates that preceded development of the strategy it was noted that “their contributions and insights have been invaluable, reflecting their interaction on the ground and on a daily basis with the migrant community” (Irish Department of Justice 2008:56).

Sporting bodies (that is, mainstream NGOs without a specific migrant focus) were also identified as having a major role in welcoming migrant participation, for which funding was made available. Nevertheless, where targeted services were carried out by non-public bodies, the strategy noted this should be reviewed for possible future mainstreaming, the

government being concerned not to develop parallel services for the migrant section of the population (Irish Department of Justice 2008: 9; 17).

Italian regions: social policy traditions and staff expertise factors in differing approaches

Analysis at the regional level in Italy (in the period 2001-2010) found a growing interdependence between state and non-state actors, coinciding with a shift in the regional administrative function towards a more enabling role supportive of social actors' initiatives. Cooperation nevertheless takes different forms. In one region, Lombardy, Campomori and Caponio (2017) found the bureaucrats are 'on top, and the NGOs are on tap', with little engagement permitted in decision making despite some involvement in implementation: 'control rather than collaboration prevails'. In contrast, in Emilia-Romagna, which is traditionally active in the social policy field and accords greater priority to migrant integration, the participation of NGOs in policymaking has been institutionalised in a consultative committee as well as through less formal arrangements.

Political control of the authority was found not to be the determining factor in differing approaches (although the rise of an anti-immigrant party did have an impact). Rather, the social policy traditions of the authority were significant, and the expertise and motivation of the authority's staff in building networks was important to the effectiveness of the process:

"The presence of a professionalised staff, with specific expertise and long-time experience in social policy and migration, favours cooperative relationships and the establishment of horizontal networks, as clearly indicated in the case of Emilia-Romagna. Conversely, when the topic is treated by the general social assistance staff, there seems to be less interest in connecting with the other actors working in the field and promoting dialogue with them..." (Campomori and Caponio 2017:317.)

A US case study on migrants' access to language classes in New York City and San Francisco, found, however, that staff and politicians' inclination to be inclusive was in itself insufficient without pressure from immigrant-serving NGOs pressing them to be more accommodating of disadvantaged immigrants' needs. Differing local political contexts enabled NGOs to work collaboratively with officials in San Francisco and more confrontationally in (a more highly centralised) New York City. Contractual relations between NGOs and the cities to provide services gave them lines of communication to articulate their views and in the process made the bureaucracies more procedurally democratic and responsive to them (De Graauw 2015).

NGO contributions pivotal at city level

One context in which the relationship between government and NGOs has had significant attention in the migration literature is in relation to what in Europe is referred to as the 'local turn' in integration policy. Theorised within a multi-level governance (MLG) framework of analysis, local government relationships with NGOs are one dimension of 'horizontal' MLG, as opposed to the 'vertical' relations with higher tiers of government. As local tiers have become more active in developing their own policy agendas, sometimes

diverging from national policy approaches, horizontal cooperation with non-governmental organisations has grown for a range of reasons: from municipalities' need to secure information on migrant communities to the assistance they need in delivering their local policy measures (Zapata-Berrero et al 2017).

National internal control policies that exclude irregular migrants in particular from welfare services have generated a growing demand for municipal services in Europe and North America, whether provided directly or through funding NGOs (De Graauw 2015; Spencer 2017; Delvino 2017). Local government, faced with the consequences of restrictive national policies, may in effect delegate these tasks to NGOs by funding their work (Ambrosini and Van der Leun 2015; Spencer 2017; Delvino 2017). National states themselves permit a varying level of provision to irregular migrants, NGOs enabling them to pursue a rhetoric of closure while avoiding its most inhumane consequences:

“Silently tolerating the action of actors who do provide services, by indirectly funding or facilitating them, can be the solution of the puzzle: States do not give up the principle of national sovereignty, but people actually living on the territory can receive at the local level some basic services they need. From this point of view, state and civil society keep their distinct roles but also seem to need each other”. (Ambrosini and Van der Leun 2015:106)

Barcelona's Service of Attention to Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees

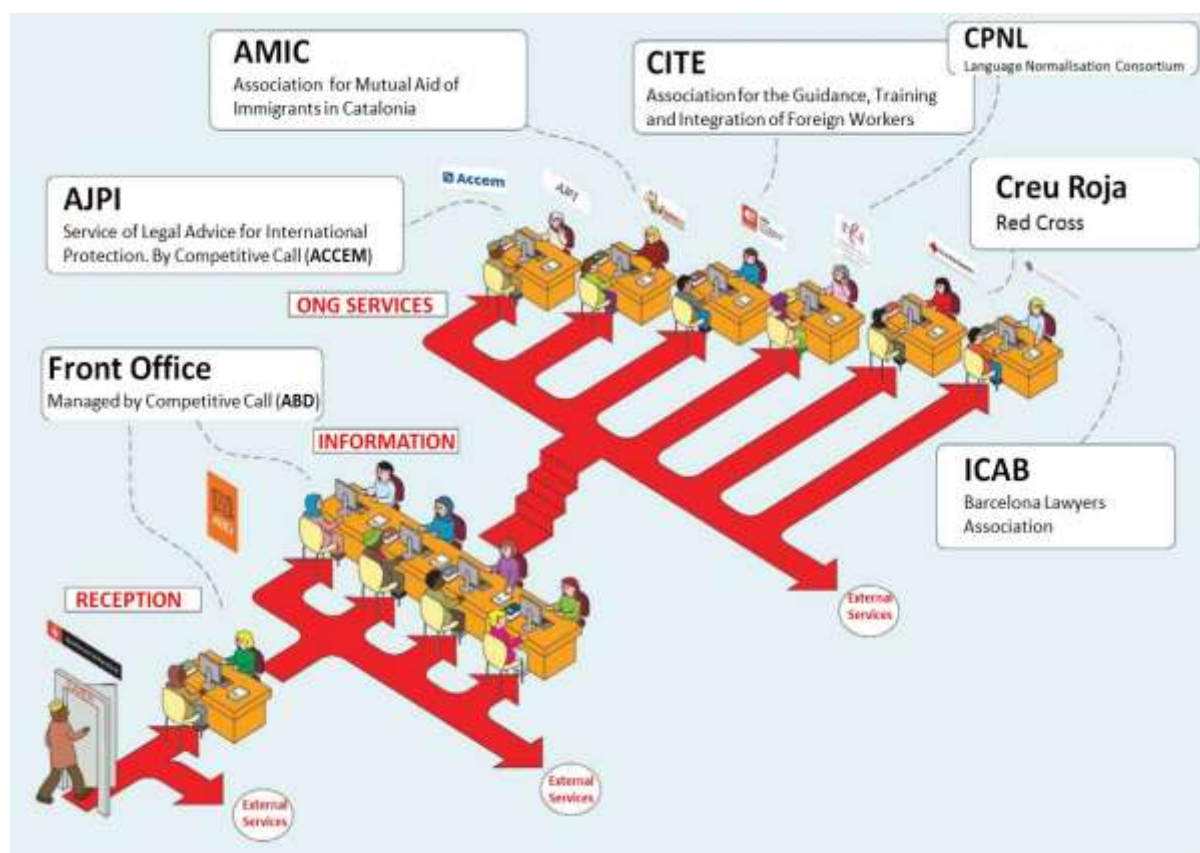
NGOs can in practice be pivotal to a city's capacity to deliver on its strategy for regular and irregular migrants, as for Barcelona in relation to its intercultural strategy, introduced in the late 1990s. Its decision to deliver services attuned to the needs of the whole population, and to promote contact across diverse communities in order to build trust and mutual belonging, required strong working relationships with a diverse network of NGOs, and engagement of them in service provision. Involvement in design of the plan itself was part of the relationship building process: the 2010 iteration of its Interculturality Plan was the outcome of deliberations involving over 3,000 people and 250 organisations (Zapata-Berrero 2017: 257).

An example of Barcelona's co-delivery of an integration services with NGOs highlights the benefits of cooperation but also the managerial challenge. Its Service of Attention to Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER)¹⁶ is a central hub for the delivery of free information and advice services to migrants, funded and managed by the city council but delivered by six NGO contractors, engaging 62 professional staff that provide both the front desk referral and a range of complementary, specialist services. These include information on accessing shelter, language classes, training and recognition of qualifications; legal advice on immigration status and on voluntary return; and social care complementary to

¹⁶ <http://www.bcn.cat/novaciutadania/arees/en/saier/saier.html>

mainstream social services. The diagram below shows the extent to which the service relies on NGO providers:

Barcelona's Service of Attention to Immigrants, Emigrants and Refugees (SAIER)



Source: Presentation of Ramon Sanahuja, Director de Serveis d'Immigració i Interculturalitat, City of Barcelona, to the Working Group of the City Initiative on Migrants with irregular Status in Europe (C-MISE) in Barcelona on 5 July 2018

The NGOs are funded by the city council but the model is one of partnership, not a hierarchical one of command and control. A coordinator employed by the city council manages the facility but needs to secure coordination and, in the partnership model, to secure changes through consensus.¹⁷

Utrecht's Refugee Launch Pad

An initiative in the City of Utrecht similarly illustrates the significant benefits to a city of working closely with NGOs, and some of the management and coordination challenges this can entail. An Urban Innovative Action,¹⁸ the city's Refugee Launch Pad is a co-living, co-learning, space for asylum seekers and local residents in which the city council has brought together a range of non-governmental partners to deliver different aspects of the

¹⁷ Presentation of Ramon Sanahuja, Director de Serveis d'Immigració i Interculturalitat, City of Barcelona, to the Working Group of the City Initiative on Migrants with irregular Status in Europe (C-MISE) in Barcelona on 5 July 2018

¹⁸ <http://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/uia-cities/utrecht>

programme, reflecting their differing mandates and expertise. The initiative involves young people from the neighbourhood living in one part of a building that otherwise serves as an asylum reception centre, with a shared ‘incubator’ space for joint learning and social activities.

The NGOs are expected largely to self-manage while contributing to the common goal but, as the project progressed, it became evident that in certain respects they had differing perspectives on the goal and how to achieve it. That led to some tensions and delays in reaching decisions, notwithstanding evidence in other respects of impressive outcomes. An example was differing views on how to open up the incubator space to engage the neighbourhood and residents in a wider range of shared activities in face of concern from the NGO charged with managing the space for the security of the building and for the young people living there:

“Each partner brought valid arguments to the table from their own professionalism and expertise, but discussions about opening up the incubator space went on for about half a year while it took time to secure funds to appoint more hosts to open the space during office hours (Oliver et al 2018:47)”.

The project evaluation (interim report) suggests that the experience demonstrates that managing a project as a horizontal network in which all partners are equals can bring challenges in relation to collaboration and decision-making. Without a ‘go-to’ person in charge, it can take too long to reach consensus; and there can be too great a focus on the contributions of individual organisations rather than on shared learning (Oliver et al 2018:47).

London: Co-opting of NGO staff into city council inclusion team

A London initiative to partner the Greater London Authority (GLA) with a small number of specialised NGOs was recently funded by philanthropy. The aim is to support work on integration and citizenship in the city where more than a third of residents were born outside of the UK. Loosely modelled on similar initiatives in the US, the cooperation takes the form of co-opting four NGO staff into the GLA’s Social Integration Team, with the aim in particular of encouraging the take up of citizenship and voter registration; of support to young Londoners to secure legal rights of residence; and of celebrating diversity and promoting social contact to build shared identity (Trust for London 2018).

Co-opting NGO staff into a municipal team is judged to have brought specialist knowledge and new ideas into the authority, helped to build the capacity and capabilities of its Social Integration Team, and enabled the authority to achieve a more ambitious programme of activity. In return, the NGOs have benefitted from the GLA’s influence and networks to deliver projects on a greater scale than they could do alone. They have also gained an understanding of how the public sector works and extended their professional networks. An assessment of the learning from the initiative so far includes the importance of buy-in at a

senior political level; and the existence of a number of experienced NGOs in the field from which secondees could be drawn. Challenges included some secondees being placed in less senior positions in the authority than in their own organisation which impacted on their ability to influence more senior GLA colleagues; pay differentials between NGO and public sector salaries, creating a sense of unfairness; that NGOs were only able to release staff to be part-time secondees (so that secondees were also fulfilling two demanding roles); and some lack of clarity on where responsibility in the team lies (Trust for London 2018).

Volunteering

One area of practice in Europe that is still largely separate from state funding or coordination is the 'burst of activism and creativity' in volunteer welcoming and integration initiatives, spurred by the refugee crisis in Europe. A review reports that, with the exception of some municipal funding, most of these new initiatives are not linked up with state nor NGO integration practitioners:

"The great opportunity to be seized now is translating the new, positive acknowledgement of voluntary work into sustainable governance structures, giving due respect to the grassroots contribution. The related threat, however, is that policy-makers cannot live up to the new complexity and coordination needs in the integration field, and voluntary commitment declines as a consequence (EWSI 2016)".

Existing integration policy coordination networks have in a few instances embraced the new volunteer-based initiatives, as in Portugal's Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados, an award winning collaborative network of more than 350 civil society organisations that work to support refugees in Portugal and source countries, which receives funding from the European Commission and from the Office of the Migration Commissioner (ACM). In Germany, the Refugees Welcome initiative has been providing asylum seekers with housing in private homes. It was followed by a government programme aiming to match refugees with mentors in their communities. Similarly, in response to the more than one thousand places pledged by Irish residents to host a refugee in the 2015 campaign launched by the advocacy group Uplift, the Irish government committed to use some of the places offered to receive refugees relocated from Italy and Greece (Fratzke 2017).

Voice in policy making

Case studies in Europe and the USA suggest that service-orientation is more central to most NGOs in the field of migration than political advocacy. This may in part reflect the lack of opportunities for meaningful, formal, engagement in policy development, despite the reliance on the NGO contribution in the implementation process and the expertise that they have from those experiences. The extent to which NGOs' voices on policy change are heard, whether informally through the networks with policy makers they develop as 'core or peripheral insiders' (Craig et al 2004) or through formal channels is debatable (Ambrosini and Van der Leun 2015). Barriers include states 'lacking the willingness or capacity to

engage civil society organisations', which in turn can lack timely information on the policy process, the capacity or knowledge to engage, or a coalition of interests that can sustain collaboration within civil society itself. For governments there can, furthermore, be 'a fear that bringing civil society to the table would require taking certain items off the agenda, thus watering down high-level negotiations' (Banulescu-Bogdan 2011:5).

That has also been found in relation to policy making at EU level, despite structures established to engage NGOs in debates on future migration policy such as the annual European Migration Forum (since 2015) and the annual meetings with Member State representatives in the European Integration Network.¹⁹ Other new avenues for engagement opened up by EU agencies include, since 2011, the annual consultative forum of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and, since 2012, the Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights of Frontex, the EU border agency.

The headline for the 2016 European Migration Forum optimistically read 'Civil society shapes the European migration agenda: employment & integration are key priorities.'²⁰ Academic analysis has however suggested, that 'there is little meaningful inclusion in policy debates of the views of recent migrants or wider civil society', citing a lack of transparency in EU and member states' decision making, structural barriers in the decision making process that marginalise NGO involvement, and the extent to which public opinion drives the policy agenda (Singleton 2015). Overall, NGOs have low expectations in relation to their possibilities to influence EU policies on immigration and perceive that engaging with national authorities can provide greater influence, especially in an anti-immigration environment fed by the 'refugee crisis' (Shields et al. 2016 citing Grey and Statham 2005; and Biswas 2011).

At the global level, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducts annual consultations with the NGOs working on displacement and protection issues. The International Organisation on Migration (IOM), which 'holds the view that sustained dialogue facilitates the identification of joint priorities, the exchange of good practices and the strengthening of synergies between IOM and civil society,' likewise has an annual consultation conference with its current and potential future NGO partners to discuss its forward programme of work, in addition to regional and thematic consultations.²¹ Over the past two years, NGOs have also been engaged in the discussions preparatory to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), expected to be the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement on migration, under the auspices of the UN. The initial consultation phase in 2017 included a series of interactive hearings, organised thematically and regionally, at which NGOs could present. The Modalities Resolution setting

¹⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/network/european-integration-network>

²⁰ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/press-releases/civil-society-shapes-european-migration-agenda-employment-integration-are-key-priorities>

²¹ <https://www.iom.int/annual-consultations>

out the process leading to the adoption of the GCM emphasises the importance of contributions that take into account ‘different realities’ and diverse perspectives, and hence the need to have the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, including NGOs. IOM played a key role in facilitating that process.²² The process has in turn enabled NGOs to develop their own collective voice, a statement in July 2018 setting out their seven shared priorities for the GCM being signed by 153 NGOs from across the world.²³

Opportunities and challenges for government and NGOs

It is clear that for government and for NGOs, there are advantages in cooperation but also challenges. In this section, we summarise what we have learnt, identifying first the opportunities and challenges identified for government (at all levels) and secondly those identified for NGOs.

Opportunities and challenges for government

For government we see that provision of services to NGO providers is part of a broader, neo-liberal trend to outsource functions that it is considered do not need to be undertaken by the state. It may also reflect a longer standing relationship with non-state, faith-based, welfare providers. Advantages can include:

- the greater awareness that NGOs have of migrants’ changing needs
- the greater likelihood that NGOs will be approached, and trusted by, migrants
- NGOs’ greater flexibility to establish a service where and when needed
- NGOs’ ability to provide a more informal, personal service; or a service that is out-with government’s role (e.g. inclusion in sports activities)
- NGOs’ ability to innovate in face of changing needs and circumstances
- Enhancing international reputation, e.g. for refugee protection, through greater capacity to meet commitments
- that NGOs can be more cost effective (if lower costs, using volunteers, or subsidised by core funding from elsewhere), and bring in community support in kind; or enabling governments in effect to devolve financial responsibility (as in community sponsorship arrangements)
- opportunity to reduce the size of the bureaucracy if responsibility is substantially devolved/out sourced
- community engagement in turn builds a public sense of ownership of and support for the integration process
- Better social and labour market integration outcomes as NGO networks build newcomers’ social connections

²² <https://www.iom.int/regional-civil-society-consultations-rcscs>

²³ <http://madenetwork.org/latest-news/civil-society-statement-global-compact-safe-orderly-and-regular-migration-gcm-advance>

- provision at arms-length where the service, as to irregular migrants, is politically sensitive or, at municipal level, is contrary to national policy
- that authorities become more sensitive and responsive to community and immigrant views, strengthening democratic participation
- a close working relationship can bring NGO specialist knowledge and ideas into the authority, refreshing its approach and enabling it to deliver a more ambitious programme

NGOs may thus, overall, have greater capacity to reach the target group and achieve the desired objective, at a price the authority can afford. The benefits appear to be greatest at the local level where most services are provided but where capacity to provide, in this age of austerity, is most constrained.

Engaging NGOs not only in implementation but also in the policy-development process further creates the opportunity to reflect their experience in the policy options considered, strengthening policy design; and to be seen to be supporting citizen engagement in the democratic process.

For government, the challenge of cooperation with NGOs can be:

- The lack of a shared perspective on the end goal, and/or on the means – so that the service is not delivered in entirely the same way as would have been the case under government direction
- That management and coordination of NGO partners, each with differing priorities, is more difficult than in a hierarchical management arrangement
- The need to find the right balance between government oversight to ensure standards and NGO/community control to build ownership and support
- Poor performance (whether in the quality of service provision or in sound administration or financial management) that can in practice, given limited forms of management control and accountability, only be rectified by changing service provider
- That cooperation brings the NGO into contact with information which government may not want to be disclosed, and hence relies on a level of trust in the relationship which has to be nurtured but may not always be present
- The risk that a change in political leadership and subsequently of policy means that a shared goal is no longer shared so that the relationship becomes strained and conflictual
- A competitive environment among service providers that can be a barrier to effective partnerships – a challenge equally for NGOs
- A shortage of potential partners in new destination areas requiring investment to build that capacity

- The time and resources needed to consult NGOs meaningfully on future policy development and the risk that their views will not be compatible with more pressing political demands

Opportunities and challenges for NGOs

For NGOs, we see that the benefits can be:

- Funding that enables them to build their capacity to provide a service on a scale that they could not otherwise deliver
- Legal opportunities to carry out activities furthering their missions which cannot be implemented without governmental authorisations or cooperation as, for instance, in search and rescue activities or sponsorship admissions of refugees
- Capacity to meet a demand that they are experiencing from migrants so that they do not need to turn them away
- Ability to provide the service in the way that they feel is most appropriate and sensitive to migrants' needs
- Access to government networks that can provide knowledge of how the public sector works and channels of influence over forms of service provision and/or policy development
- Access to evidence which they can use to bolster their internal and external advocacy for policy change
- Opportunities for immigrants and other members of the community to engage in civic affairs

The challenge for NGOs can be:

- A power imbalance in the relationship which constrains their ability to provide the service in a way that accords with their values or entirely meets the migrants' needs
- Being asked to undertake tasks or accept interventions, which are not compatible with their values or with the statute of the organisation, having to accept an uneasy compromise or withdraw
- Facing criticism for complicity if the government programme in which they are engaged 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, particularly where it is a significant portion of the organisation's overall funding, or the perception that they have lost that independence
- The skill needed to manage the balance between insider and outsider relationships with government partners, retaining trust without losing independent voice
- The contracting process favours larger NGOs, marginalising those that cannot meet the procedural requirements, and which in bureaucratising the process can reduce the flexibility, use of volunteers, and innovation for which the NGO provider is prized

- Precarious short time funding that has a negative effect on staff appointments and retention, or threatens the sustainability of the organisation if there is a significant reliance on that source of funds
- A marginal role in policy making despite a central role in implementation / service provision
- Pay differentials between the public and NGOs sectors, apparent where working in close partnership/co-optation arrangements
- Managing tensions in working relationships with government and external critics over a long period

Conclusion

In this paper we have explored the opportunities and challenges for government and NGOs in modes of cooperation in the migration field. We set this in the context of those evolving relationships in broader policy domains and in particular drew on Najam's helpful categorisation of four kinds of relationship – cooperation, confrontation, complementarity and co-optation – based on whether there are, between the government agency and NGOs involved, a shared understanding on the desired goals of the relationship and on the means to achieve them. Only where there is agreement on both ends and means is the relationship deemed one of cooperation, but there can even so be power asymmetries and challenges for both parties to be overcome. Codes of Practice, introduced to optimise the functioning of these relationships, have not as yet delivered that goal.

We found a global trend towards differing forms of partnership arrangements in and beyond the migration field: from the out-sourcing of services to NGOs to close collaboration in programme design and implementation. More rarely is there meaningful involvement in policymaking. NGOs can be central to delivery, indeed pivotal to government capacity to achieve its goals, but marginalised from deliberations on and design of the policy itself. The extent and nature of involvement varies significantly between countries, as does the involvement of NGOs per se in the delivery of public services.

The goals, interests and priorities of NGOs and governments will always be in tension, given their differing roles and responsibilities, but can coincide or partially coincide in relation to a particular task. A working relationship may then develop which delivers benefits to both parties but also brings risks and challenges. We explored the trajectory of such relationships in the migration field across very differing policy areas, from search and rescue at sea and assisted voluntary return schemes, through resettlement programmes to cooperation in settlement and integration activities.

From the literature on the relationships that we explored we drew out, in the final section, a checklist of opportunities and challenges for governments and for NGOs. In essence, for governments we identified financial, political, reputational and capacity benefits from

working with NGOs, and in delivery of better outcomes because of the expertise, innovation, flexibility and networks NGOs can bring to the task. The challenges primarily relate to differing perspectives on ends and means, to management and coordination, trust, and variable performance.

For NGOs, the benefits are primarily financial and political: the resources and capacity to deliver what they consider is needed, and access to information, evidence and channels of influence. The challenges can be reputational, if criticised for working with government; a loss of independence and autonomy to act and speak as they see fit; political, if marginalised from the policy making process; administrative, if coordination of NGO's contribution is not well managed; and financial, dependence on government funding being a potential threat to the viability of the organisation if political priorities change or austerity cut backs are required.

While the challenges can be considerable for both parties, it is evident that in many policy areas there is no alternative for government to work with NGOs and that cooperation at different levels and in different forms is likely to continue. It is thus necessary to consider whether there are ways in which the relationships can be optimised for both parties, whether through generic approaches across the migration field as a whole or targeted approaches in particular policy domains.

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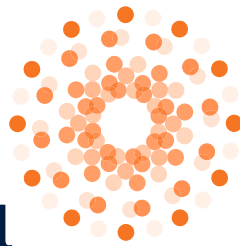
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Global Exchange

on Migration & Diversity

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity is an ambitious initiative at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) opening up opportunities for knowledge exchange and longer term collaboration between those working in the migration field.