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CRISIS MANAGEMENT NETWORKS – COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURING IN TURBULENT CONTEXTS

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Competitive Paper

Abstract:

Severe socio-economic issues that threaten peace, life or wellbeing of humans in specific regions of the world cannot be solved by any single actor. Wide networks of political, governmental, business, non-profit and humanitarian organizations are to be involved to change existing ways of behavior. Despite conflicting interests and competing behavior, involved organizations need to act collectively to induce institutional change. This is the space for examining network mobilization as a collective means to change institutions in the present study. The study aims to answer the question: How are networks mobilized in crisis management to induce institutional change processes in socio-economically turbulent contexts? The study builds on the IMP rooted network mobilization research and connects it to views from institutional entrepreneurship. A framework of network-based collective institutional entrepreneurship factors and mechanisms is provided. The framework is reflected upon from the insights of an interview study with representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in worldwide human crisis management and peace-building. This allows for describing turbulent settings with respect to typical actors, activities and ways of behaving. The study reveals two different behaviors of how actors deal with unpredictable incidents in the mobilization process. The findings call for elaborating the current network mobilization framework to account for two issues: multiple levels of actors and activities and non-teleology as a way to cope with unpredictability in the institutional change process. We suggest, therefore, viewing the creation of novelty in order to mobilize networks in turbulent contexts through an entrepreneuring perspective. Institutional entrepreneuring as a context-specific concept allows creating novelty non-teleologically and thus accounts for unpredictability.

Keywords:

network mobilization, collective institutional entrepreneurship, entrepreneuring, turbulent context, crisis management networks

INTRODUCTION

The non-armed resolution of societal and environmental conflicts and issues through changing institutions has become of interest to business network researchers recently. A fundamental reason for this may be the conviction that resolving these pressing issues is rather unlikely without corporate involvement, be it economic or political (Ritvala & Salmi 2011, 887). Changing institutions, i.e. existing norms, rules and beliefs (Powell & DiMaggio 1991), is rather a large-scale endeavor which relies on the collaboration of several, different actors. These actors are, apart from business actors, also other private actors, public actors as well as actors from the third sector (e.g. non-governmental organizations). A community of individuals, firms, and policy makers is needed to induce institutional change. In this community, which we name crisis management network, actors are not only of different backgrounds but also act potentially opportunistic. They do not only possess different goals but come with conflicting interests, which is why these networks are inherently heterogeneous and turbulent (Brito 2001). Furthermore, the surrounding social, economic and institutional environment of crisis-afflicted regions is often subject to unpredictable dynamics. Hence, change in these discontinuous networks, i.e. breaking with existing patterns and establishing new ones, is complex and difficult to anticipate (cf. Lundgren 1992).

This study aims to provide understanding of the behaviors of a wide range of actors in relationship networks that drive institutional change processes in socio-economic issue afflicted regions. The question to be answered in this study is: How are networks mobilized in crisis management to induce institutional change processes in socio-economically turbulent contexts? Thereby, this study responds to the call for research on institutionally rooted change processes in networks (Brito 2001: 50) and the call for more research on entrepreneurial activities in the political sector (Jennings et al. 2013). The focus is on crisis afflicted societies and their economies that are coined by fluid institutional environments and transforming legal norms and structures. These institutional settings can be influenced by entrepreneurial actors and activities (Rindova et al. 2009) who collectively aim at fostering sustainable social and economic systems. This is seen to require collective opportunity creation in the form of network activities which are specific to their very context. The ways of behaving for collective action in this kind of network context have received only scant attention in previous research.

The study builds on the IMP rooted network mobilization research and complements it with ideas and concepts from institutional entrepreneurship literature. The theory of embedded business relationship networks (Håkansson 1989) consisting of actors that perform activities involving respective resources (Håkansson & Snehota 1995) is well fitting to multi-level and multi-actor analyses in complex environments; it caters for not only an individual level but a more aggregated view on network dynamics (Mouzas & Naudé 2007: 63). The institutional entrepreneurship literature allows for grasping the initiation and implementation of radical changes which necessitate questioning and then developing or exchanging the existing institutions to induce institutional change towards sustainable social and economic systems (Battilana et al. 2009: 72). The concept of entrepreneuring (cf. Steyaert 2007, Rindova et al. 2009) is introduced to further the understanding of the actual mobilization process and to cater for the complexity and fluctuation which social crisis contexts are coined by.

In the following, the theoretical analysis of features of business networks and network mobilization as well as key processes in institutional entrepreneurship are developed as a

framework of network-based collective institutional entrepreneurship. The framework depicts a proposed change process and is then reflected upon from the insights of an interview study with eight representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in worldwide human crisis management and peace building. This allows for describing the turbulent setting with respect to typical actors, activities and ways of behaving. The study reveals two different behaviors of how actors deal with unpredictable incidents in the mobilization process which ask for elaborating the initial framework to account for two issues: multiple levels of actors and activities and non-teleology in the institutional entrepreneuring process. This paper ends with general conclusions and suggestions for future research.

ACTING IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT NETWORKS

The resolution of humanitarian crises poses a challenging task to society in general which can be mastered in a collective manner only (Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2010). Focusing on crisis-afflicted regions as turbulent environments we regard the development of afflicted societies and economies as characteristic of rapid changes. The societal as well as the economic development of a region may drastically fluctuate, and hence be unpredictable, at any point in time due to interstate or internal tensions (Rubin & Jones 2007: 395).

We contend that changing existing institutions, i.e. shaking up existing beliefs, policies, and practices (Dahan et al. 2006) or, in other words, changing taken-for-granted understandings, i.e. arrangements that tend to be reproduced without reflection in practice (Berger & Luckmann 1967), is one entrepreneurial way to support the creation of a peaceful and sustainable social and economic system. As our interest is in multiple actors' work for solving a crisis we emphasize the necessity for collective efforts as interplay of institutional, political and economic actors. The collective and connectedness of these actors, organized in crisis management networks, function as vehicles which transport and spread the desired change (Möllering 2010). Conceptually, we base these networks on the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group's business network approach and borrow from the institutional entrepreneurship theory.

IMP-based Business Networks

Rooted in industrial dyadic buyer-seller relationships (Håkansson 1982) the business network approach is characteristic for its inclusion of not only business actors but other private sector actors, third sector actors (Hadjikhani & Lee 2006) as well as political actors (cf. Welch & Wilkinson 2004; Welch & Wilkinson 2005). Thereby, network relationships are seen as organized patterns of both interaction and interdependence (Johanson & Vahlne 2011) between connected actors. Powell and Smith-Doerr (1994: 368) described networks as governing relations among business actors. The development of these relationships is a time- and resource-demanding process (Johanson & Vahlne 2011) which is based on gradually increasing knowledge about, trust in, and commitment to the relationship partner (Morgan & Hunt 1994). Additionally, relationship actors engage in mutual learning and adaptation processes which lead to building inter-organizational routines (Johanson & Vahlne 2011: 486).

The complexity of business networks is rooted particularly in their diverse composition and their interconnectedness with, or embeddedness in, other networks which continuously change over time. Networks' sensitivity to developments over time manifests itself twofold; it assumes that organizations transform resources to carry out transactions linked by relationships, and that the cumulative effect of the developments in relationships influences both the position and the network in which the organizations find themselves (Mouzas & Naudé 2007: 63). Additionally, multiple embeddedness types (Halinen & Törnroos 1998) contribute to the holistic view that the business network thinking provides on business relationships (cf. Thorelli 1986). Further contributing to the holism of business networks are the levels that interconnected and interdependent relationships take place at; as Easton (1992: 3) stated, a comprehensive understanding of networks assumes the investigation of relationships not only on a congregate network level but an individual and organizational level, too. Especially organizational relationships are comprised of interwoven interpersonal ties between organizations (Håkansson & Snehota 1989). The type of the ties is related with the prompt availability of the relationships and personality of interaction in them (Mainela 2007: 93).

The role of the individual in business networks, for instance its representational role, has been of particular interest to business network researchers (Halinen & Törnroos 1998: 198). Existing literature states that besides visible flows of money, products and services, business relationships are mainly informal (Powell 1990) which makes it difficult to judge the adequacy of their development and maintenance state (Johanson & Vahlne 2011). This is because business relationships are rooted in actors' intentions, interpretations, and expectations which are often opaque to outsiders (Johanson & Vahlne 2011). The representational role of individuals (as well as organizations) toward other actors on different network levels as well as among different networks has been described as a "particularly powerful means of grasping the connectedness of business networks and the effect of this on network development" (Halinen & Törnroos 1998: 203). Individuals' past and present knowledge and experience as well as their future intentions and strategies act as driving forces for change in networks. The more accumulated resources, i.e. power, capital, know-how, contacts, an individual represents the more likely they are to connect to new actors within and outside their network (Halinen & Törnroos 1998).

In summary, the business network approach constitutes a holistic view on networks which is coined by interconnected and interdependent relationships between and across different actor types, their activities and utilized resources. Despite the initial focus on organizational relationships, the role and connectedness of individuals in business networks has been emphasized, too. The business network approach features, in other words, multi-level and multi-actor characteristics which makes it appropriate for the analysis of rather complex networks and their dynamics. In the following, we will focus on especially the mobilization of networks for the achievement of a particular goal.

Mobilization of Networks

In order for fundamental change to take place in a network, not only actions by individual actors are required, but in addition, there is a need for change in the interconnected relationships between actors (Håkansson & Snehota 1995; Ritvala & Salmi 2012). For instance societal and environmental issues can be resolved only through several different, mobilized actors collectively acting in a network (Ritvala & Salmi 2009).

The mobilization of networks has been widely discussed in the field of sociology, e.g. in the context of social behavior within families (e.g. Wethington & Kessler 1986, Aartsen et al. 2004, Tolsdorf 1976). Also, political scientists (e.g. Lin 1999) have dealt with network mobilization in terms of, for instance, social capital mobilization. Schmitz (in Risse et al. 1999: 40), in his study of societal mobilization for human rights, focuses on mobilizing political actors for achieving and sustaining human rights compliance. In our study we keep following the business network approach and build on existing research in the fields of mobilizing network actors (e.g. Mouzas & Naudé 2007, Ritvala & Salmi 2009, Ritvala & Salmi 2010, Ritvala & Salmi 2011, Ritvala & Salmi 2012, Brito 2001, Lundgren 1992). Additionally, business network researchers have relied on collective action (Olson 1965, Oliver 1993), stakeholder and social movement (cf. Ritvala & Salmi 2011) as well as institutional entrepreneurship (cf. Battilana et al. 2009) literature to further the understanding of mobilizing networks. Moreover, concepts from the framing discussion (e.g. Benford & Snow 2000; Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy 1990) have been utilized to explain mobilization dynamics. Based on the underlying mobilization logic of industrial actors and their relationships (cf. Mouzas & Naudé 2007), the mobilization process has been expanded so as to include non-economic actors, i.e. public sector, governmental and non-governmental actors, too (Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2012).

Mobilization processes in a network context have been explained by business network researchers (Mouzas & Naudé 2007, Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2010; 2011) as developing relationships with new actors or changing relationships with existing actors. Different actors with the aim to reach a common goal are composed (Lundgren 1992) as the result of dynamic network processes through forming and developing rules which constitute and govern relationships between actors (Mouzas & Naudé 2007, 63). The relationships consist not only of formal deals but their sustainability depends significantly on concurring, informal interests, too (ibid.). Viewed from an opportunity identification perspective (Johanson & Vahlne 2009), the mobilization of others requires mobilizers to become involved in new networks and to gain experiential knowledge which may lead to the identification of opportunities (Ritvala & Salmi 2012: 3).

A basic assumption for explaining the mobilization of a network is that of complementarity of resources and activities; as Mouzas & Naudé (2007: 63) described, interdependency in networks presupposes the need for mutuality and collaboration. Organizations which initiate activities aiming at collective benefits “acquire the bulk of their [diverse] resources from contributions from their members” (Brito 2001: 153) with the possible outcome of influencing the activities of other actors. Mobilizing network actors means also to collectively interpret issues, align interests, and interrupt others’ interventions (ibid.). Thereby, monetary and social remuneration play an important role in motivating actors to join in for achieving a collective goal (Olson 1965, in Brito 2001), which has been confirmed by recent research (e.g. Ritvala & Salmi 2010). Social remuneration, the author stated, is based on criticism and pressure from other group members. However, also community spirit and group solidarity (Posner 1996) are motivational factors for actors to join collective action.

Mobilization is more likely to be successful when involved actors strongly commit, e.g. during turbulent phases of issues obvious to many actors (Mouzas & Naudé 2007). Based on Olson’s (1965) seminal work on collective action and inaction, however, Brito (2001: 154) concludes that especially small groups of actors are successful in mobilizing interests of

others which leads to individuals and organizations contributing to collective actions. The author explains this size-dependence through imperceptibility of individual contributions to a collective effort if there are a large number of actors. Furthermore, the likelihood is low that any one actor free-rides because a small number of actors tend to be observant about everyone's contribution. Lastly, Brito argues, the costs to maintain and organize the network are lower with only few actors involved. Ritvala and Salmi (2012) arrived at the conclusion that strongly committed actors in long-term relationships are developed predominantly and exclusively with few actors only. This so-called exclusive mobilization (Ritvala & Salmi 2012, 11) is based on negotiated common goals between mobilizer and target organizations. In the contrary, inclusive, i.e. wide and public-including, mobilizing is open to everyone, but has less clear defined goals and rewards of participation and the relationships set up are rather short-lasting (ibid.).

Mobilization within the IMP network approach is based on the development and change of relationships with other actors. Mobilizing a network means composing different actors through collectively interpreting issues, aligning interests as well as interrupting the interventions of mobilization opponents. Thereby, the mobilization often follows a complementary resource and activity pattern; actors who possess resources and carry out activities that complement those of others are more likely to be mobilized than others. Lastly, network mobilization can pursue different strategies; the creation of small communities consisting of strongly connected actors with long-term commitments or the creation of large and loosely connected communities. In order to better understand how institutional change takes place through the mobilization of networks we resort to research on institutional entrepreneurship.

Collective Institutional Entrepreneurship

Norms, beliefs and behavior (Fligstein 1997; Dahan et al. 2006), shared mental models (North 1990), rules of the game (Powell & DiMaggio 1991), or taken-for-granted understandings (Berger & Luckman 1967) are different and partly overlapping definitions for institutions. Changing an institution, in other words replacing an existing way of behaving, is a complex social process, which requires diverse actors to participate and support (Ritvala & Salmi 2009: 403). It has been argued that the resolution of these complex societal issues requires changes in individuals' values and behavior in a political and social context (Ritvala & Salmi 2009: 404), which calls for institutional entrepreneurship, i.e. entrepreneurial agency aiming at changing the institutional structure.

The change of institutions, initiated through individuals or groups of individuals, has been investigated scientifically within the fields of institutional entrepreneurship. Located at the crossroads of entrepreneurship theory and sociology-based institutional theory (cf. Bruton et al. 2010; Pacheco et al. 2010), institutional entrepreneurship deals with how institutions can be revolutionized (Hwang & Powell 2005; Fuller et al. 2007; Steyaert 2007; Battilana et al. 2009; Garud et al. 2007; Pacheco et al. 2010), i.e. how change which diverges from existing institutions in the institutional environment can be initiated and implemented (Battilana et al. 2009: 72).

Following business network researchers Havila and Salmi (2000), institutional change starts at the level of individual relationships. The activities within a network of relationships cause changes in immediate relationships which may lead to changes spread further in the network,

eventually resulting in broader, institutional changes (Havila & Salmi 2000; Ritvala & Salmi 2009). Hence, network mobilization needs to be seen as the carrier of institutional change or “vehicles of institutional entrepreneurship” (Hargrave and Van de Ven 2006; Möllering 2007).

With most studies in the fields of institutional entrepreneurship focusing on entrepreneurs as individual actors, only few studies have been conducted on collective institutional entrepreneurship (cf. Wijen & Ansari 2007, Lawrence & Suddaby 2006), which “include the purposive actions of multiple individuals and organizations [...] aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions” Wijen & Ansari 2007: 1080).

Drawing on insights from the regime theory, Wijen and Ansari (ibid.) identified several endogenous drivers for overcoming dispersed interests and opinions, i.e. the collective action paradox, which leads to sustainably and collectively entrepreneuring institutions. First, manipulating the existing power configuration can support the formation of collaborative relationships. This manipulation can take on the form of either gaining power and control over resources or directly over other actors. Second, actors can be aligned through creating common grounds. That means that agendas need to be set that are in every actor’s interest, and goals need to be formulated in tangible and intelligible ways. Third, the authors suggest mobilizing bandwagons, i.e. enrolling large numbers of actors which together form a critical mass necessary to leverage new institutions, which stands somewhat in contrast to the IMP-based approach of building sustainable, long-term relationships in exclusive mobilization cases (Ritvala & Salmi 2012). Fourth, actors may be moved to collaborate through emphasizing the material and non-material benefits or rewards of collaboration, or by means of making clear what non-compliance may cause to them. These incentives may be based also on thumping actors’ ethical value systems in terms of promoting social welfare, which constitutes the fifth driver. Lastly, Wijen and Ansari (ibid.) mention, only a successful implementation of joint agreements through, for instance, resource transfer to constrained actors and continuous progress assessments secures sustainable collective institutional entrepreneurship. Battilana et al. (2009: 87) outlined a partly overlapping, processual model of institutional entrepreneurship; both the entrepreneurs’ social position in and the characteristics of their environment constitute enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship. The implementation of institutional change, thereby, requires the creation of a vision of change and the mobilization of allies. The authors also contend that institutional change will affect, in turn, the enabling conditions for institutional change, i.e. actors and their environment (ibid.).

Change in existing institutions or the creation of new ones is likely when institutional entrepreneurs with ample control over resources and activities realize interests which they stand up for (DiMaggio 1988). This process, however, becomes significantly more complex as soon as not only a single actor is involved in the change process but many, as is the case in this study. Ritvala and Salmi (2009), building on collective institutional entrepreneurship literature (cf. Wijen & Ansari 2007; Möllering 2007), delineated the challenges of aligning common goals among actors with diverse backgrounds, i.e. business, political, civil, etc. actors; they suggest focusing on the framing and translating of the issue in question. In accordance to targeted, individual actors’ backgrounds, expectations and circumstances, the issue needs to be framed and translated so as to suit those actors. Upon identifying an issue and recognizing the need for common action to solve the issue, active agents need to frame and translate (localize and popularize) an issue, as well as set the agenda for the issue in order to raise awareness (Ritvala & Salmi 2010). Agents who are in charge of the framing and

translating process have been defined as network mobilizers in a societal issue context and are often extensively connected across different political, economic and third sector fields, for instance (ibid.). Network mobilizers typically feel responsible for initiating change, i.e. their ethical value base moves them to be pro-active (Ritvala & Salmi 2010: 904). Network mobilizers, as individuals, also constitute the starting point of network mobilization which spans individual, organizational and eventually the whole network level (Ritvala & Salmi 2010).

Instead of applying the perspective of the network mobilizer, that of a business actor as a target of mobilization leads to the identification of both monetary (Olson 1965) and non-monetary motivators. Ritvala and Salmi (2011) found motivational factors for business actors to join collective efforts on an individual, organizational and a more general network level. While all levels are interconnected, the issue's relevance to a firm's business, the firm's size, available resources and surrounding economic and socio-political situation as well as individuals' values and identity act as key factors, or mediators, which influence the participation in network mobilization (ibid.).

To summarize, the existing network mobilization literature has been seeking to understand factors and mechanisms (Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2010; 2011) that cause different types of actors to mobilize or be mobilized. An actor, in the form of an individual or group of individuals, is seen as "the initial champion for institutional change who harnesses networks to support societal change and mobilizes other actors to work towards a common goal" (Ritvala & Salmi 2009, 412). A significant amount of attention has been paid to endogenous and exogenous motivational factors of individuals and organizations to engage in mobilization activities. Thereby, the contextual and temporal embeddedness of issue networks in other, surrounding networks has been acknowledged to play an important role (Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2011; 2012). We summarize the IMP-network based collective intuitional entrepreneurship factors and mechanisms in Figure 1.

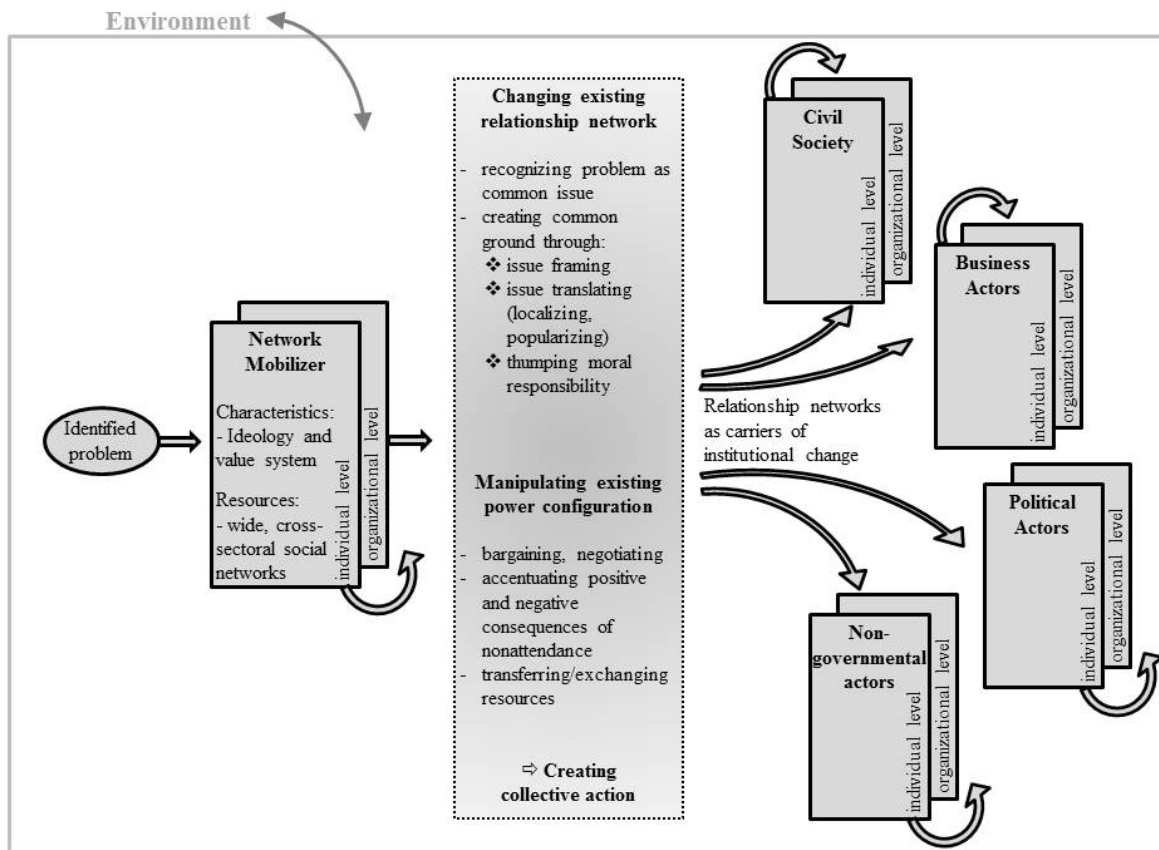


Figure 1. Network-based collective institutional change process

INSIGHTS FROM INTERNATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT NETWORKS

With the focus of our study being on institutional change through the mobilization of crisis management networks we conducted interviews with several non-governmental organizations and a governmental body who are all involved in international crisis management and peace building activities. While business actors per se have not been interviewed several NGO interviewees actively advice and represent business actors' interests. These interviewees shared their experience business actor involvement, too. The aim of this initial interview study is to illustrate the different actors and their activities (behavior) with respect to institutional entrepreneurship as a way of resolving international humanitarian crises.

The data collection included eight qualitative interviews with governmental and non-governmental actors involved in worldwide human crisis management and peace building activities. Additionally, secondary material such as press releases and the interview organizations' Internet presences were used to complement given information. The face-to-face interviews were conducted at the interviewees' premises both in Finland and Switzerland during January 2013 and are based on the snowball sampling principle (Kumar et al. 1993). The interviewees represented internationally active NGOs (n=7) and a governmental organization (n=1). All interviewees have many years of experience and knowledge in international crisis management with different emphases such as international policy-making, grass-root humanitarian development aid and business actor involvement. Several of the interviewees were associated with other organizations through, for instance, membership in

advisory boards or working for the governmental body on project bases. Also, some interviewees had worked with more than one of the case organizations over the last years. For confidentiality reasons interviewees' identity is not revealed in this study. The interviews lasted on average 49 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed with the consent of the interviewees, together producing about 50 pages of raw data.

All interviews, conducted in English, were of semi-structured nature aimed at eliciting a rich description of informants' personal backgrounds related to their work as well as their past and current crisis management and peace-building activities. Interviewees were encouraged to illustrate their experience in crisis management by means of projects they are or were involved in. This led to detailed narratives about actors, their activities and the creation and coordination of and within different crisis management cases which are conceptually illustrated in Figure 2.

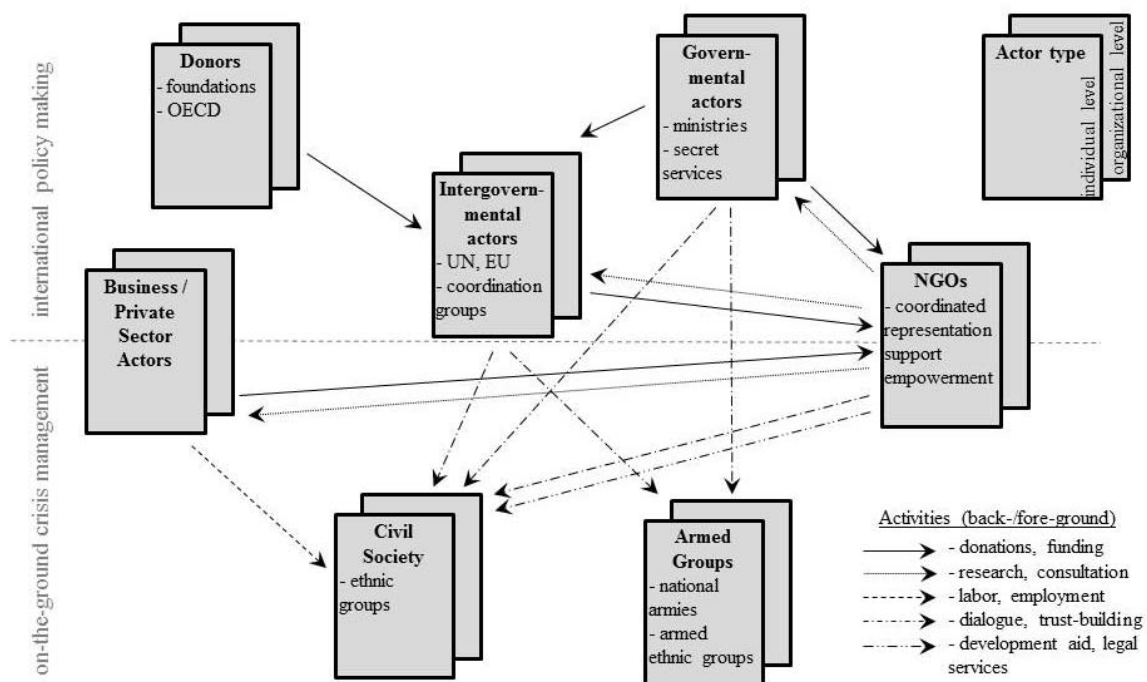


Figure 2. Crisis management network actors and activities

Crisis Management Actors

The analysis of data about general crisis management efforts shows that there is a multitude of different actors involved on different levels. Besides several governmental and intergovernmental actors as first tier actors (official international diplomatic community), crisis management networks consist of non-political second tier actors, i.e. non-governmental organizations (NGOs), too. Additionally to private actors, governments often belong to the group of crisis management donors. Crisis management networks also include affected civil societies as well as armed groups, i.e. armies and armed ethnic groups.

With the exception of few amply sized and represented international NGOs, such as the International Committee of Red Cross, most NGOs involved in humanitarian crisis management or peace-building activities are comparably small and focus on particular,

specialized functions. There are NGOs that carry out on the ground peace-building work in crisis afflicted regions and others which subscribed themselves to international policy making at a more general level. Furthermore, some NGOs are active visibly in the foreground while others carry out background functions. In the foreground, NGOs pursue, among other, development aid, create legal and structural justice for the civil society. Also, the civil society may be included in policy issues through the creation of discussion forums in crisis afflicted areas. Moreover, NGOs may serve as “subcontractors” for governmental organizations or private sector actors to carry out research or on the ground work or consult on business opportunities in crisis regions. Background work involves, for instance, empowering, supporting, representing and coordinating other (usually smaller) NGOs and connecting them to each other as well as to governmental players on the policy making level. One informant described:

“We really empower our partners to work. It's not our work. We don't do the project plans, we don't do the finances, it's the partner that does. And it's also the partner who determines the agenda, what is important in their context.”

Also foreground tasks that are supposed to be kept confidential for various reasons take place in the background.

Governmental organizations take on the form of ministries and national secret services and are often from countries with particular characteristics as a Governmental Representative argued:

“They do not belong to any block” with “vested interests” such as the NATO; they are “usually smaller countries, coming from an area which doesn't have direct interest on the issue.”

Governmental actors often possess sufficient resources to involve in processes that aim at creating dialogue bases for conflicted groups, support their trust building and reconciliation. They thereby take use of NGOs, through authorizing them to conduct research on crisis related issues, consult governmental organizations with their expertise or provide concrete development aid services in crisis regions.

In many cases governmental actors are represented in intergovernmental organizations, too. One of the most prominent intergovernmental bodies is the United Nations (UN) and its sub-organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) what comes to peace-building and crisis management. Also the European Union (EU) and its subsidiary organizations involve in international peace-building activities. Intergovernmental organizations are often major donors and contract others, mostly NGOs, to carry out specific tasks related to crises. The UN has been described by many interviewees as lead-player in crisis management efforts; they may facilitate the creation of small, temporary sub-units which specialize in the coordination of crisis management efforts of a particular crisis case or region.

Several governmental and intergovernmental organizations as well as private foundations or private sector actors provide funding for peace-building efforts. Thereby, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (DAC of OECD) acts, among others, as coordinator of donations. Other organizations, e.g.

the Rockefeller Foundation, support the peace-building process through supporting education in crisis-afflicted regions.

Apart from supporting crisis management efforts monetarily business or private sector actors engage in developing business opportunities in crisis regions. Through that they may provide labor and income for civil society as a vitally important contribution for building peace. Business actors thereby resort to support from NGOs who possess knowledge and experience about the crisis case and region in question.

Armed groups, i.e. national armies or armed (ethnic) groups in crisis regions play an important role in solving humanitarian, societal crises. It is often their commitment to non-armed handling of crises that contribute to building peace. As one informant put forward:

“The army has its own role there, so the army must be also on the table”; “in order to have the peace process serious, you need army [...] and armed groups from the ethnic side, to be present in the dialogue”.

Finally, the civil society and ethnic groups, in the case of ethnic conflicts, are ascribed an important role in settling conflicts. Through their behaviour they may support or oppose the development of peace-building efforts.

Actor and Activity Levels

The analysis of the interview data granted also insights into the different levels that crisis management actors engage in. Organizations involved in crisis management and peace-building activities are often multiply connected with sub- and superior organizations. For instance national NGOs are members of aggregated organizations which support and represent them toward governmental actors. The aggregated actors may be (partly) subordinate to intergovernmental organizations like the UN which represents the same governmental organizations. This nested system of relationships makes crisis management networks rather complex and their analysis challenging. While the majority of activities takes place on an organizational level, the initiation of activities as well as key functions are carried out on an individual level. An NGO representative argued:

“The conflict is effectively dealt with through an ad hoc coalition of influential people.”

With regards to the coordination of non-governmental actors another informant put forward:

“It's more perhaps personalities than organizations that are having key roles in making sure that the foreign NGOs [...] are coordinated.”

Actors in crisis management can be categorized according to the type of activities they carry out. Some actors, mostly NGOs, perform concrete, on the ground peace-building tasks. Other actors, including the international community of governmental and intergovernmental actors as well as donors and private sector players, engage in mostly policy making efforts on an international policy making level.

A third, important distinction is to be made between foreground and background activities. As mentioned before, some NGOs engage in tasks that are visible to the public, such as concrete development aid or dialogue sessions with the afflicted civil society. These foreground activities refer mostly to ‘hands-on’ tasks in crisis regions. Other NGOs and to a great extent the international policy makers act in the background as supportive, consultative or enabling forces.

Crisis Management Network Dynamics

Due to the multitude of actors and the complex nature of societal, humanitarian crises profound knowledge about a crisis is often fragmented and not easily accessible. Some informants claimed that certain single individuals can be seen as knowledge nodes or focal individuals; these individuals are widely connected within and across the crisis region, are accepted by many parties involved in the peace-building process and knowledgeable about the crisis, its history and the region it takes place in. In most cases the informants mentioned locals or people with local origin as examples for these focal individuals.

One informant mentioned:

“There is no intervener that has legitimacy with all the parties. It’s the fact that you have a kind of informal network, comprised of people that are [...] not impartial, they have a particular stake. But together, working together they can access the right people. And they can basically link up to, or get the right people talking to each other. And it’s called, some people [...] call it multi-party mediation, other people call it insider mediators.”

Another NGO’s representative explained:

“Insiders are the ones who know much more and then, when you’ve found the person who is an insider who will connect you to people who you would not even have thought of, then you just expand your networks slowly.”

The way crisis management networks are established, or mobilized, seems to be connected to establishing relationships to others through mutual, personal connections with influential and well-connected individuals. Thereby, crisis management networks are not coined by collaboration only; rather, many actors are heavily competing for recognition and funding, as one informant put it:

“Even the international community is competing, toughly. Not only in economic-wise and political-wise, strategic-wise but also in terms of really concretely contributing etcetera, so it’s a very competitive issue. Pity to say so, [...] because sometimes we are undermining each others’ operations.”

The complexity and unpredictability of crises makes also the process of their resolution sensitive to internal and external influences. This contextuality and fragility becomes visible in e.g. foreign corporate investments leading to violation of human rights which may reignite a conflict. A well-functioning collaboration between crisis management actors is of vital importance for building peace sustainably. One informant described an example of NGOs’ on the ground activities:

“Organizations think that we can drill a well in this village and, everyone goes to the same village, more or less, and think that how we can help the people here. And then the people [in a] neighboring village people, who might have a different ethnic background or not, see that OK, why are they only helping those and it might actually create a new conflict, because then they are like, hey, that we also need that water and you might start a new conflict because of bad planning and non-existing coordination.”

Ensuring a functioning, coordinated collaboration of not only the involved actors but their activities, too, has been called for by other informants. These activities include, among others security, human rights and development and were referred to as inclusiveness of processes:

“It's really high time to get away from peace process designs that only look at the peace process that leads to a peace agreement. Now we have to broaden the peace-building space to have multiple overlapping parallel but connected processes. One with specific civil society groups here, one with the government and the main stakeholders, one with business. And then to [...] think about inclusiveness as the collectiveness of different processes.”

Another NGO's representative explained:

“Peace building only works if these different communities of practice work together, otherwise you are not getting to lasting peace.”

The afore mentioned sensitivity to internal and external influences of crisis management networks means that peace-building processes are to a large extent unpredictable. Informants have almost unisonously brought forward that peace-building efforts rely only to a small extent on pre-defined routines and processes. For the most, the build-up of necessary relationships with key individuals and organizations as well as the type of activities depends on the crisis' initial situation as well as its development over the course of time. The networks are therefore built “ad-hoc”. One informant described his activities in identifying needs for involvement, i.e. humanitarian crises, in the following way:

“It's by chance. It's a little bit like fishing, that [...] you try to fish somewhere and you don't know, how the water goes. And sometimes it comes, sometimes not.”

The study about crisis management networks produces insights into the complexity of these kinds of networks in turbulent contexts. Not only are there many different types of actors involved in international crisis management networks, some actor types take on different roles simultaneously and are represented in diverse sub- and superior organizations, i.e. they form nested system of networked actors.

Involved activities are carried out on several, different levels. While activities are often initiated on an individual level, they affect the organizational and finally the network level, too. There is a seeming polarity between activities carried out as on the ground peace-building tasks on the one hand and as international policy making efforts on the other hand.

Furthermore, activities have been described to take place either visibly in the foreground or “behind the scenes” in the background.

DISCUSSION

The results of the interview study illustrate a high degree of complexity of crisis management networks and are largely consistent with the findings of past studies on network mobilization. Network mobilization, especially in the case of resolving societal issues, is coined by “complex interactions between individual, organizational, and network level attributes, motives, and processes” (Ritvala & Salmi 2011: 895). The existing network mobilization literature, rooted in an IMP-based business network approach, provides a profound perspective on how institutional change can be induced in order to help resolving societal issues. Thereby, relationship networks serve as carriers for institutional change. Prominent examples are those of fighting heart-disease in Finland by Ritvala and Salmi (2009), improving the environmental state of the Baltic Sea (Ritvala & Salmi 2010; 2011; 2012), or the examination of political change, i.e. altering political ideologies, on the reconfiguration of business networks (cf. Hadjikhani & Håkansson 1996).

In contrast to existing research, however, we found that rapidly changing, turbulent and unsteady contexts impede a strict and causal planning of collaboration. Our empirical study demonstrated that the institutional change process through network mobilization is less predictable and more uncertain due to turbulent social, economic and cultural environments as they occur in regions afflicted by ethnic crises, for instance. This inherent unpredictability of turbulent contexts poses particular conceptual challenges regarding the role of individuals in the initiation process of institutional change.

We identified a multitude of actors which are positioned and act on and across several different levels. The fact that actors who are represented in many organizations at the same time adds to the complexity of crisis management networks. As the existing network mobilization literature put forward, the initiation of activities takes place mostly on the individual level. In our study we found that not only are networks created (mobilized) on an individual level through personal contacts but also certain individuals act as focal persons and constitute hubs in crisis management networks. The entrepreneurial behavior of individuals, in the form of forming new relationships and carrying out activities necessary to advance the peace-building process in a certain crisis region, is of vital importance to the creation of crisis management networks and hence the resolution of issues these networks aim at. At the same time, however, the study revealed competitive behavior among organizational actors as a factor not to be ignored. While striving for recognition and funding actors show highly competitive behavior which may even lead to undermining each other’s activities.

The entrepreneurial behavior of individuals is further complicated through the unpredictability of the development of socio-economic crises. Due to external, environmental jolts (Wijen & Ansari 2007: 1081) as well as changing conditions within the crisis management network the involved actors can rely only to a small extent on pre-defined and well-tried routines and processes. Rather, actors have to spontaneously connect to others in a turbulent environment which may change at any point in time. This process has been described by one informant as ad-hoc creation of networks. Networks in turbulent contexts

seem to be highly instable and need to be accustomed to changing contexts and needs any time.

This unpredictability, inherent to turbulent environments, has been shown in our study to be dealt with in different ways. On the one hand, unpredictability is embraced through its acceptance and the adaptation to given, changing circumstances. This approach to mobilizing a network and hence changing institutions resembles that of entrepreneuring (Steyaert 2007, Rindova et al. 2009). Entrepreneuring refers to “the activities of entrepreneurs to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments” through individuals or groups of individuals (Rindova et al. 2009, 477). Entrepreneuring can be seen as a non-teleological (Sarasvathy 2001, 2003) way to entrepreneurial behavior. In this study, we contend that non-teleology does not refer to action which is entirely purposeless. An entrepreneur’s activity is always based on a rough idea, at least, about the final goal or use of the entrepreneur’s action. In crisis afflicted contexts, entrepreneurs seeking to change the existing institutional framework as a means to resolve a [human] crisis, the goal of entrepreneurs’ actions is to contribute to the resolution of crises. The characteristics of crisis afflicted contexts, i.e. turbulent, rapidly changing institutional environments and unpredictability, do not allow for institutional entrepreneurs to plan their action trajectories in advance; they may have only a limited understanding of the solidity of the structures they seek to dislodge (Rindova et al. 2009: 479). The process of inducing institutional change in crisis afflicted contexts is sensitive to past and present cultural, political, and social forces (Steyaert 2007: 471) and needs to be adaptable at any point in time. Hence, institutional entrepreneurs in these turbulent environments cannot view actors, their actions and the consequences of actions as separate entities but need to recognize the “recursive dynamics between external and internal complexity as new relations are created internally and as new inter-organizational relations are initiated externally” (Steyaert 2007: 458). It is these uncertain conditions that require entrepreneurs to depart from predictability, pre-existent goals, and an independent environment (Dew & Sarasvathy 2002).

On the other hand, the existing unpredictability can be dealt with through an inclusive, processually “all-encompassing” approach. Different activities taking place in crisis management efforts are being subsumed so as to create an inclusive approach to ongoing processes; we interpret this way of dealing with unpredictability as embracing them. Commonly agreed upon in the scholarly field is that institutions are stable and settled, causing an inherent tension in the institutional entrepreneurship discussion; namely that of combining theories that advocate for change and stability respectively. In the case of this study, however, institutions are to be seen fluctuating and rapidly changing. Already earlier studies on institutional entrepreneurship as market constituting efforts (Möllering 2007; Garud et al. 2002) concluded that creating institutions is feasible but “difficult and unpredictable in practice” (Möllering 2007, 19). “It is highly unrealistic to imagine collective institutional entrepreneurship as a linear, uninhibited process whereby actors create a vision of the future and implement it exactly in the way envisaged and with the intended results” (Möllering 2007, 20). Möllering (2010), based on his observance of market constitution in the semiconductor industry, suggests different ways of dealing with uncertainty which enable agency in the case of an unclear entrepreneurial destination. These are practices that ignore, deny, displace or suspend the inherent uncertainty of institutional work (Möllering 2010, 20). Also crisis regions afflicted by societal issues are characterized by instability and a turbulent institutional framework which contributes significantly to the complexification of successfully and sustainably mobilizing for changing the institutions of a crisis region for the better. Moreover, change as a result of dynamism, is evident also on an individual level;

human behavior, traits and preferences change over time (Sarasvathy & Venkataraman 2011, Sarasvathy 2001). Especially in the case of societal issues, such as regional civil crises, not only the social and institutional environment but also people's behavior may change rapidly.

CONCLUSIONS

The initiation of institutional change in turbulent environments such as socio-economic crisis-afflicted regions is in many ways a challenging task that can be solved only in collaboration by many different actors. Based on the IMP-rooted network mobilization and institutional entrepreneurship literature, we summarized the current state of network-based, collective institutional entrepreneurship and concluded that networks serve as carriers for institutional change. We thus respond to the call for institutionally rooted change processes in networks (Brito 2001) and the call for more research on entrepreneurial activities in the political sector (Jennings et al. 2013). An interview study with governmental and non-governmental actors involved in worldwide crisis management and peace-building activities produced insights into typical actors, activities, and ways of behaving in turbulent contexts. The mobilization of crisis management networks for institutional change includes a multitude of different actors who act on and across different levels. We identified the significance of particular individuals in creating wide networks of relationships and emphasized the initiation of network mobilization in the form of entrepreneurial behavior and acting on an individual level.

Thereby, the inherent unpredictability of crisis-afflicted regions as turbulent contexts has been shown to be dealt with in two different ways. As the planning of routines and processes in the network mobilization and, hence, the institutional change ambition, is almost impossible, actors either adapt to given situations and changes "as they come" or embrace uncertainties through building inclusive processes. Both ways of network-based collective institutional entrepreneurship have been described in the more recent entrepreneurship literature as "entrepreneuring".

Our study, therefore, shows two distinct behaviors of network mobilizers or institutional entrepreneurs in crisis management networks within turbulent contexts. The identified behaviors call for a different theoretical approach to explaining institutional entrepreneurship, too. We hence introduced the entrepreneuring concept as an entrepreneurial activity to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments, is coined by a rather non-teleological process-inclusive approach respectively. It resembles the characteristics of turbulent contexts in explaining collective institutional change processes. This study thus opens up a new trail for better understanding network mobilization processes in unpredictable contexts. It also grants insight into peace-building activities that most often take place behind the scenes. Understanding these activities is of vital importance last but not least for private sector actors, too, in order to be able to support crisis resolution processes through doing business sustainably.

Future research in the fields of network-based collective institutional entrepreneuring should focus on the coordination of several network mobilizers collaborating for a common goal while, at the same time, standing in competitive relationships, as is often the case in worldwide crisis management and peace-building efforts. Also, an in-depth analysis about how turbulent contexts, i.e. institutional, economic and social environments, and

entrepreneurial behavior interact could further the understanding of mechanisms and factors influencing the mobilization process of networks. Finally, the entrepreneuring approach lends itself to processual, longitudinal perspectives on change processes which could enrich both the network mobilization and intuitional entrepreneurship discussion.

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