

The Behavioral Dimension of Governing Interorganizational Goal-Directed Networks—Managing the Unity-Diversity Tension

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ABSTRACT

Network management research documents how network members engage in activities to advance their own goals. However, this literature offers little insight into the nature of work that aims to advance the goals of the network as a “whole.” By examining the behavioral dimension of network governance, this article identifies a specific tension that network leaders address to effectively govern networks: although unity and diversity are essential to network performance, each makes contradictory demands which require attention. Findings from four case studies of immigrant networks in the United States point to three activities representing mechanisms that staff of network administrative organizations use to address this (network level) managerial tension. The study proposes that unity versus diversity represents a distinct challenge to the governance of networks that requires strategic action at the whole-network level and merits further study.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the behavioral dimension of the management of *whole* networks, singling out the unity-diversity tension as integral to this aspect of network governance. Tensions, dualities, dilemmas, and other similar concepts associated with the uncertain and complex nature of organizational phenomena are pervasive in the organization and management theory literatures (Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2006; Smith and Berg 1987). Yet the scholarship of interorganizational networks has addressed neither the existence nor effect of these tensions as they occur within whole networks (Kilduff and Tsai 2003; Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007). This is surprising, given agreement that network governance—indeed any example of collaborative governance—is characterized by tension and inherent paradox (Connelly et al. 2008; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; March and Olsen 2005; O’Leary and Bingham 2009; Rainey and Busson 2001).

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Network management research documents how network member organizations engage in activities to manage their ego-network¹ or to advance their own goals, through dyadic relations within the network (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Huxham and Vangen 2000; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2008). However, this literature offers little insight into the nature of work that aims to advance the goals of the network as a “whole” (Kilduff and Tsai 2003; Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007). Recent calls for a study of network governance (Milward and Provan 2006; Provan and Kenis 2008) invite the empirical exploration of whole networks. Still, research on management of networks—as opposed to management in networks (Dubin 1979) most often focusing on dyads or one’s ego-network—remains scant (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Berry et al. 2004). Moreover, the limited research tends to explore the structural dimension of network governance—that is, its forms and functions—rather than attend to the behaviors of network member organizations or its leaders (Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007; Provan and Kenis 2008).

This study inquires into the governance of whole goal-directed interorganizational networks that use an independent unit called a “network administrative organization” (NAO) to govern themselves (Provan and Kenis 2008). We focus on a specific tension that the NAO must address to effectively govern the network: the unity-diversity tension. In laymen’s terms, unity is the state of being in accord, without deviation—and diversity is the quality of being different, having variety. Drawing on theories of organizational behavior (Cyert and March 1963; Lawrence and Lorsch 1967), group behavior (Smith and Berg 1987), and collaborative behavior (Huxham 2003; Wood and Gray 1991), we define this tension in the context of networks as fostering concerted decision-making and joint action among autonomous entities with distinctive aspirations, operational goals, and organizational characteristics. Thus, our study of four interorganizational nonprofit networks that promote immigrant rights in the United States asks the research question “What activities do members of NAOs perform to address the unity-diversity tension when effectively governing the whole network?”

Goal-directed networks “have become exceptionally relevant as formal mechanisms for achieving multi-organizational outcomes, especially in the public and nonprofit sectors, where collective action is often required for problem solving” (Provan and Kenis 2008, 231). Their NAOs are key players in generating the conditions for joint action by network members. They are sources of leadership at the network level. Networks devoted to immigrants’ rights are important political and social entities in developed democracies in general and in the United States in particular. At various stages of the policy cycle, these goal-directed networks are interlocutors with public bureaucracies and intergovernmental networks (Dodge 2009). They influence decisions on immigration policy issues, such as health and education, which affect immigrants’ quality of life.

Emerging from this study is that attention to the inherent tension of unity and diversity that is at the core of network collaboration as crucial to an understanding of how staff in the NAO governs member organizations of its network. NAO staff spends considerable time managing the tension generated by the simultaneous demands to nurture unity (bringing the organizations together to function in accord) and diversity (drawing out unique contributions based on their differences, from each organization). The study documents strategic

¹ Ego-networks are an actor’s network “composed of one actor’s relationships to others, and . . . measured from the perspective of the individual actor.” (Brass 1995, 48)

activities at the network level that address these tensions and create the conditions for collective action.

Although we draw from several network research traditions, including collaborative management and policy networks, our goal is to contribute to the network management literature's call to attend to network governance as a whole. We do this first by documenting activities associated with managing the whole network. Second, linking these to the unity-diversity tension, we begin to illuminate the behavioral dimension of network management.

The study is structured as follows: we first define our object of study, interorganizational networks governed by NAOs, and make the case for using the unity-diversity tension to theorize about governance of the whole network by drawing on the pertinent network governance and management literatures as well as on the classical treatments of tensions and paradox within organizational theory. We then describe the cases, sampling frame, and research methods used to answer the question. In the Findings section, we document the NAO staff's struggle with the unity-diversity tension and unpack how its leaders manage the tension successfully in the immigrant's rights networks. Finally, in the Discussion, we make theoretical connections to the received literature, proposing three mechanisms of whole-network governance, and conclude by highlighting the study's contributions and limitations.

THE BEHAVIORAL DIMENSION OF GOVERNING INTERORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS

An interorganizational *network* is a long-term cooperative relationship among organizations in which each entity retains control over its own resources but jointly decides on their use (Brass et al. 2004). These collaborative arrangements have also been studied under the rubrics of partnerships, strategic alliances, interorganizational relationships, coalitions, cooperative arrangements, or collaborative agreements (Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007, 480).

A specific type of interorganizational network, the goal-directed network, encompasses "groups of three or more legally autonomous organizations that work together to achieve not only their own goals but also a collective goal" (Provan and Kenis 2008, 231). These networks must somehow be governed to ensure coordinated action to achieve such goals. Provan and Kenis (2008) define governance as "the use of institutions and resources to coordinate and control joint action across the network as a whole" (231). In addition, they propose three structural forms for goal-directed network governance: shared governance among network members, the network governed by one member, and delegation of its governance to a NAO. The NAO is "a separate entity . . . set up specifically to govern the network and its activities" (Provan and Kenis 2008, 236).

Research has produced substantial knowledge about conditions associated with the origins of interorganizational networks (Ebers 1997), the variations in the structure of networks (Uzzi 1997), and how these factors affect the networks' performance (Shipilov 2006). There is considerably less understanding of how networks are governed. Indeed, network management scholars have urged managers to address network governance, highlighting the key role of the NAO in management at that level (Milward and Provan 2006; Provan and Kenis 2008). They also argue that attention to governance is essential to any understanding of the dynamics of interorganizational collaboration and the determinants of network goal-directed performance. As a remedy for this imbalance, they encourage empirical research at the level of the whole network (Kilduff and Tsai 2003; Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007; Provan and Kenis 2008).

Understanding goal-directed network performance demands attention to the classic organizational distinction between its behavioral and structural dimensions. Most scholarship on interorganizational networks favors empirical work on the structural conditions of networks, giving less notice to network management. Provan and Kenis' (2008) three forms described above allude to the structural dimension of network governance: that is, the formal institutions and resources designed to coordinate and control joint action. In contrast, the behavioral dimensions of network governance refer to the actions of individuals and groups aimed at coordinating and controlling joint action. Despite focused attention on networks' structural characteristics, studies also conclude that network behavior and management are stronger determinants of network performance (Dyer et al. 2007; Turrini et al. 2010).

Most behavioral research, however, has been done from the perspective of managers located in the member organizations, focusing on ego-networks or dyadic relations in a network (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2008). This is quite different than considering the operational point of view of the whole network itself (Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007). Likewise, scholars in other behavioral areas like conflict resolution use their knowledge to offer management insights, usually from the perspective of public managers in cross-sector collaborations (O'Leary and Bingham 2007). However, empirical research on the behavioral dimension at the network level continues to be limited (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Berry et al. 2004; Turrini et al. 2010).

Drawing from Management-in-Network Studies

The report Milward and Provan (2006) "A Manager's Guide to Choosing and Using Collaborative Networks" calls attention to behavioral work involved in the management of whole networks. Their report draws on the authors' broad personal experiences as practitioners, consultants, and researchers of goal-directed networks. It offers insight into the promise of much needed empirically grounded research to document how the work of managing the whole network is performed. In the meantime, designs for studies of whole-network management can draw on received knowledge from the literatures of interorganizational collaboration and public network management, even though they either operate one step down from the whole-network level or refer to ego-networks.

Collaborative advantage scholars have identified and studied at least five themes associated with interorganizational collaboration (Eden and Huxham 2001; Huxham 2003; Huxham and Beech 2003; Huxham and Vangen 2000). These include management tasks executed by interacting parties that promote collaboration, the different paths through which parties develop trust, the possible power infrastructures in the collaboration, the dynamic definition of membership, and the multidimensionality of objectives for collaboration. Although potentially useful, it is not clear if the insights of this research apply to dynamics at the network level, nor have these themes been explored from the NAO's point of view.

In contrast, the public network management literature is concerned with the importance of managing both the interactions among actors, the "games" where they exchange resources and coproduce activities, and the overall network (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997; Klijn and Teisman 2000; Koppenjan and Klijn 2004; O'Toole 1997; O'Toole and Meier 2004). Although distinct, these levels of action—games and the whole network—continually feed back into each other: games are influenced by the

network's rules, membership, relations, and resources and the games in turn influence the network. The how of these reciprocal influences deserves additional empirical study.

Scholars of management in networks have also explored networks' behavioral dimensions by identifying activities that help managers of network member organizations perform effectively in the complex and uncertain context of networks. For example, the literature documents 2 tasks associated with resource management: managers of member-organizations must work to attract new partners and support those who want to become members. Agranoff and McGuire (2001) refer to this as *activating*. Second, managers of member organizations must capture the necessary resources and support for the network, which they do through a type of work Agranoff and McGuire (2001) called *mobilizing*.

The literature also documents relational work in network settings. *Facilitating* fosters interaction among network member organization participants. This type of work includes such tasks as managing the inevitable inequalities among participants and motivating network members' participation (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997; O'Toole and Meier 2004; Vangen and Huxham 2003). *Framing* refers to work that creates infrastructures for collaboration between network member organizations in network contexts. For example, managers try to influence a network's institutions, including its rules and values, perceptions, and processes (Agranoff and McGuire 2001; Huxham and Vangen 2000b, Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997).²

The received literature tells us that network member organization managers perform these network-related tasks in addition to the normal work they do in their organizations. These externally driven tasks help to strategically manage the part of their organizational environment that is influenced by the network. However, they do this less for the whole network and more to ensure that their own organizations' interests are served by the network. These tasks may indirectly improve the effectiveness of the network. But more empirical research is needed to illuminate two queries about which we know little: first, the extent to which similar activities operate when shifting attention from dyadic interaction and ego-networks to managerial work aimed at whole-network joint action and second, whether there are other unique, explicit, activities performed to ensure goal attainment for the network as a whole.

The Unity-Diversity Tension in Networks

Provan and Kenis (2008) identify several tensions characteristic of network governance in general: efficiency versus inclusiveness, internal versus external legitimacy, and flexibility versus stability. Specifically, they propose that NAO-governed networks will be quite strained by these tensions, as neither pole can be favored at the expense of the other. Although we did recognize these tensions in our cases, it was another tension—that of unity versus diversity—that emerged empirically as a driving force in NAO's efforts to ensure collective action.

The concept of unity is self-explanatory in the context of organizational networks as it refers to the state of being in accord, without deviation. The concept of diversity

² Authors differ in their terminology. Thus, Vangen and Huxham (2003) refer to embracing and empowering, rather than to activating and framing. With respect to facilitating, Vangen and Huxham (2003) call this activity involving, Agranoff and McGuire (2001) refer to synthesizing, Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan (1997) refer to it as game management, and O'Toole and Meier (2004) to behavioral networking.

traditionally refers to “the demographic and cultural characteristics of an organization’s labor force, customers, competitors, or population at large” (DiTomaso and Post 2007). Consistent with a broader usage in classical organizational theory, in this article, diversity refers to variability in structural and institutional traits within and across organizations, not only with respect to demographics and cultures but also to other features of interest that are comparable within fields and populations of organizations.³ Examples of these traits include organizational form and practices (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), organizational age and size (Üsdiken 2007), organizational identity, and inter-partner diversity (Reuer, Zollo, and Singh 2002).

The significant role that the unity-diversity tension may play in whole-network governance emerged in the preliminary stage of our research (as we explain in the Methods section of this article). Yet the dynamics associated with the unity and diversity tension have been consistently recognized in the rich traditions of organizational and group behavioral theories. These literatures suggest that such tension is characteristic of any organized effort, from small group collaboration (Smith and Berg 1987) to interorganizational relationships (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Mintzberg 1983; Poole and Van den Ven 1989).

For example, seminal research by Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) linked integration (“the process of achieving *unity of effort* among the various subsystems” [4]) and differentiation (the “*segmentation* of the organizational system into subsystems” [3]) in organizations. They found that high-performing organizations achieved subsystem differentiation “consistent with the requirements of the sub-environments,” whereas their degree of integration was “consistent with the requirements of the total environment” (29). Of significance is their finding that integrative organizational devices helped address the paradoxical situation of having both high differentiation and high integration.

Associating the unity-diversity tension with performance at the level of interorganizational networks is intuitively and theoretically appealing. The basic idea of the network society (Castells 1996) simultaneously implies more fragmentation and more dependence. In fragmented settings like networks, the potential for collaborative advantage depends on the ability of each partner to bring different resources to the group. This needed diversity is, however, a function of organizational difference, which reveals tensions about collaboration (Connelly et al. 2008; Huxham and Beech 2003). Resource dependence theory reinforces this idea (Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2008): two organizations may combine their resources to counterbalance their dependency on one that is more powerful than either (Emerson 1962).

The difficulties associated with the unity-diversity tension have also been discussed indirectly in the business alliance (Goerzen and Beamish 2005) and social networks literatures (Rethemeyer and Hatmaker 2008; Shipilov 2006). Social network scholars argue that overembeddedness may diminish the diversity of informal business networks and hence reduce the availability of needed information (Uzzi 1997). Others suggest that diversity along certain dimensions (e.g., subgoals or expertise) reduces network performance

³ Neo-institutional scholars’ interest in the forces that lead fields of organizations toward greater homogeneity focuses on diversity of internal arrangements and practices (DiMaggio and Powell 1983); organizational ecologists compare organizational populations around features as varied as organizational founding, age and size, political instability, and technological evolution (Üsdiken 2007); the alliance literature has shown interest in the impact of inter-partner diversity on the relationship (Reuer, Zollo, and Singh 2002).

(Sampson 2007). Similarly the central debates of this literature underscore the need for both unity and diversity: closed networks generate trust and structural holes offer diversity in knowledge but weaken network identity (Brass et al. 2004; Burt 1992; Coleman 1990).⁴

The reviewed theories suggest that the unity-diversity tension in networks mirrors the integration-differentiation duality managers of individual organizations face and must address strategically (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Mintzberg 1983). Unity and diversity generate equally potent but conflicting demands with the potential to undermine the network's goals. Even the least diverse of goal-oriented networks must cope with the diversity of organizational characteristics inherent in any group of autonomous entities and must unite diverse members along explicitly chosen dimensions. The review of these literatures guided our interpretation of the empirical evidence we found in our study: that NAO members' ability to manage the tension may support the network's capacity to engage in joint action. Linking the unity-diversity tension to whole-network research has theoretical validity and represents the next logical step in further theorize on collective efforts that include more than a single organization.

Finally, the unity-diversity tension seems to be intuitively related to the “efficiency/inclusiveness” tension that Provan and Kenis (2008) identify at the network level. Theoretically, unity can be linked with efficiency and diversity with inclusiveness. Most likely, a manager interested primarily in efficiency would promote unity over diversity and inclusiveness, whereas someone prioritizing diversity would promote inclusiveness over efficiency. Yet, unity cannot be totally reduced to efficiency nor diversity to inclusiveness. More likely is the theoretical proposition that both efficiency and inclusiveness are influenced by the way the unity-diversity tension is managed as a whole.⁵

To conclude, based on the reviewed literature and our initial findings, we propose that unity versus diversity represents an *additional and distinct tension* in network governance not included among those identified by Provan and Kenis (2008). This tension both creates challenges and triggers strategic action for the whole network. To our knowledge, this is the first study to empirically use the NAO as the unit of analysis to explore the tensions of network-level dynamics from a behavioral perspective. The growing numbers of interorganizational goal-directed networks in both the nonprofit and public domain insures the relevance of our goal to understand the governing strategies of NAOs. Our focus on NAOs is further justified by its documented advantages as a governance form. Increased insights from empirical research will offer a solid foundation upon which to construct theory and enhance practice.

⁴ In political science, the literature on federalism offers an interesting instance of the unity-diversity tension (Watts 1998). This literature focuses on the mechanisms to balance “citizen preferences for (a) joint action for certain purposes and (b) self-government of the constituent units for other purposes” (120). In this context, Agranoff and McGuire (2003) call for an integration between the paradigms of intergovernmental and network management. Given our focus on the behavioral dimension of inter-organizational networks—and keeping this article manageable—we do not discuss this literature here.

⁵ Network collaboration entails bringing together the capabilities and resources of diverse organizations to reach a given overarching goal. A scenario of unity without the necessary diversity will result in the network not reaching the sought goal, a less efficient outcome than one where both needs are considered. Regarding the other pole of the tension, inclusiveness does involve higher procedural costs and diversity necessarily implies some level of inclusiveness. Our findings suggest that the successful combination of degrees of unity and diversity necessarily entails a given level of inclusiveness, rather than absolute inclusiveness, for reasons already mentioned in this equilibrium point will be the most efficient option. Despite these important linkages, in this article, we specifically focused on the role of the unity-diversity tension in network governance.

METHODS

Our inquiry consisted of two interpretive comparative interview studies (Rubin and Rubin 2005), using two cases in the first round, and returning to them for further data collection while adding two new cases in the second, for a total of four cases. Three reasons justify in-depth qualitative research as the most appropriate methodology to address the inquiry: the behavioral nature of the topic, the absence of previous empirical research, and the nature of the research question (Agranoff and Radin 1991; Marshall and Rossman 1995).

The two studies took place between 2002 and 2006. Open-ended, inductive, and exploratory, Study One aimed at theory building about the work NAO staff performed to govern their networks (Ospina and Saz-Carranza 2010). It used narrative inquiry (Ospina and Dodge 2005) as the primary methodology. A key finding emerged from the data in a grounded way: the NAOs' staff experienced the competing demands of unity and diversity and spoke of the value of addressing each to facilitate collaborative actions. Data from Study One limited our ability to theorize on how the staff addressed the demands of the tension, so we went back to the field to secure the addition of new cases.

Study Two aimed at theory elaboration by inquiring further into the original findings and taking the existing collaboration and network management literature into consideration. We used a mixed inductive/deductive strategy to map emergent codes onto existing concepts from the public network management and collaborative management literatures, when possible. Table 1 illustrates the overall research design of the studies.

Study One had a broad agenda and addressed the governing of the whole network by posing the general question: "How do leaders in successful networks manage collaboration challenges to make things happen?" This article reports on findings to the more focused research question for Study Two: "What activities do members of NAOs perform to address the unity-diversity tension when effectively governing the whole network?".

Sampling Frame for Case Selection

The chosen cases represent a purposive, theoretically driven sample. It was drawn from social change organizations chosen from among those recognized by a leadership award program between 2001 and 2005. Screened by national and regional selection committees, the program selected 17–20 organizations from more than 1000 nominations each year. Over its 5-year span, 90 organizations were chosen through the program's rigorous award selection process. Of these, seven were interorganizational NAO-governed networks

Table 1
Research Design

Time frame of data collection and first analysis:	Study One 2002–04	→	Study Two 2005–06
Focus	Management of networks		Management of networks and the connection to managing unity and diversity
Sample	Two networks		Two original networks + two added networks ($N = 4$)
Intention	Theory building		Theory elaboration

and four worked on immigration issues. These four immigration networks comprised our study.

This sampling frame satisfies three theory-driven and replication criteria (Miles and Huberman 1994; Yin 1994). First, all networks were interorganizational NAO-governed networks. Second, all networks addressed immigration issues, which makes analytic generalization (Firestone 1993) more robust within the immigration policy sector but also lessens external validity, reducing possible generalization to other contexts. Third, all networks were associated with a well-regarded leadership awards program that identified and selected successful social change organizations. The cases are described at the end of the Methods section.

Since highly collaborative and successful networks are not commonplace (Huxham 2003), all four are “exceptional” cases (Miles and Huberman 1994; Stake 1994). The impact of this qualitative design for drawing causal inferences has been widely discussed (Brady and Collier 2004). In particular, the low variability caused by the selection of only successful networks demands special consideration during cross-case and within-case analysis (Brady and Collier 2004). However, given the novelty of research at the whole-network level and considering our theory elaboration purpose, our goal was to attempt positive replication and to identify preliminary patterns (Yin 1994) for future exploration. As Yin (1994) states, replication logic is equivalent to investigating repeated “cases of a rare, clinical syndrome in psychology and medical science . . . in which the same results are predicted for each of the [...] cases” (45).

Data Collection

Study One was based on in-depth, face-to-face individual and group interviews with staff and stakeholders of member organizations of two immigrant networks (12 persons interviewed). NAO leaders were interviewed first. Then they joined structured group conversations with other staff from the NAO, board representatives, member organizations, and external stakeholders such as clients, funders, allies, and public officials. The interviews elicited stories about achieving successful milestones and about conflict, obstacles, and sometimes failures. The narrative approach justified doing both individual and group interviews as the latter offer opportunity for deeper and richer stories reflecting participants’ experiences. A fluid interpretive technique allowed flexibility to move the conversation in any direction to capture these broadly and deeply.

Study Two collected additional data on the same networks and added two new cases. Individual and group interviews were complemented with observations of over a dozen major events in various sites, and network documents were consulted. Interviews followed a tree-and-branch-type protocol (Rubin and Rubin 2005), divided into four parts covering information about: the network in general, challenges of internal management of the network, the interaction between the network and its environment, and the unity-diversity and other tensions in the networks.

Thus, although in Study One, we asked for stories on the network’ success, added value and contribution, in Study Two, we did conventional semistructured interviews.⁶ This change in data collection reflected the different nature of the studies: the first was an

6 The protocols used for both rounds of data collection are available upon request.

Table 2
Study Two Interview Summary

Network	Interviewees				Interviews				Total
	Director	Staff	Member	Total	Group	Individual	Telephone	Total	
Midwest Network	1	6	2	9	2	4	0	6	
West Network	4	1	6	10	3	2	1	6	
National Network	1	1	4	6	1	2	2	5	
East Network	1	4	1	6	1	4	0	5	
Total	5	12	13	30	7	12	3	22	

exploratory theory-building exercise, whereas the second aimed at theory elaboration. Narrative inquiry studies eliciting stories on positive and negative experiences are suitable for exploratory research (Ospina and Dodge 2005). More structured interviews are more suitable for theory elaboration.

Interviews were held with the directors and representatives from the four networks' NAOs and with staff from network member organizations (for a total of 22 interviews with 30 interviewees). Five network directors⁷, 12 NAO staff, and 13 managers of network member organizations were interviewed in 7 group, 12 individual, and 3 telephone interviews. The theoretically driven rationale behind this interview sampling frame was to first target the network director and triangulate the information with the perspectives of NAO staff and selected network member organization staff. We combined individual and group interviews both for cost and time efficiency as well as to take advantage of the groups' dynamics as members responded to each other's input during the interviews (Frey and Fontana 1991). In order to guarantee full freedom of expression, network member organization and NAO staff were never mixed together in the same group interview. Table 2 accounts for Study Two interviewees and interviews by network.

Analysis

Coding was the key interpretive tool for our data analysis. Table 3 shows how the coding plan evolved organically and documents the evolution of the data analysis scheme. To explore the governance of networks in Study One, transcribed interviews were read thoroughly, with grounded codes emerging from the stories told by interviewees. The two cases were first analyzed separately and then compared with each other. Themes like inclusion and participatory process, the need for unity, and the value given to diversity were identified from the stories (Column 1 of table 3. illustrates the final codes of Study One). Management of the unity-diversity tension as a key aspect for governing the networks emerged as an unexpected but determinant finding after several iterations of grounded analysis in Study One. Given the limitations of the Study One data, we went back to the field in Study Two.

The final coding scheme of Study One became the initial one for Study Two. But we remained open to new, grounded codes (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Transcripts for the first cases were analyzed continually to adjust the protocols and refine data collection in subsequent cases as new themes emerged. Cases were first analyzed independently of each

⁷ One of the networks studied was in the middle of changing directors. We interviewed both the outgoing and incoming directors (previously the deputy director).

Table 3
The Route from Initial Codes to Reported Findings

Final Codes—Study One (Emergent)	Comment on Code Evolution	Final Codes—Study Two (Theory and Emergent)	Thematic Findings
Objectives	No change in code	Objectives	Included in framing
Trust	No change in code	Trust	Included in generating unity
Open structure	Two structure-related codes were introduced: structure and NAO.	Open structure	Included in framing and bridging
Structure			
NAO			
Nurturing	Management tasks were spelled out.	MngtA-Rules	Included in framing
MngtA-Nurturing	Included in bridging		
MngtA-Capacitating	Included in capacitating		
Decision making	Decision making was included into the power code family. However, statements relating to the facilitation of collective decision making were coded as MngtA-Facilitation.		Included in framing
Membership			
Power—power bases	The power family group was developed out into different types.	MngtD-Membership Meaning making	Included in capacitating Included in framing
Power To	Included in generating unity		
Power bases	Included in supporting diversity		
Unity	No change in code	Unity	Included in generating unity
Diversity	No change in code	Diversity	Included in supporting diversity
Sources	The sources of the unity- diversity tension, that is why unity and diversity are necessary, mapped onto the power bases.		
Awareness	Awareness of the tension was finally coded as either a statement referring to unity or diversity.		

other. To build a tentative explanatory model, draft narratives and causal maps were created for each case. As analysis progressed, some codes were modified, others added, and others eliminated. Similarities and differences were noted, and a final, cross-case comparative matrix was constructed for each meta-code, tabulating quotes for codes versus cases (Miles and Huberman 1994). Column 3 in table 3 illustrates the final set of codes of Study Two, whereas Column 2 describes the evolution of the code from Study One (Column 1) to Study Two (Column 3).

Lastly, as is often the case in qualitative research, a final iteration of data analysis took place during the writing stage. Column 4 of table 3 describes how the final codes of Study Two (Column 3) relate to the reported findings.

The Cases

To maintain confidentiality, we gave pseudonyms to the networks. All networks are located and develop their work in the United States. East Network and Midwest Network are located in large urban centers on the East Coast and in the Midwest, respectively. National Network has members throughout the United States with the NAO based in the West Coast. Finally, West Network works in a predominantly rural state on the West Coast.

The networks differ by size (budget and membership), scope, and geographical location. Nevertheless, all work in the following programmatic areas: community, civic, and technical education for immigrants (the main constituents of the member organizations of the networks); advocacy in favor of immigrants' rights; and leadership development and organizing. Table 4 summarizes each network's main characteristics and mission, including information about the nature of the NAO in each network.

All networks were first created by a few organizations (who would become the first member organizations) which then set up the NAOs for self-governance. East Network was founded in 1987 by large nonimmigrant service-providing organizations following the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA), which made 3 million immigrants eligible for legal status. In 1995, different progressive nonprofits joined to create West Network and to defeat anti-immigrant ballot measures then being prepared for circulation to voters of a west coast state. In 1996, Midwest Network was created when a handful of pro-immigrant nonprofits started informal meetings, propelled by the anti-immigrant tone of the 1996 Personal Responsibility Act. In July of 1999 after a soccer match, different day-labor groups (both independent and organized by pro-immigrant nonprofits) initiated the National Network, a network of day-labor centers.

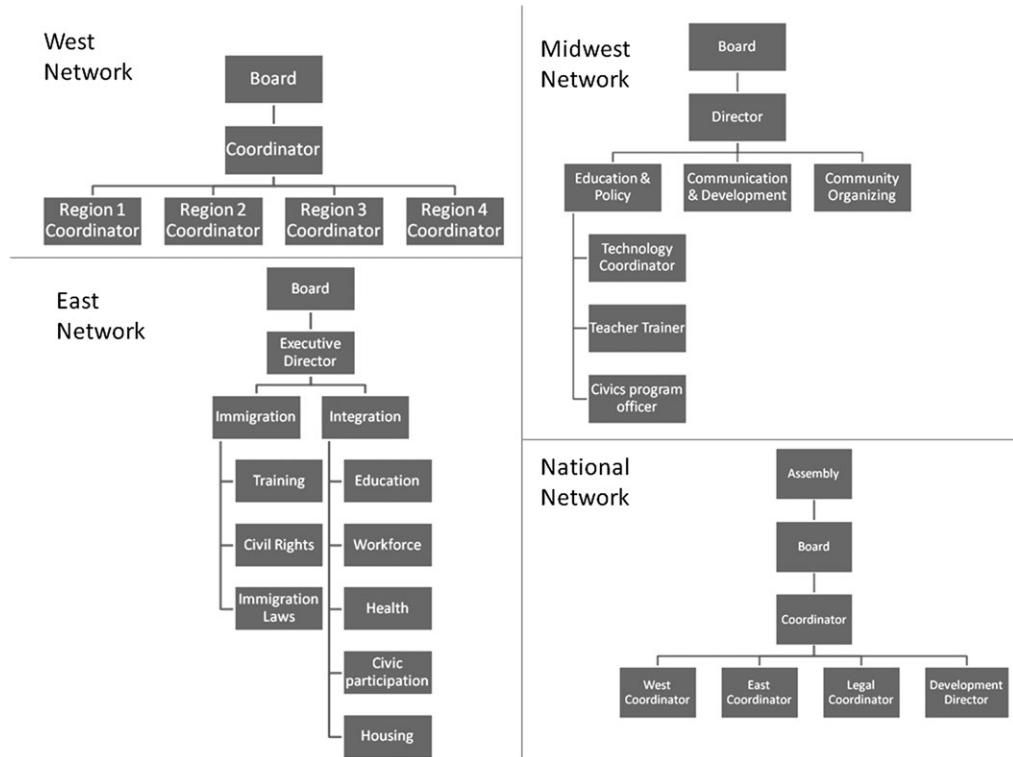
At the time of study, only East Network was a registered nonprofit⁸, the others used an organizational member as a fiscal sponsor. Figure 1 below shows the organizational charts of each NAO. In essence, West Network's NAO is composed of the coordinator and four part-time regional coordinators; National Network's NAO is made up of a national coordinator, two regional coordinators, and two functional coordinators. Midwest Network's NAO is comprised of nine employees: including an executive director, an education and policy director, a communication director, and a community organizing director. East Network's NAO has 19 staff who work under the executive director on immigration—training, legal issues, and civil rights—and integration activities.

⁸ In the United States, a nonprofit needs to register with the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3) to be tax exempt. When this is not the case, the nonprofit needs to find a fiscal sponsor, which is then formally the legal entity.

Table 4
Basic Characteristics of Cases

Network	Budget	Members	Mission	NAO Staff	Governing Body	Registered
East Network	\$2,167,560	164	To provide a forum for the immigrant community to discuss urgent issues and provide a vehicle for collective action in addressing these issues.	19	Elected Board of directors (22)	Yes
West Network	\$195,000	16	To promote immigrant rights and well-being and to counter the growing anti-immigrant agenda in Oregon.	4	Board of directors (1 per member)	No
Midwest Network	\$1,690,218	20	To improve the quality of life for immigrants and refugees and to ensure dignity and respect by organizing and uniting communities through education, leadership development, and direct services, and by promoting the voice of community in public policy.	7	Board of directors (one per member)	No
National Network	\$290,000	30	To strengthen and expand the work of local day-laborer organizing groups, in order to become more effective and strategic in building leadership, advancing low-wage worker and immigrant rights, and developing successful models for organizing immigrant contingent/temporary workers.	6	Assembly and Board (10)	No

Figure 1
Governing Whole Networks: Addressing the Unity-Diversity Tension



Each of these networks has successfully carried out joint action via its members to advance their common mission.⁹ Although we do not have objective proof of their effectiveness in furthering their missions (i.e., we cannot state that immigrants' rights have been improved because of their work), we can rightfully state that each network has mobilized resources in a specific direction and that its organizational members have acted jointly.

For example, these networks were an active element of the community that spearheaded the progressive pro-immigration side of the debate during the 2006 US Congress immigration reform conversation. As part of a huge mobilization campaign against the proposed reform, they received extensive media attention, and the congressional initiative they opposed was eventually dropped. The impressive turnout in rallies promoted in part by these networks is revealing. In Los Angeles' March 25th rally, up to 500,000 participants were counted, and the Los Angeles Times (2006) quoted two member representatives from

⁹ The leadership program that recognized the success of these networks considered solid evidence of the following criteria: that they were tackling critical social problems with effective, systemic solutions; that their work and outcomes demonstrated strategic leadership; and that they had documentation of results and of the organization's capacity to sustain these beyond individual efforts.

National Network in its coverage. Midwest Network-led rallies brought together 100,000 local marchers on March 11 and another 400,000 on May 1. One of its member organizations was cited in the city's main newspaper on May 2 (Chicago Tribune 2006). A rally led by the West Network in a small rural town on April 9 drew 20,000 people, whereas East Network's executive director was quoted in *The New York Times* as she addressed tens of thousands during the April 10th rally. Thus, we assume that the NAOs have successfully governed their networks by creating conditions for joint action to advance whole-network goals.

We have additional evidence of successful collective action in the studied networks. Midwest Network organized a petition campaign collecting more than 19,000 signatures, for the reform of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS),¹⁰ which resulted in the creation of an Independent Monitoring Board of 44 organizations that acts as a watchdog group and pushes immigration reform. Similarly, East Network enrolled over 60,000 members of immigrant families in an immigrant voter education and mobilization campaign prior to the 2000 elections. West Network has been central in defeating several anti-immigrant ballot measures, including attempts to negate social services to immigrants in 1996 and again in 1998. Two editorials in *The New York Times* were dedicated to the work of the National Network (Downes 2006; Greenhouse 2006). In addition, this network has struck down several anti-solicitation ordinances on the West coast.

FINDINGS

We first document the unity and diversity poles of the tensions and thereafter how NAO leaders and staff, as well as network members, experienced the tension. We then describe how the NAO staff purposively attempted to manage it in their efforts to ensure joint action to achieve whole-network goals.

How the Tension Manifested in Practice

Briefly documenting the existence of the two poles of the unity-diversity tension demonstrates its relevance and pervasiveness in whole-network management activities.

Diversity within the Network: Heterogeneity among Members

Network diversity is at the core of the rationale behind the existence of this organizational form. More interesting is *how* internally diverse these networks are and the implications this diversity has for the solidarity of network members. We find these networks are diverse along these dimensions: geography, culture, organizational characteristics, and specific organizational goals. Although members of all networks are nonprofit organizations serving or advocating for immigrants, variations in organizational size are striking. Considering size—number of employees, number of immigrants served, and annual budget—one National Network member organization may have a budget of around \$10,000, serve 300 constituents, and may be staffed by volunteers, whereas another network member

¹⁰ At present, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services has replaced the former INS.

organization has a budget of \$3.5 million, serves 4900 immigrant laborers a year and employs a paid staff of professionals.

Member organizations' priorities, focus issues, and constituencies are also diverse. They share the same general goal but differ widely in its specifics. At West Network, for example, some organizations address workers' rights, others women's issues, and yet others gay, lesbian, bi-, and trans-sexuals' rights. Likewise, some members are more confrontational than others, and political tendencies vary. National Network's director claims: "in our network, there are organizations that are more militant than others, [who] believe more in doing advocacy in a different way." Such diversity becomes visible during decision making and strategizing. Finally, National and West Networks are geographically diverse, the former is present in 11 states and the latter only works in one state. Table 5 offers additional evidence of how NAO staff describe their network's internal diversity: the first four rows provide quotes exemplifying network diversity along the following dimension: geography, culture, organizational characteristics, and organizations' specific goals.

Differences among member organizations within the same network are quite relevant when the goal is collective action. An organization constituted of second-generation American-Chinese US citizens has little in common with another made up of recently arrived Latin American undocumented immigrants. Differences between a gay rights organization and a farm workers' association or a neighborhood organization and a national union are large. NAO members' governance must respect, and oftentimes sustain, such diversity while creating unity.

Unity within the Network: A Member-Unified Arrangement

In addition to being diverse, we find that these networks are united very specifically by common dimensions of identity, shared goals, and their value of diversity. Consider the following statement by the coordinator of a member organization of National Network:

Although we are all Latin, it is not easy to integrate us all... Some come from the rural areas, others from cities. [We have] different ways of viewing the world. The way we integrate everything has been to put on top of the table [that] here you are [an immigrant worker].

Although the immigrant community in the United States is highly heterogeneous, a strong immigrant identity unifies organizations in this policy sector.¹¹ But explicit opportunities for participants to see these connections must be organized to ensure that immigrant identity catalyzes unity. For example, in an open-day event of their curriculum development program at Midwest Network, all participants shared their experiences as immigrants; West Network uses the powerful idea of the "immigration movement" as a unifying theme and so on.

Intertwined with this work, the discursive value given to "diversity" itself represents another important dimension that unites immigrant networks. A high sensitivity to diversity by network participants was observed at different events. They named it deliberately, and explicitly incorporated culturally diverse rituals. Most important events—National Network's annual meeting, a major West Network town hall meeting, East Network supporter's annual event, and Midwest Network's citizenship conference—were bilingual or trilingual (English, Spanish, and Chinese), and many included traditional artwork from

¹¹ In the case of National Network, it is the identity of the immigrant worker subgroup.

Table 5

Quotes Exemplifying Diversity and Unity Poles in Networks and the Tension Experienced by NAO Staff

	National Network	Midwest Network	East Network	West Network
Diversity: geographic	<p>I think the issue mostly is of how decisions are made through this process where we're sort of spread out throughout the country.</p> <p>Like this, for an example, is in signing our 501c3 contract or status application, we have to send it across the country in order to get those signatures.</p>			<p>People [from city A] don't always know what is going on in [city B], and stuff like that.</p>
Diversity: cultural-ethnic	<p>It's difficult because we bring our frontiers with [us,] some of us come from the rural areas. Others from the city. We have different ways of seeing.</p>	<p>Yeah it's difficult, you know, to bring, you know, to group who have a different language, you know, speaking and different culture, different background. You know difficult. I think that that—I think it's the most difficult.</p>	<p>And then the decision about do we want to support a bill that has maybe one less South Asian language, one less language? And so the groups were saying, well, we need unity. I don't support the bill. There were concerns about that. . . . I see that being a tricky situation —</p>	<p>Sometimes different messaging or a different way of framing things. It's a predominantly immigrant-based coalition so . . . A lot of it has to do with geographic diversity as well, not just diversity of communities.</p>

Continued

Table 5 (continued)

Quotes Exemplifying Diversity and Unity Poles in Networks and the Tension Experienced by NAO Staff

	National Network	Midwest Network	East Network	West Network
Diversity: characteristics and organizational size	Groups that serve hundred workers and groups that serve seven worker centers each center serves about 250 to 600 every year	I would say some of the challenges that I've seen haven't been between groups per se, but between larger, more established agencies and the smaller grass-root agencies. [...] the larger established organizations because they've been around for a long time, they can generate more money because they provide more services, and so they recruit more students and so their grants or their funds are larger in comparison to smaller organizations that only provides one service in its class. Also the larger organizations have more staff to go around so they can be involved in many different committees within Midwest Network.	I think, is having a small group with like, two staff, and then having a big group with 200 staff, and in those cases, sometimes the smaller groups get a little frustrated [...] because they're just not dealing with the bureaucracy, where you come to a meeting, and you decide to join event, and everybody commits to, alright, so we'll bring 20 people or whatever, and then the representative from big group goes back and it takes her two weeks before she can get to her executive director, because they have this huge bureaucracy, where this particular thing might not be the priority, so I think those kinds of differences, we just have to work into our planning.	Folks from Portland have a very different mode of operating, and the folks in Eugene have a different mode of operating.

Continued

Table 5 (continued)

Quotes Exemplifying Diversity and Unity Poles in Networks and the Tension Experienced by NAO Staff

	National Network	Midwest Network	East Network	West Network
Diversity: specific issues	There are organizations that run one corner, and organizations that don't run worker centers that do like wage-claim work.	So the Arab organizer and the Korean organizer, they're working with youth. The two Latinos, they're working with adults. And then Sotee, who's Cambodian, he's working with all ages in his community. So there's diversity just in terms of the kind of the population that they're working with. And then there's also diversity I think in the needs of each community and in what the goals are for the organizing projects.	I think we're at a place where we have a lot of our strongest leaders representing immigrant-led organizations, where they have a particular immigrant face, but we still try to make room for legal groups or big service providers like catholic charities, definitely plays an important role.	Just the tensions of working with a lot of different people who sometimes want different things or are on their own trips for one reason or another, just trying not to get derailed by that.

Continued

Table 5 (continued)

Quotes Exemplifying Diversity and Unity Poles in Networks and the Tension Experienced by NAO Staff

	National Network	Midwest Network	East Network	West Network
Unity: identity	There are different ways of seeing things. Our way of integrating it all is by putting the problems on top of the table: here you are a day-labor.	I usually see it when it comes to anything regarding immigration. Not immigration issues like amnesty or anything but against the immigration office, like the Chicago office or whatever. When someone's papers are being checked by the FBI and held up and another agency think [unintelligible] been going on and it's too different. This agency could be a Korean agency for Arab people. I've usually seen them unite on issues like that. They're getting on together. And if it's not happening in your agency it may happen, they'll be coming soon to you. So you want to stop it before.	It's probably when the shit hits the fan. [...] I'm sure post-9/11 there was some sense of unity in terms of, in terms of like responding to the special education program all these south Asian men deported, the INS looking for terrorists.	You know, we are the immigrant movement.
Unity: Shared goal	Ultimately there's a really strong focus that unites us all in focusing on worker development	I've always [focused on] what are their most urgent needs that they have in common? So when I came on board I was really fortunate in the fact they had some really obvious common needs.	When [you] have the right issues because of the level of energy and the sort of realness that [the members] have ... they're all there ... pushing for it ... [people] from a lot of communities are coming together.	We are united because we all advocate for immigrant rights ... we all work with immigrants.

Continued

Table 5 (continued)

Quotes Exemplifying Diversity and Unity Poles in Networks and the Tension Experienced by NAO Staff

	National Network	Midwest Network	East Network	West Network
Unity: value of diversity	I think that [the diversity] is the richness, right? . . . everyone has their own different perspective [so] we do open dialogues where everyone proposes their view of the issue and we land in a common point where we are all comfortable.	And then another thing I keep telling the staff, that you can't have everybody, altogether, dancing, everyone out all of us dancing the Salsa, its okay. It's chaotic; it's fine to be chaotic.	To take individual groups' sort of weaknesses and strengths together and sort of be able to welcome that—like one group may offer one particular piece to make this working group, you know, stronger, for example. They're great mobilizers. And then another group may be like totally legal-savvy, you know, and sort of understanding that perspective from the policy and then sort of having mobilization come together. That really makes it sort of a powerful group to have all those types of resources there and available, and so working groups, we have groups that come from all different types of backgrounds, and I think that really makes us stronger to sort of be able to work with them.	And some of them are saying, "Well is it really necessary that we're all on the same page anyway?"

Continued

Table 5 (continued)

Quotes Exemplifying Diversity and Unity Poles in Networks and the Tension Experienced by NAO Staff

	National Network	Midwest Network	East Network	West Network
Unity-diversity tension	<p>Yes, there are tensions. Particularly in identifying what are the national things and what are the local things. Or what are the local things that have national implications. Those are kind of like the tensions.</p> <p>[“National things“ represent the unity side of the tension, and ”local things“ refer to the diversity side.]</p>	<p>And when you [addressing the ED who sits in the coordinating unit] get a group that’s diverse as we are . . . staying fairly friendly and really not having a tremendous difference of opinion about who did this and who didn’t do that, that’s pretty good testimony to your ability to keep us all on track.</p>	<p>[Diversity] really makes things really difficult in terms of bringing that unity together.</p>	<p>There’s a lot of politics among the [members] and to get everybody to agree [is] not easy.</p>

different countries and rituals from both Native American and national traditions. The use of three languages represents a practical consideration to ensure real communication among the members but also plays a powerful symbolic unifying role.

In addition to common network identity and common values, another dimension of unity that is sought is that of a common network goal. The network and its members must share a goal that unites them and overcomes differences. All NAO staff interviewed highlighted the importance of a solid, well-founded, and shared goal. An NAO member at National Network states: “ultimately there’s a really strong focus that unites us all in focusing on worker development.” Rows 5–8 in table 5 provide quotes exemplifying network unity along the following dimensions: identity, a shared goal, and value of diversity. Although diversity is a given in these networks, and must be sustained, unity needs to be constructed. Having empirically documented both poles of the tension, we can proceed to explore how leaders in the NAO experience the tension itself.

Experiencing the Unity-Diversity Tension

Many interviewees associated leadership with times when all network members got together and carried out a campaign, training or a rally. A manager of Midwest Network’s NAO, when asked to describe a moment when he thought the work was going really well, answers:

The idea that we can in fact make a change, that we can get people together who have varying viewpoints and varying agendas, and get them all to work together for something like the Independent Monitoring Board . . . where we have people from different organizations working together and bringing their ideas together . . . And the synergy of many organizations working together is what makes Midwest Network successful.

Diverse member organizations, “working together,” account for the networks’ strength. Members in these coalitions praise organizational diversity and underscore its importance for the work. The executive director from East Network describes it as follows:

... one of the main reasons why the [East Network] has been . . . increasingly more and more effective is because, whatever the process has been, we’ve been able, for the most part, to bring so many different groups to the table that don’t normally advocate together . . . We’ve found a way to make it in all of their interest . . . and then, we speak with this very diverse voice that has so many important components, that it bears paying attention to.

These quotes describe the notion of “unity in diversity.” The work is about figuring out how to draw unity from within the existing diversity, capitalizing on that diversity. And this is not easy work. Interviewees associated key moments of the NAO’s work with getting all members to collaborate. But at the same time, the main challenges highlighted in the stories were related precisely to bringing different groups together as the executive director of West Network stated: “[Network work] is living in a state of constant tension . . . some tension is good.” The executive director at West Network confirms: “Every day we have to face that contradiction, that tension . . . it’s stressful because then . . . the same diversity and richness . . . gives us threat and at the same time gives us a lot of strength.” The last row in table 5 offers further evidence of how members of the network’s NAO experienced the tension.

Having empirically documented the tension, the next section proceeds with the core contribution of this article: exploring how NAO staff manage to address the two sides of the unity-diversity tension in ways that enable the network to develop “networkedness.”

Governing Whole Networks—Creating Unity in Diversity

At the network level, three types of activities by NAO staff create the conditions for interaction that help member organizations find unity in diversity. NAO staff work to bridge differences, frame basic agreements and procedures, and contribute to enhance the networks' or the members' capacity.

Bridging Work: Mediating Member Interaction

The NAO staff works with network member organizations on an on-going basis to promote their interaction. This mediating role helps to overcome differences among members in a number of ways: creating spaces for dialogue and interaction, recognizing member involvement, mediating among members, and disseminating information across member organizations.

The NAO disseminates information through the member organizations that constitute the network. A staff person at Midwest Network's NAO comments how poor communication may hinder unity: "sometimes there are problems in communication. There's a sense of not being a collective momentum [or of having] a collective goal." As information conduit for the network, staff members of the NAO both promote opportunities to foster unity and address situations that may generate disunity.

In this role, NAO staff members address network issues that range from ceremonial interventions to power imbalance. West Network's manager recounts: "If we have a major rally in Salem and we turn out, say, hundreds of people, and the folks from Medford come up in a van, they want recognition that they drove five hours to get here." Member organization staffs cannot credibly praise their own efforts, so NAO staff publicly acknowledges, and appreciates their work, building good will among member organizations. Similarly, power issues sometimes require bridging that directly addresses and mediates the inherent imbalances and disagreements that risk disunity. Midwest Network's director emphasizes the danger of confrontation during interaction—hinting at how easily diversity turns into disunity if it is not addressed—and the role of NAO mediators:

You can't have a meeting without multiple confrontations . . . in a day-to-day basis . . . I just have to hire staff that know how to manage and have lived experiences as well so that they know how to . . . respond, and to respond with care and be mindful.

Likewise, a junior leader of a West Network member organization pointed to the success achieved through the presence in the NAO of good "mediators" that "file roughness" between members.

A program officer from East Network distinguishes the work of bridging from the work member organizations themselves must do to accomplish the network goals: "We play that coordinating role, supportive role, technical assistance role," and then he added, "but the bulk of the work, given the sheer size of the city, has to come from our groups." Others agreed that the NAO cannot do the members' work but can help create the conditions for joint work. This requires a constant balancing act from the NAO. West Network's director describes the challenge of bridging without imposing: "being strategic is pushing towards the fine line between dictating what needs to be going on and having regions have a say" The decision of how strongly to intervene, especially when there is a sense that some bridging may help, is not clear-cut. The big picture afforded to staff from the NAO helps them to balance this act, at times weaving together the work

of diverse members through NAO-initiated activities, whereas at others supporting member-led initiatives. The first row of table 6 further illustrates NAO members' bridging activities.

Framing Work: Setting the Stage for Concerted Action

NAO staff participates actively in creating a basic understanding about what is appropriate behavior among network members. Structure, process, and culture are all objects of this work. For analytical purposes, each is illustrated separately, but it is their dynamic interaction that creates the right conditions to find unity in diversity.

Each network has structures for decision making that vertically span from the network's board all the way to the member organizations' constituents. The open and inclusive nature of the decision-making structures at each level is common to all, as is the critical responsibility afforded to the NAO in constructing and maintaining them. Midwest Network's director describes the network's structure and its participatory spirit as follows:

The coalition . . . starts at this layer of executive directors . . . but they meet only once a year, like an annual meeting. [And then] we have programs and projects together. And those project coordinators come together on a monthly basis for the specific projects . . . And then we go even deeper, we now take the community members of these different organizations to come together in the Leadership Program, together with some key staff, to come together. So I guess it's a multi-layered cake, which makes it richer, but also harder to bake . . . I think we are successful because we have deep connections in a lot of these communities.

The NAOs' work is about creating ways to "go even deeper" into the base, and about keeping the structures open, hence the reference to having deep connections in a lot of communities. "Baking" a deeply layered cake is not easy, but it is necessary. The NAO leads this work and ensures that it happens by engaging members in it.

Participation is particularly important when there is disagreement around policy, for example, in deciding whether to support a controversial bill. In these cases, promoting consultation of member organizations with their constituencies helps clarify the member organizations' stance on issues. Then potential disunity can be avoided when network members are able to find common ground or reach acceptable agreements. This is illustrated in the case of the Senate-sponsored McCain-Kennedy immigration bill. West Network's former director explains:

We recently had a discussion around the comprehensive immigration reform. And we had a discussion around the Kennedy-McCain Bill. There was disagreement. Some members of the coalition thought that it was meager. It was like we weren't getting anything. But the good thing about a coalition that has a membership base, or has anchor organizations that have that base, is that the base dictates to the organization what the organization's position should be.

Many leaders in the member organizations found this bill quite problematic and were initially against it. But their constituencies urged them to reconsider and support it because it offered immigrants a path to citizenship. The decision was legitimized by guidance from the base. The NAO staff's focus on the whole network allowed for the effective flow of information downward and upward, helping members find common ground despite ideological differences.

Finally, in addition to setting structures and processes, the NAO is able to address the two poles of the tension through the key framing activity of promoting a strong

Table 6
Additional Support for the Three Activities Identified

East Network	West Network	Midwest Network	National Network
Bridging	I've been working to do more consistent communication with folks . . . It's hard to know how much information to report back all the time . . . But people need to know, people are wanting to be informed as far as what's going on. Also, just knowing what's going on in other regions.	A lot of the people who are working here, a great majority are Mexican undocumented people. And they tend to kind of overpower the voice in immigration reform efforts. And I think sometimes it seems like [their] agenda seems to take up a lot of space [in the network]. Bearing in mind that they are really that guiding force too.	The people who work in networks have to be peacemakers. I know that between [two National Network members] there are issues . . . People have different ways of doing things . . . some of our organizers focus more on developing relationships with the local establishment, police officers, politicians . . . and some may see this as . . . "a sell out" . . . So those kinds of things, yes, they happen.
Framing			

Continued

Table 6 (continued)

Additional Support for the Three Activities Identified

East Network	West Network	Midwest Network	National Network
<p>One thing about us is that it is very open, and we reward people who work hard, and who bring their community members' involvement into our work</p>	<p>We recently had a discussion around the comprehensive immigration reform. And we had a discussion around the Kennedy-McCain Bill. There was disagreement. Some members of the coalition thought that it was meager. It was like we weren't getting anything. But the good thing about a coalition that has a membership base, or has anchor organizations that have that base, is that the base dictates to the organization what the organization's position should be.</p>	<p>The coalition ... starts at this layer of executive directors ... but they meet only once a year, like an annual meeting. [And then] we have programs and projects together. And those project coordinators come together on a monthly basis for the specific projects ... And then we go even deeper, we now take the community members of these different organizations to come together in the Leadership Program, together with some key staff, to come together. So I guess it's a multi-layered cake, which makes it richer, but also harder to bake ... I think we are successful because we have deep connections in a lot of these communities.</p>	<p>The [network's music] band's music is a catalyst for bringing diverse groups together, breaking down cultural stereotypes, and educating communities about Latin American cultures and the struggles of [immigrant worker]</p>
<p>Capacitating</p> <p>My group is more troublesome: you know why? Because [my] groups aren't paid."</p>	<p>Usually it's hard for me to get them [group members] to do things that are not related to funding or to money, if there's no financial reward for their agency.</p>	<p>The Apprenticeship Program was formed to build capacity of ... partner organizations to do community organizing within the social services framework.</p>	<p>National Network actively supports member-to-member coaching and directly trains its members in management and administrative skills.</p>

organizational and national culture. A strong set of cultural norms gives meaning to network structures, rules, and procedural agreements and helps members experience unity in diversity. An East Network program officer stresses: “you develop rules of engagement . . . you have to develop rules.” A program officer adds: “we agree to disagree.” These rules help to regulate behavior by setting boundaries that everyone will respect.

The NAO explicitly cultivates inherited sets of values and rules of engagement, which become part of the network’s own culture. The worldview anchored in social justice values and protective of the inherent worth of the immigrant identity is evident throughout. National Network does not allow “swear words” in network conversations; West Network emphasizes César Chavez’s philosophy of mutual respect: “we have the right to criticize and we do so, but our movement is guided by principles”; and Midwest Network’s main meeting room is decorated with inspirational phrases from the pro-civil rights Highlander Training Center.

Similarly, chants and symbols related to common identities and social justice values were repeatedly used during the network collective events observed. Midwest Network finished one of its meetings with the well-known “We shall overcome” from the civil rights movement; National Network repeatedly chanted “*un pueblo sin fronteras*” [“a people without borders”] during its National Assembly; West Network shouted Chavez’s “*si se puede*” [“yes we can”] throughout its City Hall meeting; and East Network’s rallies were punctuated by loud demands from the group for immigrants’ rights.

National Network’s coordinator explains how, in spite of rivalries across different nationalities, the network generates a unified identity by drawing on culture: “And yes, there may be differences [between nationalities] but we address it by creating a soccer team. On one [same] side we have Mexicans and Hondurans playing . . .” He adds later: “When you develop a sense of unity based on culture among the [immigrant workers] . . . what you are doing is creating a sense of pride, a sense of identity.” Row 2 of table 6 provides additional evidence of framing activities carried out by NAO members.

In sum, the NAO staff engages in work that gives emotional sustenance to individuals by ensuring an appreciation of their unique cultures, and at the same time, it frames the work of the network around an identity they hold in common (immigrants who have rights in this country). These purposes go hand in hand.

Capacitating Work: Constructing the Right Community

Effective cultivation and management of the members represent purposive means to address the unity and diversity tension. Two membership management activities help to create unity in diversity: strategic recruitment and building member capacity. Both enhance the network’s capacity by shaping the *right* community for joint work, hence the name of this work: *capacitating*.

The NAO engages very deliberately in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the right member organizations for the network. The National Network coordinator’s answer to how they managed to generate unity and maintain diversity suggests that this is an essential part of the process:

I think it [successfully managing the network] all starts off when an organization applies to be part of the network: there’s all the principles that we have to make sure that they believe and we see the work that they’re doing, the organizing work.

Network leaders in the NAO are very careful when selecting and attracting members to maintain the network's continued constructive heterogeneity. As documented earlier, these networks cultivate unity along the dimensions of a shared identity, a meta-goal, and the value of diversity. They carefully ensure diversity of cultural-national origins, sub-issues, and organizational characteristics, among other factors.

The work of National Network, West Network, and Midwest Network to select and attract potential member organizations happens at the network level. In contrast, East Network's large size allows it a fairly free-flowing network recruitment policy, an "open-door policy," with a "very basic process" to accept new members. Then it places great emphasis on attracting and selecting network members to its working groups.

This work is relevant to the networks' success. It helps the NAO to very purposively and carefully select and attract the members that will ensure constructive heterogeneity rather than just neutral diversity. Once the members are in, however, diversity must be managed to develop the right degree of unity. This demands attention to a different membership management activity. The NAO can offer training, leadership development programs, and resource transfer in the form of grants or human resource support to help build members' capacity to work together more effectively.

Training and resource transfer represent obvious management activities to promote network performance and are important in and of themselves. They also seem to play a key role in creating unity in diversity. West Network's former director makes this connection clear: "we have [differences] we dealt with that through the emergence of this leadership development project . . . where we have been able to bring people together." All networks invest strongly in improving members' capabilities. This way, leaders from different member organizations develop common frames of reference and the capacity to act together.

Member capacity building is also important in generating unity in diversity because it directly affects organizations' decision to remain in the network. East Network board president suggests that to be sustainable, networks must provide organization-specific results to member groups, such as training and resources. The National Network's director seems to concur: "If you want to BS too much, it won't work. Because it's meaningless, why are you going to come and waste two hours in a national conference call for nothing? Why are you going to be a member of a useless coalition?" The likelihood that a member organization will stay may increase when shared gains from the successful advocacy actions of the networks are complemented with gains that are specific to the member organization. The last row in table 6 illustrates further capacitating activities executed by NAO staff.

When this work is considered from the perspective of the network as a whole, it becomes a strategic function directly related to network performance. Its aim is dual: First, to ensure that all organizations that join the network share the network's vision—a unifying factor—and that they are sufficiently different along other certain dimensions, thus contributing to the diversity that strengthens the network. Second, capacitating also aims at giving back to member organizations specific returns and, by so doing, strengthening member organizations' commitment to the network. This basic step toward creating unity in diversity can only happen at the network level.

In sum, staff of the NAO in the four goal-directed immigrant networks spent considerable time managing the tension generated by the demands to ensure at the same time unity and diversity. They used three types of strategic activities—bridging, framing, and capacitating—to

successfully address this tension as they tried to provide members the conditions to engage in joint action. These activities were critical to governing the whole network.

DISCUSSION

A formal proposition for future research is that a central task in the governance of networks is to strategically engage both demands associated with the unity-diversity tension—to unite the network and to support its diversity. A corollary is that doing this effectively requires finding the appropriate mix of unity and diversity to sustain the network. Figure 2 depicts the tentative components of a framework that connects the elements for an emergent and preliminary theory of the behavioral dimension of network governance. In short, NAO staff executes three activities that serve as mechanisms to sustain diversity along certain dimensions and create unity along others. By so doing, they create the capacity for the whole network to act jointly.

In effective networks, both poles of the tension exist at the whole-network level—the network is united and the network is diverse. In other words, diversity provides the resources and unity ensures the capacity to use them. This is the basic mechanism of collaboration and represents the source of the tension between unity and diversity in a network context. The degree of unity and diversity of course will vary within a continuum of circumstances, but there must always be a minimum of diversity resulting from the autonomy of the organizations and a minimum of unity resulting from adherence to the network.

The NAO governance structure implies higher network coordination costs than shared- and lead-member governance modes. It is only cost efficient if high integration and uniting efforts are necessary. It is therefore expected that NAO-governed networks will tend to need greater levels of integration and unity or, at least, will need to integrate and unite organizational members along more dimensions. The required unity will vary with the goal and type of network, in the same way that in single organizations the “*requisite integration*” varies too (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; March and Simon 1958). It is the case that the unity-diversity tension is present in networks with shared governance among its members, in those governed by one member, and in those governed by a NAO. Yet in the latter, the tension will be effectively dealt with differently as unity will be promoted along some dimensions (probably fewer) and diversity along others.

Understanding the unity-diversity tension experienced in networks implies three premises: diversity of the network is necessary for effectiveness, unity of the network is necessary for effectiveness, and diversity and unity *may easily* undermine each other if *diversity turns into disunity* or if *unity turns into similarity*. Network managers address

Figure 2
Governing Whole Networks: Addressing the Unity-Diversity Tension



different dimensions when doing work around each pole. To promote collective action, the NAO staff executes management tasks to unite the organizations along one set of dimensions (a meta-goal, the value of diversity, and a shared immigrant identity) and sustain diversity along a set of others (organizational characteristics, subissues addressed by each member, and different national identities). At the same time, the NAO staff works to avoid situations that turn unity into similarity or diversity into disunity. Knowing which dimensions will generate unity and maintain diversity within the particular context of the work seems critical to the creation of unity in diversity.

The finding that NAO staff tackles the simultaneous demands of unity-diversity by generating whole-network level activities that honor both poles of the paradox resonates with insights of organization and management theory. Scholars studying the management of tension, dialectics, paradox, and dilemmas identify three possible strategies to address them and their consequences: one strategy favors one pole over the other, which reinforces negative cycles as pressure from the suppressed side is intensified (Sundaramurthy and Lewis 2003). Another strategy aims for a balance between poles, although this may reduce the potential development of each (Huxham and Beech 2003; Mizrahi and Rosenthal 2001). Finally, another proposed way to manage the tension is to alternate or separate the poles (Poole and Van den Ven 1989), emphasizing each at different times, levels of action, or dimensions of the work (Crosby and Bryson 2005; Heifetz and Sander 1991; Hersey and Blanchard 1982).

The last strategy demands embracing tensions as part of managerial life (Eisenhardt 2000; Kaplan and Kaiser 2003; March and Weil 2005; Quinn and Cameron 1988) and requires work to cope with them. This seems to have been the preferred strategy of the studied NAO staff in our cases. The three activities of bridging, framing, and capacitating can be considered network-level mechanisms to address this tension, similar to the integrative mechanism Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) documented to address the paradox of having both high differentiation and integration within an organization.

The *bridging* work reported in this study is similar to management activities documented in the collaborative governance and network management literatures at the organizational level: synthesizing (Agranoff and McGuire 2001), facilitating (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997), brokering (Lorenzoni and Baden-Fuller 1995), and involving (Huxham and Vangen 2000). Bridging also calls to mind documented coalition building efforts in networks (Cyert and March 1963; Murnighan and Brass 1991). Managers in member organizations may perform these tasks to maximize their network benefits. When the NAO staff performs this type of work, it is intended to enhance network performance by linking diverse members to generate unity for joint action in the whole network.

We borrow the name of framing for the second documented activity from Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan (1997) who suggest that structure enables and constrains network interaction. We broaden the concept to include process and culture as framing tools because it is the dynamic interplay among structure and culture what bounds behavior and interaction (Blau and Scott 1978; Giddens 1984; Parkhe, Wasserman, and Ralston 2006). In doing framing work (i.e., in setting the stage and creating basic agreements about expected and appropriate interaction), the NAO staffs specifically build unity in diversity.

A participatory structure and open and inclusive decision-making processes help to ensure that the expression of differences among diverse entities does not turn into disunity but rather unifies. This is consistent with the received literature: complex power distribution

and interdependencies in networks requires more open structures and processes (Stone 2006). Furthermore, management in networks, in contrast to intraorganizational contexts, is less about decision making (Miller, Hickson, and Wilson 1996; Simon 1976) and more about setting the stage for diverse members to make decisions. The NAO members aim to set up open processes not so much to reduce uncertainty but to cope with it (Kilduff and Dougherty 2000; Thompson 1967), particularly given the conflicting tensions associated with unity and diversity.

The NAO's framing work at the whole-network level is also about generating common vision, values, and identity among members. The organization and management literatures suggest that managing culture addresses the need for unity, integration, and cohesion in the midst of diversity, differentiation, and fragmentation (Hogg and Terry 2000; Hunt and Dodge 2000; Selznick 1948; Van de Ven 1986). In working with members to set the proper structures and processes, the NAO staff also helps to frame, at the network level, the necessary "social architecture" (Schein 1992) or "deep structure" (Bryson and Crosby 1992), the right degree of "cultural embeddedness" (DiMaggio and Zukin 1990), and the rules of engagement that create whole-network identity (Ravasi and Schultz 2006).

With respect to the third activity, by enhancing the capacity of the entire network and of each organizational member, the NAO staff helps to purposively cultivate unity while also maintaining diversity in the network. Network scholars have identified managing the selection and recruitment of members, what they call activation, as a key activity in network management (Agranoff and McGuire 2001). Our findings suggest that one key motivation of the engaged NAO staff in activation work is to cope with the unity-diversity tensions to develop network capacity for collective action. We include activation work under what we have called "capacitating," which highlights building capacity: both organizational member capacity by training and resource transfers and network capacity by incorporating quality members and increasing member capacity.

Of the activities identified, capacitating is clearly the most illustrative of whole-network management for two reasons. First, participants are selected according to network-level criteria rather than according to network member's independent preferences. Second, the work is about having the network give back to members, rather than about each organizational member gaining unilateral advantages from the network, as documented so far in the alliance management literature (Inkpen and Tsang 2007).

Capacitating goes beyond the good human resource management functions of selecting member organizations and training individuals. It is true that training organizational member's employees is a main task of capacitating. Yet the underlying objective is ultimately to strengthen the network. This happens both by incorporating necessary actors and by making the network's organizational members more capable. Training member employees and transferring resources to members strengthens the network in two synergistic ways: First, members—that is, the network's nodes—are stronger. Second, organizational members receive a return for their specific organizations, which increases their commitment to the network. The combined impact of both strengthens the whole network.

This network-level function has barely been made explicit in the literature. Lorenzoni and Baden-Fuller (1995) do suggest that the strategic center of a network must be a capability builder, but there is no study that explicitly explores how networks make themselves and their organizational members more capable. An exception is Agranoff's (2006) rich study on public management networks. He identifies four different types of networks:

informational (information exchange), developmental (capacity development of members), outreach (resource exchange and coordination), and action (formal collaborative action) networks. He defines capacity building as building the network and its members “knowledge architecture” (226). Agranoff goes on to state that capacity building is a “core function of developmental networks, but it is also clearly an integral function of outreach and action networks and, to a limited degree, of informational networks” (226). Although we define capacitating somewhat more narrowly, we do complement his findings and reiterate that capacitating is a core strategic function for action networks (and we believe for all networks). This is so because it has the function to increase network effectiveness, integrate network partners, and retain partners by giving them an individualized payback.

Our study suggests that unity in diversity is generated through training and resource sharing because these create common rules and frames of reference. These activities also sustain membership: when the achievement of the network’s substantive goals is complemented with direct benefits to each organizational member, the likelihood of engagement increases. This connection to network sustainability is consistent with received knowledge both in network management research (Human and Provan 2000) and in the business alliance literature (Khanna, Gulati, and Nohria 1998).

CONCLUSION

The research journey described in this article reflects a theory-building and theory-elaborating rather than a theory-testing exercise. Our goal has been to build knowledge helpful to the theory and practice of whole-network governance. The topic of interest in our research was the behavioral dimension of network governance, the unit of analysis was the NAO, and the level of analysis was the entire network, as recommended by scholars calling for more research of *the network as a whole* (Berry et al. 2004; O’Toole 1997; Provan, Fish, and Sydow 2007; Provan and Kenis 2008), going beyond ego-networks.

Theory aims at explaining how and why things happen (Sutton and Staw 1995). Highlighting the role of the fundamental tension of unity and diversity in the governance of networks illuminates the hows and whys of network governance. It helps to clarify how the NAOs coordinate joint action to accomplish whole-network goals in the midst of competing demands from network member organizations. Our study thus offers an empirical and theoretical exploration of the behavioral dimension of network governance. To our knowledge, it represents a first incursion into new terrain. Just as the organizational design literature has focused on balancing integration and differentiation (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Mintzberg 1983), we propose that the literature on governing interorganizational networks pay more attention to the unity-diversity tension. We see this as a key (network level) managerial tension that affects network performance and is worthy of further study.

We propose that, while not alone, unity versus diversity represents a distinct tension that creates challenges for governing networks and triggers strategic action at the whole-network level. NAO staff recognizes this tension as a critical aspect of their governing work. Rather than attempting to resolve the paradox by favoring one pole over the other, they cope with it (Eisenhardt 2000) by successfully addressing its contradictory demands. They engage this tension in deliberate ways through mechanisms that consider both sides and that support the network’s ability to carry out collective action. Although these mechanisms may not be the only way to support joint action, their pervasiveness across all

networks suggests that this work may be relevant and necessary for the governance of the networks.

Bridging, framing, and capacitating are mechanisms used at network level to manage the unity and diversity tension in the studied networks. We further propose that governing networks also requires identifying the dimensions along which the NAO can help to unite the network although it supports constructive heterogeneity. In the studied immigration networks, work to unify members focused on issues of identity, assigning value to diversity, and developing a meta-goal. Work to ensure diversity focused on member-related characteristics, issues of interest, and national culture. We also suggest that achieving a successful mix of unity and diversity, what ever it looks like in particular contexts, represents strategic work for those responsible for the governance of the whole network.

From a practical point of view, illuminating the behavioral dimension of interorganizational network governance is relevant and necessary. This type of work is both difficult (Human and Provan 2000; Huxham and Vangen 2000) and crucial to the network's performance (Dyer et al. 2007). Although networks are intended to facilitate joint efforts to address wicked problems, by their very nature, they are tension ridden. Our findings may offer reflective practitioners (Schön 1983) some useful conceptual handles (Huxham 2003) for governing collaborative interorganizational networks. The findings may resonate with practitioners' experience of the difficulties of network management and may offer insights that help to make sense of a complex reality and reflect on their practice in novel ways.

We offer three concrete implications for practice. First, network managers shall recognize and accept the tension intrinsically involved in networks. The unity-diversity tension while troublesome for the individual manager does not necessarily reflect malfunction. Second, the tension can be coped with. This involves promoting diversity along specific dimensions and unity along others. Although we suggest these dimensions are contingent, effective practitioners will promote both poles of the tension. Third, we propose three management activities that help cope with in the complexities of supporting diversity and unity along different dimensions. Awareness of the tension-ridden nature of the work and ways to cope with it may help practitioners understand the existential dilemmas they face daily. As one of the leaders in the studied network indicated when we shared our findings, this awareness may relieve unnecessary performance anxiety.

There are limitations to our study. First, a multiple case design offers robust conclusions drawn from more than one context, that are logically supported and well embedded within the received literature. However, the choice of "exceptional" cases based on a replication logic precludes a control group to contrast findings. This reduces both the strength and transferability of insights. At the same time, learning from networks that have proven to be capable of collective action is valuable both for analytical and for practical purposes (Nag, Corely, and Gioia 2007; Yin 1994).

Second, several issues are in need of further research. Our research question focuses specifically on the NAO. The findings are thus most applicable to interorganizational networks governed by an identifiable entity, such as a coordinating unit, a strategic center, or a NAO. Not all networks choose this governance structure. Another issue in need of further attention is time. Absent a longitudinal approach, the findings might be specific to mid-age networks such as those studied (ranging from 8 to 20 years in existence). This requires further exploration. Interesting time-related questions include: does the need to cope with

tension and the type of governance work vary along a network's lifecycle? And what dimensions of network management are path dependent?

Third, the research contributes to an understanding of the governance of whole networks by targeting the interorganizational level. But the exclusive focus on the NAO offers a partial view of governance. A network study necessarily demands also asking questions about how each member organization's within-network management influences the network as a whole. Furthermore, individuals do matter and must be considered at all levels of action. A microlevel analysis of the NAO may be an excellent complement to this research.

Fourth, immigrant networks may have their own specificities (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Furthermore, the immigration policy field is clearly a country-specific research context. Therefore, the transferability of our findings would be extremely limited were we reflecting on immigration policies or advocacy techniques. However, since the focus is on network governance, it is sensible to suggest the cautious transferability of our findings to interorganizational networks in general. At the same time, the universality of this organizing tension may make the findings relevant to all sectors irrespective of policy field or network form.

Finally, focusing on network activity in civil society organizations, our research complements the received knowledge from the study of business, intersectoral, and governmental network management. This broadens the scope of the field to include a new and relevant context for theories about network and collaborative governance (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary 2005; O'Leary and Bingham 2009). Just as management theory has come from studying public organizations (Kelman 2005), immigration nonprofit networks may be an excellent field to theorize about interorganizational network governance, given the uncertain, complex, and hostile environments in which they operate. Nevertheless, research in other contexts is needed to contrast these findings.

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