Determinants of Cooperation with Migrant Organisations

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Research questions and background

- Cooperation as a tool to achieve intercultural opening and learning?

- Policy programs on federal and state level as well as EU level fostering cooperation between established old "German" organizations with new, smaller migrant organizations

- Political and scientific background: Paradigm change in the perception of migrant organization ("From institutions of social segregation to integration policy partners")

- Acknowledgment of migrant organizations in the national integration plan 2007

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Types of Cooperation

- Tandem projects

- Projects design

- Cooperation in umbrella organisations

- Coaching / mentoring

- Joint public awareness campaigns

- Access to new target groups

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State of research

- Cooperation as a complex process with many pitfalls

- Three main success dimensions

1. Internal factors: professionals vs. volunteers, rich vs. poor organizations, big vs. small organizations, religious vs. non-religious etc.

2. External factors: role of funding organizations and public discourse

3. Relational factors: modes of communication, hierarchy, competitive situations, the crucial eye-level?

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Methods

- intercultural opening project in the field of adult education
- cooperation between migrant organisations and the project initiator's regional offices in three different locations (urban/mixed/rural)
- project duration of three years 1st of October 2016 until 30th of September 2019
- survey methods:
  - 38 qualitative guided interviews
  - 2 focus group interviews
  - 6 participatory observations
  - 4 expert interviews

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Analytical frame
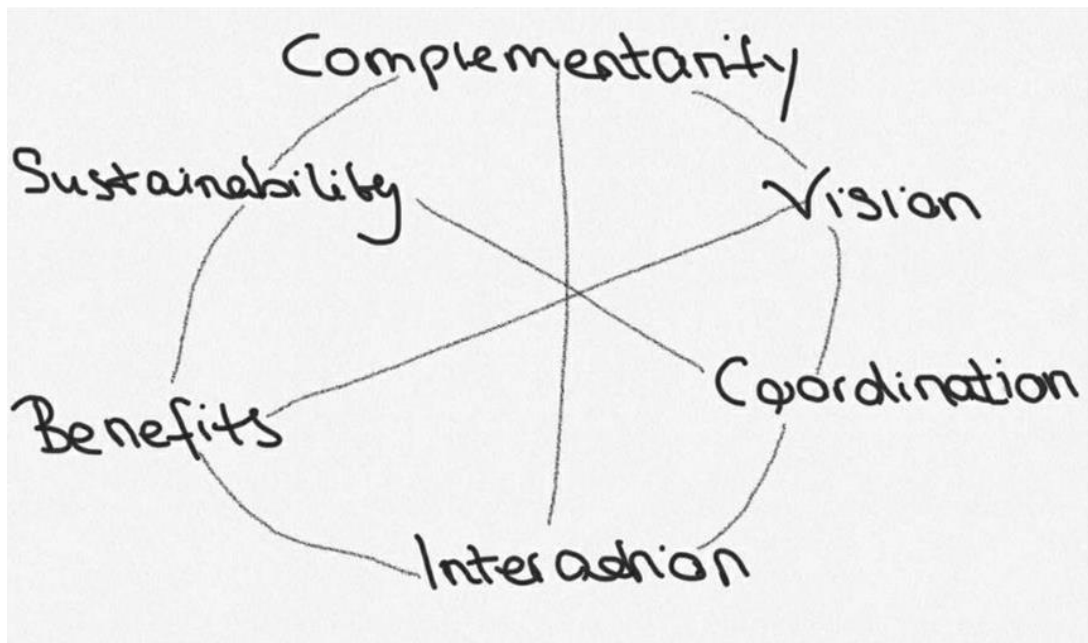
based on model by Neugebauer, Uwe / Beywl, Wolfgang (2006): Methoden zur Netzwerkanalyse. In: Zeitschrift für Evaluation Nr. 2. 249–286.

Results: Complementarity

- 12 different organisations in 3 regions (urban, mixed, rural) and 1 initiating organisation
- Strong differences with regards to age, size, activities and degree of professionalisation
- Similarities:
  - Religion
  - Dependance on voluntary work
  - Presentation and celebration of culture and/or religion

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Results: Common vision

- Lack of time and communication issues impeded the creation of a common vision at the beginning of the project
- Created problems such as the choosing "wrong" partners and confusion among partners about the goals of the project

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Results: Coordination

- Hierarchical project structure
- Project coordinator in the project initiator's headquarters
- Employees in the regional offices were tasked with the management on-site
- Managing actors all struggled with establishing eye level

Results: Interaction

- Initially no channels of communication between the migrant organisations
- Communication between regional offices and migrant organisations complicated by
  - Tensions between volunteers in the migrant organisations and full-time employees in the regional offices
  - Long summer holidays
- Creation of trust among the cooperating organisations led to closer cooperation and to the organisation of several learning events

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Results: Benefits

- Financial support/relief for the migrant organisations
- Professional guidance
- Sharing of resources such as rooms, expertise, ideas and manpower
- New input, broadening of range of activities and topics
- Rewarding experiences and meetings

Results: Sustainability

- Adult education organisation:
  - Reformation of internal structures (mission statement and statute)
  - Sensitisation for needs and interests of migrant organisations
  - Abandonment of stereotypes and prejudices
- Migrant organisations:
  - Abandonment of stereotypes, prejudices and fears
  - Professionalisation
  - Development of long-term projects

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Discussion and conclusions

-> Cooperation can be a good tool for intercultural opening and understanding, but there is no universal formula to achieve success.

Three main learnings:
- Importance of communication and the creation of trust
- External impulses as a means to create change
- Fostering internal structures for cooperations (professionalisation)

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