

Betina Hollstein · Wenzel Matiaske
Kai-Uwe Schnapp *Editors*

Networked Governance

New Research Perspectives

 Springer

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Betina Hollstein
SOCIUM—Research Center on
Inequality and Social Policy
University of Bremen
Bremen, Germany

Wenzel Matiaske
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
IPA Institute for Employment Relations
and Labour
Helmut-Schmidt-University—University of the
Federal Armed Forces Hamburg
Hamburg, Germany

Kai-Uwe Schnapp
Political Science Department
Universität Hamburg
Hamburg, Germany

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Networked Governance: Taking Networks Seriously

Betina Hollstein, Wenzel Matiaske, and Kai-Uwe Schnapp

Governance refers to the multitude of ways, mechanisms, and processes in which individuals, companies, organizations, societies, states, and supranational forms of organization arrive at and implement decisions. Governance in this abstract sense describes patterns of rules and mechanisms of social coordination and decision making in which a group of actors regulates its collective issues and interests (Mayntz 2009: 9). As a less abstract concept, governance is not just any mode of steering but a particular one, something done cooperatively in a network structure. The terms *governance* and *network(ed) governance* refer to a mechanism of reaching and implementing decisions whereby, instead of hierarchy and command or markets and prices, networks and cooperation are at work. Whereas government always entails a hierarchical component, governance does not even need to involve government or state actors (Fuster 1998: 68).

Governance research today faces ever more complex organizational forms that consist of different types of actors (e.g., individuals, states, IGOs, economic entities, NGOs), instruments (e.g., law, administrative decree, recommendations), and arenas from the local up to the global level. This increasingly questions theoretical models that focus primarily on markets and hierarchies as modes of

B. Hollstein (✉)

Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, University of Bremen, Mary-Somerville-Str. 9, 28359 Bremen, Germany

e-mail: betina.hollstein@uni-bremen.de

W. Matiaske

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, IPA Institute for Employment Relations and Labour, Helmut-Schmidt-University, University of the FAF Hamburg, Holstenhofweg 85, 22043 Hamburg, Germany

e-mail: matiaske@hsu-hh.de

K.-U. Schnapp

Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences, Social Science Department, Universität Hamburg, Mittelweg 177, 20148 Hamburg, Germany

e-mail: kai-uwe.schnapp@wiso.uni-hamburg.de

governance. In this book, we seek to explore older as well as emergent forms of governance by combining theories and methods developed in social network analysis (SNA) and governance research. In so doing, the contributions assembled in this volume use concepts and methods of social network analysis to investigate governance processes.

This approach differs in important respects from the usage of the terms *network governance* or *governance networks* that has dominated the governance research literature so far. Starting in the 1990s, the terms *network* or *network organization* were increasingly used in the literature to capture the complexity and opacity of these newly emerging forms (Powell 1990; McPherson et al. 1992; van Waarden 1992; Alter and Hage 1993; Kobrin 1997; Keck et al. 1998; Uzzi 1999; Korzeniewicz and Smith 2001; Sassen 2001; Rohrschneider and Dalton 2002; Kern 2004; Hafner-Burton et al. 2009). In particular, two strands of governance theory arise from these contexts: network governance theory and nodal governance theory. Network governance theory has focused on formal governance networks, that is, public policy networks and issues pertaining to their management (meta-governance) and democracy (Torfing 2006, 2007). Nodal governance, on the other hand, has adopted a wider definition of governance to include various processes of networked governance that range from local security initiatives in South African townships to international trade agreements (Burriss et al. 2005). Like network governance theory, nodal governance theory has scrutinized the normative implications of networked governance. Yet the latter has been more sensitive towards power inequalities (Burriss et al. 2005). Whereas the theoretical and empirical foci differ, both approaches have in common that they have treated networks mainly as a metaphor and a theoretical notion rather than an empirical tool (Dupont 2006; Knox et al. 2006).

Only relatively recently have a number of researchers begun arguing that networks are not only suitable as a metaphor but also as a theoretical and empirical concept to describe distinct forms of governance (Wald and Jansen 2007; Lazer 2011; McClurg and Young 2011; Siegel 2011). In line with these theoretical considerations, a number of empirical studies have proven social network analysis to be a promising approach to understanding governance processes (Powell 1990; Windolf and Beyer 1996; Brandes et al. 1999; Brandes and Erlebach 2005; Agneessens and Roose 2008; Christopoulos and Quaglia 2009).

In this volume, we follow this line of thought. We argue that the analysis of their network structure is a prerequisite for a deeper understanding of what governance networks do and can achieve, why they achieve it, and what the social meaning of these networks is. Social action, interaction, and the formation of relationships—that is, social networks—make (wo)man a social animal. They are the very essence of society itself (Simmel 1908; Elias 1978). As Tilly puts it: “. . . transactions, interactions, social ties and conversations constitute the central stuff of social life” (Tilly 2004: 72). Neglecting this fact or simply giving it a metaphorical interpretation when analyzing governance networks risks forgoing major insights that one can gain when being attentive to the details of these structures and their analysis.

1 Social Networks and Social Network Research

Following J. Clyde Mitchell's classic definition, networks can be described as a "specific set of linkages between a defined set of social actors" (Mitchell 1969: 2) whereby both the linkages and the social actors can refer to quite different social entities. Actors can be organizations, political actors, households, or individuals. The linkages or relationships may refer to the exchange of information, resources, support, or to power relations. By way of formal and informal institutionalization of interaction, these relationships generate the very fabric of every organization, society, state, and supra-state. It is through this fabric that any type of social network, such as personal networks, informal networks within and between organizations, or power elites, emerges as a structure with a significant impact on its actors (Scott 2000; Scott and Carrington 2011). In contrast to most standard social science methodologies and theories, social network analysis does not attempt to explain differences among actors through their characteristics (attributes) but instead through the relations in which they are embedded (Wellman 1988; Wasserman and Faust 1994; Emirbayer 1997; Scott and Carrington 2011). In line with Georg Simmel's approach (Simmel 1908), social network analysis takes relations—rather than individuals and attributes—as the fundamental unit of social analysis (Wellman 1988; Hollstein 2001). With reference to Emirbayer (1997), Mische calls this the "anti-categorical imperative" of social network analysis (Mische 2011: 80). Going beyond even individual relationships, network research investigates the structure of the various relationships within a network (e.g., the formation of clusters or cliques) and the influence of structural properties of networks and social relations on social actors and social integration. This form of structural analysis "does not derive its power from the partial application of this concept or that measure. It is a comprehensive and paradigmatic way of taking social structure seriously by studying directly how patterns of ties allocate resources in a social system" (Wellman 1988: 20). Networks are made up of actors (nodes) and their interrelations (edges), which can be formally analyzed through the tools of social network analysis. For instance, information flow is a lot faster and norms are more effectively established in dense networks where a large number of people are acquainted with one another than in networks marked by a low density of relationships. At the individual level, dense networks provide more social support but also exert more social control (Coleman 1990). Another well-known structural property of networks is so-called structural holes (Burt 1992). Occupying such structural holes gives an entity privileged access to information, power, and influence (Padgett and Ansell 1993).

Moreno's sociometric studies in the 1930s and American community studies in the 1940s were early antecedents of contemporary network research in the social sciences. Interestingly, many of their first applications focused on governance issues, including the question of how to design and organize housing projects, schools, and prisons (Moreno 1936; Lundberg and Lawsing 1937). However, with the rise of computers, the focus of social network analysis partly shifted away from these substantial and applied questions toward methodological,

conceptual, and computational advances. The most important concepts developed in the 1970s and 1980s to describe social networks include cohesion, equivalence, centrality, and embeddedness (White et al. 1976; Freeman 1979; Wasserman and Faust 1994; Trappmann et al. 2005; Stegbauer and Häussling 2010). Although the field still profits very much from these developments, it has arguably hindered the integration of the fast-growing network paradigm and its scientific community into wider theoretical debates (Schnegg 2010).

Only in the 1990s, and strongly associated with the work of scholars like Ronald Burt and Harrison White, were major developments initiated that once again increased the value of social network analysis for the social sciences and humanities (Schnegg 2010). On the one hand, Burt and others argued that actors and their strategies had to be more rigorously included in the analysis of social phenomena (Granovetter 1985; Burt 1992). This perspective has enhanced our understanding of how people shape social structures creatively while acknowledging that those structures also constrain social action (hence, this is one part of network governance as governance of networks). On the other hand, a second major development is strongly associated with the work of Harrison White. He argued that social structures are always embedded in discourses that support or question them (White 1992, 2008). In doing so, he helped to overcome the gap between those social scientists who focus on social structures and those who search for culture and meaning (Hollstein 2001; Fuhse 2015). Both developments (re)link network research to larger theoretical debates in the social sciences (structure/agency, social structure/culture) and pave the way toward integrating the network paradigm into a wider theoretical context. The theoretical debate is also reflected in a significant increase in network studies that integrate quantitative and qualitative methods, that is to say, structural network data and the network perceptions and network practices of actors (Hollstein 2011; Dominguez and Hollstein 2014). The attractiveness of relational analysis (White 2008; Mützel and Fuhse 2010) is becoming more and more recognized theoretically and, as this volume will demonstrate, also offers fresh and fruitful perspectives on governance as a process of coordination.¹

2 Organization of the Book

It is this contemporary analytical approach of social networks and social network analysis, which refers to an ensemble of specific concepts and methods used to collect and analyze sets of relational data (e.g., Wasserman and Faust 1994; Scott and Carrington 2011; Dominguez and Hollstein 2014), that provides the main thrust of this edited volume. As the volume will demonstrate, the basic assumption of social network research—namely, that an empirical analysis of social relations can provide a deeper understanding of the functioning, success, and failure of old as

¹For a more extensive treatment of the history of social network analysis, see Freeman (2004), Schnegg (2010), Scott and Carrington (2011), Ward et al. (2011), and Carrington (2014).

well as new organizational forms and governance structures—has proven to be a fruitful approach in many research contexts. An analytical approach to social networks furthermore provides orientation for empirical research and helps to avoid widespread “normativisms” that frequently accompany the discovery of networks as new entities in economics, politics, and society.

We aim to advance *networked governance* as a more general research paradigm that focuses on processes of coordinating, reaching, and implementing decisions that take place in network(ed) (social) structures. By combining theories and methods developed in social network analysis and governance research, an international group of scholars from the fields of anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology has explored established as well as emergent forms of governance and explores processes and mechanisms of networked governance. The starting point for this book was a lecture series organized by the editors and held at the Center for Globalization and Governance (CGG) at the University of Hamburg in 2012 and 2013.² The contributions thus take into account the increasingly complex forms that governance takes, which consist of different types of actors, instruments and norms, as well as arenas from the local up to the global level. The topics addressed in this volume are the processes of coordinating, reaching, and implementing decisions that take place in network(ed) social structures, such as the governance of financial markets, environmental governance, and the governance of knowledge production, innovation, and politics. These processes are investigated and discussed from the viewpoints of sociologists, political scientists, and economists who are seeking to encourage the exchange of ideas, concepts, and approaches between different fields and disciplinary perspectives. The contributions to this edited volume all adhere to the basic assumption of social network research outlined above and sketch possible paths that research in this field might take in the future. The chapters address important questions and engage in cutting-edge debates in the different areas on which they focus, thereby making a substantial contribution to the field of networked governance.

The book consists of four parts. The articles in part I, *Networked governance: General issues*, represent disciplinary viewpoints brought together in this volume: political sciences (Christopoulos), sociology (Jansen), and economics and management research (Sydow). The authors discuss fundamental issues and questions relevant to networked governance: the question of how relations between (political) actors are associated to political outcomes (Christopoulos), the role of social networks and social capital in knowledge production (Jansen), and ways of managing (inter-organizational) networks (Sydow, Jansen). The contributions in part II, *Types, processes and limits of networked governance*, present studies that demonstrate the use and the potential of the social network approach when investigating governance in different societal arenas. These studies range from the macro to the micro level, such as the governance of financial markets (Mayntz), the coordination

²We are grateful to the School of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Hamburg for their financial support of this event.

of action in heterogeneous “interstitial” communities (Korff, Oberg, and Powell), the network self-management of individuals at social networking sites (Grabher and König), and the social embeddedness of individual educational decisions (Heath, Fuller, and Johnston). The contributions in part III, *Methodological approaches*, present different ways to investigate networked governance processes: simulations (Pfeffer and Malik), stochastic actor-oriented models (Mohrenberg), experiments (Schwaninger, Neuhofer, and Kittel), and complex mixed-methods designs (Gluesing, Riopelle, and Wasson). At the same time, the chapters offer valuable insights into specific fields of research, such as policy diffusion (Mohrenberg), social exchange (Schwaninger, Neuhofer, and Kittel), and environmental governance (Gluesing, Riopelle, and Wasson). The volume closes with a chapter that sums up major results, draws conclusions, and assesses prospective lines of future research (Hollstein, Matiaske, Schnapp, and Schnegg).

To illustrate the wide spectrum of possible uses of the social network concept in investigating governance processes and, at the same time, to encourage the discussion of the (somewhat similar) theoretical and methodical problems across different subjects, the book includes studies from diverse areas of application. The contributions thus represent governance processes that take place in various arenas and network(ed) (social) structures, such as policy networks, international institutions, multi-stakeholder contexts, inter-organizational networks, heterogeneous interstitial communities, or personal networks. The network processes involved take place at different societal levels (from diffusion of policies to personal influence) and can take very different shapes—from reflexive relationship management to path dependency and network influences beyond the consciousness of the actors.

3 The Contributions

The first part of the book introduces the disciplinary perspectives assembled in this volume and discusses general issues. It starts with a contribution by *Dorothea Jansen* addressing fundamental concepts, questions, and discussions relevant to networked governance. By focusing on the governance of innovation, learning, and knowledge production, Jansen argues that networks are a more complex and sophisticated mechanism of coordination than either markets or organizations. Introducing the concept of social capital that is embedded in social networks, she demonstrates that a network approach can help to determine why and when which type of network structure and which network ties foster the process of knowledge production. She also tackles the question of governing networks by means of incentives or institutions and outlines a more macro-level interpretation of networks of knowledge production and innovation as a new governance form. The governance of networks and the question of whether and how (inter-organizational) networks can be managed is discussed by *Jörg Sydow*. On the basis of studies on the management of inter-firm networks, he conceptualizes managing inter-organizational networks from a structuration perspective that is able to capture the genesis and dynamics of these networks and their reliance on individual and

collective actors. As he argues, there is an inherent tension between emergent features of existing inter-organizational networks and the active governance of their network structure and performance. Path dependency and uncertainty mark the extreme ends of the continuum between which much of network management takes place. In the third chapter, which is devoted to general issues, *Dimitris Christopoulos* provides an overview of governance networks in politics with a focus on governance as the process as well as a product of political relations. He outlines key parameters for capturing network properties of and network influences on political action, political power, and decision making. In addition, he examines the mechanisms through which agent relations affect power and the impact this has on governance process and outcomes. Christopoulos argues that studies of governance networks should ideally combine analyses of interactions, resource transfers, asymmetric power relations, and the values of key political actors.

On the basis of case studies, the chapters in part II focus on certain types, processes, and mechanisms of networked governance in different societal arenas, ranging from the macro to the micro level. *Renate Mayntz* investigates international institutions of financial market regulation and their changes after the 2008 financial crisis. Applying a social network approach, she describes various aspects of the structure of the network that governs financial market regulation and its changes following the reform (tightened relations, expanded scope of the network). However, her contribution also demonstrates that in order to understand the effectiveness of a network and a type of governance system, the relationships between actors must be scrutinized carefully, for example, with regard to their nature and purpose. Taking into account the newly emerging and increasingly complex forms of governance, *Valeska Korff*, *Achim Oberg*, and *Walter Powell* discuss how networks coordinate and commit communities of individuals and organizations to common causes and agendas, and how disparate actors govern their behavior in the absence of clearly established rules and norms. In addition to other types of networks such as brokerage networks, social movements, and technology clusters, they introduce interstitial communities as a particular form of networked governance in which disparate actors (individuals, organizations) come together, convene, share ideas, and refine new practices. Whereas the former *join* actors in a given field, interstitial communities *create* such a field and open new developmental trajectories. A completely different form of decision making is presented in the subsequent chapter by *Sue Heath*, *Alison Fuller*, and *Brenda Johnston* on how personal networks govern individual educational decisions. Their case study illustrates different ways in which the decision to pursue higher education is influenced by one's personal network. With regard to networked governance understood as a process of arriving at *collective* decisions, this study clearly marks a border case. Nevertheless, the study nicely demonstrates the social embeddedness and complexity of what we usually consider an *individual* decision. Furthermore, in focusing on those who did not pursue higher education, the study questions the voluntary and conscious character of decisions and brings to the fore the significance of identities, norms, habits, and habitus (Bourdieu 1984) in understanding individual action. The last chapter of part II by *Gernot Grabher* and *Jonas König* is again concerned with

the management of networks—in this case, the management of personal relationships on social networking websites. Interestingly, the authors find a generic type of performativity, something they call reflexive relationship management: actors perceive and describe themselves and their actions through the vocabulary of social network theory. Not only do people describe themselves in this way, they also use knowledge from social network theory and evidence from network research to shape their own personal networks. Furthermore, Grabher and König show that the active governance of personal networks is an intentional activity that is carried out first and foremost to be able to produce other governance results with the help of the respective network.

Part III presents methodological approaches to the investigation of networked governance processes: *Jürgen Pfeffer* and *Momin Malik* provide an overview of the use of computer simulations for the investigation of social networks and governance processes. By reviewing classical studies on the evolution and dynamics of complex socio-economic systems, they discuss opportunities and limitations of simulations, with a special focus on agent-based models. In his chapter on policy diffusion, *Steffen Mohrenberg* presents another way to study network dynamics. As a method especially appropriate to probe into causal relations and questions of influence and selection, he focuses on stochastic actor-oriented models (SAOM) as developed by Tom Snijders and his group. In diffusion research, SAOMs can be used to better understand how beliefs spread in social networks and to show how decisions are formed as consequence of network structure, its evolution, and the diffusion of beliefs. *Manuel Schwaninger*, *Sabine Neuhofer*, and *Bernhard Kittel* focus on basic problems of network formation and social exchange in networks and review the use of experimental methods, especially laboratory experiments. They discuss the limitations of and prospects for laboratory research in the investigation of networked governance. Experimental research can help identify actors who shape networks as well as the effects of network structure on the ability of actors to further influence network structure. Finally, by integrating standard instruments of (quantitative) SNA with interpretative approaches, *Julia Gluesing*, *Ken Riopelle*, and *Christina Wasson* present not one method but rather a methodological toolbox for the analysis of networked political decision making. In their study on environmental governance within local multi-stakeholder contexts, they demonstrate how networks, policy content, and the collective construction of meaning inside networks can be analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the processes in governance networks. In the final chapter, *Betina Hollstein*, *Wenzel Matiaske*, *Kai-Uwe Schnapp*, and *Michael Schnegg* relate this new research perspective on networked governance to network governance research as it has developed over the last decades. They present a classification of networks as institutions and discuss the relations between actors and networks. They sum up the major results of the contributions in this volume and advance *networked governance* as a more general research paradigm that focuses on the processes of coordinating, reaching, and implementing decisions that take place in network(ed) (social) structures.

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