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Governance of International Skilled Migration: Scalar Politics and Network Relations

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Abstract

Studies of migration governance have predominantly examined the involvement of states and supranational actors in policymaking, paying less attention to the influence of nonstate actors at the national and local scale. This article brings together literatures on migration governance and policy networks to investigate the participation of national and sub-national actors in skilled migration governance in the petroleum industry in Norway. The article makes three arguments. First, government actors have clearly delineated the spheres of influence in skilled migration policymaking. These boundary-setting practices ensure that the state remains in charge of key domains related to international migration and employment. Second, expertise is a salient component in the scaling and networking practices of stakeholders in international skilled migration. This expertise informs policy briefs and is used to gain access to influential decision makers. Third, the findings confirm the emergence of new, private actors that transcend scalar hierarchies through public-private partnerships. The article concludes that public-private partnerships enable state actors to extend their influence to the private sector. The most influential state actors, however, refrain from these alliances to remain neutral in politically charged issues. Thus, the state retains considerable decision-making power in skilled migration and employment-related issues.

Key words: Norway, migration governance, qualitative methods, scale, network, policy network

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Introduction

The attraction and retention of highly skilled migrants is a central policy issue in high-income states. These migrants are in high demand in today's global knowledge economy, as they fill labor shortages and are believed to contribute to economic development and innovation. Governments try to balance demands for open markets, open borders, and liberal standards with calls for immigration control (Lahav, 2000; Ruhs 2013). High-income states increasingly give preference to highly skilled migrants while trying to limit the admission of low-skilled migrants and refugees (Triadafilopoulos, 2013). At the same time, employer associations, labor unions, and other nonstate actors try to shape skilled migration regulations to their advantage.

The migration management literature investigates how governments try to control the admission of international migrants (Geiger and Pecoud, 2012). These studies provide valuable insights into policymaking processes at the national scale, but do not pay attention to actors at the sub-national scale and articulations between the micro, meso, and macro scale. Sub-national actors can develop "bottom-up" initiatives to influence political decision-making processes at the local, regional, national, and/or international scale (Piper, 2009). Studies of the socio-spatial strategies of these actors can help us better understand how the governance of international migration operates. These insights matter as nonstate actors should have access to decision-making in liberal pluralist societies (Menz, 2009, 3).

Neoliberal economic restructuring initiatives have created new territorial, scalar, and networked formations (Miller, 2009) and more complex governance regimes (Jessop, 1997). These restructuring processes have rescaled the political organization of society, including the decentralization of decision-making power from the national scale to supranational institutions, and regional and local actors. The "scaling up" of migration-related matters is evident in international asylum agreements and attempts by the European Commission to harmonize migration policies across European Union (EU) member states (van Riemsdijk, 2012). For instance, the European Commission created a European Blue Card to establish a common European labor market for skilled third country nationals (Cerna, 2013). Migration-related decision-making is "scaled down" to regional and local actors who may offer language courses, housing, and job seeking assistance for immigrants. Migration governance is also shifted "outwards" in agreements between receiving states and countries of origin to accept deported citizens (Lahav, 2000), and the relegation of state responsibility to private actors. The involvement of nonstate actors has received little attention in skilled migration studies (but see Menz, 2009), which this article addresses.

Most studies of international labor migration have focused on institutions and organizations at the national, international, or global scale as key sites of regulation and governance. A reification of these "higher" scales may obscure significant spaces and places of influence at sub-national scales (Paul, 2005; Leitner and Miller, 2007). Actors and institutions at lower scales can rescale social issues through socio-spatial struggles. Thus, "we should not lose sight of how actual practices construct the broader structures that are the focus of grand theorizing" (Leitner, 2004, 252). This article investigates the involvement of stakeholders at national and sub-national scales, and their socio-spatial strategies to influence the governance of skilled migration.

This article aims to make two key theoretical contributions to literatures on migration governance and theories of scalar politics and network relations: 1) The research combines literatures on scale and networks to investigate the intersections and articulations between scalar politics and network practices of state and nonstate actors in the governance of skilled migration. Thus, the study takes up the challenge to develop "complex-concrete analyses that are systemically, reflexively attuned to the polymorphy of sociospatial relations" (Jessop et al., 2008, 392). This analysis helps us better understand the actual practices of scaling, rescaling, and network modes of governance in international skilled migration. 2) The research refines traditional macro studies of international labor migration through the inclusion of stakeholders at "lower" geographic scales. Sub-national actors rarely are in a position of much power (Peterson, 2003), but they can initiate collaborations to "scale up" an issue to national governments or international institutions, or "shift out" an issue to create more inclusive modes of governance (Cohen and McCarthy, 2014 in Norman et al. 2014).

This article responds to calls to integrate literatures on scale and networks. Geographers have recently argued that scale is only one dimension of spatial politics, and they call for an investigation of the articulations between scale and other spatialities such as networks, territories, and places (Leitner, 2004; Jessop et al., 2008; Leitner and Sheppard, 2009). These scholars note that territories, places, scales, and networks are relationally intertwined and mutually constitutive. In order to capture these complexities, Jessop et al. (2008, 394) urge scholars to develop "more complex categories reflecting different types of articulation and disarticulation among these four dimensions [territoriality, place, scale, and networks], with the goal of producing thick descriptions and more concrete-complex explanations for given research objects." This article investigates the articulations and disarticulations of scales and networks through the lens of skilled migration governance.

The article is divided into five parts. The first part discusses scalar debates in human geography and scalar politics in international migration. This is followed by literatures on the governance of international migration, paying particular attention to scalar conceptualizations in this literature. The second section discusses contributions and critiques of the policy networks literature, and the methods are explained in the third part. The fourth section provides a case study of the scalar strategies and network relations of state and nonstate actors in skilled migration policymaking in Norway. This section analyzes the modes of scaling, rescaling, and network strategies of stakeholders to shape migration governance, and their use of resources and networks to access key decision-makers. The conclusion places these findings in debates about the changing roles of the state in migration governance, the politics of scale and networks, and the possible emergence of new actors and institutions in migration governance.

Scalar politics

Hierarchical theories of scale conceptualized scale as different levels of analysis that are embedded within, and often nested inside, larger scales (Sheppard and McMaster, 2004). This perspective regarded scale as an "unproblematic, pre-given and fixed hierarchy of bounded spaces in which processes occur" (Leitner, 1997, 124). Constructivist perspectives have rejected these hierarchical notions of scale, emphasizing that geographical scales are fluid and mutable. These perspectives understand scale as a multiplicity of differently structured, tangled hierarchies that operate at multiple, overlapping scales (Brenner, 2001).

Scholars of globalization often reify the global as the scale that dominates events and institutions at lower scales (Herod and Wright, 2002b). Such studies envision the global scale as the largest scale, and each subsequent scale becomes smaller in size with less decision-making power. Such a hierarchical conceptualization of scale does not pay attention to the multiple ways in which issues are created, regulated, and contested between, across, and among scales (Bulkeley, 2005). In fact, scalar hierarchies can be "top-down," "bottom-up," or both, and higher scales do not necessarily dominate lower scales (Collinge, 1999). In addition, "scalar jumps" are "not always unidirectional, as groups move back and forth through a constant negotiation of the scales of vision, action, and solidarity" (Herod and Wright, 2002a 219).

Bulkeley (2005) notes that most studies of environmental governance assume that decisions cascade from higher to lower scales, paying little attention to bottom-up governance. Bulkeley argues that instead, these issues "are created, constructed, regulated and contested between, across and among scales, and through hybrid governing arrangements which operate in

network terms" (Bulkeley, 2005, 876). Thus, scalar constructions take place through networks and spaces, and networks are subject to rescaling.

Marston, Jones, and Woodward have advocated for geography without scale, preferring non-hierarchical social networks over scalar representations. They assert that "research projects often assume the hierarchy in advance, and are set up a priori to obey its conventions" (Marston et al., 2005, 422). This critique of scalar hierarchies is echoed by Dicken et al.: "Too often, a particular scale (for example, the local) or a bifurcated (for example, global-local) geographical scale of analysis is used in ways that preclude alternatives and that obscure the subtle variations within, and interconnections between, different scales" (Dicken et al., 2001, 90). In response to these critiques, this article investigates the actual processes of scaling and rescaling in skilled migration governance without assuming a hierarchy in advance.

Scalar perspectives in governance studies

In the late 1980s and 1990s, a shift from government to governance occurred under the influence of neoliberal market ideologies. Privatization initiatives and the liberalization and deregulation of markets were accompanied by a change in governing. Government refers to the formal institutions and regulatory power of the state, and their ability to make decisions and enforce them (Stoker, 1998). In governance regimes, nonstate actors are involved in the decision-making process. These actors build networks and partnerships that can blur the boundaries and responsibilities between public, private, and voluntary actors (Rhodes, 1997). Thus, governance changes the relationships between the state, the market, and civil society (Geddes, 2005), and there is "no single authoritative rule-maker' (Betts, 2011, 5). The reduced regulatory powers of the government can provide more autonomy and self-governance for nonstate actors (Rhodes, 1996). These autonomous 'self-organizing, interorganizational networks" (ibid.) can in certain instances be more effective than government-imposed regulations (Stoker, 1998).

The private and voluntary sectors have become more involved in national and local decision-making and the delivery of services, taking on responsibilities that were traditionally carried out by public institutions. Governments now share their responsibilities with private actors through the contracting-out of services, public-private partnerships, and arrangements with local authorities. These arrangements can blur the responsibilities of actors, which government actors can use to their advantage. Governments can also devolve responsibility to private actors to avoid possible blame. For example, governments hold airline companies accountable for the return of international travelers who do not have the required travel

documents (Lahav, 2000). Through the delegation of responsibilities, governments can appear neutral in politically sensitive matters.

Under neoliberal governance, the influence of the state on decision-making and the delivery of public services has changed. Some scholars argue that the responsibilities of the state have mainly been reconstituted under globalization (Peck and Tickell, 1994; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Others have noted that localities gain more influence as the governance of the economy is "scaled up" to the global scale and the regulation of work and social reproduction is "scaled down" to local institutions (Swyngedouw, 1997). The rescaling of the state creates new "geographies of governance" (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999) that have widened the scope of actors and institutions that are involved in policymaking. In addition, these changes in power regimes can open up new spaces of political power for state and nonstate actors. The governance literature examines the actors and decision-making spaces that emerge from these reconstitutions of power and influence.

Kunz, Lavenex et al. (2011) have observed an increasing involvement of the private sector in the management and governance of international migration flows. They note that these multilayered public-private partnerships can result in new forms of migration governance. They note that the "partnerships between state and nonstate actors is not as much a sign of abandoning sovereignty but more about reasserting or redefining it by creatively extending authority to issue areas traditionally controlled by industry associations, employer unions or manpower agencies (Kunz et al., 2011, 17)." Thus, Kunz et al. argue that these partnerships merely extend decision-making power to nonstate actors rather than removing power from the state.

Some scholars have expressed concerns about a lack of openness and transparency when nonstate actors take over responsibilities of the state. First, the fragmentation of services and reduced central authority make it more difficult to assess accountability (Rhodes, 1996; Swyngedouw, 2000). Second, self-organizing networks can become autonomous and resist central guidance over time, opening the possibility for "governing without Government" (Rhodes, 1996, 667). Third, stakeholders usually work with policymakers outside public view (Freeman, 1995), which gives resourceful, powerful actors an advantage over the general public that is less organized and less likely to mobilize around a common goal.

The studies discussed above have noted an increasing role of nonstate actors in the governance and regulation of international migration. This scalar perspective on migration governance, however, provides only a partial understanding of governance relations.

Stakeholders also establish network relations that can transcend the scaling of these issues, which will be discussed in the next section.

Policy networks

Policy networks may be more efficient governance solutions than hierarchical decision-making models. The benefits of network modes of governance are touted as "more efficient, more flexible, more effective means to assemble resources and actors to complete complex tasks than markets or hierarchies" (Leitner, 2004, 234). Policy networks consist of "clusters of actors, each of which has an interest, or 'stake' in a given policy sector, and the capacity to help determine policy success or failure" (Peterson and Bomberg 1999, 8). These studies focus on policy outcomes at the national and supranational scale, paying little attention to sub-national scales (Leitner et al. 2002). This article studies the formation and operation of policy networks at the national and local scale.

Dowding (1995) and Rhodes and Marsh (1992) have called for policy network studies of the meso-level, where interactions between interest groups and government take place. Dowding (1995, 138) has found that "the sub-governmental level was most important for understanding the detail of policy formation and the success of policy implementation." Rhodes and Marsh (1992) argue that researchers should specify the articulations between scales: "The meso-level concept of policy networks needs to be located in a number of macro-level theories of the state and the articulation between levels of analysis needs to be specified. In other words, policy networks are only a component part of any explanation of the process and outcomes of policy making" (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992, 203). However, Rhodes and Marsh do not provide examples how these articulations work empirically. This article provides an empirical analysis of scalar and network relations in skilled migration governance.

The policy network approach analyzes policymaking as an interaction process between multiple actors, including government agencies and interest groups. Klijn (1996, 112) argues that studies of policy networks should pay attention to the dynamics and context of policymaking, investigating "how actors strategically act within the context, possibilities, and constraints of the network." These constraints include rules and resources of institutions and their influence on the behavior of actors (ibid.).

Freeman (1995) identified an "organized public," which consists of interest groups and NGOs, as a potentially powerful governance force. These groups can pool their resources to rally around a common issue, and appeal to politicians. Freeman argues that politicians are more likely to respond to the demands of an organized public to maximize their votes than to the

general "unorganized" public. While Joppke (1999) has argued that Freeman's conceptualization of the "organized public" is specific to the United States, the importance of a clearly defined goal and well-organized pressure groups also applies to the European context.

Statham and Geddes (2006) studied newspaper coverage of asylum policies in Britain to investigate whether collective action of an "organized public" can influence migration policies. They conclude that a relatively autonomous elite (in this case the state) rather than an organized public makes decisions in asylum policy. They also find that the state takes a restrictionist stance on asylum policy. This finding opposes Freeman's (2005) claim that policymakers take a more liberal approach to immigration than the general public. In the governance of international skilled migration, which is less politically charged than asylum policy, the "organized public" is more likely to have an influence.

Somerville and Goodman (2010) studied changes in migration policies in the UK between 1997 and 2007. They found that policy networks influenced economic migration policy, while asylum and integration policies were strongly state-led. They note that policy networks are influential when they have proximity to policy makers, resources, and a coherent ideology in regards to policy outcomes. In the case of economic migration policy, stakeholders pooled their resources and rallied around a common policy goal, namely the liberalization of economic migration. The authors conclude that nonstate actors at the local and national level influenced economic migration policymaking, countering the elite-driven perspective. In other arenas of migration, policymaking still predominantly takes place at the national scale where the government retains its decision-making power.

The policy network approach has received four major critiques. First, the approach merely describes collaborations and partnerships between stakeholders. Second, the policy network approach has problems of abstraction, which is inherent in all models (Dowding, 1995). Third, the policy networks framework rarely addresses power struggles within networks. Members can control access to a network, and decide who is allowed to participate. Thus, some actors have privileged access to policy networks and can help shape the policy agenda and its outcomes, while others are excluded (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). This contributes to structural inequalities in access to and influence in government policymaking (ibid.). Fourth, policy network studies fail to investigate the creation of networks, focusing mainly on outcomes (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999). This article provides an analysis of the articulations and disarticulations of network modes of governance and scalar politics, while paying attention to access issues.

Methods

This research is part of a larger project on the governance of international skilled migration in Norway. The project investigates the actors and institutions that are involved in international skilled migration, and the lived experiences of foreign-born engineers and information technology specialists in Norway. This article examines the petroleum industry, selected for its high proportion of foreign-born engineers. Norway is the seventh largest producer of oil in the world, and the third largest producer of natural gas (Ministry of Petroleum and Energy). The petroleum industry contributes over 20 percent of Norway's GDP and almost half of its exports (Statistics Norway, 2015b). This economic importance provides the petroleum industry considerable political influence.

The empirical findings are based on fieldwork research conducted in Oslo and Stavanger in summers 2011, 2012, and 2013. The two selected cities house petroleum-related companies that depend on skilled migrants to fill labor shortages. Oslo, Norway's capital, is the center of national political decision-making. Oslo is the largest city in Norway with over 650,000 inhabitants (City of Oslo, 2015). It is also the most ethnically diverse city, with 32% of its population foreign-born (compared to 13% nation-wide) (ibid.). Stavanger is Norway's "oil capital," located on the south-west coast where the oil and gas industry developed in the early 1970s. The city later became an international center of oil production and innovation. Stavanger is Norway's third-largest metropolitan area after Oslo and Bergen, with over 132,000 inhabitants. Twenty-one percent of its population is of immigrant background (Council of Europe, 2014). This article discusses the scalar politics and network relations of skilled migration stakeholders in these two cities.

The author conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with six policymakers, seven labor union representatives, three employees in the Business Association of Norwegian Knowledge- and Technology-Based Enterprises, three representatives for the Chambers of Commerce in Oslo and Stavanger, two leaders in Oslo Technopole (now Oslo Business Region), three employees in Knowledge Oslo, the President of the Oslo International Club, two conference organizers, and five conference presenters to investigate their involvement in skilled migration governance. The interview questions asked about collaborations, partnerships, and other networking strategies, and examined the (re)scaling of skilled migration issues. The interview data provided insights into collaborations between stakeholders and lobbying efforts of private actors. The author also attended four conferences in 2012 and 2013 that discussed how Norway could attract and retain more skilled migrants. These conferences provided opportunities to observe interactions between delegates, and to discuss their involvement in

skilled migration governance. Data from interviews and observations were supplemented with scholarly works on scalar politics, policy networks, and migration governance, and online news sources. The interviews and observation notes were transcribed and used to reconstruct stakeholders' network connections and scalar relationships.

The following section discusses migration governance in Norway. This segment is followed by an analysis of scalar politics and network relations of stakeholders in international skilled migration, and the (re)scaling of responsibilities of state and nonstate actors in skilled migration governance.

International migration to Norway

Norway is an attractive destination for immigrants. It has consistently topped the rankings of the United Nations Human Development Index, and offers a comprehensive cradle-to-grave welfare system for its citizens and permanent residents (Esping-Andersen, 1996). Norway remains committed to the universal provision of welfare goods and state-provided public services despite increased financial pressures on the welfare state (Geddes, 2005). In addition to its generous welfare benefits, Norway attracts workers with its availability of jobs and low unemployment rate (4.1 percent in March 2015) (Statistics Norway, 2015a).

Norway has one of the fastest growing populations in Europe, and immigration contributes considerably to this growth. Currently, Norway is second to Switzerland in all OECD countries in influx of labor migrants as a share of its population (OECD, 2014). Most of these migrants are EEA citizens, who have the right to reside and work in Norway. In the year 2012, Norway received more than 25,000 labor immigrants, one of the highest numbers ever recorded. Close to 90 percent of all immigrants came from Europe, and most of these new arrivals came to Norway to work. Almost half of all immigrants came from Poland (11,500), Lithuania (6,600) and Sweden (5,700) (Thorud, 2014). Norway also received 9,400 migrants from the Nordic countries. Of non-European migrants, only twelve percent were labor immigrants and the remainder came as family migrants and refugees (ibid.).

The recent influx of migrants can partly be explained by Norway's economy. Norway fared better during the global financial crisis than most other states thanks to a sustained demand for its petroleum products and related services (Economist, 2013). However, Norway's labor market is currently less attractive for petroleum engineers due to a decline in the global price of oil and reduced offshore activity (Economist, 2015).

The following sections analyze the scalar politics and network strategies of stakeholders that are involved in the governance of international skilled migration. Nonstate actors are

involved in the recruitment and retention of skilled migrants, and try to influence the decisions of local and national actors to their advantage. The analysis studies how policy networks and scalar politics are used to shape skilled migration governance at the local and national scale.

Employer associations: "Scaling up" skilled migration issues

Employer associations can be powerful actors in the governance of international skilled migration, particularly if they represent sectors of (inter)national economic and political importance. The associations have successfully framed international skilled migration in a positive manner, convincing politicians that these migrants help alleviate skill shortages and contribute to competitiveness and innovation (Menz, 2009).

Employer associations rely on expertise to strategize their lobbying efforts. The Business Association of Norwegian Knowledge- and Technology-Based Enterprises, Abelia, has a legal department with expertise in national and supranational migration and employment policies. Abelia also draws on legal advice by its parent organization, the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO). This legal expertise is used in lobbying efforts with ministries that work with migration and employment-related issues. Abelia also gathers and shares expertise at its annual membership conference. In 2012, the organizers invited researchers and industry experts to discuss how Norway can attract more skilled migrants (Abelia, 2012).

Abelia representatives "scale up" migration concerns from individual members to the national government, using their policy networks to gain access to national decision-makers (Koopmans et al., 2008). Abelia's close relationship with policymakers is illustrated by its annual meeting with the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). In these meetings, an Abelia representative discusses difficulties that Norwegian employers experience with immigration regulations, and makes recommendations for improvements. Abelia's meetings with UDI officials illustrates the organization's privileged access to national decision-making (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992).

Abelia also lobbies the government to attract more skilled migrants. In 2011, Abelia sent a letter to four ministries to request a government white paper on Norway's attractiveness for skilled migrants. Abelia suggested tax incentives for foreign-born workers, government-paid Norwegian language courses, improved information about living and working in Norway, and faster decisions on residence permit applications. Hanne Bjurstrøm, then-Minister of Labor and Social Inclusion, responded that the same tax rules should apply to foreign-born and Norwegian workers, and that the language tuition issue would be discussed by the Parliament. She

concluded that improvements had been made in the processing of residence permits (Bjurstrøm, 2011).

In a presentation at the Global Mobility Forum Conference in Oslo in 2012, State Secretary of Labor Gina Lund placed the responsibility for language course funding on Norwegian employers. Referring to tax incentives for skilled migrants, she mentioned that "We will not run into unhealthy competition for taxes. We want people [in Norway] to live on equal terms." She added that it was not the government's responsibility to recruit skilled migrants to Norway. Referring to a Government White Paper on labor migration, Lund emphasized that migrants should be "a supplement to domestic workers, not replace them" (Lund, 2012, translation by author).

The State Secretary of Labor clearly established the values, norms, and motives for action (Freeman and Kessler, 2008), and delineated the legislative and regulatory realms of the state and its power to enforce these rules (Stoker, 1998). The Norwegian government is responsible for tax policies, and is not willing to make exceptions for skilled migrants. The recruitment of skilled migrants and payment for Norwegian language courses are not the responsibility of the state, and the Secretary of Labor was not willing to negotiate on these issues. Thus, the Secretary's response reflects the limits to scale (Jessop, 2009).

In response to employer complaints about the long processing times for residence permit applications, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) established a user group to elicit feedback on its services. Invited company representatives meet several times a year to discuss migration-related issues. This initiative provides employers direct access to national decision-makers. However, this model is exclusionary in three ways. First, only representatives for large, well-known companies are invited, providing access for elite members (Statham and Geddes, 2006). Smaller companies, that usually experience more difficulties attracting skilled migrants (OECD, 2014), are excluded from these conversations. Second, there is a lack of transparency as the meetings are not publicly announced and closed to non-members. Third, group members are privileged by their location in Oslo. The exclusivity of the user group is a reflection of structural inequalities in access to and influence in government policymaking (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992).

Abelia representatives maintain close relations with policymakers in UDI, enabling the organization to "scale up" employer concerns to the national scale. It also maintains connections with local and national politicians and other influential actors. However, tax breaks for skilled migrants and the tuition fees for Norwegian language courses are non-negotiable.

Roles of cities and migrant organizations in skilled migration governance

Cities have started to play an active role in the recruitment of skilled migrants to enhance the city's economy and international reputation (Plöger and Becker, 2015; Moretti, 2012; Musterd and Gritsai, 2013). Glick-Schiller and Çaglar (2012, 2011) have conceptualized this interaction as a mutually constitutive relationship: cities shape the lives of skilled migrants, and these workers can enhance the national, international, and global positionings of cities through their social and professional networks.

The City of Oslo tries to attract skilled migrants. Hallstein Bjercke, Vice Mayor for the Department of Cultural Affairs and Business Development for the City of Oslo, has repeatedly voiced his intention to make the city attractive for skilled migrants. On the Facebook page of the Global Mobility Forum, an annual conference that discusses how Norway can be more attractive for skilled migrants, Mr. Bjercke stated the following: "I want Oslo to be the city of talents. I want global talents to feel welcome in our city. Citizens with an international background are an asset to the city and to our economy" (https://www.facebook.com/globalmobilityforum).

Mr. Bjercke uses the term "global talent" as a framing device (Menz, 2009) to place skilled migration in a favorable light. The term "migrant" may refer to low-skilled migrants and refugees who may pose a burden on the welfare state. The term "talent migrant" has a more positive connotation, evoking images of the benefits that skilled migrants may bring to the city and the nation. Stakeholders carefully craft a narrative to gather support from the general public and politicians for skilled migration. This framing of "desirable" migrants has also been used by recruitment agencies (Findlay et al., 2013) and nanny agencies (Pratt, 2004).

Several groups have portrayed Oslo as a knowledge city to make it more attractive to skilled migrants and investors. The non-profit regional development agency Oslo Business Region has led a brand management initiative for the region. The project aims to attract more skilled migrants by improving Oslo's reputation as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship (Oslo Business Region, 2015). The city of Oslo has also established a Knowledge Oslo (*Kunnskap Oslo*) network that includes institutes of higher education and independent research institutes. The network members discuss, among others, how the institutions and the city can attract more skilled migrants. In these initiatives, public and private stakeholders are creating local networks to make Oslo a more attractive destination for skilled migrants. These branding efforts, however, may not be sufficient as some skilled migrants select their destination based on professional opportunities rather than place attractiveness (Musterd and Gritsai, 2013; van Riemsdijk and Cook, 2013).

The Oslo International Club (OIC), a social club for foreign-born skilled workers and internationally minded Norwegians, also promotes Oslo as an attractive destination for skilled migrants. The OIC has posted a political agenda for a "more internationally-friendly Oslo and Norway" on its website (http://www.oslointernationalclub.com/about-us-2/agenda/), providing suggestions how Oslo can become a more cosmopolitan city (for more information about the OIC, see van Riemsdijk, 2015). These suggestions are similar to Abelia's recommendations (discussed above), requesting a government white paper on international talent recruitment to Norway, and incentives for skilled migrants and Norwegian companies to hire global talent (Oslo International Club, 2013).

The founder of the OIC has established personal connections with several politicians, aiming to bring the OIC's political agenda to the attention of national decision-makers. He also invited politicians to give presentations at OIC events. In these interactions, the OIC engages in client politics, "a form of bilateral influence in which small and well-organized groups intensely interested in a policy develop working relationships with those officials responsible for it" (Freeman, 1995, 886). In this case, a policy network approach may be more influential as the OIC has similar goals to Abelia, the City of Oslo, and the Oslo Chamber of Commerce (discussed below). A closer collaboration among these stakeholders may result in a more targeted and unified political influence.

Networking venues: Conferences on international skilled migration

Conferences connect stakeholders with common interests and objectives, and provide opportunities to share resources (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992). In addition, conferences can be used for agenda-setting and the development of common goals, which can enhance the political influence of "organized publics" (Freeman, 1995). In 2011, 2012, and 2013, six conferences were held in Oslo that discussed how Norway could become more competitive, and how the country could attract more skilled migrants. These conferences were organized by the Global Mobility Forum (which held three annual conferences during this period), Abelia, the Oslo Chamber of Commerce, and the labor union Tekna.

Conferences are key arenas for the creation and exchange of knowledge and expertise. Conference delegates can gather expertise to make their business, organization, or city more competitive. Delegates can also use their expertise to gain access to policy networks and decision-makers. This was evident when human resource managers, politicians, and skilled migrants discussed migration-related issues in panel sessions. For example, presenters at the Global Mobility Forum discussed the institutional barriers that skilled migrants face, including the

long wait time for residence permits, the high cost of Norwegian language courses, and their long-term integration difficulties. The presentations brought these issues to the attention of national decision-makers and local stakeholders. Thus, the conferences provided political opportunity structures through the mobilization of local and national actors (Piper, 2009).

Network nodes: Chambers of Commerce in Oslo and Stavanger

The Chambers of Commerce in Oslo and Stavanger are key nodes in the local and national governance of international skilled migration. The Chambers actively promote international skilled migration through their extensive networks in business, city governance, and national politics. The Chambers' involvement in skilled migration can be explained by their business interest in this migration. An increase in skilled migrants satisfies the needs of the Chambers' business clients, and is likely to result in more business for the Chambers' relocation agency International Network of Norway (INN). Companies hire INN to provide relocation services for foreign employees, including practical assistance and information sessions about Norwegian society and culture.

The Oslo Chamber of Commerce (OCC) has initiated several public-private partnerships to promote international skilled migration to Norway. The OCC co-funded the publication of a guide for new arrivals in Oslo, and it commissioned a report that investigates how Norway can become more attractive for skilled migrants (Oslo Chamber of Commerce, 2013). The report proposes a national strategy for the attraction of talent, using national talent policies in Denmark and Canada as examples. The report and a related conference were co-funded by six regional Chambers of Commerce, Abelia, and the Research Council of Norway (NFR). In these projects, the OCC negotiated new spaces for political power (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999) through public-private partnerships.

The governance of skilled migration in Stavanger differs from Oslo in several respects. Stavanger is located on the southwest coast of Norway, 550 kilometers from national decision-makers in Oslo. Instead of trying to "scale up" local needs to the national scale, the Chamber of Commerce in Stavanger (SCC) created a local public-private partnership to improve the reception and retention of skilled migrants. The SCC became aware of the needs of skilled migrants through its relocation agency INN. While providing relocation services, the SCC noticed a housing shortage and accompanying spouses' difficulties with finding employment.

In response to these needs, the SCC invited representatives for local petroleum companies, city government, European Employment Services (EURES), the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV), and local organizations to discuss how they could address these

issues (Oslo Chamber of Commerce, 2013). In response to recommendations from the network members, the group exerted political pressure to build more affordable housing in Stavanger. INN also worked with NAV and EURES to offer job training courses for spouses.

The network mode of governance in Stavanger is more efficient and more flexible than national command and control systems of regulation (Peck and Tickell, 2002). Since the network members have clearly defined goals and political clout, they can exert considerable political pressure (Freeman, 1995). The impact of local policy networks depends, however, on the finances and priorities of the city. In Stavanger, petroleum-related companies have a large economic and political influence on the decisions of the city government. These private networks are likely to be less influential in more diversified economies.

The Stavanger model of decision-making raises important questions about transparency and accountability of the network (Rhodes, 1996; Swyngedouw, 2000). The SCC selected influential network members whose goals aligned with the Chamber. Less influential stakeholders, such as representatives for small petroleum-related companies, could not weigh in on these decisions. The omission of these stakeholders made the decision-making process quicker and more efficient, while it contributed to a democratic deficit in the local community.

The socio-spatial strategies of the Chambers of Commerce in Oslo and Stavanger reflect a new mode of network governance (Bulkeley, 2005) that involved public and private actors at the local scale. The Chambers established public-private partnerships that transcended boundaries between the public and private realms, and state and nonstate actors. These local networks are more flexible than national networks and may be more efficient because they are easier to coordinate (Collinge, 1999; Leitner et al., 2002).

Labor unions: Assisting skilled migrants at the local scale

Labor unions play an increasingly important role in international skilled migration. While labor unions in Europe have traditionally taken a protectionist stance on international migration, they now support the immigration of workers as long as the migrants have the same rights and obligations as domestic workers (Freeman and Kessler, 2008). This is also the case in Norway, where The Norwegian Society of Engineers and Technologists (NITO) and the Norwegian Society of Graduate Technical and Scientific Professionals (Tekna) support the immigration of engineers and technologists.

Tekna had noticed a need for practical information among foreign-born engineers and technologists. In 2013, Tekna developed a workshop to teach foreign-born workers about the Norwegian employment system, and the rights and responsibilities of workers in Norway. The

workshops were held in Stavanger, Trondheim, and Oslo, and attracted a large number of foreign-born workers. The workshops explained Norwegian labor laws and discussed the ways in which the union could assist its members. The labor union used the workshops to attract foreign-born workers, who are underrepresented in Tekna's membership base.

Tekna also gathers expertise on international skilled migration for its lobbying efforts. In 2013, Tekna organized a conference on "borderless challenges in a globalized world" that discussed internationalization and globalization in the labor market. The conference organizers invited human resource managers for international companies to discuss the opportunities and challenges related to the internationalization of the workplace. Local Tekna offices used this expertise to provide assistance to foreign-born workers.

Conclusion and suggestions for future research

This article has examined how state and nonstate actors shape the governance of international skilled migration at the local and national scale. The findings show that highly skilled migration, which is the least politically charged form of migration compared to low-skilled migration, family reunification, and refugees, remains state-led. Norwegian state institutions establish and enforce admissions regulations for skilled migrants, thus maintaining state sovereignty in migration-related matters. Concerns about state sovereignty in the admission of skilled migrants are also evident in other European states (van Riemsdijk, 2012).

Private actors play important roles in the governance of skilled migration at the local and national scale. They are involved in the recruitment of skilled migrants, the promotion of Norwegian cities as knowledge hubs, and they garner national attention for housing shortages and state funding of Norwegian language courses. The Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion did not want to be linked to international labor recruitment and the appropriation of government funds for "privileged" migrants, which are politically charged issues. The Ministry distanced itself from these activities, and thereby opened up governance spaces for private actors.

At the same time, state actors are entering realms that were traditionally governed by private actors (Kunz et al., 2011). For example, the public-private partnership between the Research Council of Norway (NFR), Abelia, and the OCC extends the influence of the NFR into the private sector. As the NFR funds research collaborations between universities and private companies, the partnership with the OCC can be seen as a logical extension of this relationship.

The inter-scalar, networked modes of governance between these actors blur the division between public and private, state and nonstate, and local and national. This hybrid mode of governance (Bulkeley, 2005) may be more effective and efficient than the traditional

hierarchical decision-making models of state institutions. These arrangements, however, may exclude stakeholders from the network (Rhodes and Marsh, 1992) and blur the responsibilities of the actors involved.

The public-private partnership between the OCC, Abelia, and NFR upsets traditional hierarchical notions of scale. The OCC involved the NFR locally rather than trying to "scale up" skilled migration issues to the national scale. The inclusion of the NFR in the OCC's network lends legitimacy and prestige to the report and conference on the recruitment of skilled migrants to Norway, and is likely to garner attention at the national scale. The influence of this network, however, is rather small. The NFR is only one of several government agencies with a stake in international skilled migration, including the Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion and UDI.

It is important to note that "bottom-up" access to decision-makers at the national scale and inclusion in policy networks does not necessarily confer decision-making power. UDI gathers feedback from Abelia and company representatives on Norway's skilled migration policies, but does not necessarily act upon their recommendations. The leader of the Oslo International Club has personal connections with national politicians but has little power to influence the policymaking process. The Ministry of Labor and Social Inclusion retains final decision-making power in migration regulations.

Geographical proximity to national decision-makers shapes the scalar politics and networking strategies of stakeholders in international skilled migration. Oslo has hosted several conferences to discuss how Norway can become more attractive for skilled migrants, and stakeholders located in Oslo are most likely to attend these meetings. Representatives for large companies are invited to speak alongside politicians and government officials, and they participate in meetings with UDI and NFR. These arenas provide personal access to decision-makers, and the possibility to help shape skilled migration regulations.

Stakeholders in Stavanger rely more on local decision-makers to attract skilled migrants and improve their conditions, perhaps due to their geographic distance from national decision-makers in Oslo. The Stavanger Chamber of Commerce has created autonomous "self-organizing, interorganizational networks" (Rhodes, 1996) in which public and private actors collaborate to find local solutions to skilled migration-related issues. The business representatives have considerable political influence in this network due to the central importance of the petroleum industry in the city.

The analysis has shown that expertise plays an important role in the governance of skilled migration. Stakeholders gather expertise at national conferences to make their businesses

and organizations more competitive, and they create new partnerships to better understand the factors that attract skilled migrants to Norway. Private actors can leverage their sector-specific expertise to gain access to the networks of powerful decision-makers at the local and national scale. Governance studies should examine the creation and exchange of expertise to better understand power relations in scalar politics and network relations.

It is important to pay attention to the socio-political context for migration governance in Norway. The scalar politics and networking strategies of study participants are shaped by Norway's small population size (5.1 million) and its strong tradition of cooperation between the government, employers, and labor unions in labor-related issues. This tripartite system provides employer organizations and labor unions the opportunity to influence labor-related decisions. Access to government officials is likely to be more restricted in more hierarchically organized and more populous states. Thus, a contextual understanding of migration policies matters (Geddie, 2015; Klijn, 1996).

Norway's slowing economic growth and related rise in unemployment may affect public opinion on skilled migration to Norway. A decline in global oil prices since 2014 has negatively affected Norway's economy, which is closely tied to the petroleum industry (Economist, 2015). While skilled migration is currently believed to contribute positively to national competitiveness and innovation, future inflows of skilled migrants may be construed as competing with local labor forces. In addition, the Syrian refugee crisis has evoked nativist responses that may affect the acceptance of skilled migrants. It may become more difficult for private actors to influence decision-making at the local and national scale when opposition to international migration increases.

Scalar strategies and network relations are likely to change over time (Ter Wal and Boschma, 2009; Klijn, 1996) as the needs and priorities of stakeholders shift in response to systemic changes. At the start of this project, employers demanded faster processing times for residence permit applications and easier access to UDI representatives. Once these demands were met, the employers' interests shifted to the promotion of Norway as an attractive country for skilled migrants, and addressing the practical needs of these migrants. These shifting agendas and outcomes may contribute to the rescaling of migration issues and changing network compositions, depending on the agendas, resources, and policy networks of the stakeholders involved.

I would like to make four recommendations for future research. First, I recommend longitudinal studies of the allegiances and power struggles among stakeholders. These studies would capture the changing roles of actors and institutions in the governance of international

skilled migration. Second, it would be beneficial to study skilled migration governance in other states to compare and generalize the results. A study of country-specific factors would enrich our understanding of the contextual specificities of governance forms. Third, I recommend studies of other sectors that are involved in skilled migration policymaking. The petroleum industry is characterized by a close cooperation between business and the state. The division between state and industry may be more pronounced in other sectors, contributing to different scalar and networking strategies to influence decision-makers in international skilled migration. Fourth, the inclusions of stakeholders at the supranational scale would broaden and deepen our understanding of skilled migration governance. The European Commission's efforts to harmonize migration policies across member states is likely to change migration politics. Combined with a network perspective on migration governance, these studies would enhance our understanding of scalar politics and network relations in international migration governance.

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