Public and private networks in a multi-level perspective: A case of Swedish migration policy

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Abstract

In recent governmental reports, the migration policy area has been pointed out as being characterized by coordination problems and shortcomings in accountability. In today’s system, the responsibility is shared between several authorities, and the municipalities, the Swedish Public Employment Service, the County Councils, the Swedish Migration Board, and publicly financed private services are the central actors. Having that said, Swedish migration policy represents an archetypal example of a complex governing process that spans several vertical levels and includes a variety of actors with sometimes-conflicting responsibilities. Our study has the purpose of inquiring into governing within the “establishment reform”, and we base it on interviews with key actors and derive from theoretical ideal types of networks, markets, and hierarchies. The results are somewhat unexpected. Networking structures run parallel with uncertainties concerning responsibilities in this area. Although this is a general flaw in such forms of governance, the aspects of combining this model with strong constraints in self-governance are more unexpected. Hence, networks are forced to have a top-down perspective, combined with great restrictions in autonomy for the involved actors.

Keywords: governance, networks, hierarchies, markets, migration policy.

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Introduction

In December 2010 several significant parts of Swedish migration policy were changed. Through “establishment reform” (The Swedish Government 2009) a centralization was implemented in which the national level took over the responsibility of municipalities for the establishment of newly arrived immigrants. The number of involved actors has, through this amendment, grown considerably. Today the participating actors consist of authorities, County Councils, and municipalities, as well as private interests (The Swedish Government 2009). This is a situation that spans both vertical and horizontal dimensions, reflecting several levels of the public administration and, simultaneously, actors that originate from the governmental, regional, local, and private sectors. To summarize, the present situation clearly reveals a complex multi-level policy sector. This reform, reflecting something of an archetypal situation of a modern governing process (Pierre and Peters 2000), has hitherto, due to its new establishment, not been studied from a scientific perspective.

The reformation of Swedish migration policy is an example of a policy area which counteracts the trend toward decentralization – instead, responsibility and power is transferred to the national level as the Public Employment Service becomes the responsible authority. In line with the ideas of new public management (NPM), the changes in migration policy also included privatization, as private actors become involved in the establishment of the immigrants in the labor market. This is done in order to make the public sector more efficient and even, in some cases, more democratic (Dahlström, Peters, and Pierre 2011). The emergence of new conditions for organizing policy in this area has led to new processes and practices for governance and has contributed to the requirement for new and changing roles for steering (Björk, Bostedt, and Johansson 2003, 25). According to Rhodes (1996, 653), emerging situations such as this involve those in charge being able to choose between different “governing structures.” Organizations that deal with steering can be hierarchical or network- or market-oriented (Kjær 2004, 191). Drawing from Weber’s work, hierarchical steering represents the traditional model of bureaucracy and advocates a clear structure of responsibility. In contrast, the market-oriented model builds on the logic of free economic markets in which the exchange of goods and services occurs. Governing through networks is a final alternative answer for coping with increased complexity in terms of the number of involved actors (Rhodes 1997; Sørensen and Torfing 2007). This means that there is a governing process in which networks supplement action through public bureaucracies (Dahlström, Peters, and Pierre 2011). According to these ideal types, the government can adopt different roles. This means that the government has some discretion and can adapt its way of ruling in basically three different ways.
In this article we present one of the first Swedish studies in this reformed policy area and apply suitable theoretical perspectives for analyzing the governing within the reform. Hence, the focus of the article is to analyze the complex steering processes that arise when the governing is taking place in a governance setting through cooperation between different public actors in a policy field that at the same time is characterized by increasing centralization. Theoretically, we approach this puzzle by deriving from three ideal types of “governing structures.” We examine one Swedish region in which parts of the establishment reform was applied as a pilot project before being applied to the rest of Sweden. Empirically this is done by collecting material through conducting interviews with involved actors,

Deriving from theories of governance, the purpose of this article is to inquire into the governing within the establishment reform and to determine such processes with the help of different theoretical ideal types.

When we began this inquiry, we also found, from our analysis of previous understandings (for example Kooiman 2003) of steering and coordination in complex policy areas, that the multiple actors that are involved may have competing values and interests which can lead to difficulties in making decisions. When actors that are not subject to the conventional forms of accountability, such as prime ministers or other political leaders, are a part of the policy process, problems with steering and accountability arise. When cooperation between multiple actors is obligatory, problems often arise, resulting in unclear (or unequal) power or capacity relations. In the article we will focus upon how the centralization of responsibility in the area of migration policy affects the agents’ notions of steering, since the policy area may still be described as a policy field characterized by the logic of governance or, more specifically, NPM, since cooperation between a number of actors is required.

In the following section, an exposé of the development of migration policy in Sweden is presented. This is followed by an outline of the theoretical concepts that, at the end of the section, are summarized into a theoretical framework. Thereafter, the research design of this article is presented. This section is followed by the empirical presentation. The article ends with analysis and conclusions.

**Background: changes to migration policy in Sweden**

Sweden has long been one of the biggest receivers of immigrants in the EU and today has one of the largest proportions of immigrants compared to the proportion of its population that were born in Sweden (Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006; UNHCR 2011). This policy sector has had corporatism and consensus as general trademarks, in combination with ambitions to achieve the greatest equality possible (Soininen 1999). Although these are the cornerstones of Swedish migration policy, it has undergone continuous changes since the post-war era. From the Second World War onwards, the then very homogeneous Sweden began receiving quite large proportions of immigrants. The national
policy was, however, concentrated not on refugees but on labor immigration. In 1972 additional labor migration was prohibited, and this issue did not arise again until far later (Bucken-Knapp 2009). This completely altered the effects of national policy. Instead of attracting employers to the Swedish labor market, the change led to growing numbers of refugee and family immigration, initially from other parts of Europe but soon also globally. After joining the EU in 1995, Sweden’s policy was incorporated into the policy of the Union, and during this time a new direction was taken (Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006). This meant a shift from what had been called ‘immigrant policy’ to ‘integration policy’, which very much took its point of departure from the individual’s position and enhanced their rights, but also emphasized the obligations of each individual too (Jørgensen 2011; Soininen 1999).

The administration of this policy sector also went through changes during these years. After the Second World War the National Labour Market Board (AMS) was in charge of refugee reception in Sweden. Responsibility was, though, transferred by the mid 1980s to the municipalities, which led to a form of decentralization in which the local level, to a large extent, was in charge of carrying out the national migration policy (Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006). However, when the center-right government took office after the election in 2006, it soon became obvious that new reforms were to come. The general problem, which the new government pointed out, was the unsuccessful establishment of newly arrived refugees in Swedish society and particularly in the labor market. A government committee was therefore appointed in 2007, and about a year later it delivered its official report (The Swedish Government 2008). The ‘establishment reform’, decided upon in late 2010, was derived from the work of this committee and led to a return to previous policies in which the main responsibility was once again placed at the governmental level (Borevi 2012).

The aim of this reform, which is oriented toward immigrants who have received residence permits, is based on the ambitions of the center-right government of achieving a faster establishment of immigrants in society as well as minimizing the risk that the conditions of this establishment vary because of the room that the municipalities previously had to maneuver. Hence, the more significant changes are a centralization of the main responsibility and coordination with other actors, which are now to be dealt with by the Swedish Public Employment Service. In addition, this authority is also obliged to create a plan for each immigrant’s establishment in society in general, which must include their establishment in the labor market (The Swedish Government 2009). The reform also specifies that the County Councils have responsibility for enhancing cooperation and taking a regional responsibility. However, the first steps for introducing the County Councils into this policy sector had already been implemented in 2007. The focus was sharpened by the reform, in particular when addressing the task of keeping up constant dialogues with the municipalities to ensure that the required reception capacity is reached. The County Councils are also in charge of setting up
agreements with the municipalities for receptions, while the latter actors are responsible for providing housing and classes in Swedish. Quite interestingly, the government notices that this changeover has, in several regions, resulted in new organizational structures, including networks and partnerships (The Swedish Government 2009). Furthermore, a completely new feature launched in this reform is that an introduction guide is assigned to each immigrant. This is financed by the Swedish Public Employment Service, and the role for this actor is to facilitate and advance immigrants’ establishment in working life. Of special interest, and a significant change compared to previous regulations, is that introduction guides not are public ones but most often originate the private sector (The Swedish Government 2009). As this illustrates, the contemporary Swedish system is characterized by the shared responsibilities of a number of actors.

The governance perspective in the understanding of migration policy

Within the framework of governance, three different governing ideal types can be identified. These will be the theoretical basis of this study: network, market, and hierarchical governing (Nyhlén 2011; Meuleman 2008). The term governing ideal types marks the distinction between theory and practice. This should be understood as an analytical tool through which the empirical material can be analyzed (Premfors et al. 2003).

The study derives from theories of governance. Governance is a theoretical concept that can have many different meanings, and it tends to be poorly defined and the definitions are changing, therefore it is important to define the concept and elaborate an analytical tool (Robichau 2011). Central to the governance perspective is the increased complexity of modern society, which has resulted in new forms of organization and control. When it comes to organizing, this transition has meant that the local political level has taken on increased importance through decentralization. In general, the power and responsibilities have been transferred from the central to the local level and the number of stakeholders has multiplied. A consequence of this is increased complexity, which has resulted in new forms of governing. Some researchers argue that the development has gone from a hierarchical to a more interactive governance model where steering through networks is a central part (Montin and Hedlund 2009; Pierre and Peters 2000; Pierre 2001). In the governance perspective, the traditional forms of political responsibility and accountability have therefore been risked to play out their roles (Montin and Hedlund 2009, 10). This is mainly due to the fact that more actors than previously are now included in the policy-making process. Klijn (2008) argues that governance is governing by networks, while other researchers (Kjaer 2004) argue that the role of the central government in a
governance setting is to coordinate the networks. Rhodes (1996, 666) and Kjaer (2004, 43) argue that the challenge for governments is to find new ways to cooperate and appropriate network models.

**Networks as governing**

The networks are usually described as self-organizing, in which the actors cooperate in order to exchange resources. The driving force behind the networks is the different set of resources each actor possesses. Rhodes (1997, 15) defines networks as: “self-organizing, interorganizational networks characterized by interdependence, resource exchange, rules of the game and significant autonomy of the state.” In their definition, Torfing et al. (2012) stress the importance of collective action in accordance with some common objectives in network governance. The networks are neither formally assembled nor completely unstructured (Gossas 2006). Hertting (2003) has a similar definition of networks, and refers to them as mutually dependent actors. These will voluntarily organize themselves around the functionally and/or geographically defined policy problems in informal forms of cooperation. Coordination will be reached through negotiations on the basis of sincere information provided in order to increase their implementation capacity with maximum sustained autonomy. According to these definitions, networks are seen as having sufficient resilience toward state interference and the capacity for self-organization (Peters and Pierre 1998). This does not mean that the central government loses its ability to steer; rather, it loses its capacity for direct control. This is often replaced with alternative models of influence. Within governance, government actors are conceptualized as in a state of continual bargaining with the members of the networks, and these government actors bargain as relative equals. Steering in the governance context is about setting priorities and defining goals rather than about direct control (Peters and Pierre 1998). This means that governance is a governing process in which actors, together, set the goals. This reduces the risk of the implementation of the policy failing.

**Market as governing principle**

Besides network governing, two other governing ideals are identified in the literature (Meuleman 2008). Market governing has become increasingly common in Western democracies. The market ideal means, in its simplest form, that there is a relationship between two actors, where one has something to sell at a price that results in a transaction. If the competition is perfect, the system establishes an equilibrium where supply and demand meet (Premfors et al. 2003, 26). The rationality in the model is determined by how actors act, i.e. which product they choose. In the market model, competition is the fundamental organizational principle. The market model is based on the assumption that the market is the best and most efficient allocation principle. Exposing public organizations for reasons relating to competition is seen as a good way to ensure great value for money and that the activities are
conducted in a cost-effective manner (Almqvist 2006). In conventional market theory, competition maximizes both performance and the quality of a specific service (Almqvist 2006, 39). Additionally, this perspective would also imply that actors from the private sector are let into an arena which has previously been exclusively serving the interests of the public. This is, though, not without potential problems. It is only drivers of market ideologies that risk making joint problem-solving harder, since not every actor sees economic incentives in such tasks (Pierre and Peters 2000).

Hierarchical governing

The hierarchical model of governing is associated with bureaucracy. The main aspects of bureaucracy can be summarized in four words: hierarchy, impersonality, continuity, and expertise. In terms of the hierarchical aspects, the model builds on a clear superiority and subordination of different levels and instances. The model also advocates impersonality, which means that the bureaucracy works according to specific rules and without a large discretion. Continuity means that the officials of the bureaucracy are permanent employees that have the opportunity for advancement. Further, officials in the bureaucracy are recruited by expertise (Peterson and Söderlind 1993). The basis for the hierarchical organization is formalized and objective expertise is a necessity. The hierarchical model’s strength is performing standard operating procedures in a stable and predictable environment.

In general, the bureaucratic model is usually understood as a hierarchical governing structure from the top down (Montin 2006). This means that the political decisions will be implemented by the administration and that policy makers should be able to be held accountable for decisions and their implementation. In theory, there is a clear division between those who make the decisions and those who implement them, which gives rise to the hierarchical model’s clear division of responsibilities. The division, however, is challenged by changes primarily in the production of, for example, social services that have been the subject of extensive restructuring over the past decades. In the hierarchical model, the public administration excels itself in terms of its independence from all other outside actors. The only dependency that exists in the environment is dependency on the rules and the law (Peterson and Söderlind 1993, 16).

Analytical model and empirical expectations

The different theoretical ideal types are summarized in Table 1. In line with the general purpose of this article, three dimensions are emphasized. First, we distinguish between the numbers of stakeholders involved in governing. Second, based on different theoretical perspectives, we stress differences in incentives to cooperate. Third, we note the varying extent of self-governance related to the different perspectives.
Table 1 Analytical framework

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Hierarchical</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of stakeholders</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>several</td>
<td>few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incentives to cooperate</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>weak</td>
<td>weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-governance</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>strong</td>
<td>weak</td>
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The different ideal types do come with differences in empirical expectations. Drawing from the theoretical perspectives, we assume that network governing involves multiple stakeholders in a self-organizing governing process characterized by interdependence but seen as able to resist steering by the state. To manage this, the government is forced to steer by setting priorities and defining goals. The stakeholders cooperate in order to exchange resources in order to reach common objectives. The organization is voluntary and is driven by functionally and/or geographically defined problems. In contrast, the empirical expectations of the market as a governing principle are driven by individuals being entailed to make choices in a free market in which a number of actors compete with each other. Incentives to cooperate among actors are therefore weak, since a competitive logic is applied. However, in an analogy with the network model, this model necessarily claims some deregulation, posing a significant degree of self-governance. Finally, the empirical expectation of hierarchical governing is that of a top-down perspective with involvement of only government stakeholders. This traditional perspective provides no incentives to encourage cooperation because, since it forces regulation, it is associated with minimum autonomy of the administration.

**Research design, material and analytical strategy**

Due to the complexity of this policy area, spanning from municipalities to the national level, an intermediate level of analysis will be proposed to reach the aim of this article. This means that we will study the coordination of the area of migration policy at the regional level. There are several advantages to this design. It enables the study to include all the concerned actors since they all, in one way or another, operate on the regional level. Another advantage of the design is that we can add precision to the task of investigating into coordination and steering in this policy sector. The region of Västernorrland is selected for this undertaking. There are several reasons for this. First, in Västernorrland a pilot project was initiated during 2009 in which elements of the subsequent reform were tried out. Hence, studying this region provides additional opportunities to examine the reform, since, at least partly, it has actually been leading in this area for a long period of time. Second, Västernorrland approximately represents an average region in Sweden. Generally, it is about the
average geographical size of the average region in Sweden and consists of urban areas as well as large areas of countryside.

To include all the relevant perspectives, a number of actors will be addressed and examined. First of all, representatives of the Swedish Public Employment Service will be the focus of this study, since it is the actor that currently bears the main responsibility. Also, representatives of the Migration Board will be interviewed, since this agency is another main actor within this field. Moreover, the County Administrative Boards play a crucial role when it comes to being the link between the government and its agencies and the municipalities. We will therefore also address the work of this regional actor. Finally, the municipality sector will be included. That is done through examinations of the largest municipality in the region, Sundsvall. The material that forms the basis of this research is based on interviews; see Table 2. The interviews were conducted during the spring and autumn of 2013, and key stakeholders from the discussed actors took part. The respondents were chosen by using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling enables us to identify influential individuals and influential networks (Farquharson 2005). The snowball sampling was done by asking the respondents to nominate other presumed respondents, that is, nomination by reputation. By doing this, we identified the key political actors involved in the networks. Since it is a policy area involving local and regional actors, it is possible to assume that the actors are aware of each other and thereby find it possible to nominate one another. The purpose of using snowball sampling is not to generalize but to identify key political actors (Tansey 2009). Avoidance of a biased selection was achieved by starting several different snowballs (see Mason 1996). Contact with respondents was made by email or by phone, and an appointment for the interviews was agreed. The quotes that appear in the text are reproduced verbatim, except for editorial changes to some quotes to make them easier to read and some adjustments to allow for the transition from spoken language to written language.

In the interviews, the semi-structured interview method was used, which means that the questions are predetermined, but that there is an opportunity to ask supplementary questions about anything in the answer that is unclear. During the interviews, an interview guide was used in which the questions were based on a number of key topics. These were used as a unifying link in the interviews, and they facilitated the compilation and analysis of the material. The interview guide also gave the interviewer the opportunity to ask supplementary questions if there were any ambiguities (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2003). In the empirical extraction, we have attempted to use quotes that reflect the width and depth of the material. The people quoted are those whom we feel best capture the aspects that need to be illuminated. By using this method, we hope to capture the dynamics of the material that the interviews gave rise to (see Schmauch 2006).
Table 2 Summarizing respondents’ interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public official</td>
<td>the Public Employment Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>the Swedish Migration Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public official</td>
<td>the County Administrative Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public official</td>
<td>the County Administrative Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of department</td>
<td>Municipality of Sundsvall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public official</td>
<td>Municipality of Sundsvall</td>
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**Empirical findings**

In this section we will present the empirical material related to each of the theoretically derived dimensions, that is: hierarchies, networks, and markets in governing processes.

**Hierarchies and steering in the migration policy field**

The "establishment reform" (The Swedish Government 2009) centralized much of the responsibility from the municipalities to the Swedish Public Employment Service. The reform also gave the Swedish Public Employment Service responsibility for the coordination of the work with actors involved in the process of establishing newly arrived immigrants. In practice this means a potential creation of multi-level networks, with local, regional, and central level actors. Although the reform clearly has a focus on the joint contributions of different actors, it also inherits hierarchical traits and has a logic that is derived from a top-down approach.

In many ways, the Swedish Public Employment Service is currently the key actor in the establishment and integration of immigrants. As pointed out by a public official at the Public Employment Service, it acknowledges that it has this major responsibility that is set out in the reform (Widenstjerna 20130520). This is not only the view of this agency; every interviewee gives similar answers. The Public Employment Service has a mandate that also gives it a unique position compared to the other actors. With such a responsibility, a special position of power will also arise. Representatives from the municipality that previously had the corresponding task indicate this by mentioning two circumstances. First, as a governmental actor, the Public Employment Service is an organization which is not always harmonized with specific regional conditions. Second, this agency is, from an outside perspective, experienced as hierarchical (Hill 20131014; Collin 20131014). Other actors verify this perspective, as this quote from a public official from the County Administrative Board expresses: “The Public Employment Service is, like I said, quite a hierarchical and centrally controlled agency” (Schmidt
20130610). But there is a responsibility within the County Administrative Board’s role to enhance cooperation within the scope of the reform. Interviewees point out that this task has been challenging, partly due to frequent reorganizations among the other included actors, which makes it hard to agree upon the geographical division of areas (Ödlund 20130610). The different organizational conditions have, though, resulted in varying perspectives on the role of the Public Employment Service. A head of department at the Swedish Migration Board expresses an alternative picture, indicating that it is easier to coordinate, within the reform, with the other government agencies than with other types of organization. This reason is also in line with ambitions to reach more of a national standard for establishment (Isaksson 20130614):

I think it is easier in the sense that we have more of a national regulation to relate to, while the municipalities to a larger extent follow specific local conditions, resulting in different work in different municipalities.

Taken together, the different perspectives seem to be due to the extent of similarities between the included organizations. However, since the reform clearly sets out that the Public Employment Service is responsible and drives coordination in this area, it seems appropriate to interpret hierarchies within organizations and between actors as a potential constraint of efficient governance.

Concerning the degree of self-governing within the borders of the reform, the ideas that are noted by those interviewed are ambiguous. As an example, the representative of the Migration Board indicates that the reform is rigid and does not allow significant space for autonomy, but simultaneously argues that when it comes to the possibility of outlining cooperation, solutions adjusted to the local conditions are possible (Isaksson 20130614). In contrast, the experience of the public official at the Public Employment Service is that coordination is very formalized: “It is very controlled from above” (Widenstjerna 20130520).

Organization of networks for reaching goals

To fulfill its mission, the Employment Service should network and interact with different stakeholders to enable newcomers to enter the labor market. This means that the Public Employment Service should interact with municipalities, County Councils, County Administrative Boards and the introduction guides, and the National Migration Board (The Swedish Government 2009). Hence, a network structure is embedded in the reform.

While the Public Employment Service has the main mandate to create coordinated networks for assuring that the tasks of the reform are carried out, the County Administrative Boards are directed to facilitate collaboration between the very same actors. Potentially, this overlap risks creating
uncertainty about how responsibilities are distributed. Conducting interviews verifies such tendencies but also indicates that due to established networks prior to the reform, the County Administrative Board continues to benefit from already developed structures. The County Administrative Board has the overall responsibility for coordinating all of the central state authorities’ work in the county, while the responsibility of the Public Employment Service is only associated with the establishment reform. However, in this specific policy field interviewees from the County Administrative Board reveal that the division of responsibilities between the two authorities is not particularly clear, and sometimes disagreement appears about who has primary responsibility for the coordination of efforts in the reform (Ödlund 20130610; Schmidt 20130610).

In contrast, the Public Employment Service admits that the reform has brought about a crucial change in this sector which takes time to adjust to. Bearing in mind that this reform was implemented in December 2012, the public official at the authority states that: “If we could get good cooperation going in four or five years we will have done it well” (Widenstjerna 20130520). Obviously, this indicates that the present form of network governing in this sector is not as successful as could be wished for.

The reform directly points to the County Council as one of the key actors within the strategies of facilitating the establishment of immigrants in society. Since it is responsible for the health sector, it has an important role to play in welfare services for this group. Several of the interviewed actors do, though, point out challenges in this cooperation. Both the representatives from the municipality and the representatives from the County Administrative Board emphasize the problem of involving this actor in the networks. A public official at the County Administrative Board describes the efforts of involving the County Council in established networks as symptomatic of this problem: “we would really like to include the County Council … but they have been difficult to reach” (Schmidt 20130610).

Moreover, what also emerges from the interviews is that part of the reason for this is problems. The county-run health care service is a complex organization in which many actors are involved, which makes it difficult to cooperate with other actors. There have also been problems in informing the health care organization about the establishment reform and what is covered by the reform (Widenstjerna 20130520).

Although engagement is structured in networks with quite formal character traits, much less formalized steering is also evident. Still, daily work relations at the individual level must be well developed to ensure that every part of the establishment reform is dealt with. One public official from the municipality claims that good personal contacts between administrators as the involved actors are necessary to guarantee a seamless handling of individual cases (Hill 20131014). The extent of such good relations seems to vary, partly due to differences in organizational backgrounds.
The market and the steering of the establishment reform

A completely new feature launched in this reform is that an introduction guide can be freely chosen by each immigrant. This role is financed by the Public Employment Service, and several types of service are provided by the introduction guide. Generally, the introduction guide is supposed to be supportive when it comes to achievements related to getting established on the labor market. Their mission is quite broad, and includes assistance in strategies that go beyond more formalized methods of job searching, including personal networks of the introduction guide. In addition to this, the introduction guide can also function as a supporting actor on a more general basis concerning all kinds of issues that can be relevant for getting established in a new country (The Swedish Government 2009).

One year after the reform was launched, in December 2011, 72 percent of immigrants had their own introduction guide (Statskontoret 2012). Since these guides are often private entrepreneurs, the financing of these actors mirrors ideas of the free market (cf. Almqvist 2006) and is mainly based on their achievements. Hence, an introduction guide that will see to it that their client gets permanent employment will be given the highest compensation. A recent government report points out several drawbacks to this. First, immigrants have problems making an informed choice of introduction guide. Nor is it easy to know what this actor can and cannot assist with. Second, the opinion of the Public Employment Service is that the individual engagements of these guides, in general, is for too short a time. Moreover, too much effort is placed on giving social support, which takes the focus off enhancing establishment on the labor market (Statskontoret 2012).

Privatizing the general acts of support that were previously conducted by the municipalities has posed additional uncertainties. Individuals still turn to the municipality for help, despite the fact that this resource is assigned to the introduction guides. Nevertheless, an official in the studied municipality states that they do what they can to minimize an individual’s suffering: “Since we are all committed, you think that if you help them the first time they will know how to proceed the next time” (Hill 20131014). The market element of the establishment reform is also visible from other perspectives. The Public Employment Service has continuous contact with the introduction guides and has noticed that some of them try to maximize their earnings by being engaged by more immigrants than one guide can really help. Another example of market imperfection is the uneven geographical distribution of these enterprises. If there is no introduction guide where an immigrant lives, guides have to either travel or this service will be offered by the Public Employment Service. However, a reform that has the ambition of minimizing differences that arise because of where individuals live will risk the
opposite, that is, a situation in which immigrants living in sparsely populated areas do not have the option of choosing between a multitude of actors (Widenstjerna 20130520).

**Analysis**

The empirical section has been approached by following the logic from the three different theoretically founded ideal types. The examined reform will now be analyzed in relation to these.

The establishment reform has an embedded principle of multi-level coordination between involved actors. Clearly, this is closely related to a governing network structure. Thus, the reform lists several involved actors and includes regulation for essential cooperation. A stronger incentive for this is hard to find since it is not voluntary. Failures in networking structures are also visible within the reform, though. Actors are not necessarily equal, due to the exceptional position of the Public Employment Service. Hence, mutually agreed objectives and goals are not always noted. Further, the steering in this area is in many ways direct, without strong features of self-governing, but in some aspects, such as the creation of forums for networks, autonomy is experienced as a larger aspect. Generally this reform bears trademarks of network governance but also diverges from it (cf. Peters and Pierre 1998).

A limitation is the situation with parallel networking structures, due to actors having overlapping responsibilities. This not only results in a vagueness about how governing should proceed and by whom it should be driven, but it also risks creating an overload of different formal as well as informal networks.

There is also a distinct feature of market principles in the establishment reform: letting private actors in as introduction guides. The assumed logic is that private entrepreneurs can most efficiently deliver introductory services to new immigrants (cf. Almqvist 2006). In many ways, this part of the reform follows theoretical assumptions. The number of stakeholders does, though, vary, based on the geographical situation, leading to a variance in the possibilities for immigrants to make a free choice. Although the reform sets out models for the evaluation and monitoring of these actors, a significant level of self-governance is associated with their work. A striking example is the attempt to maximize the budget within the frames of their publicly financed commitments (cf. Niskanen 1971). Even though empirical proof is absent, one could wonder to what extent these actors mirror the behavior of public officials when it comes to outlining the work so that it becomes as easy and routine as possible (Lipsky 1980).

Finally, the traditional hierarchy is also found in the governing of this sector. Although there are several involved stakeholders and incentives to cooperate are called for, there are details in the reform that minimize the extent of self-governance. The collected material verifies this. Hence, although the
forms of governing are different, compared to the traditional bureaucracy, the reform still claims features that are mostly associated with a “Weberian bureaucracy.”

These dimensions, taken together, resulted in a model of governing that merges different perspectives; see Table 3. There are obviously several stakeholders. Even though the reform itself points out that cooperation is necessary within this policy area, there is also a sense that networks as a structure are desired by the involved actors. Put differently, working in networks is not experienced as a constraint, but rather quite the opposite. The incentives for such cooperation therefore go beyond the regulations, since it genuinely appears to be an organizational form that is desired. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the reform is, despite the general network approach, quite rigid. However, some examples of self-governance are noted that are mainly about how the forms of cooperation should be constructed. Summarizing this aspect, it is clear that it varies, but still it must most correctly be described as leaning toward being more of a traditional regulation than being formulated in terms of general goals and priorities.

**Table 3 The establishment reform**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of stakeholders</td>
<td>several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incentives to cooperate</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-governance</td>
<td>varies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusions**

From a theoretical perspective of governance, this reform encompasses many distinctive trademarks. It spans different administrative levels and includes both public and private actors, including a claim of necessary cooperation. Yet it is also paradoxical. Networking structures run parallel with uncertainties concerning responsibilities. Although this is a general flaw in these forms of governance, perhaps more unexpected are the aspects of combining this model with strong constraints in self-governance. Hence, networks should be forced forward from a top-down perspective and combined with great restrictions in autonomy for the involved actors.

Although this is a unique example from the Swedish context, achieving the purpose of this article required the use of a combination of theoretical models. From a theoretical perspective, inquiring into governing within the establishment reform has emphasized shortcomings in the internal logic of how the reform is carried out.
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