P06 / Interlocal Collaboration for Inclusive Governance

Topic : INEQUALITIES AND PUBLIC POLICY

Chair : Xuechun Wang (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

Second Chair : Yijia Jing (Institute for Global Public Policy)

Third Chair : Ziteng Fan (Institute for Global Public Policy, Fudan University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

General Objectives, Research Questions and Scientific Relevance

Inclusive governance refers to a system in which the governing process actively engages and serves all segments of society (OECD 2020). It plays crucial roles in enhancing social welfare and equalizing public services. Key instruments for achieving inclusive governance include public involvement in decision-making, equitable resource allocation and intergovernmental collaboration.

Interlocal collaboration—collaboration between two or more local governments to address shared challenges—has gained popularity in recent years. By transcending administrative and geographical boundaries, interlocal collaboration can be particularly effective in tackling disparities in public services for marginalized populations, regional welfare gaps, and power imbalances across regions (Blåka et al. 2023; Elston et al. 2018; Jing and Savas 2009; Lee and Liu 2024). Interlocal collaboration promotes inclusive governance through mechanisms, such as pooling resources for resource-constrained organizations, fostering trust via information sharing, and enhancing adaptability through communication networks (Ki et al. 2020; Yi et al. 2018).

Despite its growing popularity, the role of interlocal collaboration in promoting inclusive governance remains underexplored. First, most studies tend to approach interlocal collaboration primarily from a cost-reduction perspective, while its value in promoting inclusive governance has not been fully acknowledged. For example, although shared services among neighboring regions are often viewed as a way to reduce costs through economies of scale, recent studies also highlight their ability to improve service accessibility for floating populations (Chen et al 2019; Chen 2021; Wang and Fan 2024). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries adopted cross-regional cooperative agreements to help migrant workers access public services provided by local governments at their destinations, despite travel restrictions (International Labour Organization 2020). Furthermore, interlocal collaboration is not limited to Western developed countries; it is also gaining traction in nations of the Global South (Consciência Silvestre et al. 2019; Luna-Reyes 2007). Comparative studies are therefore needed to fully understand its development across diverse institutional contexts.

The panel invites papers that explore the value of interlocal collaboration in advancing inclusive governance, addressing the following questions:

1. How can interlocal collaborative be introduced to foster inclusiveness in different institutional contexts and policy domains?

2. What challenges do practitioners face at various stages of interlocal collaboration (e.g., entering collaboration, selecting partners and implementing agreements), and how do these challenges affect the outcomes?

3. What forms and arrangements of interlocal collaboration exist to promote inclusive governance, and what factors influence its successful implementation?

4. How do practitioners balance interlocal collaboration with other policy instruments when promoting inclusive governance?

5. In multi-level governance systems, what roles do different actors (central/local governments, citizens, social organizations and enterprises) play in collaboration, and what strategies do they employ?

6. What are the outcomes (both expected and unintended) of interlocal collaboration, and are these outcomes consistent across institutional settings?

7. How can classic public management and policy process theories be applied to gain insights into interlocal collaboration?

8. What methodological innovations, given recent advances in big data, computational social sciences, and

experimental methods, can be applied to the study of interlocal collaboration?

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Call for Papers

Onsite: in-person and virtual presentations

The panel welcomes theoretical, empirical, and methodological research exploring how interlocal collaboration can make governance more inclusive. To guide prospective contributors, we offer the following directions and guiding questions:

Public Policy and Administration Studies

We welcome studies focusing on the design and implementation processes of interlocal collaboration. We encourage the use of diverse empirical methods to demonstrate how governments and various organizations facilitate interlocal collaboration, and to explain why it is preferred over alternative approaches

such as privatization. In addition, revealing the collaborative beliefs and strategies of different stakeholders during the collaboration process is also crucial, especially in the context of changing political and institutional environments.

Comparative Studies

Given the popularity of interlocal collaboration in different domains and settings, we encourage researchers to adopt a comparative perspective when analyzing aspects such as the rationales behind partner selection, the availability of policy instruments, and the interaction patterns among multiple collaborators. Considering the differences in institutional and resource constraints, as well as cultural values across various contexts, highlighting these nuances is essential.

Policy Evaluation Studies

Although interlocal collaboration is believed to generate numerous benefits; policy evaluation studies with rigorous empirical designs are still insufficient. We therefore call for studies that employ diverse causal inferences strategies to assess the effects of interlocal collaboration on various objectives, particularly its implications for inclusive governance.

Other Studies in a Broader Sense

We also welcome studies on interlocal collaboration that may fall outside the specific categories above.

Submissions are not restricted by specific areas of public policy, with preference given to topics of broad significance that advance interlocal collaboration for inclusive governance. Following the session meeting, authors may be invited, if interested, to submit their work to *Global Public Policy and Governance*, a Q2 journal in political science and international relations, and undergo the peer review process.

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Session 1

Friday, July 4th 10:15 to 12:15 (A1)

Discussants

Yixin Dai (Tsinghua University)

Claudia Avellaneda (Indiana University Bloomington)

(Virtual) A new conceptual model for inclusive transportation policymaking: interlocal insights from Toronto, Canada.

Aaron Johnston (Toronto Metropolitan University)

This research paper explores new theoretical frontiers through the development of an idealized policymaking model to realize more inclusive, accessible transportation policy and decision making as well as governance processes at the interlocal level. This model is constructed by combining top down (horizontal policymaking) and bottom up (capabilities approach) theoretical modalities with the policy development process. In the context of the ideal policymaking process, I envision authentic participation of persons with disabilities at the agenda setting and policy formulation stages where there is a focus on problem definition, operationalizing policy goals and horizontal policymaking emphasizing coordination. Under the aegis of deliberative democracy, serving as the linchpin for the amalgamated concepts, I endeavour to operationalize the capabilities approach for a nuanced comprehension of legislative impact on the developmental trajectory of policies governing accessible transportation.

I am presenting the theoretical and conceptual pathways that I utilized to develop this conceptual model in the context of my doctoral dissertation, where I apply it to a case study at the interlocal level between the City of Toronto’s transit agency – the Toronto Transit Commission’s (TTC) policy practitioners and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) created Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT) composed of persons with disabilities. However, for this paper, I will highlight how multiple and contradictory theoretical and conceptual approaches come together to create an idealized policymaking process model.

The construction of this idealized policymaking model is guided by the following research questions:

1) How do top-down and bottom-up theoretical frameworks work together to improve accessible transportation policymaking approaches?

2)What role might the participation of people with disabilities play in such an approach?

Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative design utilizing a critical literature review and deductive reasoning to develop new propositions to construct an idealized policymaking model. Through this deductive approach, gaps, assumptions, hypotheses and existing theories are analyzed to develop new propositions for the aforementioned model.

This research makes a few critical contributions to the academy on methodological and literary fronts. Firstly, from an inclusive governance standpoint, my use of the interconnections between the capabilities approach and deliberative democracy broadens the debates on governance models that recognize the agency of individuals to choose what they have reason to value to be able to contribute meaningfully in policymaking and governance processes. In addition, my work challenges traditional hierarchical top down policymaking modalities such as horizontal policy to prioritize the inclusive incorporation of persons with

disabilities within the transportation policy development process. Lastly, from a methodological and theoretical standpoint, I use innovative deductive reasoning and critical literature to craft propositions in the development of a new conceptual model.

As such, the intended result of my research is to provide municipal policy practitioners and urban planners around Canada with a model to foster authentic participation of persons with disabilities in the development of accessible public transportation policies in Toronto.

Do Similarity Promotes Interlocal Collaboration

Xuechun Wang (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

Zihan Zhang (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

Do Similarities Promote Inter-local Collaboration? A Meta-analysis.

Inter-local collaboration, which is the focus of this study, emerges when ‘two or more governments act collectively to capture the gains from providing or producing services across a larger area’ (Feiock 2007, 48). This concept focuses particularly on governmental collaboration among different localities (Leroux and Carr 2010; Minkoff 2013). Despite the potential benefits of inter-local collaboration in service delivery, local governments also consider the costs and risks of obtaining these benefits (Blåka 2017). The collaborative process often involves complex issues such as developing trust, sharing resources, achieving common objectives, and managing ‘game-like’ interactions among participants, which may produce barriers to stakeholders’ participation in collaboration (Bianchi, Nasi, and Rivenbark 2021). Regarding this, numerous scholars have focused on the predictors of local governments’ participation in collaborative arrangements from various perspectives.

Previous studies find that collaborating with ‘similar’ partners is one way to avoid transaction costs in terms of bargaining and coordination (Feiock 2007; Bel and Warner 2015; Dixon and Elston 2020). Local governments with similar socioeconomic conditions often face common challenges and share comparable policy preferences. They may also interpret the challenges and design potential solutions in similar ways, which helps to reduce the time and effort spent on negotiation in reaching and implementing inter-local agreements (Dixon and Elston 2020). Additionally, similar localities may have compatible resources and equal commitments to sustain collaborative partnerships (Chen et al. 2019).

However, the extant studies regarding the predictors of inter-local collaboration still require further improvement. First, similarity can be manifested in various forms, such as similarity of culture, institution, economic, society, administration status. Currently, academia does not systematically categorize the impact of similarity on inter-local collaboration. Second, the factors of similarity show mixed results in promoting collaboration. This study attempts to fill the above mentioned research gaps and examine the role of similarity mechanisms for promoting inter-local collaboration by conducting a meta-analysis.

The meta-analysis complies with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). The main research question is: Do similarities promote inter-local collaboration? Hence, the scope for meta-analysis is restricted to empirical studies examining the relationship between inter-local similarities and inter-local collaboration, and the start year for considering published studies is 2000. There were 1209 studies obtained from the academic databases. After removing duplicates and unrelated results, there were 145 studies in all. By conducting additional searches in collaboration-related journals and using the snowballing approach, the author identified 65 relevant studies as a supplement. Finally, examination of abstracts and the full study resulted in selecting 40 studies for meta-analysis purposes. This study systematically examines the impact of similarity on inter-local collaboration.

(Virtual) The Channel for Social Cohesion? Hawker Centres in Singapore

Jungyeon Park (LKY School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore)

SOOJIN KIM (Nanyang Technological University)

This research aims to address the key research question: Under what conditions can hawker centres be more effectively managed as inclusive spaces by continuing to fulfill their role in promoting social cohesion? Social cohesion, defined as an enduring feeling of connection, belonging, and trust, is crucial for the well-being of communities (Delhey & Dragolov, 2016; Klein, 2013). In modern society, the fragmentation of shared identities—driven by individualization and growing social diversity—has led to "a new crisis of social cohesion" (Kearns & Forrest, 2000). This emerging crisis necessitates governmental efforts to diagnose the current challenges and to foster a more inclusive civic culture. In Singapore, hawker centres traditionally

serve as “community dining rooms” that bring together citizens from diverse backgrounds, thereby regarded as one of the catalyst for social cohesion and community harmony. However, due to today’s rapidly changing socio-demographics, concerns have been raised about the long-term sustainability of hawker centres, especially vis-à-vis the viability of hawkers and the accessibility for consumers. The way in which the government manages hawker centres can significantly influence the long-term cultivation of social cohesion. This situation presents a unique research opportunity to explore citizen perceptions about how hawker centres can evolve to become more inclusive communal spaces by fulfilling their role in strengthening social cohesion. Through focused analyses using a mixed-methods design incorporating both web-based surveys and semi-structured interviews, this research seeks to offer valuable insights for strategic government interventions aimed at fostering a sense of community and inclusiveness. Furthermore, the findings of this study can offer a potential framework applicable to similar community spaces, thereby providing broader implications for public spaces and public service delivery, especially within the Asia context.