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)

Do Similarity Promotes Interlocal Collaboration

Xuechun Wang (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)
Zihan Zhang (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

(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)