

# T18P02 / Innovation and Experimentation in the Public Sector: The Experience in Federations

**Topic :** T18 / Others

**Chair :** Tracey Arklay (Griffith University)

**Second Chair :** Robyn Hollander (Griffith University)

**Third Chair :** Liz van Acker (Griffith University)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

### Objectives

Innovation is a frequent catch-cry of governments (Obama 2016, Lee Hsien Loong 2016, Turnbull 2015). Encouraging entrepreneurship has even been viewed as a solution to counter extremism, (Obama, 2016) yet when raised political attention is most often directed to private firms where it is assumed most innovation occurs. This panel proposes to shift the focus from the private sector to exploring public policy innovation in federal settings.

There is an extensive scholarship predicated on the idea that subnational units within federations can act as policy laboratories. This panel provides an opportunity to discuss and examine whether this is so and if there are areas of public policy where this is more likely to occur. While there is some scepticism that states can be truly innovative and overcome their predisposition to rational conservatism (Rose-Ackerman, 1980) public policy scholars know empirically that experimentation occurs. The fact that subnational, national and supranational governments do experiment and do copy from each other raises important questions: including when do they engage in policy experimentation and further under what circumstances and in what ways do they seek to benefit from the experiments of others? Galle and Leahy (2009) attempt to answer these questions from a theoretical perspective. They suggest that advantages can accrue to first movers and point to several factors which contribute to the spread of policy ideas including similarities in context, the availability of policy information and the costs and incentives of copying. The question of interstate learning has an extensive public policy literature which spans a host of policy areas including health (Weissert and Scheller 2008), gaming (Boehmke and Witmer 2004), business regulation (Kerber and Eckard 2007, welfare (Volden 2006) and the environment (Rabe 2007).

Despite considerable differences in methodology, object of study and conceptual framing, this work identifies a range of circumstances and conditions which stimulate federations to act as policy laboratories. The role of local government should not be overlooked. While the literature on the role of local government is less extensive, the study of how local conditions shape policy further supports the value that federalism can provide in developing public policy which suits local circumstances.

This panel provides an opportunity for scholars to discuss the policy innovation success stories, to learn from what was done well (or less well) across different federations and jurisdictions and to contribute to the discussion on how innovation and public policy experimentation can be further developed.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited from different perspectives for presentation. The overall objective is to provide a platform and stimulate discussion on key innovation and policy issues, including but not exclusively around Economic policy, Gender issues, Environmental sustainability,

Social policy, Regional and urban policy and Cultural policy

We would welcome the submission of any abstracts that fall within the broad area of public policy, innovation and federalism. We invite participants to share their new ideas, research findings, successes and challenges. We would also welcome any theoretical insights that are relevant to the themes.

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## Session 1 Innovation and policy experimentation in federations

Thursday, June 29th 08:15 to 10:15 (Block B 5 - 3 )

### **Discussants**

Tracey Arklay (Griffith University)

Liz van Acker (Griffith University)

### **Innovation in a federal system: the role of States**

Tracey Arklay (Griffith University)

Robyn Hollander (Griffith University)

Liz van Acker (Griffith University)

### **The politics of the emerge of social policy laboratories in Mexico**

Anahely Medrano (CONACyT-CentroGeo)

### **From piloting to policy: lessons from agricultural pilots in India**

Sreeja Nair (National University of Singapore)

### **Innovation in Policy-making in India: A Multi Case Study Analysis**

Devasheesh Mathur (International Management Institute)

### **Smart contracts – a threat or an opportunity for the global economies?**

Aleksandra Lisicka (1. University of Oxford; 2. Wardynski & Partners law firm)