

**NIG Annual Work Conference 2016,
24-25 November, Antwerp (Belgium)**

Panel 12: Local and regional governance in a globalizing and Europeanizing society and economy: decentralization, differentiation, and the challenges for democracy

This panel will focus on local and regional governance in a globalizing and Europeanizing society and economy. Solutions to complex problems such as climate change, organized crime or social inequality, in the Netherlands and elsewhere, appear to be more and more found at the local and, in particular, at the regional level. Likewise, economic development and growth can no longer be realized through national innovation policies and strategies alone; local and regional variations, it is argued by both practitioners and academics, require a differentiated and decentralized approach.

In response to these complex societal problems and economic challenges, novel interactions emerge. Among governments, businesses, civil society and knowledge institutions, and across levels of governance, from local to international. The city-region, in its various sizes and shapes, increasingly seems to serve as a focal point of activity – economically, societally, ecologically, culturally, as well as administratively and politically – stimulating sustainable growth and fostering technological as well as social innovation.

This development – in the literature labeled as the ‘new regionalism’ or, more recently, the ‘rescaling’ of the (European) state – involves significant transformations, including:

- shifts in central-local relations (both on national and EU levels): devolution, regionalization, etc.
- changing relations between municipalities: intermunicipal governance arrangements
- and a new balance between government and society: grassroots governance, triple helix collaborations, etc.

These interactions and transformations in the context of the city-region raises many exploratory, explanatory and evaluative questions in relation to governance, which may be addressed in the framework of this panel:

- What do these novel interactions look like (e.g. intermunicipal, public-private and triple helix collaborations)? How are they characterized? What differences exist between cities and between regions in the Netherlands and abroad in terms of how these interactions are governed? Or within a region, between various problem areas?
- How can we explain the interactions that develop in response to the various societal and economic challenges, and the way they are governed? How can differences in the design of new forms of governance and be understood (e.g. ranging from functional to political factors)?

- How effective are novel interactions? How do we actually know they are effective? In what ways can societal effects and impacts be measured?
- How legitimate are novel interactions? In what ways can (legal) responsibility and (democratic) accountability be organized (e.g. through representation, deliberation and participation)?

We welcome all kinds of papers – theoretical, empirical, historical, legal – in different stages of development – from research proposals to pre-final drafts – and from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds. We do encourage comparative approaches, juxtaposing local and regional governance across cities, regions, countries, sectors and time. Moreover, we challenge researchers to adopt a focus both on substantive problems and on the processes and structures to govern those problems. We consider such a combined focus invaluable and indispensable, for science and practice alike.

The theme of the panel cuts across the various sub-themes of the NIG research program, as it touches upon new and emerging forms of multilevel and multi-actor governance, the role of political institutions and democracy and the position of public managers in relation to such governance.

If you want to present a paper, please submit your abstract (max. 800 words) to NIG before August 25th 2016 via de NIG website.

Panel chairs:

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