

XXIII IRSPM Wellington Renewing Public Management for Stewardship, Innovation and Impact

Panel Proposal: Advancing governance networks theory and working with social complexity

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Panel theme:

Making policies and delivering services that embrace the results and innovations people want, and yet also are sufficiently resilient and adaptable to serve the future is challenging. Collaboration among public sector actors and also with private actors in governance networks has become a common public management mode. While many questions relating to network governance have been addressed in the past decades, including at IRSPM in Edinburgh in 2018, some key questions are still on the table and some new questions are emerging.

The social and substantive complexity of the multi-institutional hierarchical levels and the multi-level, multi-actor actor networks involved cries out for augmented theoretical and methodological approaches, particularly those embracing and working with complexity theory, perhaps in combination with collaborative governance, networks or other theories.

We propose a panel that, as well as considering individual contributions that address these theoretical perspectives, will also create time for a plenary session with commentators on each to bring together and discuss predominant themes emerging from the papers at the end of each session.

Some questions which papers might address include:

- ✓ How do governments decide on ways to engage in or set-up collaborative arrangements for policy-making and service delivery? How does meta-governance unfold in practice?
- ✓ Are there new concepts, methods or models informed by complexity theory, network governance theory, or other relevant theories to better understand contemporary governance?
- ✓ How do we measure, explain, and better predict the results and performance of collaborative arrangements?
- ✓ How can we identify & develop collaborative/network leadership? How does leadership as a particular theme contribute to collaboration?
- ✓ How is collaboration the same and how is it different across jurisdictions? We welcome contributions that show comparative research on collaboration, and/or combine different methodological perspectives to the development of a comparative strategy to overcome limitations of current survey, QCA, case study approaches that are usually limited to particular countries.
- ✓ What do practitioners want to manage and evaluate in collaborative processes? What tools and schemes have been devised so far and can we develop them (further) to be

used by practitioners? How do we translate our knowledge to the field and make it usable?

Papers that address other unanswered questions are also welcome.