

## 4 Institutional change and regional transition

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Contemporary cities and regions are facing multiple, wicked challenges, such as natural emergencies due to climate change, multi-scalar social inequalities brought about by globalization, worldwide migration phenomena and the overall quest for improving the quality of life of places. These challenges require territorial governance actors to develop new skills for understanding and dealing with uncertain scenarios changing at an increasing speed, while ensuring interactions between public and private actors and civil society.

To efficiently and effectively deal with the complex processes of change, innovative institutional settings are required, that are better equipped to face and steer ongoing transitions at all spatial scales. These new territorial governance arrangements may range from “soft”, flexible functional regions to more formalised institutional mechanisms ensuring coordination between existing policy levels and administrative units.

This track intends to discuss the rescaling and reframing of territorial governance processes, focusing on institutional change and regional transition. Scholars and practitioners from all over the world are invited to present related theoretical and empirical contributions, addressing themes such as:

- the conceptual and practical deficits of current governance settings and mechanisms, explored in relation to the evolution of territorial challenges;
- the extent to which collaborative, place-sensitive territorial governance arrangements can make a difference when facing complex spatial challenges;
- the processes of institutional learning and design and their impacts on policy change and policy diffusion;
- the emergence of new, “softer” territorial governance arrangements and its implications for traditional “hard” processes and jurisdictions.

Comparative studies that take up multi-actor and multi-scale perspectives on the adaptation to and management of ongoing transitions are especially welcome.

**Keywords:** policy change, policy diffusion, institutional learning, European spatial planning, territorial governance, territorial cooperation, comparative planning studies.