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Policy Scotland

# Path-Dependencies in Framing and Delivering Regional Inclusive Growth: Scotland as an example

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# Overview

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Research Purpose/Structure

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Contemporary and Historical Insights

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Questions/Way Forward

# Introduction:

Policy Scotland and  
Urban Studies

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RIG research network on behalf of  
SG

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UoG support/guidance on Glasgow  
Economic Commission (Muscatelli)

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IG implementation in Glasgow City  
Deal – Sighthill/LOIPs (Waite)

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EDAS IG Community of Practice/NA  
diagnostic (McGregor)

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Extensive background in urban and  
regional studies (MacLennan)

# Research Purpose & Structure:

Scotland's city-region approach to implementing IG

## Introduction

- IG increasingly referenced politically
- Shifting focus in Scottish policy

## Conceptual /Historical Framing

- Historical: lack of integration of theory & policy; frag btw spatial activity & policy silos (since 1950's)
- Contemporary IG insights (Benner and Pastor; Lee; Sissons et al; Lupton)

## Scottish application of IG

- How do IG institutional arrangements combine expanded economic policy with measures to support the delivery of an inclusive city-region over time?

## Methods

- Country Case Study; document review, content analysis and non-participant observation

## Analysis & Findings

- Path dependency of implementation at regional level
- Central-local tensions: A solution looking for a problem (diagnostic NA); A problem looking for a solution (city deals post S&E review);

# Methodology

## Research Objectives:

- what are the tools and mechanisms for IG implementation across growth deals
- role of institutions: decision-making capacities/autonomies
- implications of IG policy across different scale

## Rich context-based case study:

- policy implementation affected by the relationship between social structure and agency
- Contextualised Scotland growth deal approach to IG implementation

## Empirical analysis

- role of normative institutional theory (North)
- how IG policy is fundamentally dependant on, and shaped by, the diverse nature of institutional characteristics in context

## Theoretical Contribution:

- how institutions impact IG policy implementation across different scale and in a path dependant way

# Previous Insights: Conceptualising & implementing IG

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Broad consensus on IG principles in policy rhetoric: equitable, participatory, growing, sustainable and stable (Benner et al. 2016)

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Broadly shared prosperity...equitable, participatory, growing, sustainable and stable (Benner et al. 2016)

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Dominant research themes: labour, skills, firms births and deaths, innovation and investment

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Increasingly referenced politically: SG definition 'sharpest' (Lee, 2018: 4)

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Systems evidence for policy implementation supporting remains unclear, fuzzy and evolving (Lee, 2018)

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Elastic policy rhetoric has implications for implementation 'anything goes'

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No agreement about '*HOW*' IG achieved' (Turok & Visage, 2018: 7) or transmission mechanisms across spatial levels - from national to regional level

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Policy makers have a partial view of how IG interventions shape growth of regions 'blind to distribution' (Lee, 2018)

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Need well-designed sectoral and structural policies and reforms' (Bactler et al 2019: 3)

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# Implementing IG: An integrated approach

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Conceptual incompleteness in IG literature

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Theoretical frameworks evolving - partial view of how interventions shape growth of regions - **better integration** of regional-neighbourhood research (coexisted until 1990's)

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Present IG policy embedded in a top-down approach – implications for path dependant nature of implementation (lack of guidance)

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Which spatial scale should IG interventions be implemented (Turok, 2010) – growth national, inclusion local?

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Revisit important inclusion mechanism: how local systems shape exclusion/inclusion

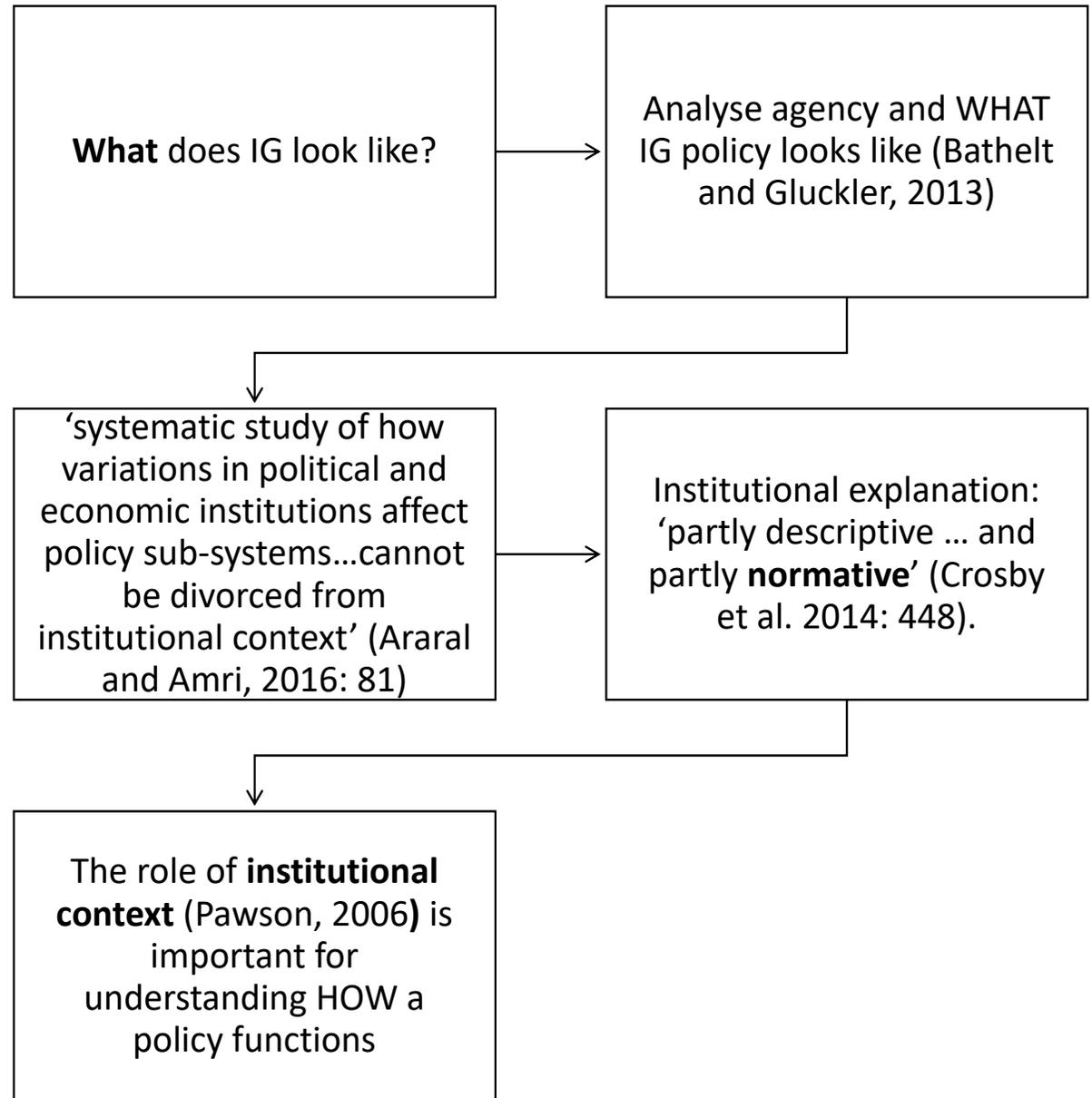
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Better integration of 'bottom-up' regional sub-systems of implementation and other sectors - health, housing, education

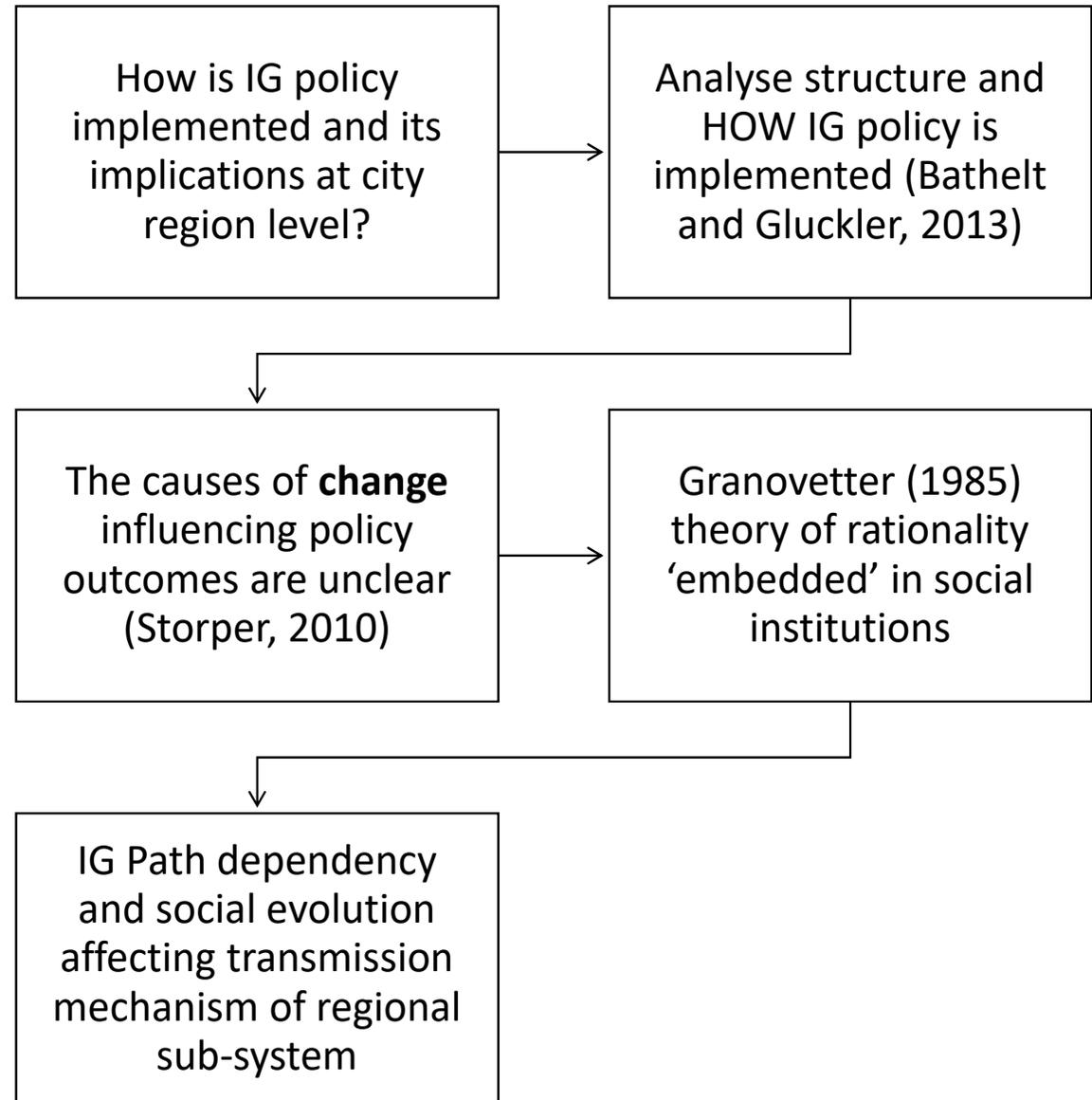
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IG requires multiple orders of governments to work together (see Diagram 1 for Scottish example)

# Theoretical Framing: Institutional Context



# Theoretical Framing: Path dependency in city-region approach



# Case Study Context: Scotland IG policy

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Extensive policy debate on meaning and implementation of IG;

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IG policy focussed on economic development; city-region approach evolving;

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Key mitigations for inequality: welfare and tax policy (retained by Westminster)

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Post-devolution: Scotland more tax powers (income tax/stamp duty) but less local levers to influence redistribution (council tax)

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Coincides with re-emerging cities and city-region policy in Scotland

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Multi-level partnerships and opaque accountabilities (Pugh and Connolly, 2016: 321);

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Changing political/economic institutions: increasing complexity of devolved structures since devolution

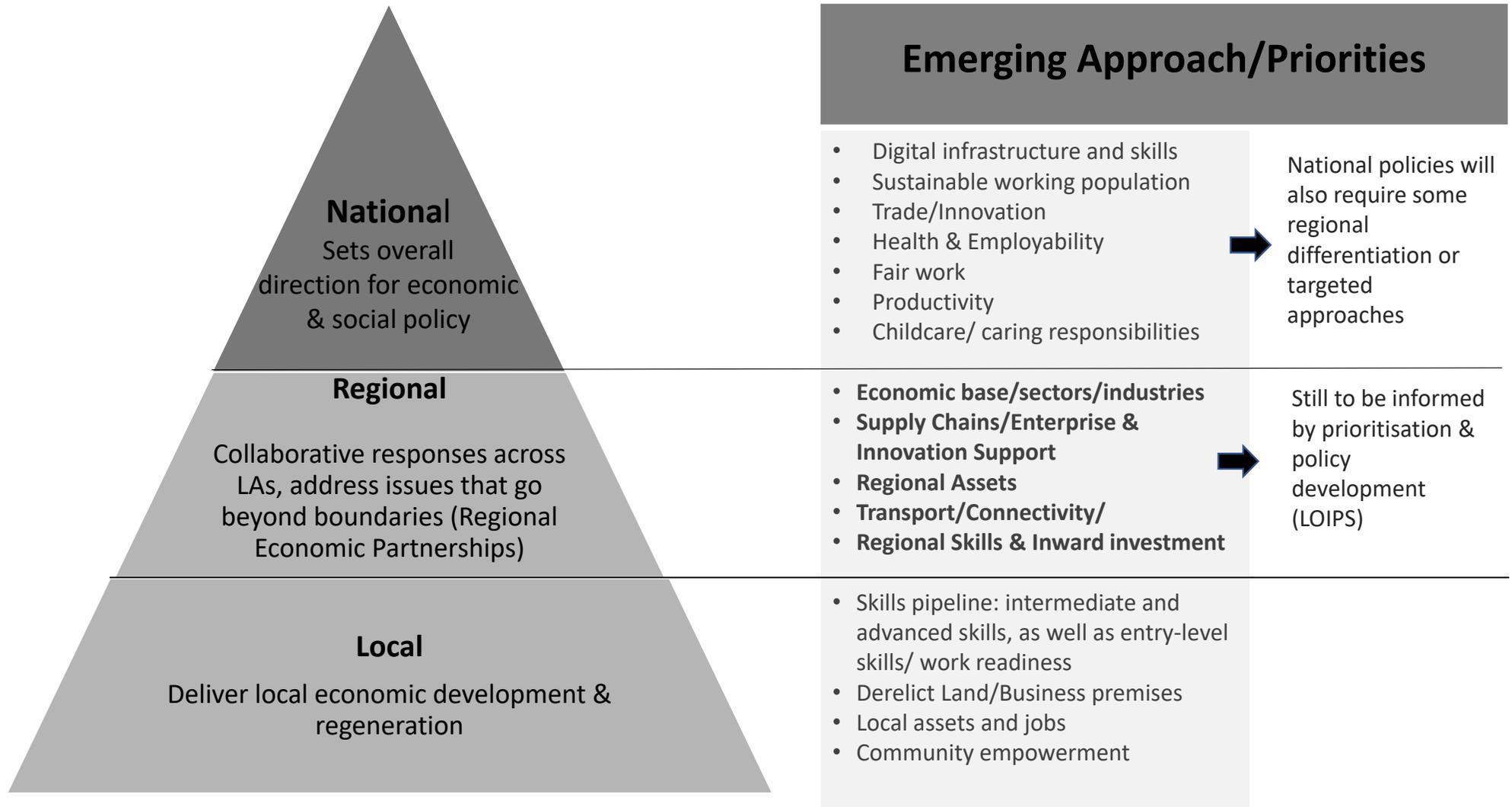
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Perceived increasing centralisation of local government, eroding of local powers held before devolution (council tax);

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Redistribution component/requirements for implementing IG is relative to local and regional context;

# Diagram 1: Delivering IG in Scotland: Aligning Policies + Action



# Initial Observations: What and How is IG implemented?

## WHAT IG policy looks like:

- National IG policy setting/framework vague on implementation - regions setting own priorities but practitioner confusion (IPPR) – increased devolution of EcDev?
- city-region approach evolving – ‘municipal fragmentation’ potentially challenging
- Loosely defined nationally, provides opportunities for more local/rural delivery (e.g. NA Community Welfare)
- pay-offs take time - requires multiple tiers of government to operationalise – new partnerships of reconfigures?

## HOW implementation is taking place:

- National/regional tensions (e.g. local infrastructure/ skills plans may not necessarily deliver on national priorities)
- Devolution context implications for redistribution - pushing debate on availability of local levers (trust concerns)
- Problems with diagnostics (sample size; problem looking for solution) – need regional approach to align with local priorities (LOIPS)

# Indicative Findings: theoretical & empirical dimensions

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**Conceptual complexities:** rhetoric on indicators, poorly designed delivery vehicles, lack of research on policy levers impact on outcomes

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**Technical complexities:** data first approach no practical impact on city regions delivery of IG – need qualitative priority/action setting to be localised

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**Implications for implementation:** cart ahead of horse complicates implementation – need clearer approach to developing logic chains, outcomes focus and local levers at core of delivery

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**Empirical dimensions:** Scotland city region IG approaches shaped top down by institutional norms and priorities of national government, with national local tensions

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**Empirical dimensions:** need IG focus in ‘devolution’ policy for ‘deeper’ integration (Sissons et al 2017)

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**Theoretical dimensions:** evolution of regional application context/path dependent on national institutional ‘norms’ for local levers/ambitions/tools (Couch et al 2011) and devolution to LAs

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**Theoretical complexities:** irreducibility of context and difficulty of separating out IG outcomes at regional level (and ranking causal importance of contingent events for theoretical replication)

# Questions going forward?

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What are the increasing/diminishing returns from evolving regional system/mode of governance – is this the right scale for policy focus?

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What are the implications of a lack of guidance for the city-region IG focus in Scotland – cart before horse?

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What does a city deal/region approach offer - is capacity & ambition sufficient?

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How best should other thematic areas be incorporated – what about health, education and culture?

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What does ‘embeddedness’ suggest about bottom up approaches to IG – are communities sufficiently involved from the bottom-up?