

Leading glocal security challenges

Comparing local leaders addressing security challenges in Europe

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Contemporary security challenges put local leaders to the test. Today's security challenges are transboundary by nature. They ignore state borders and arise and/or have impact on a global scale. At the same time they affect local communities and the lives of individuals across the globe. This challenges local leaders to provide tailor-made and pragmatic solutions to both causes and effects of so called 'glocal' security challenges entering their towns. Some scholars even argue that the local manifestation of global threats enables local leaders, mayors in particular, to solve world problems (Barber, 2013). This paper presents a research idea on local leaders addressing security challenges in a globalized world. It aims to combine leadership literature with literature on governance capacity to structure an international comparison of local leaders addressing glocal security challenges.

Key words: Local leadership, governance capacity, glocal governance, security, mayors

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1. Global challenges calling for local leadership

We live in societies with high technological standards and interconnection between almost every corner of the physical and digital world. This offers us endless opportunities to make a living, learn and travel. At the same time, the interconnection and borderlessness of today's world increased our vulnerability to a variety of complex **security challenges**. A key characteristic of contemporary security challenges is their **transboundary** nature. Criminal networks, cyber criminals and terrorist groups for example, operate on global scale, ignore state borders or even leave the physical world behind. Simultaneously, their actions generate real life impact in local communities and on the lives of individuals.

This challenges **governments** at all territorial levels to **design new strategies** to address complex and sometimes unexpected security challenges. In fact, the transboundary character of current security challenges qualified traditional responses at nation state level as less effective. Because causes and effects of today's security challenges can be found in local communities, a so called '**glocal perspective**' is required. The concept of glocality finds its roots in the explicit connection between two processes: globalization and localization (Sucháček, 2011) triggering a shift of "institutional/regulatory arrangements [...] from the national scale to both supra-national or global scales and downwards to the scale of the individual body or local, urban and regional configurations" (Swyngedouw, 2004:25).

One of the implications of the glocal perspective is that the impact of global challenges on local societies becomes visible. In fact, cities appear to be affected by today's global challenges in the most direct way possible. Think of refugees challenging citizens and governors with practical and moral questions, terrorist attacks frequently taking place in European metropolises and inhabitants of urban areas suffering health problems due to climate change. A glocal perspective to these challenges allows to see something we overlooked for a long time: the potential to address transboundary challenges could be found closer to home.

In this respect, academics characterized **local governments** as new **loci of power in world systems**. Key in their analyses is the **governance capacity** of local communities fostered by their ability to learn, experiment and adapt creatively to threats and opportunities (Innes and Booher, 2003). And if cities would indeed be loci of power with the potential to address today's transboundary challenges, **local leadership** would be of crucial importance. Solving contemporary security challenges would come down to skillful leaders raising the governance capacity of local communities (John and Cole, 1999). Some even argue that concerted actions of local leaders, mayors in particular, could solve world problems such as climate change, poverty and drugs trafficking (Barber, 2013).

2. Unravelling local leadership to glocal security challenges

The overall assumption of this research project is that global security challenges put local leaders to the test as the impact of these challenges is utterly present and pressing at the local level. In general, security challenges can be largely defined as threats or actual harm to acquired values caused by intentional, human action (Van den Berg and Hutten, 2016). Contemporary security challenges range from cybercrime, to terrorism, to violence and human trafficking. As most of these security challenges are not only **glocal**, in the sense that they simultaneously play out and thus can be addressed on both local and supra local levels, they are also wicked and complex by nature (Rittel and Webber, 1973). This implies that there is usually not one single cause and solution and it requires concerted action of governments, citizens, and businesses and to signal and address them effectively.

When it comes to solving such wicked and complex problems, a growing number of scholars is looking into leadership in urban governance (John and Cole, 1999) and signals a trend towards **stronger leadership styles** among Europe's local leaders (Borraz and John, 2004; Steyvers et al, 2008). This trend towards stronger leadership is associated with the changing governance landscape. More precisely, with the rise of complex and wicked problems came a shift from hierarchal, top down governmental steering to a more fragmented, horizontal landscape of a wide variety of actors operating on various levels (Borraz and John, 2004). This so called shift from 'government to governance' is assumed to be calling for strong leaders to address public challenges adequately (Steyvers et al, 2008). Personalization of leader selection and expansion of legislative-executive powers would create stronger leaders able to provide direction and act in pluralized governance settings (Steyvers et al, 2008). Besides institutionalized strengthened leadership, the authors ,paradoxically, recognize the importance of soft skills to facilitate and broker processes op agenda setting, decision making and multi-actor and multi-level settings (ibid).

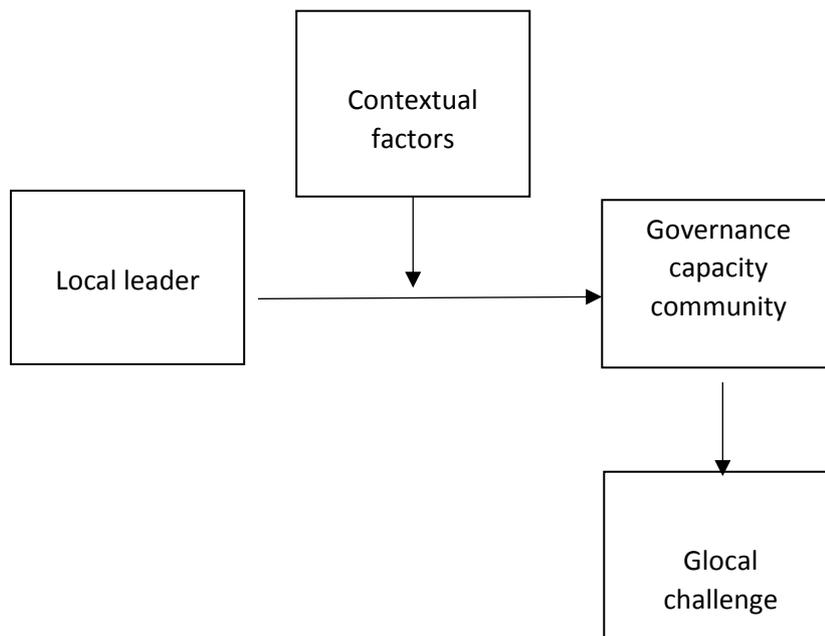
Whatever style may be adopted , unravelling **local leadership** implies looking at practices of local leaders towards both public challenges and other stakeholders. Most scholars on (local) leadership acknowledge that leadership practices are shaped by a wide **variety of factors and contexts** offering both a formal and informal base for leaders to operate from (Sweeting, 2002). These include *institutional arrangements* structuring the way of appointment (Ervick, 2015) and *constitutional elements* such as the local government act shaping leadership practices (Lowndes and Leach, 2004). Also the *political system* in place sets the boundaries in which leaders operate (Haus and Sweeting, 2006) and different types of democracy imply different roles for political leaders (Haus and Sweeting, 2006). On a policy level, the local *policy agenda* and activities and policies of national and international institutions, as well as economic forces are assumed to shape parameters for local leadership (Sweeting, 2002). Besides these rather formal factors, informal aspects such as *personal*

characteristics including psychosocial traits, skills, personal background, and previous work experience do affect leadership styles and practices (Lowndes and Leach, 2004; Prins, 2014).

Although leadership matters a great deal in public governance, solving public challenges is by no means a solo activity in today's multi-actor and multi-level governance landscape. Tailor-made, pragmatic and innovative solutions to pressing public problems entering town depends on more than just an individual leader's practices. In other words, addressing today's complex public problems calls upon a local community's **governance capacity** (Innes and Booher, 2003). Especially in contemporary circumstances where complex challenges trigger more horizontal governance strategies in which public actors interact and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders inside and outside local government. Hence, governance capacity which is defined by Gonzalez and Healey as "the ability of the institutional relations in a social milieu to operate as a collective actor. [...] this capacity is not just defined by formal laws and organizational competences, but is embedded in the dynamics of governance practices, with their complex interplay of formal and informal relations" (2005: 2056). Addressing 21st century challenges would thus come down to leaders boosting the governance capacity of local communities (John and Cole, 1999) in such a way that a wide variety of stakeholders can learn, experiment and adapt creatively to threats and opportunities (Innes and Booher, 2003).

Taken together, when assessing how local leaders address contemporary security challenges one needs to empirically study under which conditions local leaders build governance capacity in local communities. Therefore the concepts of local leadership and governance capacity are the core of a preliminary conceptual model to assess a local leader's their ability and impact to lead global challenges.

Figure 1: Simplified conceptual model



3. Research objective and strategy

The research aims to assess to what extent and under which conditions local leaders are able to build governance capacity in local communities in order to tackle glocal security challenges. This will be done by means of an **international comparison** of how mayors (local leaders) in variable contexts deal with similar security challenges. This boils down to two objectives:

- 1) To measure the governance capacity of local communities when addressing security challenges
- 2) To indicate which contextual factors limit and/or enable mayors when building governance capacity

The research strategy is a **multiple, comparative and international case study**. The overall assumption is that local mayors are confronted with the same glocal security challenges, however, operate in a different context affecting their ability to build governance capacity. This calls for a selection of similar security challenges and variation on contextual factors in which local leaders operate. Cases (cities and their mayors) will be selected based on strategic variation on institutional (way of appointment) and constitutional context (task and powers). Furthermore, mayors of large European cities (in terms of number of inhabitants) are selected because, according to literature on glocal governance, these are most likely to become loci of power in supra local networks (ref). Finally, cases will be spread out over the northern, western, eastern and central part of Europe in

order to move beyond the dominance of (single) case studies in particular parts of Europe. This results in the following case selection criteria:

- Institutional context - variation way of appointment mayor (appointed vs elected)
- Constitutional context - variation formal powers mayor regarding security as laid down in local government act
- Seize by number of inhabitants - most number of inhabitants in country / capital city
- Location - spread across Europe (north, east, west, south)

Table 1: overview case selection¹

| | Elected | Appointed |
|--|---|---|
| Formal powers regarding security | <p>City A</p> <p>Most number of inhabitants in country / capital city</p> <p>Northern Europe</p> | <p>City B</p> <p>Most number of inhabitants in country / capital city</p> <p>Eastern Europe</p> |
| No formal powers regarding security | <p>City C</p> <p>Most number of inhabitants in country / capital city</p> <p>Western Europe</p> | <p>City D</p> <p>Most number of inhabitants in country / capital city</p> <p>Southern Europe</p> |

For each case we will assess how mayors operate under different contextual factors when addressing **similar security challenges**. Security challenges will be selected by means of the following criteria:

- 1) Challenges expected to manifest themselves in physical, urban areas of European cities and thus falling under responsibility of local government/local leader.
- 2) Challenges are glocal of nature because causes and/or effects play out on BOTH supra-local and local level
- 3) Challenges entail a security aspect because they cause harm to acquired values (health, possession, etc) due to intentional actions by human actors

Selection of security challenges was guided by the latest EU agenda on security which lists terrorism, organized crime and cyber-crime as the three most urgent security threats on European soil

¹ Need to expand number of cases

(European Commission, 2015). The European Commission states that these priorities ask for a concerted approach in Europe and that such an approach should include local actors, such as citizens, communities, leaders and governments (ibid). Table 2 weighs the EU security priorities against the selection criteria. This results in selection of **terrorism** and **organized** crime to be subjected to case study research.

Table 2: selection security challenges

| Criteria | | Terrorism | Organized Crime | Cyber-crime |
|----------------------|---|---|---|-------------|
| Manifestation | <i>Physical urban areas states of EU cities</i> | Yes | Yes | No |
| Glocal | <i>Local dimension</i> | -Radicalization of citizens -Terrorist attacks in EU cities | -Use of local subsidies and permits for illegal activities -(temporary) Location of criminals + financial and human sources + activities | x |
| | <i>Supra local dimension</i> | -International conflict -Cross border flow of people/ideas between EU and conflict areas | (Mobile) criminal networks operating on cross border, international level | x |
| Security | <i>Harm to value</i> | Public order, life, subjective safety, etc.. | Financial, violation of human rights, illegal activities, etc | x |
| | <i>Intentional</i> | Intentional actions by groups and individuals | Intentional actions by groups and individuals | |

Triangulation of data sources and research methods will be applied when collecting and analyzing data for each case study as summarized in table 3. The first research objective to measure governance capacity will be met by means of a survey among stakeholders in local communities combined with secondary analysis of existing documents. The second research objective of indicating which factors affect mayors when building governance capacity will be addressed by means of a survey amongst mayors and civil servants, interviews with mayors and secondary analysis of existing policy documents. Taken together all methods aim to build and operationalize theory on governance capacity and local leadership and provide a first empirical assessment of leaders building governance

capacity as well as governance capacity itself. The next paragraph explains how this is relevant to several bodies of knowledge as well as to society.

Table 3: Overview research methods and techniques

| What to 'measure'? | Data needed | M&T data collection and analysis | Qualitative / Quantitative | Theory building / testing |
|--|---|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 1-Governance capacity local community | Data indicating community's ability to address security challenge: -tasks/ambitions/goals community regarding security challenge -policy evaluations regarding security challenge (output) -police statistics regarding security challenge (outcome) | Survey among key actors local community on ambitions, activities and perceived level of success regarding security issue Secondary analysis of existing documents, content analysis, coding | Qualitative (+ Quantitative) | Building: design framework and indicators to measure governance capacity of local communities + first empirical assessment |
| 2- Contextual factors affecting mayor building governance capacity | Data indicating local context and (non) activities mayor regarding community and security challenge: -national and local government acts -national and local policies -survey mayors + civil servants -interviews / focus groups mayors | Secondary analysis of existing documents, content analysis, coding Survey among mayors and civil servants on mayor's (non) activities and local context Interviews / focus groups with mayors on their perception of which contextual factors affects their (non) activities when building governance capacity and how | Qualitative | Building: design conceptual model mapping factors affecting local leader's ability to build governance capacity + first empirical assessment |

4. Relevance and innovative character

This research project is relevant to several bodies of knowledge and aims to be of societal relevance.

4.1 Literature on local leadership

Literature on local leadership is mostly built on single country, single city, and small N studies with a convenience sample in western European countries (Gissendanner, 2004). This results in a fragmented body of knowledge in terms of conceptualization and empirical assessment of local leadership. This research project will review existing literature on factors affecting local leadership and merge these into a conceptual model mapping how contextual factors potentially affect a local leader's ability to build the governance capacity of a local community. The model will be tested by means of a structured comparison of large cities in all parts of Europe.

Innovation 1: state of the art conceptual model mapping factors potentially affecting local leader's ability to build governance capacity. The theoretical innovation lies in the combination of dominant factors in existing studies and relating those to the concept of governance capacity.

Innovation 2: the model will be tested by means of a selection of international cases. The research project aims to test findings of single case and small-n studies on leadership and governance studies with convenience samples on a larger scale in European cities.

4.2 Literature on governance capacity

Academic literature foresees in conceptualizations of governance capacity as a collective effort of multiple actors, for example local communities and governance networks including public, private and societal actors (ref). Governance capacity is seen as a crucial condition to solve public problems, especially those that cannot be effectively addressed by formal institutions alone (Innes and Booher, 2004). Although many studies stress the potential capacity of these collectives, profound empirical assessments of their actual governance capacity is lacking. This research will further develop the scarce indicators to measure governance capacity available in literature and provide much needed empirical assessment. Furthermore, a single/few studies point out that local leaders/mayors can foster governance capacity (Gissendanner, 2004). This research will further explore the suggested relation between governance capacity and local leadership, both conceptually and empirically.

Innovation 3: developing a framework- including a set of indicators - to measure governance capacity of local communities

Innovation 4: conceptualization and empirical assessment of the potential link between local leadership and governance capacity

4.3 Literature on local governance

Key assumption in literature on glocal governance is that the nation state has been replaced by supra national and local entities as new loci of power in the world system. However, most studies do not move by conceptualizing the concept of glocal governance. Empirical testing of this -sometimes activist- claim is not yet available. This research provides a reality check. It will empirically assess the capacity of local communities and their leaders when addressing glocal security challenges thereby exploring their current position in the governance landscape.

Innovation 5: empirically testing the claim that local entities are new loci of power in world systems by measuring the governance capacity of local communities when addressing global security challenges.

4.4 Societal relevance

As new and challenging security challenges pop up in local society, it is of crucial importance to assess local leadership in a globalized world. Local leaders, mayors in particular, are directly affected by the global challenges of the 21st century making them true 'first responders'. Moreover, citizens trust individual leaders over national and international governments to deal with challenges of current times (ref). This project results in an assessment of local leaders' ability to build governance capacity to address glocal security threats. The research has the potential to positively affect this ability by indicating barriers and enablers for local leaders raising governance capacity. Societal relevance can be found in the objective to provide local leaders with evidence based insights in their current governance capacity.

Innovation 6: academically validated recommendations on barriers and enablers affecting a local leader's capacity to deal with global challenges on a local scale.

5. Timeline and deliverables

| Months | Activities | Deliverables |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1-6 (6) | Literature review Final selection and prep case study | Article 1: "Conceptualizing governance capacity of local communities and their leaders' (literature review) |
| 7 - 16 (9) | Within case analysis part I: measuring governance capacity local community | Article 2: 'Measuring governance capacity of local communities confronted with global security issues' (objective 1) |
| 17 - 32(15) | Within case analysis part II: assessing role mayor + contextual factors Cross case analysis: comparing cases and finding patterns in role leader-level of capacity | Article 3: 'Explaining a local leader's ability to tackle security issues' (objective 2) Article 4: 'Are cities / mayors new loci of power in world systems?' |
| 33-38 (6) | Synthesis | Book |

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