



SAPIENZA  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

# EGPA2026 CONFERENCE

24-27 August Rome, Italy

CALL FOR PANELS



Public Governance for the  
Common Good: Human Intelligence  
Serving the Global Community

[iias-iisa.org/egpa-2026-conference/](https://iias-iisa.org/egpa-2026-conference/)



## EGPA Specialized Panel 1

### From Tensions to Paradoxes: Rethinking public administration and management

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Public administration and management (PAM) are increasingly characterized by enduring structural contradictions arising from grand societal challenges, institutional pluralism, and growing demands for accountability, participation and performance. Public organizations are expected to reconcile competing expectations from diverse stakeholders—citizens, political actors, professionals, and experts—while operating under conditions of uncertainty, resource scarcity, and complex governance arrangements.

While tensions and contradictions have long been acknowledged in PAM scholarship, they have traditionally been approached through lenses such as hierarchical control (Weber 1958), trade-offs and dilemmas (Hood 1991), or wicked-problem perspectives (Angeli, Camporesi, and Dal Fabbro 2021). Paradox theory offers a complementary lens to deepen our understanding of these tensions by conceptualizing them as **contradictory yet interdependent elements that persist over time (Smith and Lewis 2011)**. Rather than seeking definitive resolutions, a paradoxical perspective highlights how actors navigate, accommodate, and enact tensions through ongoing strategies and practices (Lewis and Smith 2022).



Although paradox theory has gained traction in management and organization studies, its application within PAM remains fragmented and still emerging, despite its strong potential to illuminate governance dynamics, organizational processes, decision-making and multi-level interactions (Adeoye and Ran 2023; Ingaggiati et al. 2024; Qi and Ran 2023).

This call for paper seeks to broaden and strengthen the conversation by inviting contributions that explore **tensions, contradictions and competing demands in PAM and reimagine them as potentially assuming a paradoxical nature.**

We particularly welcome works that expands the empirical, theoretical, and methodological boundaries of paradox research in public administration and stimulates dialogue across different PAM domains.

We invite proposals addressing paradoxes, tensions, and contradictions across different levels and contexts, including (but not limited to):

#### **Macro-level dynamics, including:**

- Governance arrangements, policy processes, and institutional complexity, Public sector reform, digital transformation, and advanced technologies,
- Accountability, legitimacy, and public value tensions.

#### **Meso-level organizational processes, including:**

- Collaborative and networked governance,
- Citizen participation and engagement, co-production, and co-creation,
- Value creation and destruction in public services,
- Strategic management, performance evaluation, HRM, and DEI policies.

#### **Micro-level foundations:**

- Individual agency, sensemaking, emotions, and identity,
- Leadership, professional roles, and power dynamics in navigating tensions.

#### **Cross-level and ecosystem perspectives:**

- Nested or knotted paradoxes across governance levels,
- Inter-organizational collaboration and public service ecosystems,
- Intersections between organizational, institutional, and societal tensions.



We invite contributions from any theoretical or empirical tradition, expressly welcoming a diversity of methodologies (including qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method), comparative research or analytical approaches (conceptual, longitudinal, historical works; e.g., Ingaggiati et al., 2025), diversity policy contexts, administrative traditions, and geographic settings.

Contributions may also intersect with the themes of other EGPA permanent study groups or connect to the overall theme of the 2026 EGPA conference.

### References:

- Adeoye, Olumide, and Bing Ran. 2023. "Government transparency: paradoxes and dilemmas." *Public Management Review*.
- Angeli, Federica, Silvia Camporesi, and Giorgia Dal Fabbro. 2021. "The COVID-19 wicked problem in public health ethics: Conflicting evidence, or incommensurable values?" *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8 (161): 1–8.
- Hood, Christopher. 1991. "A public management for all seasons?" *Public Administration* 69 (1): 3–19.
- Ingaggiati, M., G. Barbato, M. Guerci, and R. Ruffini. 2024. "Reimagining the bureaucracy and post-bureaucracy debate: a systematic literature review on paradoxes in public administration." *Public Management Review*.
- Ingaggiati, M., Guerci, M., Barbato, G., & Ruffini, R. (2025). *The Bureaucracy versus Post-Bureaucracy Paradox in Public Administration: A Historical Perspective on the Selection and Training of Public Managers*. *Public Administration*.
- Lewis, Marianne W., and Wendy K. Smith. 2022. "REFLECTIONS ON THE 2021 AMR DECADE AWARD: NAVIGATING PARADOX IS PARADOXICAL." *Academy of Management Review* 47 (4).
- Qi, Huiting, and Bing Ran. 2023. "Paradoxes in collaborative governance." *Public Management Review*.
- Smith, Wendy K., and Marianne W. Lewis. 2011. "Toward a theory of paradox: A dynamic equilibrium model of organizing." *Academy of Management Review* 36 (2): 381–403.
- Weber, Max. 1958. *Essays in Sociology*. A Galaxy Book.



## Practicalities

If you wish to present a paper in one of the Permanent Study Group's, Ad Hoc Group's, or Specialized Panel's sessions at the conference, please upload an abstract outlining your proposed conference paper. This may be done through the conference website.

## Important dates

- Deadline for submission of abstracts: April 6, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Booster Grant applications: April 15, 2026
- Acceptance notification and opening of registrations: April 20, 2026
- Deadline for submission of EGPA Travel Grant applications: April 26, 2026
- Full paper submission deadline and registration deadline: July 19, 2026

## Website

- <https://www.iias-iisa.org/egpa-2026-conference/>

## Submission

- <https://www.conftool.org/egpa2026/>
- Unless specified otherwise, 500-words limit for abstracts

## Contact

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