**Call for Contributions**

**Positive Public Administration: New Directions for Theory and Practice**

**Editors**

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Feel free to contact the editors with any questions.

**Overview of the project**

The editors have secured a book contract with Edward Elgar to produce *Positive Public Administration: New Directions for Theory and Practice*, a multi-contributor volume focused on positive public administration (PPA). PPA is an emerging “approach to research and scholarship that examines the degree to which, the manner in which, and the conditions under which public policies, programs, projects, organizations, networks, and partnerships thrive, advance important democratic values, and produce widely valued societal outcomes” (Douglas et al, 2019). The volume seeks to “make the case” for PPA, lay the groundwork for how PPA research can be conducted meaningfully and to illustrate the positive contributions of governments and governance.

We are seeking contributions to the book, which aims to lay out the foundations of PPA and provide cases illustrating PPA around the world. Specifically, we seek contributions that will expand on the essay, “[Rising to Ostrom’s challenge: An invitation to walk on the bright side of public governance and public service](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25741292.2021.1972517)” (Douglas et al. 2021), which called for a “program of research devoted to uncovering the factors and mechanisms that enable high performing public policies and public service delivery mechanisms; procedurally and distributively fair processes of tackling societal conflicts; and robust and resilient ways of coping with threats and risks.”

***One-page proposals are due on 29th of April, 2022***. We will use these to select what we believe to be an optimal suite of contributions and provide the authors with constructive feedback to assist them in moving from abstract to full text. First drafts of chapters are due in January 2023. Author workshops will be a key part of the project both before and after the first draft stage, allowing for a collaborative and interactive approach. It is anticipated that these will run as part of mainstream international conferences (e.g. PMRA, IRSPM, EGPA).

**The book: short description**

A negative bias is ingrained in public administration, focusing considerable attention on failures, missteps, and blunders, and largely overlooking the positive contributions that public administration makes in the lives of individuals, communities, and societies. This phenomenon not only characterizes much scholarly work and the popular press, but also penetrates deeply into the discourse of public administration practice where it is increasingly common to disparage the work of public servants and public organizations.

This volume will draw together an international set of scholars driven to counterbalance negativity bias by advancing the nascent drive towards Positive Public Administration (PPA). PPA draws inspiration from the ‘positive’ movements in several other social science fields (see Douglas et al., 2021). This volume seeks to apply and enrich the toolkit of PA scholars and to inform and inspire PA practices. It will set out the foundations of PPA and illustrate PPA perspectives at work, using exemplary cases from around the world to explore how core functions of government are performed successfully.

Cutting across the volume is a central question: *Why do some public policies, programs, organizations, networks, or partnerships manage to do much better than others in producing widely valued societal outcomes, even as they address difficult challenges and/or operate under seemingly unfavourable conditions?* In answering this question, the volume provides a catalyst for a new endeavour in public administration.

As editors, we are committed to:

* Producing a truly global volume that features authors from around the world and that champions the next generation of scholars.
* Fostering high-quality research that reflects intergenerational and intercontinental expertise. Including a broad range of contributions, including theoretical chapters, empirical chapters (regardless of methodological approach), and critical appraisals of PPA.
* Publishing an open access book to enable maximum engagement with our collective work (the co-editors have negotiated open access in the contract with the publisher and will provide the funding. Individual authors will not be required to pay for open access).
* Using a collaborative and interactive process throughout the project, including some online and in-person workshops to develop the PPA agenda and advance research.

**Book structure**

This book will follow a traditional academic structure but will be written in a way that is accessible to broader audiences, such as practitioners, journalists, and laypeople. The book will have three sections: (1) a set of introductory chapters, (2) chapters that examine PPA within the context of five key government functions, and (3) a set of concluding chapters. We briefly describe each of these sections below.

***Section I: Introduction***

This will offer two introductory chapters written by the co-editors that set the stage for the book. Chapter 1 will draw on a published article about PPA to define the concept, explain its relevance and significance, and lay out the organization of the book. Chapter 2 will delve more deeply into the concept of PPA, probing its intellectual foundations and lessons learned from similar initiatives in other social science disciplines. It also will provide an overview of the common analytic approach used to put flesh on the bones of the PPA exemplars.

***Section II: PPA at Work***

This main section of the volume will offer five clusters of empirical-analytical chapters showcasing PPA ‘at work’ in concrete studies of *public* *policies (programs, projects)*, *public organizations*, and *collaborative governance networks*. We are looking for studies tackling instances of PPA in five key government functions:

1. Providing Internal and External Security (chapters 3-5)
2. Regulating Markets, Firms, and Networks (chapters 5-7)
3. Managing the Economy and the Public Purse (chapters 8-10)
4. Tackling Complex Societal Challenges (chapters 11-13)
5. Crafting and Delivering Public Services (chapters 14-16)

In this section, each chapter will offer a PPA-analysis as it pertains to the performance of a particular government function. To create parity, all chapters in this section will follow a similar format and address thematic questions identified/explained in the introductory chapters as they apply to the empirical instance(s) that are. Specifically, all chapters in section two will be structured to address:

1. *Introduction:* provide an overview and introduction to the government function/s the chapter focuses on. If needed, provide relevant stage-setting information about the theoretical and/or empirical contexts you are investigating. Articulate the central puzzle and claim of the chapter.
2. *Conceptual and normative vantage point:* how is positivity conceptualised in your study? Which values and considerations feed into your (or the case actors’) perspective? Make the case for their salience in the context of study.
3. *Assessment and narration*: how has positivity been made visible and valued in this case (e.g., in terms of progress, pride, achievement, quality, value, integrity, trust, loyalty, etc.)? By whom, for what purpose, and to what effect is positivity evident in the case? What debate, if any, has there been around the assessment of the qualities, performance, achievements, impacts of the relevant actors, processes, and interventions as positive? What were the dynamics of positivity, and how do you interpret its significance?
4. *Mechanisms:* what does your analysis suggest were the main driving forces and engines of the positive accomplishments under study? What challenges and barriers have been overcome to achieve positive outcomes and to secure their endurance over time? What combination of luck and skill was at play here?
5. *Conclusions and implications:* what is the upshot of the story told in the chapter? What does it urge scholars and/or practitioners of PA to consider, reflect on, learn, or start/stop/continue doing? To what extent can the ‘engines of accomplishment’ identified in the domain/case under study be purposefully designed into the architecture of other governance actors and processes? What are important next steps in further PPA explorations of this?

***Section III: Progressing PPA***

The final section of the volume will offer up programmatic and reflective chapters that take stock of and debate the promises and potential pitfalls of PPA in terms of theory, methodology, and relevance for public administration practice.

In addition, throughout the book, we anticipate including ‘sidebars,’ that is, inserts that offer practitioner-oriented or citizen-oriented reflections on PPA, such as letters and other personal narratives, exemplary mini-cases, instances of appreciative inquiry, and other techniques PPA scholarship can make use of.

**Invitation: Prepare a one-page pitch**

We invite proposals from people interested in being part of this project. If you are interested in being part of the project, please prepare a one-page pitch for the editors to consider. Specifically:

1. Familiarise yourself with the above-mentioned Douglas et al. (2021) essay, “[Rising to Ostrom’s challenge: An invitation to walk on the bright side of public governance and public service](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25741292.2021.1972517).” This essay sets out key starting points for the development of PPA and the key themes of interest in this project.
2. Prepare a **one-page** pitch for your contribution to *Positive Public Administration: New Directions for Theory and Practice*. In your pitch, clearly and concisely explain:
   1. Where and how your contribution fits into section two or three of the book structure (see below).
   2. For section two contributions: The case that you will explore and whether it centres on: public policies (programs, projects); public organizations; collaborative governance networks; and/or some other aspect of public administration.
   3. For section three contributions: Whether your primary focus will be on theory, methodology, or practice.
   4. How your case connects to and advances the PPA agenda.
   5. The connections between your case and the cross-cutting themes for the section two chapters (i.e., conceptual and normative vantage point, assessment and narration, mechanisms, and conclusions and implications – see below).
3. Upload your one-page pitch and answer the short contributor survey at: <https://syracuseuniversity.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4PKc1jG6LLEIhka>