

## The American Society for Public Administration 2024 Annual Conference

Minneapolis, Minnesota April 12, 2024

### SECTION ON AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (SAPA) SYMPOSIUM



### CALL FOR PAPER PROPOSALS

#### Pathways to Enhancing Resilience in the context of African Governance and Development

Aligned with the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) 2024 Annual Conference theme, “Building Resilient Communities,” the Section on African Public Administration (SAPA) invites members in the US, the African continent, and globally to submit their paper proposals on the concept and task of resilience building in the African context. As recognized by the ASPA community in this coming year’s conference theme, the definition of resilience is driven by local stakeholders as they take charge of the identification of local needs and the formulation of local solutions. The concept of resilience has attracted policy makers, public administrators, practitioners, and academics since the 1960s with roots in Paulo Freire work on the effects of colonial oppression and the ensuing loss of land and community traditional practices (2000). Robert Chambers 1980’s action research on rural development further expanded the concept of resilient livelihoods in the face of external shocks and crises and ways to build resiliency in the face of chronic vulnerability and unexpected external shocks and crises, both internal and external (2009). Edward Carr (2021), further conceptualizes resilience as “not the mere response to specific impacts as much as the ability to respond over time, recover and return to normality after confronting abnormal, alarming, and often unexpected threats.” In attempting “to address the questions of resilience of what and resilience to what.” Raymond Tutu and Janice Busingye (2018), *point out the* need to further investigate the resilience attributes like “stressors driving change,” “anticipatory learning,” and “social capital.”

Conceptualizing and operationalizing “resilience” in the African context is multilayered and porous. It is multilayered as it transverses the formal and the informal. Formal institutions experiences unique set of challenges in state capacity and fragility. The informal coalescing identity and solidary of family structures and communities networks plays a vital part in filling the gaps of formal institutions. The porous attribute highlights unique pathways to creating innovative policy design and tailored agile social fabrics of resiliency. Community-based initiatives and leadership matters are highlighted in face of disruptions and in the aftermath on the path to recovery. This grassroots approach incorporates local strengths and cultures and are evident among African nations. It lends a unique discussion in resiliency as strategies and initiatives are context-sensitive consequently improving legitimacy, readiness, and adaption.

This call for papers (CFP) invites scholars and practitioners to debate, within the African continent context, effective and innovative strategies to enhance communities’ ability to prepare for, cope with, rebound from, and adapt as needed to unexpected events and threats facing their local systems and

livelihoods. The timing of such alignment between SAPA CFP and the overarching ASPA is a fortuitous one. This is because this is SAPA's returning symposium after its inaugural continental conference held in Cairo, Egypt (June 6-7, 2023). As evidenced by the various presentations during the continental conference, privileging attention to the local context was deemed a critical takeaway as it helps better understand the emerging challenges while also defining the actionable parameters as any strategic interventions as bounded with local institutional capacity and legal authority of involved stakeholders. While situationally different, the aspirations of communities and its members are no different from those in the Global North. In its pursuit, we have learned about the innovations and unique partnerships molded by the various involved entities. These insights are not only useful for the practitioner trying to replicate successes but also to those working on theory. A better working theory tailored to the African member nations is warranted. Such theory is not only enlightening to develop a better understanding of PA/PM in Africa but also offers insight for a reverse migration in academic thought by offering what could the general group of Public Administration and Public Management scholars learn from our collective efforts.

To catalyze this important discussion, we propose the following questions grouped into the following tracks:

#### **Track I: Rebounding from Challenging Times**

- What are the key characteristics of community resilience in the African continent context?
- What are the roles of public administration in building democratic governance resilience?
- How does community-based leadership cultivate and sustain local democratic governance?
- How do home-grown approaches to resilience play out on the continent during challenging times?

#### **Track II: Methodological Innovations to Better Ascertain Local Circumstances**

- What methodology supports the acquisition of local knowledge?
- What methodological innovation arises in fragile states?
- Are there cases of public and private partnerships in policy design and implementation?
- What could scholars and practitioners offer in analytical frameworks to study community resilience (Insights for research, evaluation, and capacity training)?
- What roles do civil society organizations play in policy formulation and evaluation?

#### **Track III: A Probe into African Political Institutions' Resilience**

- What happens to systems and community resilience when democratic governance is failing or fails?
- What types of systems and community resilience exist during turbulence, volatility and conflict?
- How do governments on the African continent build capacity to address new and unforeseen challenges (tools of governance and their availability)?
- How do governments partner with local communities to support resilience (Comparative case studies of successful partnerships)?

#### **Track IV: Theoretical Frameworks on Comparative Studies among African Nations**

- Are there identifiable characteristics that African nations have in common when facing adversity?
- How could the youth and grassroots organizations lend insights to making sense of resilience in diverse African countries?
- How could scholars, practitioners, and academics collaborate in building a contextualized African development governance?

## Submission Protocol for Paper Proposals

SAPA Academic Affairs Committee welcomes the submission of proposals for individual papers and fully formed panels in alignment with the SAPA 2024 Annual Symposium theme. Please note that the SAPA Symposium will run all day on April 12, 2024. We need your active participation to make it a successful event. Please submit your proposal to Dr. Shin Kue Ryu, SAPA Academic Affairs Committee Chair ([ryushin@isu.edu](mailto:ryushin@isu.edu)).

Dissemination of high-quality conceptual, theoretical, empirical, policy- and practice-oriented research is strongly expected. All proposals should: 1) briefly explain how the paper or panel connects to the overall Symposium theme; 2) note the individual conference track in which the proposal best fits; 3) include 3-4 keywords, and 4) provide complete contact information for the corresponding individual. Proposals for individual papers should include an abstract of 250-400 words. Proposals for fully formed panels should consist of three to four complementary papers and include an abstract of 400-600 words.

The submission deadline is **November 30, 2023**. Review of SAPA Symposium proposal submissions will begin on December 1st, 2023, and continue through December 15, 2023. SAPA is obligated to submit the complete symposium proposal by **December 15, 2023** to the ASPA Secretariat. The high-quality papers presented at the Symposium will be considered for publication in either a special co-edited issue of AJPAM (e-edition) and/or an edited volume. AJPAM is the African Journal of Public Administration and Management.

**Note:** kindly note that ASPA 2024 annual conference is a strictly in-person event. We ask everyone to make the necessary arrangements with their respective institutions to make the in-person attendance possible. If you have any questions, please reach out to Dr. Shin Kue Ryu.

## References

Burnette, Catherine et al. 2019. *The Framework of Historical Oppression, Resilience and Transcendence to Understand Disparities in Depression Amongst Indigenous Peoples*. British Journal of Social Work

Carr, Edward. January 2022. *A Climate Resilient Future is a Just, Equitable Future*. In Thought Leadership Speaker Series/Final Report. Innovation for a Sustainable, Equitable Transportation System. Volpe Center.

Chambers, Robert. 2009. *Vulnerability, Coping and Policy*. IDS Bulletin. 37 (4):33-40.

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Freire, Paul. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY, Continuum.

Tutu, Raymond and Busingye, Janice. September 2018. *Building Resilient Societies in Africa for the Future: Conceptual Considerations and Possible Resilience Constituents*. Journal of Futures Studies, 23(1): 55–76.