

Local Governments in Times of Change and Uncertainty

Public Services · Climate Change · Environmental Challenges
18–20 June 2026 · Facultat d'Economia i Empresa · Universitat de Barcelona

Governance & values

Amalgamations,
intergovernmental
relations

Budgets & austerity

Local spending,
resilience and
federal dynamics

Service delivery

Cooperation,
procurement
and innovation

Climate & new tech

Water, procurement,
AI and social
media

Scientific Committee

Germà Bel (UB) · Trevor Brown (Ohio State) · Judith Clifton (Cantabria)
Marc Esteve (UCL-ESADE) · Raymond Gradus (VU Amsterdam) · Mildred Warner (Cornell)

Universitat de Barcelona · Observatori d'anàlisi i avaluació de polítiques públiques · Govern i Mercats · ESADE



Local Governments in Times of Change and Uncertainty: Public Services, Climate Change and Environmental Challenges

Thursday 18 June 2026

14h30. Registration opens

15h00-15h15: Opening remarks

15h15-16h00. Values, intergovernmental relations and collaboration

Chair: Marc Esteve (UCL & ESADE)

*Municipal amalgamations as a threat to democracy and the principles of local self-government:
small municipalities' resistance to the "big is beautiful" paradigm*

Erlingsson, Gissur (Linköping U.) & Jörgen Ödalen (Linköping U.).

Does vertical consolidation improve local public service performance?

Alonso, Jose M. (U. Cantabria) & Rhys Andrews (Cardiff U.)

16h00-16h45. Crime, punishment and local governance

Chair: Mattia Casula (U. di Bologna)

Mafia infiltration, local governments and public policies

Michele Giuranno (U. del Salento) & Debora Assisi (U. del Salento) & Diego Ravenda (TBS Business School) & Felice Russo (U. del Salento)

Analysis of fees and fines for residents and nonresidents: impacts for social and economic inequity

Austin M. Aldag, (U Alabama Birmingham) & Peter A. Jones (U Alabama Birmingham).

16h45-17h15: Coffee Break

17h15-18h15. Local public spending and austerity

Chair: Mildred Warner (Cornell U.)

The politics of local spending: municipal budget responses to federal election results

Lorenzo Catalano (K.U. Leuven) & Kristof De Witte (K.U. Leuven).

Resilient local budgeting in times of change.

Tjerk Budding (Vrije U. Amsterdam), Raymond Gradus (Vrije U. Amsterdam) & André Mol (Vrije U. Amsterdam).

Fungible Budgets: An analysis of US local government project cancellations in early 2025.

Zijing Zhao (Cornell U.) & Mildred Warner (Cornell U.).

Friday 19 June 2026

9h30-10h30. Public services delivery, organizational choices and effects

Chair: Amir Hefetz (DGR&SC, Holon).

Intermunicipal cooperation and utility strategies: to cooperate or not to cooperate?

Emilien Macault (U. de Lorraine) & Alexandre Mayol (U. de Lille).

Still changing after all these years: A dynamic analysis of Portuguese local government Service Delivery Choices (1999-2025).

António Tavares (U. de Minho) & Pedro Camões (U. de Aveiro).

Shared Bureaucracy and Local Government Performance: Evidence from Planning Controls in England.

Han Wang (U. Southampton; LSE); Thomas Elston (U. Oxford).

10h30-11h15. Innovations in delivery and procurement of services

Chair: Daniel Albalade (U. de Barcelona)

Political ideology and administrative innovation: evidence from municipal service delivery in Catalonia

Joël Bühler (U. de Barcelona), Esther Pano (U. de Barcelona) & Marianna Sebó (U. Politècnica de Catalunya)

Changing mindsets in local government contracting: evidence from a national-scale RCT on relational contracting training

Ole Helby Petersen (Roskilde U.), Lena Brogaard (Roskilde U.), Matthew Potoski (U.C. Santa Barbara), Nicholas Buhmann-Holmes (Lund U.).

11h15h-11h45: Coffee break

11h45-12h30. Managing risks from climate change

Chair: Justine Le Floch (U. Paris I-Sorbonne)

The strategy of the horizons: the role of underinvestment in municipal water networks during summer drought challenges

David Cromelynck (U. de Brest); Alexandre Mayol (U. de Lille); Simon Porcher (U. Dauphine); Stéphane Saussier (U. Paris I).

Addressing climate change through public procurement: A big data and machine learning approach.

Bjarke Lund-Sørensen (Roskilde U); Lena Brogaard (Roskilde U) & Ole H Petersen (Roskilde U).

12h30-13h30: 'Meet the editor' session

Chair: Trevor Brown (Ohio State U.)

Claudia Avellaneda (Indiana U.). *Local Governments Studies.*

Judith Clifton (U. de Cantabria). *Journal of Economic Policy Reform.*

Ole. H. Petersen (Roskilde U). *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory.*

Matthew Potoski (U.C. Santa Barbara). *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management & International Public Management Journal.*

13h30-15h00: Lunch time (free).

15h00-16h00: Challenges for accessibility and equity in local services

Chair: Claudia Avellaneda (Indiana U.)

A public value framework for collaborative governance financial sustainability and service legitimacy

Silvestre, Hugo (UNILAB, Brazil); Eduardo Grin (FGV, Brazil) & Aldenísio Correia (UNILAB, Brazil)

Do Crises Motivate Change? Did local government services for aging increase after the pandemic?

Mildred Warner (Cornell U.), Hongtao Huang (Cornell U.) & Xue Zhang (Penn State U.).

Privately financed PPPs for social and affordable housing: A review of the Irish experience

Eoin Reeves (U. of Limerick)

16h00-16h45: New technologies and approaches: analysis and policy implementation

Chair: David van Slyke (Syracuse U.)

Does professionalization in governments' social media use increase citizens' online engagement? – evidence from municipalities in Poland

Monika Banaszewska (U.E.W Poznainu); Ivo Bischoff (U. Kassel); Małgorzata M. Hybka (U.E.W Poznainu); Waldemar Rydzak (U.E.W Poznainu); Jacek Trębecki (U.E.W Poznainu) & Aleksandra Wimberger (U. Kassel)

How AI can improve state & local infrastructure delivery: A practical framework using a large post-WWII project dataset

Richard Geddes (Cornell U.) & Saurabh Mishra (Taiyō.AI).

Saturday 20 June 2026

9h30-11:30am: Network meeting to discuss the incorporation of the Workshop's contributions to the results of the project *Mobility and transport policies: Effects on climate change, sustainability and health*. Ministry of Science and Innovation (PID2022-138866OB-I00). 2023-26.