



4 & 5 NOVEMBER, 2026

LEADING  
RESEARCHING, WRITING AND EXPRESSING LEADERSHIP  
(DIFFERENTLY)



Hosted at the IGR-IAE and the CREM laboratory at the University of Rennes on 4 and 5 November 2026, this conference is a collaboration between the Observatoire Santé Solidaire des Dirigeants of the Universities of Rennes, Rennes 2 and the EHESP, the IESEG School of Management, Louvain School of Management at UCLouvain, ESCP, IAE at the University of Grenoble Alpes and ESSCA School of Management

Its aim is to bring together French- and English-speaking researchers interested in studying leadership differently.

The conference is organised in partnership with the scientific association Projectique.

The best papers will be published for a special issue of the Projectique journal.

## Key dates

- 13th April 2026 : Submission portal opens
- 15th June 2026 : Submission deadline

**Submission adress :** [leading.differently.2026@gmail.com](mailto:leading.differently.2026@gmail.com)

## Call for contributions

Researchers and scholars in leadership studies are used to the production of scientific articles – empirically-based papers, either quantitative or qualitative, that adopt a neutral tone and position the researcher as a neutral observer – that form the mainstay of academic discourse. But there is a need for more human forms of research and writing that let us say what we feel as well as showing what we see. Alternative forms of writing that meet this kind of need could include essays, debates, dramatized accounts, autoethnography and other forms of reflexive writing.

There can be fears that unconventional forms of research and writing have less impact than conventional articles – but that overlooks the opportunity for resonance that different approaches can support (Cunliffe, 2022; Hibbert, 2021). As practice, leadership appears to be being revitalised by a humanistic ethos that outlines the contours of a caring leadership style that safeguards against organisational violence (e.g. Desrosiers, Gril and Fleury, 2025). Resonant work reaches people where they are in the context of their authentic lives, offering renewed connection in situations where dominant societal structures, built around normative theories, are leading to their alienation (Rosa, 2025). The prevailing trend in this practical arena remains one of functionalism and the risk of reducing a humanistic project to management practices that follow traditional approaches—including in the way they are articulated—of performance-oriented management (see, for example, Delmas, 2021; Malhaire and Dunant, 2022). Given the turbulent social contexts, inhuman technologies and technocratic interventions shaping leadership today, the need for more human and resonant forms of research and writing on leadership is now pressing (Kostera, 2022 ; Boncori 2022).

This conference aims to create a space for scholars—whether or not they come from leadership studies—who seek to think about, write about, and communicate research on leadership and leaders differently, by drawing on critical, feminist, affective, aesthetic, or simply singular and embodied approaches. Contributions exploring alternative expressions of leadership within multiple types of organizations, including academic institutions, are also welcome.

### References

- Boncori, I. (2022). *Writing differently*. Routledge.
- Cunliffe, A. L. 2022. Must I Grow a Pair of Balls to Theorize about Theory in Organization and Management Studies? *Organization Theory*, 3(3): 1-28.
- Deckers, J. (2021). The value of autoethnography in leadership studies, and its pitfalls. *Philosophy of Management*, 20(1), 75–91.
- Delmas, N. (2021) Un leadership humain et performant ? Oui, c'est possible. Editions Mardaga.
- Desrosiers M.E., Gril E., Fleury C. (2025) Un leadership humain au service du CHUM. *Gestion*, 2025/4, pp. 27-32.
- Hibbert, P. 2021. *How to be a Reflexive Researcher*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Hibbert, P. 2024. *Leader Work*. New York: Routledge.

Kostera, M. (Ed.). (2022). *How to write differently: A quest for meaningful academic writing*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Ladkin, D. (2008). Leading beautifully: How mastery, congruence and purpose create the aesthetic of embodied leadership practice. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(1), 31–41.

Malhaire et Dunant (2022) *Vers un leadership créatif, efficace et humain : le leadership en temps de crise*, 5è éd. Gereso.

Rosa, H. 2025. *Time and World*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

## Submission formats

We welcome contributions in both conventional and alternative formats that focus on studying leadership in ways that maximize humanity and resonance rather than focusing on generalizability and ‘scientific’ approaches such approaches may include:

- Classic article formats : proposal (extended abstract 3-5 pages or full draft, 20 pages) adopting a critical and/or reflective perspective on leadership and leadership studies.
- Essays
- Autoethnographies, collaborative ethnographies and collaborative autoethnographies
- Dramatic formats, such as plays (including notice of logistical requirements)
- Poetry
- Journaling
- Visual images/collages/posters
- Reflective accounts of the researchers' leadership research journey/ e.g. how to allow oneself to write about/study leadership differently
- Other forms of research-informed or research-inspired creative writing e.g. dirty writing, beautiful writing, ‘writing differently movement’ inspired writing...

Discussion pieces which address any of such formats as research genres, or investigate philosophical or methodological approaches, are also welcome.

Submission instructions:

**For articles, essays and ethnographies** please submit an extended abstract of 3-5 pages or a full draft of up to 20 pages

**For alternative format submissions** please submit a one-page summary of your proposed input and contribution.

## Organizing Committee

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- . Pr Laurent Taskin, Université Catholique de Louvain, LouRIM

## Key speakers

- . Pr. Ilaria Boncori, University of Essex, UK
- .Pr. Jean-Francois Chanlat, Emeritus, Paris Dauphine, Professeur invité de l'université de Rennes
- . Pr. Carol Elliott, University of St Andrew, UK
- . Pr. Paul Hibbert, University of St Andrew, UK
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