Fordham University

Track 1: Building Capacity

Our Track Theme:

Enabling Wiser City Service Systems for Humanity

Track co-chairs:

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1. Short track description

Enabling Wiser City Service Systems for Humanity

Cities are complex service systems that shape consumers' everyday lives and well-being through interconnected services, such as healthcare, education, housing, mobility, technology, energy, governance, and the environment. This track brings together scholars and practitioners to explore how city service systems can become wiser in serving humanity. Participants will collaboratively conceptualize wisdom practices across urban service subsystems and develop a transformative research agenda for enabling wiser cities that create positive outcomes for consumers and society. The track is an initiative of ServCollab and the UN PRME Working Group on Service Systems for Humanity.

2. Extended Track Description

Enabling Wiser City Service Systems for Humanity

Humanity is an urban species (Gross, 2016). Cities are complex service systems where people interact to support everyday life. Service research has described cities as holistic service systems that provide all the services that humans need (Spohrer et al., 2012). Within cities, humanity creates essential and interdependent service subsystems, including governance, healthcare, education, housing, mobility, communications technology, energy, and the environment. Urban services research has documented a broad range of subsystems within these systems (Kumar et al., 2020). As holistic service systems, cities bring public, private, nonprofit, community, and educational actors into close interaction and concentrate social, economic, political, and environmental challenges.

This Track 1 proposal focuses on enabling wiser city service systems. Cities vary considerably in their capacity to coordinate urban subsystems that create value for inhabitants, with some fostering societal well-being and others struggling to do so (Visnjic et al., 2016). Hence, cities provide a valuable context for examining the possibilities of large-scale transformation (Villari, 2022). City service systems have direct consequences for consumers. Consumers depend on interconnected urban services in their daily lives, and the accessibility and quality of these services can influence their well-being. Thus, examining how city service systems can wisely serve their inhabitants provides an important opportunity to improve consumer well-being.

Business schools are well positioned to conduct transformative research that helps city service systems improve, as they operate within cities. The business accrediting agencies (AACSB, AMBA, and EQUIS) are calling on business schools to demonstrate societal impact. For example, AACSB's Standard 9.3 requires "Schools produce scholarly work—basic, applied, and/or pedagogical—that demonstrably advances understanding, practice, or policy in their chosen societal impact area(s)." (AACSB, 2026).

This Track 1 proposal is an initiative of ServCollab (https://www.servcollab.org) and the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management (PRME) Working Group on Service Systems for Humanity (https://www.unprme.org/working-group/prme-working-group-on-service-systems-for-humanity/). PRME works with over 800 business schools worldwide and has the mission "to transform management education and develop the responsible decision-makers of

tomorrow to advance sustainable development." (UN PRME, 2026). This track provides an opportunity for business scholars to investigate important societal topics in city service systems.

The purpose of this track is to conceptualize the practices that enable city service systems to wisely serve humanity. Wisdom is defined as "… the capacity to realize what is of value in life, for oneself and others …" (Maxwell, 2007, p. 108). Wisdom enables transforming service systems (Hamdan et al., 2025). Service systems research distinguishes wisdom from technical intelligence or efficiency by connecting wiser systems to human values, equitable conflict resolution, quality of life, and positive societal outcomes (Spohrer et al., 2016).

Track goals

This track will build collaborative research capacity to enable wiser city service systems. Participants will collaborate to achieve the following goals:

- conceptualize wisdom practices that enable wiser city service systems;
- explore how wisdom practices manifest across different urban service subsystems;
- examine how these practices can improve consumer and societal well-being; and
- develop a transformative research agenda for enabling wiser city service systems.

Participants and capacity building

Practitioners and scholars in Transformative Consumer Research, Transformative Service Research, responsible management, sustainability, ethics, public policy, healthcare, education, and technology will be invited to participate in this track. Diversity across disciplines, career stages, and cities will be actively sought.

Applications from junior scholars are particularly encouraged, including PhD students and early career researchers within the first three years post-PhD. The track is open to relevant external stakeholders and practitioners whose knowledge and experience can contribute to understanding and transforming city service systems.

Post-conference collaboration

After the TCR conference, the team will collaboratively draft our *Enabling Wiser City Service Systems for Humanity* manuscript, which will be submitted to a public policy or service research journal.

3. References

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4. Biographies

Raymond P. Fisk

Raymond P. Fisk is Founder and President of ServCollab and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Marketing at Texas State University. He has published in the *Journal of Service Research, Journal of Service Management, Journal of Service Marketing, Journal of Retailing, Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing*, and others. He received the AMA SERVSIG Career Contributions to the Services Discipline Award in 2005 and the Grönroos Service Research Award from the Hanken School of Economics, Finland, in 2012. He is Co-Chair of the United Nations PRME Working Group on Service Systems for Humanity Steering Committee.

Claire Deventer

Claire Deventer is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at ICHEC Brussels Management School, Belgium. Her research explores the intersection of artificial intelligence, technology, and transformative service, with a particular focus on human well-being, consumer behavior, and technology-enabled service experiences. She is interested in how emerging technologies reshape human relationships, decision-making, and value creation in service contexts. Claire is also a member of the Steering Committee of the *Service Systems for Humanity* Working Group within the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, where she contributes to advancing research on service systems and societal well-being.

Qusay Hamdan

Qusay Hamdan is Vice President and Research Scholar at ServCollab, where he leads research, community, and strategic initiatives that advance collaborative scholarship to serve humanity. He also serves on the Steering Committee of the UN PRME Working Group on Service Systems for Humanity. His research spans Service Research, Transformative Service Research, and Service Ethics, with particular interests in wise service systems, vulnerable identities, inclusion, sustainability, and social impact. He earned his Ph.D. in Business Economics from Ghent University and has held academic positions at the University of Namur, Vlerick Business School, and Karlstad University's Service Research Center (CTF).