



Palazzo del Capitanio  
Piazza Capitanio, 3 - 35139 Padova, Italy  
tel. 0498274534  
[dip.fisppa@unipd.it](mailto:dip.fisppa@unipd.it)  
[dipartimento.fisppa@pec.unipd.it](mailto:dipartimento.fisppa@pec.unipd.it)

## **Paolo Francesco Cottone - Narrative CV**

### **Profile**

Paolo Francesco Cottone is Associate Professor of Social Psychology at the Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Education and Applied Psychology (FISPPA), University of Padua. He holds a PhD in Social Psychology and Personality and has developed his academic work at the intersection of cultural psychology, social psychology, communication, cooperation, intercultural processes, and the social uses of digital technologies. At the University of Padua he directs the Interaction and Culture Laboratory and has long contributed to doctoral training in Social Sciences, with particular attention to interactions, communication, and cultural constructions.

His research trajectory connects a stable theoretical interest in cultural mediation and situated activity with a practical attention to the artefacts, tools, and environments through which social life is organised. Across different domains, his work asks how people construct meaning, negotiate positions, cooperate, communicate, and transform practices within institutional, technological, intercultural, and ecological contexts. This has led him to study virtual environments, distance learning, intercultural mediation, sustainable energy communities, gender and prison contexts, death education, dignity, and psychosocial dimensions of decarbonization.

### **Research Orientation**

Cottone's research is grounded mainly in cultural and social psychology. His work approaches communication and cooperation as situated social processes, shaped by the cultural artifacts and institutional settings in which they occur. Rather than treating technologies as neutral tools, his research examines them as social artifacts that reorganize interaction, define new action contexts, and mediate cooperation, learning, participation, and identity construction.

Methodologically, his work draws on qualitative and interpretive traditions, including ethnographic approaches, discourse analysis, media and newspaper analysis, conversation and interaction analysis, positioning analysis, and gesture analysis. This methodological orientation is visible across his research on virtual environments, intercultural contact zones, gendered institutions, and energy transitions. A recurring theme is the effort to connect micro-level interaction with broader cultural, institutional, and societal processes.

### **Research Projects and Collaborations**

In the early 2000s, Cottone contributed to European projects on virtual environments and clinical applications. In VEPSY, "Telemedicine and Portable Virtual Environments for Clinical Psychology," he worked on ergonomic validation, usability, cognitive walkthrough, breakdown analysis, and multi-user virtual environments. In EMMA, "Engaging Media for Mental Health Applications," he contributed to the study of social interfaces, navigation in virtual environments, emotion-oriented environments, and interaction methods for mental health applications.

Alongside these European projects, he worked on national PRIN projects concerning virtual communities, technology-mediated collaboration, and e-learning in complex organizations. These projects explored the potential of virtual environments and distance-learning systems for training, cooperation, meaning negotiation, and organizational learning. This early research shaped a long-standing interest in how digital environments become spaces of collaboration, learning, ambiguity, and situated action.

From 2007 onward, his research increasingly engaged with intercultural mediation and contact zones. He was responsible for units on “Intercultural Learning” and “Informal Practices of Intercultural Mediation” in University of Padua projects dedicated to intercultural research and practice. These projects addressed linguistic-cultural mediation, identity construction, media discourse, and ethnographic analysis in local intercultural contexts.

Between 2011 and 2013, he participated in the European Daphne project EMPoWER, “Empowerment of Women Environment Research,” coordinated at the University of Padua. The project focused on gender-based violence, psychodrama, empowerment, and processes of identity positioning and change. This line of work connects to later publications and projects on prison, dignity, transgender people in correctional settings, and institutional approaches to vulnerability and discrimination.

From 2012 to 2015, he served as local unit manager in the FIRB project ACCESI, “Socio-constructivist analysis of the Italian sustainable energy communities.” This project opened a major line of research on sustainability, public discourse, social representations, energy citizenship, and the psychosocial dimensions of energy transitions. From 2020, he has participated as local unit head in the Horizon 2020 project TIPPING+, “Enabling positive tipping points towards clean-energy transitions in coal and carbon-intensive regions,” extending this work toward decarbonization, place attachment, lock-in mechanisms, and just transitions.

He has also participated in the Erasmus+ project DE4PP, “Death Education for Palliative Psychology,” and in University of Padua projects on teaching quality, ICT integration, transversal skills, and gender binarism in prison settings. His collaborations include long-standing international links with Brazilian research groups, including the Laboratório de Psicodinâmica do Trabalho Feminino at the University of Brasília and the Laboratório de Psicologia Social da Comunicação e Cognição at the Federal University of Santa Catarina.

### **Teaching and Academic Service**

Cottone teaches in the areas of Social Psychology and Intercultural Psychology. His recent teaching includes Intercultural Psychology in the Master’s degree programme in Clinical, Social and Intercultural Psychology, Psychosocial Processes, Cultural Pluralism and Inclusion, and General and Social Psychology. His teaching activity also includes methodological and thematic modules on cultural psychology, intercultural approaches, qualitative analysis tools, and research methods.

He has been a member of the Doctoral Committee in Social Sciences at the University of Padua since 2008 and has supervised doctoral research in cultural psychology, discourse, intercultural processes, and social interaction. His academic service has included participation in departmental bodies, scientific committees, thesis committees, and quality assurance activities for degree programmes.

### **Publications and Scholarly Contribution**

Cottone’s publications cover a broad set of research areas while maintaining a coherent focus on culture, interaction, artifacts, and institutions. His work includes studies on virtual environments and collaboration, distance learning, intercultural positioning, gender and institutional contexts, prison and dignity, psychodrama and violence, public discourse on energy sustainability, grassroots participation in the Transition Movement, psychosocial dimensions of decarbonization, and social-ecological tipping points.

He co-edited the 2016 special issue “Energy Transitions in Europe: Emerging Challenges, Innovative Approaches, and Possible Solutions” for *Energy Research & Social Science*. His institutional profile currently lists more than eighty publications. His CV reports over seventy peer-reviewed journal articles and edited-book contributions, as well as numerous national and international conference presentations. His work has appeared in journals such as *Energy Policy*, *Energy Research & Social Science*, *Global Environmental Change*, *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *Behavioral Sciences*, *Frontiers in Public Health*, *Frontiers in Psychology*, *International Journal of Transgender Health*, *Cognition, Technology & Work*, and *Ergonomics*.

### **Public Identity**

Taken as a whole, Cottone’s academic profile can be read as a sustained investigation into how people act, learn, cooperate, and make sense of change through cultural artifacts, social positions, technological environments, and institutional contexts. His research moves between empirical analysis and methodological experimentation, between public issues and situated interactions, and between academic outputs and the practical tools that make research, teaching, and interpretation possible.