

*Behavioural and Policy Sciences Seminar Series
(with support from Mr Chan Hon Pun)*

Public Accountability in Street-Level Bureaucracies: The Accountability Regimes Framework

Professor Eva Thomann

University of Konstanz

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2022
Time: 4:30pm - 5:30pm HKT
Zoom : Please register by scanning the QR
code or using the link below.
Zoom details will be provided by
email before the seminar.
<https://bit.ly/3936Jqf>
Language: English



Abstract

Hierarchical accountability often proves insufficient to control street-level implementation, where complex, informal accountability relations prevail. However, scholars lack a theoretical model of how street-level relations affect implementation outcomes in terms of actual behaviour. Using the Accountability Regimes Framework (ARF), the study presented here explains how a hybrid implementation arrangement can create competing street-level accountabilities that translate into policy divergence. The anti-terrorist "Prevent Duty" policy in the United Kingdom (UK) relies on a hybrid arrangement that requires university lecturers to report any student they suspect may be undergoing a process of radicalization. We ask: what perceived street-level accountabilities and dilemmas does this politically contested policy imply for lecturers, and how do they affect divergence? An online survey of British lecturers (N=809), combined with 35 qualitative follow-up interviews, reveals that the Prevent Duty faces a severe acceptance problem on the ground. Accountability dilemmas predictably trigger street-level divergence. Moreover, results demonstrate the importance of political-ideological accountability.

Biography

Eva Thomann is a scholar of Public Policy and Public Administration who specializes in policy implementation. Since April 2021 she is a full professor of Public Administration at the University of Konstanz. Previously, she has held research positions at the University of Bern, the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, the University of Heidelberg, the European University Institute in Florence, and the University of Exeter. She completed her PhD in Public Administration at the University of Bern in 2015 and has worked in policy consultancy from 2009-2015. Her research interests include policy implementation, Europeanization, behavioral public policy and administration, and case-oriented and set-theoretic methodology. Her current work focuses on three pillars: accountability, discrimination, and corruption in street-level bureaucracies; differentiated policy implementation in the European Union; and good practices in Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Eva's monograph "Customized implementation of European Union food safety policy: United in diversity?" (Palgrave, 2019) won the 2019 IPPA best book award. Next to her forthcoming Cambridge University Press textbook on QCA using R (with Carsten Schneider and Nena Oana), her research has been published in leading journals including Governance, the Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, and the Journal of European Public Policy.

All are welcome!

Enquiries: Dr. Nick Petrovsky
Email: npetrovs@cityu.edu.hk