

Practical Aspects of Developing a Research Agenda: the Example of Stereotypes of Civil Servants



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Bio:

Lars Tummers is a chair professor of public administration and organizational science at Utrecht University, The Netherlands. He is also a Visiting Professor at City University of Hong Kong. He worked as an Associate Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam, a Marie Curie Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley, and a Visiting Scholar at the University of Oxford. He is a globally recognized expert on public leadership and behavior change. He is one of the originators of the interdisciplinary field combining psychology and public administration, called Behavioral Public Administration.

Abstract:

Civil servants are essential to society, yet are often stereotyped as lazy or incompetent. Negative stereotypes can deter skilled workers from entering the public service and impact civil servants' performance. This project is the first comparative study to explore stereotypes of civil servants across countries. I will discuss how this project developed, going from initial ideas to a concrete agenda to a grant application and research papers. I will also share key findings. First, we have indeed found negative stereotypes, but also positive ones. Such positive stereotypes can be used to attract personnel to the public sector. Furthermore, we have identified the 'ideal' values of civil servants. Lastly, we identify ways to improve the relationship between civil servants and citizens.



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