



“Modern Democracies at their Limits? Causes and Consequences of Policy Accumulation”

Speaker: Christoph Knill (University of Munich)

Chair: Maria Elena Cavallaro (Luiss)

Date and Time: March 30th, 2022, 13:15 – 14:30hrs

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Abstract

The responsiveness to societal demands is both the key virtue and the key problem of modern democracies. On the one hand, responsiveness is a central cornerstone of democratic legitimacy. On the other hand, responsiveness inevitably entails policy accumulation. While policy accumulation often positively reflects modernization and human progress, it also undermines democratic government in three main ways: First, policy accumulation renders policy content increasingly complex, which crowds out policy substance from public debates and leads to an increasingly unhealthy discursive prioritization of politics over policy. Secondly, policy accumulation comes with aggravating implementation deficits, as it produces administrative backlogs and incentivizes selective implementation. Finally, policy accumulation undermines the pursuit of evidence-based public policy, because it threatens our ability to evaluate the increasingly complex interactions within growing policy mixes. We argue that the stability of democratic systems will crucially depend on their ability to make policy accumulation more sustainable.

About the Speaker

Professor Dr. Christoph Knill is Chair of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Munich. He studied public administration and political science at the University of Konstanz and obtained his PhD from the University of Bielefeld in 1994. He was research associate at the Max-Planck Institute for the Study of Societies in Cologne (1994-1995), the European University Institute in Florence (1995-1998), and the Max-Planck Project Group for the Study of Common Goods in Bonn (1998-2000). Before joining the Department, Christoph Knill has been Professor of Political Science at the Universities of Jena (2001-2004) and

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Konstanz (2004-2014). The main research interests of Christoph Knill lie in the areas of comparative policy analysis and comparative public administration. In this context, his main focus is on policy-making in the European Union, the analysis of processes of international policy convergence and policy diffusion as well as research on policy implementation. With regard to these topics, his major thematic interest is on environmental, social and morality policies. For further information see <https://publicpolicy-knill.org/de/>.

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