# Topics for master theses

| Last update: January 2025 |
|---|

The master's thesis topics offered by our chair are derived from our research profile. We distinguish between four fields: Organization, Human Resource Management, Strategic Management, and Market-Oriented Leadership in Public and Nonprofit Organizations. In addition to this list of topics, you also have the option to propose your own topic that aligns with the chair's profile. The following table provides examples of possible topic areas within each field. To develop a master's thesis topic, please contact Mr. Bruder (jonas.bruder@uni-mannheim.de). For information on the framework and requirements for master's theses at our department, please first read our guidelines for academic writing.

| Research domain | Possible topic areas |
|---|---|
| Organization | Hybrid Organizing, Bureaucracy, Public-Private Partnerships, Resilience, Digitalization, Organizationl development |
| Human Ressource Management | Volunteering, Recruiting, Motivation, Person-Environment (Mis-) Fit |
| Strategic Management | Accountability, Legitimacy, Citizen-State Interactions, Administrative Burden, Nonmarket Strategy, Shared Value Creation, Corporate Philanthropy |
| Market-Oriented Leadership | Representative Bureaucracy, Fundraising, Public service delivery |

| Organization | Introductory questions | Introductory literature |
|---|---|---|
| **Ways to Avoid Mission Drift? Organizational Response towards Mission Achievement in Hybrid Organizations.**<br><br>*Wege, um Mission Drift zu vermeiden? Organisationale Reaktionen zur Zielerreichung in hybriden Organisationen.* | Which scientific findings regarding organizational responses to mission drift in hybrid organizations are discussed in the literature?<br><br>What factors constitute an effective response to potential mission drift in hybrid organizations?<br><br>Method: qualitative (quantitative is possible) | Grimes, M. G., Williams, T. A., Zhao, E. Y. (2019). Anchors Aweigh: The Sources, Variety, and Challenges of Mission Drift. *Academy of Management Review*, *44*(4), 819–845. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2017.0254<br><br>Hota, P. K., Manoharan, B., Rakshit, K., Panigrahi, P. (2023). Hybrid Organization Deconstructed: A Bibliographic Investigation into the Origins, Development, and Future of the Research Domain. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *25*(2), 384–409. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12314 |
| **The Machines Take Over – Citizens' Perceptions of Automated Bureaucratic Decision Making.**<br><br>*Die Maschinen übernehmen – Die Wahrnehmung automatisierter behördlicher Entscheidungsprozesse* | Which scientific findings on the opportunities and challenges of using algorithms in official decision-making processes are discussed in the literature?<br><br>How does the visible use of algorithms affect citizens' perception of official decision-making processes?<br><br>Method: quantitative | Grimmelikhuijsen, S. (2023). Explaining Why the Computer Says No: Algorithmic Transparency Affects the Perceived Trustworthiness of Automated Decision-Making. Public Administration Review. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13483<br><br>Alon-Barkat, S., & Busuioc, M. (2024). Behavioural public administration meets data science: A behavioural research agenda on algorithmic decision-making. Journal of Behavioral Public Administration, 7. https://doi.org/10.30636/kbgvqh65 |

| Human Ressource Management | Introductory questions | Introductory literature |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| Strategic Management | Introductory questions | Introductory literature |
|---|---|---|
| **Tackling Administrative Burden - Effects of Administrative Burden Reduction Strategies on Citizens' Burden Perception**<br><br>*Bewältigung administrativer Belastungen - Auswirkungen von Strategien zur Reduktion administrativer Belastungen auf die Wahrnehmung der Belastung durch die Bürger\*innen* | Which scientific findings on dimensions and strategies for reducing administrative burdens are discussed in the literature?<br><br>How do strategies for reducing administrative burdens affect learning costs, compliance costs, and psychological costs?<br><br>Method: quantitative | Halling, A., & Baekgaard, M. (2023). Administrative Burden in Citizen–State Interactions: A Systematic Literature Review. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muad023<br><br>Benish, A., Tarshish, N., Holler, R., & Gal, J. (2023). Types of administrative burden reduction strategies: who, what, and how. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, muad028. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muad028 |
| **Double Negative Effects of Administrative Burden? The Impact of Administrative Burden on Citizens' Civic Capacities**<br><br>*Doppelt negative Auswirkungen von administrativen Belastungen? Die Auswirkungen administrativer Belastungen auf die Civic Capacities von Bürger\*innen* | Welche wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse zu Auswirkungen administrativer Belastungen auf die Civic Capacties von Bürger\*innen werden in der Literatur diskutiert?<br><br>Welche Auswirkungen haben administrative Belastungen auf die Civic Capacities von Bürger\*innen?<br><br>Method: qualitative (quantitativ possible) | Halling, A., & Baekgaard, M. (2023). Administrative Burden in Citizen–State Interactions: A Systematic Literature Review. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muad023<br><br>Christensen, J., Aarøe, L., Baekgaard, M., Herd, P., & Moynihan, D. P. (2020). Human capital and administrative burden: The role of cognitive resources in citizen-state interactions. *Public Administration Review*, 80(1), 127-136. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13134 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **When Citizens Like Administrative Burden - Identifying Conditions in Which Administrative Burdens are Welcomed**<br><br>*Wenn Bürger administrative Belastungen begrüßen – Identifikation von Bedingungen, unter denen administrative Belastungen positiv wahrgenommen werden* | Which scientific findings on the effects of administrative burdens on citizens' civic capacities are discussed in the literature?<br><br>What effects do administrative burdens have on the civic capacities of citizens?<br><br>Method: qualitative | Baekgaard, M., Halling, A., & Moynihan, D. (2024). Burden tolerance: Developing a validated measurement instrument across seven countries. *Public Administration Review*. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13835<br><br>Doughty, M., & Baehler, K. J. (2020). "Hostages to compliance": Towards a reasonableness test for administrative burdens. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, *3*(4), 273-287. https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvaa010 |
| **Design Matters – Identifying Factors Influencing Administrative Burden in Digital Citizen-State Interactions**<br><br>*Auf das Design kommt es an – Identifikation von Faktoren, die die administrative Belastung in digitalen Bürger-Staat-Interaktionen beeinflussen* | Which scientific findings on the causes of digital administrative burdens are discussed in the literature?<br><br>What factors in the design of digital government services cause administrative burdens? How are the causes related to interactions between technology, administrative staff, and users?<br><br>Method: quantitative (qualitative possible) | Halling, A., & Baekgaard, M. (2023). Administrative Burden in Citizen–State Interactions: A Systematic Literature Review. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muad023<br><br>Peeters, R. (2023). Digital administrative burdens: An agenda for analyzing the citizen experience of digital bureaucratic encounters. Perspectives on Public Management and Governance, 6(1), 7-13. https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvac024 |

| Market-Oriented Leadership | Introductory questions | Introductory literature |
|---|---|---|
| **To Grant or not to Grant. How Important are Grants for Follow-Up Funding in Social Enterprises?**<br><br>*Gefördert zu werden oder nicht gefördert zu werden. Wie wichtig ist eine Förderung für Sozialunternehmen für anschließende Kapitalrunden?* | What scientific findings are discussed in the literature on the signaling effect of successful fundraising?<br><br>Can funding in the start-up phase of a social enterprise help to raise funds more effectively in later financing rounds?<br><br>Method: qualitative/quantitative | Martin, M. (2015). Building Impact Businesses through Hybrid Financing. *Entrepreneurship Research Journal*, 5(2), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.1515/erj-2015-0005<br><br>Hirschmann, M., Moritz, A. (2020). Social Finance in Europe: The Transition from Grants to Follow-Up Financing for Social Enterprises. In: Moritz, A., Block, J.H., Golla, S., Werner, A. (eds) Contemporary Developments in Entrepreneurial Finance. FGF Studies in Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-17612-9_10 |
| **When Public Service Delivery Fails – The Effects of Public Service Failures on Citizens' Satisfaction, Emotions, and Trust in Public Institutions**<br><br>Wenn öffentlicher Dienstleistungen versagen – Welche Auswirkungen haben Public Service Failures auf die Zufriedenheit, Emotionen und das Vertrauen von Bürger*innen in öffentliche Institutionen | Which scientific findings on the impact of public service failure on citizens are discussed in the literature?<br><br>How does public service failure affect the emotions of affected citizens and third parties? How is this justified?<br><br>Method: quantitative (qualitative possible) | Holler, R., Tarshish, N., & Kaplan, E. (2024). "That's where the hunt for the correction begins": Experiences of administrative errors as sites of administrative burden. *International Journal of Social Welfare*. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12637<br><br>Van Vaerenbergh, Y., Orsingher, C., Vermeir, I., & Larivière, B. (2014). A meta-analysis of relationships linking service failure attributions to customer outcomes. *Journal of Service Research*, 17(4), 381-398. https://doi.org/10.1177/10946705145383 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **When Service Recovery Matters – How Recovery Activities Influence Citizens' Perception of Public Service Failures**<br><br><br>Wenn Service Recovery den Unterschied macht – Wie Service Recovery Maßnahmen die Wahrnehmung von Public Service Failures durch Bürger*innen beeinflussen | Which scientific findings on the effect of recovery activities in the context of public service failure are discussed in the literature?<br><br>What recovery activities after a public service failure are expected by affected citizens and third parties?<br><br>Method: qualitative (quantitative possible) | Döring, M. (2022). 'Explain, but make no excuses': service recovery after public service failures. Public Management Review, 24(5), 799-817. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2020.1864013<br><br><br>Grégoire, Y., & Mattila, A. S. (2021). Service failure and recovery at the crossroads: recommendations to revitalize the field and its influence. *Journal of Service Research*, *24*(3), 323-328. https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670520958073 |