

Public accountability in public health in China

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Propositions supplement to the dissertation

Public Accountability in Public Health in China: Managing Food and Vaccine Incidents

Ronghui Yang, Maastricht 2020

1. Public accountability with respect to public health is viewed as a democratic value in West, while public accountability is seen to a technical instrument to favor institutional efficiency for public health governance in China. (This dissertation, Chapter 6)
2. Limited information disclosure during the vaccination and the baby food crisis in China was meant to retain public trust, but it resulted in the opposite, public distrust. Hence, to increase public trust in public health information transparency is key. (This dissertation, Chapter 6)
3. Although the current Chinese political system makes reciprocal dialogue with citizens difficult, several national public health crises in China display the need a bilateral communication infrastructure. (This dissertation, Chapter 5)
4. Performing fieldwork according to formal procedures like informed consent is the standard in Western countries, but in the Chinese context, doing informal fieldwork via establishing *Guanxi connection* (private relationship) with participants is required to gain access. (This dissertation, Chapter 1)
5. The construction of an inclusive governance system in China should be compatible with Chinese Confucianism that stresses the proportionality between individualistic and collectivistic values. (He, 2016)
6. “Advancing according to its own logic, much of science has lost sight of the better world it is supposed to help create. [...] Only through direct engagement with the real world can science free itself to rediscover the path toward truth”. (Sarewitz, 2016, p. 40)
7. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, trust is more important than anything. (Zheng, 2020)
8. Using the dissertation as a lens to understand COVID-19 crisis response in China, results in the hypothesis that although the pandemic was controlled quite fast, inappropriate public accountability practices during the pandemic control stimulated public distrust on Chinese social media. (Valorisation chapter)
9. Understanding social problems through inquiring the testimonials of multiple stakeholders favors epistemic justice in knowledge production, or, as an old Chinese proverb goes: “Knowledge and truth come from the debates”. (真理越辩越明)
10. Confucius expressed the value of humility (in science) best: “If three walk together, one should be my teacher”. (三人行，必有我师焉)