

CALL FOR PAPERS

Actors, mechanisms and directions of Policy Diffusion: between translation and resistance

Deadline for submissions: March 31, 2017

(Articles in English, Portuguese, and Spanish)

Organizers

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The purpose of this Special Issue on Policy Diffusion for the Brazilian Public Administration Review is to discuss topics on this fast-growing research theme. Policy diffusion has gained space in different fields of social science and has made important theoretical and conceptual contributions. This has an empirical basis, for administrative modernization, the influence of international institutions on domestic policies, competition among countries, and globalization have made the adoption of similar policies in different contexts more and more frequent (Simmons, Garrett and Dobbin, 2008; Pal, Hadjiisky and Walker, 2016). In federal States, the adoption of many policies is induced top-down, which affects subnational entities (Daley and Garand, 2005). Furthermore, regional integration and international regimes have provided for harmonization of norms and regulatory instruments.

However, literature on public policy and administration in Brazil has only quite recently turned its attention to this phenomenon. The current interest of Brazilian scholars is also due to the fact that many Brazilian social policies have started to be exported (Porto de Oliveira, 2016), such as the Participatory Budgeting, the Family Allowance Program and the Food Purchase Programs. **Why do policies diffuse? Who are the actors involved in them? What mechanisms affect the process? How are policies translated to different contexts? Do governments consent to transfers, or do they oppose to them? In what ways does diffusion transform the state and influence success or failure?**

International literature has identified objects of analysis, producing hypotheses and research strategies that have advanced the understanding of the phenomenon and the explanation of its causes. Scholars can consider diffusion in at least two dimensions: the process itself, and its results (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000). Considered as a process, diffusion is the spatial or temporal relocation of an idea, model, administrative arrangement or institution. Analyses of this nature seek to understand the mechanisms that affect the diffusion process, either facilitating or impeding its movement. With respect to results, research has focused on elements that determine the success or failure of policies that have been diffused.

Different authors agree that there are four predominant mechanisms in the diffusion of policies: learning, competition, coercion, and socialization (Graham, Volden and Schipan,

2013, p. 690). Politicians learn from other systems and emulate their policies. In addition, governments compete with one another to promote the interests of their own parties or to obtain financial resources. In many cases, policies are institutionally imposed by means of legal devices that encourage their adoption. Finally, communities of politicians influence the implementation of management models shared with civil society.

Research strategies to analyze policy diffusion may combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Historical analysis of events is often used to understand the conditions that determine the continuity of diffusion over time. Within this approach, time series are constructed and the determinants are tested to verify their statistical relevance. Another technique is process tracing, which is employed to trace the course of diffusion, seeking evidence of the mechanisms that influence the result, and the influences of such a legacy on the course of policy implementation. A similarly ambitious approach aims to produce transnational comparisons, seeking to go beyond comparative strategies as well as to understand the activities of transfer agents, their spaces of encounter and their interactions (Hassenteufel, 2006).

Although policy diffusion has been a fast-growing topic for international scholars committed with public policy and administration, there are still a few of its key aspects that have not been explored yet. The intent of this Special Issue is to contribute to the understanding of this phenomenon, expanding the scope of academic debate, as well as to coordinate and foster the agenda of policy diffusion research in Brazil. This call for papers invites Brazilian and international scholars with cutting-edge research work on policy diffusion to submit their contributions. We particularly encourage papers that take into account the following six themes, which we understand have not still been sufficiently covered by the international literature.

1. Resistance to diffusion:

Transfers of a certain model to another context are not an automatic process. Dynamics of bargaining and even of opposition usually operate along with transfers. Governments can accept or reject part of transferred models, or even resist to international imposition.

2. Policy translation:

A major contribution from the sociology of science to the understanding of policy diffusion is the idea that in order to travel from one place to another, models have to be translated. It means that during the transfer process, models suffer changes and adaptations on its instruments, as well as on the idea that is being carried out. Without some sort of translation, models would not fit into different contexts.

3. The internationalization of domestic coalitions, political dynamics and conflicts:

Policy transfer research is one of the most interesting themes to bring domestic and international politics together. In some cases, it is not a single policy that is being exported. Other elements usually cross national borders along with this movement. Such elements may be domestic coalitions, political dynamics and conflicts, which are internationalized once they reach other countries, institutions or spaces.

4. The role of private sector corporation and consultancy:

Public policy and administration scholars analyzed predominantly public national and international institutions, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations. Nevertheless, private sector corporations and consultants have also been involved in fostering solutions for public problems, such as architecture firms in order to deal with urban policies.

5. Spaces of networking and transfer agents:

An important part of the transfer process occurs in transnational spaces, such as conferences, meetings and workshops. In these events, transfer agents advocate for models, legitimate practices, and sign cooperation agreements. This is an important part of the policy transfer process.

6. South-South or South-North transfers

A great part of the literature on policy transfers has been devoted to exploring empirical transfers of objects between Northern countries and from these to Southern countries. These movements have been recently reversed, with a fast-growing mass of experiences traveling from South to South – for example, between Latin American countries, and from these to Africa – as well as from South to North.

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The deadline for paper submissions is March 31, 2017.

Note: please indicate in the field "AUTHOR'S COMMENTS" (bottom of the page – 1st stage of the procedure) that your paper is for the special issue: "Actors, mechanisms and directions of Policy Diffusion: between translation and resistance".

Specific questions about the special issue should be directly addressed to the guest editor: Osmany Porto (osmanyporto@gmail.com).

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