

Kapitel des Buchs eher äusserlich als innerlich verklammert sind. Auch wenn man das Buch für das nimmt, was es sein will, bleibt ein grösseres Manko. Es ist der ausgesprochen unspezifische Umgang, den die Autoren mit dem Begriff «Schweizer Gebirge» pflegen. Nicht das «Gebirge» spielt eine zentrale Rolle in der Schweizer Identitätsbildung, sondern die «Alpen». Der Jurabogen ist ein wichtiger Gebirgszug der Schweiz. Dennoch haftet den Juraregionen eine Aura von Fremdheit an. Als einstiger Brennpunkt der anarchistischen Internationalen und als Keimzelle links-emanzipatorischer Bewegungen passt diese Gebirgsregion nicht ins nationalkonservative, alpine Selbstbild der Schweiz. Gebirge ist auch in politischer Hinsicht nicht gleich Gebirge. Eine weitere Differenzierung etwa nach Sprachregionen oder ein Vergleich zwischen den sehr unterschiedlichen Politiktraditionen des Wallis und Graubündens wären interessant. Sieht man von der mangelnden Differenzierung des Begriffs des Gebirges ab, handelt es sich bei «La montagne suisse en politique» aber um eine lesenswerte und runde Studie.

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Policy Laboratories of the Federal State? The Role of Intergovernmental Cooperation in Health Policy Diffusion in Switzerland

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The popular metaphor that subnational units in federal states constitute “policy laboratories” which facilitate evolution and spread of best practices in a given policy area is – although often referred to – only rarely tested systematically. By analysing whether cantonal policy decisions in the area of health insurance subsidies are interdependent, this book addresses the policy laboratory assumption directly, contributing thereby to the vibrant literature on policy diffusion. As the author shows, health care offers a particularly timely and relevant topic to test hypotheses on policy diffusion and policy learning: Ever increasing health care costs and a trend towards risk privatization, which are not only observed in Switzerland but also internationally, raise important questions of social inequality and solidarity, which are at the heart of the research on welfare states. Overall, the book provides a very specific answer to the question „who learns, from what, and where”, as it highlights the relevance of networks in terms of inter-governmental institutions as channels for successful policy learning.

The first chapter introduces the research design, clarifies the contribution of the study and offers an outline of the book. In this section, the author also justifies her analytical focus on the Swiss federation. With the majority of studies on subnational policy diffusion centring on the United States, the Swiss case, in contrast, allows analysing other similarities than geographic proximity as a source of policy diffusion, such as for instance cultural-linguistic proximity. What is more, Switzerland’s pronounced federalism, which is manifested in the principles of subsidiarity and executive federalism, leaves the cantons considerable autonomy in policy making and implementation, guaranteeing thereby sufficient variation in cantonal approaches to health insurance subsidies and thus providing an ideal starting point for the analysis of policy diffusion. Katharina Füglistner’s main objective is to propose an analytical framework that allows for better

inclusion of interdependencies between policy-makers when analysing policy change and to identify factors that enable or hinder the diffusion of a policy in federal states.

Chapter two presents the theoretical framework, culminating in the formulation of general hypotheses. The author approaches the concept of policy diffusion by distinguishing it from other concepts analysing the consequences of interdependencies among actors such as policy transfer and policy convergence. Thereby, policy diffusion is defined as a process in which government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior choices made in other countries. Based on a review of existing literature, the author observes that while there is abundant empirical evidence for policy diffusion in different policy fields, not much is known about the underlying mechanisms yet. In the following, the author discusses the three diffusion mechanisms of competition, emulation, and learning, which are not easily distinguishable empirically. Reference to the social network literature allows the author to develop a convincing theoretical argument of how networks built through intergovernmental relations offer a viable channel for the dissemination of policy relevant information, which could facilitate policy learning processes.

The theoretical section is followed by two chapters on the general characteristics of Switzerland's health-care system (chapter three) and the specificities of health insurance subsidies and their implementation in the 26 Swiss cantons (chapter four). The comprehensive elaboration on the historical evolution of Switzerland's health care system facilitates a more thorough understanding of its path dependency and sheds light on the reform obstacles which are inherent to Switzerland's political system. Chapter four on health insurance subsidies finally descends to the cantonal level, which is at the centre of this study, and discusses the heterogeneous cantonal implementation of subsidy policies. Using the four dimensions of eligibility, identification of beneficiaries, payment modality and exhaustion of federal contribution, this chapter nicely visualizes the considerable policy variety across cantons and over time. Chapter five contains an elaboration on data and analytical method chosen and lays the basis for the quantitative empirical analyses presented in chapter six. The author contrasts different analytical approaches, discusses their strengths and weaknesses, and justifies the selection of directed dyadic Event History Analysis for the present research setting. The complexity of a directed dyadic dataset notwithstanding, the author succeeds in providing a clear explanation of the sophisticated data structure by referring to an exemplary data excerpt. The operationalization of explained and explanatory variables unfolds along the theoretical expectations, and the data sources consulted seem comprehensive. In a similar vein, the empirical analysis follows strictly the three sets of theoretical hypotheses. In a first analytical step, the author shows that similarities other than geographic proximity such as the linguistic region or more fine grained regions matter when it comes to explain policy adoption in Swiss cantons, although not always in the expected direction. The second analytical step reveals that political outcomes matter, as a frequent use of initiatives apparently transmits the impression that a certain cantonal policy is unpopular, lowering the probability of policy adoption by other cantons. By contrast, the direct relationship between policy success and policy adoption is inconsistent and depends on the policy dimension under consideration. The most important and strongest finding of this study is however presented in the third analytical step, which shows that the adoption of successful policies, i.e. policy learning, does mainly occur through intergovernmental networks, more specifically the national and regional Conferences of Cantonal Directors of Public Health.

Overall, this is a methodologically sophisticated and theoretically sound study, which contributes to the research on policy diffusion by shedding light on the questions of "how and where" policy learning might occur. The inherently unobservable nature of mutual influence implies that the null-hypothesis, meaning that increasing policy similarity is not the result of learning or

imitation processes, but of independent choices, cannot easily be rejected in diffusion studies. Nevertheless, thanks to the elaborate analytical approach chosen, this study provides compelling evidence that policy learning does occur under specific circumstances, that is, if policy success is communicated and channelled.

At the same time, the study leaves some questions open. My main concern regards the overall research design, as the structure of the analysis is not always clear. This holds especially for the general chapters three and the first part of chapter four, as the added value of the very rich information provided in these chapters to the overall analysis remains too vague. The study exhibits traces of a multi-method research design (cf. Brady et al. 2006), and a more systematic application of this logic would have benefited the internal coherence of the empirical analysis. Compared to chapters three and four, the main quantitative analysis in chapter six is rather short. For instance, a more critical and comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the quantitative results, especially the counter-intuitive ones, would have been interesting. Additional robustness tests based on alternative operationalisations or including additional control variables (e.g. cantonal mortality rates to account for structural [dis-]similarities in the cantons) would have allowed assessing the robustness of the findings in a more comprehensive way. Furthermore, reference to additional networks, especially informal ones, would better satisfy the picture of a “messy political world” referred to by the author, than the rather clinical focus on one single type of network. Finally, the analogy of “Bayesian updating” evoked by the author to describe learning processes seems to suggest that Bayesian inference, for instance in terms of Bayesian multilevel modelling (cf. Jackman 2009), would be a particularly fruitful approach for the analysis of policy learning.

These critical remarks should not impair the relevance of this book as a contribution to the advance of the research on policy diffusion in federal states. Based on the major finding of the book that joint membership in intergovernmental institutions enhances the spread of best practices, Katharina Füglistler correctly concludes that for the states-as-policy-laboratories metaphor to work, it is crucial that information about policies is available to others. For all researchers who are interested in the moderating role of institutions and policy diffusion in fields in which harmonization is politically difficult to achieve but cooperation necessary, this book provides a source of inspiration.

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Power Sharing in Deeply Divided Places

McEvoy, Joanne O’Leary, Brendan (Eds)

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With *Power Sharing in Deeply Divided Places* Joanne McEvoy and Brendan O’Leary have put together a volume that will be of particular interest to scholars of conflict and post-conflict socie-