Facilitating Policy Innovation in the Middle East

Iain Gately

Associate Programme Management Officer, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Lebanon

iain.gately@un.org

Abstract

There is a need to ensure the effective transfer and diffusion of successful policy innovations that facilitate sustainable development in the Middle East region. However, to date there has been limited research on policy innovation in the Middle East region through theories such as policy diffusion, with most studies focused on North America and Western Europe. The following short essay represents an attempt to highlight this shortfall, stimulate discussion on what key factors could facilitate policy innovation in the Middle East, and promote further studies to address this imbalance. This is a theoretical study that primarily examines three theories that address the spread of policy innovation between governments: policy diffusion, policy laboratories, and borrowing strength. These theories are applied to different factors that influence policy innovation (geographic proximity, political ideology, culture, and networks and individuals) considered within the context of the Middle East to assess their relevance and applicability. Based on the application of these theories and key factors, the essay proposes three novel hypotheses for policy innovation, which are linked to the different factors. Each hypothesis identifies an area where it is expected that policy innovation would occur, if the theories hold true in a Middle Eastern Context. The essay contains an accompanying call to test these hypotheses within the region. It is expected that further studies in this area will be able to both test and build on the proposed hypotheses to determine the applicability of current (Western) theories to explain policy innovation in the Middle East and move towards a more comprehensive and targeted theory of policy in this region.

Keywords: Policy diffusion; Policy innovation; Middle East; Governance; Policy design

تيسير ابتكار السياسات في الشرق الأوسط

إيان غايتلي

موظف معاون لإدارة البرامج، اللجنة الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لغربي آسيا (الإسكوا)

iain.gately@un.org

ملخص

هناك حاجة لضمان نقل وتعميم ابتكارات السياسات الناجحة التي من شأنها تسهيل تحقيق التنمية المستدامة في منطقة الشرق الأوسط. لكنّ الدراسات حول ابتكار السياسات في هذه المنطقة لا تزال محدودة، ولا تعدو كونها نظريات حول قضايا مثل تعميم السياسات، ومعظمها يركّز على مناطق أمريكا الشمالية وأوروبا الغربية. يمثّل هذا البحث محاولة لتسليط الضوء على هذا النقص، وتحفيز النقاش حول العوامل الرئيسة التي يمكنها تسهيل ابتكار السياسات في الشرق الأوسط، وتشجيع المزيد من الدراسات لمعالجة هذا النقص. يعرض البحث ثلاث فرضيات ويدعو لاختبارها في المنطقة، من أجل تحديد إمكانية اعتماد النظريات (الغربية) الحالية لشرح ابتكار السياسات في الشرق الأوسط. تبحث هذه الدراسة، النظرية بالمقام الأول، ثلاث نظريات حول انتشار ابتكار السياسات بين الحكومات؛ وهي: نشر السياسات، ومختبرات السياسات، واقتراض القوة. يتأثر تطبيق هذه النظريات بعوامل مختلفة تؤثر على ابتكار السياسات (منها: القرب الجغرافي، والأيديولوجية السياسية، والثقافة، والشبكات والأفراد)، ويُنظر فيها في سياق الشرق الأوسط؛ لتقييم مدى ملاءمتها وقابليتها للتطبيق. يقترح البحث – بناءً على تطبيق هذه النظريات والعوامل الرئيسية – ثلاث فرضيات جديدة للابتكار السياسي مرتبطة بعوامل مختلفة. تحدد كل فرضية المحور الذي يُتوقع حدوث ابتكار سياسي فيه، وتبحث في مدى تناسب تلك النظريات في سياق شرق أوسطي. يطرح البحث اختبارًا لهذه الفرضيات داخل المنطقة؛ لتحديد إمكانية تطبيق هذه النظريات لشرح سياسة الابتكار في الشرق الأوسط، ويتوقع أن تسهم مزيد من الدراسات في هذا الميدان في اختبار الفرضيات المقترحة والبناء عليها؛ لمعرفة مدى قبلية تلكم النظريات للتطبيق في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، والتقدم نحو نظرية أكثر شمولًا واستهدافًا للابتكار السياسي في الشرق الأوسط.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعميم السياسات، ابتكار السياسات، الشرق الأوسط، الحوكمة، تصميم السياسات

1. Introduction

Recent years have seen a dramatic shift in the nature and scale of issues and challenges for policymaking in the Middle East. These have been exacerbated to such a degree by the recent COVID-19 pandemic that it is almost cliché to note the complexity and 'wickedness' of the challenges that now face public policy development in the form of climate change, global conflict, supply chain disruptions, and others. There is a need to ensure the effective transfer and diffusion of successful policy innovations, that facilitate sustainable development in the region.

To date there has been limited research on policy innovation in the Middle East region through theories such as 'policy diffusion', with most research focusing on North America and Western Europe (Lindsey & Bitugu, 2018; Rüland, 2022). The following short essay represents an attempt to stimulate discussion on what key factors will facilitate policy innovation in the Middle East and promote further studies to address this imbalance. Consequently, the paper is composed of two parts. The first will examine the literature on policy innovation and theories on how it can be facilitated, to identify key factors that facilitate policy innovation. Then, considering these factors, it will propose three hypotheses. The intention of these hypotheses is that they are to be tested within the region, to determine the applicability of current (Western) theories to explain policy innovation in the Middle East. It is hoped that this will stimulate further discussion and interest, to move towards a broader theory of facilitating policy innovation and diffusion of successful policies in the Middle East.

2. Policy innovation

Policy innovation is defined as the successful adoption of a new policy by a government (Mintrom, 1997; Walker, 1969). This can be driven through internal factors, such as in response to pressure from interest groups or the electorate, as well as through external factors such as the spread of innovations from one government to another (Shipan & Volden, 2008). The following section will present three theories that address the spread of policy innovation between governments: policy diffusion, policy laboratories, and borrowing strength.

2.1. Policy diffusion

Policy diffusion is defined as a process in which policymaking and policy outcomes in one polity influence policymaking and policy outcomes in other polities (Blatter et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2013; Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016). Although broad, what characterises this definition is the necessary requirement of interdependence, which distinguishes policy diffusion from policy convergence (Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016). Within the literature, there are three main types of interdependence that can be identified, which are usually referred to as mechanisms. These are: learning, emulation, and competition[1] (Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016). Although learning and competition are the most common mechanisms explaining policy diffusion (Shipan & Volden, 2008), emulation still plays a role. Consequently, these will be the three mechanisms focused on in this paper.

The learning mechanism occurs where policies in one unit are influenced by the consequences of similar policies in other units, with successful policies being more readily adopted by other polities

---

[1] Some scholars choose not to include coercion as a mechanism however, noting that the term *diffusion* necessarily implies that there are no central actors coordinating the spread of policies.

(Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016; Volden, 2006). This is perhaps best summarised by Berry and Baybeck (2005), who note that 'when confronted with a problem, decision makers simplify the task of finding a solution by choosing an alternative that has proven successful elsewhere'. Here, the success of a policy will relate to the outcomes it achieves, challenges it faces, and what support it receives politically (Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016).

Theoretically, two main kinds of learning can be identified (Blatter et al., 2022). The first follow a constructivist view, that policy innovation will spread through 'epistemic communities' of experts, following the diffusion of shared knowledge of what is effective (Blatter et al., 2022; Simmons et al., 2006). This kind of learning is fostered by shared norms, beliefs, and notions of evidentiary validity (Simmons et al., 2006). Consequently, actors are able to legitimize themselves through the adoption of universally legitimized policies (Meyer et al., 1997). The increase in exposure through participation in international networks and the catalytical presence of international organizations can also facilitate this kind of learning (Seitzer, 2022).

The second is an objectivist and individualist approach, using Bayesian updating, where individual actors add new information to their beliefs, and then revise accordingly (Blatter et al., 2022; Simmons et al., 2006). Notably, this approach discounts the role of collective actors in the learning process (Blatter et al., 2022). In the individualist approach, key actors are institutions such as government ministries, and individuals such as government ministers. Their engagement with policy innovations in other polities will be viewed through a lens where the innovations will be evaluated according to their potential impact on domestic political processes (Blatter et al., 2022). Some of the risks with the individualistic approach can be observed in the realisation that not all actors are equally sensitive to the same information (Gilardi, 2010), and some filter this information through ideological lenses (Volden et al., 2008). These individual biases are much harder to overcome without the additional input that can occur in more constructivism-informed approaches to learning (Gilardi & Wasserfallen, 2019).

The diffusion of policy through competition takes place where governments react to the policy choices of one another in an attempt to attract or retain resources, for example in the area of tax reform (Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016). As distinct from learning, where a government will observe the success of a policy and seek to implement it, Braun and Gilardi (2006) highlight that central to the concept of competition is the impact of a successful policy in one government on the effectiveness of a corresponding policy in another government. For example, Brady et al. (2011) found that state governments would establish a state lottery to prevent a loss of revenue occurring when their residents played the lottery in nearby states, following successful implementation of the policy there.

Most commonly discussed in the area of competition as a mechanism of policy diffusion is the concept of the race to the bottom (Korten, 1998). However, this criticism ignores efforts taken by governments to enhance service provision for residents, which have been shown to instead drive a race to the top – evidenced by minimum income provisions pioneered in France by regions and in Spain by the Basque Country, which then spread across the whole of the respective state territories (Keating, 2012).

The dominant conception of emulation as a form of policy diffusion is closely aligned with the constructivist view of learning, and the concept of universally legitimised policies (Blatter et al., 2022; Meyer et al., 1997). However, learning and emulation can be distinguished from one another by understanding that learning focuses on the action – the adoption of the policy and its effects – while

emulation focuses on the actor – the government that adopted the policy (Shipan & Volden, 2008).

In instances of emulation, policymakers may be willing to adopt 'best practice' policies, however they do not, or are unable to, assess whether a given policy choice is suitable for their particular context (Simmons et al., 2006). Historically this has been demonstrated in the policy literature through examples of smaller cities within states adopting policies in order to be favourably viewed as aligned with larger cities, who were early adopters (Shipan & Volden, 2008). This approach can often lead to superficial or poor implementation of particular policy choices (Blatter et al., 2022).

2.2. Policy laboratories

First proposed by Justice Louis Brandeis in 1932, was the concept of 'laboratories of democracy' as a characteristic of federal systems. This saw the development of policies by state and local government as facilitating experimentation with new policies and mutual learning about superior policies (Kollman et al., 2000; Oates, 1999). This approach sees governments in a federation work as a 'collective intelligence' (Langlois & Garzarelli, 2008), running concurrent policy experiments. Those experiments that are unsuccessful have a low cost to the federation, due to the initial limited scale they are run at, while successful experiments can be easily adopted and provide high returns. Utilising this approach, federations can provide useful spaces for knowledge growth from trial and error (Garzarelli & Keeton, 2018). Explicit in this theory is the idea that the successes or failures of previous experiences in other units will shape an actor's decision to adopt similar policies, which provides a clear link with the policy diffusion mechanism of learning (Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016; Shipan & Volden, 2008).

In a competitive federalist system, the level of autonomy that is granted for the states allows them the freedom to explore policy innovation in a decentralised manner. This can enrich the policy-making process by enabling states to experiment with, and adopt, successful policy initiatives free from centralised control (Keating, 2012). However, some critiques have been raised of the policy laboratory concept as being solely the domain of states, operating entirely independently from a federal authority. For example, it has been found that states do not always effectively share information with one another on policy experiments – particularly failed ones. This can make it difficult for state governments to access information that might inform their own experiments (Wiseman, 2014). Concerns have also been raised with data collection related to policy experimentation, with some states relying solely on others to collect data (Biber, 2011), while in other instances datasets that are not standardised or comparable have caused complications (Wiseman, 2014).

The solution to these concerns is to introduce a 'central manager' to coordinate the experiments (Wiseman & Owen, 2018). In a federal system, this role is filled by the central federal government. While states are empowered to experiment with policy options, the coordination from a centralised body such as a federal government helps this experimentation succeed (Wiseman & Owen, 2018).

For example, a central federal government is in possession of unique strengths that allow this facilitation of experimentation. The first is a broad perspective, not often available to states, that allows differentiated approaches to be identified. Second, although there are limited incentives for states to collectively agree on things like uniform data collection (Wiseman, 2014), a central federal government can facilitate uniform measurement and data collection, as well as inspire data sharing across state borders (Wiseman & Owen, 2018). The central government can also operate as a central repository to

distribute and collate successful experiments when they occur, such as through the establishment of policy 'menus' that allow states to pick and choose the approaches they prefer (Madison, 2014).

2.3. Borrowing Strength

First described by Manna (2006), the Borrowing Strength Model examines the role of federalism in agenda setting, originally with a focus on education policy. The Borrowing Strength Model 'occurs when policy entrepreneurs at one level of government attempt to push their agendas by leveraging justifications and capabilities that other governments elsewhere in the federal system possess. Here, license is defined as 'the strength of the arguments available to justify government action' (Manna, 2006), and capacity is defined as 'the ability to act once policymakers decide they want to act', including the human, budgetary, and institutional resources or infrastructure that governments possess' (Manna, 2006). For example, states may use the justification of a central government discussing or advocating a particular policy direction to open a discussion at the state level and build a level of momentum that may not have been previously possible (Saultz, 2017).

Under the borrowing strength model, state governments can borrow strength from a central government, the central government can borrow strength from state governments, or all governments can do so concurrently. In the case, that governments borrow strength from each other concurrently, positive or negative feedback will be generated. Positive feedback will accelerate trends, while negative feedback will lead to stability (Manna, 2006). It should also be noted that this approach does not have to be limited to federal systems of government. Policymakers will rely on their networks to facilitate and inform their work, reaching out across government, non-government actors, civil society (Moynihan, 2008).

However, application of the borrowing strength model is resource intensive since policy makers will need a high level of skill and sufficient time to learn from others' policy experiments and then apply them in their own context (Shipan & Volden, 2012). To address this, limits on capacity can be addressed by 'go-between' actors (Shipan & Volden, 2012). Nationally, this can take the form of professional organisations that act as clearing houses for information on policies being developed by members, while at a regional and global level, this role can be played by international organisations (Shipan & Volden, 2012). For example, a study of health policy in Swiss cantons showed that participation in intergovernmental conferences increased the likelihood of cantons adopting successful policies from one another (Füglister, 2012).

3.   Factors that influence innovation

A range of factors influence whether and when new policies are adopted and diffuse across a country or region. These include geographical proximity, political ideology and ideation, and culture (Agnew & Shin, 2019; Kleider & Toubeau, 2022; Mossig et al., 2022). In addition to these macro-level or structural factors, the role of individual policy actors, and the steps that they can take must also be considered (Gautier et al., 2018). The following section will examine these factors, and how they can facilitate, or hinder, policy innovation through the theories outlined above.

3.1. Geographic proximity

The role of geographic proximity in influencing diffusion processes is clear. The greater the proximity of different actors the more likely they come into contact, and hence, the more likely the content of the

diffusion process will be adopted (Mossig et al., 2022). For example, in a study of the diffusion of anti-smoking legislation in cities in the United States, Shipan and Volden (2008) found that governments would be more likely to adopt policies from larger and more proximate cities. At a worldwide level, the diffusion of policies regarding long-term care systems for elderly citizens has also been shown to have been influenced by geographical proximity (Fischer et al., 2022).

However, an overreliance on the role of geographical proximity as an enabling factor in the diffusion of policies can distort understanding, especially in an increasingly interconnected world (Kammerer & Namhata, 2018). Magetti and Gilardi (2016) note that although geographic proximity is a key component of diffusion it cannot clearly discriminate between the existence of the main mechanisms in a case of policy diffusion, and thus should be combined with other indicators. As a result, of increasing importance is the role that political ideology and culture may play (Kammerer & Namhata, 2018), including their interactions with geographic proximity, since geographically proximate states may also share cultural, demographic, and political characteristics (Volden et al., 2008).

3.2. Political ideology

Political ideology has been shown to influence the diffusion of policies. In an early study of education policy diffusion, Volden showed that policies flowed along partisan lines between legislatures (Volden, 2006). Policymakers can be biased against policies that counter their ideologies and are more easily influenced by co-partisans (Butler et al., 2017). The strength of the political ideology in policy diffusion is further demonstrated by DellaVigna and Kim (2022), who found that in the 2000s and 2010s, geographic and demographic proximity were predictive of policy diffusion, but after this period the strongest predictor of adoption was political alignment – the effect of which was strong enough that the predictive accuracy of the model increased in later periods. Political ideology has also been shown to hinder diffusion in some instances, with legislatures unwilling to learn from those governed by opposing parties (Butler et al., 2017). However, it was also found that this bias could be overcome by placing an emphasis on policy success, or in the case of earlier adoption by co-parties (Butler et al., 2017).

However, these studies focus exclusively on the impact of political ideology on policy diffusion in democratic governments. More recent studies have focused on policy diffusion in authoritarian regimes, such as in China (Liu & Li, 2016; Zhang, 2012; Zhang & Zhu, 2019; Zhu, 2014). This research has highlighted the importance of learning and emulation mechanisms within and between authoritarian governments. This suggests that policy performance and overall economic performance can be the main incentives for authoritarian governments to learn from others (Zhang & Zhu, 2019). Notably, authoritarian regimes are less likely to base their assessment of policy performance on the potential impact of domestic political processes (Blatter et al., 2022; Khodr & Reiche, 2012).

3.3. Culture

Culture is an integral aspect of the human condition, in particular as a facilitator of learning, and is of increasing importance in economic and social studies (Windzio & Martens, 2022). The term 'culture' is, however, a broad one and must be clearly defined (Mossig et al., 2022). An effective way of defining distinct cultures for the purposes of examining policy diffusion is through the concept of cultural spheres, which can be used to distinguish between cultures, while also allowing for a degree of overlap and change over time (Windzio & Martens, 2022). In this approach, clusters

of countries can be defined by religious characteristics, gender role orientations, language groups, civil rights, and rule of law, with the strength of ties between countries related to the number of cultural characteristics they share (Windzio & Martens, 2022). In studies of the spread of education policies, culture has been shown to have been a major influence, with countries located within the same cultural sphere learning and adopting policies from one another at a greater rate than those outside of the sphere (Seitzer et al., 2022; Windzio & Martens, 2022).

3.4. Networks and individuals

Another important structural factor that influences policy innovation is the existence of formal and informal transnational networks that promote the diffusion of policies across countries (Maggetti & Gilardi, 2016; Shipan & Volden, 2008). An example of a formal network is engagement with, or participation in, an international organisation. This platform enables peers from different countries to meet and exchange information, while providing channels for further collaboration and cooperation (Metz & Fischer, 2016). Building on this interaction, the international organisation is also able to present itself as an epistemic authority within the policy community (Barnett & Finnemore, 2012). The dissemination of knowledge through such an authority can further reshape policy preferences (Fergusson & Yeates, 2014). Consider, for example, the role played by the United Nations Environment Program as part of a 'discourse coalition' towards integrated water resource management (Allouche, 2016).

While policies travel through networks, they also do so through individuals as well (Gautier et al., 2020). Hence, the role of individual actors, who will approach policy makers to inform them about policy options that they believe would be effective in their jurisdictions, must also be considered as part of the process (Shipan & Volden, 2008). Here, recent studies have examined the use of framing by these actors in successful policy innovation and diffusion (Gilardi et al., 2021). Framing describes the way that a policy option is placed on the agenda in order to increase its popular support and ensure that it is prioritised over others (Béland, 2005; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). For example, drawing the attention of policy makers to existing benchmarking and comparative rankings as a framing technique can make them more willing to adopt policy innovations (Mahon & McBride, 2009; Porte et al., 2001).

A link also exists between framing and political ideology, which stresses the importance of framing in building a coalition of willing partners (Volden, 2017). By effectively framing an issue in a way that engages with the key concerns of an opposing political group, it can be possible to address negative perceptions (Volden, 2017). An example is provided through the expansion of Medicaid in the United States. The framing of the policy by Democrats as a means to lower taxes overall, due to the increase in federal subsidies available through adoption of the policy, addressed concerns of Republicans who had initially perceived the policy as a step away from the free market, and towards increased government intervention (Karch & Rosenthal, 2017).

4. Discussion

So far, this paper has principally considered theories of policy innovation as they apply to Western contexts, such as America and Western Europe. As has been noted above, there are limited studies that address the theories of policy innovation and diffusion in the Middle East. Consequently, the application of the available theoretical frameworks can be difficult without making modifications

(Khodr & Reiche, 2012). In an attempt to remedy this, the following section will discuss policy innovation and the key factors that influence it, drawn from the theory above. This will be used to develop three hypotheses that are proposed for further testing in the Middle East, as stepping stones to determine the applicability of these theories within that context.

Based on the literature there are several key factors that can be identified in facilitating the spread of policy innovation. These are geographic proximity, culture, and political alignment. While geographic proximity is a key component of diffusion it cannot clearly discriminate between the existence of the main mechanisms in a case of policy diffusion. Consequently, it must be considered alongside additional factors.

Culture is an important element when considering the structural factors that may facilitate policy innovation. Culturally the Middle East is a diverse region (Al-Aweel, 2018). Nevertheless, there exist enough shared cultural characteristics such as religion, gender role orientations, language groups, or attitudes towards civil rights, and rule of law, that the creation of clear cultural spheres can be defined, and used to determine the relative strength of cultural ties between states (Windzio & Martens, 2022). Regarding geographic proximity, it has also been found that policy diffusion in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council was most likely to occur between those states that were proximate and that shared cultures (Khodr & Reiche, 2012).

Hypothesis: Policy innovation through diffusion will occur between states in the Middle East that are in similar cultural spheres. This will be enhanced further in cases of geographical proximity.

However, the role of political ideology in facilitating policy innovation is harder to apply within the Middle East. The existence of a range of government types, including authoritarian regimes and absolute monarchies, alongside some democracies, make it difficult to determine a consistent group of current theories that are applicable. However, acknowledging research that has been undertaken to examine the diffusion of policy innovations within authoritarian regimes, different approaches to policy diffusion through learning can be considered as applicable. Notably, that policy performance and overall economic performance are the main incentives for authoritarian governments to learn from others (Zhang & Zhu, 2019), and that authoritarian regimes are less likely to base their assessment of policy performance on the potential impact on domestic political processes (Blatter et al., 2022; Khodr & Reiche, 2012).

Hypothesis: Authoritarian regimes will place less weight on the domestic impact of policies when policy diffusion takes place through learning and emulation.

Consistent in the literature is the importance of a body or bodies that can facilitate policy innovation. This is reflected in policy diffusion that occurs through the constructivist concept of learning, where states are exposed to shared norms, beliefs, and notions of evidentiary validity through participation in international networks and the presence of and international organizations – all of which facilitate this kind of learning (Blatter et al., 2022; Seitzer, 2022; Simmons et al., 2006). In the context of policy laboratories, policy innovation is facilitated through a 'central manager' that can coordinate the experiments, facilitate uniform measurement and data collection, inspire data sharing across borders, and operate as a central repository to distribute and collate successful experiments when they occur (Madison, 2014; Wiseman & Owen, 2018). In a similar manner, using the theory of borrowing strength, go-between actors can mitigate discrepancies in capacity, acting also as clearing houses to effectively distribute information on policies (Füglister,

2012; Shipan & Volden, 2012). Consequently, in an examination of policy innovation in the Middle East, the presence of centrally coordinating bodies, such as the League of Arab States, the World Bank, ESCWA, or others, as well as their actions, will need to be considered.

Hypothesis: The active participation of an international organisation or regional network in collating and distributing information will facilitate policy innovation in cases where successful policies have been previously developed by early-movers.

5. Conclusion

To consider how policy innovation might be fostered in the Middle East, this essay has outlined some key theories regarding the spread of policy innovation, albeit from a Western context, including an examination of the factors that can be expected to influence these. The essay has identified those key factors that could be expected to have the most influence, and consequently proposed three hypotheses that should be tested to further explore the applicability of mainstream theories regarding policy innovation and diffusion mechanisms in the Middle East.

As a way forward it is proposed that further studies take place on policy innovations in the Middle East, with case studies of related policy innovations that have occurred to test the above hypotheses. This will determine their applicability in the Middle East region and provide opportunity to refine or redevelop these based on the results of the case studies. In time, it could be expected that a more specific theory of policy innovation would be developed, including the most appropriate mechanisms of diffusion and other facilitators, considering the unique context of the region.

References

Agnew, J., & Shin, M. (2019). *Mapping Populism: Taking Politics to the People*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Al-Aweel, I. (2018). Federalism: Necessary Legal Foundation for the Central Middle Eastern States. *Pace International Law Review*, *31*, 293.

Allouche, J. (2016). The Birth and Spread of IWRM - A Case Study of Global Policy Diffusion and Translation. *Water Alternatives*, *9*, 412–433.

Barnett, M., & Finnemore, M. (2012). Rules for the World: International Organizations in Global Politics. In *Rules for the World*. Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801465161

Béland, D. (2005). Ideas and Social Policy: An Institutionalist Perspective. *Social Policy & Administration*, *39*(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2005.00421.x

Berry, W. D., & Baybeck, B. (2005). Using Geographic Information Systems to Study Interstate Competition. *American Political Science Review*, *99*(4), 505–519. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051841

Biber, E. (2011). The Problem of Environmental Monitoring. *University of Colorado Law Review*, *83*, 1.

Blatter, J., Portmann, L., & Rausis, F. (2022). Theorizing policy diffusion: From a patchy set of mechanisms to a paradigmatic typology. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *29*(6), 805–825. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2021.1892801

Braun, D., & Gilardi, F. (2006). Taking 'Galton's Problem' Seriously: Towards a Theory of Policy Diffusion. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, *18*(3), 298–322. https://doi.org/10.1177/0951629806064351

Butler, D. M., Volden, C., Dynes, A. M., & Shor, B. (2017). Ideology, Learning, and Policy Diffusion: Experimental Evidence. *American Journal of Political Science*, *61*(1), 37–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12213

DellaVigna, S., & Kim, W. (2022). *Policy Diffusion and Polarization across U.S. States* (Working Paper No. 30142). National Bureau of Economic Research. https://doi.org/10.3386/w30142

Fergusson, R., & Yeates, N. (2014). International governmental organisations and global youth unemployment: The normative and ideational foundations of policy discourses. *Policy and Politics*, *42*(3), 439–458. https://doi.org/10.1332/030557312X655648

Fischer, J., Polte, A., & Sternkopf, M. (2022). Introduction of Long-Term Care Systems: The Nascent Diffusion of an Emergent Field of Social Policy. In M. Windzio, I. Mossig, F. Besche-Truthe, & H. Seitzer (Eds.), *Networks and Geographies of Global Social Policy Diffusion: Culture, Economy, and Colonial Legacies* (pp. 139–167). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83403-6_6

Füglister, K. (2012). Where does learning take place? The role of intergovernmental cooperation in policy diffusion. *European Journal of Political Research*, *51*(3), 316–349. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.2011.02000.x

Garzarelli, G., & Keeton, L. (2018). Laboratory federalism and intergovernmental grants. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, *14*(5), 949–974. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1744137417000595

Gautier, L., De Allegri, M., & Ridde, V. (2020). Transnational Networks' Contribution to Health Policy Diffusion: A Mixed Method Study of the Performance-Based Financing Community of Practice in Africa. *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, *10*(6), 310–323. https://doi.org/10.34172/ijhpm.2020.57

Gautier, L., Tosun, J., De Allegri, M., & Ridde, V. (2018). How do diffusion entrepreneurs spread policies? Insights from performance-based financing in Sub-Saharan Africa. *World Development*, *110*, 160–175. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.05.032

Gilardi, F. (2010). Who Learns from What in Policy Diffusion Processes? *American Journal of Political Science*, *54*(3), 650–666. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00452.x

Gilardi, F., Shipan, C. R., & Wüest, B. (2021). Policy Diffusion: The Issue-Definition Stage. *American Journal of Political Science*, *65*(1), 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12521

Gilardi, F., & Wasserfallen, F. (2019). The politics of policy diffusion. *European Journal of Political Research*, *58*(4), 1245–1256. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12326

Graham, E. R., Shipan, C. R., & Volden, C. (2013). The Diffusion of Policy Diffusion Research in Political Science. *British Journal of Political Science*, *43*(3), 673–701. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000415

Jones, B. D., & Baumgartner, F. R. (2005). *The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems*. University of Chicago Press.

Kammerer, M., & Namhata, C. (2018). What drives the adoption of climate change mitigation policy? A dynamic network approach to policy diffusion. *Policy Sciences*, *51*(4), 477–513. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-018-9332-6

Karch, A., & Rosenthal, A. (2017). Framing, Engagement, and Policy Change: Lessons for the ACA. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, *42*(2), 341–362. https://doi.org/10.1215/03616878-3766746

Keating, M. (2012). Intergovernmental Relations and Innovation: From Co-Operative to Competitive Welfare Federalism in the UK. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *14*(2), 214–230. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2011.00484.x

Khodr, H., & Reiche, D. (2012). The Specialized Cities of the Gulf Cooperation Council: A Case Study of a Distinct Type of Policy Innovation and Diffusion. *Digest of Middle East Studies*, *21*(1), 149–177. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1949-3606.2012.00131.x

Kleider, H., & Toubeau, S. (2022). Public policy in multi-level systems: A new research agenda for the study of regional-level policy. *Regional & Federal Studies*, *32*(3), 277–305. https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2021.2018681

Kollman, K., Miller, J., & Page, S. (2000). Decentralization and the search for policy solutions. *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, *16*(1), 102–128. https://doi.org/10.1093/jleo/16.1.102

Korten, D. C. (1998). When corporations rule the world. *European Business Review*, *98*(1). https://doi.org/10.1108/ebr.1998.05498aab.007

Langlois, R. N., & Garzarelli, G. (2008). Of Hackers and Hairdressers: Modularity and the Organizational Economics of Open-source Collaboration. *Industry and Innovation*, *15*(2), 125–143. https://doi.org/10.1080/13662710801954559

Lindsey, I., & Bitugu, B. B. (2018). Distinctive policy diffusion patterns, processes and actors: Drawing implications from the case of sport in international development. *Policy Studies*, *39*(4), 444–464. https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2018.1479521

Liu, W., & Li, W. (2016). Divergence and Convergence in the Diffusion of Performance Management in China. *Public Performance & Management Review*, *39*(3), 630–654. https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2015.1138060

Madison, K. (2014). Building a Better Laboratory: The Federal Role in Promoting Health System Experimentation. *Pepperdine Law Review*, *41*, 765.

Maggetti, M., & Gilardi, F. (2016). Problems (and solutions) in the measurement of policy diffusion mechanisms. *Journal of Public Policy*, *36*(1), 87–107. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0143814X1400035X

Mahon, R., & McBride, S. (2009). Standardizing and disseminating knowledge: The role of the OECD in global governance. *European Political Science Review*, *1*(1), 83–101. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773909000058

Manna, P. (2006). *School's In: Federalism and the National Education Agenda*. Georgetown University Press.

Metz, F., & Fischer, M. (2016). Policy Diffusion in the Context of International River Basin Management. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, *26*(4), 257–277. https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.1716

Meyer, J. W., Boli, J., Thomas, G. M., & Ramirez, F. O. (1997). World Society and the Nation-State. *American Journal of Sociology*, *103*(1), 144–181. https://doi.org/10.1086/231174

Mintrom, M. (1997). Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation. *American Journal of Political Science*, *41*(3), 738–770. https://doi.org/10.2307/2111674

Mossig, I., Windzio, M., Besche-Truthe, F., & Seitzer, H. (2022). Networks of Global Social Policy Diffusion: The Effects of Culture, Economy, Colonial Legacies, and Geographic Proximity. In M. Windzio, I. Mossig, F. Besche-Truthe, & H. Seitzer (Eds.), *Networks and Geographies of Global Social Policy Diffusion: Culture, Economy, and Colonial Legacies* (pp. 1–37). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83403-6_1

Moynihan, D. P. (2008). Learning under Uncertainty: Networks in Crisis Management. *Public Administration Review*, *68*(2), 350–365. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00867.x

Oates, W. E. (1999). An Essay on Fiscal Federalism. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *37*(3), 1120–1149. https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.37.3.1120

Porte, C. de la, Pochet, P., & Room, B. G. (2001). Social Benchmarking, Policy Making and New Governance in the Eu. *Journal of European Social Policy*, *11*(4), 291–307. https://doi.org/10.1177/095892870101100401

Rüland, A. L. (2022). Learning from rivals: The role of science diplomats in transferring Iran's health house policy to the US. *Globalizations*, *0*(0), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2022.2062845

Saultz, A. (2017). Fourth Time is the Charm: Charter School Policy and the Influence of the Elite in Washington State. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *92*(1), 53–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2016.1264809

Seitzer, H. (2022). The Diffusion of Workplace Antidiscrimination Regulations for the LGBTQ+ Community. In M. Windzio, I. Mossig, F. Besche-Truthe, & H. Seitzer (Eds.), *Networks and Geographies of Global Social Policy Diffusion: Culture, Economy, and Colonial Legacies* (pp. 227–253). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83403-6_9

Seitzer, H., Besche-Truthe, F., & Windzio, M. (2022). Networks of Global Policy Diffusion: The Introduction of Compulsory Education. In M. Windzio, I. Mossig, F. Besche-Truthe, & H. Seitzer (Eds.), *Networks and Geographies of Global Social Policy Diffusion: Culture, Economy, and Colonial Legacies* (pp. 59–81). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83403-6_3

Shipan, C. R., & Volden, C. (2008). The Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion. *American Journal of Political Science*, *52*(4), 840–857. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00346.x

Shipan, C. R., & Volden, C. (2012). Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners. *Public Administration Review*, *72*(6), 788–796. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2012.02610.x

Simmons, B. A., Dobbin, F., & Garrett, G. (2006). Introduction: The International Diffusion of Liberalism. *International Organization*, *60*(4), 781–810. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818306060267

Volden, C. (2006). States as Policy Laboratories: Emulating Success in the Children's Health Insurance Program. *American Journal of Political Science*, *50*(2), 294–312. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00185.x

Volden, C. (2017). Policy Diffusion in Polarized Times: The Case of the Affordable Care Act. *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*, *42*(2), 363–375. https://doi.org/10.1215/03616878-3766762

Volden, C., Ting, M. M., & Carpenter, D. P. (2008). A Formal Model of Learning and Policy Diffusion. *American Political Science Review*, *102*(3), 319–332. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055408080271

Walker, J. L. (1969). The Diffusion of Innovations among the American States*. *American Political Science Review*, *63*(3), 880–899. https://doi.org/10.2307/1954434

Windzio, M., & Martens, K. (2022). The Global Development, Diffusion, and Transformation of Education Systems: Transnational Isomorphism and 'Cultural Spheres'. In K. Martens & M. Windzio (Eds.), *Global Pathways to Education: Cultural Spheres, Networks, and International Organizations* (pp. 1–35). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78885-8_1

Wiseman, H. J. (2014). Moving Past Dual Federalism to Advance Electric Grid Neutrality. *Iowa Law Review Bulletin*, *100*, 97.

Wiseman, H. J., & Owen, D. (2018). Federal Laboratories of Democracy. *U.C. Davis Law Review*, *52*, 1119.

Zhang, Y. (2012). Institutional Sources of Reform: The Diffusion of Land Banking Systems in China. *Management and Organization Review*, *8*(3), 507–533. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2011.00256.x

Zhang, Y., & Zhu, X. (2019). Multiple mechanisms of policy diffusion in China. *Public Management Review*, *21*(4), 495–514. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2018.1497695

Zhu, X. (2014). Mandate Versus Championship: Vertical government intervention and diffusion of innovation in public services in authoritarian China. *Public Management Review*, *16*(1), 117–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2013.798028