

Review of: "From International to Subnational: A Contribution to the Insertion of Subnational Governments in Northeastern Brazil in the Internationalization of Public Policies."

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This review was prepared upon invitation by the Qeios' editor. The study of Superti et al. refers to policy diffusion, a topic of great interest in the international literature owing to the globalization movement that emphasizes the importance of recognizing the influence of international actors for public policies, including sub and supranational elements that can module the process. Knowledge production on this subject can help to explain patterns and motivations that lead governments to emulate, to accept conditionalities to implement policies and to seek to learn from successful cases. The study has an innovative trait because updates and expands the knowledge on the field of internationalization of public policies in an upper-middle income country and because highlights potential role of subnational entities in peripheral regions. This is particularly important for large countries with decentralized policymaking process in which regional and local levels enjoy relative autonomy to formulate policies and have resources or ability to obtain them in order to support the policy implementation as is the case of Brazil and other countries as South Africa, India and Indonesia. This study was guided by two research questions: what is the state of the art of the field of diffusion of PP in Brazilian research and how has IR participated in this field? Have the state governments of the northeastern region of Brazil been playing a leading role and have they been the stage of experiences of internationalization of public policies?

In view of this, the authors updated the Brazilian scientific production on diffusion of public policy until 2021 and mapped implemented or running public policies led by states in northeastern Brazil that have undergone internationalization processes. The methodological procedures adopted were appropriate for the study purpose.

The readers would benefit if the authors could explain the focus on states in northeastern Brazil. The country is divided in five geographic macro-regions: North, Northeast, Southeast, South and Midwest. In a recent paper on the provision of a major population-based health policy among Brazilian municipalities [Silva et al 2021], I and colleagues resorted to a comprehensive five-decade study showing that the first two macro-regions were historically neglected in the policymaking process during the second half of the 20th century producing huge inequalities on the social and economic development of the country and among Brazilian citizens at education, health and income levels. For example, the access to public goods, such as clean water, sanitary drainage and electrical power, followed a trajectory where increasing coverage went from South and Southeast macro-regions towards Midwest, Northeast and North macro-regions [Arretche 2015]. Although the country remains as one of the most unequal in the entire planet, inequalities have been expressively reduced over in the beginning of 21st century owing to several public policies, and this could leave clearer the relevance of the focus on

Northeast macro-region that has had a great dynamism in that period.

The authors quantified the production of articles, theses and dissertations (T&D) from Brazilian research on the field of internationalization of public policies. Among articles, they noticed increment with major participation of three knowledge areas: Social Sciences, Administration and Health Sciences. Among T&D, areas of greatest growth were Political Science, Health Sciences and Social Sciences. The manuscript could be improved if the authors would dedicate a few lines to comment on the general characteristics of the studies in these areas of high frequency. Not by chance did health stand out. In fact, attempts at international cooperation to implement policies aimed at controlling and preventing infectious and contagious diseases have had since the 19th century. The concept of International Health emerged at 1913 and the activities were based on medical and biological foundations and on assistance relations, coming from developed countries, aimed at less developed countries. In recent decades, the field has resigified with the consolidation of Global Health claimed as an area of study, research and practice that prioritizes the improvement of health and the pursuit of equity for all peoples of the world. Health is seen as a value in itself, leading to guidelines of a solidary and altruistic nature, based on ethical principles of social justice, equity and solidarity (Koplan et al. 2009). Between these two moments, several technologies transfer efforts happened among the countries. I and a colleague had the opportunity to study the public policies for fluoride use in Colombia and Brazil before and during the adoption of the right to health. The results showed that fluoride use strategies had similar characteristics in both countries at initial stage of cooperation with the USA. As time passed, the policies differed. In Brazil, the strategy was to adjust the concentration of fluoride in public water supplies, while in Colombia, the public policy consolidated was the addition of fluoride to table salt. In both countries, the accumulated experience and pressure from stakeholders were as important as the scientific knowledge produced; however, while in the former an interactive model with strong participation of internal agents predominated, in Colombia, external participation was crucial for this interaction (Garcia Rincon and Frazão 2023).

In the section V referred to 'Mapped Public Policies', the authors provided a denser commentary on the experiences of internationalized public policies in the northeastern states identified. This Brazilian geographic macro-region is composed by nine states and five cases were reported demonstrating the effort of the governments to increase their international insertion and seek public policy alternatives to their challenges in diverse contexts. It is valid to note that one of them referred to the sanitation policy, the same area that motivated the initial stage of cooperation maintained by Brazil and Colombia with the USA on public policy for fluoride use.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the editors for the initiative to create Qeios and to thank the invitation to review the manuscript. The open science movement is a path of no return. Encouraging transparency, respect and kindness in all interactions and communications, Qeios can really facilitate the connection and collaboration among researchers in a transdisciplinary way. I consider that the manuscript is of good quality, contains relevant content to its field and could be improved if the authors could extend the section III from a qualitative point of view. A table could be elaborated to indicate some traits of the included studies as authors, objectives, methods and main results.

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