Policy transfer in higher education policy formation

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Introduction

The year 2006 marked the start of preparations leading to university reform in Finland. The national discussion on university reform was held concurrently with the higher education (HE) modernisation discourse in the Council of the European Union (EU). There is existing research on the development of EU-level cooperation and the development of Finnish HE policy, but relatively little research on the significance of EU HE policy cooperation in member states. The research problem, then, is the connection between EU and national-level discussions on HE policy.

The research presented in this chapter evaluated the connection between national higher education policy formation and EU-level discussion on higher education. Policy transfer theory has been tested by Moisio (2014) as an explanatory model for studying the success or failure of EU cooperation in HE policy. The policy transfer method pays particular attention to the policy formation process and the possibility of transfer of ideas, policies and arrangements from one political setting to another setting or system (Radaelli 2000; Dolowitz & Marsh 2000).

Policy learning and policy transfer

There is some evidence that the EU education policy discourse has been transferred to EU member states. Lange and Alexiadou's (2010) research differentiates various policy learning styles (mutual learning, competitive policy learning, imperialistic policy learning and surface policy learning) in education policy by categorising different types of interactions between the same range of public policy actors (member states themselves and member states and the European Commission). The concept of mutual learning holds that qualitative knowledge about different practices is as important as quantitative information. Participation in mutual learning is voluntary, and participating countries/member states have positive incentives to participate (in clusters and peer learning activities) when the knowledge from these events may help them solve national policy problems.

According to Lange and Alexiadou, the concept of competitive policy learning focuses more on the quantitative side of cooperation. Various EU institutions (Eurostat, Cedefop and the European Training Foundation) develop statistical analyses of education practices in the EU. Competitive learning starts from specific assumptions, indicators or benchmarks, and discussions are limited to the selected problems. While mutual learning is aimed at the deep learning of traditions and politics, the goal of competitive learning is to open up international *comparisons*. Competitive learning depends on the pressure created on member states. Because states are motivated to preserve their good reputation, pressure becomes effective when combined with media attention. Since statistics are created mainly by formal institutions, competitive learning is less of a bottom-up process than mutual learning (pp. 452–454). Lawn and Lingard's (2002, 300) earlier study also stresses the importance of statistical production—previously done mainly by the OECD but latterly by the EU as well—and the statistical comparison that is central to harmonisation. However, Erkkilä (2014) argues that the European Commission has increased its role in HE policy by using global university rankings. These rankings have created "a political imaginary competition, where European universities must be reformed if they are to be successful" (p. 92).

The concept of imperialistic policy learning refers to the attempt by some countries to export their national education policies to others as well as to the European Commission's policy agenda (Lange & Alexiadou 2010, 452–454). There is some evidence that this has been one of the goals of the United Kingdom's HE policy (Alexiadou & Lange 2011). Conversely, surface policy learning refers to a more passive or negative response by a member state, which is an attempt to minimise the influence of the Commission or other member states. Learning, for the most part, entails only observation of possible infringements of national sovereignty that should be reported back to national administrations. Another manifestation of surface policy learning, according to Lange and Alexiadou (2010, 455–456), is the national progress reporting for Education and Training 2010/2020, which sometimes only describes member states' own national education policies, even with regard to benchmarks that differ in scope or timeline from those mutually agreed at the EU level.

As members of international structures or regimes, national governments may have to adopt policies as part of their obligations. The question here is whether policy transfer within the EU can be interpreted as coercive, given that individual nations have, in principle, joined the EU voluntarily. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, 14–15) point out that each member state does have influence over the adoption of EU policies; thus, they actively and voluntarily shape EU politics. It is therefore possible to argue that policy transfer in the EU is both obligated and negotiated.

Contemporary policies are increasingly affected by policy transfer, especially in the European context, because of close cooperation between many policy fields. As part of globalisation and Europeanisation, politicians and civil servants have become acquainted with each other, and at the same time, international organisations and policy entrepreneurs "sell" policies around the world. Teichler (2004) wisely reminds us, however, that although the increase of knowledge transfer across nations has typically been seen as a phenomenon of globalisation, one must keep in mind that governments are highly active in shaping the rules of knowledge transfer, doing so in order to maximise their

national gains (p. 13). The penultimate section of this chapter examines the concept of policy transfer in greater depth.

Policy transfer and explaining lesson drawing

Radaelli (2000) and Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) define policy transfer as a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting or system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting or system. Dale (1999) identifies a total of eight mechanisms under policy transfer: borrowing, learning, teaching, harmonisation, dissemination, standardisation, installing interdependence and imposition. Policy transfer is the comprehensive term for all these mechanisms, covering both voluntary and coercive transfer in different circumstances and by various actors.

The concepts of policy transfer and policy diffusion are both founded on the notion that the ideas of other countries or systems may be worth testing elsewhere. These policies may either spread or be transferred to new environments. The difference between policy transfer and policy diffusion is that diffusion studies tend not to reveal anything about the content of new policies, focusing more on process than on substance (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 345).

In the globalised world of the twenty-first century, policy transfer is a policy formation tool that has gradually increased in use between nations.[1] Public policy is something that is both global and national, and policy-makers study other political systems for new ideas about policies, programmes, institutions and jurisdictions, which they look to apply to their own context. The policy transfer concept can be used either as an independent variable—to explain

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[1] Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) mention three reasons for increasing policy transfer: global economic pressure, rapid growth of communications and the influence of international organisations.

why a particular policy was adopted—or as a dependent variable, to explain why transfer occurs (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 354).

The following questions can usefully be asked about policy transfer. Why engage in policy transfer? Who transfers policy? What is transferred? From where and why? How is the transfer composed, and what are the different degrees of transfer? How is the process related to policy success or failure (see Radaelli 2000; Dolowitz & Marsh 2000)? It has been shown that at least six main categories of actors are involved in policy transfer: elected officials, political parties, civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs/experts and supranational institutions (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 345).

Policy transfer may be either voluntary or coercive and includes objects such as policy goals, structure and content, instruments and techniques, institutions, ideology, attitudes and concepts as well as negative lessons (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 350). *Voluntary transfer* is usually based on a perceived dissatisfaction with a current state or even on observed policy failure. Uncertainty about the reasons behind problems or the effects of previous decisions may prompt actors to search for policies they might wish to borrow. As Haas (quoted in Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 347) put it: "International collaboration...is an attempt to reduce uncertainty".

Coercive transfer can take place either directly or indirectly. *Direct coercive transfer* occurs when transfer is required by an external actor. However, that obligation is rarely imposed by another state; international institutions are typical players in direct coercive actions, and EU legislation is a good example of this kind of measure. *Indirect coercive methods* derive from a variety of situations, including technological development, economic pressures and international consensus. Fears of being left behind on an important public issue may also generate attention and lead to policy transfer: "A country can indirectly be pushed towards policy transfer if political actors perceive their country falling behind its neighbours or competitors" (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 347–349). This can be driven by international comparisons, which are made against the current best. The international flow of national data has increased, and comparison is now an everyday business, usually conducted

between countries. It has been argued that comparison is a highly visible tool for governing at all levels: at the organisational level for management purposes and at the state level for governing and measuring performance (e.g. PISA) (Grek, Lawn, Lingard, Ozga, Rinne, Segerholm & Simola 2009, 10).

Another question concerns why countries engage in policy transfer. Both supporters and opponents of various policies use reasoning, as needed, to win support for their ideas. It has been noted that policy lessons from abroad can also be used as *neutral truths*, but equally, these truths can also be used as political weapons (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 346). Dale observes that *policy borrowing*, in particular, is often related to policy legitimation and political usefulness since borrowing is voluntary and is conducted between more or less compatible systems: "We don't usually borrow something we don't know we have a use, even a need for..." (Dale 1999, 9).

The factors that may constrain policy transfer are multiple, and the viability of the transferred subject will be judged at a national level according to existing norms and expectations (p. 9). The more complex the policy or programme, the more difficult it is to transfer, and differences or similarities between host and target countries or systems also matter. However, the simpler the expected outcomes are to predict, the easier the transfer becomes. Bureaucratic size and efficiency may also influence transfer, as well as economic resources, since implementation often requires financial measures (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, 354).

Policy learning can be understood as one of the tools of policy transfer,[2] which entails learning about organisations, programmes or policies. The definition of the term is quite broad and may mean that some form of learning is likely to be present in any mechanism of policy transfer. According to Dale (1999, 10–11), normal policy-making is associated with learning about instruments, while learning about policy goals arises in relation to reforms or shifts in policy paradigms.

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2   According to Hill (1997), policy transfer theory builds on Rose's (1991; 1993) work on policy learning.

Policy transfer through *harmonisation* is commonplace in some areas of European integration. The harmonisation mechanism works through collective agreement, whereby all member states pool some of their sovereignty for the benefit of the EU. *Dissemination* differs from harmonisation in its dimension and extent: the OECD is a good example of an international actor that disseminates ideas to participant countries that do not have the competency to harmonise policies. *Installing interdependence* is a policy transfer mechanism that usually concerns issues that go beyond the scope of any nation state (peace, environment or human rights). It is focused purely on policy goals and usually works in a bottom-up manner, including the whole of civil society. Finally, *imposition* is coercive and is the only mechanism that does not require learning, persuasion or cooperation (Dale 1999, 9–15).

Bulmer and Padgett (2004) use another typology to define different types of policy transfer. *Emulation* or copying is the strongest form of transfer, involving the borrowing of a policy model, in its entirety, from another jurisdiction. Conversely, *synthesis* includes elements of a policy from several sources. *Influence* is a weak form of transfer, which only inspires a new policy. Finally, an *abortive* measure occurs when transfer is hindered by the borrower (p. 106).

In order to understand policy transfer, it is necessary to recognise several other factors. It is not enough to treat transfer as if it were an "all-or-nothing" process: the motivations involved must also be taken into consideration. The policies may develop over time, especially when borrowing policies from elsewhere. Second, different actors may have different motivations. It is likely that politicians and policy entrepreneurs will introduce a process on a voluntary basis, but when international organisations become involved, this is likely to result in some coercive policy transfer—although, of course, this depends on the particular action. Finally, the timing of the transfer also affects the process. In times of political and economic stability, transfer is likely to be voluntary. However, during political crises, policy transfer is likely to have some coercive elements (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000, 16-17).

The concept of policy diffusion is a little different from that of policy transfer. Policy diffusion is analysed to identify why some governments come to adopt policies brought from elsewhere and why others are more reluctant—why governments differ in their readiness to act. At one end of the scale is *immunity*, where no diffusion of a policy is possible because the organisational or state unit is not open to new external ideas; at the opposite end is *isomorphism*, meaning that diffusion of ideas and concepts occurs quite easily, producing homogenisation across states. In reacting to external policy pressure, there are three means or strategic choices: *resistance*, *imitation* and *adaptation*. Resistance is a likely initial reaction to external pressure, protecting already established values from external ideas. Strong resistance may make the state or organisation immune to new ideas and concepts. Imitation relates to the concept of isomorphism, whereby new ideas are adopted smoothly and receptively (Bache & Olsson 2001, 218).

Adaptation may occur on a conceptual level or in practice, or even both. On the conceptual level, an organisation or state may adopt ideas from the external world as a rational strategy. However, changes at the conceptual level may also change practice. The discourse around new ideas in an organisation or a state unit may impact "like a virus that spreads and infects the behaviour" (Bache & Olsson 2001, 218). Adaptation may also work like a translation process, in which ideas and concepts may be given a local perspective (see Bache & Olsson 2001, 218; Karakhanyan, van Veen & Bergen 2011, 23–24). While policy diffusion emphasises structures, the concept of policy transfer stresses policy content and the role of agency in transferring ideas and practices; thus, the concepts are interactive (Karakhanyan et al. 2011, 58).

Policy transfer in the EU

Radaelli (2000) attempts to understand policy change within the EU by utilising the concept of policy transfer. He observes that the EU is in fact an enormous platform of different policy transfers from dominant countries and/or from advocacy coalitions to other countries and coalitions. The European

Commission can be seen as an active policy entrepreneur in this process, acting in concert with other "policy transfer activists" such as pressure groups or policy experts. Policy transfer implies that "policy diffusion is a rational process wherein imitation, copying and adaptation are the consequences of rational decisions by policy-makers" (Radaelli 2000, 26, 38).

Radaelli (2000, 31–32) describes the legitimation of the European Monetary Union by a transfer process that included several central elements: history and learning, bargaining, the anchoring power of the Deutschmark and consensus on the paradigm of policy credibility. Policy transfer can occur both as dependent and independent variables. One can explain policy transfer as a process or use policy transfer to explain policy outcomes (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000, 8). Radaelli (2003, 12) argues that policy learning within the EU context is mostly about power. The formation of indicators, peer reviews and common guidelines supports this view as they produce hierarchies of various responses to political problems and create different pressures on member states to adapt.

According to Bulmer and Padgett (2004), there has been little consensus on how policy transfer really works in the EU. Their argument is that because there are varied governance structures within the EU, they generate various transfer types. This, in particular, explains why the EU is such a good "laboratory" for testing the policy transfer concept. The authors identify three different forms of governance in EU politics, which will be introduced next and summarised in Table 1 (see also Bulmer et al. 2007).

Hierarchical governance operates in policies related directly to the single market, where the EU may exercise supranational power granted by the treaties and utilise coercive measures of policy transfer. These measures are based on supranational European law, but they are also based on the powers delegated to supranational institutions, such as the Commission's powers in relation to competition policy. A state must adopt such a policy as a member of an international organisation or as a condition of financial assistance from it. This form of governance involves a high level of institutionalisation. Hierarchical transfer is related to "negative" integration, which is the purest form of this

type of governance; the abolition of restrictive measures from the single market is an example of negative integration. A softer form of hierarchical governance comes from secondary legislation (Bulmer & Padgett 2004, 104–105, 108). For instance, a directive for professional qualifications was negotiated and adopted in the Council and the European Parliament and then transferred to member states. Member states are key players in this transfer process because they must implement this legally binding directive. The Commission and the European Court of Justice supervise this implementation and ensure that the policy's content is transferred, as decided at the EU level, and that the member state has really "learned" from the EU policy. Bulmer and Padgett argue that the use of coercive measures and high institutional density in hierarchical governance obliges member states to emulate EU models (p. 109).

A second form of governance is based on the common rules and norms agreed by member states and adopted by the EU, using the qualified majority vote (QMV). This form of governance is *negotiated* and is fairly common within the EU. Negotiation takes place in a variety of EU contexts, and agreements range from binding legal rules to informal understandings. According to Bulmer and Padgett, this form of governance has been referred to as a "negotiated order", often occurring in circumstances where policy models or ideas from one or more member states are incorporated into EU norms (104–106). Negotiation is characterised by bargaining and problem-solving. Bargaining is likely to produce competition between negotiators, and transfer outcomes are likely to correspond to the weaker forms of synthesis or influence, with the possibility of abortive transfer. Conversely, problem-solving may succeed in shaping negotiators' preferences, since it promotes information exchange amongst participants. By providing incentives to national actors, this opens them up to new policy models from other member states and creates the circumstances for emulative policy transfer. For this reason, Bulmer and Padgett argue that bargained negotiation under unanimity hinders the transfer process, as the outcomes are weaker than those received by problem-solving under QMV (p. 110).

A third model is based on *voluntary* cooperation and exchange in policy areas where member states retain sovereignty but coordinate policy through EU institutions. In fact, the interaction between national policy-makers is facilitated by the EU. Bulmer and Padgett call this form of transfer "facilitated unilateralism". Voluntary transfer takes place when a sovereign state unilaterally adopts policy *from* an external source. In this form of governance, transfer occurs horizontally through the diffusion of policies between member states. Facilitated unilateralism only employs soft or flexible rules and influence to persuade member states to redefine their policies. With a low level of institutionalisation, EU institutions act as enablers of cooperation, and non-governmental actors are largely absent. An example of facilitated unilateralism is the open method of coordination (OMC), which applies guidelines and benchmarks to influence decision-making in member states (104–106, 110).

In defining the different types of EU policy transfer, Bulmer and Padgett use the above-mentioned typology of *emulation*, *synthesis*, *influence* and *abortive* measures. They argue that hierarchical governance will generate the strongest form of policy transfer—that is, emulation and synthesis—citing the example of the European Monetary Union in making the interesting point that, within the EU, negotiation may produce emulation. Usually, however, member states' attempts to shape EU policies result in synthesis or mere influence. According to Bulmer and Padgett, facilitated unilateralism is confined to mutual influence between member states, or even to abortive transfer (p. 106). Table 1 provides examples of the institutional variables linked to possible transfer outcomes.

Table 1. Mode of governance, institutional variable and transfer outcomes
(adapted from Bulmer & Padgett 2004, 107)

Mode of Governance	Institutional variables	Range of likely transfer outcomes
Hierarchy	Authority/normative mandate accruing to EU institutions Density of rules Availability of sanctions/incentives	Emulation-Synthesis
Negotiation	Decision rules/Mode of negotiation: QMV + problem solving Unanimity + bargaining	Emulation-Synthesis Synthesis-Abortive
Facilitation	Institutionalization: Treaty incorporation of objectives Specificity of guidelines Quantifiable benchmarks Density of exchange networks	Influence-Abortive

Alternatives to policy transfer

Criticisms of policy transfer focus mainly on its importance—is it really a theory or just another form of policy-making, distinct from more conventional forms? There have also been questions regarding why lesson-drawing and policy transfer occur in place of other forms of policy-making. A third question that arises is how the policy transfer method affects policy-making, particularly when compared to other policy processes (James & Lodge 2003).

James and Lodge (2003) argue that "lesson-drawing" and "policy transfer" are difficult to distinguish from other forms of policy-making. They maintain that researchers interested in conceptual, non-domestic or across-time influences in policy-making should not restrict themselves to the policy transfer framework, as there are other available approaches. The authors give two examples, the first of which is the institutional approach, explaining how policy-making is mediated by institutions. Institutionalism offers an answer to the question of who has power in coercive action, and why some actors are recipients, and some are not. Institutional analysis also offers an explanation of how organisational structures affect learning processes. A second alternative

or supplementary explanatory model to policy transfer, according to James and Lodge, is the power of ideas in policy-making. The spread of ideas often includes networks of actors involved in learning and transfer, and the nature of the network—whether it is an advocacy coalition or an epistemic community—is important.

James and Lodge argue that developing clearer measures of "transfer" might help to develop the approach. Effort should also be made to validate whether transfer has occurred and to assess, as needed, the extent of non-transfer. One must note that James and Lodge's criticism is from 2003 when the OMC had just started as a policy learning format within the EU. The authors refer to the process of Europeanisation and the OMC, but it was for the purpose of estimating its effects.

Policy transfer can be a useful explanatory tool, but other explanatory models can also be useful, such as international cooperation, policy networks, advocacy coalitions and epistemic communities, which also develop and promote various policies and ideas (also Dolowitz & Marsh 2000, 21; Radaelli 1999) and present another way to study the phenomenon at hand. According to Enders (2004, 374), Europeanised policy responses in HE may also be an example of mutual adjustment. Governments continue to adopt their own national policies, but in so doing, they reflect the policy choices of other governments or perceived European developments. Bulmer et al. (2007, 5) add that in earlier periods of policy analysis, it was typical to look at policy convergence since national policy-makers tended to rely on signals from the international system. By adopting similar solutions, there appeared to be convergence. This approach, however, focuses primarily on policy outcomes more than on the actors and methods of the policy process. The policy transfer approach also identifies the external catalysts for change, key actors, reasons behind as well as different steps in the process whereby policy from one jurisdiction is shifted to another.

The utility of policy transfer

As described in Moisio (2014), Bulmer and Padgett's (2004) typology of various forms of governance and policy transfer may serve to explain the policy transfer forms in EU policy cooperation in HE (see Table 2).

Bulmer and colleagues (2007, 9) note that governance by negotiation amounts to policy transfer by consent, centred on the Council of the EU. Common rules and norms are agreed by the member states and thereby adopted by the EU. In the process, member states have the opportunity to "upload" their policy preferences to the supranational level. The Commission is the agenda-setter, and it "controls the access points at which policy ideas enter the EU system" (p. 55), as member states also try to influence the ideas adopted by the Commission for transfer. "Self-interested Member States can be expected to compete to shape EU norms according to domestic preferences and practices, thereby reducing the subsequent adaptation pressures" (p. 20). In a soft law sector such as education, as noted above, adaptation pressure is minimal, which may in part explain why Finland was active in the HE modernisation talks, seeking to direct the discussion in the Council to favour the purposes of national policy formation.

Table 2. Governance of education and policy transfer
(adopted from Bulmer and Padgett 2004; Bulmer et al. 2007, 25)

Mode of Governance	Institutional variables	Range of likely transfer outcomes	*Instrument* in education policy
Negotiation	Decision rules/Mode of negotiation: **QMV + problem solving**	Emulation-Synthesis	Recommendation of the EYC
	Unanimity + bargaining	Synthesis-Abortive	Resolution/conclusion of the EYC
Facilitation	Institutionalization: Treaty incorporation of objectives **Specificity of guidelines Quantifiable benchmarks Density of exchange networks**	Influence-Abortive	ET 2010 OMC

"Under facilitation sovereignty remains vested in national arenas, but is overlaid by interaction between national policy-makers *facilitated* by the EU" (p. 23). Facilitation as a mode of governance offers only soft and flexible means to persuade member states to reassess their policy practices; the new form of cooperation, the OMC, was a good example of such means. The role of the EU is to work as an enabler of exchange and a mediator between member states (p. 24). A low level of institutionalisation means that policy transfer is restricted to influence and that there is a relatively high incidence of abortive measures (p. 24). According to the Finnish experts interviewed for the study, this was the case with OMC in HE policy.

Policy transfer can be a useful explanatory tool, but it is clear that no theory can explain all outcomes. Other explanatory models can also be useful, such as international cooperation, policy networks, advocacy coalitions and epistemic communities, which also develop and promote various policies and ideas (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000, 21; Radaelli 1999) and could be another way of studying the phenomenon at hand. According to Enders (2004, 374), Europeanised policy responses in HE may also be an example of mutual adjustment; governments continue to adopt their own national policies, but

in so doing, they reflect the policy choices of other governments or perceived European developments. It is possible to conclude, however, that policy transfer can be useful when explaining the outcomes of the four categories of description here. Moreover, the results suggest that the theoretical development could be further improved by introducing the concepts of *interaction* and/or *policy spin*.

The outcome space below shows how the significance of EU cooperation arises according to the understandings of Finnish HE policy experts, from category D (irrelevance and resistance) to category A (change)—that is, from entirely voluntary cooperation (OMC) to semi-coercive negotiated transfer (the Lisbon Strategy implementation). The categories are different and separate, but their contents are mutually supportive. For instance, the notion of a new kind of interdependence in category A supports the understanding of a variety of influences on a member state from EU cooperation. Category C, in describing fusion, supports category A in characterising change in EU-level cooperation: other forms of cooperation (OECD and Bologna) were seen to be important, but the relevance of EU cooperation increased at the turn of the century. The understandings in category D of the irrelevance of the OMC and soft law can also be supported by category C, where the interviewees observed that the EU is only one form of international cooperation. Clearly, although they can be introduced separately, the categories are also interconnected.

Figure 1 presents the completed outcome space for the four results categories. The preliminary outcome space improved with the scale of policy transfer (according to Bulmer et al. 2007). EU HE policy cooperation does not reach the point of entirely coercive transfer, moving from completely voluntary policy transfer to semi-coercive policy transfer when connected with overall EU goals, such as the Lisbon Strategy. To date, there has been no direct imposition of implementation of EU HE policy; thus, the outcome space stops at semi-coercive transfer. Here, the term "to date" is of relevance, as the new EU2020 strategy and its follow-up, with the European semester and new financial regulation, may change the situation in the near future. This may be a theme for further research.
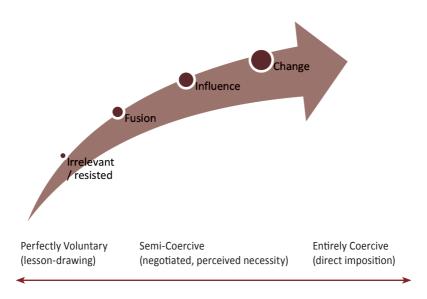
Figure 1. Outcome space: From voluntary to semi-coercive transfer

With reference to the scale of policy transfer (from Bulmer et al. 2007, 15), EU HE policy cooperation has changed from voluntary to semi-coercive policy transfer, but it has yet to become entirely coercive.

Conclusion

Effective policy analysis requires knowledge of how policy works. If reformers do not understand causation in public policy, they cannot assess whether or not their choices will work. A failure to understand decision-making procedures and the context within which they work often results in inappropriate choices when transforming methods of policy-making (John 1998, 10).

The purpose of this chapter was to describe how, through the transferability and functionality of transfer mechanisms, it is possible to study the effectiveness of policy cooperation. Policy transfer theory may help in understanding what is significant in EU cooperation and which methods of EU cooperation transfer

policies to the national level. In the post-2006 context of Finnish HE policy formation, there was a clear connection between EU-level and national-level decision-making. The theoretical framework offers an approach to combining the different findings and observations and can be used as an "overcoat" for the study, but theory alone cannot explain all possible results (Maxwell 1996, 33).

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