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JUKKA SYVÄTERÄ

Creation and Domestication of Global Policy Trends

The case of national bioethics committees

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Contents

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In Tampere, 31 March 2016,

Jukka Syväterä

Abstract

Although scholars have conclusively established that a great deal of national policymaking actually is interdependent with the trajectories of other countries, it has remained largely a mystery why nation-states voluntarily conform to global policy trends. Neoinstitutionalist world society theory has shown that globalized cultural context produces universalistic scripts from which states, organizations, and individuals derive many of their features. The empirical studies carried out within this tradition have portrayed interdependent policymaking as a process of growing isomorphism brought about via diffusion of global scripts and models. However, operationalization of interdependent policymaking in terms of diffusion and isomorphism hides certain aspects crucial for fuller understanding of the formation of global models and the actual process by which national policymakers end up enacting them. Consequently, nation-states are seen as conformists unthinkingly following current fashions and the rationales of national policymakers in conforming to global trends are neglected.

The dissertation approaches these problems through examination of the worldwide proliferation of national bioethics committees (NBCs). These are expert bodies that produce opinions and statements with the purpose of giving advice to governments on ethics-related aspects of formulating health policies and regulating developments in the life sciences. They serve as a good and timely example, because the recent worldwide expansion of NBCs has been relatively rapid and shows no signs of abating. At present, a hundred or more countries either have established an NBC or are in the midst of instituting one.

The dissertation comprises three articles, each presenting a case study concerned either with the formation or with the domestication of the global model of NBC. The sources of data analyzed include parliamentary debates, official documents on establishing NBCs, and publications by international organizations active in the field of public bioethics. The methodological approach applied for the dissertation draws from interpretive policy studies and discursive institutionalism. In practice, attention is directed to the dynamics by which ideas and discourses motivate national policymakers to act in ways that, though often not purposely, in effect lead to similar reforms throughout the world. The articles

identify the rationales (shaped by world cultural scripts articulated through and with national and particular interests alike) underlying the political moves that led to the creation and codification of the global model of NBC and to its domestication in the case of one country in particular, Finland.

In light of the findings from these case studies, three key points can be identified, each of them representing a contribution to the understanding of isomorphism and conformity prevailing in the world polity. Firstly, they call into question the rigid conception of policy diffusion according to which diffusion of a policy model begins with the invention of a model through theoretical abstraction and continues with diffusion that accelerates when enacting a model becomes an "institutional imperative" among potential adopters. The argument made is instead that *the formation of global policy models takes place in parallel with the process by which they spread throughout the world*. Secondly, the dissertation presents evidence that, although the functionalist conceptualizations are rarely plausible for explaining nation-states' conformity to global policy trends, *functionalist imaginaries of "modernization of society" actually have a crucial role in processes whereby nation-states conform to global policy trends.* Thirdly, it is argued that, while it is understandable that national policymakers' activities resemble unthinking mimicry from the bird's-eye view of world society theory, *the rationale for the national actors involved in enacting global models is not to imitate but to formulate their stakeholder interests in such a way that they converge with the "national interest"*.

The results allow us to see the world polity as a synchronized system wherein nation-states keep an eye on each other's moves and use those moves to justify their own. National policymakers utilize the models adopted elsewhere to articulate both "national" and stakeholder interests. Thinking about the world polity as a synchronized system produces novel insight in relation to the mysterious conformity of sovereign nation-states. What has appeared from the macro perspective of world society theory to be unthinking conformism is actually an unintended side effect of the strategic actions taken by actors in the fields of national policymaking. This conclusion is not intended to underestimate the influence of world culture as portrayed by world society theory. On the contrary, it attests to the validity of that research tradition's central tenet, according to which the common scripts of world culture constitute each nation-state as a member of the world polity. It implies that the contemporary world polity is already so profoundly synchronized that the policymakers of most nation-states constantly react to what other countries have done or are expected

to do in the future. Synchronization does not, however, always lead to isomorphism: nation-states can react to global trends in any of various ways. The research for the dissertation shows that even when isomorphism does result, this is not because the relevant nation-states were simply imitating others or passively adopting exogenous models.

Abstract in Finnish

Vaikka aiempi tutkimus on osoittanut kansallisen päätöksenteon olevan usein riippuvaista muissa maissa toteutuneista kehityslinjoista, on pysynyt pitkälti arvoituksena, miksi kansallisvaltiot vapaaehtoisesti seuraavat maailmanlaajuisia politiikan muutoksen trendejä. Uusinstitutionalistinen maailmanyhteiskunnan teoria on osoittanut maailmankulttuurin tarjoavan malleja, joita omaksumalla niin kansallisvaltiot, organisaatiot, kuin yksilötkin saavat monet ominaisuuksistaan. Tämän tutkimusperinteen puitteissa toteutetut empiiriset tutkimukset ovat tyypillisesti kuvanneet keskinäisriippuvaista päätöksentekoa globaalien mallien diffuusiona, jonka tuloksena valtioiden institutionaaliset rakenteet ja politiikat samankaltaistuvat. Keskinäisriippuvaisen päätöksenteon operationalisoiminen diffuusion ja isomorfismin käsittein kuitenkin peittää näkyvistä eräitä globaalien mallien muodostumisen ja niiden omaksumiseen johtavien prosessien syvemmän ymmärryksen kannalta olennaisia seikkoja. Tästä syystä kansallisvaltiot on nähty konformisteina, jotka harkitsemattomasti mukautuvat maailmanlaajuisiin kehityssuuntiin.

Väitöskirjassani lähestyn näitä ongelmia yhden esimerkkitapauksen – kansallisten bioeettisten komiteoiden maailmanlaajuisen leviämisen – tarkastelun kautta. Tapaus on ajankohtainen ja hyvä esimerkiksi globaaleista politiikka-trendeistä, sillä kansallisten bioeettisten komiteoiden leviäminen yhä useampiin maihin on ollut suhteellisen nopeaa viime vuosikymmeninä. Tähän mennessä tällainen asiantuntijaelin on perustettu jo noin sadassa maassa.

Väitöskirjan kolmessa artikkelissa tarkastellaan kansallisen bioeettisen komitean muotoutumista globaalina mallina sekä kyseisen mallin domestikaatiota yhdessä maassa, Suomessa. Tutkimuksen empiirinen aineisto sisältää muun muassa eduskunnassa käytyjä keskusteluja, erilaisia hallinnollisia dokumentteja sekä bioetiikan alueella aktiivisten kansainvälisten järjestöjen tuottamia tekstejä. Väitöskirjassa omaksuttu metodologinen lähestymistapa ammentaa erityisesti tulkitsevasta politiikka-analyysista ja diskursiivisesta institutionalismista. Käytännössä tämä merkitsee sitä, että analyyttinen huomio suuntautuu ideoihin ja diskursseihin, jotka motivoivat kansallisia päätöksentekijöitä ja muita toimijoita

toimimaan tavoilla jotka usein johtavat samankaltaisiin reformeihin useissa eri maissa.

Väitöskirjan päätulokset lisäävät ymmärrystä globaalien mallien ja kansallisen päätöksenteon dynamiikasta, jonka käsitteellistämisessä maailmanyhteiskunnan teoria on toistaiseksi liiaksi painottanut konformismia ja isomorfismia. Ensinnäkin, tulokset kyseenalaistavat jäykän käsityksen politiikkamallien diffuusiosta, jonka mukaan diffuusio alkaa mallin keksimisestä ja kiihtyy mallin tullessa "institutionaaliseksi imperatiiviksi" potentiaalisten omaksujien keskuudessa. Tutkimuksen tulosten valossa näyttää olevan pikemminkin niin, että globaalit politiikkamallit muodostuvat samanaikaisesti niiden levitessä ympäri maailman. Toiseksi, väitöskirjassa esitetään, että vaikka funktionalistiset selitykset harvoin selittävät sitä, miksi kansallisvaltiot mukautuvat globaaleihin politiikkatrendeihin, on arkiajattelussakin yleisillä funktionalistisilla käsityksillä yhteiskunnan modernisaatiosta kuitenkin keskeinen rooli prosesseissa, joissa kansallisvaltiot näyttävät mukautuvan näihin trendeihin. Kolmanneksi, väitöskirjassa argumentoidaan, että globaalien mallien omaksumiseen osallistuvien kansallisten toimijoiden toiminnan mieli näiden omasta näkökulmasta ei ole muiden matkiminen, vaan pyrkimys yhteensovittaa edustamansa erityiset intressit "kansallisen intressin" kanssa. Globaalin mallin domestikaatio kansalliseen politiikkaan usein avaa kentän kamppailulle, jossa eri toimijat pyrkivät parantamaan tai puolustamaan asemiaan.

Maailmanyhteiskunta näyttäytyy väitöskirjan tulosten valossa synkronoidulta järjestelmältä, missä kansallisvaltiot pitävät silmällä toistensa liikkeitä ja reagoivat näihin liikkeisiin omassa toiminnassaan. Kansalliset päätöksentekijät hyödyntävät muissa maissa omaksuttuja malleja kansallisten ja erityisten intressien artikuloimiseen. Maailmanyhteiskunnan käsittäminen synkronoituna systeeminä avaa uudenlaisen näkökulman suvereenien kansallisvaltioiden konformismiin. Synkronisaatio ei merkitse samankaltaistumista, sillä kansallisvaltiot voivat reagoida globaaleihin trendeihin monin eri tavoin. Väitöskirja osoittaa, että jopa silloin kun kansallisvaltiot tekevät samanlaisia reformeja, ei syynä ole se, että niiden päätöksentekijät yksinkertaisesti matkisivat muita tai passiivisesti omaksuisivat ulkopuolelta tulevia malleja. Se, mikä on vaikuttanut maailmanyhteiskunnan teorian näkökulmasta isomorfiseen kehitykseen johtavalta konformismilta, on usein itseasiassa tarkoittamaton seuraus useiden toimijoiden strategisesta toiminnasta kansallisen politiikan kentällä. Tämän johtopäätöksen tarkoitus ei ole aliarvioida maailmankulttuurin vaikutusta kansallisvaltioiden kehityslinjoihin. Pikemmin se merkitsee sitä, että nykyinen maailmanyhteiskunta on jo niin

perustavasti synkronoitunut, että useimpien maiden päätöksentekijät jatkuvasti reagoivat samoihin signaaleihin ja siihen, mitä muut maat ovat tehneet tai mitä niiden odotetaan tulevaisuudessa tekevän.

List of original articles

This dissertation is based on the following original articles.

Article I Syväterä, Jukka & Qadir, Ali (2015). The construction and spread of global models: Worldwide synchronisation and the rise of national bioethics committees. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology* 2:3–4, 267–290.

Article II Syväterä, Jukka & Alasuutari, Pertti (2013). Conforming to global policy trends: Legitimating narratives in the case of ethical policy advice. *Critical Policy Studies* 7:1, 37–52.

Article III Syväterä, Jukka & Alasuutari, Pertti (2014). Converging national with stakeholder interests: Establishing a national bioethics committee in Finland. In Alasuutari, Pertti & Qadir, Ali (eds.) *National Policy-Making: Domestication of Global Trends*. London: Routledge, 164–180.

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Introduction

When one considers the nonexistence of world government, especially in conjunction with the remarkable differences countries display in their resources, conditions, and political histories, it is surprising how nation-states all over the world constantly carry out similar reforms and enact the same institutional models (Meyer et al. 1997). Although scholars (e.g., Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a) have conclusively demonstrated that a large proportion of individual nation-states' policymaking actually shows interdependence with the trajectories of other countries, why nation-states voluntarily conform to global policy trends has remained largely a mystery.

The dissertation explores this mystery by exploring the worldwide proliferation of national bioethics committees (NBCs) as a case of interdependent policymaking of this nature.[1] These committees are expert bodies that produce opinions and statements with the purpose of giving advice to governments on ethics-related aspects of formulating health policies and regulating developments in the life sciences (Fox & Swazey 2008; Kelly 2003; Sperling 2013). They form a good and timely example, because the recent worldwide expansion of NBCs has been relatively rapid and is still continuing apace. Between the mid-1980s and the turn of the millennium, almost all industrialized countries established such a body. Since then, the wave has rapidly spread throughout the developing world. At present, a hundred countries or more either have established an NBC or are in the process of instituting one (see Article I for details).[2] The phenomenon can also be seen as part of the general expansion of expert policy advice across all possible fields of policy. Over the last few decades, the proliferation of all kinds of expert panels, councils, committees, and advisory boards has been

[1] Not all countries' NBCs are "bioethics committees" by name. Other terms regularly used in reference to these bodies include "national bioethics council" and "national ethics committee." Instead of setting out to define the NBC in this dissertation, I proceed from definitions formulated in the international field of public bioethics. Thus, NBCs are bodies classified as belonging to that category by said bodies themselves and by international organization active in the field.

[2] In this introductory article, I refer to the three original articles included in the dissertation as Article I (Syväterä & Qadir 2015), Article II (Syväterä & Alasuutari 2013), and Article III (Syväterä & Alasuutari 2014).

dramatic. On one hand, the rise of ethics committees is of a unique character, since "ethics expertise" is much more controversial than the expertise of scientific advisory bodies (Bogner & Menz 2005). In previous literature, the proliferation of NBCs has been interpreted as a manifestation of an "ethical turn" (Gottweis 2008, p. 275) or a broader shift toward "ethical governance" (Wahlberg et al. 2013).

Sociological institutionalism and, particularly, a theoretical research program known as world society theory have with great success explained the conformism prevailing in the world polity (Meyer 2000, 2009; Meyer et al. 1997; Meyer, Krücken & Drori 2009; Schofer & Meyer 2005).[3] It has shown that globalized cultural context produces universalistic scripts from which individual actors, organizations and nation-states derive many of their features. According to the proponents of this theory, globalized world culture works through soft and diffuse mechanisms, among them associational processes that channel universalized cultural meanings assigned to the various aspects of social reality (Boli & Thomas 1997, 1999; Lechner & Boli 2005). In practice, institutionalist sociology has portrayed interdependent policymaking as a process of growing *isomorphism* – patterns of increasing structural similarity in the organized spheres of society and human activity – brought about via diffusion of global cultural models and scripts.

Such operationalization of interdependent policymaking in terms of diffusion and isomorphism, however, obscures certain elements crucial for fuller understanding of why and how sovereign nation-states submit to the global policy models. The first "black box" can be seen in the formation of global models, which has been left without much attention mainly because the focus of analysis has been primarily on determining the variables that explain the spread of models to different countries or on measuring the expansion of world culture in terms of factors such as the number of international organizations (see Buhari-Gulmez 2010, p. 259; Schofer & McEneaney 2003). Another black box in diffusion-oriented studies is the actual process in which nation-states come to enact similar models (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014b, p. 2). World society theory tends to conceive of national policymakers as acting along the lines of a globally diffusing "logic of appropriateness" without being able to evaluate whether the fashionable policy at hand actually advances the state of affairs in the given policy field (Simmons,

[3] In articles II and III, this theory is called "world polity theory" instead of "world society theory." The two labels are used interchangeably in the literature, but the latter term appears to have become more established in recent years, which is why I have chosen it here and in Article I. Occasionally, other labels have been used too, such as "Stanford School Institutionalism" (Buhari-Gulmez 2010).

Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, p. 32). Nation-states are, then, portrayed as conformists that unthinkingly follow current fashions (Meyer 2004). Thus, the rationales of national policymakers in conforming to global trends have been dismissed. However, in the case of global policy models, it is obvious that these models can become enacted only via certain moves (e.g., introducing a reform or proposing a change to the legislation) by national policymakers, legislators, and other relevant actors.

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the travels of policies by shedding light on the black boxes identified above. The global policy trend of establishing NBCs could be taken as a typical example of isomorphism resulting from diffusion of global models (cf. Jang 2003, p. 121; Meyer et al. 1997, p. 151). However, I depart from the usual conceptual framework of sociological institutionalism by shifting the focus of analysis from diffusion and isomorphism to the processes and practices through which policymakers end up acting in ways that may – when seen from a bird's-eye perspective – look like mere conformism. I also want to emphasize that it is important to draw a distinction between the impetus a global model gives for policy change and the actual outcome of that change. With the framework of diffusion and isomorphism, it is taken too much for granted that interdependent policymaking always leads to policy convergence (Beckert 2010). Not all models are enacted everywhere, and even when they are, they tend to be enacted in more or less "edited" form (Sahlin-Andersson 1996). Global policy models are also "domesticated," in a process that begins when a reform is introduced in national policymaking via reference to "exogenous" ideas or models and that often leads to adoption of the model in such a way that the outcome of the reform becomes experienced as domestic (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014b, p. 9).

Three case studies

The original articles that are components of the dissertation explore the formation of the global model of NBC (Article I) and domestication of that model in one national context, that of Finland (articles II and III). Article I traces the evolution of the NBC into a global model, presenting a qualitative analysis of official documentation. The article shows that the forming of a global model in the case of the NBC has taken place in parallel with the process by which it has spread throughout the world. In the process of its formation, four shifts can be identified:

the appearance of an institutional identity, construction of the paradigmatic model, coordination of activities through networking, and consultation by international organizations. Each shift has contributed to further codification of the model. In each shift, nation-states monitored what other countries were doing and drew from the formalizations of the model that prevailed when the country in question was adopting the model.

Article II analyzes the justifications presented in parliamentary debate for adoption of the NBC model in the Finnish context. The National Advisory Board on Health Care Ethics (ETENE) was established in 1998, when the wave of establishing NBCs was in its most intense phase throughout the industrialized world. Prior accounts of the rise of NBCs have focused mostly on explaining it as a functional response to difficulties in governing the rapidly advancing life sciences and biotechnology and as a reaction especially to the consequent legitimacy problems constantly faced by policymakers, scientists, and the pharmaceutical industry. The article argues that such explanations do not fit all cases. Finland is used as an example. The article's analysis of the policy narratives employed to legitimate the reform shows that world cultural ideas of "modernization of society" and the "national interest" had a crucial role in the process whereby the model was adopted.

Article III analyzes the same debate but with the focus on the articulation of global ideas in relation to national and stakeholder interests. The article addresses the puzzle of how it was possible that the proposal for instituting an NBC in Finland was accepted by Parliament even though it was generally agreed that there had been no public controversies that such an institution would resolve. Through detailed analysis of the political field battle triggered by the introduction of the global model of NBC, the analysis teases out different interest-based rationales underlying the arguments by which the reform was justified. This article shows that domestic actors articulate a transnational idea or model in relation to prevailing conceptions as to the common good and the national interest. Thus, for the national actors involved in enacting global models, the rationale is not to engage in imitation but to bring together the interests of the nation with the interests of various stakeholders. The participants' success in the struggle in the political field depends on their ability to present their stakeholders' interests as the national interest.

Overall, the results allow us to see the world polity as a "synchronized" (see Alasuutari 2016) system wherein nation-states keep an eye on each other's moves and use those moves to justify their own. National policymakers utilize the

models adopted elsewhere to articulate both "national" and stakeholder interests. Thinking about the world polity as a synchronized system produces a novel insight in relation to the mysterious conformity of sovereign nation-states. What from world society theory's macro perspective appears as unthinking conformism is actually an unintended side effect of the strategic actions taken by actors in the fields of national policymaking. With this conclusion, I do not intend to deny or underestimate the influence of world culture as portrayed by world society theory. On the contrary, it attests to the validity of that research tradition's central tenet, according to which the common scripts of world culture constitute each nation-state as a member of the world polity (Meyer et al. 1997). It is a conclusion suggesting that the contemporary world polity is already so profoundly synchronized that the policymakers of most nation-states constantly react to what other countries have done or are predicted to do. Synchronization does not, however, always lead to isomorphism: nation-states can react to global trends in any of several ways. The research carried out for the dissertation shows that even when their roads do lead in the same direction, it is not because the relevant nation-states were simply imitating others or passively adopting exogenous models.

The sociology of public bioethics

Although the main contribution of the dissertation is to inform further development of our understanding of the conformity among nation-states, the original articles may have implications also in relation to the emerging field of sociology of public bioethics. Building on institutional sociology and on domestication research, these pieces offer a wholly new framing of the phenomenon and produce new insights into the global formation of public bioethics and the ways in which it has become institutionalized in national states' public policies.

Public bioethics has become an increasingly prominent subject of social scientific research in recent years.[4] A considerable proportion of this body of

[4] Alongside "public bioethics", which is the most widely used term, references to "political" (Felt & Wynne 2007, p. 46), "official" (Jasanoff 2007, p. 173), and "regulatory" (Callahan 1999) bioethics are often made. All these labels are used to render policy-advising bioethics distinct from academic bioethics. For overviews of the sociology of bioethics, see De Vries, Turner, and Bosk (2007) and López (2004). For accounts on the rise of public bioethics as a historical process, see Fox and Swazey (2008, pp. 21–76), Jonsen (1998), and Wilson (2011).

literature addresses or at least touches on NBCs, with the main theme of the studies in question being the democratic legitimacy (Briggle 2009; Dodds & Thomson 2006; Evans 2006; Friele 2003) of such bodies and whether they have a role in "public engagement" (Moore 2010, p. 198) – i.e., in enhancing the dialogue among scientific experts, policymakers, and wider publics. There is also a growing body of research that assesses the functions and consequences of the "ethical turn" that has taken place in the governance of biomedicine, biotechnology, and health care (Braun et al. 2012; Gottweis 2008). Another topic that has prompted numerous studies is the nature of the "ethical expertise" of ethics policy advisers and how it stands in relation to political decision-making (Bogner & Menz 2005, 2010; Hedlund 2014; Pustovrh & Mali 2015). In addition, the fairly large body of work compares NBCs of different countries, mostly focusing on opinions produced by NBCs on a particular issue (Ahvenharju et al. 2006; Fuchs 2005; Jasanoff 2007, pp. 171–202; Kastenhofer 2009, pp. 86–89; Mali et al. 2012).

As a global phenomenon, the proliferation of NBCs has been studied little (however, see Fox & Swazey 2008, pp. 215–232; Myser 2011; Salter & Salter 2007). The same can be said about international bodies active in the field of bioethical policy advice, although some work has been done on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the European Group on Ethics (EGE) (Busby, Hervey & Mohr 2008; Langlois 2013; Mohr et al. 2012; Tallacchini 2009; ten Have 2006). There is not yet a body of research comprehensive enough to enable making sense of the phenomenon of NBCs' emergence on a global scale. Why NBCs have been established by so many nation-states, all over the world, within a relatively brief span of time has not been made the explicit focus of earlier studies, although the topic has been touched upon by a number of works.

Most typically, the rise of NBCs has been explained with argument that they are a functional solution to governmental problems that modern societies face on account of developments in the life sciences. It is stated that policymakers need expert policy advice from NBCs on complex issues surrounding biotechnology, health care, and advances in biomedicine. Controversies arising from developments in biomedical science have been linked to waning public trust in science. This is why public engagement and stimulation of public debate on the ethics of these issues has been conceived of as highly important (see Herrmann 2010). Accordingly, NBCs are seen as new forums for the ethical deliberation necessitated by cultural differences within pluralistic societies (see Salter & Jones

2005). As Susan Kelly (2003, p. 342) states, public bioethics is conventionally seen as providing "a predominantly secular, rational, and 'neutral' discourse, not unlike the law or science itself, for negotiating the competing value complexes of various public interests."

The critically inclined version of the functional explanation gives emphasis to the legitimating function of NBCs. They are seen as according political legitimacy to decision-makers with respect to controversial issues born of developments in the life sciences and new medical technologies (Gottweis 2008; Salter & Jones 2002, 2005). For example, Brian Salter and Charlotte Salter (2007) argue that public bioethics committees are functional for policymakers in that they help to solve legitimacy problems by reconciling cultural concerns with the scientific progress and promises of new technologies. Susan Kelly (2003) argues that the main function of bioethics committees is to aid in managing boundary conflicts surrounding authority in science and that they are used at the same time to build consensus and protect the autonomy of science. Reconciliation in the relations of politics and science is seen as the primary function of NBCs also by Sheila Jasanoff (2007) and Mary Leinhos (2005). Most critical authors have argued that committee-based ethics positions can actually suppress diversity in the ethical positions upheld in society (Galloux et al. 2002, p. 146). Finally, an additional role of bioethics bodies has been identified in protecting the commercial interests of the pharmaceutical industry and biotechnology companies from criticism (Elliott 2004; Rose 2007, pp. 30, 256).

All in all, the literature has interpreted the rise of public bioethics bodies mainly as a solution to the legitimacy problems triggered by the development of modern biosciences. These studies set out important notions of the diverse political rationales behind the establishment of NBCs around the world and offer ideas on the potential consequences of that phenomenon. The functional explanations do not suffice, however, for explaining the cases wherein establishment of an NBC has not been preceded by noteworthy conflicts or public controversies about biotechnology (see Article II). They also largely ignore the rapid rise of political bioethics as a global phenomenon. Constituting an interesting exception are a few studies that have conceptualized the rise of public bioethics in terms of "global assemblages," thereby paying attention to how global forms are territorialized (Collier & Ong 2005). In an interesting manner, David Reubi (2010) has situated the idea of the bioethics committee as an elementary part of the bioethics assemblage, where it exists alongside a belief that there are ethics problems in medical research that can be solved via rules and

ethical guidelines. He has traced how Western bioethics was imported to Singapore, finding out that "the list of topics tackled by [Singaporean national ethics advisory bodies] is a carbon copy of the catalog of issues addressed by bioethical commissions in other developed countries" (Reubi 2010, p. 155). He concludes that the main reason for Singapore's conformance to global standards was an assumption that it would promote Singapore's reputation on the international stage and thus make the country more attractive to multinational companies. Reubi explains the logic behind this with reference to a particular style of reasoning characteristic of the Singaporean governing elite. However, for rendering understandable how nation-states almost everywhere in the world rapidly came to consider it necessary to institute an NBC, world society theory is more suitable.

In summary, previous accounts of the phenomenon have focused principally on explaining it as a functional response to difficulties in governing the rapidly advancing life sciences and biotechnology and, at the same time, to legitimacy problems constantly faced by policymakers, scientists, and the pharmaceutical industry, prompted by this very technoscientific development. In relation to earlier studies on the rise of public bioethics bodies, this dissertation's articles open a novel line of inquiry, one that draws from sociological and discursive institutionalism, thereby promoting an understanding of the expansion of ethical policy advice as a global cultural process.

The structure of the introductory essay

The purpose of this introductory essay is to introduce the key themes discussed in the three original articles, to sum up the results presented in them, and to draw together the implications of these in relation to the general problem tackled in the dissertation: why nation-states conform to global policy trends. The essay is organized in the following way. In the next section, I review theoretical approaches relevant to making sense of the global policy trends and isomorphic change. Starting with the dominant approaches, I briefly evaluate the suitability of various theories for understanding the worldwide proliferation of NBCs. After this, I proceed to the theoretical framework of my own study, orienting the reader to sociological institutionalism and world society theory. Following that, the framework is complemented by the analytical perspective of domestication. Then, I address the study's empirical setting, data, and methods. This is followed by a

section discussing the results presented in the articles. Finally, I consider how the findings contribute to development of an emerging theoretical framework for understanding the synchronization of national policies.

Theorizing on global policy trends

In the existing literature, globalization has been conceptualized in various ways (e.g., Guillén 2001; Held & McGrew 2003a; Meyer 2000). Theories differ from each other in, first of all, whether they emphasize economic, political, or cultural aspects of globalization. Probably the most popular way of utilizing the concept of globalization has been to refer to the expansion of economic exchange driven by the spread of capitalism (Castells 2011; Wallerstein 2004). Certainly it is evident that the flows of international trade and investments, of technology and information, and of labor and production have increased, and this has changed the interdependencies among countries (sometimes even creating new ones), especially between countries on the periphery and those at the core of the world economic order. There is great variation in how the consequences of these changes have been interpreted. While some authors emphasize growth and the increasing stabilization of the global system achieved via mutual interdependency, others point to emerging risks and escalation of global inequalities generated by uneven dependencies.

Another form of globalization theories emphasizes political power and the relations both among nation-states and between them and transnational forms of governance. A substantial proportion of this debate has surrounded the continuation of nation-states in an era of globalization (e.g., Marsh, Smith & Hothi 2006; Rosenberg 2005; Sassen 2007, pp. 45–96). Many have argued that globalization is undermining the power and significance of the nation-state (e.g., Appadurai 1996; Lash & Urry 1994, pp. 279–281; Strange 1997). Michael Mann (1997, 2013) finds the assertion of the nation-state's vanishing relevance greatly exaggerated and notes how the rise of the nation-state and globalization have been entwined from the very beginning. The more linked states have grown with global networks, the closer to the ideal type of nation-state they have become. Hence, the expansion of globalization actually has brought widespread reinforcement of nation-states.

There is a broad spectrum of globalization theories that focus primarily on the cultural aspects of the phenomenon. Many of these feature in a debate on whether globalization can be deemed to yield greater cultural homogeneity, often seen as

Westernization and cultural imperialism, or instead to create new hybrid or "glocal" cultural forms that actually contribute to the enrichment of the world's cultural pluralism (e.g., Hannerz 1987; Pieterse 1995; Ritzer 2007; Robertson 1995). From the perspective of this dissertation, the most relevant way of thinking about globalization entails referring to "greatly enhanced awareness of the presence and power of a world society" (Meyer 2007, p. 263). This view of globalization encompasses the widely shared understanding of intensifying economic and political interdependencies, but it also points to wider cultural dynamics, by which individuals, organizations, and nation-states worldwide increasingly arrange their lives, purposes, activities, and policies in relation to global frames, standards, and models. As John W. Meyer (2011, p. 263) argues, "[t]he world is an extraordinarily unequal place, and filled with distinctive cultures, but models of the good society are strikingly isomorphic. And changes in these models flow around the world with great rapidity: adopted often on an enthusiastic and voluntaristic basis by societies eager to progress."

These global dynamics are readily visible in the constantly emerging waves of enactment of similar policies and institutions nearly everywhere in the world. The worldwide wave of neoliberal economic policies is probably the most striking example (e.g., Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008b; Simmons & Elkins 2004), but there is an abundance of examples, from all sectors of policymaking, of common models for reforms, policies, and governance organization spreading like wildfire throughout the world (e.g., Dobbin, Simmons & Garrett 2007; Drori, Meyer & Hwang 2006; Drori et al. 2003a; Frank, Hironaka & Schofer 2000; Strang & Soule 1998). Nation-states are constantly adopting relatively similar policies or adjusting existing legislation in line with the course steered by other countries, thereby establishing similar bureaucratic structures and governmental policies. It can even be argued that whenever changes take place in the activities or institutional structures of any nation-state, the changes in question are most likely to be derived, in greater or lesser measure, from global models or scripts.

How is it possible that in this world without a world government, inhabited by diverse cultures and whose countries manifest such huge differences – whether in affluence, traditions, technological development, political regimes, or forms of civic organization – the various nation-states end up carrying out similar political and institutional reforms? The lens of analysis can obscure these patterns. When policy reforms are analyzed in individual national contexts, the question about the global shaping of national policies often does not even come up. Society, the "natural" context of sociological studies, has every so often been described and

imagined as a territorial unit, surrounded by borders and having organized around a specific set of distinctive government machinery. In a word, the paradigmatic conception of a society renders it congruent with a nation-state: a society is the totality of social relationships organized around one governmental system, separated from other societies by national borders. Societies have often been analyzed thus, as if they were closed systems of relations, each one living in a "container" (Beck 2000) set up by an individual nation-state. Indeed, most studies of political change and policy reforms within nation-states have, with little reflection, focused on elements inherent to or conditions specific to a given nation-state, thereby implicitly assuming that nation-states make reforms independently of each other.

Comparative studies of several countries too tend to focus on national differences between reforms or the institutional structures in the individual countries, although the overall similarity of the trajectories of change is often evident and much more surprising. This kind of "methodological nationalism" (Chernilo 2006) has been challenged, and it has become obvious that change in any society is dependent on change in other societies or at least affected by it. When looked at from the global perspective, reforms that otherwise might be conceived of as "national" become seen as part of series of similar changes extending through several other societies. National policymaking and the trajectories of other countries are much more interdependent than researchers working under the auspices of methodological nationalism ever expected.

From the viewpoint of a researcher studying global trajectories of change, avoiding methodological nationalism need not (or should not) mean disregarding the importance of the nation-state as a globally percolating institution that serves, after all, as a dominant cultural frame for making sense of the world but also framing many aspirations to change the world. As Andrew Barry (2001, p. 43) remarks, the "idea that there is clear distinction between the inside and the outside of the nation-state is a political fiction […] that has had real effects." In spite of intensified global connectedness, the nation-state has remained a focal locus that channels and transforms global trajectories of change. Of course, many other actors than nation-states, from transnational advocacy networks (Keck & Sikkink 1999) and epistemic communities (Haas 1992) to multinational corporations and international organizations, also play noteworthy roles in the processes wherein global ideas and models circulate and are adopted in various local contexts. What is common to these actors and also domestic policy actors (who tend to see themselves as working "inside" the nation-state, although their institutional

identity and role might be relatively transnational in character) is that often they aim to influence the behavior of nation-states.

Making sense of the mechanisms and dynamics of interfaces between global transformations and local decision-making is now recognized as one of the most fundamental problems within global and transnational sociology (e.g., Drori, Höllerer & Walgenbach 2014b; Held & McGrew 2003b). Interdependent policymaking, which, according to the definition of Beth A. Simmons, Frank Dobbin, and Geoffrey Garrett (2008a, p. 7), takes place when "government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior policy choices made in other countries," has been approached from several theoretical perspectives. Below, I firstly discuss how the theories employed by the dominant approaches in the discussion of global policy trends have dealt with phenomena such as nation-states' practice of enacting the same policy models or adopting similar bureaucratic structures.[5] Then, I present a discussion of the institutionalist viewpoint and domestication framework.

Dominant theories on global policy trends

The mainstream realist approaches that dominate most of the discussion can be divided into three groups on the basis of what they propose to be the driving force behind the nation-states ultimately carrying out homogenous policy reforms (see Dobbin, Simmons & Garrett 2007; Marsh & Sharman 2009; Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a; Weyland 2005). The emphasis may be on 1) the *coercive power* of actors external to a nation-state in determining the direction of national reforms, 2) *competition* wherein nation-states strategically make reforms because doing so gives them a competitive edge in relation to other countries, or 3) the benefits gained through *rational learning* from the other countries' best practice in solving problems.

Theories that stress coercion take power asymmetries between actors as a starting point. More powerful actors are able to impose their will on others and thus dictate the direction of policy change with respect to the weaker actors. Powerful actors exerting coercive force are typically supposed to be leading

[5] Most studies related to these phenomena do not use the term "policy trend"; neither do they utilize the term "interdependent policymaking" or "interdependent decision-making." Often the phenomena are conceptualized as diffusion of policy models, policy transfer, policy convergence, or harmonization of policies.

states, international organizations, or agents of global capital. However, more often than sheer force or threats of its use, coercion takes place through "conditioning," it is thought (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, p. 10). This involves conscious manipulation of conditions through which powerful actors make it reasonable for weaker nations to undertake policy reforms of a certain kind.

There is not much reason to perceive the global proliferation of NBCs as a result of active use of coercive power. No country has been forced to establish an NBC. On the contrary, countries have been eager to establish them. Some studies suggest that NBCs are used to shield commercial interests of pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies from criticism (Elliott 2004; Rose 2007, pp. 30, 256). Although in some cases advocates of these commercial interests have been involved in establishing NBCs there are no signs of coercion. While international organizations, such as UNESCO, have actively encouraged developing countries to establish NBCs, their ways of doing so can hardly be described as coercive (see Article I). Conditioning might have some effect, especially in the cases of late adopters of the model, because of the simple fact that having an NBC allows countries to participate in the work of certain international bodies and networks of NBCs and thereby become able to engage in policymaking in international fields. Even here, however, it is more the collective of all those countries that have established an NBC that strengthens the norm of every country needing an NBC. This kind of conditioning is rather more within the remit of sociological institutionalism, which is discussed in the next section.

Theories that explain spreading of policy models in terms of competition presume that nation-states strategically engage in similar reforms because they aim to succeed in competition with each other. Arguments emphasizing competition as a driving force of global policy trends are especially popular in studies of global transformation of economic policies. For example, liberalization of economic policies may be said to diffuse when policymakers believe that making reforms of this kind confers a competitive edge or that making these reforms is requisite for survival in global competition (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, p. 17). National policymakers certainly justify (or express opposition to) all reforms in terms of the national interest, and often these references cast the nation-state as a competitor to other countries (see Article III). There is no evidence as to whether the existence of an NBC in a given country has any effect on economic growth; nonetheless, establishing them has been justified in public policy discussion with the argument that they have a role in

promoting economic growth (see Article I, specifically the section “International networking of NBCs”). The logic behind the idea is that NBCs increase public trust in biotechnology and the pharmaceutical industry, thereby legitimating national policies designed to promote commercial activity in these fields.

It is not likely, however, that the NBCs have been established primarily with the intention to legitimize policies that protect commercial interests of the biotechnology industry or with the principal purpose being to boost economic growth. Economic policy is not the main field in which discussion on bioethics and initiatives to establish NBCs has taken place. It has been concentrated more in other fields of public policy, especially with respect to human rights and health policy. Competition may, of course, exist also in other senses than the economic one. Nation-states compete against each other, for example, in the regime of reputation – e.g., in demonstrating how advanced the institutional structures for protecting human or individual rights are. If that were the case, it might be that establishing an NBC could be imagined as improving a nation-state’s score on this axis. Here also, it makes sense to turn to sociological institutionalism (see the next section), which has a long record of showing how nation-states enact models primarily for image reasons.

Theories that explain the spreading of common policy models in terms of rational learning assume that policies spread because policymakers draw lessons from other countries’ policy experiments and apply them when designing policies in their own country (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, pp. 25–30). Learning takes place when policymakers’ beliefs are changed either because of their own experiences or because of observing and interpreting other countries’ policy experiments. Each country’s past experiences are connected to the larger body of knowledge of policy experiences in other countries. Simmons, Dobbin, and Garrett (2008a) note that policy learning theories vary in their assumptions about the degree of rationality in learning processes: Approaches closer to rational choice theories tend to assume that countries and policymakers are able to use the available data optimally to make the best possible decisions in relation to information available about possible choices. At the other end of the continuum are more sociologically oriented researchers, who emphasize that information utilized in policymaking is filtered in many ways, such that information from particular channels, or networks, has much more effect than that from others (ibid. 2008a, pp. 29–30). Some countries’ experiments are used more than others, and existing networks among countries, policymakers, and organizations influence what kinds of information flow more easily.

For instance, international organizations may have an important role in shaping and filtering the information that national policymakers use in designing national programs. As Article I shows, UNESCO has had a remarkable role in constructing a model of NBC that is easily transferred to any country, and it has explicitly taught developing countries to establish NBCs. Any country that has enacted an NBC model has drawn from the current form of the global model of NBC. In this sense, it is clear that conforming to a global model always features an aspect of learning. Indeed, most studies that present interpretations of why NBCs have proliferated see them as a functional solution to governmental problems and, therefore, as building, implicitly at least, on a premise that somehow national policymakers have learned about the model. It is possible that national policymakers have learned from developments in other countries that something disastrous could happen, such as a decline in public trust of biotechnology, and that they have learned to anticipate the possibility of similar political issues arising for them in domestic politics (see Article II). However, policymakers are, as any actor is, generally unable to figure out all possible policy alternatives most of the time and assess their relative effectiveness (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a). For most policy reforms, such as establishing an NBC, no evidence for efficiency is available. What policymakers come to learn – appropriate ways to act – is explained better by new institutionalism, which we consider next, than by a realist understanding that conceives of learning as a process wherein policymakers come closer to the truth about the best way to organize governance.

Sociological institutionalism and world society theory

The theoretical background of this dissertation lies in sociological institutionalism. As pointed out above, the realist approaches to interdependent policymaking tend to emphasize either the power of actors external to a given nation-state determining the direction of its national reforms or the benefits gained via learning from other countries. Thus the national actors are thought to submit to external models because of strategic compliance, coercive circumstances, or a desire to learn best practice in order to solve problems, or because conforming to similar policy models is believed to give a competitive edge in relation to latecomers. Sociological institutionalism, in contrast, takes a very different view.

"*Sociological institutionalism*" is quite a broad label, one that is employed mainly for demarcation in relation to the other two main schools of new institutionalism, *rational choice institutionalism* and *historical institutionalism* (Hall & Taylor 1996). All three of these traditions, which developed in roughly the 1970s in response to the then-dominant actor-centered and behavioral perspectives (Hall & Taylor 1996), are commonly referred to as new institutionalisms in an obvious contrast against older forms of institutionalism. For Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell (1991), it is Philip Selznick's work from the 1940s–50s that epitomizes the old institutionalism. According to them (see also Scott 1987), the main difference here between old and new lies in the conceptions of institutionalized behavior. Straightforwardly political and moralistic, old institutionalism conceives of institutions as the products of interested actors, infused with their values (Selznick 1966, p. 17).

The new institutionalist accounts made a break from this view by rejecting intentionality as the main explanation for the rise of institutions and by according much more weight to unreflective and taken-for-granted aspects of behavior (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). Common to all these new varieties of theory is an emphasis on institutional context as an environment that shapes the actions of the actors (e.g., individuals, organizations, or states); hence, they stand decidedly in opposition to social theories committed to methodological individualism. Even rational choice institutionalism stems from a sense that institutions affect individuals' and organizational actors' actions. By introducing institutions in studies of interest-driven decision-making, rational choice institutionalism has aspired to address situations that seem anomalous from the angle of rational choice theory – namely, circumstances wherein actors do not act as rationally as predicted by a context-free theory supposing that actors always strive to maximize their benefit in line with their preferences (Schmidt 2006, pp. 102–103). It considers institutional rules important because of the predictability they create for the outcomes of action and because they can be useful to counteract collective irrationality that might be generated via several actions that are rational individually (Peters 2001, p. 45). It does, however, retain a belief that actors have a fixed set of preferences toward the fulfillment of which their behavior is strategically directed (Hall & Taylor 1996). Thereby, it adheres much more closely to actor-centered theory than to historical or sociological institutionalism. It also tends to interpret institutions in functionalist terms: actors are thought of as creating, sustaining, and manipulating institutions because of the benefits these yield for them.

Historical institutionalism concentrates much more explicitly on the institutional development of states than rational choice institutionalism does (Schmidt 2006). It diverges clearly from rational choice institutionalism also in that it does not presume that benefits obtained via institutional change would be the primary explanatory factor for change. Instead, it sees changes in institutional structures as being mainly unintended consequences resulting from actors' choices, which, in turn, are significantly shaped by power asymmetries, path-dependencies, and unexpected historical events (Hall & Taylor 1996). The idea of path-dependent change is probably the most distinctive feature of historical institutionalism (see Thelen 1999). It puts emphasis on the impact of preceding trajectories of change on subsequent changes. The historically unique conditions of a given nation-state determine or at least shape the forms taken by that institutional change. Historical institutionalism has been utilized widely in comparative studies of evolution of policies (e.g., Pierson 1994). While it can indeed be useful in pointing out the sustainability of particular national special characteristics of the institutional structures and patterns of politics, it is not as helpful for understanding the remarkable similarity in many features between nation-states.

The perspective of sociological institutionalism is not so confined to the distinctiveness of the institutional organization and development of individual nation-states. Relative to the other two varieties of new institutionalism, in its conceptualization of "institution" it encompasses a much wider set of things than just formal rules and procedures. In sociological institutionalism, human action is guided by institutions – "the symbol systems, cognitive scripts, and moral templates" (Hall & Taylor 1996, p. 947) that not only frame the meaning for action but also "confer identity" (Douglas 1986, p. 55), as much for the actors themselves as for all things meaningful to them. Sociological institutionalism thus interprets reality from a profoundly cultural perspective. The feature that most clearly distinguishes sociological institutionalism from the other two strands is how it approaches "rationality" as a historically contingent and culturally constructed phenomenon (Hall & Taylor 1996; Schmidt 2006).

Sociological institutionalism has its origins in the advances made in organization theory in the 1970s and early '80s (see Hall & Taylor 1996; Scott 1987). Adopting Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's (1967, p. 72) conception of institutionalization as construction of shared social reality, John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977, p. 341) argued that many organizations in contemporary societies "reflect the myths of their institutional environments instead of the

demands of their work activities." By "myths," these authors referred to rationalized institutional rules that organizations absorb and through which they gain purpose and legitimacy. Institutionalized rules are called myths because their efficacy is bounded by how widely these beliefs are shared and because organizations' actual activities do not necessarily have much to do with their "ritually" enacted formal structures and purposes (Meyer & Scott 1983). Isomorphism of formal organizational structures flourishes since organizations are rewarded (e.g., through an increase in cultural legitimacy) for conforming to beliefs about "rational" manners of organization and action (Meyer & Rowan 1977).

Isomorphism and conformity have thus been at the heart of sociological institutionalism from its inception. Ever since, there has been a distinguishable line of research that takes institutional isomorphism as an object of study. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three mechanisms – coercive, mimetic, and normative – through which various organizational forms and practices become similar to each other. Although coercive and normative pressures are among the mechanisms typically referred in realist explanations too, adding "mimetic isomorphism" (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, p. 151) alongside the earlier explanations indicated a significant turn. It pointed out that uncertainty and vaguely understood problems with ambiguous causes often lead organizations to imitate others. Existing organizations are interpreted as models showing which practices are copied by other organizations. For Meyer (2009, pp. 41–42), the discovery of mimetic isomorphism marked a shift from scientific realism towards a phenomenological understanding of institutional change. The development of world society theory began with this shift in organization theory and is a direct continuation from it.

Mimetic isomorphism, or emulation in the approach taken by Simmons and colleagues (2008a, pp. 31–40), is a fourth mechanism of policy diffusion, alongside the coercion, competition, and learning discussed above. It is at the focus of sociological institutionalism's explanations of isomorphism. Emulation – i.e., imitation of the members of a peer group in order to equal or exceed their performance – can be understood as a form of learning, but it differs from rational learning, in that the perspective approaches policymaking from the understanding that both legitimate goals and means of pursuing them are socially constructed (as opposed to being based on facts). This approach to the global diffusion of models and ideas has been developed furthest within world society theory (Drori & Krücken 2009; Meyer et al. 1997). It holds that, instead of coercion or strategic

action, what causes nation-states to conform to the common models is the world culture. In this framework, "world culture" is understood as globally expanding "appropriateness," broadening consensus on what the appropriate actors, objectives, and modes of action are (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, p. 32). The world culture does not directly enforce uniformity of action between nation-states; it functions mostly through "soft" and diffuse mechanisms, such as universalized assumptions and shared cultural meanings given to various aspects of social reality (Lechner & Boli 2005).

The proponents of this research tradition emphasize the role of shared cultural models, which shape the behavior of nation-states (Meyer et al. 1997). World society theorists proceed from the observation that in the contemporary world there prevails "the expanded flow of instrumental culture around the world" (Meyer 2000, p. 233). In this, they refer to increasing isomorphism among nation-states wherein "common models of social order become authoritative in many different social settings" (Meyer 2000, p. 234). Following the phenomenological thinking of Berger and Luckmann (1967), they emphasize that the actors are constructed by cultural scripts provided by the institutional environment in which those actors are embedded (Meyer 2010; Meyer & Jepperson 2000). In this theoretical tradition, "culture" refers to "socially shared symbolic and meaning systems that become embedded in objects, organizations, and people yet also exceed what particular individuals can grasp and accumulate" (Lechner & Boli 2005, p. 16).

The idea of "world culture" may seem overly abstract at first glance. However, as Frank Lechner and John Boli (2005, pp. 16–17) emphasize, world culture is no more abstract than culture that is considered local or national. Of course, culture remains abstract in the sense that it works through language, which always and inherently is an abstract system. The actors, organizations, objects, and societal structures are constituted by culture, but culture is at the same time embedded in all of these. Whether "local" or "global," the culture never floats freely; it is carried by most concrete entities, from people and organizations to all sorts of documents and rules. What is characteristic specifically of *world* culture is that it consists of discourses, rules, and assumptions embedded in global institutions (Lechner & Boli 2005, pp. 20–21, 44). This view does not mean a literal understanding of world culture as truly universal. Rather, ideas and ways of thinking may be conceived of as world cultural when they are framed with reference to "the entire world," humanity as a whole, or ideals understood as

universal. Accordingly, the universality of world culture consists in an understanding of things as if they were globally meaningful and feasible.

World society theory explains the standardization and universalization of social organization by the worldwide cultural and associational processes shaping the structure and behavior of nation-states (Meyer et al. 1997). From world society theory's perspective, the most important mechanism in diffusion of global models is what John W. Meyer (2000, p. 243) calls the "identity mechanism." It is because actor identities are structured by world culture that models can spread as rapidly as they do throughout the world. National states, for example, have the identity of a nation-state: that is why they set out eagerly to enact the properties and ways of acting that are seen as proper for a nation-state. Globalized cultural context produces increasingly universalistic scripts from which many features of individual actors, organizations, and nation-states are derived. In this sense, world society theory makes it understandable why nation-states (as do individual actors, organizations, and bureaucratic structures) now look surprisingly similar everywhere.

George M. Thomas (2009) clarifies the concepts of the world polity, world culture, and world society in a useful way. Each of these concepts emphasizes certain aspects of the world. Conceptualizing the world as a polity highlights that national states act in a global context that constitutes their legitimate forms of authority, interests, and forms of action. World culture, as a concept, pays attention to cultural processes, with ontological and moral schemas producing patterns of similarities and differences among nation-states. Similarities arise because the cultural identity of nation-state is shared by all nation-states. Nation-states throughout the world adopt similar practices because of shared assumptions of what it is to be a nation-state. The concept of world society emphasizes that the world can be thought of as it were a stateless society. From this perspective, national societies are not as integrated and bounded as global cultural and political narratives make them seem; instead, many of the features of different national societies are actually enactments of the same global models.

Many researchers subscribing to world society theory have shown that isomorphism of institutional structures and policies is taking place between societies in many distinct fields: studies have shown how the political, economic, and cultural spheres of quite different societies are being organized in increasingly uniform ways everywhere in the world (Cole 2005; Drori & Meyer 2006; Hafner-Burton, Tsutsui & Meyer 2008; Jang 2003). World society theory explains the growing isomorphism in terms of the world culture – in other words,

by spreading of cognitive scripts that become taken-for-granted ways of organizing societies. The global expansion of a scientific mindset and a sense of universal validity of scientific explanations (Drori et al. 2003b) is a prime example. As a result, homogenization of institutional models increases on a global scale (Drori et al. 2003a; Meyer et al. 1997).

Thus world society theory has very convincingly shown that institutional isomorphism and expansion of all kinds of common models, including policy fashions and organizational models, are central features of the contemporary world society. It has explained these phenomena with reference to world culture and the nation-states' tendency to conform to global trends, or whatever are deemed appropriate ways of acting and being a nation-state in the contemporary world polity. It has also analyzed the contents of world culture. According to world society theory, the policy trends that develop in the world society are not totally random (Meyer, Krücken & Drori 2009). It is, in fact, possible to discern certain trajectories that have already been present for a long time. The continual process of rationalization, above all, is endemic to most spheres of social life and organization. Virtually every modern actor strives to be deemed a rational actor. One key way in which actors perform their rationality is by forming organizations (Meyer & Bromley 2013).

What actually diffuses throughout the world, according to this view, is the so-called logic of appropriateness (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, p. 32). World culture consists of shared understanding about what is appropriate, and it thereby guides policymaking towards isomorphism among national states. World culture defines "appropriate" actors, aims of policymaking, and means of reaching those aims. There are a number of forms that the logic of appropriateness may take when resulting in the diffusion of policy models (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, p. 34). Firstly, diffusion may take place through the nation-states' practice of following countries that are considered successful. Secondly, policymakers draw rationales for adopting new policies from various expert groups that invent theories explaining the effects of policies. Thirdly, both expert groups and policymakers devise arguments that create relations between certain characteristics or circumstances of a country and appropriate policies for those specific conditions. Finally, the policies originally invented for specific problems in specific countries may later diffuse readily to other countries since they have undergone certain stages of institutionalization. All four modes may legitimate the adoption of a model only if the adopters are seen as similar enough to the countries emulated. The culturally conceived *similarities* of potential adopters

facilitate and shape the rapid diffusion of policies and other models (Strang & Meyer 1993, p. 487).

In empirical studies, the typical way of examining the diffusion of policies or organizational models is to binary-code countries as either adopters or non-adopters. Being an adopter would then be explained by quantitative analysis of, for example, the number of organizations acting in a particular field or interaction with international organizations. The approach has been criticized for the high level of abstraction in its analyses of diffusion (Simmons, Dobbin & Garrett 2008a, pp. 39–40). While world society theory has been able to demonstrate that common models of organizing institutional structures and other aspects of social life have been enacted worldwide and that this is explained better in terms of world culture than by rational choice or functional perspectives, some elements have not been fully developed yet. Because the focus has been on the *diffusion* of global models, the processes in which these models evolve have been left with much less attention. Simultaneously, operationalization of the spreading of policy models as diffusion has meant that the actual processes by which national policymakers end up enacting global models, leading to apparent conformism among nation-states, have been left mostly as another black box (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014b, p. 2). The framework of domestication of global trends, utilized and further developed in the present work, is intended to overcome these problems.

From world society theory to domestication research

In the previous section, I concluded that, although world society theory certainly has provided very good description of the global isomorphism and expansion of all kinds of models, or scripts, including policy fashions and organizational models, the actual processes wherein models are created and enacted by nation-states have remained largely a black box. Another problem is that world society theory tends to portray actors (e.g., national policymakers) as passive emulators or unthinking conformists who ritually enact global scripts even when these do not suit the local conditions. I argue, however, that the cultural logic leading to apparent isomorphism is more complex and it is fully possible that world culture, while having a decisive role in national policymaking, functions at the same time through national actors who utilize world cultural models in their action much more cleverly than most neoinstitutionalist accounts suppose. To shed light on

the blind spots discussed above, I complement the theoretical framework in this dissertation with insights from domestication research.

The social scientific use of the concept of domestication originates from anthropology, where it has been used to refer to the taming of animals. This idea of incorporating external, wild, objects into the community or domestic economy has been adopted in various other fields of research (Stenning et al. 2010, pp. 72–74). For instance, in social studies of science it has been used to conceptualize the "taming" of the risks and uncertainties of new technology (Smits 2006) that takes place in households when new technological artifacts are brought in (Berker et al. 2005; Haddon 2006). The concept has been used also to capture the duality of taming and being tamed (Stenning et al. 2010, pp. 73–74). In the context of post-colonial studies, for example, it has denoted the colonial practices aimed at taming or subordinating "subaltern social formations" (ibid., p. 73), thereby causing hegemonic practices to be conceived of as inevitable parts of everyday reality. On the other hand, in a more positive manner, emphasis has been placed on the domestication being a dynamic, even empowering, process that allows making exogenous forces familiar and inventing new practices via articulation of international and local ideas. Along these lines, Suvi Salmenniemi and Maria Adamson (2015, p. 89) define the domestication process as "a complex articulation in which elements of different systems of meanings with diverse trajectories are sutured together to produce a novel interpretation."

Apart from media studies, wherein the concept of domestication has been utilized in examination of how foreign news items are framed for national audiences by journalists (Clausen 2004) and other actors (Alasuutari, Qadir & Creutz 2013; Qadir & Alasuutari 2013), most domestication literature has actually focused on studying domestication in the context of households and day-to-day life (see Silverstone 2006). The framework of domestication of global trends as utilized and developed in this dissertation focuses, instead, on the processes wherein global ideas and policy trends are domesticated in local or national policymaking in such a way that they become not only enacted but also experienced as domestic or self-evidently natural parts of the local or national institutional order[6]. In this emphasis, the way domestication is handled in the present work differs also from other conceptualizations used to make sense of local adoption of global models, including policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh

[6] This approach was created by Pertti Alasuutari and his research group (Alasuutari 2013; Alasuutari & Alasuutari 2012; Alasuutari et al. 2013; Alasuutari & Qadir 2014c; Rautalin 2013), of which I am a member.

1996; Stone 2012), translation of global ideas (Czarniawska & Sevón 1996, 2005), hybridization (Holton 2000, pp. 148–151; Pieterse 1995), localization (Acharya 2004), and vernacularization (Levitt & Merry 2009). The domestication framework shares these conceptualizations' view that local actors have an active role in processes that often lead to adaptation to global policy trends. However, the main emphasis in these other conceptualizations is on how the locally enacted version differs from the global model in consequence of the process in which the exogenous idea is transformed by local cultural context.

The concept of domestication, on the other hand, pays specific attention to the fact that surprising similarities are overshadowed by an experience of local uniqueness and by the practices that routinely "flag" (Billig 1995) the properties and features of a nation-state as "national" even though they are derived from global scripts and are enacted quite similarly by other countries. The idea of domestication renders understandable how it is possible that citizens of a nation-state retain a "banal nationalist" (Billig 1995) experience of social change, such that the transnational influences are largely forgotten (Alasuutari 2011, p. 231). The reforms are naturalized as destinations of a national development path, even when they are justified by references to global models or information on reforms carried out in other countries. On the other hand, as is pointed out in Article II, the domestication process also enables domestic policy actors to be conceived of as agents of change, so that adopting the model in question does not appear to be mere imitation of other countries.

The domestication framework emphasizes the cyclical nature of global change (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014c, pp. 10–14). Domestication of world cultural models also constantly generates new world cultural ideas and transforms older ones. The reforms made in nation-states often involve domestication of multiple global models and ideas in parallel, and domestication of a certain idea may take place through a number of separate reforms in one nation-state. Accordingly, there is neither an obvious starting point nor a clear finish line to the processes of domestication. It is, however, possible to distinguish two phases in the domestication process analytically: the introduction of a model via information on the policy moves made by other countries and the domestic field battle triggered by this. Domestication of a worldwide policy trend begins with the introduction of a new idea to the domestic political agenda. This can be done by simply presenting information about reforms carried out in other countries or by referring to international comparisons.

These comparisons have a twofold role in triggering processes of domestication. On one hand, comparisons contribute to the construction of national identity, and, on the other hand, problems to be addressed in national policymaking are constructed through them (Sahlin-Andersson 1996; Sevón 1996). National identity is being formed already in the identification of relevant countries for comparison. On the other hand, nation-states are regularly framed as competing with each other (Fougner 2006). Through the lens of a cultural framework of competition, making reforms similar to others' is seen not as mere mimicry but, rather, as a part of the rational competition strategy (Alasuutari 2013, p. 107). National policymakers perform responsibility and independent agency by means of practices such as making comparisons, selecting features from realizations of a global model in individual countries, and combining these (Article II).

It is often assumed that the fact of many countries – especially when they either are considered "leading" countries or belong to a common reference group for the country in question (e.g., the Nordic countries in Finland's case) – having made similar reforms is proof that other nations have to follow if they want to keep up within their "league." In this light, comparisons are used also to articulate desires related to the future state of affairs and the desired direction of change (Tervonen-Gonçalves 2012). Desire to "modernize" specifically has an important role in the domestication of global models (see Article II). Following global policy trends does not seem mere mimicry if it is believed that the trend in question is part of the path of evolution of nation-states. Although current social theory finds modernization theories somewhat out of fashion, they are routinely, though in tacit ways, employed in political argumentation (Alasuutari 2011).

The comparisons (as are other, less well-refined sources of information on the moves of other countries) are typically used to construct the problems that national policymaking has to tackle. The problem arises when there is a gap between the situation of the given country and the situation of other countries in what said country's policymakers identify as its league (cf. Sahlin-Andersson 1996, p. 71). The policymakers may accentuate that, for example, the country is lagging behind or that its leading position may soon be challenged (Alasuutari & Rasimus 2009). Or, as is illustrated by Article II, they may point out that their country lacks something (e.g., a policy or an institution) that others already have, or they might refer to problems of other countries that are expected to become problems domestically. Comparisons between nation-states advance the naturalization of the idea that citizens of the given nation-state belong to a team

whose members share the same interests (Alasuutari 2013, p. 107). The introduction of a new policy model or idea typically sparks a policy process whose form can be described as a struggle in a national "political field" (Bourdieu 1991).[7] A Bourdieuan field can be understood in basic terms as a relational space formed of relations between social positions and field-specific rules that define who can participate in the game in the field and how it is to be played (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). A defining feature of the political field is that actors taking part in a struggle have a sense that they should adhere to the political game, which "is the product of the game at the same time as it is the condition of the game being played" (Bourdieu 1991, p. 180). In such struggles, actors take positions on whether they consider the policy idea or model debated to be beneficial or instead harmful from the perspective of the interests the actors are defending. What is at stake in political field struggles when they are connected with a reform (e.g., enacting the model of NBC via changes in existing legislation) is not always about taking sides for or against the suggested reform. Instead, what the participants do is try to articulate the reform as well as possible in terms of diverse (although more or less specific) interests (see Article III). Using the "field" concept underlines that the struggle takes place in a context wherein certain rules apply (see Alasuutari & Alasuutari 2012, p. 133). In the context of national policymaking, the most important rule is that, although the participants in a struggle defend particular stakeholder interests and various convictions, they must all try to present justifications in a manner whereby their stance is framed such that it is seen as for the best for the nation and its citizens. Decisions made in the field of national policymaking are justified in terms of the national interest, but at the same time politicians and other participants in the political field battles also defend several, quite different stakeholder interests.

Although actors often justify reforms by the fact that a given model or policy has been enacted in other countries (Article II) or by an authoritative international organization recommending its adoption (Alasuutari, Rautalin & Syväterä 2016), the policies and models soon become experienced as domestic. This is because, whether a model is enacted or not, the entire political process, along with the end result, is seen in a context of wider domestic political drama (Alasuutari 2016) and this framing contributes to the exogenous origins of a model or policy tending

[7] "Field struggle" and "field battle" are used here and in the original articles interchangeably, although the former is the term usually employed in the English translations of Bourdieu's work. The term "battle" may evoke overly militaristic associations, but, by the same token, Bourdieu (1991, p. 181) describes democratic politics as "sublimated form of civil war" wherein "combative organizations" (e.g., political parties) are "mobilized."

to become forgotten. In consequence of the field battle, the global model may become enacted, probably in substantially 'edited' (Sahlin-Andersson 1996) form, or it might be wholly rejected. Even if the domestication process does not lead to anything more than a rejection or results in the adoption of a totally different policy, it still has brought about a change, at least in that the policy debate of the country in question has become more or less aligned with other countries'.

The original articles of the dissertation have contributed to the development of the domestication framework. Article I illustrates the cyclical nature of the domestication process: it shows how the national enactments of a global model actually contribute to continual change to the global model itself. Articles II and III elucidate the rationales of domestic policymakers whose action leads to the enactment of an exogenous model. In addition, Article II illustrates the introduction of an exogenous model and the field battle that follows. It also adds to our understanding of why global models appeal to national policymakers, by showing how world cultural ideas, especially that of modernization of society, work in the domestication process. Article III focuses on a struggle in the domestic political field and shows how its successfulness from participants' viewpoint depends on the extent to which they are able to articulate a global model simultaneously with both national and particular stakeholder interests.

The methodological framework

The dissertation is theoretically grounded in the tradition of sociological institutionalism, particularly in the theoretical research program of world society theory. However, the methodological approach applied here diverges from the standard perspectives taken within world society theory. As discussed in previous sections of this work, world society theory has thus far placed strong emphasis on statistical analyses, which have, indeed, produced a convincing and empirically grounded picture of isomorphic trends in the world polity. However, in this introductory essay I have also identified two black boxes in current understanding of the processes that lead to institutional isomorphism and the apparently conformist behavior of nation-states. Accordingly, I noted that, because earlier scholarship on interdependent policymaking has operationalized it predominantly in terms of diffusion, research has not been successful enough to account for the actual processes in which global models are created and nation-states end up enacting them.

Existing scholarship on globally expanding isomorphism tends to conceive of actors as emulating universalized models, yet it neglects to consider the motivations of local actors in doing so. At a general level, world society theory points to image-related factors that encourage nation-states to act in ways deemed appropriate for a good member of the world polity, but it has not had much to say about why decision-makers ultimately enact these models. Portraying the spread of global models as diffusion hides the fact that the enactment of any policy model in a nation-state must take place through a series of decisions made by policymakers. When it comes to spreading of abstract ideas, the diffusion framework may be accurate enough, but it offers only a superficial explanation for the reforms realized through policymaking processes.

Therefore, an alternative research strategy is needed for rendering the surprising amount of isomorphism in the modern world polity understandable. I suggest that the key is to waive one of the principles of world society theory, which, in practice, rejects the possibility that actors' strategic action might be a

part of explanations for isomorphic developments. To be enacted, a policy model must pass a test, finding success in a policy process in which multiple interested actors (e.g., individuals and organizations) defend their positions. Assenting to this view does not mean a return to scientific realism, given that the actors' interests just as much as the actors themselves are constructions, assemblages of cultural scripts and models. Although this is not at all an unfamiliar idea in literature on world society theory (Meyer 2009, 2010; Meyer & Jepperson 2000), the empirical studies tend to overlook any link between the abstracted models and the description of their global expansion: there is no much attention to the actual ideas, beliefs, or discourses that motivate actors when they are making decisions necessary for enactment of the model. It is surprising how little focus this fact has gained in empirical studies, since what truly makes far-reaching isomorphism an astounding phenomenon is that it takes place in a world where uniqueness, authenticity, individuals' autonomy, and state sovereignty are celebrated (Alasuutari 2015, p. 8).

With an objective of shedding light on the gaps discussed above, for this dissertation I have adopted a research strategy quite different from those typical under world society theory. Instead of analyzing variables and statistical relationships that might explain the global proliferation of NBCs, the original articles in this dissertation are an attempt to create new understanding of the research problem via qualitative case studies. By approaching this problem through three distinct angles to a single case, the three articles together contribute to increasing understanding of why and how sovereign nation-states voluntarily end up conforming to global policy trends. The examination of the NBC studied for Article I illustrates the evolution of global policy models. The Finnish NBC explored in articles II and III is illustrative of the domestication of global models. All of the articles highlight the role of local actors in a process that leads to isomorphism and that, when considered from the macro perspective, looks like conformism and passive emulation.

It is obvious that the main research problem – *why and how nation-states conform to global policy trends* – is such a complex one that it cannot be completely solved in one study, or even three. Therefore, the aim is more modest: to employ case-based analyses of a single illustrative example of global policy trends to generate interpretive explanations for the phenomena under study. This enables us to shed light on those aspects of the central enigma – the conformity of sovereign nation-states to global policy models – that might be consigned to darkness if analyzed from the macro perspective in the manner typical of empirical

studies in the world society tradition. The generalizations drawn from the case studies undertaken in the dissertation project are suggestions only yet are intended to improve the theory on policy isomorphism.

A feature common to all three case studies is a methodological orientation toward attempting to produce novel and well-reasoned interpretations of the phenomena in question through qualitative case-based analyses that emphasize the role of ideas and discourses in the global policy transformations. At a general level, the orientation can be likened to approaches taking an interpretive or discursive approach to policy analysis (Fischer 2003; Hajer 1995; Wagenaar 2014). In this study, I utilize an orientation of this nature to direct attention to the dynamics by which ideas and discourses motivate actors (e.g., national policymakers) to act in ways that, although often not with this intent, in effect lead to similar reforms all over the world. The articles identify the political rationalities (shaped by world cultural scripts articulated through and alongside both national and narrower interests) underlying the political moves that led to creation and codification of the global model of NBC and to its domestication in the case of one particular country. Interests are here understood as constructions that reflect normative (e.g., moral or political) mindsets at least as much as they do the social positions or material circumstances of interested actors. Politics is, above all, "about the fashioning, identification, and rendering actionable of such conceptions and the balancing of (presumed) instrumentality and more affective motivations" (Hay 2011, pp. 67–68). The interpretive framework utilized draws from poststructuralist approaches offering attempts to identify discursive patterns and regularities between narratives and political reasoning (Czarniawska 2010; Foucault 1972; Gottweis 2003; Howarth & Stavrakakis 2000).

The approach formed when these insights are taken together with the dissertation's theoretical grounding in sociological institutionalism could well be called discursive institutionalism (Schmidt 2008, 2010). Indeed, Vivien Schmidt has proposed that discursive institutionalism constitutes a fourth type of new institutionalism, alongside the rational choice, historical, and sociological varieties. Discursive institutionalists focus their analysis on the coordinative and communicative discourses actors engage in when they generate or legitimize political ideas and actions (Schmidt 2011a). By "coordinative discourses" she refers to policy actors' argument and deliberation on areas of policymaking while communicative discourses take place between policy actors and publics. Discourse is seen as the "missing link" between ideas and actions (Schmidt 2011b, p. 115). In her view, discursive institutionalism differs from the other

forms in that it is able to explain the dynamics of policy transformation while other types of institutionalism are, to a greater or lesser extent, tied to "positing institutions as in stable equilibria" (Schmidt 2011b, p. 107).

I suggest that it is better to conceive of the line between sociological and discursive institutionalism as much more blurred than Schmidt has put forward. I find *discursive* institutionalism not to mark a departure from the tradition of *sociological* institutionalism so much as to demarcate conveniently a distinct methodological orientation *within* sociological institutionalism.[8] The discursive approach fruitfully complements sociological institutionalism rather than being in opposition to it. It illuminates the process in which global models and ideas become effective in domestic politics. Studies adopting this approach have shown that when adoption of global models is studied from the standpoint of national policymaking, it is obvious that local actors have an active role in promoting them (Alasuutari 2015, pp. 3–8).

The methodological orientation described above has provided underpinnings for the empirical work presented in all three articles in the dissertation. In addition to all being aimed at increased understanding of the same general research problem and sharing the same general methodological orientation, the articles have other features in common. Each presents analysis of policy discourses. In terms of data this means examining policy documents. In Article I, the data were collected with the purpose of tracing the evolving of NBCs into a global model. The data sources include project descriptions, experts' reports, working papers, strategy papers, guides, memoranda, declarations, newsletters, and brochures (published mainly by international organizations working in the field of public bioethics). The data sources also include information on the founding of NBCs throughout the world. Articles II and III utilize a dataset consisting of the parliamentary discussion and all relevant government documents related to the reform by which the NBC model was enacted in Finland in the late 1990s, just as the wave of establishing NBCs was at its most intense throughout the developed world. The dataset covers the government bill (1998) proposing that Parliament add a decree to the existing Act on the Status and Rights of Patients and all

[8] The same can be said about Scandinavian institutionalism (Czarniawska & Sevón 1996, 2005), which likewise has occasionally been called "the fourth institutionalism." As discursive institutionalism does, it fits well under the umbrella of sociological institutionalism. Both discursive and Scandinavian institutionalism explicitly are aimed at understanding the dynamism of institutional change. A distinctive feature of the latter is that it applies the concept of translation, derived from the work of Michel Callon and Bruno Latour, to analysis of institutional and organizational change.

relevant policy documents and speeches given by Members of Parliament related to the reform. The policy documents include expert opinions and reports of parliamentary committees or memoranda of their meetings that comment on or propose revisions to the draft of the bill.

Discourse analysis methods suitable for examination of policy documents (e.g., Hajer & Laws 2006; Howarth 2004; Wagenaar 2014) are utilized in the analyses presented in the articles. The articles differ from each other in respect of the kinds of discursive practices given focus. Article I explores the ongoing construction of the global model of NBC and how its evolving construction is set in bi-directional relation with actual adoption of the model. In the course of the analysis, several "shifts" revealed in the global rise of public bioethics have been identified. These are not discrete events; rather, each of them is a move from earlier conceptions toward a more universalistic understanding of the NBC. Thus they are not total breaks, and each adds a new layer atop earlier conceptions. Article II focuses on the political rationalities underlying the expressed need to establish a body for ethical policy advice. It analyzes how the reform was justified by means of particular problem definitions and causally framed stories about how certain problems might be solved by the reform or what might happen if it were to be rejected. It also considers the role of world cultural scripts, functioning as sources of legitimization for policymakers: underlying assumptions, metanarratives, or worldviews that organize possible ways of knowing and thinking. The analysis performed for this piece identified political imaginaries, or "legitimating narratives," about how ethical policy advice is thought to be able to influence problems perceived by policymakers. Article III considers policy discourse as a field battle wherein several interests – both national and stakeholder interests – are articulated via, and in tandem with, domestication of a global model. The concrete analytical work presented in each article contributes to identifying discursive patterns through which topical issues, identifications of actors, and self-evident truths are constructed, categorized, and discursively articulated with political struggles.

Results and discussion

For each of the original articles, the research questions, empirical setting, and results are summarized in Table 1. In the following three subsections, I present the central results described in the articles and discuss their implications for understanding the conformity among nation-states. Instead of summarizing the articles, I will concentrate on drawing one key point from each of them.

Parallel processes – the formation and spread of global models

Most studies of interdependent policymaking pay little attention to the actual processes through which global models are created. This is because interdependent policymaking is usually operationalized as diffusion of global policy models and, accordingly, the typical research strategy is to proceed from a recognizable pattern of adoptions of a given model among nation-states and then test possible explanations for it. Thus the spreading of models is portrayed as their top-down diffusion into nation-states, and the causal mechanisms behind successful diffusion have been given the analytical focus.

Though world society theorists occasionally make reference to the bi-directional nature of the relationship between the formation and diffusion of global models (Drori, Höllerer & Walgenbach 2014a), it has not really been at the focus of research thus far. Empirical studies use to focus on diffusion of a specific policy or organization. In practice, these studies presuppose that the model is constructed first, then stays fairly stable through the process of diffusion. Whenever the models enacted differ from the formal global models, the deviation is analyzed in terms of decoupling (Meyer et al. 1997, pp. 154–156). While many studies have focused on how global models are adapted or edited to suit local contexts, study of the interplay between models' construction and spread has been confined mostly to individual national contexts. Accordingly, these studies also largely overlook the simultaneity of spreading and formation of policy models.

Table 1. The research problems, empirical settings, and results presented in the original articles

	Article I	Article II	Article III
Theoretical problem and the particular aspect of it scrutinized	How and why nation-states conform to global policy trends		
	How formation of global policy models takes place	How conforming to global trends takes place in such a way that it does not seem mere imitation	How the "national interest" and stakeholder interests are reconciled in a political field battle triggered by introduction of global ideas
Empirical research question	How the NBC has spread throughout the world polity and how it (as a model) has evolved into its current form	How the proposal to establish ETENE was justified in the parliamentary debate	How national and stakeholder interests were reconciled in the debate that took place in Finland when the NBC model was adopted
Data	Information on establishment of NBCs; official documents mainly published by international organizations active in the field	The parliamentary discussion on the reform by which ETENE was established in Finland in 1998; government documents related to the reform	
Analysis and methods	Tracing the spread and changing codification of the model	Analysis of legitimating narratives; identification of assumptions surrounding problems the reform is thought to affect and related political imaginaries	Analysis of the means of articulating establishment of an NBC in terms of national and stakeholder interests
Results	Identification of four stages in the formation of global models	Identification of three legitimating narratives utilized when the reform was justified	Identification of rationales of actors taking part in the field battle triggered by the global model
Contribution to addressing the theoretical problem	The formation of global policy models as taking place in parallel with the process by which they spread throughout the world	That the functionalist imaginaries of "modernization of society" actually have a crucial role in processes whereby nation-states conform to global policy trends	That for the national actors involved in enacting global models, the rationale is not imitation but convergence of the "national interest" with the interests of various stakeholders

To make sense of the formation of global policy models, Article I set out to trace the process by which the NBC has evolved into its present form as a commonly recognized global model. This entailed analyzing the worldwide institutionalization of the model alongside shifts in how the model has been constructed in official documentation by international and national organizations and other relevant actors in the field of public bioethics. As noted above, the analysis in the article identifies four shifts in the construction of the model that have taken place in the course of the NBC model's spread throughout the world. Each shift adds new layers of theorization to the model.[9]

The first shift came with the NBC's *appearance as a category*. The first countries to establish bodies now identified as NBCs were the United States (in 1974), Slovenia (1977), France (1983), and Sweden (1985). The emergence of these bodies can be seen as part of a wider global trend of institutionalization of scientific policy advice. Each of them was established before the term "national bioethics committee" was coined in the late 1980s. The emergence of a new institutional identity involved theorization of NBCs as a specific kind of expert body and created an entirely new field, *ethical* policy advice. It also marked the start of the first wave of NBCs' proliferation, wherein the model was enacted in most industrialized countries during the 1990s.

The second shift was *construction of the paradigmatic model* of the NBC. Soon after the appearance of the NBC as a category, the French version became employed as a paradigmatic example of NBCs, thereby setting certain standards as to the proper form for an NBC, its purposes, and the membership. Accordingly, the ideal NBC is judged to be, among other things, a permanent, multidisciplinary, and independent body that is established by law and has a consultative role in national policymaking. Though NBCs of other countries differ from the French version in various respects, when they are compared with each other this is often done in relation to the French model. The paradigmatic character of the French version is at its most discernible when it is invoked on occasions of stating a definition for an NBC or citing the properties of one for purposes of excluding bodies from the class of NBCs. In other words, to be an NBC, an organization has to resemble the paradigmatic model closely enough. The theorization involved in this shift thus created a format for the NBCs to come.

[9] Theorization is a concept utilized by David Strang and John W. Meyer (1993, pp. 492–493) to refer to cultural construction that involves "self-conscious development and specification of abstract categories and the formulation of patterned relationships such as chains of cause and effect […] a strategy for making sense of the world."

The third shift was that of *international networking* of NBCs. In the 1990s, NBCs began to organize themselves into international networks (such as the Global Summit of National Bioethics Commissions and the Forum of National Ethics Councils). These new international organizations in the field of public bioethics have been involved directly in theorization on the NBC model, since they have taken it quite explicitly as their task to standardize and formalize the model via purposeful activities aimed at sharing best practice and specifying a similar set of problems for NBCs to tackle across national borders. Thus, appropriate scope and suitable modes of action for NBCs were further codified in this shift.

The fourth shift brought *consultation by international organizations*. Bioethics has long been in the sphere of interest of two intergovernmental organizations, UNESCO and the WHO. With the 2000s, however, they (especially UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee, or IBC) became active in promoting spreading of the NBC model to the developing countries. Via this shift, the model has become more "global" than ever before. It has been constructed as an instrument of global change, particularly as a tool for supporting human rights related to health, use of biotechnology, and development of pharmaceuticals in developing countries. The efforts of UNESCO have produced clear guidelines for establishing NBCs (including a series of guidebooks for policymakers), which are intended to facilitate establishment of such bodies in developing countries. The attendant theorization has produced a universally applicable model that has been constructed as if a fundamental part of the institutional structure of any country. The fourth shift has enhanced the ongoing second wave of proliferation of NBCs, in which more than 60 developing countries have already adopted the NBC model or at least taken steps toward adopting it.

In sum, the analysis in Article I points to the NBC as having become increasingly codified as a global model in parallel with its spread. Codification and redefinition of the NBC has taken place especially via international organizations and networking of NBCs with each other. The case study shows also that a state adopting the model drew on whatever the current level of formalization was at the time. This observation leads to some conclusions that are important for better understanding of nation-states' conformity. It suggests that if one is to understand interdependent policymaking, the adoption of a model should not be seen as the endpoint of the process. This is because the global models are not stable, as studies of diffusion are used to describing them as being. In terms of methodology, it implies that preferring research designs that allow observing

the ongoing process of construction of models makes more sense than analyzing diffusion of a single model. Not only are the locally adopted versions of a model translations of a global model, but also the global model itself is constantly redefined, and this process draws from locally enacted versions. This point is further illustrated by Article II, which shows how the Finnish version of the NBC was locally constructed through adding features from NBCs of several other countries to the generic global model.

In summary, Article I traces the process through which the NBC has evolved into its present universally applicable form. It shows that the model of NBC has been increasingly codified as a global one *while* it spreads. In this process, various actors – existing NBCs, researchers, national policymakers, and international organizations – have contributed to the formation of the now universalized NBC model. Once NBCs established relations to their equivalents in other countries and became organized into international networks and organizations, these took on an important role in defining and codifying the NBC in parallel with the model's expansion throughout the world.

Working from these observations, I argue that *the formation of global policy models takes place in parallel with the process by which they spread throughout the world*. This claim stands in contrast to the majority of studies on the spreading of global models, which typically presuppose that the model is first formed, then diffused. It calls into question the common view within policy diffusion research that the process of diffusion begins when a model is invented, usually by means of theoretical abstraction, which is followed by diffusion that accelerates when enacting a model becomes an "institutional imperative" (Strang & Meyer 1993, p. 495) among potential adopters.

The role of functionalist imaginaries in global governance

Mainstream realist theories typically explain isomorphic social change either in terms of power relations or by the functional rationality of the reforms carried out, but for most areas of policymaking these theories are unable to account for nation-states' conformity (Meyer et al. 1997, pp. 147–149). World society theory diverges greatly from the usual realist explanations in this respect. It sees nation-states as enacting common models "ritualistically" even when these do not suit their needs. However, because empirical studies within this tradition typically

focus on the diffusion of the models, they say little about the processes through which national policymakers end up enacting models.

To shed light on the black box of processes through which nation-states come to conform to global policy trends, for Article II I explored how the adoption of the NBC model was justified in the case of Finland. The model was enacted in Finland in the late 1990s, precisely when the wave of establishing NBCs in industrialized countries was at its most intense. Around this time, national policymakers in nearly all of the industrialized countries (and a short while later in developing countries, in still increasing numbers) ended up establishing an NBC – voluntarily, since there was no coercive power that could have forced countries into such a reform. Neither was there, in the case of Finland, any such obvious need as earlier literature often suggests to be the reasons for establishing NBCs – e.g., lack of public trust in medicine or in biotechnology.

From the bird's-eye view of world society theory, nation-states' practice of enacting similar models resembles unthinking emulation of what is taken as a proper way of organizing structures and activities of a nation-state. However, reforms such as establishing an NBC are outcomes of a (parliamentary, in most countries) political process in which reforms must be successfully justified, at least if they entail passing a new piece of legislation. It is quite unlikely that national policymakers would justify such acts, leading to apparent conformism, by simply stating that the reform has to be made because other countries have already made similar reforms or are about to.

Accordingly, Article II was written to explore the actual justifications put forth in the political process by which the NBC model was enacted in Finland. The analysis of the parliamentary discussion and government documents related to the reform shows, indeed, that imitating other countries was not cited at all in attempts to justify the enactment of the model. Instead, the article identifies three distinct legitimating narratives used to justify the establishing of a body equivalent to the NBCs of other countries. These narratives are derived, in fact, from world cultural ideas of the national interest and modernization, and the article thereby illustrates how world cultural scripts occupy a decisive role in national policymaking.

The first narrative uncovered is that of *international pressure*. Although there was no coercive authority that would have demanded Finland to adopt the model, subtler forms of pressure were referred to in the parliamentary discussion in efforts to legitimate the reform. This discussion referred to the ongoing harmonization of governance of biomedicine, science, and technology in Europe,

and having an NBC was presented as offering useful potential in relation to upcoming changes in legislation. The perceived pressure stemmed from the fact that the European Union and also the general international community had started to communicate through bioethics discourse. Having an NBC was seen as a way to fill a gap in Finnish policymakers' capability of taking part in this discourse.

The *functionalist narrative* framed the reform as a potential solution to a broad set of domestic governmental problems, from needs for prioritization in the health-care system to uncertain acceptability of new methods of medical treatment and to eroding societal values. One of the functions envisaged for the body was to educate both citizens and politicians to discuss complex ethics issues emerging with advances in biomedical science. In the course of the discussion of the proposal to establish an NBC, more and more purposes were invented for the relevant body, many of which were never mentioned in the government bill or in the decree ultimately issued.

Underlying most justifications offered in the discussion was a framework that draws from the tacit concept of modernization (Alasuutari 2011). The *modernization* narrative took three distinguishable forms in the discussion. The fact of an *international trend* of establishing NBCs was used as proof that it is beneficial also "for us" to have such a body. The motivation is not to imitate but to stay on the train of modernization, because failing in that might hinder general (e.g., economic or social) development. Also, an assumption of evolutionary *stages of development* framed the argumentation. For example, it was supposed that problems similar to those experienced in some other countries (such as increasing distrust in medical science and biotechnology) would arise in Finland – and therefore that similar solutions are needed. Underlying the notion of a need to educate the public is the idea of a state's responsibility to *modernize the people*: if a country wishes to remain among the civilized nations, its citizens must be educated.

The results presented in Article II are consistent with world society theory's idea that nation-states follow global trends because actors and identities are constituted by globalized world culture. The article illustrates also that policymakers' rationale for conforming to trends is not based solely on the fact that others are doing the same. Social imaginaries – both functionalist in nature and those derived from the idea of modernization – are used to justify enacting models similar to other countries'. Thus, while I agree with the central view of world society theory according to which functionalist explanations are rarely plausible for explaining global isomorphism, I argue, proceeding from the above

discussion, that *functionalist imaginaries of "modernization of society" actually have a crucial role in processes in which nation-states enter conformance with global policy trends*. The modernization narrative, especially, is a powerful engine of synchronization because it persuades national actors to follow international trends.

The article illustrates how conforming to global policy trends may take place in such a way that it does not seem mere imitation of other countries' actions. The Finnish version of the NBC was constructed by comparison and selection of various features of NBCs enacted earlier, in other countries. In this way, the domesticated model was made to seem distinct from any other version, implying that the policymakers responsible for drafting the proposal for a new body had made their work well informed by learning from the strengths and weaknesses of other countries' versions and by selecting the features best matching specific national needs. Thus, from the standpoint of national policymaking, following a global trend thereby does not seem to be simple superficial emulation of other countries.

Reconciling national and stakeholder interests

As was discussed above, the analysis in Article II shows that the rationale of national political actors was not to imitate what was going on in other countries but to defend the best interests of the nation. Yet world cultural ideas of the national interest and modernization motivated the national policymakers to enact the NBC and thereby to follow a global trend. Whether the adoption of the model was justified because it was seen as a functional solution to the domestic problems or as an integral element of modernization, underlying the argumentation was the idea that the reform was for the good of the "imagined community" (Anderson 1987), the nation. These are actually two extremely strong world cultural scripts that rule all national policymaking: whether policymakers oppose or instead defend a given reform, they nearly always invoke the idea of the "common good" of the nation when justifying their views. Nearly as often, they appeal to the importance of defending the advantage of the nation-state in a competition with other countries as an argument for their view. Although all policymakers typically frame their views as being in the nation's best interest, they always (either knowingly or intuitively) at the same time defend or stress particular stakeholder interests.

If we are to understand why nation-states end up conforming to global policy trends, it is essential to make sense of the dynamics that tie global ideas, the national interest, and several stakeholder interests together. This was the objective for Article III: to study how interests of different actors were reconciled with the national interest in the domestic political field battle triggered by the introduction of the NBC model in the case of Finland. The article was prompted by the puzzle of how it was possible that the proposal to institute an NBC in Finland was accepted by Parliament even though there had been no public controversies in Finland that such an institution would reconcile. Indeed, a most fundamental feature of the case was that the reform was debated at some length although no one really opposed it. Instead, it was defended on many, quite different grounds.

The political field battle that occurred in the Finnish parliamentary discussion was not about whether or not the reform should be carried out. The struggle coalesced around who should be represented by the proposed body and how its tasks should be defined in relation to roles of relevant professions and other institutions. These issues were also linked to the nature of suitable ethical expertise. The analysis laid out in Article III teases out various interest-based rationales that are underpinnings of the arguments raised in relation to these issues.

The struggle over representation included debate on which groups should have representatives on the committee. The government bill reflected the global model of NBC in that a diverse composition of the body, with regard to stakeholder groups and professions, was proposed. In the parliamentary debate on the proposal, the medical profession was the only stakeholder that had a position taken for granted by everyone, although there were different views on what would be a suitable strength for it in relation to other stakeholders. Other groups whose representation was demanded and debated were nurses, users of health-care services, and disabled persons. Defenders of all these groups strove to argue convincingly that a strong position for the group in question was necessary for legitimacy of the expertise of the pending body. Similarly, demands were put forth for ensuring that the committee's membership guaranteed the presence of religious views or that a religious perspective would be represented.

There was only a little discussion of whether academic perspectives on ethics (or philosophy) should be represented, and, all in all, the position of ethics expertise in the composition of the nascent committee was left considerably vague. The amorphous notion of ethical expertise, however, did frame the debate on the role and expertise of the various professions and institutions to be

represented by the new body. All interest groups tried to specify suitable expertise and objectives of the body in such a manner that the reform would fight for their cause in the most advantageous ways possible. Ultimately, most appeals for revising the original proposal as to the composition of the body did not have much effect on the final definition of the body. If anything, the introduction of the NBC model gave many political and stakeholder groups, many of which had not had anything to do with bioethics before, an opportunity to articulate their interests in this respect.

In light of the fact that there was no obvious functional need to establish an NBC in Finland (since public trust in medicine and biotechnology had never taken a serious blow in Finland), there was somewhat of a mystery in why the decision-makers in Finland, in practice without any opposition, wished to enact the model. The analysis elaborates on this. Firstly, the new body was not seen as a threat by any group or institution – after all, it was to be only an advisory body, without formal power. Instead, many stakeholders saw in it potential for pursuing their interests. The reform was also so clearly associated with many world cultural virtues (e.g., modernization, rational governance, human rights, and citizens' participation) that standing against it would have been risky.

Although Finland's establishing of an NBC might resemble unthinking conformism from the macro perspective of world society theory, it was actually an outcome of a political field battle wherein domestic actors reconciled a global model with prevailing conceptions of the common good and national interests. They also utilized the debate to articulate several (more or less rival) stakeholder interests. The participants' success in the political field battle depended on their ability to present particular stakeholder interests as compatible with or prerequisite to the national interest.

It is from considering these findings that I argue that for the national actors involved in enacting global models, the rationale is not to imitate but to bring together the "national interest" with the interests of various stakeholders. Ideas for national policy reforms are often derived from global models, and such reforms may indeed resemble unthinking conformity through the lens of world society theory; however, one key element is that introduction of an exogenous model in the domestic policy field typically leads to a political field battle in which many different stakeholders aim to articulate their interests via the model. In other words, any new idea can become a bone of contention, the stuff of domestic political struggles. This advances the domestication of the model, as a

model initially seen as exogenous becomes experienced as something with relevance to many sides and stakeholders in the relevant area(s) of national policy.

Conclusion: Interdependent policymaking as synchronization

I have made three key points in the above discussion of the results presented in the original articles in this dissertation. Firstly, I have challenged the rigid conception of policy diffusion according to which diffusion of a policy model begins with the invention of a model through theoretical abstraction and continues with diffusion that accelerates when enacting a model becomes an institutional imperative (Strang & Meyer 1993, p. 495) among potential adopters. I have argued, instead, that *the formation of global policy models takes place in parallel with the process by which they spread throughout the world*. Secondly, I have argued that, although – as institutional sociology has revealed in numerous contexts, again and again – the functionalist explanations are rarely plausible for interpreting nation-states' conformity to global policy trends, *functionalist imaginaries of "modernization of society" actually have a crucial role in the processes wherein nation-states come to conform to global policy trends*. Thirdly, I have argued that, while it is understandable that national policymakers' activities resemble unthinking mimicry when considered from the perspective of world society theory, *the rationale for the national actors involved in enacting global models lies in not imitation but an attempt to formulate their stakeholder interests in such a way that they are the "national interest"*. Sometimes this leads to fashion-following-type behavior and similar reforms being made all over the globe, but often only the discursive frameworks of policy debates are aligned with other countries' example. In any case, the trajectories of global change become synchronized.

With the preceding sections, I have aimed to point out how each of these key points sheds light on the two black boxes of diffusion studies I identified earlier: how global models are created and through what kinds of processes nation-states come to enact them. The dissertation has explored the process by which recognizable policy models become global while they spread and how models change as they spread back and forth through the world polity. As Article I shows, nation-states draw from the theorized global model as it currently stands when they enact global models. Since the global model is always subject to change, it

cannot be presumed that the same model has been adopted by every country. Each move has potential to trigger a response by other states. Because the common scripts of world culture constitute every nation-state, they often are echoed in similar policy moves, as in the case of the proliferation of NBCs.

However, as Article II illustrates, policymakers' stated rationale for conforming to trends is not based only on the fact that others are doing the same. Social imaginaries – functionalist ones and those derived from the idea of modernization – are used as justification for enacting models similar to other countries'. Whether or not the imaginaries (see the discussion of legitimating narratives in Article II) are truthful or based on a "real" state of affairs matters little – if policymakers believe in them, they will have real consequences (Alasuutari & Qadir 2014a). In any case, a global policy model can become enacted by nation-states only when national actors make certain moves (e.g., introducing a reform or proposing a change in legislation).

That domestic actors do not merely react passively to scripts is expanded upon further in Article III. In the moves they make, they take into account both their interests and what they know is happening in other countries. The information about what is going on elsewhere is an important resource from the national policymakers' viewpoint, for advancing their goals in the national political field. Global models become authoritative in a nation-state context only when national actors perceive them as useful and articulable in terms of interests they attempt to advance.

The three key points highlight good reasons to go further and propose that it would make sense to move from the diffusion framework to thinking that portrays interdependent policymaking in terms of *synchronization* (Alasuutari 2016). In this framework, the world polity is conceptualized as a synchronized system in which nation-states constantly monitor each other's moves. One can conclude that, for understanding the intermingled processes of formation and spread of global models, it is crucial to avoid proceeding from the assumption that a single, stable policy model diffuses through the world polity and instead to analyze policy moves made by national states. Domestic political field battles are triggered by exogenous ideas, and these struggles contribute to further synchronization of political discussion worldwide. For example, it is likely that establishment of an NBC in any given country entails a more or less similar struggle, organized around the composition of the body (Article III). In this struggle, ethical policy advice and the rather complex issue of "ethical expertise"

come to be discussed everywhere in terms of professions and religious convictions.

When the foregoing reasoning is drawn together, it can be argued that national actors have a central role in global governance: when they justify and criticize policy reforms, they utilize international standards, organizations, global policy formats, and information about policies adopted in other countries. The world polity is already so deeply synchronized that national policymakers routinely refer to other countries (Alasuutari 2014; Alasuutari & Qadir 2014b). Synchronization may sometimes be purposeful (see Article I), but more often it is a side effect of the national actors' manner of using information about reforms made elsewhere and global models in domestic political struggles (see articles I and III). In a synchronized world polity, isomorphism is not so surprising. It is important to note, however, that synchronization does not necessarily mean convergence of national policies. Although all nation-states react to what is going on elsewhere, they do not always end up making similar changes. Even when they do, they retain distance from others in some respects.

Above, in discussion proceeding from the studies carried out for the original articles, I have made the point that the concept of diffusion is too rigid for analyzing proliferation of more or less codified policy models and organizational formats, such as that of the NBC. But there remains a need to unpack another broadly used term, "model." World society theory emphasizes the power of shared cultural models in shaping the behavior and institutional structure of nation-states (Meyer et al. 1997). The models that are thought to diffuse display such diversity that it may even create confusion. I propose that future studies could usefully situate the various models along a continuum of more abstract to more practice-oriented models. At one end, the term "model" is used to signify principles and ideas at a high level of abstraction, such as citizenship or equality (Meyer et al. 1997, pp. 145–148). Some models, put forward especially by scientific endeavors, are ontological in the sense that they state the nature and purpose of actors and other entities (Drori et al. 2003a). Other models close to the abstract extreme are more like what we might call travelling ideas, from social concerns to all kinds of fashionable conceptions of organizing (Czarniawska & Sevón 1996; Inoue & Drori 2006). At the other extreme lie policies, practices, standards, and bureaucratic structures, all of which have some kind of practice-oriented purpose (e.g., Jang 2003). Organizational formats such as that of the NBC are among these.

Although the work for this dissertation focused rather strictly on the rise and spread of one particular policy model, that of NBC, it is important to acknowledge that no world model spreads without carrying something more along the way. Thus the phenomenon explored in the original articles is closely linked to the shared "models of the good society" (Meyer 2007). The NBC model spreads together with the idea that the policymakers of a contemporary society are in need of "ethical policy advice" and that multidisciplinary bodies of experts are the proper way to embody or channel suitable "ethical expertise" for this purpose. The NBC is also a reflection and carrier of world cultural values. In the course of my analysis of the justifications presented for political bioethics and the rationale of its institutions, it became clear that values at the core of world culture (Boli 2006; Boli & Thomas 1997) are regularly referred to. Ideals such as rational decision-making, participation of citizens, the inviolable value of an individual human life, and health as a right, alongside hope for a better future for humankind via technoscientific advances, are embraced when actors provide justification for establishing NBCs. All of these ideals are highly cherished values in contemporary world culture.

The metaphor of diffusion might be suitable, after all, for describing the expansion of such abstract models and ideas. Although such world cultural principles and scripts are historically contingent and are subjects of constant struggles, they have spread through the world polity and become more or less coupled with actual practices in the relevant contexts. What actually spreads is not a single, identifiable organizational format but an evolving codification traveling back and forth through the world polity. This implies that it would not mean much to insist that any single enactment is more decoupled from the model than another, for the model is not stable enough for that. It continually forms while it spreads.

The component studies of this dissertation suggest that global ideas become authoritative in the nation-state setting when they are domesticated through local field battles wherein exogenous ideas are converged with national and stakeholder interests (Article II and III). Enactment of an organizational form by a nation-state is not, however, the endpoint to synchronization. On the contrary, it is to be expected that actors running such organizations seek to start collaborating with similar organizations, elsewhere. They also establish international organizations in the field in question or join existing ones. Within these networks, information is shared, ideas exchanged, and the organizational format further codified (Article I). A fruitful starting point for studies of the

associated phenomena might be that national actors enact global models for establishing organizations in various policy fields in order to become better equipped to affect future policymaking in a given policy field (Alasuutari, Rautalin & Syväterä 2016). Future studies need to explore the dynamics of these interactions in depth.

* * *

I have deliberately confined most of this work to engaging with a particular theoretical research program: sociological institutionalism and, more specifically, world society theory. Since I have been concerned with identifying and shedding new light on "black boxes" in this tradition, I have sometimes positioned my approach more clearly within it and sometimes, especially with respect to methodological questions, set it closer to boundary lines, thereby establishing connections to other approaches. While I believe that commitment to a single theoretical perspective has contributed to the coherence of this work, it has to be admitted that I have not given full attention to similar theoretical moves made elsewhere in the world of contemporary sociological theory.

For instance, I acknowledge that the criticism of the diffusion frame presented in this dissertation resonates with some discussions in post-colonial sociology (e.g., Bhambra 2007; Go 2013). In this context, the standard storyline of diffusion studies, in which the formation and spreading of global models is portrayed as a one-way linear flow (of "modernity") from Global North to Global South, has been heavily criticized. It has been seen as obscuring "the ways in which the presumably unchanging thing that spreads might get refashioned or reconstructed along the way or how it may have been forged through interactive relations in the first place" (Go 2013, p. 38). That a global model appears to diffuse relatively smoothly to multiple localities is possible because discourses already existing in these localities provide scripts for it. Likewise, the continuation of the modernization narrative (Article II) could have been reflected upon further in light of the literature on how sociologists have constructed the meaning and compassable content of "modernity" (Bhambra 2014). These considerations could serve as starting points for more in-depth elaboration on how global power relations and local histories explain the reasons for certain scripts spreading readily while others do not.

Although the existence of a convention ought not to be the only rationale for conforming to it, one could point out that it probably is more a rule than an

exception that when researchers depart from the confines of their chosen school of thought, they tend to adopt ideas eclectically, in the manner that best supports their argument. In this respect, they are not so different from policymakers who "pick and choose" from among the features of versions of the models enacted elsewhere in order to create a version that fits their country's conditions well (see Article II). If there is a feature of institutional sociology that I would hope to see adopted in sociology beyond the subfield of global and transnational sociology, it might be the aptitude to become fascinated by surprising similarities in forms and trajectories – which are so common that they are often overlooked in a world focused on individuality and on celebrating differences. The idea of synchronized policy moves enables us to see many of these similarities as outcomes of constant motion.

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Original articles

The construction and spread of global models: Worldwide synchronisation and the rise of national bioethics committees

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Abstract

Cultural approaches to national policymaking have yielded much empirical evidence that national decision-making is greatly impacted by policy choices made in other countries. Considering that the common explanation of policy diffusion cannot explain all instances of isomorphism, this paper proposes an alternative way of operationalizing interdependent decision-making. Drawing on emerging work in neoinstitutionalist world society theory, we suggest that the rise of global policy models can be explained by thinking of the world polity as a synchronised system in which national states keep an eye out on each others' moves and, often, match them. As a consequence, global models are formed *in parallel* with their spread. We illustrate this argument by analysing the worldwide institutionalisation of national bioethics committees (NBCs). Using qualitative analysis of official documentation on NBCs, we trace how the institution has evolved into a widely recognised and codified format in four shifts – the appearance of an institutional category, construction of the paradigmatic model, networking, and consultation by international organisations. We show how this analysis corrects for the assumption of rigid policy models in most diffusion research and offers new designs for empirical research.

Keywords: sociological institutionalism, global policy models, diffusion, synchronisation, world society, national bioethics committees

Introduction

Cultural approaches to national policy-making have made considerable headway in exploring the truly interdependent nature of decision-making (e.g. Simmons et al., 2008). In contrast to micro-cultural perspectives that emphasize the locally-driven, idiosyncratic nature of national policies, a macro-cultural approach draws attention to the wider institutional environment within which national states are embedded (Meyer et al., 1997). Considerable empirical evidence in this line of scholarship shows that policy reforms made elsewhere have a great impact on decision-making in any country (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014b). Yet we still need more knowledge about how precisely global models influence the politics of national policymaking and how national policy reforms, in turn, have an effect on the formation of global models. In this paper we approach these macro-cultural questions by focusing on the two-way relation of formation and worldwide spread of policy models, underscoring how policy models are formulated *as* they travel through the world polity.

Interdependent policymaking is mostly operationalized in research as the diffusion of global policy models through the global system (Drori et al., 2003; Meyer et al., 1997). Indeed, nation-states across the world often enact administrative apparatuses of policymaking guided by worldwide models. Examples range from central bank independence (Maman & Rosenhek, 2014) to ministries of science and technology (Jang, 2000) and human rights institutions (Koo & Ramirez, 2009). Nation-states also formulate remarkably similar policies and appear to reform existing policies in surprisingly similar ways (e.g. Dobbin et al., 2007; Frank et al., 2000). Sociological institutionalism has been quite successful to explain such policy *isomorphism*, i.e. patterns of increasing formal similarity when it comes to trajectories of worldwide policy change. In particular, world society theory explains policy isomorphism by drawing attention to the fact that nation-states are members of a single, stateless world polity, and whose actors are guided by common cultural 'scripts' (Meyer, 2009; Meyer et al., 1997; Thomas, 2009). The typical research strategy is to begin from a recognisable pattern of adoptions of a policy innovation among nation-states and then ask for an explanation for this pattern.

In their critique of realist notions of more or less hermetically sealed nation-states, such studies on diffusion have greatly enhanced our understanding of how policies travel across the world. However, they tend to overlook the actual processes by which a global policy model is created or tuned, and often underplay

significant policy differences amongst nation-states by emphasising overarching world cultural scripts. This is mostly because the research design traces the top-down diffusion of a policy model, and therefore begins with the assumption that the model's construction *precedes* its diffusion. The diffusing model itself is assumed to be relatively stable through the spreading process. Researchers then often assess the deviation of one policy model from another, or the 'original', with explanations ranging from variations in implementation capacities to 'decoupling'.

Although this is a natural assumption, it is obvious that it is an idealisation to assume that a model is *first* constructed and *then* diffused (in more or less the same form). Some traditions, such as policy transfer research (Acharya, 2004; Cook, 2008; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), 'domestication' (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014b), 'hybridisation' (Nederveen Pieterse, 1995), and 'creolisation' (Hannerz, 1987), have indeed emphasised how models adapt to suit the local context. However, these approaches, too, have lacked effective emphasis on the bi-directional nature of construction and spread of models (Drori et al., 2014). Most of the attention in this tradition has been on individual national contexts and decision-making. We thus need to know much more about how recognisable policy models become global in spread, as well as whether and how they change in the process of spreading back and forth through the world polity.

This paper aims to address these gaps by suggesting an alternative operationalization for the principle of interdependent policymaking. Rather than beginning with an assumption of a single, stable policy model diffusing (or adapting) through the world polity, we propose to view the process of construction and spread of a model as a series of policy *moves* made by national states. The world polity can be thought of as a *synchronised* system, in which national states keep an eye out on each others' moves and, often, match them (Alasuutari, 2014). In the process, a global policy model emerges as an on-going construction and theorization that spreads as it forms. We aim to show how the lens of policy synchronisation helps make better sense of this bi-directional process of formation and spread of policy models than diffusion of a single model.

To do this we study the processes of construction and worldwide spread of National Bioethics Committees (NBCs). The NBC is a prime example of a model created and codified in parallel with the process of its spreading. Most scholarship relates this spread to an 'ethical turn', referring to the fact that over recent decades ethics has become the predominant discourse in governance of biotechnology, health care and life sciences (Bogner & Menz, 2010; Gottweis, 2008). That is not

to argue whether policymaking has become more ethical where it was previosly unethical; what is certain is that an ethics discourse is more explicitly present in today's policymaking. Policy issues involving biotechnology and biomedical interventions are inevitably framed in terms of ethics, as for instance in the case of the UK vote on 'three-parent babies' in early 2015. The global proliferation of NBCs is a highly tangible facet of the ethical turn. These organisations evaluate policies or emerging technologies from the standpoint of ethics, educate scientists on ethics-related aspects of research, raise public discussion of ethics issues, and advise policymakers on ethically problematic issues arising from legislative needs that emerge from developments in biomedical science and technology. Almost all industrialised countries have now established committees of this sort, and developing countries, in increasing numbers, are in the process of creating such bodies.

By tracing the process through which the NBC has evolved into its present universally applicable form, our analysis points out that the NBC has been increasingly codified as a global model *while* it spreads. In this way, the paper diverges from diffusion studies and illustrates how policy moves made by synchronised national states results in a shifting yet spreading global policy model.

Neoinstitutionalism: From diffusion to synchronisation

Neoinstitutionalist world society theory has discerned that individual nation-states consistently make reforms in surprisingly similar fashion (e.g. Frank et al., 2000; Meyer et al., 1992). Countries often appear to be conforming to global models in their policymaking even when models in question do not fit to the country, or when there are no apparent functional needs for making such reforms. Given significant differences in conditions and resources of nation-states, and the fact that there is no world government telling nation-states what to do, such isomorphism has been a puzzle. World society theory (Meyer, 2009; Meyer et al., 1997) has successfully accounted for this by drawing attention to the similar constitution of nation-states in a stateless world polity. From this viewpoint, it is world culture that causes nation-states to conform to common models, not by enforcing but by working through universalised assumptions and shared cultural scripts characterising the various aspects of social reality. National policy actors are, therefore, far less agentic and rational in their choices, and far more guided

by the world cultural scripts that largely constitute them as actors in the first place (Meyer, 2010).

In this research tradition, policy models are seen as diffusing through the world polity. Thus, Strang and Meyer (1993) argued that the social construction of actor identities and the theorisation of the diffusing models and adopters impose conditions for the successful diffusion of any socially meaningful object. The process of diffusion is portrayed by this account as beginning with the invention of a model, typically via theoretical abstraction, followed by diffusion that accelerates when enacting the model becomes an 'institutional imperative' (Strang & Meyer, 1993, p. 495) among potential adopters. Operationalizing the spread of global models as diffusion has meant that the variables and causal mechanisms explaining successful diffusion have been at the centre of attention. The literature on world society theory certainly expresses awareness of the bidirectional nature of the relationship between spreading and formation of global models (Drori et al., 2014). However, the processes by which global models are created have not been the focus of research. Empirical studies of diffusion of specific policies or organisations, for example, typically ignore these issues because the research design traces the 'top-down' diffusion of a model, or its adaptation by policymakers around the world. Critics of diffusion focus on how local policy models are translated (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996), localised (Acharya, 2004), or domesticated (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014b) versions of the global model. However, they too tend to overlook the simultaneity in construction and spread of models that is a feature of many actual policies.

In order to retain focus on the worldwide phenomenon of a global policy model, and yet preserve insights into local adaptations, we build on emerging studies about policy synchronisation (Alasuutari, 2014, 2015). To do so, we first need to unpack the commonly held singularity of 'a' policy model. In world society theory and empirical studies informed by it, there is great variation in what a 'model' really is. In the context of world society theory, the term is used to signify principles and ideas at a high level of abstraction, such as citizenship, equality, rationalised justice, and socio-economic development (Meyer et al., 1997, pp. 145, 48). Actors from individuals to organisations subscribe to scripted 'models' of actorhood (Meyer, 2010). Furthermore, the entirety of material reality is ontologically organised in globally diffusing models, of which medical models of the human body are an example (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 148). Yet not all models that diffuse are as grandiose: some are more like 'travelling ideas' (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996), from health as a social concern (Inoue & Drori, 2006) to all kinds

of fashions that ceaselessly travel between organisations (Drori et al., 2014). There are also models with very practice-oriented content, such as 'the global model of a chess club' (Lechner & Boli, 2005, p. 13). All kinds of policies, practices, and standards spread (e.g. Meyer et al., 1997, pp. 146–48), as do bureaucratic structures such as government ministries (Jang, 2003).

In this paper, we propose separating the term 'model' into two ontological levels. The first is a level of 'principles', or 'scripts', such as rationalized organisation. The second is a practice-oriented level of codified organisational forms. The first may, indeed, diffuse as a single, identifiable principle through the world polity, and be more or less tightly coupled in different contexts with practices. However, the second level of actual codified organisational form is not so stable and, as we show below, continually forms while spreading. What actually spreads is not a single, identifiable organisational format, but an evolving codification that moves back and forth through the world polity.

The world polity itself is tightly integrated, especially since the 1940s (Meyer et al., 1997; Strang & Meyer, 1993). National states are not only criss-crossed by intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organisations, but also themselves keep an eye out on each others' moves and match them, although not necessarily by copying or even adapting whole policies. The stateless world polity is by now so well synchronised that national policymakers routinely justify individual reforms by referring to what others are doing or haven't *yet* done (Alasuutari, 2014; Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014a). In this sense, it is more appropriate to think of successions of policy moves being made by national states in particular policy areas, than of diffusion of singular policy models. Each move sparks a response by other states, although not by all states in all cases and not always by emulating a complete policy. But the common scripts of world culture that constitute each state as a member of the world polity mean that most states end up making similar policy moves, turning in similar ways, as for instance in the case of the ethical turn in policymaking since the 1970s.

Institutionalisation of political bioethics bodies

The boundary between academic bioethics and policy-advising expertise has been drawn by calling the latter 'official' (Jasanoff, 2007, p. 173) or 'public' (Kelly, 2003) bioethics. Here we choose to use the concept of *political* bioethics (Felt & Wynne, 2007, p. 46), because of its emphasis on the political element that

institutionalised ethics discourse has acquired in contemporary policymaking (even though 'technical' discourse might often obscure its political nature). The two modes may be mutually reinforcing: academic bioethics is legitimated by being 'policy-relevant', while political bioethics is legitimated by its relationship to an academic tradition.

What developments, then, have led to the ethical turn? Numerous studies, extending from the history of bioethics (e.g. Jonsen, 1998) to sociological research on science and governance (Fox & Swazey, 2008, p. 25; Jasanoff, 2007, p. 174), begin the story with the Nuremberg Trials, held in 1945–1947, wherein 23 doctors, among others, were convicted of war crimes. Disclosures of experimentation on humans and other horrors committed by Nazi doctors garnered worldwide repugnance and deflated the reputation of the medical profession. The trials produced the Nuremberg Code, issued in 1947, a set of 10 principles describing conditions that must be fulfilled before human medical experimentation is justified. In the following year, the World Medical Association adopted the Declaration of Geneva, a modern version of the Hippocratic Oath, to renew confidence in doctors and medical science. In 1964, both the Code of Nuremberg and the Declaration of Geneva were incorporated into the Declaration of Helsinki, a set of ethics principles for medical research adopted by the World Medical Association. Ever since its announcement, the Declaration of Helsinki has served as a basis for all important self-regulation measures of the medical profession.

Increasing self-regulation and new formulations of professional ethics clearly codified and strengthened medical ethics, as professional ethics for use by doctors; however, ethics questions related to biomedical science were here to stay, and means of evaluating practices in medical research and health care were needed. Novel technologies and new forms of knowledge emerged, especially with the rise of genetic research and molecular biology, which the field of traditional medical ethics was not fully equipped to face. Bioethics was developed to address these new problems. The scope of this new field was broader than that of medical ethics, which is often thought of as no more than professional ethics for doctors' practice in clinical settings. Bioethics was not merely institutionalised as a novel academic field; it soon came to form a promising enterprise among policy advisers in many countries.[1]

Critics have pointed out that bioethics expertise can be employed to shield the commercial interests of biotechnology companies from closer scrutiny and criticism (Elliott, 2004). Bureaucratized bioethics may provide much needed

ethical clearance, especially for commercial actors in pharmaceuticals (Rose 2007, pp. 30, 256). From national policymakers' perspective, bioethics advisory bodies can be seen as 'soft infrastructure' for promoting biotechnology, as they work as a mechanism to guarantee the good image of national biomedical research in global markets (Reubi, 2010, p. 153). Other critics note that the diversity of positions in society on ethics may be suppressed through the use of bioethics to legitimate certain policies regulating bioscientific advances (Galloux et al., 2002, p. 146). The technical and theoretical language of bioethics is also disconnected from patient experience, and does not respond to the anxieties felt by individuals (Evans, 2006). Many note that technocratic means of control and the bureaucratic authority of expert advisers are extended to reaches of human life that would better be left as the realm of politicians and the people themselves. Perhaps paradoxically, literally vital issues associated with human life from zygote to terminal treatment are depoliticised through ethicisation.

As a whole, earlier studies have explained the emergence of bodies of ethical policy advice in mainly functional terms, as a solution to the legitimacy problems triggered by the development of the biosciences (e.g. Kelly, 2003; Salter & Salter, 2007). These narratives provide reasonable explanations for the prominent position that ethics has attained in policymaking in the areas of biotechnology, health care, and life sciences. Taken together, they may yield a plausible conception of the diverse political rationales behind the establishment of NBCs in any given country and also of the potential consequences of this development. However, it is unlikely that the functional explanation – establishing an NBC as a response to legitimacy problems – can be applied to all cases. In many countries, such as Singapore (Reubi, 2010, p. 153) and Finland (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2013, p. 38), the establishing of NBC was not preceded by remarkable conflicts, scandals or public outcry surrounding biotechnology. The functional accounts mostly ignore the rise of political bioethics as a global phenomenon.[2] Somehow national policymakers almost everywhere in the world quickly considered it necessary to institute a new kind of advisory body, specifically labelled as *ethical*.

Development of the 'National Bioethics Committee' as a global model

To trace the formation of the NBC as a global model we draw on empirical evidence from two datasets. The first dataset consists of information about when and where NBCs have been established. Since there is no complete list of NBCs

and their dates of formation, the information was gathered from numerous sources. The full list of NBCs and their years of establishment, along with the sources of this information, are specified in Supplementary Data 1 below. The second dataset consists of texts that represent the discourse of political bioethics. We searched for all naturally occurring data that sheds light on the formation of the NBC as a global model. From the initial mass of documents we selected key documents for close reading on the basis of their being authoritative or illustrative in their way of describing and legitimating NBCs. Many of these documents are published by UNESCO and its International Bioethics Committee, the European Commission and its Expert Group on Science and Governance, or other organisations (including the WHO and individual NBCs), and some are scholarly papers (many of them authored by individuals active in some of the above-mentioned organisations). The documents also include project descriptions, experts' reports, working papers, strategy papers, guides, memoranda, declarations, newsletters, and brochures. We do not consider the documents we have analysed to be mere containers of information – they are also 'active agents' (Prior, 2003), in the sense that they themselves have had an important role in constructing NBCs and the networks of actors formed around them.[3] Our methodological approach has been inspired by forms of neoinstitutionalist analysis that emphasise the role of ideas and discourse in explaining the dynamics of policy change (Alasuutari, 2015; Schmidt, 2008).

Similar to many other policy trends, the worldwide institutionalisation of ethical policy advice has been rapid. Thus far, at least 89 countries have established an NBC (see Figure 1), and at least 11 countries are currently in the process of adopting the model (see Supplementary Data 1). The rise in the number of NBCs began in the mid-1980s. Prior to that, only a few nation-states had such an organisation. The model has spread throughout the world in two main waves. By the late 1990s, an NBC had been established by most industrialised countries. Since then, developing countries have, in increasing numbers, set up such a body. This is, actually, a typical pattern often observed in studies of diffusion: high institutionalisation of a model leads to spread to developing countries (e.g. Schofer & Meyer, 2005).

The NBC model has been increasingly formalised and codified in parallel with its spread. By tracing this development, we have identified four key shifts in the global rise of political bioethics. The first took place with the NBC appearing as simply a category of organisations of a specific kind. In the second shift, the paradigmatic model of the NBC was constructed. With the third shift, the

activities and modes of work of the existing NBCs were networked with each other. The fourth shift led the international organisations in the field to redefine the NBC while they strove to assist nation-states in establishing NBCs.

In speaking about ‘shifts’, we do not refer to four discrete events. Rather, each turn in the path is a shift from earlier conceptions toward a more universalistic understanding of the NBC. Accordingly, they are not total breaks; each shift adds a new layer to earlier conceptions.

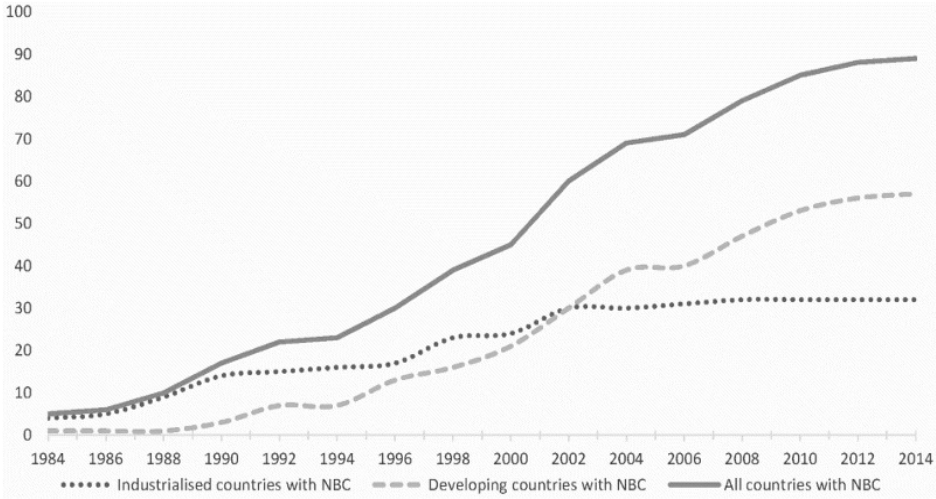

Figure 1. Cumulative number of countries with NBC, 1984–2014.

The appearance of the NBC as a category

The international trend of establishing NBCs started before ‘national bioethics committee’ appeared as a category used to describe the bodies in question. The first of the committees that are now known as NBCs were established in the 1970s (1974 in the United States and 1977 in Slovenia) and the early 1980s (1983 in France and 1985 in Sweden). The category was coined a while later, with Australia’s National Bioethics Consultative Council and Italy’s Comitato Nazionale Italiano di Bioetica, both established in 1988, being the first national-level bodies whose names actually included the word ‘bioethics’. The word has been part of the name of most NBCs established since then. The entrenchment of a specific category, or institutional identity, of ‘national bioethics committee’

strengthened the global trend in line with which most nation-states suddenly wanted to establish an NBC.

The first use of the category appears in an article about comparative law in relation to modern birth technologies, published in the mid-'80s (Knoppers, 1985, p. 11), where the French Comité Consultatif National d'Ethique pour les sciences de la vie et de la santé (CCNE) is referred to by this term in a footnote. Then 1988 in the *British Medical Journal* reports about a conference on ethics in reproductive medicine, where 'the foreign visitors found it peculiar that no national bioethics committee had been established' in the United Kingdom (Gillon, 1988, pp. 1212–13). Since then, use of the term 'national bioethics committee' has increased rapidly: Google Scholar found only about 10 hits for work published before 1990 that feature the term 'national bioethics committee'. The number of hits exceeded 100 for works published in 2000 or earlier, 1000 for publications issued in 2010 or earlier and 2000 for works published by 2014.[3] The increased presence of the term in published texts speaks to the stabilisation of this particular label in reference to or description of certain kinds of bodies.

Bioethics in general gained prominence first in the United States, where the earliest academic institutes of bioethics were established in the late 1960s (Jasanoff, 2007, p. 176). From there, academic attention to bioethics spread all over the world in the following decades, most forcefully in the 1980s and the 1990s (Fox & Swazey, 2008). The origins of bioethics in the policy-advising realm too, in the form of national-level committees, can be traced to the United States. David J. Rothman (1991), writing about the history of bioethics in the US, mentions that back in 1968 a bill had been introduced to create an advisory body on bioethics issues, to assess 'the ethical, legal, social, and political implications of biomedical advances' (ibid., p. 169). The idea behind this body was similar to that of most NBCs today: a national committee was to be set up comprising not only doctors but also lay representatives with various backgrounds and diverse viewpoints. The bill was not passed, largely on account of fierce opposition by leading figures of the medical profession, who fought for their monopoly of authority in the regulation of biomedical practices.

The idea of establishing such a body resurfaced a few years later; this time Congress passed the act. Thereby, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research was established in 1974. The growth of support for founding a commission had occurred because of scandals coming to attention in the US between 1968 and 1974 when cases of experimentation on humans in biomedical research were disclosed (Jonsen,

1998). In the interpretation of Rothman (1991), an important consequence of the establishment of this first national-level body for bioethics policy advice was that the medical profession lost its monopoly on ethics-related decision-making on medical issues in the United States.

Successive bodies followed that first US commission, leading to the present Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues (established in 2009). The composition of NBCs in the United States has been more explicitly politically grounded than that of NBCs in most other countries. They have received their mandate from either the President in office at the time or Congress and, therefore, have been regularly assembled and disbanded. The National Bioethics Advisory Commission (set up in 1996 and dissolved in 2001) recognises that the US was a forerunner in the development of ethical policy advice:

> In the past, American society has found it useful to promote a national discussion of those complex bioethical issues that have arisen and to develop appropriate public policies where necessary. To carry out this task, the Federal Government has, in the last three decades, convened a number of bioethics commissions to promote national deliberation. Indeed, the United States took the lead in developing a forum for 'public bioethics'.
>
> (National Bioethics Advisory Commission, 1998, p. 4)

Nevertheless, the United States later lost its leading position by disbanding the bodies and being unable to create a permanent commission. The report bemoans the fact that the US has, for years at that point, 'stood virtually alone among industrialized nations in not having established a permanent standing commission to address evolving bioethical issues' (National Bioethics Advisory Commission, 1998, p. 3). It was recognised already in 1993 in the US that other countries were following France's model in the development of NBCs:

> [W]hile U.S. Government-sponsored bioethics forums have disappeared, government initiatives are on the rise elsewhere ... France created a broad-based bioethics commission, and since then several other European nations have followed suit.
>
> (U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment, 1993, pp. 15–16)

The idea that national, multidisciplinary expert bodies could help on public policy issues that include complex ethical questions related to biotechnology and life sciences thus first emerged in the United States. The context for the innovation was the general rise of social regulation in US policymaking in the 1970s. The decade saw the rise of many scientific advisory committees in several

policy fields (Jasanoff, 1994). The bodies of ethics policy advice were initially identified as belonging to this broad group of scientific policy-advice bodies. Before the NBC as a category was even coined, a similar idea was also enacted in some other countries (Slovenia, France, Sweden). However, the appearance of the NBC as a category involved a theorisation of *ethics* advisory bodies as a distinct form of policy advice. This theorisation created an entirely new field of expert policy advice. From then on they were not primarily compared to other national science advisory bodies, but to their counterparts in other countries. From NBCs being something to think about in regard to ethical policymaking, they became something *through* which to think about ethical policymaking.

Construction of the paradigmatic model

Though the United States had established an NBC early on, it would be France that became commonly known as giving birth to the world's first NBC (e.g. Bouësseau et al., 2011; Maio, 2004). Theirs has become a paradigmatic model for NBCs, serving as a standard to which other countries' ethics bodies are often compared. The French model of the NBC has become a well-known and valued brand and thus facilitated the spread of NBCs around the world. While the US national ethics committees established earlier are acknowledged, it is usually emphasised that the first *permanent* NBC was set up in France (e.g. Fuchs, 2005).

The creation of the CCNE, in 1983 by a decree of President Mitterrand, was politically motivated but also advocated for by the scientific community (Fox & Swazey, 2008). Academic and public discussion on issues of medically-assisted reproduction (e.g. *in vitro* fertilisation) in the early 1980s precipitated the establishment of the CCNE (Rabinow, 1999). Indeed, the first issues discussed by the committee were related to reproduction, but, in contrast to the United States, where these debates have usually been linked to political struggles over abortion, the French committee articulated the issues more broadly through 'universal ethical principles, especially those relevant to defending the 'dignity' of the 'human person' (ibid., p. 72). Most of its members are appointed on the basis of expertise and interest in ethics, many are selected from the research sector and some are appointed by the President of the Republic. A brochure published in English by the CCNE when it celebrated its 25th anniversary illustrates how the committee identified itself as the original NBC and a model for other countries:

> Created in 1983, it was the world's first ethics committee ... CCNE stands as a model for all those who believe that such an institution needs to function freely, serenely and independently of any administrative authority. CCNE also seeks to knit close ties with all those who protect and develop their own national ethics committees elsewhere in the world.
>
> (CCNE, 2008, p. 3)

Indeed, many NBCs have utilised the CCNE as a model. The formal structure and the scope of its activities have been followed in many countries that have set up an NBC. The French version has, in fact, become ordinarily employed as the paradigmatic example of the NBC. For instance, in a Finnish parliamentary debate, preceding the establishment of an NBC in Finland, the French model was referred to in a reverential tone, as though a symbol of a modern and civilised nation (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2013).

Slovenia is another case in point. It is interesting for the fact that Slovenia's National Medical Ethics Committee (or Komisija Republike Slovenije za medicinsko etiko), a permanent body active since 1977, was founded six years before France set up its committee. However, according to Fuchs (2005, p. 48), only some 'representatives of central and eastern European bioethics' claim that it was the first in the world:

> Slovenia is occasionally said by representatives of central and eastern European bioethics to be the state with the oldest national ethics body. The National Medical Ethics Committee was established as long ago as in 1977. Unlike the decision of the French President in 1983 to create a bioethics forum and a legislative advisory body for ethical issues in the life sciences and healthcare, the Slovenian decision of 1977 was the state's response to developments in research … The Committee's tasks and the basis of appointment of its members were redefined in 1995. It is therefore only in that year that Slovenia's National Medical Ethics Committee can be said to have become an ethics council comparable in its functions and mode of operation with the French or Danish model.

The example of Slovenia shows how successfully the NBC of France has been branded; only after its tasks were redefined in 1995 to follow the French model more closely did the existing Slovenian national ethics body become classified as belonging to the group of NBCs. Compared to the paradigmatic model of NBC, the Slovenian committee had up to that point had an overly practical focus, with the emphasis in its work being on reviewing research protocols (ten Have et al., 2011, p. 386).

The construction of the originality of the French NBC has had an important role in the evolution of the NBC as a global model. The French model has become routinely utilised as something in relation to which other versions can be viewed.

International networking of NBCs

During this on-going process of construction as a uniform model, NBCs have become organised internationally and networked with each other. The biennial Global Summit of National Bioethics Commissions, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and held for the first time in 1996 in San Francisco, is a good example of this development. The aims of the Global Summit and the measures intended for achieving them are expounded in the *Tokyo Communiqué* (Global Summit of National Bioethics Commissions, 1998), which was signed at the second summit in the series, held in Tokyo in 1998. The summit aspires to promote 'enlightenment on bioethics around the world' and 'increase the know-how of national commissions in dealing with difficult issues' through concrete practices such as assembling and circulating a list of topics to facilitate co-ordination of national bodies' activities. After the 2010 summit, members of WHO and host Singapore's Bioethics Advisory Committee claimed that '[s]ummits have proven to be a valuable instrument […] to facilitate collaboration between national ethics committees' (Bouësseau et al., 2011, p. 156).

In Europe, even more intensive and explicit aspirations have arisen in relation to the goal of synchronising the field and the modes of activities of NBCs. Ethical policy advice became institutionalised in the European policy arena when the Group of Advisers on the Ethical Implications of Biotechnology was established, in 1991. It was replaced six years later by the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies. Earlier studies (Galloux et al., 2002, p. 140; Jasanoff, 2007, p. 89) have emphasised that the institutionalisation of ethics in Europe has been a political move by the European Commission and the European Parliament, responding to public concerns surrounding developments in biotechnology, concerns that have been characterised by the European policymakers as conflicts over values.

The European Group on Ethics has proved to have had a far-reaching influence on the governance of biotechnology in the European Union (Mohr et al., 2012). Its purpose has, accordingly, been seen mainly as to legitimate politically contested policies and ensure increasing commercialisation of biotechnology, in this way improving the competitive position of the EU in emerging bio-economic

markets (Plomer, 2008). The European Commission's (2002) *Life Sciences and Biotechnology – a Strategy for Europe* indeed supports such an interpretation. The strategy urges reinforcement of the networking between and within the European Group on Ethics and European NBCs because the committees are seen as useful in increasing public acceptance for the development of the life sciences and biotechnology:

> Without broad public acceptance and support, the development and use of life sciences and biotechnology in Europe will be contentious, benefits will be delayed and competitiveness will be likely to suffer … To be at the front of developments, Europe should have the capacity for foresight/prospective analysis and the necessary expertise to help clarify the often complex issues for policy-makers and the public.
>
> (European Commission, 2002, pp. 19–20)

Being helpful in crafting legislation and in other everyday policymaking is not considered the only purpose of the European Group on Ethics. Instead, it considers itself to have a much more important mission in searching for common European values and building a common ethical identity for Europe (European Commission, 2010). The foundation for the legitimacy of the European Group on Ethics seems to lie in the fact that it seeks to identify values shared by European citizens or ensure that the various ethics-related positions held by Europe's citizenry are taken into account in science and technology policymaking. Information-sharing through networking with NBCs is seen as a key to success in this respect. This turn toward a focus on ethics in EU policymaking is officially explained in terms of aspirations to redefine the EU as a community of values instead of viewing it as a mere trade community (European Commission, 2010, p. 1).

It is important to note that the search for a common ethical identity entails, in practice, redefinition of NBCs. In the European context their purpose is no longer only 'national' (to advise national governments and raise public discussion); now they actually participate in the Europe-wide coordination of the scope and field of policy-relevant ethical advice. The work of NBCs produces material for the European Group on Ethics to use in its opinions for the European Community, and, simultaneously, NBCs use the opinions produced by the European Group on Ethics when they craft their own positions. To organise this flow efficiently, the European NBCs have been networked together through the Forum of National Ethics Councils, organised by the European Commission, which has regular joint sessions with the European Group on Ethics. This process certainly contributes

to the harmonisation of *official* ethical opinions and standards, but one could argue that it is not so obvious that it has very much to do with the 'harmonization of ethical values' as held by citizens or with creating 'the European ethical consensus' – though both are held to be highly desirable in EU policymaking (see Ozoliņa et al., 2009, pp. 29–30). International networks and bodies that have a representative from each nation-state with an NBC have contributed to the forming of the self-evident 'truth' that each nation-state must have an NBC.

The third shift in theorisation of the NBC model produced rules for appropriate scope and modes of action. NBCs around the world were networked which each other and their representatives were organised into new bodies for political bioethics. These organisations set out to standardise the work of NBCs by sharing best practices and identifying ethical problems relevant for all NBCs. After the emergence of the NBC as a category, the French model soon became a typical or even original representative of the model. The generic model became theorised through the French model. It came to represent a kind of ideal type of NBC: a prestigious, permanent, multidisciplinary and consultative body with no decision-making mandate but that issues opinions to be used in national policymaking, and which is independent but established by law. This paradigmatic model was utilised to exclude bodies that do not resemble it enough.

There has always been space for difference between NBCs established in different countries. Nevertheless, when NBCs are compared with each other, comparisons take place within frames set by the paradigmatic model. For instance, the French model standardised the idea that members must have some expertise and interest in ethics, and must represent different fields of research, stakeholder groups and religions. This has been adopted in most other countries. However, while the French NBC includes five members representing the 'the main philosophical and spiritual families',[4] NBCs in some other countries do not include any religious representation, or only a representative of one religion. In any country establishing an NBC, discussion over membership typically also activates debate over whether or not to include religious representatives. So the change brought by this shift is that after the formation of a paradigmatic model it has scarcely been possible to establish an NBC without relating its membership to these, now naturalised, member categories.

International organisations also encourage and provide assistance to nation-states to establish such bodies. UNESCO, in particular, has been active in producing instruments for the development of global ethical standards for science (Pavone, 2007). UNESCO and its International Bioethics Committee have been actively encouraging developing countries to establish NBCs since about 2005. They came to define the NBC as a universally relevant (rather than nation-specific) policy instrument, thus constructing the model as transferable.

In 1991, it was decided that UNESCO would have a role in developing global bioethics (Sass, 1991). UNESCO's interest in bioethics can be traced back to the 1980s, when it organised conferences at which the ethics implications of the Human Genome Project were given attention. In 2002, the ethics of science and technology were listed among UNESCO's main priorities. Soon after, in 2003, the UNESCO General Conference declared it necessary to formulate universal standards of bioethics, so the International Bioethics Committee began work to draft the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (Berlinguer, 2004). Henk ten Have (2006, p. 334), the director of UNESCO's Division of Ethics of Science and Technology from 2003 to 2010, explains that prioritising bioethics among UNESCO activities is a reflection of global concerns over the ethical acceptability of scientific and technological progress. Indeed, UNESCO has taken the lead in pursuing shared standards and principles for technological development. This has taken the form of assisting nation-states to establish NBCs, providing guides and training members of NBCs around the world, helping nation-states to organise education in ethics and issuing several declarations on bioethics.

Two global-level bodies established by UNESCO – the International Bioethics Committee, founded in 1993, and the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee, established in 1998 – have been especially important. While the former is made up of independent experts in various fields of science, the latter is composed of UNESCO member state representatives. The purpose of the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee is to examine the recommendations given by the International Bioethics Committee and issue opinions on them in accordance with the aim of ensuring a solid link between the policymaking of member states and bioethical policy advice.

Mindful of the purpose of promoting shared norms, values and global standards for the regulation of the life sciences and biotechnology, UNESCO has

produced three declarations on bioethics, most ambitiously the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (UNESCO, 2006b). In its wake, UNESCO also produced a precise definition for NBC (UNESCO, 2005, pp. 9, 22). The declaration states that NBCs should be established by all UNESCO member states. At the time of its issuing, practically all industrialised countries had already established such a committee, so the call obviously was directed to developing countries. UNESCO initiated the Assisting Bioethics Committees project (UNESCO, 2008), aiming to support states in the establishment of NBCs. In practice, much of its focus has been on Africa, most of whose countries have lacked an NBC. The project has facilitated the model's adoption via, for example, publication of a series of guides for policymakers and members of committees, along with the arrangement of courses for actors in target countries (ten Have et al., 2011). The guides supply a practical checklist of steps necessary for enacting the NBC (UNESCO, 2005), instructions as to work methods for existing NBCs (UNESCO, 2006a) and material that aids in preparation of training for the committee's members (UNESCO, 2007). Through activities such as these, UNESCO has contributed to making the NBC a universally applicable policy model.

In a sense, UNESCO and other international organisations promoting the establishment of NBCs around the world are 'teachers of norms' (Finnemore, 1993). This suggests that an international norm has evolved according to which responsible nation-states must establish specific organisations to supply ethical policy advice on issues related to developments in medical science and technology. The motivation of UNESCO in helping nation-states to establish NBCs is that only through the mediating role of ethical policy advisers can the principles of the declarations be expected to be incorporated into national laws and policies (ten Have et al., 2011).

UNESCO has indeed been successful in furthering the spread of the NBC. In 2013, the organisation listed 17 countries that established an NBC with its support, and nearly as many in which the process was in progress with its assistance (UNESCO, 2013). It is important to note that UNESCO's capacity to spread the model of the NBC to developing countries is not coercive in nature, since the measures described above have an effect only if national policymakers become convinced that enacting the proposed model is consistent with national interests. Thus UNESCO tries to create a common understanding that a need exists for having an NBC in all countries. It is, in the end, the nation-states' policymakers who decide whether they will enact the model or not.

This shift has contributed to development of the NBC into a global policy model in two important ways. First, the fact that only representatives of NBCs are invited to certain international meetings reaffirms the self-evidence of the idea that every nation-state should have this kind of body. Second, international organisations have had an important role in standardising the NBC, such that now a clear blueprint is available for latecomers.

The fourth shift in theorising the NBC model changed it so that it has become constructed as global in two senses: it has become understood as an instrument of global change and it has become universally applicable. The NBC is now theorised as an important aspect of reinforcing human rights on a global scale. This is evident in the Universal Declarations on bioethics issued by UNESCO where the bioethics policy advice is explicitly presented as having a role in the realisation of human rights especially in the developing countries. The NBC model was also turned by international organisations (especially by UNESCO) into a model that is easily adopted by any country. "Step by step guides" for establishing and education of NBCs were published. Thus this shift has been a decisive turn in accelerating the spread of the model into developing countries. Through this shift, the model was constructed as if it was a fundamental part of policymaking in any country.

Discussion

In this paper we traced the development of the NBC into a global policy model. We showed how the NBC has become a global standard, such that its enactment by nation-states appears to be nearly an institutional imperative. In breaking down the singular conception of a policy 'model' into two ontological components – abstract principles and concrete formats or institutions – the paper identified four shifts along the way by which the NBC become constructed as a global model. In these shifts, the spread of the model throughout the world became possible. The first shift, the creation of the NBC as a category, was an obvious condition for the emergence of the model. The important finding in this connection was that members of this category existed *before* the emergence of the category *per se*. In this sense, 'theorisation' of the model followed the first phase of spreading. With the second shift, the NBC was further standardised as a model. The way in which the NBC was organised in France came to be commonly considered the paradigmatic model for other countries either to follow or to diverge from; for

instance, the case of Slovenia shows that, to be deemed a genuine NBC, an organisation had to resemble the French model closely enough. The paradigmatic model also became widely associated with the image of a civilised, modern, and efficient way to govern development in the life sciences.

With both the first and the second shift, individual 'theorists', such as researchers, had an important role in stabilising the new category. With the two following shifts, the NBCs already created became organised into international networks. These networks and international organisations became key actors in further modification, standardisation, and codification of the model. The third shift entailed purposeful activities aimed at the development of a uniform model, including sharing best practices and defining a similar set of problems in the countries in which the model had already been adopted. The fourth shift – consultation by international organisations – strengthened the institutional imperative of the NBC, with intergovernmental organisations promoting the establishment of NBCs. The motivation of UNESCO and many other international promoters of the model stems from the idea that NBCs might function as carriers of many (world cultural) principles and norms – for example, of those encompassed in the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights. Indeed, the global proliferation of NBCs can be seen as reflecting more abstract 'world models' (Meyer et al., 1997, p. 145) such as human rights, individualism, and rational governance. These principles and purposes are made explicit in the self-description of any of these committees just as much as in the political discourse wherein their establishment was justified. The analysis showed how the NBC model has become more codified over time.

Thus the case illustrates that while local enactments are translations of a global model, what is considered to be a global model is also constantly redefined. The dynamics of interdependent policy-making cannot be fully grasped if the adoption of a model is seen as the endpoint of the process. Global policy models are not as stable as diffusion studies often describe them to be or as the idea of script-enactment in world society theory might suggest. Instead, as the case of the NBC demonstrates, numerous actors employ a variety of measures – such as codifying, defining, branding, and networking – as they strive to stabilise the models. In the process, locally-enacted models are modified but are also used as material in the construction of uniform global models. Although we have shown that at the institutional level the NBC has become a largely standardised format of policy advice, we do not argue that actual NBCs – enactments of the global model – have all become similar. There certainly are many differences between the

practices, self-images and political roles of NBCs in different countries. This is, first of all, a consequence of huge differences in regards to the financial and human resources of NBCs: even if the highly-esteemed NBC of France serves as a model to be emulated for several other organisations, it is quite clear that most NBCs, working with scarce resources, cannot achieve similar results. On the other hand, features of national political cultures contributing to differences between enacted versions of the global model of NBC could be pointed out in future studies. These features are embodied, for example, in different compositions of NBCs: what scientific disciplines, or which religions, if any, are presented. Establishing an NBC has, indeed, triggered struggles over representation in many countries, e.g. in Austria (Bogner & Menz, 2005, pp. 25–26), Finland (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2014, pp. 167–171), and Germany (Sperling, 2013, pp. 37–41).

Our analysis of the four shifts shows that new layers of theorisation and codification are added to the policy model of the NBC as it spreads through the world polity. In each shift, nation-states looked across their borders to see what others were doing, which was enabled by the fact that democratic polities are so similarly structured and constituted by such similar scripts of what a nation-state should look like. Depending on when a state adopted the model, it drew on the level of formalisation in that shift of the global process. A crucial element in each shift is the conception of the NBC as an ever-more universally applicable model. To argue that other global policy models than the one studied here typically evolve through a similar set of 'shifts' would need more empirical research. It is not immediately clear whether the same pattern is generally applicable for other policy models and whether precisely the same shifts may be exported to other cases, although we hypothesise that the first two shifts might be generic as far as state institutions are concerned.

In any case, the parallel codification and spread of the NBC as a policy model is quite a general phenomenon: many policy models change as they spread through the world polity, sometimes back to 'early adopters' as in the case of the Slovenian NBC. We therefore suggest that 'diffusion' – evoking the image of single particles spreading through a fluid – is not the most appropriate term to describe the emergence of such global policy models. Instead, the image of the world polity as a synchronised system better captures the parallel spread and *formation* of a global model. In this image, the actors engaged in national politics and policymaking utilize globally-available culturally constructed models. This takes place in a stateless world polity that comprises national states keeping an eye on each other's moves, using those moves to justify their own, possibly by

amending them to ‘suit local requirements’. They also draw on a relevant, theorised global model, as it exists at the time. As a result, such policies and even institutions in a state bear at least a ‘family resemblance’ to those in other states at any given time, although each model is quite ‘unique’ and the system as a whole is never static but always in motion. Although states enact the same forms of global models in a manner that makes them seem like a school of fish, constantly adjusting their moves to each other, they never become one single fish (Alasuutari & Qadir, 2014, 2). Thus the lens of synchronization may advance our understanding of world cultural conditions of national politics and policy change.

Coming back to the idea of a policy model, we hasten to add here that this does not affect world polity theory’s point about the diffusion of abstract principles, or ‘cultural scripts’, such as ‘rights’ or ‘ethical care’. But when it comes to precise, codified, institutional models, the concept of diffusion cannot accommodate the evident fluidity in the world polity. The macro-cultural concept of synchronised policy moves by nation-states in the world polity promises to offer us more nuanced insight into the travels of policies.

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Notes

[1] For an overview of institutionalisation of political bioethics in individual countries, see Fox and Swazey (2008) on the United States, Reubi (2010) with reference to Singapore, Sperling (2013) on Germany, and Wilson (2011) on Britain.

[2] The discussion of global bioethics has tended to focus on questions about global inequalities related to health and medical research, along with the issue of importing ‘Western’ or ‘universal’ ethics framework to the developing world, often seen as ‘ethical imperialism’ (Green et al., 2008;

Myser, 2011; Wahlberg et al., 2013). The global institutionalisation of political bioethics has been touched on, however, in a study by Salter and Salter (2007) on human embryonic stem cell science.

[3] We consider that relying on documents as data is a strength of our analysis although it also sets certain limitations. Such material tends to make reforms and policy-ideas seem more ready-made than they would appear if we were in a position from where we would observe real-life policymaking, e.g. crafting of such documents. Documentary data may make policy processes seem overly polished and systematic, because they typically are cleaned of all the messier aspects of policymaking. However, the fact that even in such documents we find that it is not a single ready-made model that smoothly diffuses, strengthens our claim that the common idea of 'top-down' diffusion does not capture the dynamics of proliferation of global policy models well enough. We are grateful to a reviewer for pointing this out.

[4] Search conducted in January 2015. The trend is similar when alternative terms ('national bioethics council', 'national ethics committee', etc.) are searched.

[5] Thus the members include a Catholic, a Jewish, a Muslim and a Protestant. The fifth is a secular researcher, who has sometimes claimed to be alleged to be a representative of Marxist philosophy (Becker & Grabinski, 2011).

Supplemental data

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Conforming to global policy trends: legitimating narratives in the case of ethical policy advice

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Abstract

The global proliferation of national bioethics committees (NBCs) has been explained by arguing that they are legitimation devices used to reconcile ethical contradictions brought about by the development of biotechnology. However, such functional explanations do not suit all cases, like that of Finland, where the founding of an NBC was not preceded by remarkable conflicts or public controversies around biotechnology. The case can better be interpreted in light of world polity theory, according to which nation-states enact global models spreading like fashion throughout the world. We argue that the actual justifications evinced when a transnational model is enacted must be examined to render comprehensible the growing isomorphism of nation-states. Our analysis of policy narratives used to legitimate reform in the case of Finland shows that actually the functionalist imagery of 'modernizing' society is used as an essential part of global governance in the nation-state context.

Keywords: National bioethics committees, domestication of transnational models, isomorphism, legitimating narratives, modernization, Finland

Introduction

When the idea of establishing a national bioethics committee (NBC) was introduced in Finland and discussed in the Finnish Parliament, the proposal was motivated by reference to the ethical questions and public debates brought about in other countries by advances in life sciences. Yet, although it was widely acknowledged, that no such controversies have emerged in Finland, the decision was taken to establish a Finnish NBC, to be called *National Advisory Board on Health Care Ethics* (with the acronym ETENE).

The founding of an NBC in Finland is a good example of isomorphism among national states – that is, of the convergence of policies and institutional structures between nation – states toward uniform patterns of organizing the political, economic and cultural spheres of society (Held *et al.* 1999, Meyer 2000, Guillén 2001, Boli 2005, Herkenrath *et al.* 2005, Albert 2007). While it is still debated how efficiently the homogenizing consequences of globalization are counterbalanced by glocalization (Robertson 1992, Robertson 1995) and other tendencies conducive more to divergence than convergence, the world polity theory research tradition (Meyer *et al.* 1997, Boli and Thomas 1999, Drori *et al.* 2003, Lechner and Boli 2005) in particular has produced much evidence about isomorphic developments taking place in many fields, such as the spread of human rights norms (Cole 2005, Hafner-Burton *et al.* 2008) and organizations like ministries and NGOs (Yong 2003, Drori and Meyer 2006). Moreover, policy convergence has been reported in numerous studies (Bennett 1991, Busch and Jörgens 2005, Heichel *et al.* 2005, Holzinger and Knill 2005).

NBCs are bodies of expertise that advise governments on formulating health policies and regulating developments and applications of life sciences and medical technologies (Jasanoff 2007, Fox and Swazey 2008, Bogner and Menz 2010). Stimulation of public discussion on ethical issues of these developments and ensuring that all possible 'ethical positions' are taken into account are also explicated tasks of NBCs of many countries (see Herrmann 2010). In recent decades they have been established in most affluent countries. The greatest wave of establishing NBCs took place in the 1990s, and by 2002 at least 26 of the 30 OECD countries had such bodies.

The evolution of bioethical policy advice has usually been explained functionally as a solution to the legitimacy problems triggered by the development of biosciences. For example, Salter and Salter (2007) suggest that political bioethics responds to the political need to reconcile cultural concerns

with the scientific progress and promises of new technologies. It is thought that without bioethics medical science would be unable to develop and apply new medical technologies and at the same time deal with the cultural opposition to these technologies. Critics have accused bioethics of being a mere legitimation device used by governments to suppress the diversity of ethical opinions (Galloux *et al.* 2002, 146). Through bureaucratization, it is thought, bioethics protects medical researchers and commercial interests from criticism and scrutiny (see Rose 2007, 256). For instance, Susan Kelly (2003) argues that the main function of bioethics committees is to help manage boundary conflicts of authority in science, and that they are used at the same time to build consensus and protect the autonomy of science. On the other hand, it has been argued that NBCs respond to a real need to create new forums for an ethical discussion that takes into account cultural differences in pluralistic societies (Salter and Jones 2005).

However, the functional explanation is hardly applicable to cases like Finland, in which the founding of the NBC was not preceded by remarkable conflicts or public discussion around biotechnology. In Finland biomedical science (and science in general) has always enjoyed trust and 'politics of life' issues have never aroused public discussion on any significant scale, with the occasional exceptions of prenatal genetic screenings and assisted reproductive technologies (see Jallinoja 2005, Meskus 2009). It has also been noted that unlike many other European countries, no ebbing of trust in the authority of medical science and biotechnology has taken place in Finland (Tupasela 2007, Snell 2009).

In that sense the Finnish case can be better interpreted in light of world polity theory, which has noted that nation-states worldwide are surprisingly similar in many structural respects and that they are constantly adopting unexpectedly similar reforms (Meyer *et al.* 1997). It is pointed out that the standardization of institutional structures and practices as well as the convergence of policies is due to the tendency of nation-states to enact global models spreading like fashions throughout the world (Meyer 2004). Thus they end up conforming to world cultural scripts by which to organize society.

The realist approaches emphasize diffusion as a process whereby influences external to a nation-state come to determine national forms. The national actors are thought to submit to external models because of either strategic compliance or coercive circumstances. World polity theory takes a different view and emphasizes the importance of shared cultural models. The fact that 'common models of social order become authoritative in many different social settings' (Meyer 2000, 233–234) is explained by the worldwide cultural and associational

processes shaping the behavior of nation-states and other actors (Lechner and Boli 2005). Instead of coercion or strategic action, it is the world culture that makes nation states conform to the common models. The world culture does not directly enforce nation states to act uniformly, but it mostly works through "soft" and diffuse mechanisms, like universalized assumptions and shared cultural meanings given to different aspects of social reality (Drori and Krücken 2009, 18–19).

The founding of NBCs in affluent countries within such a short period of time without any external coercion to act uniformly could be presented as a classic example of the explanatory power of world polity theory in making sense of the isomorphism of nation-states. There is, however, scarcity of research on how actors in domestic settings justify enacting global models. For instance, John Meyer (2004) characterizes nation-states or national policymakers as Babbitts, hypocrite conformists who unthinkingly enact models that do not even fit their country, but it is unlikely that doing what other countries have done would as such serve as a justification for a reform like establishing an NBC. While world polity theory neatly explains the global diffusion of transnational policy and organizational models, the actual process in which models are enacted by nation-states has lacked more detailed explanation. When domestic policymakers are conceived as simply 'enacting' worldwide models, the active role of local agents in the process is largely ignored. World polity theory has been criticized also for disregarding tensions and contradictions within world culture (Finnemore 1996, Buhari-Gulmez 2010).

The aspect of diffusion of worldwide models to which we especially want to pay attention in this article is to examine how conforming to global policy models actually takes place in national policy discussion. This way, we argue, it is possible to give a fuller picture of the local-global interaction, which is, within world polity theory, mostly analyzed only at a high level of abstraction. Both in theoretical and empirical (mostly quantitative) accounts of this research tradition, global trends are described without much focus on the interplay of these trends with national environments where trends are realized (see Simmons *et al.* 2008, 40). Thus, local processes where models are enacted have been largely overlooked. To overcome these shortcomings, we complement the theoretical framework of this article with the concept of domestication.

Instead of assuming that the diffusion of global models takes place as nation-states simply adopt them in top-down processes, the domestic processes triggered by the introduction of transnational models should be rendered comprehensible. With this objective in mind, this article analyzes how the *National Advisory*

Board on Health Care Ethics (ETENE) was established in Finland as an example of the domestication of ethical policy advice. By examining the domestication of the idea of 'ethical policy advice' and the concept of 'national bioethics committee', the article aims to add to the understanding about the spread of policy fashions, often leading to institutional isomorphism of nation-states.

The local adoption of global ideas has been conceptualized also as policy transfer (e.g. Dolowitz and Marsh 2000) and translation of global ideas (e.g. Czarniawska and Joerges 1996). Studies using these conceptualizations have deepened the understanding about processes by which global ideas travel and are localized. For example, they have helped to get a grip on the crucial role of local actors in the processes of localization, and they have pointed out how models and ideas are constantly transformed when they are translated from global ideas to local practices. While we totally agree with these observations, the points we want to make in this article are rather different. While related concepts such as creolization (Hannerz 1987), hybridization (Pieterse 1995), localization, translation, and vernacularization (Sealing 2011) refer to the difference between the 'original' and the modified version, the concept of domestication employed here calls attention to the lived experience of the actors, i.e. to the fact that through the process of domestication external influences become seen as domestic. The point we want to emphasize in this article is that conforming to global policy trends is made in such a way that domestic policy actors can maintain their sense of agency. Our case analysis shows how conforming to a policy trend is justified in policy discussion so that it does not seem to be mere imitation of what other countries have already done. In addition, due to the process of domestication citizens of a nation-state retain a 'banal nationalist' (Billig 1995) experience of social change as an upshot of domestic politics and a national developmental path, so that although reforms are justified by international comparison or worldwide models, the transnational influences are largely forgotten (Alasuutari 2011, 231).

Through the process of domestication, a transnational model becomes institutionalized in a national context (Alasuutari 2011, 226–231, Alasuutari and Qadir forthcoming). As a process, domestication of worldwide policy trends includes, first, an introduction of a new idea or policy model. Introduction of a new idea to the domestic political agenda can be made by simply presenting information about reforms made by other countries or by more refined cross-national comparative data. When the introduction of a new policy item launches a policy process it typically takes a form that can be characterized as a field battle in which domestic actors take positions regarding whether they consider the idea

or model in question as advantageous or counter-productive. At the end, the transnational model is enacted, or perhaps wholly rejected. The policy that is eventually adopted can be more or less unique in relation to the abstract transnational model or any other of its realizations in other countries. Even when a domestication process of a transnational model or idea does not lead to anything else but its rejection or to the adoption of a totally different policy, it still has made a change: at least domestic policy discussion has become synchronized with other countries and this way contributed to the generation of possible new global trends. The framework of domestication emphasizes the cyclical nature of global change; a process in which embracing global ideas by nation-states constantly generates new world cultural ideas and transforms earlier ones.

The empirical analysis presented in this article focuses on the parliamentary discussion and all relevant government documents related to the reform by which ETENE was established in 1998, just when the wave of establishing NBCs was in its most intense phase throughout the developed world. The data consist of 23 policy documents and 82 speeches given by Members of Parliament. All the addresses are comments on the Government Bill (1998) proposing that Parliament add a decree to the existing Law on the Rights of the Patient. Both the draft commented by different parties and the final version of the Government Bill are included in the documents analyzed. Most other documents are expert opinions and reports of parliamentary committees or memoranda of their meetings that comment on or propose revisions to the draft of the Bill. Seven of the documents precede the Bill and were included in the data as each of them is somehow connected to the preparation of the proposal. The oldest of these are from 1994, when the idea of adopting the model of an NBC was first officially evinced.

Our analysis sheds light on the political rationalities underlying the need to establish a body for ethical policy advice. The methodological approach we have chosen emphasizes the role of ideas and discourses in explaining the dynamics of policy change (e.g. Schmidt 2011). Ideas are present in our analysis at three different levels of generality (Schmidt 2008, 306). First, the model of NBC and the idea of ethical policy advice are policy solutions, scripts that can be enacted by any nation-state. Second, the reform (of enacting NBC) is justified with certain problem definitions and causal stories about how certain problems may be solved by the reform, or what might happen if it was rejected. Third, there are ideas that are more general, yet normally less reflected by actors, but that still work as sources of legitimation for policy-makers: underlying assumptions,

metanarratives or worldviews that organize possible ways of knowing and thinking.

In practice, we analyze the assumptions of problems to which ETENE is reasoned to be a solution: political imaginaries about how ethical policy advice is thought to be able to have some effect on these problems. In this instance we conceive of such rationalities as legitimating narratives. They are *narratives* in the sense that they derive credibility from their sequential structure, in which enacting the reform is an act or event transforming the initial state of affairs to a new one (see Fischer 2003). For example, the reform may repair an imperfection or repel a threat. By providing possible plots for action narratives help policymakers to attain a sense of control over the ambiguities of complex reality (Stone 1989, Hajer 2004). This way of understanding the role of narratives in policy-making differs from that of scientific realism, as we do not attempt to speculate about the accuracy of causal relations expressed by them. Nor do we assume or try to reveal any deeper structure that links the world and narratives. Instead, our interpretative framework is closer to the poststructuralist idea according to which analysis sheds light on discursive patterns and regularities between narratives and political reasoning (Foucault 1972, Gottweis 2003, Czarniawska 2010).

Legitimating narratives

The proposal to establish ETENE was justified on many different grounds. Of all the different rationales presented, we can identify three different justifications for the reform. We call them *legitimating* narratives because they are all used to either justify the reform in preparation or to give reasons for a need to promote the proposed reform.

Of these three justifications, the first one can be called the narrative of international pressure. Within it initiating a reform is presented as an imperative in coercive global conditions. The second is the functionalist narrative. In that narrative ETENE is presented as a solution to various domestic political problems. The third can be called the narrative of modernization because it utilizes the tacit concept of modernization (Alasuutari 2011) as a general framework by which to justify the reform. The role of this narrative is especially prominent because assumptions inherent in it make domestic actors inclined to follow international trends and carrying out reforms leading to isomorphism.

These three legitimating narratives are not mutually exclusive. Rather, all or some of them can be found on any occasion in which the reform in question is justified. These different narratives are not always apparent and easily identifiable in the argumentation; rather, they are more like underlying premises or tacit assumptions that complement the arguments and make them appear rational in the political discourse.

The narrative of international pressure

No external power requires Finland to institute an expert body comparable to the NBCs of other countries. Nor do the participants of the discussion under scrutiny insist on anything like that. However, they refer to subtler forms of international pressure that necessitate the establishing such a body. In the discussion, the narrative of international pressure is mostly related to the process of harmonizing governance within European countries.

The report (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 1994) in which the establishing of ETENE is officially proposed for the first time notes that the Council of Europe has recently asked Member States to comment on the draft of the Convention on Bioethics (Council of Europe 1997). The report refers to issues 'demanding ethical evaluation' created by the development of genetic technologies and their medical applications. Before that report the term 'bioethics' had not practically speaking been used in Finnish policy fields. Therefore its publication is a key event in the introduction of political bioethics to the Finnish policy discussions. In the parliamentary discussion, it is referred to as an example of the ongoing process of harmonization of the governance of biomedical science and technology in Europe:

> For example, research on embryos requires Europe-wide rules about what is allowed and what is not … the Convention on Bioethics guarantees minimum protection for the citizens of joining countries … it has not been easy to reach a consensus due to religious and cultural differences between European countries and since the traditions of legislation are different in them. The Convention on Bioethics is now complemented by the Government Bill to establish an advisory board on the ethics of health care.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)[1]

[1] All data excerpts are translated from Finnish by the authors.

According to the rationale behind the statement quoted above, harmonization creates pressure to become active in changing legislation, also in Finland. Hence establishing a national committee on ethics is argued to be useful in this.

Another example of the process of harmonization is the Directive of the European Communities that demands every Member State set up a national body that can express a 'national view' on certain kinds of medical research projects ongoing in many countries at the same time (see European Parliament and European Council 1997). The international conventions and the requirement placed upon Finland are pointed out as a reason to develop new bioethical expertise and policy advice. In this instance establishing a national committee on bioethics is justified by the anticipation that as Finland has recently joined the European Union, it will become necessary to communicate at the level of the Union on bioethical issues previously unfamiliar to most politicians. Questions such as human cloning will be taken up:

> What does the cloning of a human being actually mean, where is it accepted? I think that the national committee has to communicate at the level of the European Union and also to listen to the people as well as the scientists of other countries in these matters.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion 1998)

In the narrative of international pressure Finland's inability to take part in the international bioethical discourse and inadequate expertise to respond to legislative needs created by the membership on the European Union are presented as central problems to which establishing ETENE is assumed to be a solution. It is argued that preparing the ground for new expertise in ethical issues related to biomedicine and health care will help decision-makers in future legislative needs and in communication in international arenas. Thus, not only anticipated needs to change the national legislation but also the expertise needed in order to take part in the bioethical discourse, well established within EU policymaking (European Commission 2002, Felt and Wynne 2007, Gottweis 2008), is evinced as a justification for the formation of ETENE.

The functionalist narrative

Establishing ETENE was also presented as a potential answer to domestic political issues. During the parliamentary proceedings, many problems making its establishment expedient were articulated. The scope of the assignment of the

proposed advisory board grew much wider than it had been initially, which was indicated by naming it the National Advisory Board on *Health Care Ethics* instead of the originally suggested *medical ethics.* The Government Bill (1998) on the establishment of ETENE emphasizes the problems in making responsible decisions on the allocation of resources of public health care, the uncertainty of the acceptability of certain methods of medical treatment and research and the problems due to new medical technology. By discussing, evaluating and advising decision-makers and generating societal discussion ETENE is expected to be helpful in solving these problems.

In the parliamentary discussion on the proposal some problems are framed as 'everyday' ethical issues of health care and others are claimed to be more 'novel' issues. The everyday ethical problems are most often connected to a lack of resources in health care. A common argument is that because of the lack of resources, the equal treatment of patients is endangered and the nursing staff would be in many situations forced to work without clear ethical guidelines. Difficulty in getting proper medical treatment because of long queues in public health care is an example of everyday problems from the perspective of the patients. In this line of thought ETENE is presented as a tool that could help to prioritize health care:

> More and more treatments of different diseases are found … we end up in the discussion that these treatments consume resources so much that it would be possible, with the same money, to easily take care of those more easily cured. The questions about prolonging the lifetime of the human being and increasing its quality; they are such questions that a committee consisting of diverse and very wise people is needed.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)

In this discussion a contradiction between unlimited demands and limited resources is presented as a fundamental problem of the governance of health care today, and new authorities are called for to resolve it. The daily ethical issues of the health care system are contrasted with the problems caused by the development of biomedical science and technology. In some speeches the origin of ethical problems in health care is seen to be in the changed set of societal values:

> The fact that we are engaged in this kind of a discussion is because harsh attitudes have appeared in our society and our set of values has changed. It is true that the basic values that have protected life and the human being have lost ground and their resonance has become weaker.

(Parliament of Finland 1998)

Most of the ethical issues framed as ‘novel’ are related in some way to new medical technologies. In contrast to everyday problems, which are seen to be problems of the present, the problems emerging from scientific and technological development are typically seen as problems of the future that society should be prepared to face. When speaking of everyday ethical issues, ‘ethical’ usually refers to issues of fairness and justice within society or to concrete dilemmas complicating work of the health care professionals. In the case of new medical technologies ‘ethical’ is referred to as fundamental problems of another kind: problems that have to do with drawing boundaries in the development of science and application of technologies.

Most often the ethical issues argued to be created by advances in biomedical science and technology are presented as burning issues elsewhere, in other countries and in international forums. It is assumed that many of these problems will be coming to Finland, with certainty but with a delay. ETENE is seen as a means to prepare Finnish society to address forthcoming problems, which are so complex and ‘ethical’ in nature that a new kind of *ethical* expertise and advice is needed. Facilitating ethical discussion and assessment are seen to be essential for regulating science and technology so that benefits can be derived without encroaching on fundamental human values. Current realities in other countries, or rather conceptions of them, are used as raw material in presenting imageries of domestic futures.

In the functionalist narrative, ETENE is presented as a technique for governing present ethical problems, mostly due to a shortage of resources in health care and a lack of ethical guidance. On the other hand, ETENE is given a role as a ‘body of anticipation’ (see Adam and Groves 2007) when it is imagined to be useful in predicting future problems. A firm belief in the use of expertise for solving political problems rationally underlies both of these rationales: ‘The task should be to move from the grassroots level to the uppermost level of top know-how, and to the level of making future prognoses’ (Parliament of Finland 1998). Rationalization of governance and decision-making are presented as ultimate aims, and strengthening the prominence of expert advisors is portrayed as an infallible means to fulfill them. In this sense, the functionalist narrative is entwined with the narrative of modernization.

The modernization narrative

In the parliamentary discussion, the modernization narrative assumes three distinguishable forms. First, the narrative legitimates the reform by referring to the existence of an international trend as firm proof that it would be wise also for Finland to follow it. Second, the narrative invokes the old evolutionary assumption that societies evolve through certain stages of development. Third, the modernization narrative is used to evoke the Enlightenment idea of the need to modernize the people as a project for which politicians should take responsibility.

An international trend

In the report published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (1994, 3) where the establishing of ETENE is for the first time officially proposed, it is stated at the very beginning that 'in international development it has become commonly understood that the rapid progress of medicine has created new ethical and judicial problems which cannot be solved by conventional means'. Several examples of such problems are mentioned, such as applications of human genetics and assisted reproductive technologies. That the regulation of biomedicine is of growing importance and new, ethically sensitive ways of governance are needed, is justified by describing the international development: that many other countries have recently become active in developing legislation in this area and that international treaties on the regulation of biomedicine are in the making.

Establishing NBCs is presented as an international trend taking place either throughout the developed world or at least in countries implied to belong to the reference group of Finland. All countries mentioned by name in the discussion are either Western European or Nordic countries. The justification section of the Government Bill (1998) briefly describes the already existing national ethics committees of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, France and the Netherlands. Why this particular set of countries is chosen while there could have been numerous other countries with similar bodies, is not explained. It can be assumed, however, that the other Nordic countries are 'natural' choices as they are routinely referred to in policy documents when reforms are made in Finland (Alasuutari 2004), and that France and the Netherlands are probably mentioned because they are supposed to represent original versions of the model due to the long histories of these countries' national ethics committees.

The same document proposes duties and tasks for the Finnish version of the model soon after describing the existing NBCs of other countries. The way in which the Government Bill is organized makes it obvious that the Finnish version is constructed by following and comparing versions of the transnational model enacted in other countries. Instead of emulating the model of one particular country as such, the Finnish version is constructed by selecting elements emphasized, according the Government Bill, in various countries. This makes conforming to a global trend appear as active action, and the enacted model is domesticated to be distinct, even if all the features have been adopted from other countries' models. By building the national version from various elements taken from different countries implies that the decision-makers and civil servants who have drafted the proposal have done their work independently and well informed. The resultant reform does not appear to be a mere copy of a transnational model but to have been designed by carefully selecting best practices drawn from many sources. The descriptions of other countries' committees are referred to several times both in the parliamentary discussion and in the expert statements:

> In the Swedish model there is much that must also be aspired to in the Finnish model. I appreciate the principle that the Council does not take a stand on individual research designs or on individual patient cases … In the model of Norway, I consider it as an unsatisfactory principle that the separate research ethics commissions have been appointed for the health sciences and medicine … In the model of France it is a good objective of a national ethics commission … that its task is to give advice in ethical questions concerning the whole society created by the developments in life sciences.
>
> (Hospital District of Central Finland 1998)

The previous quote of a statement given by a physician in a leading position illustrates how the national version of the model is made from the 'best' features of existing versions of the model. Another expert statement describing other countries' models puts certain features in a particularly important role:

> In other Nordic countries there are successful national ethics commissions which, either exclusively or among other tasks, deal with the ethical problems of health care, medicine and biotechnology. They also function as links between research, public opinion and political decision-makers. These bodies have published a great deal which has promoted general public discussion on ethical questions.
>
> (National Advisory Board on Research Ethics 1998)

New problems, like a lack of public discussion on ethical issues of health care, are also found to which ETENE is imagined to be the best possible solution.

Drawing on models of other countries' similar bodies, multiple roles are proposed for ETENE as a governmental technique in the political imagination of participants in the discussion. It is argued that ETENE is needed not only to help in policy-making by producing statements but also to educate both politicians and the public and to raise discussion on health care ethics, genetics and related new technologies. Furthermore, it is envisaged as a forum for profound ethical reflection, which ensures that the values which guide policy-making are in the right order.

The international trend narrative thus utilizes conceptions and descriptions of models already established in other countries to design ETENE and to anticipate its tasks. The fact that many other countries had already established similar bodies is used as a justification for the claim that having an NBC is a compulsory part of the institutional structure of any civilized country. Indeed, having such a committee is even presented as an essential condition for a country wishing to be regarded as modern:

> By founding the ethical advisory board on health care I consider that we join the so-called civilized western countries. It is already high time to get this body.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)

Following a global trend might sound like superficial emulation motivated by a need to stay in the right reference group of countries. However, going along with such trends is not seen in that way because the national solution is proposed as a well-reasoned package put together by learning from the strengths and weaknesses of existing NBCs of other countries.

Stages of development

While the argument that there is an international trend which a nation-state must follow appeals to the nation's international image and wish to stay abreast of development, another version of the modernization narrative uses changes in other countries as proof of a general developmental direction, guided by a universal law of social evolution. According to this rationale, also found in the parliamentary documents and discussion analyzed here, similar reforms are necessary in any nation-state because they are functional requirements, the lack of which will become obstacles on the developmental path (Alasuutari 2011). Following this train of thought, cross-national comparisons may be used to justify

reforms by pointing out that in some respect the country in question is lagging behind other countries (Alasuutari and Rasimus 2009). Indeed, in the parliamentary discussion it is argued that the governmental problems of other countries will inevitably become problems in Finland too; an assumption that is then used to justify the establishment of ETENE as a means to prepare for the same issues. That certain developments in life sciences have become framed as ethically problematic issues is interpreted as proof that Finland, too, must move in the same direction and to develop ethically informed governance. By monitoring the international situation the national policy-makers present themselves as responsible. To keep abreast of the trajectory of modernization requires being constantly aware of impending challenges: 'In Finland, we are perhaps technologically even ahead of the others, but the decision-makers are lagging behind, very much behind the others (Parliament of Finland 1998).'

Positioning the domestic conditions in relation to other countries serves as a powerful justification for policy reforms. In the discussion about establishing ETENE two axes of development are especially prominent. In technological progress, Finland is commonly ranked among the most modern countries, but living with the very same progress is argued to be problematic, mainly because of a perceived lack of reflection and knowledge on the part of both policy-makers and citizens:

> The development of biomedical science is fast and if uncontrolled it may lead to violating human dignity and human rights. … The progress of genetics and the possibilities created by genetic engineering raise questions about how it is allowed to intervene with human heredity. … These are the areas in which scientific progress and what is for the best of the individual can get caught up in the conflict with each other.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)

In the quote above, the progress of science, a highly valued symbol of modernity, is presented as inevitable and as something that threatens other values associated with modernity, for instance human rights. More generally, it can be said that the need to govern and control the development of science permeates the discussion analyzed here. Yet belief in the power of rationality is unwavering, and strengthening the prominence of expertise in policymaking by creating a new body of expert advisors is presented as the solution to the problems faced: 'A high level institution should be created to discuss ethical issues of health care, as already takes place in all the countries we regard as civilized states (Parliament of Finland 1998)'.

Modernizing the people

In the third version of the modernization narrative, the population of the country is seen as being in need of modernization. This version carries out the traditional efforts to cultivate the nation, which is most apparent on numerous occasions in which a lack of public discussion on ethical issues of health care and medical technologies is used as a justification for the founding of a body for ethical policy advice. This justification for establishing the NBC not only entails the idea that the nation needs an institution that promotes and activates public discussion on bioethics. The NBC is also portrayed as an institution that 'guides' public discussion and in that sense educates the people about proper ethics and valid views on these questions. In that way ethics is not considered as an area of debate closely related to politics but rather as an area of expertise in which educated individuals can teach the public:

> A task of this advisory board would be to guide societal discussion … clearly and popularly in such a way that it would be possible to understand it easily. Obviously, we need this kind of societal discussion and guiding of the discussion in questions concerning the health care.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)

In the parliamentary discussion there is wide consensus on the view that a lack of discussion on ethics is a problem to be solved through the establishment of the NBC. The idea that the NBC could guide the discussion and educate the public on ethical questions is also repeated several times in the discussion, but naturally there are different views as to what the right views would be in different issues.

In this version of the modernization narrative, ETENE is thus justified by the need to generate discussion about values in society, and this is expected to have significant consequences. The primary result anticipated is a heightening of the quality of ethical discussion, which also implies getting rid of the ignorance of 'the ordinary people' so that they become competent to discuss complex moral issues. Consequently, health care practices are also expected to become more ethically sound:

> [I]t is very clear that the ordinary people do not have so much knowledge that they could have had any chance to engage enough in ethical and moral discussion on these [ethical issues of health care] matters.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)

Other countries that already have national ethics bodies are seen to be engaged in much better discussion on ethical issues in health care than 'we' are. Instead of referring to public controversies, it is the lack of ethical discussion in relation to other countries that is used as a justification for establishing an NBC. The speaker goes on by describing appreciatively how the ethics advisory bodies in numerous European countries have been successful in generating societal discussion:

> In France President Mitterrand originally formed this kind of ethical body and it has been the model for all these similar European advisory boards. In it, laymen are widely represented, and there are also experts and it is engaged in a very wide ethical discussion … Now we are going to join these civilized European countries, also at this level.
>
> (Parliament of Finland 1998)

Discussion

In this article we set out to answer the question as to why the transnational model of NBC was also enacted in Finland during a wave of founding similar bodies throughout the developed world. This question is particularly interesting since in Finland the problems which it was to be the committee's main task to solve had not been evolved. It was also widely acknowledged in the parliamentary discussion that there had been no significant conflicts or public discussion threatening the legitimacy of biotechnology in Finland. In that sense the functional explanations for the spread of NBCs, according to which these committees have been established to serve as legitimation devices to reconcile contradictions between ethics and biotechnology (Galloux *et al.* 2002, Kelly 2003, Salter and Jones 2005, Salter and Salter 2007, Gottweis *et al.* 2009) do not quite work in the case of Finland. Rather, the case fits better the remit of world polity theory, according to which nation-states are conformists that follow global trends because actors and identities are constituted by the originally Western, now globalized world culture (Meyer 2009, Meyer 2010). According to world polity theory, the diffusion of such worldwide models can best be explained by the density of the global network which a nation-state is part of than by functional requirements to adopt a particular model. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely that within a sovereign state with little or no external pressure to adopt a model, enacting it would be justified by merely saying that we must do it because others have done, or are about to do, the same. We therefore approached the case of

Finland from the viewpoint of the actual justifications presented for the establishment of the Finnish NBC by analyzing the parliamentary discussion preceding the founding of ETENE in Finland to study the rationalities and justifications for the reform.

On the basis of the analysis it can indeed be said that imitating other states' behavior was not a sufficient or acceptable argument by which to justify the establishment of ETENE and, in effect, following the global trend and thus contributing to isomorphism. Instead, the argument that there is international pressure to conform to the emergent standard of each state having their own NBC was one of legitimating narratives, along with the functionalist narrative, according to which the new committee would serve all kinds of functions from helping in policy-making by producing statements to educating the public. Since the problems ETENE is anticipated to solve or the roles it is expected to assume are placed in the future, the functionalist narrative is closely entangled with the modernization narrative, according to which establishing an NBC is necessary because it is part of the economic and social development of advanced economies. In this context discussants even said that Finland needs to establish the committee because it is an international trend and other countries in its reference group had done the same, but the point is not to say that we need to imitate others. Rather, the existence of a trend and the behavior of other countries is used as proof that modernization is leading in that direction, which is then presented as a normative argument by implying that failing to do so would impede or halt beneficial economic and social development in the country. On the same grounds the different functions envisaged for the NBC, such as modernizing the people, are also justified: those measures are considered necessary for the nation to keep up with the times and retain its place among the civilized nations.[2]

None of these justifications would, however, be plausible without certain underlying premises of all political argumentation; premises that, we argue, are honored in all countries and are thus part of the current world social and cultural order comprised of nation-states. The first is the assumption that in the domestic political discussion, discussants must justify their views and demands by what is best for all citizens, even though they may knowingly or intuitively defend their own group interests. In that way the nation is constructed as a team or community

[2] Cross-national comparative study done along similar lines than the analysis presented in this article could be useful to show how similar narratives have worked in other countries, including those where substantial public controversies around biotechnology have preceded the founding of NBCs.

with the shared interest of maintaining and increasing the wealth and wellbeing of the population. Second, related to that, the cultural framework of competition is the dominant way in which the nation is related to other nations. Within that frame it is assumed that national states are strategic actors engaged in a zero-sum game in which the best states prosper and less competitive ones decline. That framework makes it understandable why taking models from others is not considered mere imitation but rather a means to keep up with the competition by adopting the 'best practices'. In this study, this underlying assumption could be seen, for instance, in the way in which ETENE was designed by proposing a combination of the best ideas from a number of countries and to learn from the mistakes of others.

To get back to the functionalist explanations for the fact that NBCs have been established in practically all affluent states during a short time span, it could, of course, be argued that our analysis of the case of Finland does not contradict with them. After all, the establishment of ETENE was justified by its future functions, such as solving ethical problems emerging from the development of biotechnology. The policymakers consult social science experts about the functional requirements for organizing modern society, which is justified by the assumption that there is basically only one right way to organize society and its institutions. As Meyer and colleagues (Meyer *et al.* 1997, 162–163) point out, 'in each arena, the range of legitimately defensible forms is fairly narrow. All the sectors are discussed as if they were functionally integrated and interdependent, and they are expected to conform to general principles of progress and justice'. Thus it can be said that the functionalist imagery of society as part of rationalized world culture has an essential role in paving the way for the globally fashionable policy reforms in the nation-state context, thereby contributing to growing isomorphism.

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Converging national with stakeholder interests: Establishing a national bioethics committee in Finland

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Introduction

Expert policy advice continues its expansion worldwide and across all possible policy fields. Over the last few decades, the proliferation of all kinds of expert panels, councils, committees and advisory boards has been dramatic. The question to be explained is why policy solutions of this particular type, taking the form of an advisory board, diffuse so efficiently throughout the world.

National bioethics committees (NBCs) can be considered as a specific type of expert policy advice (Bogner & Menz, 2010). Among the purposes of these bodies is to give policy advice concerning health care, biomedical advances and biotechnology and to stimulate public discussion on these issues (Dodds & Thomson, 2006; Fuchs, 2005; Jasanoff, 2007). Earlier research has offered mainly two kinds of explanations for the upsurge of NBCs. First, the functional role of NBCs in responding to the challenges that modern societies confront due to developments in life sciences has been pointed out (Gottweis, 2008; Kelly, 2003; Salter & Jones, 2005; Salter & Salter, 2007). Second, it is argued that NBCs are devices mainly used for legitimating political decisions in the governance of health care and to protect biomedical sciences from closer scrutiny (Galloux et al., 2002, p. 146; Rose, 2007, p. 256).

NBCs have emerged as a global phenomenon. Practically all developed countries have established such a body within a rather short time frame. Most of them were set up during a period less than 15 years: as many as 25 OECD member states founded a NBC between 1988 and 2002. Later on, an increasing number of developing countries have been founding such bodies.

However, the functional explanations briefly described above are insufficient in explaining all the cases. In an earlier study (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2013) on establishing the Finnish version of the NBC, the National Advisory Board on Health Care Ethics (ETENE), we have argued that these explanations are insufficient in explaining the phenomenon in its whole global magnitude. In Finland, for example, the NBC was not established as a response to preceding public opposition towards biotechnology or to new medical technologies. There had been no remarkable conflicts or public discussion around these issues, since medical science (and science in general) has always been highly trusted by the public. Thus the global proliferation of NBCs within such a short period of time without any external coercion to act uniformly could actually be presented as a typical example of the explanatory power of world polity theory (Meyer, 2009; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997). World polity theory points out that the

standardization of institutional structures and the convergence of policies is a result of the tendency of nation-states to enact global models spreading throughout the world, and argues that such isomorphic behavior is caused by emulation. Within this theory, nation-states and other individual or institutional actors are viewed as conformists culturally tamed by rationalistic world culture (Meyer, 2004).

However, in our earlier study we pointed out that adopting the worldwide model was motivated by the world cultural ideas of the national interest and modernization. In other words, within the national context establishing the bioethics committee was not justified by simply following the example of other countries but rather by evoking the nation as a self-evident imagined community and by serving the common interest. The argument that the national interest required the advisory body was justified by saying that founding such bodies is part of modernization and that failing to do so would mean that the nation is "lagging behind" other countries.

Thus, in our previous research we showed how instituting the bioethics committee was seen as a "rational" decision to make when viewed from the viewpoint of the national interest. That does not, however, provide a sufficient explanation for the fact that the reform was carried through by a change in law without any real opposition during the parliamentary process. Although decisions made in national politics are always justified by the national interest and although most politicians defend their claims as being in the interest of the whole nation, this does not mean that politicians would not also defend their group or stakeholder interests. Besides, had the policymakers come to the conclusion that no bioethics advisory body is needed in Finland, that would have also been justified by the national interest. Considering the outcome, the decision-makers had to see benefits in establishing the bioethics committee from the viewpoint of their interests.

Although the proposal to establish the NBC in Finland met no opposition, it would be mistaken to suppose that it did not trigger a political struggle. Political battles are not necessarily about taking sides for or against a given reform. Rather, a struggle may also take place about the ways in which the reform can be articulated with different interests and ideas. Thus the acceptance of a reform has to be explained by its potential advantages for the different stakeholders that form the domestic political field (Bittlingmayer, 2002; Bourdieu, 1991; Wacquant, 2004). For a law to be passed, enough decision makers need to consider it potentially advantageous for their interests or from the viewpoint of the ideals

they promote, or at least they need to regard opposing it more harmful. In the domestic field battle (as outlined in the introduction to this volume), different parties and stakeholders will thus try to influence the form the new law will assume so that it best suits their views.

By talking about individual or group views or interests as decisive in determining whether a political decision such as adopting a global model is made within local politics, we do not imply that actors can be reduced to their objective interests stemming from, say, class positions. Nor do we imply that decision-making comprises a battle, the outcome of which can be predicted by a calculus that takes into account clashing interests and forces behind them, as rational choice theory would have it. Rather, constructing groups with which to identify and articulating their "objective" interests is also part the rhetoric of political battles (Alasuutari, 2004, pp. 121–139). Some of the stakeholder groups involved are older and more organized than others. In any case, as also mentioned in the introduction to this book, the ideas of different parties or stakeholder groups typically have a transnational origin and character as part of world culture. Yet any claim made in the political field can be seen both as a means to defend a group's predefined interests and as a move to define the group in question as a community with shared interests. Thus, in this chapter we focus on a better understanding of the institution of the NBC in Finland by analyzing how the interests of different actors were articulated in the parliamentary process.

The case study

The domestication of transnational models always entails potential changes in established practices and relative positions between different actors in the national political field. Hence it is typical that various local groups of actors view it either as a threat or as an opportunity for their position. In the case of establishing the NBC in Finland, the reform itself was not opposed by anyone participating in the discussion. On the contrary, it was justified on many different grounds. It was, for instance, seen as a necessary aid in decision-making concerning the allocation of resources to public health care, in solving problems related to certain methods of medical treatment and those created by new medical technology, in ensuring fairness of the health care system, in helping medical and nursing staff with ethical guidelines, and in generating discussions on ethics in society. Over and above these and other purposes invented on the way, the

imagery of modernizing society was the ultimate justification: establishing the NBC was seen as a necessary part of development of advanced societies (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2013). Yet a political field battle was triggered by the suggestion to establish the NBC.

From the viewpoint of domestication it can be expected that the taming of an exogenous model (like the NBC), or idea (e.g. the idea of ethical policy advice), triggers a field battle in which actors aim to protect or strengthen their positions depending on whether they assume the reform to be a threat or an opportunity (Alasuutari, 2013). Local field battles actually have an important role in the process in which global trends are domesticated. Exogenous models are used as ammunition in the domestic power games in which different groups of actors make their best to turn the suggested reforms into justifications for their own aspirations. In this way the global origins of a model are often forgotten, since the making of a reform is viewed as a domestic political struggle.

The empirical analysis presented in this chapter focuses on the parliamentary discussion and relevant government documents related to the reform by which ETENE was established in 1998. The data consists of 23 policy documents and 82 speeches given by Members of Parliament (MPs). All the addresses are comments on the Government Bill (1998) proposing that Parliament add a decree to the existing Law on the Rights of the Patient. We also analyze the draft and the final versions of the Government Bill, reports of parliamentary committees, and expert statements commenting on or proposing revisions to the draft Bill.

Our methodological orientation can be described as discursive policy analysis (e.g. Howarth & Torfing, 2004). This means that we pay attention to the discursive practices through which policies are made and political struggles are organized. In practice we focus on the ways in which participants of the analyzed discussion articulate the reform in question with their interests and aspirations. Our analysis aims to tease out different interest-based rationales underlying the arguments by which the reform is justified by discussants.

The results of the analysis are presented in the following two sections. First we focus on highlighting the speakers' interests by analyzing whom or what groups they suggest to be members of the future advisory body and how these demands are justified. After that we focus on revealing the underlying stakeholder interests by analyzing how the speakers propose to define the tasks of the committee in relation to the roles and expertise of existing institutions and professions. Speaking on behalf of those stakeholders, related to their

constituency as MPs, the speakers are hence engaged in defending or strengthening their positions in the new circumstances.

The struggle over representation

Arguing which kind of individuals or groups should have a seat in the advisory body on bioethics was one of the two ways in which actors articulated their interests in the process. Such articulation through the idea of representation was already an essential part of the draft Government Bill, which set the agenda for the discussion. The composition and qualifications expected of the members are described in the following way:

> The members have to be persons who are well versed in the ethical questions of health care. They have to represent the point of view of the users and organizers of health services, the professionals of health care, legal science, health science and the ethical study concerning the human being and the society. In the choice of the members who represent the users of services, different cultural and convictional factors and age structure of the population have to be taken into consideration. At least four of the members of the consultative committee are nominated from the members of the parliament.
>
> (Government Bill, 1998 emphasis added).[1]

The Government Bill emphasizes diversity in the structure of membership. Most of the members are to be experts of different fields, but stakeholder groups and different views amongst citizens are also to be taken into account. As the first sentence of the above quote illustrates, all members are expected to possess some kind of *ethical expertise* in addition to expertise derived either from individuals' professional or disciplinary background.

While the discussants shared the view that there is a need for a body of ethical policy advice, what ethical policy advice and ethical expertise mean was left open.[2] This vagueness of ethical expertise demanded of the advisory body created a space for a political field battle. In this particular case it meant that the MPs

[1] The emphasized sentence in the quotation was cut off from the final version. The accepted decree (Statutes of Finland, 1998) restricts the number of members to twenty, including the chair and the vice chair. The members are to be nominated by the Council of State for four years at a time. Here and throughout, the translations from Finnish to English are our own.

[2] The Government Bill does not elaborate where the intended ethical expertise is to come from. Formal training in ethics is not required from all the members. Rather, it is thought that suitable ethical expertise is derived from inclination and personal experience.

taking part in the discussion spoke on behalf of different groups of people constructed as essential stakeholder groups regarding bioethics and bioethical expertise. On that basis the speakers made demands about the groups that should have a representative in the committee. In the discussion, physicians, nurses, "users of services" (e.g. disabled people) and those representing religious convictions are mentioned as such groups. Each speaker makes an effort to convince the audience (decision-makers or citizens) that the strong position of a given group in the advisory body is a condition for the legitimacy of its expertise.

Instituting a national committee on bioethics naturally touches on the work and social standing of physicians and nurses. Thus it is not surprising that the position of these health care professions was one of the points around which the struggle was organized. While it was taken for granted by all sides that the physicians will be represented in the body, there was much more uncertainty about the position of nurses and the relation of nursing ethics to medical ethics. Some discussants related the dispute about the committee members' backgrounds to the nurses' fight for professional appreciation. Some MPs who rose up to defend the social standing of the nurses demanded that a sub-committee on nursing ethics should be formed as a part of ETENE, in addition to the *Sub-committee on medical research*[3], suggested by the Government Bill:

> A stand on the order of importance of [medical] research and nursing is taken here [in the Government Bill] … It is proposed that a sub-committee on medical research is established … this means being on the side of medicine, and I do not consider it necessary because I see that the sub-committee on nursing ethics is important as well.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Rask, Social Democratic Party)

Thus the demand to include representatives of nurses to the advisory body is justified by framing the issue as a question about the proper relation between nursing ethics and medical ethics. In the previous and other addresses demanding the founding of a sub-committee on nursing ethics alongside the sub-committee on medical research, it is argued that it would be important to balance the

[3] The role of the *Sub-committee on medical research* is not so much in national policy advice but principally in issuing ethics reviews on clinical drug trials and supporting and coordinating activities of local level ethics committees (National Committee on Medical Research Ethics, 2011). The members are mostly experts from fields of medical science (like pharmaceutical research, genetics and medical genetics and epidemiology) but also include some having expertise on law and ethics acquired by formal training. In addition, at least one member represents interests of patients.

influence of medical authority of the doctors by creating an equivalent body of nursing ethics where nurses and understanding on nursing ethics would be represented. This is justified by stating that nurses confront ethical issues on a regular basis in their everyday working practices. In the background is the idea that different kinds of ethical expertise are needed in tackling different issues. The recommendation to establish a sub-committee on nursing ethics was also made in a statement by the Hospital District of Central Finland (1998), which states that more attention should be given to urgent ethical issues faced in everyday healthcare. Instead of focusing mainly on the ethics of medical research, it expresses the hope that national guidance would be given to the current ethical challenges of health care. However, the idea of establishing a sub-committee on nursing ethics was ultimately rejected in the parliamentary proceedings, a decision justified mainly by the argument that taking the ethics of care into account is to be the duty of ETENE as a whole and thus a specific sub-committee would be unnecessary.

The idea hinted at in the draft version of the Government Bill (1998) according to which clients should have representatives was also utilized in the lawmaking process. The sentence in question says that "in the choice of the members who represent the users of services, different cultural and convictional factors… have to be taken into consideration." That sentence, which was omitted from the final version of the proposal, opened up the possibility to speculate on and to make claims about how "the users of health care" should be represented or how different convictions and cultural backgrounds should be taken into account in the criteria applied in appointing committee members.

Hence, the National Council of Disability presented the stance that the users of health care should be persons who are actual users, such as the disabled themselves. The Council demanded that the users should be represented equally with the health care profession:

> It is desirable that the representatives of users of services are the users of services themselves. It is important that the disabled people have sufficient representation in the advisory board because manifold ethical questions in the public health care are connected with disability. … I indeed propose that establishing a sub-committee within the advisory board is considered. This sub-committee could consist of the representatives of disabled and the other users of services.
>
> (National Council of Disability, 1998)

The suggestion to establish a sub-committee for users of health care was not well received by medical experts in the discussion of the Committee on Social

Affairs and Health of Finnish Parliament. The chair of the National Council of Disability expressed disappointment about it, anticipating that the suggestion will not be realized: “The professionals seldom want to include patients or customers in real interaction (Könkkölä, 1998)”.

Another claim made in the discussion was that the four members of ETENE who are also MPs should represent the users of health care in the advisory body. This suggestion was challenged in the following address:

> There [in the Parliament] is many kinds of ethical expertise also here as it has already been seen in this discussion but if this kind of playful continuation is allowed, it would seem that certain members of Parliament, Kokkonen and Kautto, have already reserved seats for themselves in this advisory board … but I would consider the representativeness of research on values, of the religious viewpoint and of Christian values as much more important than that politicians are sharing these seats among themselves.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Alaranta, Centre Party)

The same member of parliament justifies his opinion by referring to public opinion or world views that he believes to be widely shared within the Finnish population:

> From us, the Finns, the majority surely believes that in these matters of life and death, it is God who is the lord of life and death; not a doctor, not a cleric, neither the police nor any human being but the power which is above all of us. This is a point of view that should be connected some way also to this discussion.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Alaranta, Centre Party)

The inclusion of religious viewpoints was taken up when MPs discussed who will represent the users of health care in ETENE. Thus there was similar ambiguity concerning both questions: who are the representatives of health care users, and how broadly should the views of the public be included in the body? Some MPs expressed the hope that ETENE could bring religion back to politics. These MPs refer to the examples of other countries and then state that that in Finland the religious viewpoints are “for some strange reason” marginalized from political discussion:

> For some strange reason it is for us in Finland extremely difficult to use, for example, the word “religious”. Yes I am surprised about that. In my opinion, something could be normalized, and in this case it is desirable that there are people who represent religious and philosophical views in the advisory board.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Vehkaoja, Social Democratic Party)

In spite of the fact that several addresses aspired to include the religious viewpoint, it is not visible in the revisions to the Government Bill. The field battle over inclusion or exclusion of religious viewpoints remained one-sided in that in the parliamentary discussion nobody was explicitly against it. Those who were against the inclusion of religious viewpoints simply did not comment on the issue. Yet, the viewpoint remained excluded. The quote above also illustrates a demand for inclusion of philosophical views, or of experts who have formal education in philosophy. Yet this issue too did not receive much more attention in the discussion, and philosophers were not given any special position in the Finnish version of NBC.[4]

In conclusion, the arguments made on the representation of different views of the public in ETENE were not successful. Instead of reserving quotas for special groups such as the disabled, the clergy or philosophers, the MPs ended up concluding that the general public with its different views on ethical issues is sufficiently or best represented by MPs themselves. In that sense the power to decide about these "lay" members of the advisory board was handed over to the political parties and to the parliament. That is, instead of instituting particular stakeholders groups regarding bioethics, the parties retained their role as general stakeholders.

When considering expertise and authority in bioethical issues, medical doctors as a group were considered the most significant candidate. This is surprising in light of the fact that medical practice forms a major part of the field that the prospective advisory body was to monitor. Although critical voices considering the role of the medical profession in the committee were also heard, relatively few addresses constructed the prospective ETENE as a kind of jury in which ordinary sensible citizens reflect on what is right or wrong, thus controlling the ethics of medical doctors. Rather, many addresses expressed the wish that ETENE could help citizens learn how to discuss difficult issues regarding ethics of health care. One medical doctor, an "elder" in the profession, was mentioned as a potential candidate for the chair of ETENE:

> It came to my mind that archiatre[5] Risto Pelkonen has guided public discussion clearly on many occasions in such a way that it has been possible to understand it

[4] It was only afterwards that this decision led to a debate in which the outcome has been both questioned and defended (e.g. Rydman, 2002; Takala, 2002).

[5] Archiatre is the honorary title always given to one medical doctor who serves as the elder of the profession. The title stems from French, and originally it depicted "doctor to the King".

> easily. Obviously, we would need this kind of public discussion and guiding of the discussion in the questions connected to health care.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Väistö, Centre Party)

As a whole, the reform clearly did not pose a threat to the established institutional order of health care. The discussion reproduced a hierarchical order in which politicians and expert knowledge were elevated above the views of the public. The demands for the inclusion of religious viewpoints or for a symmetrical representation for the users of health care in relation to representatives of science-based expertise remained marginalized. It is hence striking that even the discussants taking a stand on behalf of the marginalized viewpoints supported the reform. It is possible that they anticipated that the advisory body might serve as a medium for bringing forward their views in the future.

The role of key professions and institutions

Participants' interests in the discussion on instituting ETENE can also be seen in the way the speakers proposed to define the tasks of the committee in relation to the roles and expertise of key institutions and professions. Foreclosing what they deemed harmful definitions of the position of an institution or profession and instead promoting beneficial ones, the actors in question advanced their views or interests. In this respect the key stakeholders, especially the medical profession, aimed to make their voices heard. In addition, several participants voiced their views on how to define the role of the advisory body in relation to politics, particularly economic policy.

When debating the role of the advisory body in relation to key stakeholder groups, medical science attracted much attention. While its central position was often taken for granted in the discussion, the ethical expertise of physicians was, however, called into question by some MPs:

> I think it is extremely important that these ethics advisory boards will not be mere playgrounds of the medical doctors. I respect doctors thanks to their professional skills but for example in these ethical questions, in profound moral matters … but the profession has not necessarily trained a doctor to this kind of discussion that is now going on here and what above all is needed.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Kekkonen, Social Democratic Party)

Although acknowledging the physicians' expertise regarding their professional skills, the speaker points out that medical doctors are not trained to be experts in ethical questions. On that basis he demands that other kind of expertise – in other words, expertise in ethics – is also needed in ETENE. Although the address is critical of a large proportion of representation of medical science in the advisory body, it does not entirely denounce the representation of medical doctors.

For medical doctors and the Finnish Medical Association (FMA), on the other hand, ensuring wide representation of medical science in the committee was the main objective. In defending the profession's significant role in the new advisory body, the FMA promoted the view that experts from many special fields of medicine have to be represented in the body. In its statement concerning the draft of the Government Bill, the association does not openly argue that medical doctors are also experts on ethical questions, but stresses that a wide range of medical expertise in needed in the committee, complemented with lay members with experience from ethical questions.

> A wide range of medical expertise has to be secured in the composition … Concerning the members it is stated [in the draft of the Government Bill] that they have to be experts or laymen who are interested in ethical questions. According to the view of the Finnish Medical Association, the experts' share in the advisory board must be guaranteed and the laymen cannot replace experts. Naturally, the presence of both is desirable. It is also important that when members are chosen, a sufficient number will be persons who have worked already earlier with ethical questions.
>
> (Finnish Medical Association, 1998)

By establishing a dichotomy between experts and laymen, in which the epithet expert only refers to medical experts, the statement excludes the possibility of talking about experts in other fields such as ethics. It is implied that ethics is an area where there can be no expertise, only personal interest and prior experience. Hence the FMA statement constructs medical doctors as the only group of experts, whose wide representation they deem necessary, but they also gracefully welcome laymen interested in ethical questions.

In the parliamentary discussion, the medical profession's right to wide representation was justified also by the claim that the profession has acquired a lot of ethical expertise and that especially Finnish physicians are responsible. For example, a member of parliament who was active in promoting the founding of a NBC in Finland years before the Government Bill, says:

> In my opinion, we can give quite a big credit to the Finnish Medical Association, the medical profession and also to the pharmaceutical industry. Because the Finnish pharmaceutical industry has, broadly speaking, been the first on the globe to make their own ethical rules … Of course in some small workshops something unethical might be going on, but when it comes to the pharmaceutical side, it seems that the matters are in control.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Kokkonen, National Coalition Party)

In contrast with the potential view that the new committee's central task is to oversee the ethics of the pharmaceutical industry or the medical profession, the statement makes it clear that the purpose of the new body is not meant to act "against" those stakeholders. Rather, the address praises the pharmaceutical industry for its forerunner position in ethical issues.

The same line of argumentation can be found in the FMA's statement on the draft of the Government Bill. To demonstrate that the medical profession has solid experience and expertise in coming to terms with ethical questions, the statement lists the bodies, principles and declarations of its own and those of the World Medical Association. Commenting on the claim made in the Bill that there is no national level body in Finland that focuses on the ethical matters in the field of medical science and health care, the FMA mentions its own ethics committee as an already existing body. However, the association endorses the instituting of the NBC in Finland in order to get other groups than the medical profession to engage themselves in discussion on ethics. Instead of presenting the reform as a threat, the association's statement thus presents the view according to which establishing ETENE is an opportunity to strengthen the legitimacy of the medical profession and a means to influence future policymaking concerning health care and medical practices. By this kind of framing the FMA preempts the view that the purpose of establishing the NBC is to control the medical profession.

In addition to the medical profession or the pharmaceutical industry, the new advisory board on bioethics was also a potential threat or possibility for those responsible for political or administrative decisions related to ethics. It is no surprise, then, that the relation of this new subfield to the established ways of policymaking became an issue in the lawmaking process. For instance, the statement of the Hospital District of Uusimaa concerning the draft of the Government Bill (Hospital District of Uusimaa, 1998) states that if politicians are incapable of establishing clear guidelines for prioritization within public health care then the new advisory body could help in this task. The politicians, for their part, avoided defining any clear order of prioritization, although in the

parliamentary discussion several MPs stressed that ethics should be discussed within economic realities. One MP, for instance, presented the view that ethics would be an easy matter if there weren't any economic constraints: "A wide mutual understanding is found in our midst about these ethical viewpoints, but unfortunately the financial matters lag behind (Parliamentary discussion 1998, Vihriälä, Centre Party)". Another MP presented a contrary view of the relation between economy and ethics, underlining incongruity of economic and ethical questions:

> The statement talks about the necessity of the economy and about the fact that it must be taken into consideration. It sounds very good but, in my opinion, it is unnecessary due to the fact that this advisory board deals with ethical questions. One cannot think that when we now are in a bad situation financially, we have different ethical norms. When we have better economy, we would have a little different ethical opinion. Ethical opinions do not change in this way. … ethical questions are ethical questions. They must be above economic questions.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion 1998, Rask, Social Democratic Party)

These two views on the relation between ethics and the economy imply different ideas about the tasks of the NBC. While the statement of the Hospital District of Uusimaa and the address of MP Vihriälä promote the idea that the NBC could help policymakers or administrators in making tough decisions of prioritization in changing economic conditions, or doing those decisions for them, the address of Rask maintains that ethics and the economy must be kept separate. In that sense it implies that the task of the NBC would be to define general ethical guidelines or universal rights.

As the prospective body was planned to consist mainly of specialized experts, the view that the reform might contribute to depoliticizing political issues haunted the discussion. The Minister of Social Affairs responded to such presuppositions by arguing that the political dimension should not be sidelined. In that way she justified the proposal in the draft of the Government Bill to include four MPs in the membership:

> When we nominate the members to the advisory board on health care ethics, there must be also other experts than those of health care and medicine. There must be a strong political dimension. Our politicians must raise these matters to the discussion, define policies and guide the public discussion. Therefore it is stated in the decree that also four members of the Parliament are to be named to the ethical advisory body. The intention is to get a political dimension included that way. I myself consider it extremely important that different fields will come to the

> advisory body, for example theologians, lawyers etc. It must be as broad-based as possible because of the complexity of these problems.
>
> (Parliamentary discussion, Minister of Social Affairs and Health Huttu-Juntunen, Left Alliance).

Thus the consensus formed in the lawmaking process had elements that appealed to several viewpoints and interests. The expertise of the medical profession was acknowledged and medical doctors' heavy representation was accepted, but experience and expertise in ethics was also acknowledged. Political control over the new body was also guaranteed by securing a quota for MPs.

For the legitimacy of ethical policy advice, it thus seemed to be vital that the advisory body be independent enough of the political and administrative system to be seen as capable of objectivity in its advice. On the other hand, it was in the interest of decision-makers that the advisory body be sufficiently under political control, because it would be, in the end, a tool meant to help in legislation as well as in creating and guiding public discussion. It is important to note that establishing ETENE did not replace any existing structures of policymaking. Instead, it added one new element into policymaking in health care. Thus, from the viewpoint of those who participated in the discussion, the reform did not constitute much threat to existing hierarchies or actor positions. Another reason why the reform was not opposed even when it was seen as a potential threat for one's interests is the fact that the model of NBC embraces many aspects of what is taken as virtuous in the modern world culture (see Boli, 2006): rational progress, enhancing participation of citizens, and protecting humanity and individual rights, for example. Taking a stand against such a reform would not give a good appearance and hence might actually work against one's interests. Hence the safer way to avoid expected problems is to strive for such a definition of a reform that does not contradict with stakeholder interests in the question.

Discussion

In this chapter we addressed the puzzle as to how it was possible that the proposal to institute a bioethics committee in Finland was accepted in the Parliament without any opposing arguments presented, although it was generally agreed that there had been no such public controversies over bioethical questions that such an institution would reconcile. In that sense the Finnish example shows that the typical functional explanations (e.g. Galloux, et al., 2002; Gottweis, 2008; Kelly,

2003; Salter & Salter, 2007) are not sufficient in all cases. In an earlier article dealing with the same question (Syväterä & Alasuutari, 2013) we pointed out that the Finnish case fits better in the remit of world society theory, which stresses emulation as the reason why nation-states enact global models. However, we also showed that for the actors involved, the rationale was not simply to imitate but rather to act in the interest of the nation. In this chapter we have pursued actors' views and interests further by asking how the politically correct motive of the national interest also converged with their stakeholder interests, making it possible that the law was passed without opposition.

The results of the analysis show how the struggle over the advisory body was entangled with the interests of different groups. These could be seen for instance in the discussion on the composition of the future body. The participants made suggestions about several groups that should be represented. The representation of the medical profession was taken for granted, although there was controversy about how strong their position should be. The positions of other groups such as nurses, users of health care, and those representing religious views were much more contested. In any case, the reform acquired much of its legitimacy from the way it was defined in the Government Bill as a body in which many different stakeholders are included.

Stakeholder interests could also be seen in the proposals about the role of key professions and institutions in the future bioethics committee. This discussion dealt particularly with the role and expertise of the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry in ethical issues on the one hand, and the relation of bioethical advisory to political decision-making on the other. The spokespersons of the medical doctors defended their positions by appealing to science and by obscuring the difference between scientific and ethical expertise. In the discussion of the relationship between ethics and politics, some participants greeted with delight the possibility that the bioethics committee would make difficult decisions about prioritization for politicians and civil servants, whereas a majority of the MPs wanted to retain political control over the advisory body.

In all, revisions made to the original draft of the Government Bill as a consequence of the lawmaking process were marginal. ETENE was not meant to replace any earlier bodies or practices and thus it was not a direct threat to any group or institution. Rather it was seen as an opportunity for pursuing different interests. Several interest groups aimed to define the tasks of the bioethics committee in such a way that it supports their interests and objectives in the best possible way. Although many of these objectives were not officially recorded as

the aims or tasks of ETENE, the discussion served as a platform for articulating them. At least it was possible for different groups to consider ETENE as a way to advance their interests or to become a forum in which to get publicity for their ambitions. It was also justified by many virtues such as rationality, citizens' participation and human rights, cherished in world culture (see Boli, 2006), which is why taking a stand against such a reform was probably seen risky, something that might work against one's interests. Hence a safer way to avoid potential problems was to influence the definition of the reform in such a manner that does not contradict an actor's interests in the question.

We can conclude that to understand how transnational models are enacted in national policymaking, the local power games and interest-based rationales of local actors should not be dismissed. What might look like unthinking conformism from the viewpoint of world polity theory (Meyer, 2004) actually often is, we argue, an outcome of a political field battle in which domestic actors articulate a transnational idea or model with prevailing conceptions concerning the common good and the national interest. The participants' success in a political field battle depends on their ability to present their stakeholder interests *as* the national interest.

The enacting of NBCs has not been such a consensual process everywhere as it was in Finland. In Austria, for example, the founding of *Austrian Bioethics Commission* in 2001 instantly triggered a heated political debate (Bogner & Menz, 2005, pp. 25–26). The critics of the commission criticized it for being a purely expert body instead of engaging the public in decision-making. The members of the Commission were chosen on the grounds of their specialized knowledge (that was the criterion officially stated), but critics pointed to the lack of transparency in the process through which the members were nominated. The debate culminated soon in the founding of a "counter-commission" by organizations of the disabled. Although the political struggle was milder in Finland, it is interesting to note that the debate was organized around a similar set of issues in both countries: how ethical expertise should be defined, who should be represented in the advisory body, the nature of proper ethical expertise, and the relation between expert knowledge and the people affected by political decisions. Obviously, ethics is a field in which the definition of expertise is even more contested than, for instance, in the case of scientific advisory bodies (see Bijker, Bal, & Hendriks, 2009; Jasanoff, 1994). While the authority of scientific advisors is fundamentally epistemic, it is commonly understood – especially in the context of pluralistic democracies – that it is questionable to insist that one's

better knowledge could make one's ethical standpoint more viable than that of those who possess less knowledge of the substance in question. The very idea that there could be expertise in ethical matters is a controversial issue (e.g. Bogner & Menz, 2005; Varelius, 2008). The case analyzed in this chapter shows that the struggles around the construction of expertise are an important part of the domestication of policy models, especially when new actor positions (like that of ethical policy advisor) are created. The case discussed in this chapter also exemplifies how ideas or models domesticated by national states already include the discourses that may be used to oppose or demand a reformulation of the model. Political field battles contribute to the synchronization of political discourses and upcoming struggles between different national states. Emerging local struggles triggered by global trends are thus already framed by global scripts.

We suggest that this example also contributes to explaining more generally why committee-type policy solutions – e.g. advisory boards and expert panels – proliferate and spread so successfully everywhere in the world. One aspect is the relation of advisory bodies to already existing institutionalized hierarchical structures. An advisory board is a rather light organizational form, and normally it does not replace anything that already exists within the institutional structure. In other words, it only adds a new element to the organizational structure of policymaking without interfering with established practices or hierarchical positions between actors. Of course this does not need to mean that establishing bodies of this kind would not have any real influence on policymaking. Yet, founding such a body does not appear to threaten anyone's position directly. The second aspect is that advisory bodies are seen as easy responses to diverse problems. They do not usually use formal power but produce opinions and suggestions that can be used and interpreted by decision makers in various ways. Thus, in the political imagination of the actual users of formal power, they serve as a rich resource for legitimation that can be tapped when a political situation calls for additional support in making decisions on difficult matters.

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