

Abstract

Policy borrowing has become an important area in the comparative study of public policy. Research indicates that smaller countries often draw lessons for their own policies from the experience of larger, nearby countries. Several studies have documented policy borrowing from the United States to Canada, in accordance with the expected pattern, in such areas as environmental policy, civil liberties, affirmative action, and various economic matters. The case of tobacco regulation presents a somewhat different pattern, with Canada relying on medical and behavioral research from the United States in helping to formulate the Tobacco Products Control Act of 1988 and subsequent legislation, but the earlier Canadian policy serving as an exemplar for United States policy, in the form of the proposed and now adopted regulations on tobacco by the Food and Drug Administration. In turn, Canada's new tobacco control legislation, Bill C-71, now passing through the Canadian parliament, has also drawn upon the FDA proposals. The larger country borrowing from the smaller one constitutes "policy borrowing in reverse." Several hypotheses are offered for why this has occurred.