



INSTITUT FÜR HÖHERE STUDIEN
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PUBLIC LECTURE

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"Policy Change and Its Measurement in Comparative Policy Analysis: Conceptual Problems and Potential Alternatives"

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IHS, Stumpergasse 56
1060 Vienna, Lecture Room SZ VI

ABSTRACT

Policy change is an important concept in comparative policy analysis. Despite its centrality, most empirical studies fail to provide clear-cut definitions and measurement of this concept. Against this background, emphasis is placed on the evaluation of previous scholarship on policy change in the areas of social and environmental policy. It turns out that most studies use proxies for measuring policy change even though they contradict the basic idea of policy-making activities. Furthermore, studies usually neither capture the complexity of policy change, nor do they take the possibility of policy change through dismantling into account. Additionally, the empirical focus of most analyses is too narrow, which impedes robust statements about causality. In response to these flaws, I propose a new conceptual perspective, which captures policy change as a broader empirical phenomenon. I continue to discuss its advantages but also disadvantages and show the implications for the research process.

Professor Dr. Christoph Knill is Chair of Comparative Public Policy and Administration at the University of Konstanz, Germany. The main research interests of Prof. Knill lie in the areas of comparative policy analysis and comparative public administration. In this context, his main focus is on policy-making in the European Union, the analysis of processes of international policy convergence and policy diffusion as well as research on policy implementation. With regard to these topics, his major thematic interest is on environmental, higher education and morality policies. Prof. Knill has published numerous articles in international journals. His most important book publications include *The Europeanization of National Administrations: Patterns of Institutional Change and Persistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001), *Europäische Umweltpolitik. Steuerungsprobleme und Regulierungsmuster im Mehrebenensystem* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2003). *Die Europäische Union: Theorien und Analysekonzepte* (UTB: Stuttgart, 2005, with Katharina Holzinger, Dirk Peters, Berthold Rittberger, Frank Schimmelfennig, Wolfgang Wagner), *Cross-National Policy Convergence: Causes, Concepts and Empirical Findings* (London, Routledge, 2006), and *Environmental Politics in the European Union: Policy-making, Implementation and Patterns of Multilevel Governance*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007, with Duncan Liefferink).