

2014

## Book Review, *The Democratic Foundations of Policy Diffusion: How Health, Family and Employment Laws Spread Across Countries* by Katerina Linos

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### Recommended Citation

Theresa Cheng, *Book Review, The Democratic Foundations of Policy Diffusion: How Health, Family and Employment Laws Spread Across Countries* by Katerina Linos, 32 BERKELEY J. INT'L LAW. 239 (2014).  
Available at: <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/bjil/vol32/iss1/7>

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Review of *The Democratic Foundations of Policy Diffusion: How Health, Family, and Employment Laws Spread Across Countries*  
by Katerina Linos

Theresa Cheng\*

I.  
INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of globalization has captured the world's cultures, marketplaces, and state laws. Even national governments are not impervious to this growing trend, as states are quick to imitate the policies developed by other countries or advanced by international institutions. International models can strongly influence the development of a nation's agenda, but little scholarship has been produced elucidating the narrative of connecting global norms with domestic politicking.

In her book *The Democratic Foundations of Policy Diffusion*, Katerina Linos posits a novel theory explaining international patterns of policy adoption by re-framing the political backdrop of an increasingly pervasive global occurrence. Linos proposes a policy diffusion model that embraces domestic democracy as the engine through which international norms spread, countering previous social policy scholarship that traditionally credits international elites and technocratic networks. While the dominant account of policy diffusion conflicts with the large body of literature attributing the formulation of domestic social policy to only domestic factors, Linos's model asserts that electoral incentives drive a diffusion process in which international norms and domestic democracy are mutually reinforcing.

At the heart of her proposal is an acknowledgement that international norms do not necessarily conflict with the attitudes or policy positions of voters.<sup>1</sup> She further posits that voters rely on their impressions of foreign models to develop judgments on domestic government competence and legislative

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1. KATERINA LINOS, *THE DEMOCRATIC FOUNDATIONS OF POLICY DIFFUSION: HOW HEALTH, FAMILY, AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS SPREAD ACROSS COUNTRIES* 19 (2013).

action. National media profoundly shapes these benchmarks, so that the general populace is most familiar with large, rich, and culturally similar countries. Driven by electoral incentives to win the approval of voters, politicians in democratic states choose to imitate foreign models, leveraging the public's disproportionate familiarity with relatable countries to reassure them that the designed policies are competent and broadly accepted. As a result, governments adopt the policy choices of countries heavily covered by national media.

Linos's diffusion through democracy model offers more than just a novel account of a government's strategic use of information from abroad. The theory proposes strong linkages between international law and domestic policymaking, and it clarifies the global and political circumstances from which this policy diffusion arises. She demonstrates the applicability of her model to two major areas of social policy—family policy and health policy—both of which have been traditionally understood to be shaped entirely by domestic forces. The diffusion through democracy account shatters the previous implications that policy diffusion and domestic democratic processes are antithetical by illustrating that democracy facilitates the spread of international values.

Linos's book, and the theory it introduces, serves as a grand finale-thesis, a culmination of years of research as an international law fellow and lecturer at Harvard Law School and, more recently, as an assistant professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. Her diverse research interests, ranging from European Union law to employment law, result in a sophisticated and convincing account of political science and legal scholarship. Linos's exceptional research skills and interests are brought to bear in this compelling and insightful book combining legal analysis with original empirical research as she challenges present scholarship and familiar accounts of policy diffusion and social policy development.

## II.

### SUMMARY

Leading international policy diffusion models often explore only broad, theoretical pathways through which foreign norms influence domestic policies.<sup>2</sup> Competition, the first pathway, underscores a state's desire for a greater share of resources or capital over a competitor.<sup>3</sup> In competing with one another, governments may imitate another's laws to attract businesses and labor. The second pathway is learning, in which a government adopts a policy after evaluation of the reform's positive effects in a foreign state.<sup>4</sup> According to the

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2. *Id.* at 14-15.

3. Linos, *supra* note 1, at 14 (citing Zachary Elkins, Andrew Guzman & Beth Simmons, *Competing for Capital: The Diffusion of Bilateral Investment Treaties, 1960 – 2000*, 60 INT'L ORG. 811 (2006)).

4. Linos, *supra* note 1, at 15 (citing Chang Kil Lee & David Strang, *The International Diffusion of Public Sector Downsizing*, 60 INT'L ORG. 883 (2006)).

third pathway of emulation, policy replication occurs without regard to international outcomes. In hopes of following a global script, states decide to adopt foreign norms solely based on the identities of prior adopters. Abstracted away from the mechanisms of domestic policy adoption, these traditional pathways typically ignore the individual agency necessary for policy diffusion.

As Linos notes, more recent diffusion scholarship highlighting the role of the domestic actor attributes policy adoption only to technocracy, or to the networks of sophisticated elites, such as policy experts and politicians. These diffusion models promote a “top-down” framework of policy adoption in which bureaucratic technocrats and policy experts shape domestic law to imitate models from abroad, imposing international values upon domestic voters.<sup>5</sup> Unable to access these circles of technocracy, ordinary voters do not provide real input on proposed laws. In short, under these conventional theories, state reforms may be in direct opposition to the democratic populace.<sup>6</sup> These accounts fail to explain how technocrats, particularly elected politicians, are able to impose unpopular policy agendas onto the same electorate pool upon which they rely to win reelection.

In the same vein, present social policy literature singularly examines domestic factors in the national adoption of redistributive laws. In sharp contrast to the theories of technocratic diffusion of international policies, leading social policy scholars attribute the domestic acceptance of social reforms to democracy and the expression of popular demand, which is aligned with voters’ material interests.<sup>7</sup> Proposed economic bills earn the backing of powerful interest groups, such as strong labor unions or employer organizations, and are ushered slowly through the bureaucratic channels toward possible adoption.<sup>8</sup> Societal acceptance of the adopted welfare reform eventually follows. Dominant accounts of social policy adoption exemplify this pathway, highlighting only domestic forces in national reform.<sup>9</sup>

Contrary to the dominant narratives, Linos’s model of policy diffusion reconciles the two conflicting bodies of literature with the explanation that international values and democracy can be mutually reinforcing and that “elections and other democratic processes are an engine, not an obstacle, for the

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5. Linos, *supra* note 1, at 16 (citing ANNE MARIE SLAUGHTER, *A NEW WORLD ORDER* (2004); Michael Mintrom, *Policy Entrepreneurs and the Diffusion of Innovation*, 41 *AM. J. POL. SCI.* 738 (1997); Michael Mintrom & Phillipa Norman, *Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Change*, 37 *POL. STUD. J.* 649 (2009); KURT WEYLAND, *BOUNDED RATIONALITY AND POLICY DIFFUSION: SOCIAL SECTOR REFORM IN LATIN AMERICA* (2007); Kenneth Anderson, *Foreign Law and the US Constitution*, 131 *POL’Y REV.* 33 (2005); American University News, Transcript of discussion between US Supreme Court Justices Antonin Scalia and Stephen Breyer, AU Washington College of Law (Jan. 13, 2005)).

6. *Id.* at 2.

7. Linos, *supra* note 1, at 17 (citing Douglas A. Hibbs Jr., *Political Parties and Macroeconomic Policy*, 71 *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.* 1467 (1977)).

8. Linos, *supra* note 1, at 18.

9. *Id.* at 17.

spread of policies across countries and can provide critical domestic legitimacy for these policies.”<sup>10</sup> Shifting away from the conventional narrative attributing the spread of similar policies around the world to networks of technocrats, Linos proposes a novel account of policy diffusion, one that credits voters and elected politicians with the agency and power to change domestic policy to reflect international norms. She asserts that reforms in democratic states occur not only because of the technocrats who are knowledgeable about international values, but also because of citizens who express their support through elections and other democratic processes.

Foundational to her proposed model of policy diffusion through democracy is the relationship between voters and elected officials.<sup>11</sup> In democratic states, politicians seeking election strive to convince electorates of their competence and of their alignment with the voters’ values. Politicians, and the political platforms they promote, are constrained by voters and the public interest. Voters, on the other hand, view political candidates and their political platforms with skepticism, and it is upon this skepticism that Linos builds her theory of policy diffusion through democratic mechanisms.

In contrast to the sophisticated technocrats who have access to international decision-making processes, voters may have only a vague sense of the types of policies they support. Yet citizens continue to appraise hopeful politicians with limited and contextualized information passively accumulated through the continual bombardment of printed, televised, and digitized media. Through these streams of coverage, voters acquire knowledge of foreign developments, but do not learn of such international events equally, as the media disproportionately covers the developments of culturally proximate countries with large economies.<sup>12</sup> As a result, state citizens develop only general, nebulous impressions about foreign regimes, international organizations, and policies abroad, with the most familiar countries—those that are large, rich, and proximate—resonating most favorably with voters. In the diffusion through democracy account, citizens welcome such information about foreign models and use this knowledge to benchmark government performance. Knowledge of identical foreign laws can shift citizens’ perspectives of domestic policy proposals, and Linos highlights three types of voters who are particularly swayed by international accounts: inexperienced voters, skeptics, and voters who hold positive views of foreign governments and international organizations.<sup>13</sup>

Despite being severely constrained by voters, politicians anticipate the public’s use of foreign models and benefit from introducing these international values into their domestic policies, especially during election campaigns and in

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10. *Id.* at 2.

11. *Id.* at 18.

12. *Id.* at 20. Here, proximity is understood to be geographical, linguistic, and cultural similarities.

13. *Id.* at 28.

debates on proposed legislation. Politicians frame possible policies by borrowing foreign models, particularly the policies of countries most familiar to voters. They use such comparisons to show similarities between international models and their own proposals. This invocation of international norms serves two ends: first, it shows that the proposed law coheres with public values; and second, it signals that the politician governs competently. Details of the success or failure of a foreign model are not necessary; voters are most likely to respond to a model's familiarity and adoption as foreign law.<sup>14</sup> Perceiving that a foreign state has adopted particular legislation indicates that foreign leadership vetted the reform and ultimately found it worth the expense of implementation.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, by comparing a proposal with foreign models, a politician signals to voters that his or her proposed policies are mainstream and are accepted by familiar countries. Even politicians who have personal misgivings about international models have the electoral incentive to embrace these models to appeal to swing voters—members of the populace who have doubts about a government's competence and values.<sup>16</sup> However, according to Linos's theory, such references to foreign models are less likely from politicians who are unconstrained by electoral incentives, for example, those living in non-competitive electoral environments such as dictatorial or oligarchical regimes, or those not seeking re-election.<sup>17</sup>

To empirically substantiate the cornerstone of her theory, that voters respond positively to foreign models in the evaluation of policy proposals, Linos begins her analysis in the United States. The United States is a difficult test case because of its relative wealth as well as its geographically and culturally distinct character. To further exacerbate these distinctions from other states, US citizens have access to a wide variety of domestic resources for reliable policy opinions and research. Domestic sources of information, such as think tanks and universities, may lead voters to dismiss information from international sources. Americans are typically characterized as conflicted, even hostile, to information with foreign origins.<sup>18</sup> With its late adoption of foreign models in health care and family policy, the American government reflects its citizens' resistance to international norms.

Linos conducted public opinion experiments to corroborate her claim.<sup>19</sup> She surveyed a representative sample of Americans to assess the level of support for social welfare reforms in the areas of health care and family policies and to determine whether the support level would change if the policy was described as

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14. *Id.* at 23.

15. *Id.* at 23.

16. *Id.* at 25.

17. *Id.* at 29.

18. *Id.* at 38; Steven Calabresi, "A Shining City on a Hill": American Exceptionalism and the Supreme Court's Practice of Relying on Foreign Law, 86 B.U. L. Rev. 1335 (2006).

19. Linos, *supra* note 1, at 41.

an accepted foreign model. Respondents were significantly more likely to support the policy if it was presented as an international recommendation, particularly one from the United Nations (UN).<sup>20</sup> By delineating the positive responses to social policy information from abroad according to different groups of US citizens, she further supports her theory that inexpert and skeptical voters are more likely to rely upon foreign models in evaluating a policy than non-skeptics. Aggregate support for left-leaning ideology increased more significantly for those with little prior knowledge or who were more likely to oppose social welfare policy.<sup>21</sup>

To investigate the other side of her theory, that politicians rely on foreign models to appeal to voters, Linos compares the debates leading up to the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA), and the unsuccessful health reform proposal, the Health Security Act of 1993. She utilizes presidential campaign statements and the *Congressional Record* to contrast the references made by the supporting and opposing politicians to international templates. As predicted, proponents of these pieces of legislation frequently refer to foreign models to increase public support. In the family policy debates, for example, reform advocates made 290 references to foreign models, highlighting policies in Germany and Japan in particular.<sup>22</sup> This focus on German and Japanese models seems incongruous, as neither state had particularly successful family policies. However, national US media featured these states prominently in the preceding decades, making them relevant to citizens. Opponents of these policies also acted according to the diffusion model, as exemplified by the arguments made against health care reform. Critics emphasized the diversity of international health models and challenged the international references directly, expounding on the negative effects of similar health care reforms in other countries.<sup>23</sup>

#### A. *Conditions Most Favorable and Unfavorable to Diffusion Through Democracy*

While this proposed relationship between voters and politicians is central to Linos's policy diffusion through democracy model, the strength of the diffusion—whether a country replicates a foreign model entirely or a variation of the model, and whether diffusion occurs at all—depends entirely upon the national and international circumstances, or, as Linos terms them, the “scope conditions.” One such national factor is the policy area under scrutiny. Linos theorizes that imitation of foreign models is more likely to occur within policy areas that are the most politically salient and in contention in the domestic

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20. *Id.*

21. *Id.* at 45.

22. *Id.* at 39.

23. *Id.* at 57.

arena.<sup>24</sup> Politicians are unlikely to reference foreign models for proposed legislation that is of little interest or of little debate to voters. Similarly, competitive electoral environments should influence politicians to refer to broad international policy outlines to reassure voters about broad policy goals, and not the details of policy implementation.

Linow asserts that policy diffusion through democracy also depends on the characteristics of the country considering policy imitation.<sup>25</sup> If foreign models are to lend credibility to policies in the face of a skeptical populace, then diffusion effects should be stronger in countries that give its citizens reason for skepticism. For example, international norms should be most well-received by voters in countries without reliable domestic sources of information, as may be found in corrupt or poor states. Countries undergoing transitions may also rely more on foreign policy comparisons because their citizens are likely to experience doubt in the reforms. Finally, countries that have geographically and culturally proximate neighbors and whose residents receive greater coverage of foreign affairs should have strong responses to international models.

Similarly, several characteristics of a foreign model influence the likelihood that it will be adopted. First, the decisions of competent foreign policymakers or international institutions, such as the UN or International Labour Organization (ILO), are more likely to resonate with domestic voters. Second, in the absence of high-quality information or when citizens are unable to gauge the reliability of a source, the number and identities of countries adopting a particular legislation also persuade voters.<sup>26</sup> According to Linow, the diffusion through democracy model resembles emulation models and is strongest in situations where multiple foreign governments make and international organizations recommend the same policy choice, as was seen in the field of maternity leave in family policy. In contrast, policy areas offering a variety of possible prototypes send weaker signals to uncertain voters. For example, countries and international organizations promulgate diverse health structures, from universal health care to privatized insurance schemes, and this multiplicity of models weakens the likelihood that a state will adopt one structure over the others.

The final scope condition influencing the strength of diffusion effects is temporal and implicates the domestic politics of late and early adopters. Linow hypothesizes that late adopters of a particular legislation were able to introduce and implement the reforms under less favorable domestic conditions than pioneers.<sup>27</sup> This hypothesis illustrates the significance of the connection Linow's theory makes between international model diffusion and domestic policymaking. By definition, early adopters must advance their legislation

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24. *Id.* at 30.

25. *Id.* at 31.

26. *Id.* at 32.

27. *Id.* at 34.



without the availability of international models to follow or reference, and reform will come only after favorable conditions are met. However, late developers are able to use internationally promulgated norms to strengthen and implement their domestic cause despite less favorable conditions.

By analyzing familiar international waves of policy reform, Linos develops her theory further by empirically testing the range of scope conditions leading to policy diffusion. She examines the applicability of her proposed diffusion model to two distinct social policy areas chosen for their disparate scope conditions: family policy and health policy. Family policy is typical of other social policy fields with strong international lobbying efforts. Health policy, on the other hand, represents a least-likely test case, a scenario with unfavorable scope conditions that would challenge the validity of the model most. Linos demonstrates the validity and wide applicability of her model by analyzing the diffusion patterns in well-known social policy reforms: the diffusion of family policy across Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, the adoption of the National Health Service model across Europe, and the recent Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act reform in the United States. Each of these reforms represents policy diffusion through democracy under disparate scope conditions, and Linos utilizes these historical reforms to elucidate the international and domestic factors that facilitated policy diffusion the most. To further underscore the validity and strength of her proposal, Linos highlights least-likely cases of diffusion through democracy at the country-level, or domestic circumstances in history during which the scope conditions were least favorable to yield policy diffusion through democracy. Here, she focuses on rich democracies with strong domestic policymaking capacities that should reduce the need to reference foreign models.<sup>28</sup>

#### *B. Family Policy Diffusion: Maternity Leave and Family Benefits*

By investigating the spread of family policy across OECD countries, Linos concretely demonstrates to readers the application of her diffusion model to social policy fields. Family policy, particularly maternity leave, is representative of other social policy areas, such as antidiscrimination regulations and unemployment policy, in the types and structures of the international and domestic stakeholders involved in the politicking.<sup>29</sup> As with other social policies, family policy debates typically divide domestic interest groups equally, pitting those most likely to support international social welfare values, such as unions, feminist groups, and left-wing parties, against groups opposing these norms, such as employers, religious groups, and right-wing parties.<sup>30</sup> As seen in global family policy adoption patterns, domestic debates of many social policy

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28. *Id.* at 6.

29. *Id.* at 128.

30. *Id.* at 129.

fields occur against a backdrop of strong international policy recommendations provided by powerful stakeholders like the ILO to member states.

To better survey the policy area, Linos explores two topics within family policy: maternity leave and family allowances. This comparison of family policy topics offers Linos the additional methodological advantage of within-field variation analysis, as she is able to contrast diffusion patterns that differ on degree of international organization activity alone. As early as 1919, international expert stakeholders, such as the ILO and European Union (EU), began developing extensive, detailed, and legally-binding recommendations on maternity leave, leading to one dominant international model with few opposition groups. No equivalent international advocate existed for family benefits until ILO developed relevant guidance in 1952, and even afterwards, the ILO was never forceful about its recommendation. Linos is thus able to use the field of family allowances as a benchmark to measure how a similar field develops with international influences.

Global adoption patterns of family benefits and maternity leave reforms support the diffusion through democracy model. Even though a present-day survey reveals that maternity leave is almost universal and more widespread than family allowances, closer examination of the forces promoting global policy adoption reveals that international norms contributed significantly to the promulgation of both family policy fields. In order to test the influence of foreign models over domestic reforms and to identify other diffusion factors, Linos uses statistical modeling to measure the “weights” of potential international and domestic determinants of a state’s reform.<sup>31</sup> The results corroborate her claims that, in contrast to previous scholarship on policy diffusion and domestic social policy adoption, domestic policymaking is significantly driven by emulation of proximate and familiar countries, and that both international and domestic forces are equally influential in determining national reform. In fact, countries with the greatest ties to the international system were most likely to adopt longer maternity leaves.<sup>32</sup>

Global adoption patterns also confirm the temporal dimension of the diffusion through democracy account. By using industrialization as a proxy for the domestic political conditions necessary for maternity leave reform, Linos uncovers a significant negative relationship between the year a state adopted

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31. Linos analyzed which diffusion theories played the greatest role: emulation (measured by media coverage of large, rich, proximate countries), competition (where a competitor was defined as states exporting similar products), or learning (where successful countries were defined by high female labor market participation). The international influences were temporal lag, citizen attentiveness to international organization messages (as measured by the number of international nongovernmental organization memberships), and ratification of relevant international agreements. Domestic factors explored and determined to be significant were union power (measured by the percentage of unionized workers in the labor force), political power of women (measured by the number of parliament seats held by women), percentage of women in the labor force, and percentage of unemployed women. *See id.* at 137-41.

32. *Id.* at 147.

maternity leave and the level of industrialization present at the time of adoption. The later a maternity or sick leave was introduced, the less industrialized the state was at that time.<sup>33</sup> The statistical modeling Linos uses also supports her claim that late adopters can adopt a policy under less favorable domestic conditions than pioneers. In states that adopted maternity leave before 1919, the domestic forces accounted for much more of the policy development than in late-adopter states. Likewise, the role of country-to-country emulation in these pioneer countries was insignificant.

*C. Health Care Policy: National Health Service Model*

The application of the diffusion through democracy model also extends to least-likely test cases. Linos interrogates the global patterns of health policy diffusion to show that her theory is valid in unlikely circumstances as well. Similar to the family benefits field, health policy lacks the presence of strong, cohesive international lobbying groups promulgating a single specific model. In contrast to the ILO's specific, legally-binding recommendations advancing maternity leave, the health care policies promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Alma-Ata Declaration were broad and non-binding outlines of key goals.<sup>34</sup> Unlike the circumstances surrounding family allowances, however, health policy reform, and particularly the adoption of the left-wing National Health Service (NHS) model, faces an additional and significant obstacle: forceful domestic opposition from national interest groups. Medical associations of doctors, a key interest group, contest reforms that limit providers' autonomy and compensation, while no concentrated interest groups exist to counterbalance these associations. The beneficiaries of medical reforms—patients and taxpayers—are typically unable to organize to form a collective interest group. This asymmetry is unique to health policy and is distinct from the more evenly-divided interest groups in family policy and other social policy fields.

The multiplicity of international health care models likewise distinguishes health policy from family policy. Rich, sophisticated countries, like those in the OECD, have adopted diverse health systems that generally fall into one of three broad categories: privatized systems, social insurance systems, and universal systems. These models differ in the source of health care financing, the scope of health insurance coverage, and the delivery of health care.<sup>35</sup> First formulated in Britain in 1946, the NHS model is a form of universal, single-payer health system. While the NHS may have inspired the WHO to take up the cause for universal healthcare, the WHO failed to champion a single health model and instead described goals that were generally consistent with the NHS, but that

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33. *Id.* at 136.

34. *Id.* at 68.

35. *Id.* at 70.

could also be achieved through other systems. This array of possible health models set the stage for greater variety in country-to-country diffusion.

Again, Linos uses empirical research techniques to examine global adoption patterns for support of her diffusion through democracy account. Analysis of the diverse types of health systems found in OECD countries shows geographical and temporal patterning in the national adoptions of NHS models and social insurance systems.<sup>36</sup> Linos's studies revealed that four of the test domestic variables helped to determine domestic choices: states were more likely to have adopted a NHS model if the country had a (1) left-wing administration, (2) few parties, (3) high prior health coverage, and (4) a federalist structure.<sup>37</sup> The likelihood that a country will adopt a NHS system increases when other countries covered prominently in the national media have already adopted this reform. However, whether a country accepts NHS reform is also shaped by learning and competition diffusion theories.

Linus's analysis of health policy diffusion illustrates that not all weakly-promoted international models are doomed to fail, as seen with the family benefits case study. Diffusion through democracy can influence major national policy even with strong opposing domestic interest groups. In examining the case studies of two NHS late-adopter countries, Greece and Spain, Linos demonstrates that diffusion through democracy explains how the electoral process drives domestic policymaking to imitate radical foreign models.<sup>38</sup> To push their agenda forward, socialist politicians in Greece and Spain chose to reference NHS adoptions from rich, familiar countries, such as Britain, over geographically proximate countries with greater political and institutional similarities. The use of foreign models helped persuade skeptical politicians and medical professionals to adopt national reform.

### III. DISCUSSION

The implications of the proposed diffusion through democracy framework are significant and far-reaching. According to Linos, because international norms do not run antithetical to, but rather reinforce, local politics, this insight can transform the priorities and strategic messaging used by international organizations and community advocates. Instead of trying to persuade technocratic elites or bind them to hard law instruments, stakeholders should reframe their communications, emphasizing the informational content of soft law, or even non-law, to influence the populace or domestic nongovernmental bodies. The diffusion through democracy model highlights that voters can be the key to introducing and implementing policy reform.

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36. *Id.* at 71.

37. *Id.* at 91.

38. *Id.* at 97.

Among the strengths of Linos's formulation is her methodological approach, which combines three types of empirical evidence to support disparate portions of her theory: (1) experimental public opinion data to show that foreign models resonate with voters, (2) qualitative case studies of multiple states to show that politicians incorporate foreign models into their campaigning and legislative debates, and (3) rigorous statistical analysis demonstrating that foreign models impact domestic policy adoption.<sup>39</sup> Unlike other political scientists and legal scholars who are only able to frame theories amidst quantitative support, Linos effectively demonstrates the validity of her claims by qualitatively analyzing the adoption patterns of specific social policies in multiple distinct national contexts. Furthermore, Linos does not shy away from rigorous evaluation of the diffusion by democracy model. By testing the central assumptions of her theorem against the least-likely circumstances, she asserts the wide applicability of her model—that democratic governments facing unfavorable scope conditions were still able to transform national policy by referencing international norms.

Linos's unique empirical approach, and in turn, her diffusion model, is further strengthened by her resourcefulness and candidness. While other researchers may be stalled by the lack of original records existing from the early time periods being examined, she creatively identifies appropriate proxies in the existing data in order to source the variables necessary to conduct the statistical analyses.<sup>40</sup> She uses the limited available resources without constraining her research. Likewise, readers could perceive her work to be more credible because she readily recognizes and openly acknowledges the weaknesses not only of each statistical analysis, but also of her proposed model generally.

The book's greatest strength may be its accessibility to a wide range of audiences. Linos acknowledges that the far-reaching implications of the diffusion through democracy model would attract a diverse range of readers, from international law scholars to community advocates. Despite the complexities of the diverse topics addressed and their inter-relationships, Linos makes no assumptions about the background of her audience and is thus conscientious about explaining contexts and analytical delineations, particularly for the construction of the statistical analyses she uses. The structure she has adopted for every chapter, and for the book in its entirety, previews and summarizes for readers each chapter's critical takeaways. Linos's articulate and engaging writing style further ensures accessibility to a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in the domestic policymaking process.

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39. *Id.* at 9.

40. Despite the lack of information on the foreign countries predominantly covered in the news in 1975, Linos found an adequate substitute from the data that is available—foreign newspaper sales. In chapter four, she establishes the high correlation between foreign newspaper sales with domestic coverage of said countries and citizens' familiarity with these countries. *See id.* at 79-85.

Because diffusion through democracy has significant real-world implications on the design of international advocacy platforms and the campaigns of domestic politicians, some readers may find that Linos's book leaves some critical questions unanswered. For example, the direct relationship between voters and politicians is underexplored. While an unavoidable weakness that is recognized by Linos, the empirical research employed in the book fails to show the direct causal relationship between voters and politicians, the centerpiece of the diffusion model. Linos's public opinion experiment, for example, only shows that voters' opinions of a particular policy can shift, not that international law endorsement of certain models lead to a favorable domestic vote. Similarly, the experiment fails to show that voters and their impressions directly influence politicians' stances on key political issues related to international policy models. Politicians may reference foreign models to sway citizens for their support, but are not necessarily constrained to propose policies that imitate only the foreign countries familiar to voters.

Linos's account ushers in and highlights the role and implications of domestic media as an essential area of further research. According to her theory, voters are passive information-gatherers who learn about global happenings primarily through domestic media coverage. Constituents' impressions of politicians and their policies hinge entirely upon the media, but Linos's book is limited in its examination of this third actor. How does the media decide which countries are most culturally proximate? What else influences the media's choice in coverage and the color of these portrayals? Such unexplored questions lead the reader to wonder if perhaps the energies of international advocacy efforts should not be focused on convincing citizens of the value of certain foreign models, but rather upon the local media, who might be able to bring knowledge of foreign models directly to domestic voters.

Finally, while Linos investigates the applicability of the diffusion through democracy model to multiple waves of social policy reform at both regional and country levels, she limits exploration of the relevant circumstances to rich OECD countries. While she explains early in her book that she selected relatively wealthy democracies because they are difficult test-cases because of their strong national policymaking capacities, her sole focus on rich Western countries leaves something to be desired. Even if lower-income democracies are more likely to experience diffusion through democracy in theory, international reform advocates may be even more interested in the applicability of the democratic diffusion model to lower-income countries at the precipice of reform initiatives. The conditions accompanying the evolving industrial status of a developing or a newly developed country could disrupt a number of the scope conditions, such as accuracy of the portrayal of foreign models in media. Likewise, Linos's diffusion theory contributes to the larger understandings of the overlap between international law and domestic political processes. But by failing to explore the full relationship between her account and different types of

democratic states, the book misses an opportunity to inform transnational advocacy efforts.

These weaknesses, however, do not undermine the strength or validity of the diffusion through democracy theory, and only show the importance of further investigation of the model's applicability and implications. By bridging international laws and local politics, *The Democratic Foundations of Policy Diffusion* proffers a timely account, which reconciles previously antithetical political science scholarship by using a variety and depth of resources to explore global policy convergence from within national borders. The value in Linos's novel theory lies not only in its unique contributions to international and domestic legal scholarship, but also in its testimony to the importance of mobilizing ordinary voters in generating social policy reform.