

book in its accomplishments and also points to an important agenda for future research.

Policy Entrepreneurs and School Choice. By Michael Mintrom. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000. 324p. \$60.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Karen Mossberger, *Kent State University*

Policy entrepreneurs or issue advocates figure prominently in major theories of the policy process (e.g., Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*, 1993; John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 1995; Paul A. Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith, *Policy Change and Learning: An Advocacy Coalition Approach*, 1993). This book explores in depth the phenomenon of policy entrepreneurs, the individuals who invest their time and resources in trying to bring an idea to fruition. The controversial issue of school choice is a particularly apt example of a policy that has spread through the efforts of entrepreneurs laboring in a number of states. A good overview sets the scene in the first chapter and describes such variants as public school choice (within and across districts), charter schools, private voucher plans, and publicly funded vouchers. But the book emphasizes building and testing a theory of policy entrepreneurship. This carefully crafted study presents a number of significant arguments and findings that will be of interest for scholars (or graduate students) concerned with policy diffusion, policy change, and agenda setting as well as education policy.

The author's primary concern is to explain how entrepreneurs promote policy change. Arguing that the term policy "entrepreneur" is essentially a metaphor for an economic concept, Mintrom reviews economic theories of entrepreneurship as a prelude to constructing a political model. The social context of entrepreneurship is common to both market-based and political entrepreneurs, according to Mintrom (pp. 126–9). Immersion in relevant social networks allows entrepreneurs to anticipate needs and demands as well as develop credibility and trust with potential backers. The dilemma is that entrepreneurs also need to maintain sufficient distance to view problems in a fresh way. Policy entrepreneurs face additional challenges in part because they market ideas rather than tangible products (p. 227). Substantial uncertainty often exists over whether or how a policy idea will work. Mintrom identifies a set of attributes policy entrepreneurs need in order to act as effective change agents: creativity and insight, social perception, the ability to mix in a variety of social and political settings, persuasive argumentation, team building, and leadership by example (pp. 152–3).

The author uses two types of evidence to explore his theory: a 1993 mail survey of selected members of the educational policy communities in 48 states and interviews with a purposive sample of policy entrepreneurs. Event history analysis based on the survey data establishes some parameters for the policy significance of entrepreneurs and networks. Mintrom shows that the likelihood of consideration or adoption increases with rising activity on the part of policy entrepreneurs, controlling for a variety of other factors (p. 201). A strength of this analysis is its differentiation between factors that influence agenda setting and adoption. For example, the probability of legislative consideration increases with the number of neighboring states that adopt the policy and with indicators of participation in national policy networks. Neither factor influences adoption, however, which is related to coalition building within states, the level of opposition from teacher unions, and state performance on

standardized tests (pp. 217–9). Together, these findings indicate that momentum from diffusion in the policy stream can affect agendas, but state-specific factors in the political and problem streams are more likely to determine the fate of choice proposals.

The network activity measured in the event history analysis demonstrates the social embeddedness of entrepreneurs but not whether Mintrom's list of attributes matters. At the core of the evidence concerning these hypotheses are case studies of coalition-building strategies in three states: Nebraska, Oregon, and Michigan. Political networks within the state were successfully used when some variant of school choice was adopted. Entrepreneurial activities differed, however, based on whether the entrepreneur was a legislator who could exploit an inside strategy or an "outside" entrepreneur who faced the task of erecting a political coalition from the ground up.

Mintrom uses these cases, and material from interviews in other states, to show how entrepreneurs coped with the challenge of marketing ideas. They accepted incremental accomplishments, such as public school choice, and created demonstration projects, such as privately funded vouchers. Both incrementalism and pilot programs enhanced the potential for further change by demonstrating feasibility and stimulating demand. The marketing of abstract ideas also encouraged entrepreneurs to emphasize different aspects when pitching the "product" to different constituencies. This strategy can expand political support but also introduces the potential for transforming the idea in the process, which contributes to what I have called the diffusion of a policy label.

Overall, this is an excellent study that features careful conceptualization of entrepreneurship and solid research. Creative use of event history analysis allows for generalization beyond discrete cases and explains more about the process of policy diffusion than previous studies that have used this method. Interviews with entrepreneurs bolster findings from the survey of nonentrepreneurs that might otherwise be doubtful, and they also allow for more detailed observation. Yet, the author could have, at times, made even better use of his interviews with policy entrepreneurs. Quotations from entrepreneurs in a number of states appear within the text, but there is no discussion of how strategies in these states related to those in the three case studies. Was one approach more common than the others, for example, or was the limited coalition building apparent in Oregon problematic in other states as well? This would have strengthened Mintrom's evidence on the attributes of entrepreneurs, given their significance for his theory.

What Mintrom offers as a theoretical framework is actually a set of ideal standards against which to measure entrepreneurialism. It will take further research on other policy issues, of course, to establish which of these are most important and under what circumstances. His findings about the importance of incrementalism and demonstration projects may be most relevant to hotly contested issues that face organized opposition, such as teacher unions. It also remains to be seen whether policy ideas are usually accepted only after a considerable period of softening up through debate and compromise, as indicated here, or whether emotional appeals by entrepreneurs sometimes short-circuit deliberation.

By examining this particular piece of the policy puzzle, the author contributes a useful conceptual framework and builds on existing theories of policy change. His work also advances our understanding of the process of policy diffusion, which often has been neglected in favor of research on patterns or rates of diffusion. Mintrom's study offers a much-needed view

of the role of ideas and information from the vantage point of the policy entrepreneur.

The Politics of Ideas and the Spread of Enterprise Zones. By Karen Mossberger. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000. 288p. \$65.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

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This book is the latest product of Georgetown University Press's outstanding American Governance and Public Policy series. Karen Mossberger embarks upon a substantial intellectual effort and seeks to accomplish several tasks. First, she provides a detailed account of the evolution of the enterprise zone concept and chronicles its implementation in five states. This case analysis contributes to the study of policy diffusion by focusing on "polydiffusion" through multiple channels and distinguishing the diffusion of policy instruments and policy labels. Second, she evaluates the spread of the enterprise zone concept using a criterion of "informed decision making." Third, she assesses whether the diffusion decision-making process was characterized by a rational comprehensive, bounded rationality, or organized anarchy decision model. This effort has much to commend it but in the end is uneven. Mossberger is very successful in the first task but less so in the last two.

The introduction of the enterprise zone concept and its consideration by officials at the federal and state level are systematically examined. In-depth case analyses were conducted in five states that adopted enterprise zone legislation: Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, and Virginia. The studies are unique because they provide a detailed view of state decision processes, focusing on what information was diffused to the state and how it affected decision making.

The analysis describes in detail the process by which enterprise zones diffused to the states. The literature has emphasized either vertical channels, from the national level to the states, or horizontal diffusion among states. Instead, Mossberger argues convincingly that enterprise zones were spread by a polydiffusion through both horizontal and vertical channels. One important contribution of her account is the concept of a policy label. Mossberger provides evidence that in many states the presentation of enterprise zones revolved around a constellation of words, such as "enterprise, innovation, technology, independent, small business, venture, and risk," not around an economic process. Studies of public policy based in the welfare economics tradition see policies as tools, as specific methods to correct market or government failure. Although Mossberger does not explicitly make the distinction between tools and labels, she adds an important new term to the policy diffusion vocabulary.

Mossberger examines the intensity of analysis and the decision model followed in the policy adoption process. She first evaluates whether policy diffusion represented informed decision making, that is, whether diffused information was evaluated in light of the state's own circumstances. Mossberger concedes that assessment may be based on political debate, rational calculation, or policy experience, but her application focuses primarily on analytical assessment rather than political assessment.

The decision-making model that characterized the diffusion process also is examined. By identifying what knowledge was diffused and how it was used, the author seeks to categorize the decision-making process in each state as the rational comprehensive model, the bounded rationality model, or the organized anarchy model. There are several problems with this attempt. First, the rational comprehensive

model becomes a straw man. It will always be an empty category because its assumptions cannot be met. The decision processes in the five states examined here fell into the other two categories. Bounded rationality, although less broad than a rational comprehensive approach, relies on technical, logical, or analytical criteria for choice. In contrast, organized anarchy is based more in temporal, political, and opportunistic choice criteria; decisions are shaped by the timing of events rather than the willful choice of rational models and respond to political opportunities as well as problems.

One disappointment is that the relationship between informed decision making and the decision models is not more fully developed, either conceptually or empirically. The use of diffused policy ideas by state officials might then be defined by two dimensions that underlie the decision models and the concept of informed decision making. The first is the intensity of analysis given to alternatives, and the second is whether analytical criteria are program based or political and opportunistic. It might be informative to explore the cross-classifications of these two dimensions and their implications for understanding the patterns of debate over enterprise zones in these five states. By not doing so, the author missed opportunities to integrate more fully the idea of policy labels into the larger theoretical framework and to strengthen the link between this work and the comparative state politics literature.

From the case analysis Mossberger seeks to identify factors that account for the employment of the different decision-making models within these states. Again, separating out the two dimension of decision making, rather than relying on the three classifications, might have provided a stronger theoretical framework for prediction. The patterns of decision making are expected to be linked to legislative staff, professionalization, partisan competition, liberalism, and divided government. All the usual suspects are included, but what is missing is strong theoretical arguments that link them to a particular decision model.

Although the limitations of the conceptual framework developed here are not unimportant, they must be evaluated in light of the scope of the effort and the specific contributions this work makes to the literature on policy diffusion. The comparative case studies provide a unique and detailed view of state decision making and the policy diffusion process that will generate much discussion and debate. This work needs to be read by any serious student of state and local policy.

Founding the Criminal Law: Punishment and Political Thought in the Origins of America. By Ronald J. Pestritto. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000. 191p. \$36.00.

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Political theory reminds us that punishment is a fundamentally political action, an exercise of political power. This book is about penal reform and the philosophy of punishment as both were debated in postrevolutionary America. Pestritto combs through original writings of the founders and state constitutions in an effort to elucidate leading philosophies about the purpose of the criminal law and punishment. At a macro level, the book provides a window into how the American system, in Pestritto's venues of Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia, mediates between the tensions of the preservation of individual liberty and maintenance of public order. The book attempts to bridge the historical gap from our founding to current issues in sentencing, such as the