

## **Title: Studying cross-country movement of policy ideas: meaning, politics and ethnography**

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### **Abstract**

The travel of policy ideas and innovations across countries is widely spread in our globalised world. Despite its ubiquity, social sciences have fallen short in devising models, frameworks and methods to study and engage with it. Conventional approaches of 'policy transfer', 'policy diffusion', and 'lesson-drawing' have been criticised for being apolitical and linear. Emerging work across social sciences calls for more ethnographic research methods to understand the travel of policy ideas and its impact. In such work, a researcher is at the same time a policy practitioner involved in epistemic networks transferring ideas from one location to another. Two major challenges are central to such work: managing the border between research and practice; and developing and using formalised methods of research. We discuss these challenges and offer possible solutions by drawing on our own research in the last 5-10 years on the travel of policy ideas in diverse fields such as eco-city development, and water management from Turkey and China.

**Keywords:** policy translation, ethnography, ethics, research dilemmas

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