DIFFUSION OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

Social Sector Reforms in Brazil

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Though I did not know it at the time, the seed for this project was planted many years before I embarked upon the research for this book. From 1998 to 2000, I worked in grant making at the Ford Foundation where I supported efforts to strengthen civil society and promote good governance practices. My work had little to do with Brazil or with the social sector reforms that I examine here. But I did learn about the Ford Foundation’s long-standing initiative to support innovations in governance. While innovations awards for good governance practices always struck me as a laudable exercise, I always wondered whether award-winning programs would have an impact beyond their originating jurisdiction and spread elsewhere. If so, how would that happen? Several years later, I had the opportunity to investigate the diffusion of good governance models within the context of Brazilian politics.

As is the case with any major research endeavor, this book would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of numerous individuals. First and foremost, I am indebted to my informants in Brazil who were willing to share their experiences with me. This group includes not only the individuals who participated in interviews and focus groups, but also the many others who simply shared with me the realities of living on the margins. Informal conversations with beneficiaries of health and education programs, as well as the street-level bureaucrats who work day to day with the poor, brought to light how important it is for governments to get the policies right. While the voices of the poor are not the focus of this analysis, they nevertheless inform my own perspective on the high stakes for social sector reform.

This type of research requires extensive field research and I am grateful to a number of institutions and individuals who made it possible
for me to spend an extended period in Brazil. The Fulbright–IIE and Boren Fellowships supported my early field research in Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Salvador, and São Paulo. In Brazil, I benefited from institutional affiliations with the Escola de Administração Pública of the Fundação Getúlio Vargas–São Paulo and the Escola de Administração of the Universidade Federal de Bahia. Numerous individuals went above and beyond to assist me in the field, including Peter K. Spink, Marta Ferreira Santos Farah, Luiz Odorico Monteiro de Andrade, José Antônio Gomes de Pinho, António Sérgio Araújo Fernandes, Ilka Camarotti, David Fleischer, Fabio Santos Perreira, and Anderson Lima. I had the privilege of working with several talented graduate assistants who assisted me with data collection and implementation of a phone survey of municipal administrators; they were Ana Paula Karruz, Natália Koga, Evelyn Chaves, Lília Asuca Sumiya, and Francisco Moraes da Costa Marques. I was lucky to find such a dedicated group of graduate students, many of whom have gone on to careers in government and higher education.

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clusion. Wendy provided enthusiasm for research on social policy and Brazilian politics, which served as a constant source of energy. Kurt encouraged me to explore the public health sector as well as engage broad disciplinary debates. His research on diffusion theory serves as an important influence in my own study. Many other individuals at the University of Texas at Austin provided insights and feedback on my early research. Raúl L. Madrid offered early input on the research design and encouraged me to draw on mixed methods. Andrew Karch introduced me to a broader literature in U. S.-state politics and American studies of diffusion. Tse-min Lin lent invaluable guidance on the event history modeling in the book. Gretchen Ritter offered her keen eye and asked crucial questions that furthered the development of my argument. Finally, Robert H. Wilson’s contributions predate this work when he introduced me to his research on decentralization and governance in Brazil. Colleagues at other institutions have also contributed to the development of my thinking over the years, including Brian Wampler, Howard Handelman, and James W. McGuire. Of course, any errors and omissions are my own.

This book has been years in the making, and my early research of social sector reforms has appeared in journal articles. My publications in *Comparative Political Studies* (41:2 [2008]) and *Latin American Research Review* (43:3 [2008]) cover portions of chapters 2 and 3. Thanks go to these journals for extending permission to reprint some of the analysis.

I have been fortunate to work with the University of Notre Dame Press and would be remiss if I were to neglect their contributions. I thank anonymous reviewers, Stephen Little, Harv Humphrey, and Scott P. Mainwaring for their commitment to this project and for shepherding my manuscript through all the stages of production. Thanks also go to Margo Shearman for careful editing.

Finally, this is the kind of enterprise that would be impossible to undertake without the encouragement of my family. My parents introduced me to Brazil and instilled a lifetime of intellectual curiosity. In particular I thank my mother, Maria Lúcia Borges Sugiyama, for her love of Brazil and persistence in teaching her children about its
language, culture, and history. My father, Iutaka Sugiyama, taught me early on to ask questions, challenge conventional norms, and take on the eye of a keen ethnographer. My brother, Alexandre Borges Sugiyama, has been a constant supporter of my academic career and has served as a trusted informal adviser. Most of all my deepest love and gratitude go to my husband, Greg Carter.
One of the foremost challenges for democratic governments is to ensure that its outputs—public policies—are responsive to the needs of citizens. The difficulty of enacting good public policy is especially acute for developing nations, where the need for basic social services is high due to pressing demands resulting from high rates of poverty and social and income inequality. At the same time, governments must also overcome historic and long-standing political legacies of clientelist practices, the unequal quid pro quo exchanges between patrons and the poor in the form of patronage and vote buying, which have undermined meaningful democratic participation for the poor and accountability of the political elite. Given these challenges, it is no wonder that observers consider good governance practices rare.

Much of the scholarship in comparative politics has sought to explain why policy reform by national governments, particularly equity-enhancing social sector reform, has been difficult (Corrales 1999; Grindle 2004; Kaufman and Nelson 2004; Weyland 1996). We know for instance that the legacies of privileged interests, in which the
middle and upper classes have benefited disproportionately from the corporativist state, have created entrenched policies that are difficult for reformers to dismantle (Hunter and Sugiyama 2009). Further, we have learned that late industrialization and the delayed emergence of strong working-class political parties in Latin America have hindered efforts to promote a broad welfare state that can serve as a counterweight to a strong corporativist state (Mainwaring 1999). Those who most need the results of that type of reform, the poor and vulnerable, are the least capable of overcoming political barriers and organizing to pressure the state (Kaufman and Nelson 2004; 12; Grindle 2002, 92). Further, evidence abounds of politicians who use social programs to leverage particularistic benefits and buy votes, thus undermining the potential for meaningful social transformation through public policy (see, for example, Schady 2000). Despite these barriers to national social sector reform, however, we know that social and equity-enhancing public policy that benefits the poor can happen, particularly at the local level.

Several examples of good governance in developing contexts are worth noting. For instance, Judith Tendler’s research in the state of Ceará in Brazil’s northeast has shown how good performance can take place across a set of programs when an activist state government (supported by a reform-minded governor) supports highly dedicated public workers (1997). Merilee Grindle’s work on municipal governance in Mexico has demonstrated that local policy innovation is made possible through public sector entrepreneurship, which is in turn supported by competitive elections, state capacity, and citizen demand-making (2007). In Asia examples of model human development strategies have emerged from the Indian state of Kerala (Drèze and Sen 1989; Ramachandran 2000; McGuire 2010, 135–36). In municipalities in Kenya, India, the Philippines, and South Africa, among others, citizens have engaged in participatory decision making over resource allocation and policy implementation alongside local officials (Grindle 2007, 2). The important issue for both scholars of comparative politics and development practitioners is how to take models of good governance and support them elsewhere. Rather than focus on those unique settings where innovations take place, the emphasis here is on the mechanisms that facilitate the spread of model policies.

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This book examines the politics behind good governance programs and investigates the driving forces behind their diffusion. It does so from the vantage point of Brazilian politics, where innovative social sector reforms have sought to provide the poor with increased access to state resources. Much of this innovation has taken place at the subnational municipal level where autonomous governments have been free either to emulate well-regarded programs or ignore them altogether. Like other populous federal developing nations, Brazil is continental in size and has thousands of municipalities that vary in terms of size, population, political cultures, levels of development, and degrees of social inequality and poverty. Since the late 1980s, the country has undergone tremendous policy transformations as local governments have gained political, fiscal, and administrative autonomy. For poor and vulnerable groups, local politics hold special importance as municipal authorities provide essential basic services necessary for their survival, including sewerage services, public safety, education, and health care. Thus, the stakes are high for getting the policy right, and we need to understand when and why politicians are willing to emulate good models. Simply, what motivates politicians to replicate good governance models?

This introduction provides a broad overview of the book and its theoretical approach in order to explain the diffusion of social sector reforms in Brazil. We will look first at the Brazilian political context in which local governments experimented with social policy since democratization in the late 1980s. Then we will turn to the model social sector programs in education and health that are the focus of this book. A broad overview of the analytic approach and a preview of the argument are next, followed by a discussion of the research design of the study and an outline of the book’s organization.

Brazil’s Subnational Policy Environment

Brazilian politics offers a fascinating environment in which to examine social policy innovations as well as the motivations for subnational political actors’ emulation decisions. Much of this results from the institutional setting laid out in the democratic Constitution (1988), which
established a federal system where municipalities serve as an independent third tier of government. In practice, municipalities enjoy considerable political, fiscal, and administrative autonomy in addressing important social policy concerns. For instance, the constitution established new social rights, including the right to education and health, and requires that municipal governments undertake more responsibilities to deliver important social services. Proponents of decentralization also argued that local governance would allow for better civil society participation, as these institutional arrangements would lead to the inclusion of different actors in the policy process. Since the constitution mandates the creation of participatory mechanisms for citizens to engage in policy making through local councils, citizens would have a voice in shaping policies and overseeing policy making. As a consequence of this administrative and policy flexibility, local governments have the potential to innovate, design new programs, experiment, and serve as democratic “laboratories.”

Much of Brazil’s local political context is situated against a backdrop of geographic, social, and economic complexity. With over 5500 municipalities that lie between the productive southern plains, lush northern Amazon, and arid northeast, diversity within Brazil cannot be overstated. Local and regional differences date back to the development of its earliest agricultural and industrial sectors, natural resource endowments, immigration settlements, and establishment of local oligarchs who would dominate regional politics. Today, in Brazil observers can see local government reflect their area’s political culture and draw on varying resources. Historical legacies of exclusion have also resulted in dramatically different levels of development, poverty, and social inequality. Until recently, the country had the unfortunate distinction of being one of the most unequal countries in the world. It is common for Brazilian intellectuals, for instance, to refer to their own society as “Belindia”—a country whose income distribution is so skewed that it comprises a small upper class equivalent to the size of Belgium and a large population of poor comparable to India’s. Consequently, Brazil exhibits dramatic disparities in wealth, where the elite shop in the trendiest couture stores and travel via private helicopters while millions of families struggle to meet their most basic needs. These
household differences also carry over in geographic terms; the industrial and agricultural rich south and southeast offer a dramatic contrast to the small towns located in the arid northeast where destitution and poverty are dire and families struggle for their survival.

Socioeconomic conditions have structured local politics in meaningful ways. As Hagopian (1996) notes, traditional politics has been an important feature of political organization that draws on clientelism, regionalism, and personalism, and owes its origins to extreme economic inequalities, where local patrons use their wealth, such as landholdings, to increase their power and standing (16–17). For instance, in the hinterlands of the northeast, traditional politics has taken the form of a highly personalistic variant of clientelism, whereas in Rio de Janeiro, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB) established a machine-based form of clientelism during the military period (Dinz 1982, as cited by Hagopian 1996, 16). As the political elite gained access to state resources, the distribution of public benefits (e.g., jobs, contracts, and social services) for votes has sustained their contemporary electoral support. Influential political clans have ruled over politics in many states and municipalities, creating lasting legacies. For instance, the Sarney family has held sway in the state of Maranhão, and the family of Antônio Carlos Magalhães (ACM) has dominated politics in the state of Bahia since the 1970s (Fleischer 2008), at least until recently.

For both traditional and reform-minded politicians, the pathway to national electoral success requires achieving local electoral success. Municipal office, particularly mayoralship, represents an important venue for politicians to build careers and gather long-term political resources. As Samuels (2003) notes, many nationally recognized politicians do not build their careers throughout decades of service in Congress, but rather draw on their electoral experience in municipal executive office. Scholars of Brazilian politics have attributed this to the electoral system for congressional office that undermines the appeal of a legislative career-building strategy. Specifically, open-list proportional representation for congressional elections—with large, statewide, multimember districts in which voters can cast ballots for individual candidates—creates incentives for politicians to run on their personal appeal rather than on partisan allegiance (Ames and Power 2007; Mainwaring 1999). With
relatively weak party institutionalization, where party leaders cannot
control the electoral prospects of their members in Congress, politicians
have found that local executive office provides them with greater politi-
cal influence and ability to shape their political personas. Further, with
federal and fiscal decentralization, mayors have significant economic
resources at their disposal and do not need to rely on ad hoc national or
state-level transfers in the form of pork barrel politics to build their
flagship programs (Samuels and Mainwaring 2004). Given this political
setting—where local politics represents an important opportunity for
politicians to boost their future electoral prospects—competitive local
elections and heightened significance of local politics become the norm.
Moreover, as politicians build their reputations they highlight their mu-
nicipal achievements: their advances in administrative and policy re-
forms become an important part of that effort.

Brazilian mayors have used their administrative independence and
constitutional responsibilities to advance their political agendas. Impor-
tantly, mayors enjoy considerable discretion in putting together their
cabinets and shaping public policy during their electoral mandate, se-
lecting the department secretaries of all the agencies in their cabinet
and typically hiring individuals who are loyal to their political priorities.8
While these political appointees serve at the pleasure of the mayor, most
cabinet members, such as secretaries of education and health, have ex-
pertise in their fields. Secretaries are typically academics, high-ranking
civil servants, or former elected officials with substantive experience in
these policy domains. While mayors may require city council approval
for new initiatives, in practice city councils are weak legislative bod-
ies and rarely block major policy initiatives.9 Thus, mayors and senior
technocrats have tremendous discretion and flexibility in experiment-
ing, innovating, and replicating new public policies.

Throughout much of the late 1980s and 1990s, many states and
municipalities embraced their newfound flexibilities and operated as
policy “laboratories” by experimenting with new administrative and so-
cial policies (Abers 2000; Tendler 1997a; Wampler and Avritzer 2004;
Wampler 2004). Innovative programs abounded as cities instituted pro-
grams such as participatory governance (e.g., Orçamento Participativo,
Participatory Budgeting), income-generating cooperatives, recycling
programs, culturally inclusive indigenous school curricula, and family doctor programs, just to name a few (Spink, Bava, and Paulics 2002). Local policy experiments were created both across and within policy arenas, but were particularly notable in key sectors of municipal responsibility, such as education and health. That a number of subnational governments would become the vanguard of social policy in Brazil was particularly remarkable, given that the federal government was home to highly specialized technocrats, and that social reforms at the federal level took place very slowly (Ames 2001; Weyland 1996).

In the mid-1990s several municipal governments began to exercise their municipal authority to develop new social programs that linked poverty assistance with incentives-based conditionality tied to education. The idea was to improve human development, particularly the education of poor children, by creating an incentive for them to matriculate in school and attend classes regularly. Two cities, Brasília (the federal district) and Campinas (in São Paulo state), started their respective programs in 1995. Brasília’s policy, known as Bolsa Escola (School Grant), was implemented under Governor Cristovam Buarque, of the Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, also known as the PT). It had a clear focus on education and sought to improve the district’s lagging school indicators among the poor; particularly low educational attainment, low enrollment rates, high repetition, and high drop-out rates. Campinas’s mayor José Roberto Magalhães Teixeira, of the Social Democratic Party (PSDB), would implement the Programa de Garantia de Renda Familiar Mínima (Guaranteed Minimum Family Income Program), which combined educational conditionality with complementary health services and social assistance. Despite some important differences, both programs shared an underlying logic: they provided mothers of low-income children with cash grants on the condition they monitor their children’s behavior.

Today known as conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs), both Bolsa Escola and Renda Familiar Mínima reflected a new set of ideas. First, the poor (particularly mothers) were considered capable of managing cash benefits and did not need state authorities to tell them how to use those funds. Second, government assistance should be targeted to the neediest groups (i.e., indigent and poor families). Third, assistance
would be conditional and would require behavioral changes on the part of the beneficiaries. Local authorities would leverage compliance with program requirements—usually behavioral changes to promote a “demand” for education—in order for mothers to receive the family grant. Finally, these programs focused on overall human development and the causes of intergenerational poverty. Rather than view Bolsa Escola or Renda Mínima as expenses, policy makers approached them as investments in human development. All in all, the programs represented a very different view of what constituted “education” or “social assistance” responsibilities of local governments. They also innovated by reconceptualizing what are typically narrowly defined and highly segmented sectors to include an integrated policy design that sought to achieve mutual aims of promoting human development.

Bolsa Escola and Renda Mínima programs received early recognition for their innovative policy design. Well-respected think tanks and international organizations published favorable evaluations of the programs in Campinas and Brasília. These cities also won awards for the programs, which generated news coverage about the merits of this strategy. Municipal Bolsa Escola and Renda Mínima models quickly spread across municipalities; within two years approximately eighty-eight cities had adopted the program (Araújo and de Souza 1998). By 2001 more than two hundred cities had municipal Bolsa Escola programs (Villatoro 2004). That same year, and on the eve of presidential elections, the federal government created a national Bolsa Escola program that was similar in design but bypassed municipalities. This book focuses on municipal program diffusion, which requires budgetary and administrative obligations on the part of cities.

A second innovative policy reform to emerge among local governments took hold in the area of preventive health, called Programa Saúde da Família (PSF, Family Health Program). PSF emerged out of several local experiences in basic health care provision. One source of learning was community health work in states such as Parana, Ceará, and Mato Grosso do Sul (Viana and Dal Poz 1998, 18). The Ministry of Health formally encouraged other states to develop similar programs in 1991, by creating the Programa de Agentes Comunitários de Saúde (Community Health Agents Program, PACS). PACS primarily served
the poverty-stricken north and northeast and drew on community leaders to serve as health agents and combat alarmingly high rates of infant and maternal mortality. The program responded to some of the structural deficits in the region’s health care infrastructure (e.g., lower access to clinics, hospitals, and health care professionals, such as doctors) as well as high poverty rates that contributed to poor health outcomes for the population. Armed with information, community health agents would visit households and provide them with information on pre- and postnatal care, including the benefits of breastfeeding. Another set of insights would emerge from experiences in a wealthier municipality in the southeast, Niterói, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. In 1991 Niterói’s municipal health department drew largely from the Cuban primary health model\textsuperscript{11} to establish the Programa Médico de Família (Family Doctor Program) (Terra and Malik 1998). General practice physicians worked directly with families alongside nurses and community health agents to provide basic health care.

The Programa de Agentes Comunitários de Saúde (PACS) and Programa Médico de Família shared important insights crucial to the development of the family health program. First, both programs viewed primary care as a central focus. Rather than concentrate resources on building facilities, clinics, or hospitals, which provide more complex medical services, policy makers focused on the benefits of preventive health care to address a range of health care needs, including prevention of communicable diseases, maternal mortality, and infant mortality. Second, these programs provided services to families and did so in their communities. Health workers organized their work according to geographic territories, and maps of health needs within each area helped in their delivery of preventive medical care. Third, both programs drew on the idea that community health requires working directly with a member of the community who resides in the territory served and can function as an intermediary between the community and other health care professionals. Finally, these programs sought to change the culture of medical care by promoting proactive engagement rather than reactive responses driven by demand for services.

Policy makers integrated these insights when designing the PSF program. The Programa Saúde da Família started in 1994 in small
rural municipalities in the northeast (Viana and Dal Poz 1998). PSF was conceived at a Ministry of Health meeting in Brasília in December 1993, held at the request of municipal health secretaries and sponsored by the health minister. Participants included municipal health secretaries, technocrats in basic health from the ministry, public health specialists from state departments of health, and officials from international organizations (Viana and Dal Poz 1998, 19). Supported by the Ministry of Health, this small-scale program has the goal of improving prevention and basic health by working directly with families through home visits. To facilitate linkages to communities, health care workers operate within designated territories and in teams composed of a doctor, nurse, nurse’s aide, and several community health agents. Like its predecessors, PACS and Médico de Família, PSF represented a significant departure from the existing health care model in Brazil, which tended to prioritize clinician and hospital-based care. Like the conditional cash grant programs, the PSF received wide recognition and visibility among health care technocrats. As the program gained wider visibility and credibility, it spread dramatically, from 55 cities in 1994 to 4944 municipalities by 2003. By April 2011 nearly 95 percent of all municipalities (5279 total) had adopted the PSF program (Ministry of Health 2011).

Analytic Approach and Preview of Argument

Thus this book delves into the politics of policy making to understand the mechanisms that drive policy diffusion by examining actors’ motivations for emulating well-regarded programs. The political science discipline has long debated the origins of actors’ political behavior, particularly those related to resource allocation decisions. In other words, when and why do politicians distribute goods to constituents? To answer this question in the policy diffusion context, this analysis contrasts three paradigmatic models for individuals’ resource allocations choices: political self-interest, ideological commitments, and socialized professional norms. It opens up the “black box” of policy making by asking what motivates policy makers on the ground to make emulation decisions. Rather than employ the conventional framework used in diffu-
sion studies, which contrasts internal prerequisites with external pressures for policy emulation, this study will offer a theoretical framework for understanding the mechanisms that drive diffusion, as chapter 2 explains in greater depth.

The Argument in Brief

To uncover the motivations for social sector reform, this analysis draws on two policy arenas—education and health—that have traditionally served to reinforce personalistic politics and clientelism. Specialists in Brazilian politics have noted that social policies, including education (Draibe 2004, 380, 385; interview Weber 2011) and health (Weyland 1996, 100, 165), have served as long-standing sources for political patronage. Politicians who employ clientelistic practices to gain political support often rely on education and health sectors because they provide local officials with considerable resources. Simply, fiscal transfers for education and health constitute a large share of municipal revenues.13 Since local politicians face fiscal constraints, such as high fixed costs for personnel and maintenance, transfers for primary education and basic health services constitute an important source of revenue to sustain patron-client relations. Traditional politicians who regularly engage in clientelism can use new programs such as municipal conditional cash transfer programs and PSF to sustain these relationships through the use of patronage and the political distribution of program resources.

Other politicians, including reformists, also have strong political incentives to adopt innovative policies such as Bolsa Escola and PSF. Since Brazil has compulsory voting and a large poor population, politicians have strong incentives to recruit votes from marginalized constituents. Vulnerable groups in abject poverty are entirely reliant on basic public services and cannot reasonably exit from the public system. In other words, public education is the only option for poor families with young children, and the free public health system is the only health care available for indigent, poor, and informal workers who lack private health insurance. Given the importance of health and education for families, voters are most likely to notice and reward policy changes that improve their life prospects. Remarkably, politicians can offer
improvements in these areas without fear of alienating other voters, including powerful elites; Amaury de Sousa’s study showed that elites believe investments in education, health, and poverty reduction are necessary for the country’s development (as cited in Véja 1996). Further supporting the view that these programs are mainstream ideas, Melo argues that strong competition among Brazil’s leading political parties explains the timing and adoption of conditional cash transfer programs by the federal government (2008, 166, 169). In sum, education and health care policies, as opposed to other types of policies (e.g., the environment and job training), represent the most likely cases for an electoral incentives finding. As we will see, however, electoral competition does not drive emulation decisions.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom that politicians are driven by their electoral ambitions, I find that a political incentives approach offers a surprisingly weak explanation for the diffusion of innovative social policies. Electoral self-interest cannot explain variations across political jurisdictions and policy makers’ decisions to implement programs like Bolsa Escola and Programa Saúde da Família. Electoral incentives also fail to explain adoption decisions over time, such as why some cities appear to adopt reform more quickly than others. Rather, two different but complementary approaches explain diffusion: ideology and socialized professional norms.

First, I find that ideology serves as a foundation for many policy makers in guiding them to action and helping them filter their policy choices. My analysis reveals that politicians who self-identify as being on the left or left of center are consistently more eager to adopt model social sector reforms. High-level technocrats with political appointments, such as secretaries of education and health, who share their mayors’ ideological dispositions, are also instrumental. For left-of-center mayors and technocrats, policies such as Bolsa Escola and PSF fulfill their desires to enact policy innovations consistent with their socially progressive commitments. Thus while education and health are vulnerable to fraud, these actors emulate programs because of an overarching belief that these strategies will help to address poverty and improve social inclusion in Brazil.
Another altogether different motivation for adopting policy innovations, socialized norms, also matters in the diffusion of municipal social sector reforms. Actors involved in the policy process, mayors and especially technocrats, are embedded in professional networks that transmit information and set norms for their field. Professional associations that support networks of technocrats, such as associations in public health, play a central role in shaping technocrats’ views on trends in their field and their desire to keep up with the latest innovations. As the analysis shows, policy professionals want to demonstrate to their peer networks that they understand and follow new professional norms. The speed and extent of policy diffusion is related to the density of professional associations within each sector. Sectors such as public health, with dense and overlapping associations, are more likely to reinforce norms for “good governance” programs and encourage actors’ legitimacy-seeking behavior, thus promoting diffusion.

Each motivation for policy emulation—political incentives, ideological commitments, and socialized norms—is defined and constructed narrowly. This allows for analysis of the ways in which each mechanism works independently as well as together. Thus, in some instances, ideology and networks can work together in mutually reinforcing ways by convincing actors that policies not only reflect the latest norms in their fields, but also remain consistent with their ideological commitments. When this type of synergy takes place, as in the case of health sector reform, policy emulation decisions are more likely to endure.

Research Design

This project uses a mix of methodological approaches to capture the diffusion of social policies in Brazil, drawing on surveys, interviews, and statistical analyses to answer the question of what motivates policy makers to emulate social policies.

An important feature of this study is the comparison of two social policies that are situated in distinct sectors—education and health—and which diffuse at different rates. As Rogers notes, a shortcoming of diffusion research is the propensity to study “successful” instances of
diffusion (2003, 110). In other words, scholars tend to have a “pro-innovations bias” in focusing on policies that have spread dramatically across jurisdictions. Another component of a pro-innovations bias is that researchers tend to focus on policies they believe are “good” and should spread. This study aims to alleviate some of this bias by selecting two markedly different programs. Although both Bolsa Escola and PSF won “innovations” awards,¹⁴ as we will see, these policies are not universally perceived as “good” or desirable for all jurisdictions. Since awards for these programs are based on a single city’s experience, it is entirely possible that the same program, when adopted elsewhere, can fail to address the emulating city’s most pressing problems. Some policy makers endorsed these policies and believed the programs “should” spread, while others disagreed.

There are numerous benefits to conducting a large-n event history analysis, also known as survival analysis. First, increasing the number of observations provides greater leverage for causal inference (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Second, an event history model, which involves annual observations for each jurisdiction, addresses the problem of potential interdependence among jurisdictions and thus allows for better analyses of internal and external determinants of diffusion (Berry and Berry 1990, 1992; Collier and Messick 1975). Advanced statistical methods, such as event history modeling, also allow for a probabilistic interpretation of whether cities are likely to adopt innovative social policies.

In order to understand larger trends across Brazil and map the pattern of Brazilian social policy diffusion, I use an event history analysis statistically to test the impact of political incentives, ideology, and social networks on diffusion for Brazil’s largest cities. To conduct such an analysis, I created a database on social policies for all 224 cities that had populations over 100,000 in the census year 2000. This original database draws on information related to electoral politics, sociodemographic data, and social network connectivity. It also includes information on the adoption patterns of Bolsa Escola, Renda Mínima, and Programa Saúde da Família. Because of limited data access and in order to assess the spread of Bolsa Escola and Renda Mínima, I administered a phone survey of education and social welfare administrators for the entire
survey population. (For a list of cities included in the analysis, see appendix A.)

The task of uncovering motivations for social policy emulation decisions in Brazil is complex and thus requires multiple analytic approaches. First-order analysis can start from observable data and implications, such as information on electoral competition, politicians’ partisan affiliation, and the presence of professional networks in a given community. With this information we can draw inferences and make conclusions. Also important, however, is how actors themselves interpret these programs and explain their role in the decision-making process. As Taylor notes, in order to assess meaning, we must pay attention to the stories people tell: “A person’s understanding of her own life, the story she tells (constructs and reconstructs) about herself, which itself of course becomes part of her life, endows events with meaning, with significance for us. For most of us want to see things we have done and events in our lives as having some meaning” (2006, 33). Consequently, in order to assess whether an actor’s motivations for emulating an innovative policy are driven by political self-interest, ideology, or socialized norms, we must ask individuals to tell a story. Their narratives will frame the way they understand the event and the meaning it held for them.

The case studies draw extensively on semistructured interviews with 120 Brazilian policy makers involved in health and education policy making at the local level, elected officials, technocrats, community activists, and leaders in nongovernmental organizations. Most interviewees worked in one of the four cities in this study; however, I also interviewed a select number of policy makers who promote one of these programs nationally or work for the federal government and are responsible for setting the federal policy agenda. During face-to-face interviews, respondents discussed their motivations for adopting or advocating for Bolsa Escola/Renda Mínima and Programa Saúde da Família, and reflected on the policy process in general. In instances where local governments did not have the programs or the programs had been dismantled, we discussed why this was so. I conducted interviews in four municipalities in Brazil—Belo Horizonte (in Minas Gerais state), Brasília (in the federal district), Salvador (in Bahia state),
and São Paulo (in São Paulo state)—and sought out actors involved with three municipal administrations, from 1994 to 2003. The qualitative evidence allows for process tracing, an approach whereby I identify the mechanisms that connect my theoretically driven variables with the diffusion outcome (George and McKeown 1985).

Several criteria guided selection of the research sites. First, the four cities in this study adopted Bolsa Escola and PSF at different points in time and in a few instances even experienced policy reversal (see table 1.1). The variation in program adoption over time is important because otherwise there would be a potential for selection bias (Geddes 1990, 2003; King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 129–37). Second, these municipalities were selected to allow for variation in partisan politics. These local governments had mayors who were affiliated with eight different political parties and represented ideological leanings from across the political spectrum, from staunch rightists to leftists; no single party dominates, and all major political parties are represented (see table 1.2). Third, the case study cities also face different levels of socio-economic development and are geographically dispersed. Fourth, in the context of health policy, these cities had great flexibility in determining their basic health models. Not only did they enjoy fiscal autonomy because of their potential to generate revenues through their local tax base, but they also had a sophisticated health infrastructure and a large number of health professionals. In other words, these municipalities had the administrative flexibility to tailor health policy, and emulation of PSF was far from automatic or a foregone conclusion. Despite these important differences, these cities share characteristics that make comparison possible: all are large state capitals and face similar institutional tensions in local, state, and national-level policy making. The only exception is Brasília, which has a unique status as the federal district. So, overall, the case studies largely conform to a comparable case methodology (Lijphart 1971, 687–89; 1975) that allows for the control of differences across the cases that might otherwise be thought of as important factors in explaining diffusion.

By using both large-n statistical analyses and small-n case studies, this project bridges two research traditions on diffusion. Scholars who frame their work along the lines of “learning” and “policy transfer” typi-
cally focus on microprocesses and actors, and employ qualitative methods (see for example Bennett 1991; Rose 1993, 2004). By contrast, those who employ statistical analyses of broader diffusion phenomena typically seek the leverage that a large number of cases can offer for generalizability of causal analysis (see, for example, Box-Steffensmeier and Jones 1997, 2004b). Employing both methods enables comparison between this study’s findings and those from existing research.

Further, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative studies, this work also overcomes some of the shortcomings that single-method studies face (see Tarrow 2004). Quantitative approaches alone may provide insights on the correlates of diffusion, such as economic development.

Table 1.1. Adoption of Bolsa Escola/Renda Mínima and PSF by Local Government and Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bolsa Escola/Renda Mínima</th>
<th>Programa Saúde da Família</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brasília (DF)a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–1994</td>
<td>—b</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994–1998</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–2002</td>
<td>No/Yesc</td>
<td>No/Yesc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belo Horizonte (MG)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–2000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2004</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvador (BA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–2000</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2004</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Paulo (SP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–2000</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2004</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The Federal District, Brasília, operates under the gubernatorial electoral calendar.
b Period precedes the creation of Bolsa Escola/Renda Mínima.
c The program was suspended or discontinued and then reintroduced under new names.
However, large-n statistical analysis alone cannot explain why a jurisdiction’s level of development matters in terms of politics or suggest the mechanisms that link economic development to a policy outcome. Moreover, statistical methods can also obscure causal heterogeneity in emulation decisions, thus limiting understanding of the complex and varied mechanisms that lead to policy emulation (Mahoney and Goertz 2006). In this way, large-n statistical studies can contribute to an underaccounting of “causal complexity” by making interpretation of the underlying relationship between indicators and concepts difficult.

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**Table 1.2. Local Government Partisan and Ideological Divide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive in Office</th>
<th>Mayor’s Party</th>
<th>IdeologicalLeanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brasília (DF)b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990–1994</td>
<td>Joaquim Roriz</td>
<td>PTR Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994–1998</td>
<td>Cristovam Buarque</td>
<td>PT Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998–2002</td>
<td>Joaquim Roriz</td>
<td>PMDB Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belo Horizonte (MG)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>Patrus Ananias</td>
<td>PT Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–2000</td>
<td>Célio de Castro</td>
<td>PSB Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2004</td>
<td>Célio de Castro</td>
<td>PSB Left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fernando Damata Pimentel (PT)d</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvador (BA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>Lidice da Mata</td>
<td>PSDB Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–2000</td>
<td>Antônio José Imbassahy</td>
<td>PFL Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2004</td>
<td>Antônio José Imbassahy</td>
<td>PFL Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Paulo (SP)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992–1996</td>
<td>Paulo Maluf</td>
<td>PDS Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996–2000</td>
<td>Celso Pitta</td>
<td>PPB Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2004</td>
<td>Marta Suplicy</td>
<td>PT Left</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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a Mayor’s partisan affiliation at the time he or she ran for office.
b The Federal District, Brasília, operates under the gubernatorial electoral calendar.
c Mainwaring, Meneguello, and Power (2000, 180) inform this designation. The PTR is not classified in Coppedge 1996.
d Fernando Damata Pimentel (PT) assumed office in November 2001, after Célio de Castro suffered a stroke.
(Meseguer and Gilardi 2009). Qualitative research can help uncover the mechanisms that drive diffusion and clarify whether jurisdictions are likely to undergo similar causal processes.

At the same time, scholars note that qualitative comparison analysis also has analytic shortcomings. Lijphart argues that the comparative method is problematic as the number of cases is too small to permit systematic control by means of partial correlations (1971, 684). Geddes (1990) has noted that small-n comparisons often suffer from the problem of selection bias, and King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) have famously critiqued these approaches for their lack of systematic procedures. Defenders of qualitative research note that case studies allow for close analysis and are particularly well suited for explaining complex causal processes (A. Bennett 2010; George and Bennett 2005). In this vein this study draws on “process-tracing procedures” to explain the decision process that actors undertake to reach decisions. According to George and Bennett, “The process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior; and the effect of other variables of interest on attention, processing, and behavior” (2005, 35). Given this study’s focus on the motivations for emulation decisions, this approach is best suited to capture the policy-making process, including learning, emulation, and occasionally policy reversal.

Mixed methods that incorporate qualitative and quantitative approaches are increasingly popular strategies for analyzing comparative policy outcomes (see, for example, Madrid 2003 and Lieberman 2003). Drawing on both methodological approaches can compensate for the shortcomings inherent in each.\(^\text{15}\) While the statistical model provides insights in the requisites for adopting innovative social policies, qualitative process tracing allows for analysis of the politics of the policy process. Further, this study leverages the benefits of small-n analysis to provide better and more meaningful measures of theoretically motivated variables for the event history models. For instance, measures of socialized network connectivity are made possible through interviews where actors identify associations that hold meaning for their professional
development. In this way, this study seeks to combine the benefits of quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the same problem with the aim of gaining a richer understanding of political processes.16

Significance

In the last twenty years or so a tremendous proliferation of diffusion research has taken place across the social sciences illustrating the profound interest among scholars in accounting for change over time. Why do some ideas and policies spread across place? This study furthers previous understandings of diffusion with a new conceptual framework that focuses on individuals’ motivations in replicating policy models developed in other settings. As disciplines have embraced paradigmatic explanations for the determinants of individual behavior, many scholars have either purposefully or unintentionally embedded their fields’ assumptions in their diffusion analyses. Rather than assume actors are motivated by a single interest, this book contrasts differing perspectives. The mixed-methods approach provides the foundation for a test of whether political incentives, ideology, or social networks affect the decision-making process. Thus, by exploring contrasting motivations for political action, this study assesses three theoretical approaches that are often examined in isolation from one another.

The findings presented here differ from conventional expectations about politicians and their singular interest in electoral competition, at least when it comes to social policy domains such as education and health. Indeed most observations about social sector reform have highlighted the weak incentives for politicians to initiate reform (see, for example, Corrales 1999; Kaufman and Nelson 2004). Politicians are not thought of as being “altruistic” or for making choices because it is the “right thing to do.” Yet the analysis of local governance in Brazil reveals that politicians are more complex than we give them credit for. They can have ideological commitments and desires to make a difference. Politicians also hire highly skilled technocrats who share their vision and are equally shaped by their profession’s norms to keep up with shared standards. Altogether, this is a very different portrait of the politics of policy making. In a Latin American context where national
politicians appear to have converged around neoliberal economic models and militants bemoan the loss of a meaningful political left, I find that ideological differences and commitments still matter.

While diffusion research has broadly captured the attention of social scientists, this framework is still new to studies of Brazilian politics. Decentralization in Brazil has ushered in a new policy-making landscape where policy emulation and diffusion are increasingly prevalent. Yet scholars of Brazilian politics have not yet explored these diffusion processes. Most country-specific studies of diffusion remain largely relegated to analyses of advanced industrialized nations with federal structures, especially the fifty states in the United States. However, in Brazil subnational diffusion has taken place across thousands of municipal governments. The magnitude of policy emulation for Brazil, potentially reaching over 5500 municipalities, allows for an analysis with a much larger number of cases from which to draw causal insights. Further, the diffusion of social reforms in Brazil suggests that good governance models can spread despite important regional inequalities. Thus, this study does more than integrate an analysis of political behavior into diffusion research; it extends a new analytic framework to the study of Brazilian politics.

More generally, we know that the stakes are high for getting the policies right for third-wave democracies in the developing world. As Karl (2000) notes, poverty and socioeconomic inequality have pernicious effects on democracy; they undermine democratic aspirations, institutions, and rules, and excessive concentrations of wealth and poverty are a formula for political trouble that contributes to the greatest threat facing democracy in the Americas today (156). Thus, in order to achieve high-quality democracies that have meaningful effects for the entire citizenry, governments must actively correct for the centuries-old historical exclusions that have rendered persons belonging to some groups less than full citizens. Development practitioners—particularly those in new public administration—have tended to focus on such issues as state capacity, efficiency, transparency, and policy design and implementation (see Grindle 1997, 5). Although these aims are important and necessary, my focus here is on responsive democratic governance that is equitable and responsive to the social welfare needs of the citizens.
In the context of politics in a developing nation, we would expect good governance to entail public policies that are equity enhancing and pro-poor, and which seek to extend access to state resources to groups that are marginalized and excluded from existing programs.

Organization of the Book

This brief overview serves as a road map for the rest of this book, and each chapter will address the questions first introduced here. Chapter 2 will provide a more thorough discussion on theories of diffusion and actors’ motivations for resource allocation decisions. It offers a framework for examining social policy emulation across municipalities, focusing on actors’ motivations in replicating policies designed for other cities.

Chapter 3 provides a bird’s-eye view of the diffusion of education and health reform, through an analysis of the spread of Bolsa Escola and Programa Saúde da Família. Drawing on original data, we will observe the diffusion of these programs for the country’s largest cities. After contextualizing the trends in Bolsa Escola and PSF adoption, an event history model, a discrete time logistic model, statistically tests the theoretically driven variables related to political incentives, ideology, and social networks. A benefit to the event history analysis is that it can facilitate interpretation of time and the probability of adoption.

Chapter 4 examines the emergence of conditional cash transfer programs for education, such as Bolsa Escola and Renda Mínima, and the politics behind their spread across the country. Locally driven innovations to address educational access and attainment are examined in the context of stalled efforts for reform through much of the late 1980s and 1990s at the national level. The analysis draws primarily on case studies of four illustrative cities to reveal the ways in which ideology and professional norms, rather than electoral incentives, influenced policy makers’ adoption decisions.

Chapter 5 discusses the emergence of Programa Saúde da Família, an integrated family health program, within the context of the significant reorganization of health policy in the 1990s. National health policy made greater advances in reform, unlike the education sector, and the federal government promoted decentralization with the municipaliza-
tion of services. As local governments took on greater administrative responsibilities, many political actors implemented the PSF policy. The case studies provide accounts from key actors in the health policy field and reveal how technocrats’ connections to professional associations and the presence of leftist mayors drove replication in this policy domain.

Chapter 6 contrasts the diffusion of education reform and that of health policy. The large-n and process-tracing methods offer strikingly consistent accounts for what drives emulation decisions. Together, they also provide insights into key differences between each of the policy arenas. In addition to addressing contrasts between actors’ interpretations of these policies, the chapter also underscores how the breadth and depth of networks and informal associations influence the socialization of professional norms. Finally, the ways are examined in which policy making appears to offer a different logic from mainstream analyses of political decision making, which emphasize politicians’ electoral self-interest and culture for “buying” votes by distributing particularistic goods. In short, this study highlights the ways in which ideology and socialized norms work together to promote policy emulation, and underscores the potential for continued social sector reform into the future.