

Kirsten Jörgensen

The USA and Germany: Potentials for mutual trans-Atlantic Policy-Learning at sub-State Level in the area of governance for ecological sustainability

The paper focusses on governance for ecological sustainability at the sub-national level of policy-making in the federal systems of the USA and Germany. It draws on decentral innovation capacities for the greening of political-administrative structures and policies and explores potentials for mutual trans-Atlantic lesson drawing.

It firstly refers briefly to the challenges of ecological sustainability in the 21. Century and the role different government levels in the USA and Germany play in respect to this issue area. The article will shortly draw on the question of comparability and similarities of the U.S. states and the German Bundesländer. Then the focus will shift to the main topic and reflect on policy responses to ecological sustainability as they have been developed in the USA and Germany. A perspective which until now has been largely neglected. Only recently scholars began to draw their attention to sub-national state level responses to ecological sustainability in the U.S. states (Rabe 2004) and in the German Bundesländer (Jörgensen 2002a, 2002b). The article provides insights into the innovativeness of the U.S. states and German Länder in respect to the greening of sectoral policies and horizontal coordination of environmental policy integration. Secondly it refers to frameconditions for national policy-transfer on both sides of the Atlantic. What kinds of diffusion mechanisms support intra-national mutually lesson drawing and diffusion? Based on the empirical findings of the trans-Atlantic comparison and the illustration of already existing forms of mutual trans-Atlantic lesson drawing future perspectives for mutual learning potentials will be discussed.