

Peter Raiser: Alcohol policy in Germany on the verge of a policy field. An analysis of inhibiting and facilitating factors for the emergence of policy fields. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2018

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In contrast to ordinary commodities alcohol has a unique legal status in the German legal framework, aside from tobacco respectively nicotine. It differs from all other legal consumables in the way, that its psychoactive and biochemical effects resemble otherwise illegal drugs. The potential harmfulness of alcohol and especially the social consequences are deemed equally grave as the consequences of substances like heroin and cocaine. Contrary

to these and other drugs, alcohol is not included in the German controlled substances law. Nevertheless it can be assumed, that it is within the interest of a society, that all consequences resulting of alcohol consummation are reduced through social agreements, whether by legislation on production, trade or consumption or other form of social norms. Particularly the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Commission (EU) have been calling European governments to develop national alcohol policies for the past 20 years.

According to recent literature on policy fields, a durable and specific constellation of interlinked problems, stakeholders, institutions and instruments is considered a possible policy field. The precondition of these constitutive elements is a necessary but not sufficient requirement for the existence of a policy field. In this context, the conditions for the genesis and emergence of policy fields come into the interest for research. The basic mechanisms of inhibiting and facilitating factors have not yet been discussed sufficiently in the literature on policy fields. Among the considerations on this topic, it is discussed that a claim to particularity in contrast to tendencies of subsumption is a necessity for the genesis of a new policy field. Also impulses by international institutions and organisations are a driving force towards the emergence of national policy fields.

Taking the theoretical framework into account, the area of political action on alcohol related regulation can be described as a possible policy field. It serves as an object of research in this regard because apart from the positive identification of the constitutive elements, there can be also identified impulses by the WHO and the EU, which is an indicator for the emergence of alcohol policy as a policy field.

The question, if alcohol policy is emerged to a self-contained policy field is examined through a policy analysis. It is also aimed to gain insight on the mechanisms in political processes like legislation or parliamentary debates that act in favour or contrary to the emergence of policy fields. As a comparative case analyses designed study, the Actor-Centered Institutionalism (*Akteurzentrierter Institutionalismus*) is combined with a framing analyses that focusses on the problem construction. The findings conclude that as a central requirement for the emergence of a self-containing policy field as well as for an interconnected sphere of political activity subordinated to a prior existent policy field, a consistent perception and framing of the discussed problem has to be in place.