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How Do Policy Narratives Shape Policy Transfer Mechanisms?

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Abstract

In this paper, I put forward the claim that the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) can be usefully employed to empirically explore the policy transfer mechanisms. To support the claim, I review the literature on transfer mechanisms and then add the original elements present in the NPF. Specifically, the NPF sheds light on how transfer mechanisms evolve and are differentiated in their narrative components. The linking of NPF with policy transfer also brings challenges about who is narrating what, and with what consequences for power. This is a broad research agenda – in this contribution I develop five hypotheses linking transfer mechanisms and narrative elements. These hypotheses will be empirically tested in my fieldwork.

Keywords: Policy transfer, mechanisms, policy narratives, policy stories

Introduction

The policy transfer framework and continuum, as shown by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), identify different mechanisms that facilitate the occurrence of transfer. These mechanisms are categorized into voluntary, mixtures, and coercive, and they mainly comprise lesson drawing, conditionality, obligation, and imposition. One problem we immediately encounter in theorising about the mechanisms is the set of assumptions we make about rationality and, relatedly, how we distinguish transfer from 'decision-making'. There are indeed references to perfect and bounded rationality in the dimensions of lesson drawing, and this has often drawn criticism from policy scholars (Wolman & Page 2002; Lodge & James 2003; Evans 2009b; Mccann & Ward 2012; Cairney 2013). Some of the criticisms include the difficulty in differentiating policy transfer from decision-making; the association of some transfer mechanisms with dimensions of rationality; and the additionality the framework can contribute to the field of public policy. To address these criticisms, many scholars broadly group the mechanisms into voluntary and coercive mechanisms (Bulmer & Padgett 2005; Bulmer et al. 2007; Benson & Jordan 2011; Nutley et al. 2013). This categorization on its own is an acceptable dimension of difference in public policy (Lodge & James 2003). In line with this approach, many policy transfer studies are situated away from the domain of ascertaining perfect or bounded rationality of actors, but instead, aim to examine the voluntary actions of domestic actors or the contributions of external actors, the source of transfer object, and why policy transfer occurred and its link to policy success or failure (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000; Evans

2004; Stone 2004; Goldfinch 2006; Benson & Jordan 2012; Nutley et al. 2013; Hudson & Kim 2014).

Furthermore, to address the concern of additionality, there have been recommendations for policy transfer research to focus on "movement of ideas through policy transfer networks" and the "intermediation of agents of policy transfer" (Evans 2004, p.4), and following this, policy transfer scholars now readily identify with the need to assess the interaction that takes place among actors (Stone 2004; Legrand 2012b; Evans & Barakat 2012), the content of their communication, and characteristics of such content (Dussauge-Laguna 2013a; Legrand & Vas 2014). This attention to the relations that transpire among policy transfer actors can be regarded as imperative, as policy transfer of itself will likely not occur without the communication of the intent to do so, either among policy actors within a jurisdiction, or between them and external policy actors. Also, the process that ensues in introducing policy-relevant knowledge from another jurisdiction, is also more often than not, hinged on communication among policy actors within and/or without the recipient jurisdiction. For example, in the case of transfer of employment policy to the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1980s (Dolowitz 1997), there are accounts of dialogue in the House of Commons and House of Lords, on the possibility of learning from American welfare to work programs, with the Prime Minister at the time, Margaret Thatcher, confirming that the government was already engaged in studying how the policy works in the United States. Also, in the case of administrative policy transfer to China (Zhang & Marsh 2016), the government expressed its intent to engage in policy transfer by preparing a report on the reform of the State Council, which was later adopted by the country's legislature. Considering other instances of policy transfer with active involvement of external policy actors, and driven by coercive transfer mechanisms, such as obligation, reference to communication of the intent to engage in policy transfer and production of communication content materials to document the intent and process of transfer, also feature in these cases (Padgett 2003; Ladi 2011; Carroll 2014).

Thus, communication among policy actors, especially through conversations and documents, represents lifelines through which policy transfers are initiated and realized. This is not to assert that all there is to policy transfer is communication, but rather to emphasise that the intermediation of transfer agents, and "effects of interactions" (Padgett 2003, p.240) with transfer recipients, constitute an integral aspect of policy transfer, as it can inform whether

the transfer process will progress, or not (Dunlop 2009); the form of policy or other transfer object that will emerge at the end of the process (Dussauge-Laguna 2013b); and the transfer mechanism by which the transfer process will be driven (Savi & Randma-Liiv 2013; Park et al. 2014). As such, this paper argues for the relevance of studying the content of policy communications generated by transfer actors through the application of the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), and in a bid to understand how policy narratives can inform the policy transfer mechanisms that manifest in policy transfers. The paper draws from a review of the policy transfer and NPF literature, to demonstrate how the use of specific narrative elements by policy transfer actors, can be indicative of the policy transfer mechanism(s) that will be identified in a particular instance of policy transfer.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 1 presents different mechanisms that can facilitate the occurrence of policy transfer and presents examples of their manifestation. Section 2 gives an overview of the NPF and discusses the specific aspects of the framework that can be used to understand how narratives may inform policy transfer mechanisms. Section 3 proposes the narrative elements that will likely be associated with each of the transfer mechanisms earlier highlighted in section 1, and again drawing from the policy transfer literature, the section shows how these associations between particular narrative elements and transfer mechanisms can be sighted in policy transfer case studies. Section 4 concludes the paper and emphasises how the study of policy narratives used in the communication content of policy transfer actors, can benefit policy transfer scholarship.

1. Policy Transfer Mechanisms

Policy transfer mechanisms are factors that facilitate the eventual occurrence of policy transfer, or what explains the reason for the participation of the transfer recipient in an instance of policy transfer. They can be broadly grouped into voluntary and coercive mechanisms. This classification is primarily based on the categories introduced in Dolowitz and Marsh, in their 1996 and 2000 widely-cited publications. Benson & Jordan (2012), highlight the different mechanisms of the two categories based on a re-introduction of the transfer continuum in Bulmer et al. (2007). The coercive group is said to comprise conditionality, obligation, imposition, and semi-coercive mechanisms. With the exception of

semi-coercive mechanism, the identification of the other three sub-types of the coercive category in instances of policy transfer has been extensively reported in the literature (Radaelli 2000; Nutley et al. 2012; Blum 2014; Carroll 2014) and as a result, the paper will focus on these three mechanisms as sub-types of the coercive category.

With regards to the voluntary category, the continuum identifies lesson drawing as its sub-type and many transfer studies have been based on instances driven by this mechanism, although it is often referred to as learning (Evans & Davies 1999; Marsh & Sharman 2009; Zhang & Marsh 2016). Benson & Jordan (2012) also make reference to persuasion as a transfer mechanism that is often employed by non-state actors and they seem to align this with the voluntary group of mechanisms. One may say that since persuasion will likely leave the onus and burden of accepting to engage in policy transfer to the intended recipient, it does hold the possibility of the transfer process being domestically driven. This peculiarity of persuasion, and the limited or no hierarchical authority of the transfer agent over the recipient (Bulmer & Padgett 2005), as against what obtains in the sub-types of the coercive mechanisms may also configure the recipient's intent and engagement in the policy transfer process to be proactive. In addition, persuasion as a transfer mechanism can also likely evolve into undertaking lesson drawing that is led by the recipient, but perhaps, with the guidance of an international organisation, who may have served as initiators of the transfer process. As such, based on the likely exclusion of conditionality or hierarchical features in policy transfers driven by persuasion, this mode of policy transfer can be said to be a form of voluntary transfer, and the paper includes learning and persuasion as transfer mechanisms under the voluntary category.

The transfer mechanisms identified under the two broad categories are briefly discussed below and examples of instances of policy transfer showing their manifestation are presented.

1.1 The Transfer Mechanism of Learning

What drives the intention to draw policy lessons usually include dissatisfaction and seeking legitimacy for policy ideas (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996; Dolowitz 1997; Benson & Jordan 2011). According to the literature, the mechanism of learning refers especially to elected officials,

technocrats and civil servants. An example of this is the case of the UK, whereby New Labour, upon their assent into power in 1997 had charged policymakers to search for what works (Evans 2009a; Legrand 2012a), and this charge had informed the transfer of American welfare policies to the UK under the banner of the New Deal (Legrand 2012a). With reference to Hoyt (2006; 2008), the case of transfer of urban revitalization policy across multiple countries through the efforts of business associations and individual business owners shows that policy transfer by learning can also be prompted by commercial interests.

Policy transfer via the mechanism of learning can involve contact with and/or active engagement of the transfer source. According to Dolowitz (1997), the UK government sought to transfer employment policy from the US and efforts aimed at drawing lessons from the transfer source involved organising a conference to facilitate direct contact between British policymakers and experts from the source jurisdiction. In addition, British officials also "consulted with American academics and officials" (Dolowitz 1997, p.31) and made numerous visits to the USA. The mechanism of learning can also be employed through the use on desk studies and 'window shopping' trips to identify transfer objects and source that will be suitable. Nakano (2004) presents the case of transfer of agencification model from the UK to Japan and he notes that Japanese embassy officials in the UK had prepared detailed reports of the practice of agencification in the UK at the time it was unfolding in the late 1980s, and government officials back in Japan drew lessons from the reports. By 2011, Japan had adopted agencification in managing its civil service and between the time the model was deployed in the UK and adopted in Japan, there is no record of contacts or visits between officials from both countries, for the purpose of aiding Japan's design and implementation of its agencification model. It can therefore be seen that the mechanism of learning is characterized by the involvement of domestic policy actors within a jurisdiction, as the initiators and facilitators of the transfer process.

1.2 The Transfer Mechanism of Persuasion

Following the introduction of non-governmental policy transfers by Stone (2000b), the role of transnational actors as transfer agents have since been duly recognized in policy transfer literature. According to Stone, this group of transfer actors have limited ability to compel states or other jurisdictions to adopt a particular policy. As a result, they often rely on their

credibility, and/or proximity and access to governments, to persuade prospective transfer recipients to engage in policy transfer.

Persuasion as a transfer mechanism has the tendency to prompt the manifestation of other transfer mechanisms. It can precede lesson drawing instances where the recipient jurisdiction demonstrates willingness and interest in learning from experiences of jurisdiction prior to adopting the transfer object. For example, in policy transfer of New Public Management (NPM) practices to Saudi Arabia, Ford Foundation consultants with the support of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), kick-started the transfer process, but, the Saudi government later embarked on lesson-drawing by considering the experience of other countries such as Kuwait, Malaysia and South Korea (Common 2013). Persuasion can also precede coercive transfer mechanism and an example of this is given in the study by Tambulasi (2013) on the transfer of health policies to Malawi. The European Union (EU) initiated the policy transfer and sought to rely on the mechanism of persuasion for the actualization of the policy transfer. However, having experienced delay in the transfer process and lack of interest to release control of health services by the central government to regional levels, another transfer agent, the Department for International Development (DFID), opted for coercive transfer mechanism of conditionality to ensure the proposed health policy reform was agreed to by the recipient. The identification of the mechanism of persuasion helps to further highlights the multi-level dimension of policy transfer (Evans & Davies 1999), as it allows the examination of the policy transfers facilitated by non-state actors, and also instances where other groups of transfer agents adopt a non-coercive approach in engaging with transfer recipient.

1.3 The Transfer Mechanism of Obligation

With increasing conglomeration of states at global and regional levels, many countries commit themselves to addressing pertinent economic, social, political or environmental concerns. In ensuring that assurances given to address these concerns become reality, multilateral bodies often headed by international governmental organisations (IGOs), act as transfer agents and facilitate policy transfers. The transfer agents often have to their advantage, binding agreements that had been signed by the intended recipient jurisdiction, and they employ this advantage to compel domestic adoption of solutions agreed at the

international or central government level. In addition, sub-national units can also be in a position where they are bound by national legal frameworks to injunctions from the national government. National governments can thus take advantage of the existing legal provisions to facilitate policy transfer.

Eccleston & Woodward (2013) report on the transfer of tax transparency initiative by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to its member states. Their study highlights that in pursuing solutions for international challenges and maintaining their credibility as effective arbiters, IGOs often engage in transfer of policies that do not necessarily represent the best solution for addressing the challenge. Instead, the solutions peddled are sometimes the weak option or 'lowest common denominator' (Eccleston & Woodward 2013, p.216), and they referred to this form of policy transfer as pathological. Considering this limitation from another perspective, the dynamic of pathological policy transfer can also lead to increased policy transfer. This is because after signing-off a weak policy, IGOs are often inclined to continue pursuing the ideal solution for the policy problem, and as such, more agreements are reached, which will entail addition policy transfer instances for domestic alignment of the agreements.

The position stated above on policy transfer by obligation prompting more obligated transfers is also supported by Bugdahn (2007), although she links such transfers to additional voluntary transfers. In a study of policy transfer within the EU, she notes that "binding EU policy of ambiguous nature and/or with a limited scope of application creates policy space for additional voluntary transfers in member states" (Bugdahn 2007, p.123). The study presents cases of policy transfer of Access to Environmental Information Directive (AIE) to Portugal and Ireland and it finds that in addition to obligated transfer of the Directive from the EU, Portugal engaged in voluntary transfer by drawing lessons from France, while Ireland also drew lessons from Australia and New Zealand.

The debate of whether obligated transfers should be classified as voluntary, especially in instances where there is no "significant involvement" (Marshall 2005, p.673) of a transfer agent in actualising the policy adoption in the recipient jurisdiction[1], has been raised in the

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[1] An example of this is the involvement of some UN organisations in ensuring developing countries adopt policies that had been agreed upon via UN protocols and conventions through giving financial support (UNISDR 2016; UNEP n.d.).

literature (Dolowitz & Marsh 2000; Lodge & James 2003). However, based on the policy transfer framework and considering that the question being addressed in identifying mechanisms is why transfer, the mechanism of obligation often manifests as a consequence of a jurisdiction becoming a signatory to an international agreement or officially associating with an IGO like the EU or United Nations (UN) (Radaelli 2000; Jordan et al. 2003; Bulmer et al. 2007). As such, even though the transfer instance is being facilitated by the recipient country and there is no significant involvement of a transfer agent, yet the response to the question of why transfer will likely be stated as - obligation to an international agreement. The coercion can be said to lie in the activities of the transfer agent in stimulating support for a policy preference and producing an agreement to which associated jurisdictions are bound to, for in the absence of this effort, the recipient jurisdiction is not encumbered with any obligation, and a transfer instance may not even be introduced.

1.4 The Transfer Mechanism of Conditionality

Policy transfer can be driven by conditionality when transfer agents prescribe adoption of certain policies as condition for rendering support to the intended recipient jurisdiction. In developing countries, adoption of specific policies is often stipulated as a loan conditionality (Stone 2010), while countries intending to accede to membership of an IGO such as OECD or International Energy Agency (IEA), can be prescribed adoption of certain policies before they can become members of the IGOs (Carroll 2014; Clifton & Díaz-Fuentes 2014).

Particular reference has made to Bretton Woods institutions, notably, the World Bank and IMF, with respect to instances of policy transfer by conditionality (Marsh & Sharman 2009; Stone 2010), however, there is very limited coverage of such instances in the literature. Commenting on the limited coverage of this form of transfer, Marsh & Sharman (2009, p.280) remark that "this neglect reflects the fascination with the topics of Europeanization and globalization" and emphasized the need to for policy transfers to diversify the coverage of case studies, so as to include studies from "states of Africa, the Middle East and most of Asia". Studies from these regions will also go a long way to examine effects of transfer mechanisms on attempted policy transfers. It will be interesting to examine if conditional policy transfers do facilitate non-transfers, or can inform the degree of transfer upon eventual policy transfer.

Scholars examining policy transfer by the EU to Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) and neighbouring non-European countries have however, contributed to the study of conditional policy transfers by examining the role of the EU in stipulating accession conditions to candidate countries (Lavenex 2002; Haughton 2007). This coverage and the aforementioned comment by Marsh & Sharman (2009), on the need to extend coverage of policy transfer to African and Asian countries, show that the study of conditional transfers can likely elicit both geographical and economical dimensions, whereby the possibility of observing certain diverse mechanisms can be associated with countries in particular geographical region or, of certain economic status.

1.5 The Transfer Mechanism of Imposition

Policy transfer by imposition is situated at the end of the continuum. Imposition will likely play out in instances of transfer where the recipient jurisdiction's sovereignty is dependent on another jurisdiction for approval of its policies. However, with the modern political structure of independent nation states, "direct imposition of policy transfer on one country by another is rare" (Dolowitz & Marsh 1996, p.348). Its occurrence in present times may be associated with sub-national units, in instances where a top-down approach is employed in dictating decisions and directions to the sub-national units. Nutley et al. (2012) give the example of transfer of NPM practices, specifically, performance auditing, to Scotland and Wales from the central government based in England. He notes that even though the intent was to achieve improvement of local government services, the approach to achieving this, as perceived by the sub-national[2] units, was top-down imposition.

The unique hierarchical structure characterising the relationship between empire states and their territories in the early 20th century also present a scenario for occurrence of policy transfer by imposition. In an analysis of policy transfer experience of Australia, Carroll (2012) refers to the imposition of policies on Australia by the United Kingdom, while the former was a colony under the authority of the latter. He points to the example of Maritime sector whereby the imperial English government overturned policy decisions that had been taken

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[2] Scotland and Wales are individual countries within the United Kingdom. The term 'sub-national units' is used to depict the two countries as jurisdictions under the United Kingdom, and to allow the term to confer similar meaning across the document.

by local authorities within the colony. This example highlights a feature of policy transfer by imposition, whereby the transfer agent initiates and holds the reigns in the transfer process, with the transfer recipient having limited or no say in debating or declining the intended policy transfer.

Having discussed the mechanisms, the next section introduces the NPF. I make the claim that the NPF contributes to policy transfer research, especially in understanding how policy transfer mechanisms evolve and can be identified. This can be done by examining the use of narratives by policy transfer actors, their perception of the transfer process and the relationship existing between the transfer agent(s) and recipient.

2. The Narrative Policy Framework (NPF)

The NPF is a framework for examining the role of narratives in policymaking, and analysing policy narratives methodically, through the identification of narrative elements (Jones & McBeth 2010; Jones et al. 2014), including character, plot, setting, and moral. The different narrative elements and what they refer to is shown in Table 1.

According to the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), human beings are storytellers, and tend to use stories in order to "organize, process, and convey information" (Jones & McBeth 2010, p.329). Policy actors have also been known to organise information through stories (Kaplan 1986; Roe 1994; Radaelli 1999; McBeth et al. 2014), and this likely so because stories are seen to be relatable, easy to comprehend (Shanahan et al. 2008; Shanahan et al. 2011), and represent "generalizable (form of) knowledge … and universal principles" (Hajer & Laws 2006, p.251). Stories also focus on agency, as events and places are webbed around actors, who can be individuals or groups, and they in turn, based on their actions, morph and define the state of the events and places that are captured in the story. This characteristic of generalization in stories engenders depictions, especially of characters such as hero, victim or villain (Jones & McBeth 2010; Jones et al. 2014), which allows an author or audience to more easily portray or relate with the reality that is being communicated.

Table 1: Policy Narrative Elements

Narrative Elements	Definition
Character	The representation of the identity and/or role of individuals, groups or organisations referred to in a policy narrative
• Hero	An entity designated as fixing or being able to fix a specified problem
• Ally	An entity that supports or acts together with the hero
• Villain	An entity that causes harm
• Antagonist	An entity that is opposing the stance or action of another actor
• Victim	An entity hurt by a specified condition
Setting	The problem environment
Plot	The journey or overview of the sequence of events that the story will take its audience through (Mayer 2014). It also emphasizes the temporal element of policy narratives as stories with a beginning, middle and end (Jones & McBeth 2010)
Moral	The lessons to be learned from the narrative, and from which policy solutions can be proposed

Adapted from Shanahan et al. (2013)

Turning to policy transfer, narratives used by policy transfer actors can highlight what they perceive of other actors involved in the policy transfer and the process of actualising the transfer. Their depiction of transfer recipient, agents, or origin, can give insight into the mode of relationship between transfer recipients and agents that will likely dominate the transfer process. The narrative could, for instance, depict a story of a hero helping a victim; or a hero conquering a villain; or a hero helping victims to conquer a villain; or a hero working with an ally to help victims or conquer a villain. From these different stories, one may also attempt to deduce the transfer mechanism that likely manifested in the occurrence of policy transfer. The first two depictions can be linked to likely instances of internally-initiated policy transfer and possibly driven by the mechanism of learning, while the other depictions can be linked to

externally-initiated transfers and possibly, mechanisms of conditionality, obligation, imposition or persuasion.

In addition to depicting perceptions, the analysis of narratives can also represent an aspect of policy transfer study that can be applied across diverse geographical locations, based on the use of stories being seen as a universal communication means, and policy actors considered as storytellers. Also, because the concept of policy transfer highlights movement of ideas and intermediation of policy actors, narratives can help to show from where and to where have policy ideas moved, and by whom.

The NPF has been criticised for inconsistency in the application of the narrative elements and specifying what constitutes a policy narrative (Weible & Schlager 2014). In identifying characters, some NPF scholars allow inclusion of both animate and inanimate identities, while some do not, but advocate for use of only "proper nouns" (Weible & Schlager 2014, p.241). Considering that in a story, a character is identified based on how it treats or is treated by others, subjects in stories that can respond, inflict, or empower will need to be captured, as they will inform the identification and depiction of other characters. This notion can help to differentiate which animate or inanimate subjects can feature as characters in a policy narrative. Also, Weible & Schlager (2014, p.241) note that:

> [U]nderstanding the role of characters in a setting could be developed with the concept of plots, which is described as connecting characters and a setting. Plots could, thus, help the NPF clarify and establish limits on how nouns become characters and how those characters interact.

In line with this recommendation, the paper presents plots and settings that can be generalized and identified in narratives of policy transfer actors, so that characters can be situated within specific settings and plots, and the depiction of animate or inanimate entities can be clarified. The proposition of the settings and plots that can be used in policy transfer research is elaborated in the next section, which also explains how NPF may be used in policy transfer research for examining the role of narratives in shaping transfer mechanisms.

2.1 Operationalization of the NPF in Policy Transfer Research

To operationalize the NPF for the purpose of researching the role of policy narratives in shaping policy transfer mechanisms, the paper posits that there are specific policy narrative elements that will likely characterise different transfer mechanisms. This is based on the premise that narrative elements identified in communication materials relating to a particular instance of policy transfer, will likely reflect the manner of relationship that will be assumed between the transfer agent and recipient, the intention of transfer actors in participating in the transfer process, and what the policy transfer is expected to achieve in the recipient jurisdiction. These deductions from the narratives can be said to inform what manifests in the intent of transfer agents, how the transfer agents relate with recipients and present the proposed transfer object. Since the manifestation of intent, relationship, and transfer object are what policy transfer scholars often observe in determining the type of mechanism that is at play in a transfer instance, the narrative elements that underpin these manifestations can thus be said to be part of what has shaped the mechanism that has been identified.

With reference to findings in the policy transfer literature and the NPF literature, Table 2 presents the different policy transfer mechanisms, categorized into voluntary and coercive, and the narrative elements that will likely be associated with each mechanism. To highlight what the different features of the narrative elements portend, a brief description of each of the narrative element specified in the table is given below.

2.1.1 Setting

As setting relates to the problem environment and a depiction of the policy area the narrative refers to (Jones et al. 2014), the policy type to which the policy area can be categorised can help to identify the setting of a policy narrative. The possibility of linking a specific setting to the manifestation of a particular transfer mechanism, has also been noted by Nicholson-Crotty (2009, p.195). As can be seen from the quote below, he suggests that:

> … for some policy types the politics of diffusion will include policy learning in a significant number of states … while others will produce a political environment in which many lawmakers forgo learning

To categorize settings, the paper draws from the typology of policies put forward by Lowi (1972), and which has been generally applied across the field of public policy (Anderson 2011; Scheider et al. 2014). These are constituent, distributive, redistributive and regulatory policies. There have been some criticisms to the classification pointing to the difficulty in distinguishing the different types over a long period of time and its lack of dynamism (e.g. Kellow 1988). These were however addressed by highlighting that the policy types represent the intent of policymakers and not necessarily the policy outcomes, and also that they are determinate in the short term rather than over the long term of the policy's existence (Lowi 1988). Despite the criticisms, one might say that the classification has remained in a way, a favourite in public policy and has continued to be applied many years after its introduction.

The use of Lowi's typology of policies is based on the possibility of describing the underlining circumstances necessitating a particular policy, including the nature of the policy problem, the policy's likely target population, and legal implications. It also allows contextualising the setting of the narrative, and explaining the actions of the characters and the extent of their involvement in the policy transfer instances. For example, when the policy area in a narrative is situated as constituent or redistributive, this highlights that the policy is likely directed at a whole society, while the situation of a policy as regulatory or distributive highlights a selective target. Also, a policy narrative situated around a constituent policy suggests the need to (re)structure societal arrangements, while another narrative situated around a redistributive policy will suggest the need to address inequality in the society. These underlining circumstances will help in explaining how a narrative setting may have informed the depiction of the characters and the actions ascribed to the characters.

Table 2: Proposition of Policy Narratives Elements Characterizing Different Policy Transfer Mechanisms

Policy Transfer Mode	Transfer mechanism	Transfer agent	Policy Narrative				
			Setting	Characters	Plot	Moral	Narrative Index
Voluntary	Learning	• National Governments • Sub-national Governments • Supranational Institutions	Constituent Redistributive	Heroes and allies	Rebirth	Value (re)orientation	Low
Voluntary	Persuasion	• Transnational Organisations • International Organisations (IOs) • Other Non-State Actors	Constituent Distributive Redistributive	Heroes and allies Villains and antagonists	Rebirth Rags to riches	Value (re)orientation	High
Coercive	Obligation	• International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) • National Governments	Regulatory Redistributive	Allies Villains and antagonists Victims	Overcoming the monster	Managing benefits and cost	Low
Coercive	Conditionality	• International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) • Transnational Organisations • National Governments	Redistributive Constituent	Heroes Victims	Rags to riches	Incentives and sanctions Value (re)orientation	Moderate
Coercive	Imposition	• National Governments • Supranational Governments	Regulatory Distributive Constituent	Heroes Villains and antagonists	Overcoming the monster Rebirth	Incentives and sanctions	Low

2.1.2 Characters

As stipulated in NPF, there are three broad categories of policy narrative characters namely, heroes, villains and victims (Jones & McBeth 2010; Shanahan et al. 2013). Based on the interrelation of actors, the roles of these characters can also inform allotting identities to other actors. For example, the roles of protagonists or antagonists, can inform the involvement of other characters, such as allies and enemies. For the purpose of applying NPF to policy transfer research, the characters identified are heroes and allies, villains and antagonists and, victims.

2.1.3 Plot

Although the NPF does not stipulate specific plot types that can feature in policy narratives, the plots that have been observed in NPF literature are plots of decline, stymied progress, helplessness and control, conspiracy, and blame the victim (McBeth et al. 2012; Jones et al. 2014; Radaelli et al. 2013). These plots however, can be said to primarily depict a status quo, as against plots that show transition from the status quo to a more desirable position. The narrative plots that characterise policy narratives are drawn from Booker (2004). These are plots of rebirth, rags to riches and overcoming the monster. The plots are in line with the notion that narratives "describe change over time" (Kaplan 1986, p.768). They are also based on the observation that, stories which highlight transition from the status quo, such as stories of policy reform, often project journeys leading to triumph or happy ending (Pollitt 2013; Mayer 2014). The plot of rebirth highlights a turnaround in the perceived identity of an individual or a group. It is based on the reorientation of values and represents a "change of heart" (Booker 2004, p.26). The plot of rags to riches implies an economic reference and a shift from a state of economic deprivation or lack to buoyancy, and the plot of overcoming the monster portrays a story of acquiring the capacity to tackle a character posing threat to a society, and achieving victory.

2.1.4 Moral

The moral of a narrative implies lessons that the narrative portends with regard to its specific setting, characters and plot. The narrative moral is expected to prompt the audience that come in contact with the narrative to take action on a policy issue and can also indicate the policy solution that will be effected (Jones & McBeth 2010; Jones & Radaelli 2015). The possible lessons that can be drawn from narratives of policy transfer actors are presented as

managing cost and benefit, incentives and sanctions, value re(orientation). These are premised on what narratives suggest needs to be done, and what the occurrence of policy transfer can achieve within the recipient jurisdiction.

2.1.5 Narrative Index

Narrative index was introduced to the analysis of policy narratives in McBeth et al. (2012). It indicates the level of use of narrative elements in an actor's policy narrative. It is determined by identifying and summing all the narrative components contained in different communication sources generated by an actor or a group. The result of this can be compared with the level of narrative components that is used by another actor or group a policy narrative source. Narrative index can be stated as low, medium or high (McBeth et al. 2012).

Drawing from case studies presented in the policy transfer literature and the NPF literature, the next section discusses the proposition put forward in Table 2, on the specific narrative elements that will likely be associated with the different transfer mechanisms.

3. Policy Narrative Elements Associated with Transfer Mechanism of Learning

When a transfer process is driven by the mechanism of learning, it is postulated that the characters in policy narratives used during the transfer process will be dominated by heroes and allies, characterized by low narrative index, have a plot of rebirth and a story moral propagating new values or change in values. This proposition is based on case studies of policy transfer instances with learning as the transfer mechanism. In most of these cases, there is limited reference to interest groups, but more attention to state actors including, civil servants, elected officials and technocrats (Wolman & Page 2002; Bray et al. 2011; Legrand 2012a), and they are often preoccupied with the desire to organise or reorganise set-ups for public service delivery, to ensure high quality of service, and maintain provision of equal opportunities for individuals and groups within their jurisdiction. These desires underscore a narrative setting of constituent and redistributive policies. Also, to justify the need for policy transfer, the transfer agents often evoke values that resonate with the solution that is expected to be achieved by the transferred policy (Smith 2004; Legrand 2012a; Dussauge-Laguna 2013a), and this will likely lead to a reflection of plot of rebirth and moral of value re-orientation, in policy narratives used by the transfer agents.

Also, decision makers are often seen taking the reins in charting the course of progress, thereby assuming heroic status and situating external parties from where policy lessons are transferred from as allies. Some examples of such transfer instances include the transfer of welfare-to-work and employment policies to the United Kingdom (UK) from the United States of America (US), with both processes piloted domestically by decision makers (Dolowitz 1997; Legrand 2012a). In the case of welfare-to-work policy transfer, Legrand (2012) assert that the process was instigated by the drive for a new approach to policymaking by the newly elected Labour government in 1997. Based on the policy narrative used by the government as shown in the quote below, one can see the reference to ideals, positioning of the government as heroic, and call for reform of how government works to focus on achievement. In addition, in describing the transfer process, there is continuous mention of the relationship between the UK and US. All these go to indicate this instance of policy transfer as characterized by a setting of constituent policy, characters of heroes and allies, plot of rebirth and moral of reorientation.

> We will be a radical government. But the definition of radicalism will not be that of doctrine, whether of left or right, but of achievement. New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern. (Labour Party 1997 cited in Legrand 2012, p. 336)

The assumption of low narrative index for lesson drawing transfer mechanism as stipulated in the table, is on the premise that most documentations and use of policy narratives in the transfer process will be self-directed and self-convincing, as against what will likely be obtained in coercive transfers. Also, with little or no need to convince an outsider or bringing a less knowledgeable government on board a policy transfer in a new policy area, less effort will likely be required to persuade, coax, induce or compel other parties involved in the transfer process, and as such a limited use of narrative elements.

3.1 Policy Narrative Elements Associated with Transfer Mechanism of Persuasion

Policy narrative elements that are used in policy transfer by persuasion are noted to be characterized by setting of constituent and (re)distributive policies; characters of heroes,

allies, villains and antagonists; plot of rebirth and rags to riches; moral of value (re)orientation; and a high narrative index.

The use of policy narratives for the purpose of persuading a specific audience is widely recorded in NPF literature, particularly with respect to attempts of interest groups to convince the general public and win on a policy issue. The primary focus on interest groups is in a way synonymous with the categories of policy transfer actors that are usually transfer agents in instances of policy transfer by persuasion, including think tanks, international corporations and, international governmental organisations. With respect to policy transfer, rather than directing policy narrative elements at persuading the general public, narrative elements are used to convince prospective transfer recipients and make a case for the validity and benefits of the transfer. Policy narratives by non-state actors, according to NPF studies, often have a high narrative index based on their extensive use of narrative elements by interest groups, whether they are winning or losing on a policy issue. An example that shows this level of narrative index, is the study of policy narratives by Buffalo Field Campaign (BFC), an American non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to preservation of bison in Yellowstone Natural Park in the US (McBeth et al. 2010). In convincing the general public to stand for protection of this species and curtail demands for culling them by ranch farmers, BFC makes maximum use of different narrative characters by situating the bison as a victim, the farmers as villains and itself alongside members of public fighting for the cause of keeping the bison alive, as heroes. It also advances a policy solution of value reorientation to view the bison as a natural world asset and the issue at hand, as an environmental concern rather than a commercial issue.

Use of policy narratives in policy transfers by persuasion can be seen to manifest in similar fashion. Stone (2000; 2004; 2010) elaborate on non-governmental policy transfers. She does not use the narrative policy analysis language, yet, she usefully highlights the involvement of these organizations in transferring ideas and ideologies and providing intellectual background documents that can be used to support or represent the policy position. In the example of transfer of privatization policy to the UK, transfer agents including the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) and the Adam Smith Institute (ASI), positioned a welfare system as the villain, the conservative party as heroes and taxpayers as victims. With their plot of rebirth hinged on a move from dependence on welfare to embracing market

principles, the organizations advocate for reorientation of the economic system in order to reduce government spending and save taxpayers' funds.

Also, being viewed as principled organisations, many of these organisations will desire to be seen as consciously in favor of improved government functioning and improved standards of living for citizens. This makes them intervene in seemingly dire circumstances that the story of the policy transfer may be seen as once poor, but now rich i.e. rags to riches and a revamp of values i.e. rebirth. As such, policy transfer by persuasion will likely have a setting of constituent policy to address domestic operational arrangements; or distributive policy, in order to award support to target groups that are deemed to require it; or redistributive policy, so as to attain equality among multiple target groups.

3.2 Policy Narrative Elements Associated with Transfer Mechanisms of Obligation

As against the other aforementioned voluntary transfer mechanisms, policy transfer by obligation is predominantly a process driven by an external party, and as the term implies, often instigated by an organisation to which the prospective transfer recipient is bound by previous agreements and accords.

The focus of this type of policy transfer is often related to policing specific activities within the recipient jurisdiction, for the purpose of addressing challenges that impact on lives and livelihoods, not only domestically, but also beyond the geographical borders of the recipient jurisdiction. It is also often directed at ensuring standardized solutions that have been developed are adhered to. As such, policy narratives used in policy transfer by obligation will likely aim at strengthening the existing bond between transfer agents and prospective recipient jurisdiction. This is in order to ensure the recipient jurisdiction align with specific principles or policy preferences of the transfer agent, and alter prevalent domestic policy positions and policies. Such circumstances will likely put the setting of narratives used in policy transfer by obligation at regulatory or redistributive policies. The plot in such narratives can be described as overcoming the monster, which highlights a collective action against a challenging predicament, while the moral to be purported will hinge on weighing the benefits of the action to be taken as against the cost of maintaining the status quo, or going with an alternative stance or solution.

In contrast to policy transfer by persuasion, but similar to policy transfer by lesson-drawing, there is limited attention to issues of obligation to international agreements in NPF literature. The most likely case study the can be said to slightly consider this concern is the study of policy narratives used by members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs at the lower house of parliament in both the United Kingdom (UK) and US, in discussing political developments in the Middle East on account of the Arab Spring, which occurred in the region between 2010 and 2011 (O'Bryan et al. 2014). The authors note that in the UK MPs' deliberations on the crisis there was reference to the special transatlantic relationship between the UK and US. At some of the meetings, UK lawmakers expressed comments on the (ir)relevance of US's foreign policy with respect to the Middle East, and the likelihood of imminent obligation to adopt similar foreign policy in the UK. Although the conclusion was in the end, not in favor of the special relationship, the use of narrative elements in discussing the Arab Spring by UK lawmakers can be said to be representative of what is proposed in Table 2. The plot presented was related to overcoming the monster, which represented lack of democracy in the Middle East. Both the UK and US were also noted to be "close allies" (O'Bryan et al. 2014, p.107), and the protesters, especially women, who took part in demonstrations, were deemed as heroes.

In policy transfer literature, obligation is discussed with respect to a jurisdiction's allegiance to agreements and accords, and in most instances, with international governmental organisations (IGOs) such as the UN, EU, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which engage in policy transfers in order to "protect and expand their global relevance" (Pal 2014, p.196). From the case studies in the literature, it can be seen that the policy types addressed by such organisations are often regulatory and redistributive policies (Bulmer et al. 2007; Eccleston & Woodward 2013). Also, the major narrators are often the transfer agents with whom the prospective recipient jurisdictions have an alliance, and on the basis of the signed agreements and existing relationship, the narrators usually make use of limited narrative elements in the course of policy transfer. According to an example of policy transfer to member countries of the OECD, it is noted that the organisation commits intense efforts into ensuring its members sign on to policy propositions aimed at overcoming challenges such as money laundering, corruption, and then it sets out to transfer these policies primarily by developing high-quality technical reports (Eccleston & Woodward 2013). The example can therefore be said to reiterate a low narrativity, plot of overcoming the

monster, and setting of regulatory or redistributive policies, as the narrative properties that will likely characterise narratives used in policy transfers driven by the mechanism of obligation.

3.3 Policy Narrative Elements Associated with Transfer Mechanism of Conditionality

Policy transfer by conditionality is often characterized by a hierarchical relationship between the transfer agents and recipient organisation, and hinged on a transactional arrangement. In many instances, the prospective transfer recipient in policy transfer by conditionality, finds itself liable to the transfer agent and/or also in need of material support, military support or affiliation. However, they often have the liberty to succumb or reject proposed policy transfers. To achieve an intended transfer by conditionality, the transfer agent usually takes advantage of the hierarchical relationship or the needs of the prospective transfer recipient to propose a policy transfer as condition for benefiting from a relationship between both parties, and/or meeting the recipient's request for support (Bulmer & Padgett 2005; Lavenex 2008).

In communicating the intended policy transfer, it is hypothesized that transfer actors will make use of policy narratives that present pictures of better tomorrows, indicative of a rags to riches narrative plot. Also, to craft a policy problem and policy solution, narrative characters will be utilized to tell stories of victims in need of a hero. Target persons or groups that may be seemingly affected by the identified policy problem are positioned as victims, while the transfer agent is positioned as having the wherewithal to provide solution to the existing problem. The recipient jurisdiction can also be made aware of the possibility of being crowned heroes for attempting to solve the problem. With the balance of power more in the favor of the transfer agent, there is a maximization of the opportunity presented by the vulnerability or liability of the recipient jurisdiction, and policy issues or preferences that hitherto may not have been on the agenda can be put forward. It is postulated that the issues that will be sought to be addressed by the policy transfer will likely be ethical, economic and political concerns and there will be a moderate use of narrative elements to communicate the intended policy transfer. It is also proposed that the policy narratives used in policy transfer by conditionality will have narrative settings of constituent or redistributive policy

context, while the moral to be advocated by the narrative will focus on value orientation or re-orientation and, necessity of having incentives to secure support for the proposed policy and giving sanctions of withdrawing support should the transfer be declined (Stone 2004).

From the policy transfer literature, there are examples of IGOs facilitating policy transfers by taking advantage of accessions to membership of the organisations. One of these is the case of transfer of market liberalization policy to the Republic of Korea (Carroll 2014). Upon applying to join the OECD, and after agreeing to free up trade and open markets, the Republic of Korea became a member of the OECD, and the country's Foreign Minister described the process as a move from isolation to internationalisation. The country also described itself in heroic terms, as attaining the status of developed country and guaranteeing stability and prosperity for its citizens. The depiction of the transfer process highlights heroes as the character in the narrative, a plot of rags to riches, and a moral of managing benefits and cost. Another example is that of the accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal to the European Economic Community (EEC) (Carroll 2014). The narrative used in describing the transfer process presents a portrayal of victims, as it is noted that these countries were faced with "significant requirements regarding their progress to stable, functioning democracies, as well as changes to economic policies" (Carroll 2014, p.284). The challenge faced by the countries is said to have presented the opportunity for external policy actors to intervene, in order to "promote economic development, democratic government and political stability" (Carroll 2014, p.284). The description of the intent for engaging in policy transfer can thus be linked to a plot of rags to riches, a setting of redistributive policy, and moral of value reorientation. The narrative elements identified in these examples can be said to highlight the relevance of the proposition in Table 2, as it shows the possibility of determining the transfer mechanism that had driven a policy transfer process, by investigating the policy narratives used in the process.

3.4 Policy Narrative Elements Associated with Transfer Mechanism of Imposition

By implication of the terminology of the transfer mechanism, policy transfer by imposition concerns the ability of transfer agents to exert a high level of influence and authority over the transfer recipient. Similar to the instance of policy transfer by conditionality, as a result of the

hierarchical relationship, there will likely be limited use of narrative elements. The element of choice at the disposal of the transfer recipient, in the decision to engage in transfer or otherwise, however makes a difference in the level of use of narrative elements. The need to convince or carry the recipients along in the transfer process will result in moderate narrative index in instances of policy transfer by obligation, while limited or lack of choice in the case of transfer by imposition will lead to a low narrative index. To justify the need for imposing transfer objects on recipients, it is likely that the policy narratives used in the transfer process will feature a plot that highlights the need to address an imminent or existing challenge by exerting authority. As with the case of transfer by conditionality, the moral of policy narratives will be based on administering incentives and sanctions, with emphasis on the sanctions that might be mete out on non-complying jurisdictions Also, based on the authority of the transfer agent over the recipient, the transfer agent is often at liberty (either measured or unmeasured) to wield influence on multiple policy areas and as such, it is proposed that the policy narrative to be used in transfer by imposition can be set in the context of regulatory, distributive or constituent policy areas.

Though unintendedly, an example of use of narrative elements in policy transfer by imposition is highlighted in the case study analysing discourse by committees of foreign affairs in lower houses of parliament in the UK and US. According to O'Bryan et al. (2014, p.125), one of the committee members, in a way, branded human rights as an American concept which can be "directly transposed from the US to the Arab Spring countries", and another member expressed the possibility of the committee acting "as an assertive foreign policy actor, and promoter of a supposedly US-centric version of human rights". In describing the situation in the country of Iran, there is reference to human rights abusers, which we can refer to as the villain in the policy narrative, and also a group suffering from human rights abuses, the Iranian opposition movement, and this group can be referred to as the victims. In addressing the issue of human rights abuse, the committee also called for imposition of "sanctions on those who … further human rights abuses". The moral and setting of the policy narrative can be seen to be use of sanctions and regulatory policy respectively, while the narrative can also be said to reflect a plot of overcoming the monster.

In the policy transfer literature, it is noted that examples of policy transfer by imposition will most likely be seen in policy transfer to non-developed or developing countries from

developed countries or IGOS (Evans 2006; Stone 2010), and also from national governments to sub-national units (Nutley et al. 2012). Despite acknowledgement of this form of policy transfer, there are however very few studies examining such cases. An example from Nutley et al. (2012, p.199) gives an insight on the narrative index that will characterize transfer by imposition. Commenting on the transfer of local government performance improvement program to English local governments from the UK central government, they remarked that "CPAs (Comprehensive Performance Assessment) were imposed 'top down' by the UK government and the Audit Commission with relatively little discussion or consultation with local authorities". The limited communication can be said to reflect limited use of narrative elements and as such, a low narrative index. The case also highlights use of narrative plot in semblance of overcoming the monster, as the policy was introduced in order to end competitive tendering of services by local governments, alongside a narrative moral hinged on incentives for improved performances and sanctions for poor performances.

4. Conclusion and Research Agenda

The possibility of investigating how policy narratives shape policy transfer mechanism will present an opportunity to expound on one of the key questions of policy transfer research i.e. why transfer? Beyond being able to answer the question by directly stating that it is because of learning, or obligation or conditionality, this research focus will help to highlight the shaping capability of narratives through identifying stories that likely underpin the transfer agents' and recipients' involvement in different modes of policy transfer. Also, the proposition put forward in Table 2 presents the possibility of generating hypotheses that can be tested in policy transfer research. These hypotheses are:

H1 – When policy transfer is driven by learning, policy narratives used in communicating the transfer will have setting of constituent or redistributive policy, a plot of rebirth, and moral of value (re)orientation. The narratives will also have a low narrative index and its characters will constitute heroes and allies.

H2 – When policy transfer is driven by persuasion, policy narratives used in communicating the transfer will have setting of constituent, distributive or redistributive policy, a plot of

rebirth or rags to riches, and moral of value (re)orientation. It will also have a high narrative index and the characters will constitute heroes, allies, villains and antagonists.

H3 – When policy transfer is driven by obligation, policy narratives used in communicating the transfer will have setting of regulatory or redistributive policy, a plot of victory over threat i.e. overcoming the monster, and moral of managing benefits and cost. It will also have a low narrative index and the characters will constitute allies, victims, villains, and antagonists.

H4 – When policy transfer is driven by conditionality, policy narratives used in communicating the transfer will have setting of redistributive or constituent policy, a plot of moving from economic deprivation to abundance i.e. rags to riches, and moral of incentives and sanctions or value (re)orientation. It will also have a moderate narrative index and the characters will constitute heroes and victims.

H5 – When policy transfer is driven by imposition, policy narratives used in communicating the transfer will have setting of regulatory, distributive, redistributive or constituent policy; a plot of overcoming the monster, and moral of incentives and sanctions, while its characters will constitute heroes, and/or villains and antagonists. It will also have a low narrative index.

In addition, with the recent criticism of the use of some transfer mechanisms in facilitating policy transfer to less developed countries (Stone 2004; Koeberle et al. 2015; Broome 2015), this proposition can assist transfer agents to appropriately portray their intended motivation for initiating a policy transfer, by using relevant narrative elements that will send the right message across to the prospective transfer recipients to enable them decode the transfer agent's intended mechanism. Through identifying and strategically expressing the choice of transfer mechanism that will likely be more favourable with transfer recipients, transfer agents such as IOs, can help ensure that as many jurisdictions as possible adopt policies that can make the world a better place.

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