



How do diffusion agents
make their policy travel
across international,
continental, and
national levels?

The case of performance-based financing

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CONTEXT

Where?

 Global health: growingly complex governance

 Since the 1980s, external actors have been propelling healthcare financing reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa

 One may wonder what structures shape the diffusion of healthcare financing reforms

1 What are the key characteristics of external actors?

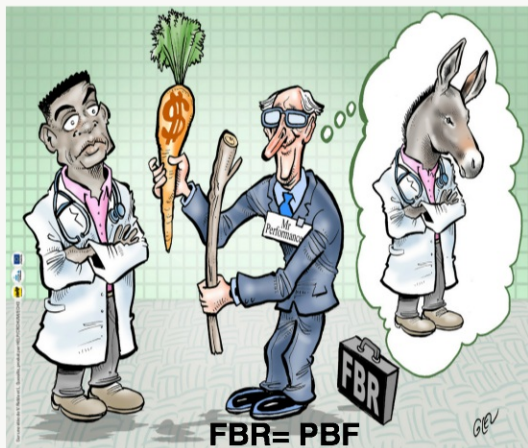
2 What strategies do they use?

3 Are there any exogenous processes?

*Endogenous
processes*

CONTEXT

Performance-Based Financing (PBF) in Africa



Key external funding agencies such as the Global Fund and World Bank argue that PBF will promote reform in a way that is locally owned and accountable (Barnes et al, 2014)



The PBF approach [...] engendered a results-oriented culture that promoted managerial autonomy & empowered providers to find creative solutions (Rusa et al., 2009)

Proposed framework (1/2)

How?

Diffusion agents?

> vs. policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon 2003), change agents (Strang & Soule 1998), transfer agents (Stone 2004)?



Individuals, networks, and institutions

In the case of PBF:

Institutions: international organisations and NGOs

Networks: communities of practice, alumni associations, etc.

Individuals: European and American consultants and scholars

Proposed framework (2/2)

Critical features of successful diffusion agents
(adapted from Hassenteufel, 2008):

Belief system

Motivations (i.e. based on interests)

**Resources (including, material ones) that
build credibility and authority**

Diffusion strategies undertaken by agents (i.e.
typical diffusion mechanisms – Braun and Gilardi
2006; Shipan and Volden 2008)

Policy emulation

Policy learning

Policy cooperation

...To which we add one recently-incorporated
diffusion mechanism (Gilardi, 2017)

Policy framing

PROPOSITIONS

- 1 If individuals, networks and institutions have divergent representations, and interests, complexity will arise: in this case, policy diffusion will be hampered
- 2 An essential but not sufficient condition for a given policy to diffuse is that diffusion agents join at least their resources together
- 3 Thanks to a clearly facilitating opportunity structure, agents diffuse PBF through the deliberate use of four main strategies

CRITICAL FEATURES (1/2)

Agents' belief system

Key individuals' background and leading international organisation rooted in:

Economics (principal-agent theories)

New public management theories (market-oriented reforms and contracting)

Agents' motivations

Seeking solutions to the under-utilisation of healthcare services (=wicked problem)

*Laudable
motivation*

Fostering better monitoring of aid (donors' interests) and career advancement and increased recognition in global health (individuals' interests)

*Self-regarding
interests*

CRITICAL FEATURES (2/2)

Agents' resources/authority

Critical assets: scholar (knowledge), social, and political resources

Most importantly, these diffusion agents have expert authority which prominently features temporal resources:

They had time to develop a social network, build up financial security, and create and disseminate knowledge

STRATEGIES (1/4)

Results

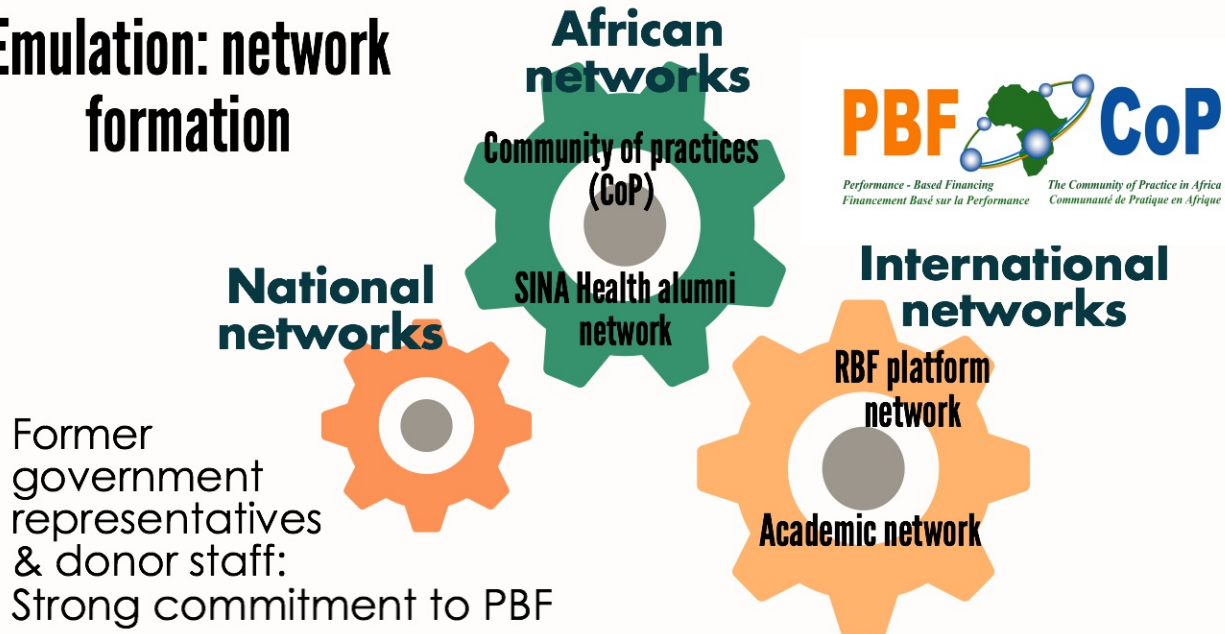
Framing

PBF is framed as the continuation of preexisting ideas:

- new public management / good governance / accountability
- South-South cooperation / Africa-led



Emulation: network formation



Former government representatives & donor staff: Strong commitment to PBF

Sources: Barnes et al. 2014; Turcotte-Tremblay et al. forth.

STRATEGIES (2/4)

Results

Empowering the political apparatus

“Health Results Innovation Trust Fund”

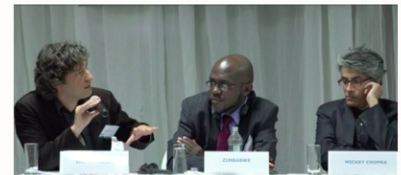
FIRST TWO MISSIONS:

1. Support design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of PBF mechanisms
2. Develop and disseminate the evidence base for implementing successful PBF mechanisms

The logo for RBFHEALTH, featuring the text 'RBFHEALTH' in a sans-serif font. 'RBF' is in blue and 'HEALTH' is in red. The logo is centered within a white rectangular box with teal horizontal bars above and below it.

HRITF workshops and webinars;
HRITF-funded study tours and
training

Nearly *US\$ 400 million* have been committed for 36 programmes in 30 countries, linked to IDA's US\$ 2.2 billion matching grants (The World Bank 2015)



STRATEGIES (3/4)

Results

Knowledge production

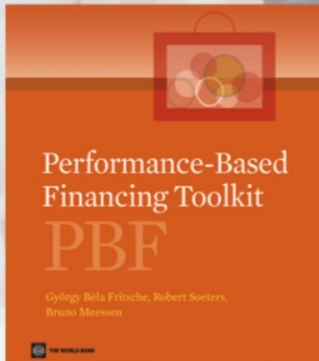
- *Impact evaluations
- *Scientific papers
- *Reports
- *Training materials

Knowledge dissemination

In Africa, support & organisation of:

- *Training sessions
- *Workshops and webinars
- *Study tours

Source: <https://www.rbhfhealth.org/>



Dissemination was fast thanks to an enabling opportunity structure: new ways of communication & cheaper traveling

STRATEGIES (4/4)

Results

Facilitating country-level cooperation

Pilot PBF programmes in SSA are:

*promoted

*implemented

*designed

*evaluated...

*funded

...by diffusion agents (including HRITF and NGOs)
(Gautier and Ridde 2017)

External actors also engage in consensus-building strategies

> using their reputation and trustworthiness to mobilise allies and, ultimately, build alliances towards policymaking


CONCLUSION

 All these strategies have been deliberately undertaken by diffusion agents



to secure fast, constant, and large uptake of the PBF reform

*Proposition
3*

 Older HCF reforms diffusion did not benefit from the same enabling factors (i.e. large financial resources and facilitating opportunity structure)

 PBF diffusion agents' share a similar belief system but pursue different interests. The key factor for success of diffusion was their

*Proposition
2*

ability to join their resources/types of authority

NEXT STEPS

- 1 Proposition 1 must be empirically tested with interview data**
- 2 Learning from PBF experience across administrative levels has been under-documented**
- 3 Investigate the ways through which domestic policymakers and diffusion agents cooperate to ensure policy sustainability (or not...)**
- 4 Based on country interview results, map the interactions between international, continental, and national actors**

Value of this research ?

- ✓ First research that looks into the features of global health diffusion agents in such depth
- ✓ In-depth descriptions of actors' belief systems, motivations, types of authority, and strategies, may be useful to policy analysts, whether in global health or other sectors involving a context of development cooperation in SSA

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Lee Kuan Yew
School of Public Policy

Thank you!



@Lara_Gautier

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