

# T02P11 / Policy Transfer and Diffusion: Looking at Policy Features and the Policy Process

**Topic :** T02 / Comparative Public Policy sponsored by Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

**Chair :** Michelle Morais de Sa e Silva (The University of Oklahoma)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Global policy models have been increasingly celebrated, but what do we know, on a theory basis, about why and how they turn global? 'Best practices' are no longer understood as absolutely best, but policies keep being transferred from city to city, state to state, and country to country. Various actors have actively and purposefully engaged in policy transfer, and many hope that the more policies are transferred, the more development will be achieved. But is that so? Why do policymakers engage in policy transfer? Are all good policies transferrable? Is there such a thing as effective transfer?

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p. 3) define policy transfer as "a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political setting". Since that seminal article, numerous other publications have tried to describe, characterize, classify and explain the policy transfer phenomenon.

Stone (2012) makes an extensive review of over 800 journal articles dedicated to the topic, revealing that several terms are used to name processes of these kinds, with slight conceptual differences: "diffusion", "transfer", "convergence", "translation". According to Stone, the policy transfer literature is especially interested in the motivations and the decision-making rationale of agents involved in policy transfer. The convergence literature, in turn, rather gives emphasis to the role of structures, institutions and other globalization processes as drivers of global policy isomorphism. Finally, scholars who have worked with the idea of translation are focused on studying the modifications, mutations and adaptations that these policies undergo when being exported/imported.

In the framework of these various existing terms and their slightly different connotations, the panel will address policy transfer and international policy diffusion, with a particular focus on the reasons, processes, and features of transfer and non-transfer. The panel will go beyond the 'best-practice' black box, presenting and debating cases that examine policy transfer and policy diffusion processes in detail. The goal is to gather scholars from different countries and policy fields and to create dialogue around the contribution of their research to building theory.

Dolowitz, D., Marsh, D. (2000). Learning from abroad: the role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making. *Governance* 13: 5 – 24.

Stone, D. (2012). Transfer and translation of policy. *Policy Studies*, 33:6, 483-499.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

Global policy models have been increasingly celebrated, but what do we know, on a theory basis, about why and how they turn global? 'Best practices' are no longer understood as absolutely best, but policies keep being transferred from city to city, state to state, and country to country. Various actors have actively and purposefully engaged in policy transfer, and many hope that the more policies are transferred, the more development will be achieved. But is that so? Why do policymakers engage in policy transfer? Are all good policies transferrable? Is there such a thing as effective transfer?

The panel welcomes presentations that examine cases of policy transfer/policy diffusion, as well as comparative research that further the theoretical debate around the competing explanations about whether and how policies travel globally. Comparative approaches are encouraged, but single-case studies will be also welcome. There is particular interest in policy transfer and diffusion experiences in the field of social policies, although works in other policy areas will be considered. Transfers happening South-South and South-North are of great interest, as well as cases of virtually global diffusion.

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## Session 1

Friday, June 30th 10:30 to 12:30 (Block B 2 - 2 )

### Discussants

Michelle Morais de Sa e Silva (The University of Oklahoma)

Natalia Koga (Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) and ENAP)

### NEW PHILANTHROPIC AID AND SOCIAL POLICY TRANSFER. A Case study on the Gates Foundation in Tanzania

Roosa Jolkkonen (University of Oxford)

Traditional aid donors – commonly understood as the World Bank (WB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), OECD-DAC, and some International NGOs, such as Oxfam – have largely dominated the agenda-setting for the Sub-Saharan African region since its independence (Chin and Quadir, 2012, p. 496). Such policy influence has been furthered by conditionalities connected to development assistance. This coercive mechanism of policy transfer (Drezner, 2004, 2001; Holden, 2009; Stone, 2010) has been a prominent instrument to influence policy directions particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, considered as the continent of ‘weak states’ and ‘bad governance’ without a credible domestic policy vision (Adesina, 2014; Khan and Gray, 2006).

Development aid continues to be a powerful vehicle of policy influence, but the donor landscape is changing. Beside the emerging Southern actors, a new brand of Western donors originating predominantly from Silicon Valley’s world leading tech-businesses such as Google, Facebook or Microsoft, are a key component of this change. This, what I call new philanthropic aid, represents a powerful group of donors with fresh ideas for development which they endeavour to spread globally. While private actors have been largely omitted in policy transfer study (Bender et al., 2014, p. 29), Stone has furthered that private philanthropies engage particularly in soft policy transfer, diffusing ideas, norms and knowledge through transfer networks (eg. epistemic communities, international organisations) providing leverage required by non-political actors (Stone, 2010, 2004). However, the empirical evidence on the mechanisms at play is currently quasi-absent, and further research focus on philanthropic donors is required to increase our understanding of contemporary transnational policy transfer in the context of aid.

This paper investigates the processes of social policy transfer initiated by new philanthropic donors within the health sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. More specifically, it examines the case of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the world’s most powerful philanthropic foundation, in Tanzania – the continent’s third biggest aid recipient with a strong policy vision shaped by its past of African Socialism. The paper presents preliminary findings of the research, focusing upon the involved (i) transfer mechanisms (eg. coercive/voluntary, hard/soft), (ii) key instruments (eg. aid modalities, networks) and (iii) recipient perspectives. The data in question consists of a documentary analysis and elite interviews with representatives of the Gates Foundation and the government of Tanzania.

### Participatory budgeting as an institutional innovation: a few hypothesis on PB expansion and diffusion

Leonardo Avritzer (U.F.M.G)

The spread of institutional innovation in democracies in the North as well as in new democracies in the

South made innovation a very trendy phenomenon. Some experiences such as participatory budgeting became world famous and are practiced in all parts of the world (Allegretti, 2013; Sintomer, 2007;2011). Other experiences such as mini-publics are in practice worldwide from Australia to British Columbia (Warren and Pearce, 2008). Even in the legal system, innovation has been introduced with highly ambiguous results (Avritzer and Marona, 2016). Thus, the issue in a moment of widespread diffusion of policy innovation is: are there limits to the positive aspects of political and institutional innovations or are innovations good per se?

This paper will try to answer this question by differentiating types of innovation, reasons for introducing innovation and the timing of political innovation and innovation diffusion. The first issue is perhaps the most important. The differentiation of types of innovation, a work carried out by only a few scholars (Hevia and Isunza, 2010), is important in order to know whether innovation serves to strengthen participation, to empower citizenship or to empower specific groups or corporations. I will argue that in many cases innovation can play the role of cooptation and disempowerment.

The second issue is areas of innovation. Innovation started in areas of public policy both in Northern and in Southern democracies. In the case of public policies, I will argue that innovation is most of the time a positive phenomenon that produces results such as a larger citizenship engagement or a better deliverance of public good (Fischer, 2000; 2013; Pires and Cambraia, 2010; Wampler, 2014). In addition to that I will argue that innovation in public policy, even when it does not work well, never poses dangers to democracy.

The most important institution innovation in South America is participatory budgeting. I will use it to explain what is participatory innovation its potentials and problems. Participatory budgeting is a local practice of public deliberation on budget issues introduced in Porto Alegre in 1989 which was expanded first to a 103 in 2003 and then to 201 cities in 2008 (Avritzer and Wampler, 2008). Most likely it is practiced in more than 300 Brazilian cities today. Participatory budgeting expanded to many parts of South America and generated a very successful case in Argentina in the city of Rosario (Annunziata, 2011, 2013). Participatory budgeting has been expanded to Europe and we see cases such as Portugal where the main phenomenon is the death of participatory budgeting. How can we evaluate the different experiences of PB? This is the question this paper will approach based on the experiences of Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo and Recife.

## **Explaining the dynamics and outcomes of policy transfer – development and testing of an integrative framework**

Ellen Minkman (Delft University of Technology)

Arwin van Buuren (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

Victor Bekkers (Erasmus University Dpt. of Public administration and sociology)

This study addresses the question which factors explain the dynamics and outcomes of processes of policy transfer, by developing a conceptual framework (based on systematic identification of empirical research findings since 1996) and applying this framework to an empirical case study in Indonesia.

Over the past decades, the body of literature on policy convergence has expanded enormously. In 2000, Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) provided a six-question framework on policy transfer that is frequently studied. However, their final questions (“what restricts or facilitates the policy transfer process?” and “how is the process of policy transfer related to policy ‘success’ or ‘failure’?”) have received limited attention. The lack of fundamental explanations of policy transfer’s process, success or failure is surprising given the crucial role played by various factors in policy transfer’s occurrence and degree of success. Such factors contribute or become decisive during different stages of the transfer process. Studies that address these questions usually focus on a single conceptual exploration, regularly illustrated with anecdotic material. Although such studies are interesting, they fail to provide a coherent explanation to why some policies transfer and others remain immobile.

To address the issue, we will answer the question how policy transfer and non-transfer can be explained. In this study we are interested in the ‘action-oriented intentional activity’ of spreading a policy, which we labelled policy transfer.

We compiled a dataset of existing empirical research between 1996 and 2016 using the method PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis). We included findings from over 200 empirical cases of policy transfer, which originated from nearly 180 peer-reviewed articles in policy mobility, policy diffusion and policy transfer literature.

Based on this dataset we developed a conceptual framework, which describes three phases in the policy transfer processes (being preparation, exchange and adoption) and distinguishes between voluntary and coercive mechanisms of transfer. These processes are linked to three forms of adoption, namely imitation,

adaptation and inspiration, and the ultimate success or failure of the policy transfer. From existing empirical studies we extracted factors that influence these phases, mechanisms and adoption forms. These factors determine whether and why policies travel successfully and include detailed features of the external and internal environment, design of the transfer process and a policy's transferability and adoptability.

The systematic mapping of empirical studies confirmed a bias towards qualitative research approaches and a focus on voluntary and successful transfer between developed, and more particularly, Anglophone countries. We therefore test the general applicability of our framework in a case of failed transfer of water management strategies in Jakarta, Indonesia.

This study contributes to the panel in two ways. First, our comprehensive framework adds to the theoretical debate about why policies transfer. Second, we demonstrate our argument in an empirical study on failed transfer in an underrepresented geographic area.

Reference:

Dolowitz, D. P., & Marsh, D. (2000). Learning from abroad: The role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making. *Governance*, 13(1), 5–24.

### **Policy diffusion and translation. The case of Evidence Based Health Agencies in Europe**

Benamouzig Daniel (CNRS / Sciences Po (CSO-LIEPP))

Patrick Hassenteufel (Université Paris-Saclay)

Health Technology Assessment (HTA) represents a set of clinical and economic methods now used worldwide to evaluate medical innovations, especially new medicines before market access. In a context of economic restrictions, scientific knowledge as well as policy reforms triggers the development of HTA in health care systems since the 1990s. Such methods have been implemented in many countries in similar independent agencies, working according to formal procedures and deliberative principles at arm's length from ministerial departments. The rise of these "evidence based bureaucracies" represents a remarkable example of knowledge circulation and policy diffusion across nations.

Examined more closely, the rather uniform picture appears however different. In each national context, the development of HTA is embedded in specific institutions, with different requirements and opportunities. Based on a qualitative study, this paper compares the use of HTA in three key European countries: the United Kingdom, France and Germany. The creation of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) in London in 1999 is often considered as a major source of inspiration for similar agencies in other European countries, like France (Haute Autorité de Santé) and Germany (IQWiG). The role of stakeholders such as pharmaceutical firms and patient organizations in the UK, in particular, is considered closely by other countries along with the participation of more traditional academic scientists and administrative staff in public expertise. In France and Germany, evidence based agencies were from inception embedded in a more administrative pathway in the case of France and in closer relations with health professionals in the case of Germany. These respective positions crucially shaped and limited their own development.

As a conclusion, what appears at first sight as knowledge circulation and policy diffusion at regional or global levels owes also to be viewed as policy and knowledge translations, involving institutional settings and social stakeholders — such as the pharmaceutical industry, patients organizations and health professions — at local level to fully capture international dynamics of policy transfer.

### **The Horizontal Diffusion of Policies for Urban Risk Reduction: Lessons on "Fungibility" from South-South International Municipal Cooperation**

Kristoffer Berse (University of the Philippines Diliman)

This paper introduces the concept and practice of international municipal cooperation (IMC) as a modality for policy transfer in the area of disaster risk reduction (DRR). IMC is an emergent form of public-public partnership that primarily involves sub-State actors from two or more countries, a global phenomenon that traces its roots to the rise of transnational municipalism in the latter half of the twentieth century. The study specifically aims to shed light on the following questions: How does IMC facilitate the horizontal diffusion of local DRR policies across national boundaries? Why do urban policymakers and managers engage in policy transfer, both as a source and recipient? What forms of "translation" take place in the process of adopting these policies? What are the reasons for modification and non-adoption? To answer the above questions, the paper examines a multi-year South-South partnership involving three cities, namely, Makati (Philippines), Kathmandu (Nepal) and Quito (Ecuador). Findings suggest that while IMC has a lot of

potential in promoting policy transfer and diffusion, the “stickiness” of good DRR policies is sensitive not only to the transfer process per se, but also to the characteristics of the policies themselves, particularly in relation to their “fungibility” or “goodness of fit” for “institutional transplantation.” The study hopes to contribute to ongoing discussions in comparative public policy, policy mobilities, and inter-local cooperation in the context of urban DRR.