P05 / Policy Transfer in the Global South

Topic : COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

Chair : Kidjie Saguin (University of Melbourne)

Second Chair : Niklas Weins (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

In the past 10 years, policy transfer studies have increasingly accommodated Southern approaches and views on the transnational movement of policies. The notion of South-South cooperation (SSC) is built on the idea that policies are deliberately circulated within and among nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. South-North policy transfer (SNPT) is also intensifying but often happening unnoticed because of asymmetries in power, resources and authority that privilege Northern countries as the legitimate sources of innovative policies (Kemmerling 2023). Incorporating knowledge generated from Southern experiences can not only challenge these asymmetries but it can also transform the understanding of policy transfer, more specifically and public policy, more broadly (Stone et al 2020).

Central to expanding the epistemic coverage of policy transfer studies is the understanding of how ‘reference societies’ or “a nation from which to borrow elements” are created (Waldow 2019, 2). Traditionally, reference societies are constructed as Northern countries based largely on historical, colonial and cultural affiliation. However, recent studies shed light on new patterns of constructing reference societies. The use of large-scale performance-based metrics has established Singapore and Shanghai as a source of successful education policies because they topped global quantitative rankings. Elites from Northern countries express negative reception or ‘shock’ against being ranked below their Southern counterparts, prompting a contentious reform process. These developments present new forms of contestations.

Recently, Brazil and China emerged as a powerful source of new instruments, knowledge, ideas (Waisbich et al. 2021). They come as the ‘two main protagonists in the context of SSC’ as they actively peddle their different policy paradigms undergirded by different political systems (Oliveira and Romano 2022, 5). China has exerted influence in the Global South on environmental policies through varying strategies including conventional development aid (Ray et al 2015, Weins et al 2023). Brazil has served as inspiration for many social policy innovations largely through SSC with the help of many international organizations (de Oliveira 2022). More recently, less economically and politically powerful countries have also become ‘reference societies’, holding power and capacity to transfer policies within specific domains. Bangladesh’ anti-poverty policies like microfinance and graduation of the ultra-poor has spread through SSC (Halder and Mosley 2004). The Philippines is the primary source of innovation on labour migration policy (Saguin and Shivakoti 2023). Similarly, there is a decidedly local element to the construction of reference societies (Saguin and Sha 2023). Best practices are often experimented on and mastered by local governments and scaled up for transfer to the transnational level (Montero 2016).

This panel seeks to bring together researchers who examine old and new reference societies in the Global South at the local, national and transnational levels. It aims to build an interdisciplinary conversation around the multi-scalar contestations that occur around the reconstitution of reference societies. It hopes to invigorate studies that unravels the theoretical foundations of the factors that drive for policies to be constructed as successful, and for nations, cities or localities to be perceived as legitimate sources of policy lessons in the Global South.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel seeks contributions from various researchers working on the multi-scalar dimensions of policy transfer in the Global South. We are interested in papers that investigate similar notions of ‘reference societies’ – their construction and reconfiguration. Papers that dwell on the politics of (old and new) reference societies are particularly welcome. Specifically, we invite papers that analyse how policies are being transferred at the local, national and transnational levels that pay attention to the contestation around the source of the policy and the subsequent translation in the ‘recipient’ society.

Some of the research questions the panel seeks to explore are the following:

· How do countries from the Global South emerge as new ‘reference societies’? How is this process

contested?

· How are reference societies constructed at the local level? Is there any specific pattern to how policies from ‘local reference societies’ are transferred?

· Why are certain countries and their policies likely to be constructed as a reference society or ‘best practice’ rather than others?

· How are new reference societies accepted in the Global South? Is there a similar ‘shock’ to their introduction as noted in traditional reference societies?

This panel embraces methodological pluralism and so we invite papers following different disciplinary traditions – geography, environmental studies, local government, among others – but the main focus is on policies that have been transferred at different scales – transnational, national and local. Both empirical (quantitative and qualitative) and conceptual studies are welcome.

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Session 1Policy transfer in the Global South

Friday, July 4th 08:00 to 10:00 (A5)

Discussants

Lhawang Ugyel (Australian National University)

Policy Transfer from the European Union to Vietnam: The case of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

Thu Nguyen Hoang Anh (LKY School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore)

Beyond Rivers: The Policy Transfer and Institutionalization of the N-Chief System in China

Weiquan Chen (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

Divergent epistemologies for policy transfer: Comparative Examination of the disciplines of 'Development Studies' and 'Public Policy'

Sony Pellissery (National Law School of India University)

Smriti Das (XLRI Delhi-NCR Campus)

Richu Sanil (Foundation for Ecological Security)

Traditional donors and transnational networks in the process of transferring evaluation to Cameroon: understanding the twists and turns of the circulation of a public action instrument.

Celestin Rodrigue Ebede Koungou (Université de Douala)

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Session 2Policy transfer from the Global South

Friday, July 4th 10:15 to 12:15 (A5)

Discussants

Sony Pellissery (National Law School of India University)

1. From Transfer Agents to Transfer Institutions: The Internationalisation of the Concept of Gross National Happiness

Lhawang Ugyel (Australian National University)

Carsten Daugbjerg (University of Copenhagen)

Climate cooperation in a multipolar world: China’s environmental policy exchange with Africa and Latin America

Niklas Weins (Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University)

Annah Zhu (Wageningen University)

Policy design through transnational policy networks: Mainstreaming graduation in social protection in the Global South

Kidjie Saguin (University of Melbourne)

BRICS Plus core policy beliefs, ideas and goals in multilevel financial governance

Flavia Bellieni Zimmermann (University of Melbourne)