Transnational Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the 'Internationalisation' of Policy

Diane Stone
Department of Politics and International Studies
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL, UK
Diane.stone@warwick.ac.uk

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1. Introduction

This paper has as its primary focus the role of international actors in policy/knowledge transfer processes. International actors are taken to mean (i) international organisations; (ii) states and (iii) non-state actors. The policy transfer activities of international actors will be addressed in relation to what the workshop organisers have referred to as "the internationalisation of policy". The approach is grounded in policy studies generally, but draws particular insight from the sub-field of global social policy (Deacon, 2003).

Policy transfer is understood as a process by which '*knowledge* about how 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' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000: 5; my emphasis). Policy transfer can involve a number of processes. The objects of transfer can include (i) policies, (ii) institutions, (iii) ideologies or justifications, (iv) attitudes and ideas, and (v) negative lessons (Dolowitz, 1997). Transfer can take place across time, within countries and across countries. Additionally, there are different degrees of transfer: this can involve straight-forward copying of policy, legislation or techniques as well as various forms of emulation, synthesis and hybridisation, and inspiration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996: 351).

In line with the notion that "with increasing globalisation of economic activity, there are increased opportunities to 'learn' from experiences of policy interventions elsewhere"[1], this paper stresses the role of agency in transfer processes. That is, the discussion emphasises the logic of choice in selection of policy ideas, the interpretation of circumstances or environment and (bounded) rationality in imitation, copying and modification by decision makers. However, transfers can be voluntary or coercive or combinations thereof (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000: 13-17). Similarly, it is worthwhile to note the distinction between successful transfers and inappropriate, uninformed or incomplete transfer or what anthropologists have sometimes called 'maladaption'. The constraints and forms of resistance to transfer are numerous and complex, and can lead to policy failure.

The aspirations of this paper are limited to three objectives. Firstly, with its focus on international actors the paper goes some way towards redressing the tendency towards methodological nationalism in much of the early policy transfer literature. Secondly, there is a concern to make distinctions between the terms 'transfer', 'convergence' and 'learning'. The argument in this context is that transfer is likely to be more effective where learning has also taken place. Attention is drawn to 'soft' forms of transfer – such as the spread of norms – as a necessary complement to the hard transfer of policy tools, structures and practices. Thirdly, transnational networks are identified as an important vehicle for the spread of policy and practice.

Policy transfer is argued to be a real phenomenon. It is the case that "national policy decisions are being informed by international experiences and policy structures". Nevertheless, domestic political considerations and capacities along with local economic conditions entail that any policy transfer is negotiated and mediated. Consequently, determining the degree of transfer is complicated by other policy dynamics in play. Policy transfer is not an independent process but is part of the wider policy process and shaped by such a process (Wolman, 1992: 44). As such, there are practical and theoretical limitations to the interpretation and tracking of this phenomenon. In brief:

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[1] Workshop invitation letter.

- the degree of transfer is likely to be more shallow or superficial when it is imposed and/or when little local learning is involved;
- the line of causality between exporting/transferring and importing/adopting jurisdictions becomes increasingly indiscernible as more transfer agents become involved;
- 'pure' transfer is unlikely as the internal determinants of polities inevitably modifies the adoption and/or implementation of policy;
- relatedly, it is not readily apparent when transfer processes have stopped, and other policy dynamics have kicked in;
- 'hard' transfers – of policy structures or instruments – require corresponding 'soft' normative or ideological transfers to endogenise acceptance and ensure policy 'fit';
- at the level of theory, there is disagreement as to whether ideational or material forces are the main driving force of convergence;
- international transfers of policy and practice do not always occur in a simple bilateral exchange between sovereign states but can be complemented and/or by-passed by transnational transfer networks.

Nevertheless, the paper suggests that the future prospects for policy transfer are heightened by tendencies towards regionalisation; the expansion, mandate creep and growing integration of activities among international organisations; and by the construction of new venues of global governance. The unprecedented speed and ease of communication and advances in transportation that is associated with phenomenon of globalisation contributes to transfers. Globalisation has been both propelled by and creates new opportunities for policy transfer, such as through 'global public policy networks' (GPPNs).

The paper is structured into four parts. The second section below assesses the different meanings of 'transfer', 'convergence' and 'learning' and some absences in the policy transfer literature. The third section draws upon empirical material to outline the diverse transfer activities of states, international organisations and non-state actors and to highlight some of the dilemmas and contradictions in the process. The fourth and final section draws attention to collaborative pursuit of transfer via policy/knowledge networks and consequences for global governance.

2. Policy Transfer, Convergence and Social Learning.

Policy transfer studies were originally developed in the US as a means to explain the adoption of policy and spread of diffusion throughout this federal system. Diffusion has been defined as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system" (Berry and Berry, 1999: 171). Diffusion describes a trend of successive or sequential adoption of a practice, policy or programme. However, the concept also seeks to identify the patterns according to which policies spread.

The 'diffusion' literature suggests that policy percolates or diffuses; something that is contagious rather than chosen. It connotes spreading, dispersion and dissemination of ideas or practices from a common source or point of origin. Four forces may create diffusion patterns:
1. a national communication network among state officials;
2. states are influenced by geographically proximate neighbouring states;
3. leader states pioneer the adoption of a policy that 'laggard' states subsequently follow;
4. national government is a vertical influence for emulation (Berry & Berry, 2000: 172-78).

This perspective posits incremental changes in policy.

The diffusion literature has been criticised for its limited focus on broad historical, spatial and socio-economic reasons for a *pattern* of policy adoption (Freeman & Tester, 1996: 9) neglecting political dynamics involved. It has an apolitical and neutral character (Peters, 1997: 76). Diffusion approaches exhibit a fascination with the process and the conditions for transfer rather than the content of new policies (Freeman, 1999). While national decision-making can be influenced by diffusion, policy innovations elsewhere are not sufficient condition for another jurisdiction to adopt the same policy. The determinants of policy arrangements can include factors that are *internal* to a system more so than external factors; such as the changing dynamics of political interests and the socio-historical make-up of a polity.

The resurgence of interest in this field in the 1990s has brought with it a proliferation of labels. They include terms such as:
- 'lesson-drawing' (Rose, 1993)
- 'policy band-wagoning' '(Ikenberry, 1990)
- 'policy borrowing' (Cox, 1999)
- 'policy shopping' (Freeman, 1999) and
- 'systematically pinching ideas' (Schneider & Ingram, 1988)

These terms convey a sense of transfer as a voluntaristic activity. Other terms emphasise compulsory conformity; that is:
- 'penetration' (Bennett, 1991)
- 'external inducement' (Ikenberry, 1990)
- 'direct coercive transfer' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996: 347)
- 'authoritarian imposition' (Ward, 1999: 58) or
- 'policy pusher' (Nedley, 1999).

They are action-oriented concepts, giving precedence to the actor and intention where the transfer process results from some rational judgement on part of policy makers.

By contrast, the term 'policy convergence' suggests that transfer arises as a consequence of structural forces. It is a macro-level idea to describe a pattern of increasing similarity in economic, social and political organisation between countries that may be driven by industrialisation, globalisation or regionalisation. Where diffusion attends to the conscious spread of policies and ideas between countries, convergence represents an important counter-factual proposition which allows for the possibility of similar developments taking place in different countries with or without any direct link between them. Accordingly, the convergence approach helps in explaining why adaptive change might take place, although it less informative on the form it takes or "why one solution to a common problem should be preferred over others" (Freeman, 1999). Approaches to convergence 'diverge on whether the driving force is economic or ideational, and whether states retain agency in the face of globalization or are dominated by structural determinants' (Drezner, 2001: 55). This paper does not engage with this debate,[2] suffice

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[2] Those working on policy diffusion and convergence (for example, Radaelli 2000; Freeman & Tester, 1996) challenge the logic of choice and "have adopted a processual perspective which goes beyond the mechanical transfer model". Structuralist approaches identify a process of institutional isomorhpism. Laggard states emulate the practices of global leaders. The 'new institutionalism' views behaviour as being led by organisations and institutions through processes of institutional iso-morphism. This approach emphasises the taken-for-granted aspects of political life where actors follow rules, shared interpretations, schema and meanings. Agent centred approaches do not dismiss structural forces but suggest that in varying degree, states and organisations can mediate, these dynamics.

to say that the approach here is not structurally deterministic and greater emphasis is given to the force of knowledge and of agency. The language of 'convergence' and 'harmonisation' is more apolitical and technical while 'policy transfer' is directly concerned with decision-making processes and the contested politics of who gets what policy.

Convergence is not the same as policy transfer. Policy transfer can be a causal factor in convergence, although convergence can result from other factors. Internal determinants may mean that may reach similar policy arrangements by very different routes. However, these same internal determinants that are specific to any social system may also mean that strong path dependencies prevail and direct a nation to diverge. Thus there are 'varieties of capitalism' in Europe. Nevertheless, path dependenices may be overcome, in some instances, by powerful transnational forces (Thatcher, 2000).

'Learning' is also connected with policy transfer, but again, this concept is analytically distinct. Here, the emphasis is on cognition and the redefinition of interests on the basis of new knowledge which affects the fundamental beliefs and ideas behind policy approaches (Hall, 1993). Consequently, learning could just as likely lead to policy innovation or termination as well as policy transfer. In other words, lesson-drawing and transfer can be an outcome of learning. Transfer of specific ideas or programmes is underpinned by deeper and prior process of learning.

The concept of learning has been subject to a number of interpretations (Bennett & Howlett, 1992: 277; Jacobsen, 1995; Morrissey & Nelson, 2001). Richard Rose in his analysis of lesson-drawing argues that learning occurs via transnational 'epistemic communities'. For Sabatier (1991), policy oriented learning occurs within advocacy coalitions. Peter Hall's model of different orders of 'social learning' and paradigm shift is also influential.[3] These approaches have in common the view that learning takes place "in complex arrangements of state and societal actors in various types of domestic and transnational policy networks and policy communities" (Bennett & Howlett, 1992: 282). Policy learning occurs when policy-makers adjust their cognitive understanding of policy development and modify policy in the light of knowledge gained from past policy experience.

Learning can lead to the development of 'consensual knowledge' by specialists about the functioning of state and society but which is also accepted as valid by decision-making elites.[4]

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[3] 'First order' change involves 'satisficing' and minor adjustments in the precise settings of policy instruments. Second order learning is characterised by re-tooling, limited experimentation and introduction of new policy techniques. This involves more obviously political and strategic factors. Changes at these two levels is characteristic of normal politics. "Normal policy making" is characterised by "incrementalism" and "bounded rationality". 'Third order' change involves a radical shift in "the hierarchy of goals and set of instruments employed to guide policy" (Hall, 1993: 284). Theoretically, policy transfer and lesson-drawing can occur across all three orders of change. That is, first order policy transfer, if it happens at all, would include the adoption of technical procedures first introduced in another context -- the kind of fine-tuning that comes with "instrumental adjustments". It is with second order change that possibilities for policy transfer are greater. The accumulation of anomalies and policy failures, rising doubts about the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements and increasing uncertainty can prompt decision makers reassess and to look to developments in other jurisdictions for inspiration. It can lead to more substantive institutional reform than 'fine-tuning', although the distinctions between the two are not clear-cut. For an application see: Hemerijck & Kersbergen (2000).

[4] Consensual knowledge is structured information about causes and effects among physical and social phenomena that enjoys general acceptance as true and accurate among the members of the relevant

When consensual knowledge is developed at a transnational level, the potential exists for the exchange of ideas providing impetus for policy transfer. While learning via regional or global networks helps promote an 'international policy culture', it is not automatically the case that learning will institutionalise in international organisations or in national governments. Learning is uneven and imperfect across different actors within a policy network.

Evidence of learning can have implications for the character or degree of transfer. Policy learning may result in a more coherent transfer of ideas, policies and practices whereas mere copying may well be *ad hoc* and piece-meal. Policy co-ordination and/or implementation is more likely to result when there is a reasonably wide consensus of the desirability of introducing policy lessons among actors inside and outside government. Additionally, certain actors may have a greater capacity for learning whereas others may adopt lessons for symbolic purposes or as a strategic device to secure political support (Robertson, 1991) rather than as a result of improved understanding.

Consequently, learning can be of different 'orders'; tactical or instrumental learning as opposed to social or policy learning. Thus an international consensus may prevail on 'best practice' but local political realities may mean that this consensus cannot take root in policy development. Political and bureaucratic interests are constrained by electoral considerations, issues of feasibility, funding shortfalls, war or famine that prevent 'harder' forms of transfer. Ascertaining the kind of learning and where or with whom it is taking place can provide understanding of the kind of policy change taking place as well as the possible effectiveness of that change. In short, there may be transfer of policy knowledge but not a transfer of policy practice.

The extant public policy literature exhibits an entrenched geographic concentration. Most writing has been transatlantic comparing the USA and UK. Lately, there has been a strong European focus. The literature is primarily Western ignoring the experiences and lessons to be drawn from developing countries (Nedley, 1999). As such, the coercive character of many forms of transfer, or 'penetration', is not well accounted.

A focus on coercion tends to direct a methodological focus on exogenous factors impelling conformity. This can result from structural factors such as global economic integration and financial liberalisation or from agency such as when the IMF imposes conditions on loans. By contrast, a focus on voluntary transfers directs analytical attention to the internal attributes and salient features of polities – similar political ideologies, languages, policy styles, institutions or administrative arrangements – that create a sense of 'psychological proximity' (Rose, 1993) and facilitate lesson-drawing.

In addition to a Western bias, research remains weak in the consideration of global, international and transnational structures, and whether policy transfer has become more widespread in recent decades (Evans & Davies, 1999; also Ladi, 2000). The literature has focused on lessons and policy transfers between nation-states with an implicit tendency to assume a bilateral relationship. The policy transfer metaphor implies a direct exchange process between exporting and importing countries. However, there can be transfer agents that are not based in or identified with either the importing or exporting jurisdiction but which facilitate the exchange

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professional community. To become consensual, information must be analysed, arranged and structured in accordance with epistemological principles that command wide acceptance in society. In our day and age, this has mean the various strands of positivism still enjoy a preferential position (Haas & Haas, 1995: 259).

between a number of polities. In other words, rather than horizontal transfers between states, policy transfers can occur vertically between states and international organisations or between transnational non-state actors.

It is also possible to learn from more than one jurisdictions and to take away a multiplicity of lessons. This 'mixed scanning' might result in transfer pastiche of negative lessons taken from one or two places and positive lessons drawn from elsewhere. It results in policy transfer that is an accumulation of lessons or 'selective borrowing' that leads to hybrids and combinations of 'synthetic innovation' (Ward, 1999: 58) in order to make policy development best fit local conditions.

The policy literature tends to be focused on the state. Accordingly, there has been a tendency towards 'methodological nationalism'; that is, a focus on dynamics within the nation-state and comparison of such sovereign units (Scholte, 1996). Importantly, transfer can also be facilitated by organisations outside and between the state. In other words, policy transfer is just as likely to be achieved by mechanisms embedded in markets and networks as in the hierarchies of the state. The role of business in policy transfer and standards setting is evident. Enhanced capital mobility is regarded as one impetus for convergence and the transfer of regulatory standards. One hypothesis here is that transnational corporations "as a group are coherent and these firms act in ways consistent with their preferences" sometimes pressuring states into a "regulatory race to the bottom" through threat of capital flight (Walter, 1999). A criticism is the erroneous assumption that states ignore other constituencies – electorates, bureaucracies and interest groups – and do not have market power vis-s-vis global capital (Drezner, 2001: 58). Similarly, in the field of environmental governance a shift in the prevailing policy pattern from a sectorally fragmented and largely legally based regulatory approach to an integrated environmental policy characterised by "softer" and/or more flexible instruments such as voluntary agreements, ecolabels, or ecological tax reforms can be observed. In contrast to the widespread assumption that policy convergence takes place at the level of the lowest common denominator, global development in the field of environmental protection has to an important extent been guided by the developmental status reached in frontrunner countries (Jörgens, 2000).

A further anomaly in the literature concerns the agents of, and actors involved in, transfer. The emphasis has been on the role of *official* actors in such processes; that is, bureaucrats, politicians and state agencies. However, the agents of lesson drawing and policy transfer are a much broader category of individuals, networks and organisations. Key actors in the mechanics of policy transfer are international organisations and non-state actors such as think tanks, consultant firms, law firms and banks. Recognition of their roles complicates understanding of policy transfer processes beyond that of simple bilateral relationships between importing and exporting jurisdictions to a more complex multilateral environment. The effect is a deepening of the transnationalisation of policy. Accordingly, the next section discusses the policy transfer capabilities of three sets of actors: states, international organisations and non-state sectors. The following section concludes with an analysis of their collective interactions via transnational networks.

3. Non-State Transfers, State-led Exports and International Policy Inducers.

This section of the paper is concerned with the 'hard' and 'soft' mechanisms of policy transfer. The emphasis is on the soft transfer of norms and knowledge as a necessary but not sufficient condition for learning in conjunction with transfer.

State Agencies of Transfer

The Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) is a unit attached to the British Cabinet Office. CMPS seeks to promote a 'lesson-drawing' dynamic within the British civil service. Towards this end, it has arranged seminars on the subject, produced documents and a web-site,[5] including a workbook *Using International Comparisons in Policy Making*. The rationalisation for it is as follows:

> The use of international comparisons is an essential element of modern, professional policy making. Looking abroad to see what other governments have done can point us towards a new understanding of shared problems; towards new solutions to those problems; or to new mechanisms for implementing policy an improving the delivery of public services. International examples can provide invaluable evidence of what works in practice, and help us avoid either re-inventing the wheel or repeating others' mistakes (CMPS pamphlet, 2002)

This is a form of the 'internationalisation of policy' but one that internalises lessons to a national system. However, while the CMPS advocates the possibilities for improved policy development, the capacity and interest within other parts of the civil service to engage in rigorous international comparison is subject to debate.

Some parts of the bureaucratic structure are more attuned to policy transfer (Berry & Berry, 1999: 179). This may result from numerous factors: the presence or not of an international professional community; resourcing issues and time constraints in policy development; political sensitivities as well as an individual or organisational disinclination to look elsewhere. Thus, many examples of 'best practice' may exist and may be advocated inside and outside a social system, but ignored. For example, in South African housing policy, it appears local policy communities chose to disregard extensive and consistent foreign advice about the exemplar housing development paradigm in Chile. This was said to result from a long-standing sense of national isolation as a consequence of apartheid; the planning pressures leading up to the 1994 election; the need for compromise among local political constituencies combined with suspicion of the World Bank and an ingrained preference to look to the developed world for lessons (Gilbert, 2002: 13-22).

Where CMPS has tried to inculcate a proclivity for lesson-drawing and importing policy innovations or 'best practice', other state agencies are involved in the export of policy ideas and practices. In this regard, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) in Canada is a good example. IDRC is a quasi-autonomous governmental development agency with the objective of helping communities in the developing world find solutions to social, economic, and environmental problems through research (www.idrc.ca). Although a 'small fish' in the donor community pond, nevertheless IDRC projects contribute to the 'internationalisation of development policy' by externalising lessons. For example, a key component of RITC (research for international tobacco control), a secretariat based at IDRC, is 'knowledge transfer' to support local, national and international policy-making and program development (relatedly see Studlar, 2000).

In the 1990s, a large scale initiative – called Acacia – sought to develop IT infrastructure and capacities in four African countries: Uganda, Senegal, South Africa and Mozambique. One objective of Acacia was 'to make lessons learned about best practices in Mozambique available to other countries in the region' (Ofir, 2002: 35). A common instrument in the projects of each

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[5] www.cmps.gov.uk/policy hub

country was ELSA (Evaluation and Learning System of Acacia) designed as an evaluation tool for shared lessons and communication.[6] Not only was IDRC seeking to promote the transfer of IT technology from the developed world, it also sought to promote lesson-drawing between the Acacia countries as they built capacity.

A particular IDRC Ukranian project is replete with examples of transfer dynamics; specifically, negative lesson-drawing, emulation combined with learning as well as resistance to imposed normative standards. This project was focused on the Dnipro River Basin and major components were water pollution control, bioassays of water toxicology, information systems development and environmental auditing. One of the more tangible examples of transfer was the visit to Canada of a team of Ukrainian 'environmental entrepreneurs' to view Toronto waste management practices. One view was that "it was better to see once than to hear many times" (Anon, 2002: 28). The visit was a mechanism to appreciate the technology (the hardware) but also the ideas and informal practices (software) of Canadian environmental management.

In project evaluation, IDRC technique was seen in a positive light as facilitating informed adoption of 'best practice'. Copying or mimicry of policy or the imposition of policy lessons provides less scope for learning or the development of consensual knowledge. A frequent complaint of many developing country experts is that of the lack of the local knowledge of foreign consultants and one-size-fits-all approach to economic reform. Indeed, the evaluators of the Ukranian project noted that other donor programs where "90% of work is implemented by foreign experts" leads to less potential for learning and extent of transfer. This contrasts with the willingness of IDRC to share information and facilitate data exchange (Anon, 2002: 15). More specifically, the relationship with donor helped cultivate an understanding of the need to adopt international standards rather than pursuing with a dual system of reporting to the donor and separate mode of environmental reporting to Ukrainian authorities. Importantly, IDRC project culture enabled local researchers to i) acquire knowledge to prepare competitive project proposals; ii) learn the language of donors; iii) enter the international scientific community.

A case of conscious 'non-transfer' or 'negative lesson-drawing' took place when IDRC refused to fund an expensive 'technological fix' (a high-energy plasma to treat waste from a meat processing plant)sought by local Ukrainian scientists and managers. IDRC position was that the plasma-based equipment was not only expensive but impractical (Anon, 2002: 32) for local needs.

An explicit form of normative transfer concerned the requirement of reporting on gender representation and participation in IDRC projects. It was met with some resistance as well as a lack of comprehension regarding the requirement for women's involvement as 'imposed by the IDRC's agreement with the Government of Canada'. The Ukranian partners 'remained skeptical', did not see gender participation in senior decision making as a priority issue and 'denied the existence of a problem'. In many quarters, gender requirements were seen as an issue inappropriately 'imported from abroad' (Anon, 2002: 44-45). Gender reporting took place but it was done for tactical reasons and not as a consequence of learning.

One tendency in the policy transfer studies is the emphasis on investigating directly observable transfers of people, policy instruments or legislation. There is relatively little analysis of the transform of norms and of those institutions that act as 'norm brokers' (Riggirozzi, 2003).

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[6] However, it is not evident that this tool was used effectively. This aspect of the programme was plagued by a number of management problems, turn-over among IDRC project officers, etc.

Implicit in IDRC funding priorities, reporting requirements and TORs for projects are certain normative standards. Norms are being transferred (if not necessarily absorbed) regarding research standards and gender participation. There was local receptiveness to scientific norms but not to gender issues. This suggests that the degree of transfer is likely to be more shallow or superficial when it is imposed and/or when little local learning is involved. Norms related to gender needed to be 'endogenised' to the same level of acceptance as IDRC programme officers specifically, and Canadian society generally, before they could make sense within the Ukranian community.

Relatedly, transfer is more likely to occur when lessons are 'proximate'. That is, that which is transferred is from a jurisdiction that is geographically, ideologically or culturally proximate. For instance, the 'transplanting' in the 1960s and 1970s of Anglo Westminster parliamentary systems to the South Pacific was, in some degree, incompatible with indigenous institutions. That is, the exporting and importing systems were not proximate. Many of these small states lacked strong local legal expertise undermining implementation of constitutions. Additionally, the 'transferability of a constitution will be determined by the presence or absence of an appropriate *Grundnorm* … the political preconditions, the mobilisation of political forces, and settlements between political groups" over land, ethnic representation before institutions 'stick' (Larmour, 2002: 49). By contrast, in Europe there is a common cultural heritage, shared histories, languages and institutions as well as similar levels of economic and political development.

Transfers from International Organisation

International organisations like the OECD or the United Nations (UN) are means to help develop common policy responses in some fields. Likewise, international regimes – a set of similar norms and principles, rules and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge – can also lead to harmonisation. UNAIDS, for example, is a multilateral initiative to co-ordinate responses to this pandemic.

As is evident, the European Union (EU) is an important institution promoting convergence of member states around policies such as the Euro. Harmonisation has been propelled by the recognition of states of interdependence and the benefits of membership and aided with economic and political incentives: structural funds, cohesion funds, voting rights, and assistance for fledgling democracies. Despite some sacrifice of national autonomy and sovereignty, harmonisation has been bolstered by awareness of the costs of divergence. As such, the EU can be considered a 'laboratory' for policy transfer. Following earlier concepts of diffusion patterns, all four types are evident in the EU context. First, in many policy areas there are communication networks among officials (see Radaelli, 2000). Second, states are influenced by geographically proximate neighbouring states as is evident from the number of states applying for accession. Thirdly, leader states pioneer the adoption of a policy that 'laggard' states subsequently follow. For instance, candidate countries emulate EU standards prior to accession. Fourthly, the European Commission is a vertical influence for compliance through directives and regulations. Numerous studies of Europeanisation now exist (see *inter alia*, Ladi, 2002; Schmidt, 2002; ESRC Future Governance at: http://www.hull.ac.uk/futgov/). Not only is the EU a laboratory, but in its external relations it is also a transfer agent. In preparation for the eastern enlargement of the EU, there are three pre-accession instruments available to the ten candidate countries. PHARE supports institution building and public administration reform. ISPA supports transport and environmental investment while SAPARD is concerned with agricultural measures. Collectively, they are designed to help induct the candidate countries into both the norms and technical arrangements of the EU regional policy model (Batchler, et al, 2002).

The development and spread of economic norms – such as transparency, capital mobility, convertibility and inflation avoidance – also influences state behaviour and conformity to what has been called the 'liberal international economic order' (Lal, 2001: 237) or more recently, the (post) 'Washington Consensus'. Shared norms precede convergence in the case where there is a common 'cosmological heritage' (Lal, 2001: 241). It has been facilitated by at least three sets of economic (dis)incentive: (i) treaties concerning trade as well as the international property rights of foreign capital; (ii) status incentives derived from joining economic clubs such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or EU; and (iii) economic sanctions or new forms of economic conditionality tied to loans.

GATT represented an international regime for member states to trade away their tariffs. The WTO represents a set of treaty-bound international norms that have "hardened" or institutionalised in codified trade law and adjudication panels. However, in the absence of an effective enforcement mechanism, adherence to WTO norms and standards is reliant upon the "internalization" of a belief in free trade and liberalisation in the domestic polities of member states. Without a 'cosmological heritage' or 'shared norms' that shape collective behaviour, compulsion is often necessary to ensure compliance and convergence. Economic sanctions are a blunt instrument and have been substantially criticised for being ineffective and/or having perverse outcomes (hence interest in 'smart' sanctions). Conditionality has five potential strategies (Lal, 2001: 253-56) relevant to understanding coercive and persuasive policy transfer.

1. *Inducement*: getting governments to enact policies they otherwise would not have initiated;
2. *Selectivity*: aid given only to those countries already exhibiting a 'good' policy environment;
3. *Paternalism*: donors attempt to get aid spent on the goods and services that they favour;
4. *Restraint*: seeking protection against policy reversal that may occur with a new government. It differs from inducement in that there is no policy disagreement between the recipient and donor country;
5. *Signalling*: Aid is used a device to signal 'good' policy behaviour by the recipient country

Inducement has lead to recipient states exaggerating the cost of policy reform thus raising the 'price' of aid, as well as selling the same reform package more than once to multilateral agencies (Lal, 2001: 253-56; also Gilbert, 2002: 4).[7] Such evidence suggests that trying to bribe the 'unconvinced' is unlikely to work. By contrast, a system of tied aid that 'locks-in' reform is more likely to reward 'good' performers and penalise countries with poor policy records. It is a policy transfer strategy that "creates incentives for the 'bad' to emulate the 'good' in the hope of getting future foreign aid" (Lal, 2001: 255).

Coercion is not the only approach of international organisations to promote 'best practice' or adherence to international standards. Institutions such as the World Bank, WTO and IMF have set up research departments or hold conferences and consultations to advocate the 'scientific' validity of their objectives, and have engaged in various outreach activities, data gathering and monitoring to promote awareness and educate the public. Knowledge sharing is a strategy of the

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[7] It has also seen some developing countries playing two games: one with international lenders and the other with domestic constituencies to deflect blame and responsibility. It is the so-called 'cunning state' strategy. The unbundling of sovereignty allows the state to claim their hands are tied by domestic political constraints slowing the pace of reform while to the citizenry, excuses for dismantling public responsibility are blamed on the conditions imposed by international financial institutions (Randeira, 2002).

World Bank and is based on the view that knowledge (education, technical expertise, IT, knowledge management, etc) plays a central role in economic and institutional development. It includes the regular ABCDE conferences and grandiose initiatives such as the much criticised Development Gateway; a common portal and one-stop shop for development knowledge on the Internet with one objective to 'harmonise' multiple different databases on development activity (see King, 2002). The World Bank Institute (WBI) contributes through developments such as two 'spin-offs – the Global Knowledge Partnership and Global Development Network (GDN) – its Distance Learning programme, the Learning and Leadership Center and the Training Institutes. The Bank presents itself as an agent of learning and a prompt for lesson-drawing; or in the words of one Bank Director, "the world's nations can learn a great deal from each other's experience" and "... we will continue to facilitate this learning" (EDI, 1998: 2). However, there are significant impediments: "… in the view of several senior (Bank) managers, there remains a serious and growing gap between what people are describing as best practice and the extent to which these ideal practices can be built into operations" (King, 2002: 319 my inclusion).

Rather than international organisations simply being an exogenous agent in the transfer of norms and principles of 'good' policy, transfer also occurs between international organisation. For example, to quote at length:

> The WTO's establishment was not just intended to formalise, deepen and widen an *international* system of trade regulation. It was also to bring greater coherence in global economic policy making by drawing together the work of the WTO with that of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, as well as to develop relations with other bodies such as the World Intellectual Property organization (WIPO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the International Organization of Standards (IOS) (Wilkinson, 2002: 129 my emphasis).

In other words, integration at institutional and professional levels amongst these international organisations creates *transnational* policy spaces in which policy transfers and/or convergence can also occur. It is a further form of the 'internationalisation' of policy making.

Non-State Actors

The diffusion of policy ideas, expertise, programmes and personnel from NGOs and social movements can be extensive (McAdam & Rucht, 1993). Here again, a problem of terminology arises: *'Policy* transfer' directs analytical gaze towards the state when it may be that ideas, behaviours, perceptions and discourses which are transported and adapted irrespective of state structures. As indicated earlier, non-state actors may be better at the 'soft transfer' of broad policy ideas (Evans & Davies, 1999) influencing public opinion and policy agendas. By contrast, officials are more involved in 'hard' transfer of policy practices and instruments involving formal decision-making, legislation and regulation. A novel development in this regard is the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (www.simpol.org).

Non-state actors are especially interested and involved in lesson-drawing, and many can be regarded as 'policy transfer entrepreneurs' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996: 345) facilitating exchanges between actors in several countries at any one time. Organisations such as think tanks or research institutes, consultancy firms, philanthropic foundations, university centres, scientific associations, professional societies, training institutes and so forth help transfer the intellectual matter that underpins policies. Processes of information sharing, research collaboration, advisory appointment and consultancy can operate as a channel for transfer of policy ideas. Ordinarily private or quasi-autonomous organisations, many have used their intellectual authority or market expertise to reinforce and legitimate certain forms of policy or normative standards as 'best practice'. They provide essential services for decision-makers by acting as resource banks;

advocating policy ideas and developing discourses of transfer; as well as spreading ideas and information through their professional networks and into media and civil society.

Transnational Think Tanks: The think tank form (originating in English speaking advanced democracies) is an organisational object of transfer that has been transplanted to many developing and transition countries (Stone, 2000) by bodies such as Freedom House, USAID and the World Bank. But cross-national comparison is also part of their *modus operandi*. An example of think tank advocacy that has assisted policy transfer concerns privatisation (Stone, 2000). A more recent example of research institutes roles in knowledge/policy transfer is the Global Development Network (www.gdnet.org). At the launch of the GDN, former World Bank Chief Economist, Joe Stiglitz', stated that "in developing countries, think tanks have proliferated and have become important agents to introduce and adapt new policy initiatives" (1999: 9). Similarly, Eastern and Central Europe is an area of significant think tank growth in the past decade and where the exchange of ideas, policy and practice is dense (Struyk, 2002). The Open Society Institutes have been an important medium for, and mediator of, Western ideas for transition. More recently, however, this Network has been a locus for policy innovation in relation, for instance, to the Roma. Rather than importing foreign approaches, home-grown policy has been spread regionally (Krizsan & Zentai, 2004). Another example, the Evian Group (www.eviangroup.org) educates and advocates the benefits of a liberal trading order. In orbit around the WTO, it is an elite association of corporate, academic and government leaders who are broadly aligned in a normative project to instill in public and political consciousness the virtues of an open world economy.

Multinational Consultants: With the advent of managerialism and its stress on exploiting the tools of financial management for efficient government, political executives and the senior officials of management consultancies increasingly interact (Bakvis, 1997). They cultivate links into international organisation (such as the public management committee, PUMA, of the OECD). The 'new public management' (NPM) ideas of *Reinventing Government* (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) were spread around the globe because of the existence of a global 'fashion-setting' network of management consulting firms and growth in the use of external consulting services by governments (Saint Martin, 2000). The large consulting firms such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers, KPMG or Andersen Consulting established 'government consulting divisions' advocating the adoption of 'a more managerial approach in government'. More recently, consulting firms have been provided enormous opportunities by rapid changes in information technology, down-sizing and out-sourcing, as well as the political transformations and move towards market economies in the former soviet states. Global consultancies have contributed to the globalization of the core values of Western culture generally, and the transmission of the idea of liberalisation specifically. Often the global brand name consultant firms act as 'reputational intermediaries'. They legitimate and signal to a wider international audience of investors and financial institutions that a country is "a serious and prudent economic manager" and "that the right kind of people are involved in the process" who "understand the global standards and are in compliance" (Nesseth, 1999: 22).

International Foundations: Political foundations are quasi-governmental actors that tend to provide support to political parties (as in the case of the German Stiftungen) or incumbent governments. For instance, the British Westminster Foundation for Democracy has been proactive in exporting democracy (Scott, 1999). Independent foundations, by contrast, have a greater degree of autonomy by virtue of their financial independence. However, they are equally involved in the transnational spread of ideas, values and norms. As is well known, the Soros foundation network was concerned to promote 'open societies' by introducing programmes developed in the West into countries of the former Soviet Union, Haiti and South Africa.

In theory, these knowledge organisations have the institutional capacity to scan the international environment and undertake detailed evaluations of policy that will help prevent the simplistic, ad hoc copying of policy that leads to inappropriate transfer and policy failure. However, it is difficult to generalise about the character of lessons drawn by knowledge organisations (or the actors in them) and, in particular, whether learning has taken place. The capacities and intentions of these actors differ considerably and will shape the interpretations of policy experience, which lessons are drawn and how and why they are 'exported' or 'imported'.

Notwithstanding evidence of considerable degree of information sharing, policy research and expert advice, demonstrating that these knowledge organisations transfer ideas into policy is another matter. The causal nexus between transferred policy ideas and their adoption is not clear and transparent. There are many intervening variables. There is also the methodological problem of demonstrating the impact of ideas when it is not possible to ascertain the cognitive order of decision-makers.

It is relatively easy to engage in the 'soft' transfer of ideas and information but it is a more difficult enterprise first to see such ideas structure thinking and secondly, to ensure that ideas institutionalised. While some ideas may capture the political imagination, many more fall by wayside. Non-governmental modes of *knowledge* transfer may be more extensive than *policy* transfer. The non-governmental status of non-state organisations is a major structural constraint to policy transfer. Non-state actors cannot bring about policy transfer alone but are dependent on governments and international organisations to see policy transfer instituted in policies and programmes.

Accordingly, these organisations are often to be found in partnership or coalition on either an ad hoc or more permanent basis with government departments and agencies, international organisations or with other knowledge organisations. Consultants, foundations, universities and think tanks are not isolated or unconnected actors. Whilst such actors are 'delinked' and relatively autonomous from the state, they interact and overlap in complex networks.

4.   Policy Partnership and Transfer Networks

Analysis has usually focused on bilateral exchange relations between states or between a developing country and international organisation or on the advocacy of non-state actors. This is of limited utility given that the locus of decision-making and sources of authority in international policy domains are not vested in clearly defined institutions. However, given that research is already "difficult because it involves in-depth knowledge of the content of policy and policy development in two or more countries" (Studlar, 2000), it becomes more complex when trying to factor in other transfer actors and attribute cause and effect relations.

A more dynamic perspective on transfer is to recognise the joint interactions between states, international organisations and non-state actors. These interactions can involve a shared experience of learning about problems and the development of a common perspective or "international policy culture" (Ikenberry, 1990: 89). Transnational policy communities of experts and professionals that share their expertise and information and form common patterns of understanding regarding policy through regular interaction (international conferences, government delegations and sustained communication) are another force for convergence (Bennett, 1991: 224-25).

Where and how does the 'internationalisation of policy' take place? Asking such a question leads into field of proliferating terms from scholars in the social sciences as they come to terms in identifying and labeling emergent forms of regulation and co-ordination in global and regional domains. The terminology is often at odds with terms such as 'global governance', 'international regimes', 'global public policy networks', 'transnational partnerships', and 'overlapping clubs'. It is necessary to make some distinction between levels of analysis in transnationalised forms of governance.

'Partnership' will be taken to mean a category of relationships at the micro-level of policy development. 'Networks' are a meso-level concept and the bulk of the discussion is reserved for this category below. 'Overlapping clubs' of international organisations and regimes operate at the macro-level. Collectively, networks, clubs and partnerships mark out a diversity of transnational policy spaces.[8]

In a world without viable global/universal institutions, "overlapping clubs" are a means to provide "order" and policy co-ordination (Rosecrance & Stein, 2001: 232). Overlapping clubs include regional associations (such as the EU, ASEAN and NAFTA) and functional regimes (such as IMF and WTO). Functional clubs are not geographic but address specific functional concerns: economic, military, political, environmental. In this perspective, enduring multi-functional institutions of a universalist character (League of Nations and the United Nations) are relatively weak and fragmented. By contrast, overlapping clubs begin with a small set of members that grow by accretion and evolve with reformed objectives. Multiple institutional designs emerge according to problem, issues and context. However, increasing integration of these international organisations, along with 'mandate creep', creates another space within which policy transfer occurs.

Partnerships between organisations are formed to enhance outcomes, qualitatively or quantitatively, as well as to produce 'synergistic rewards' (Brinkerhoff, 2002). The rhetoric of partnership is well entrenched in development policy (Gilbert, 2002). It is found in the requirement for local partners for funding by many development agencies and schemes such as USAID's New Partnership Intitiative or the World Bank's sponsorship of the Forum of Partnering with Civil Society. One 'learning initiative', Partnerships for Poverty Reduction (1996-98) disseminated hundreds of best practice case studies (Brinkerhoff, 2002: 7-9). IDRC is strong on partnership. Such partnerships may be in areas as diverse as water sanitation projects, urban housing programmes or road safety. More often than not, partnerships can be seen as localised, time contingent and involving a discrete set of partners oriented towards grass roots implementation and service delivery. NGO involvement is often high in project design and direction. However, these arrangements do not make formal policy. Partnership is a tool of development for the implementation of policy determined elsewhere.

Global Public Policy Networks

Networks are increasingly being cultivated and managed by governments and by international organisations for the delivery of public goods. In many issue areas, governments and international organizations no longer have the ability to design and/or implement effective public policies. Treaties and conventions are often too slow for immediate issues. 'Global public policy networks' are helpful in some issue areas to come to terms with these challenges. Examples

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[8] These labels and distinctions are for the purposes of distinguishing levels of analysis in this paper. In practice, the terms 'partnership' and 'network' are applied loosely at all levels.

include the ISO 14000 process, the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research, the Global Water Partnership and the 'Roll Back Malaria Initiative' (Reinicke & Deng 2000). They are different from partnerships in that they have more formalised structure, longevity and more sustained official involvement of a multiplicity of non-state actors, international organisations and states in a specific policy area. These developments[9] suggest that we are witnessing a shift in the locus of policy debate and content away from more formal global institutions like the UN (Deacon, 2003: 28).

Not dissimilar to partnership, a key feature of a network is a shared problem on which there is an exchange of information, debate, disagreement, persuasion and a search for solutions and appropriate policy responses. In other words, networks are a framework for policy oriented learning (Knoepfel & Kissling-Näf, 1998: 347). Networks bring together representatives from international organisations and state agencies with politicians, the media, business groups, trade unions and sometimes grass-roots associations. That is, they are trisectoral incorporating 'stakeholders' from the market, state and civil society.

Networks represent a soft, informal and gradual mode for the international dissemination of ideas and policy paradigms. Through networks, participants can build alliances, share discourses and construct the consensual knowledge that defines an international policy community. Networks also enable actors to operate beyond their domestic context and networks are the means by which organisations individually and in coalition can project their ideas into policy thinking across states and within global or regional fora.

Networks can also be viewed as mechanisms for 'hard' transfers. That is, a mode of governance – regulation, policy coordination, pooling of authority and joint decision-making – whereby the patterns of linkages and interaction as a whole are taken as the unit of analysis, rather than simply analysing actors within networks. This approach focuses on the structure and processes through which joint policy is organised. In short, there is a functional interdependence between public and private actors whereby networks allow resources to be mobilised towards common policy objectives in domains outside the hierarchical control of governments (Börzel, 1998).

It is a view of policy transfer as having 'steering capacities' to become a form of 'governance by diffusion' (Jörgens, 2001). Indeed, a key function of global networks is facilitating the negotiation and settlement of global standards. This is happening in areas as diverse as financial regulation and environmental management. The complexity of negotiating and setting standards, as well as the concerns of fairness and equity, typically requires the involvement of stakeholders from all sectors on a representative basis. However, they lack the 'de jure' authority of international organisations.

An example is GAVI; the Global Alliance on Vaccination and Immunization (www.vaccinealliance.com). It is a coalition of UN organizations, national governments, foundations (such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), NGOs, and the pharmaceutical industry, formed in response to stagnating global immunization rates and widening disparities in vaccine access among industrialized and developing countries. GAVI has a complicated structure but a coherent policy approach is engineered by entities such as the GAVI Working Group which meets four times a year and has weekly teleconferences and the National Interagency Coordinating Committee. It is a mechanism for international policy coordination. The core of GAVI business, to-date, has been to introduce new vaccines to countries but it is also an

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9 There are many GPPNs. See www.globalpublicpolicy.net

important structure for the dissemination of knowledge about vaccines. However, successful standard setting does not end with agreement on a norm. The network must also proceed to implementation and compliance. In terms of standards setting, GAVI has been praised for introducing across countries, results based funding systems in the health area as well as encouraging parallel reporting and monitoring systems (Ollila, 2003:49-54). In addition to establishing common procedures, GAVI itself has been used as a model for the establishment of other health related GPPNs such as the Global Fund to Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). However, the long term sustainability of these networks (especially receipt of promised donor support) casts some doubts about network capacities to compel or cajole compliance and underscores their 'de facto' governance status.

The advantage of focusing on these kinds of networks is two fold. First, as discussed above, these coalitions provide insight into policy transfer at transnational levels. Secondly, a focus on networks is one approach to reconciling agent-centered policy transfer approaches with the structurally oriented diffusion/convergence studies. Networks can be viewed as agents of transfer but also as structures. Table 1. attempts to plot how networks as transfer mechanisms differ from, but also combine elements of the ideational and institutional mechanics of transfer.

These modes of transnational transfer are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, it is conceivable that some GPPNs could 'harden' and institutionalise over time to such an extent that they are viewed more as formal institutions with political authority than as informal networks. Indeed, some claim that these 'independent' GPPNs are partly designed to circumvent the governing authority and standard setting function of UN or WHO (Ollila, 2003: 57). Consequently, there have also been suggestions that as GPPNs tend to be issue focused, pragmatic in orientation and sub-contracted, there needs to be an over-arching sets of principles to steer the conduct of these policy arrangements and ensure some feature of accountability (Deacon, 2003: 29).

Reprise: Transfer Potential in Transnational Spaces of Governance

The objective has been to shift the focus from institutions and policies at the nation-state level, to address how policy transfer not only takes place in transnational domains but can also be considered one constitutive element of supra national governance. This is not to deny the continuing power and impact of nation-states. The domestic politics of nation states will continue to ensure difference and diversity. States will remain important mediators of globalisation but their capacities to react and respond will differ substantially. However, policy transfer is not simply a dynamic between states. As is apparent, policy transfer takes place in a multi-organisational context. The transfer of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas happens within regional associations and between international organisations. Circumstances of complex multilateralism bring additional considerations of how social movements, corporations and civil society actors by-pass national policy making processes to influence international organisations. This paper has neither sought to provide a comprehensive overview of the transfer activities of institutions like the World Bank, IMF, the EU or WTO nor simply redress the insufficient attention given to their civil society partners and/or critics. Instead, the concern has been to indicate that transfer activity transcends both the national and the international and also takes place in 'the spaces within and between these overlapping and competing agencies' as 'something that passes for a global governance mechanism' (Deacon, 2003: 15-16). One consequence is the 'transnationalisation of policy'.

Table 1. Three Modes of Policy Transfer

	Ideational	Institutional	Networks
Who? Agents of Policy Transfer	Business advocates, think tanks, experts, professional associations	Politicians, international civil servants, state officials	Multi-actor; Trisectoral: NGOs/civil society; state and international agencies; business
What is transferred?	Soft: Ideas, paradigms, lessons. Problem definition and policy interpretation	Hard: Instruments, legislation, policy approaches	Hard and Soft
Authority basis	Epistemic/normative	Political/Bureaucratic' 'de jure'	Collective: pooled responsibility among 'stakeholders'; 'de facto'
When: Factors prompting re-evaluation of policy	Uncertainty, crises	Institutions refract pressures for change; slow to adapt	Intractable cross-border policy problems, absence of national responsibility
Character of search	Rational, Innovative Goal oriented	Path dependent, Incremental	Problem solving, Organic (initially) as goals unclear
Lessons taken from where?	Best exemplars in public sector, market place and civil society	Dominant institutions, Psychologically proximate jurisdictions	Experience of network members; ie. network bounded rationality
Lessons realised where in the policy process?	Problem definition and agenda setting	Decision making; resource allocation; implementation	Implementation, service delivery and monitoring
Lessons applied/ implemented where?	In 'borderless' professional communities and social movements.	In nation-states Multilateral venues	Between and above states; Transnationally via networks/clubs/ partnerships
Language	Transfer, 'cosmological heritage', norms	Diffusion Mimetic isomorphism	Collective action, Multilateralism
How is change enacted voluntarily?	Embedded consensual knowledge; paradigm shift	Rules and regulation,	Organised anarchy; fluidity and flexibility; trial and error
Mechanisms	Conferences, professional association 'best practice' advocacy,	Legislation, regulation, standards setting, war, aid conditionality	Partnerships GPPNs Alliances for implementation/services
Outcomes	Social learning and consensual knowledge	Harmonisation, Convergence and divergence	Shared identity and common preferences through action; social capital
How is change imposed?	Hegemonic power	Structural power	"Network power"
Imposed outcomes	Tactical learning; superficial transfers	Penetration & resistance, Divergent outcomes	
Why is change/transfer brought about?	Agency,	Structural imperatives	Network mediation between state structures; Constructing new spaces for agency
Why not? Factors preventing transfers	Absence of international community; no consensual knowledge; ideological contest	Lack of institutional 'fit'; discordant policy instruments	Lack of shared vision; network disunion; defection
Causes of Nation-state Convergence	Common norms or ideology among political elites	Exogenous pressures on the political economy	Networks shape the search process and constrain implementation cross-nationally
Reasons for divergence	Learning, negative lessons,	Internal determinants: eg bureaucratic resistance; political inertia	

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