

New frontiers and directions in policy transfer, diffusion and circulation research: agents, spaces, resistance, and translations

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Policy transfer, diffusion and circulation studies are a fertile ground for innovation in public policy analysis. In a globalized world, where state boundaries are permeable and public policy travels transnationally, the diffusion of policies is what naturally connects domestic to international policy. The recent surge of publications in the field consolidated an important and dense body of knowledge. However, after years of research, there now seems stasis if not stagnation, with relatively little conceptual innovation. In this article we propose to address fresh avenues for future research, considering what needs to be better understood in the policy diffusion phenomenon. The new frontiers to be explored are not only associated to heuristic dimensions of the field, but also to empirical dynamics that emerged in the past years. We highlight six new frontiers for policy transfer and diffusion research: (1) the role of the private sector and consultants; (2) internationalization of domestic coalitions; (3) transnational spaces and transfer agents; (4) policy translation; (5) resistance to transfer; and (6) South-South or South-North transfers.

Keywords: policy transfer; transfer agents; transnational arenas; policy coalitions; global South.

Novas fronteiras e direções na pesquisa sobre transferência, difusão e circulação de políticas públicas: agentes, espaços, resistência e traduções

Os estudos sobre transferência, difusão e circulação de políticas são um campo fértil para a inovação no campo da análise de políticas públicas. No mundo globalizado, onde as fronteiras do Estado são permeáveis e a política pública trafega transnacionalmente, a difusão de políticas é o que conecta naturalmente a política doméstica à internacional. O recente aumento de publicações no campo consolidou um corpo de conhecimento denso e relevante. No entanto, após anos de pesquisa, parece que há agora uma certa estase, para não dizer uma estagnação, com relativamente pouca inovação conceitual. Neste artigo propomos abordar novos caminhos para futuras pesquisas, considerando o que precisa ser mais bem compreendido sobre o fenômeno da difusão de políticas. As novas políticas a explorar não estão, em nossa opinião, somente associadas a dimensões heurísticas do campo, mas também a dinâmicas empíricas que emergiram nos últimos anos. Destacamos seis novas fronteiras para a pesquisa sobre a transferência e a difusão de políticas públicas: (1) o papel do setor privado e dos consultores; (2) a internacionalização das coalizões domésticas; (3) os espaços transnacionais e agentes de transferência; (4) a tradução de políticas; (5) a resistência à transferência; e (6) as transferências Sul-Sul ou Sul-Norte.

Palavras-chave: transferência de políticas; agentes de transferência; arenas transnacionais; coalizões de políticas; Sul global.

Nuevas fronteras y rumbos en la investigación sobre transferencia, difusión y circulación de políticas públicas: agentes, espacios, resistencia y traducciones

Los estudios sobre transferencia, difusión y circulación de políticas son un campo fértil para la innovación en el campo del análisis de políticas públicas. En un mundo globalizado, donde las fronteras del Estado son permeables

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y la política pública transita transnacionalmente, la difusión de políticas es lo que conecta naturalmente la política nacional a la internacional. El reciente aumento de publicaciones en el campo consolidó un cuerpo de conocimiento denso y relevante. No obstante, después de años de investigación, parece que ahora hay un cierto letargo -por no decir paralización-, con relativamente poca innovación conceptual. En este artículo proponemos abordar nuevos caminos para futuras investigaciones, considerando lo que requiere una mejor comprensión sobre el fenómeno de la difusión de políticas. A nuestro parecer, las nuevas políticas por explorar no están solamente asociadas a dimensiones heurísticas del campo, sino también a dinámicas empíricas que emergieron en los últimos años. Destacamos seis nuevas fronteras para la investigación sobre la transferencia y la difusión de políticas públicas: (1) el papel del sector privado y de los consultores; (2) la internacionalización de las coaliciones nacionales; (3) los espacios transnacionales y agentes de transferencia; (4) la traducción de políticas; (5) la resistencia a la transferencia; y (6) las transferencias Sur-Sur o Sur-Norte.

Palabras clave: transferencia de políticas; agentes de transferencia; arenas transnacionales; coaliciones de políticas; Sur global.

1. INTRODUCTION

Policy transfer, diffusion and circulation studies are a fertile ground for innovation in public policy analysis.¹ In a globalized world, where State boundaries are permeable and public policy travels transnationally, the diffusion of policies is what naturally connects domestic to international policy. The recent surge of publications in the field consolidated an important and dense body of knowledge. Frameworks such as that presented in the pioneer work by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) were produced to facilitate research design and analysis. The role of transfer agents as individuals (Mintron, 1997; Porto de Oliveira, 2017), think-tanks, non-governmental actors (Stone, 2004), and international organizations (Weyland, 2006; Pal, 2009) were explored in depth. Within the European integration process, a separate stream of work defined the field of Europeanization (Radaelli, 2008; Sauruger and Surel, 2006). The role of mechanisms such as learning, coercion, emulation and competition (Graham, Shipan and Volden, 2013; Lee and Strang, 2008) were considered a consensus in the area, as the article of Claudio Couto and Gabriel Bellon shows in the case of Brazilian State Constitutions, in this Special Issue of RAP. Moreover, new insights from other fields of research such as geography — with the policy mobility approach, represented by the article of Jennifer Robinson also in this Special Issue — and anthropology, were brought to the debate and compelled public policy analysts to revisit their own work. However, after years of research, there now seems stasis if not stagnation, with relatively little conceptual innovation.²

In this introductory article we propose to address new frontiers for future research, considering what needs to be better understood in the policy diffusion process.³ These are not closed reflections, but ongoing thoughts that we expect will foster debate in this area of research. This article and the

¹ Porto de Oliveira and Faria (2017) distinguish three traditions of research to analyze the international flow of political ideas, models and institutions: policy transfer, diffusion and circulation.

² As said by one of the participants during the panels on policy transfer held at the International Conference on Public Policy, Singapore, June, 2017.

³ We use the term “policy diffusion” as a general phenomenon to talk about “transfer, diffusion and circulation” processes as understood by Porto de Oliveira and Faria (2017).

special issue of the Brazilian Journal on Public Administration (RAP) which it introduces, are outcomes from the International Seminar on Policy Diffusion, organized by the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (Cebrap), in 2016. During the conference we realized that the field would benefit if we understood better the features that have been overlooked by the literature, such as domestic coalitions, private actors, transnational arenas, resistance dynamics, and translation. The aim of these reflections is to contribute both to the international debate, where studies are quite advanced, and to the Brazilian discussion, where analyses are just beginning to take shape (Porto de Oliveira and Faria, 2017).

The new frontiers that need to be explored are not only associated with heuristic dimensions of the field, but also with empirical dynamics that emerged in the past years, with the engagement of private actors, the internationalization of domestic coalitions, the proliferation of transnational arenas and the proactive strategies of Southern governments in policy “export”. In general, policy diffusion will be better understood if we combine macro and micro-scale analysis (Hadjiisky, Pal and Walker, 2017). The articles published in the journal presented by this introductory piece shed light on important aspects of the questions above, and we believe they will expand the frontiers of research on policy diffusion in exciting ways.

This introductory article will highlight six new frontiers for policy transfer and diffusion research, frontiers that are developed in detail in the articles published in this special issue of RAP: (1) the role of the private sector and consultants; (2) internationalization of domestic coalitions; (3) transnational spaces and transfer agents; (4) policy translation; (5) resistance to transfer; and (6) South-South or South-North transfers.

2. ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR CORPORATIONS AND CONSULTANCY

In principle, it should always have been possible to include the private, for-profit sector in analyses of policy transfer — corporations, after all, were one class of actors listed as early as 1996 in the Dolowitz and Marsh transfer framework (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996). But in practice, with few exceptions, the private sector has been almost completely ignored in favor of governments, international governmental organizations, and — oddly, since they are non-state actors as well — NGOs. This is in contrast to the way in which domestic public policy processes are generally analyzed, wherein the private sector is an important player through mechanisms such as lobbying, or regulation, or partnerships of one sort or another to implement public policies. This may be because in the domestic arena, the policy process takes place (outside of federal or highly decentralized systems) within a single jurisdictional space, and so we naturally give equal weight to all the different actors, regardless of the sector. In the case of policy transfer, the key variable is *crossing* jurisdictional boundaries, and indeed it is the crossing or the movement — the mobility and the borrowing — that is the focus. The formal actors in this type of process are states and policy makers, and it would be natural to observe the focus on their interactions. Interestingly, the inclusion of non-state actors like NGOs in this process might be due to their more explicit and determined role in international lobbying and advocacy (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Stone, 2004). Business and corporations have been less visible and strident on this front, working behind the scenes. Their invisibility may be due to their privileged access.

Since this is largely *terra incognita*, at least for the policy transfer literature, it is necessary to think about possible avenues of inquiry that would strengthen and enrich transfer analysis. This article will offer three. The first is one that has in fact been explored occasionally: the role of international consultancies such as McKinsey, Ernst and Young, or KPMG, to name the largest omnibus agencies, though it is likely that there are dozens if not hundreds more specialized such firms (Kipping and Saint-Martin, 2005; Saint-Martin, 2000). International consulting firms referred here are those that have some critical mass of offices across the globe, with local branches in a number of countries. The firms' infrastructure provides a system to disseminate policy ideas, as well as local connections to national and sub-national policy makers. The assumption here is that the dynamic of transfer with the participation of international consulting firms is different from the state-to-state transfer through the work of public officials. Typically, the firm will be hired by policy makers to provide advice on an issue, and the range can cover social policy fields (health and education), economic sectors (advice on taxation), or services (urban transport). The policy advice is elaborated within the firm's local/national office, but it draws on "best practices" and international models studied by the firm to form a well-grounded opinion. The alleged comparative advantage of consulting firms over other advisory agents such as think tanks or academic institutions, or indeed of doing it in-house within a government agency, is that they are more nimble, up-to-date on the latest practical innovations, pragmatic and practice focused, as well as client-responsive. The very best firms have the resources to recruit the brightest people, and thus enjoy a reputation for quality and rigor (and creativity — the academic sector, alas, often suffers from an image of being stodgy and abstruse). Of course, the question is where do the firms get their ideas? The largest ones have divisions dedicated to the public sector, with specialists who often have backgrounds in public administration (they may indeed be former state officials, or at least have had some experience in government). So there is probably a channel through the academic training that these advisors receive, but they also have the internal ideational resources of the firm itself. Perhaps the most intriguing and illustrative current example of policy transfer through consulting channels is "deliverology". Sir Michael Barber, its chief guru, was the director of the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit under Tony Blair. However, he then subsequently migrated to other sectors, both to the consulting industry (with positions at McKinsey and Boston Consulting Group) and academia (with positions at Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Graduate School of Education). Barber is a living example of the intertwining of government, academia, education, and consulting.

Consulting firms are a specific actor of the private sector, operating as idea merchants and advisors. They are in the policy advisory business. What about the corporate sector, for-profit firms that could not be expected to be interested in policy transfer per se, but are engaged in it nonetheless? This suggests a second avenue of analysis, of corporations and for-profit firms operating in the transfer space much like lobbyists do in domestic policy processes. The limelight on international advocacy has for years been on non-governmental organizations, typically around human rights issues and the environment, and at first blush it would seem that no corporations have the same sharp public profile that NGO activists (and charities) have on the global stage. However, they do have several platforms. One is international organizations themselves. One of the pioneers of this was the OECD, which was founded in 1961 and established two committees, one for businesses (the Business and Industry

Advisory Committee — Biac), and one for workers (the Trade Union Advisory Committee — Tuac). In the last twenty years, as the number and scope of global fora on almost every imaginable policy issue have grown, businesses have become prominently and almost routinely engaged for their views and experiences. One example is the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (Eiti), sponsored through the World Bank. As its title suggests, it brings together some of the world's largest resource companies, governments, and NGO watchdogs and advocates to hammer out protocols and agreements on tax and financial transparency, all under the broad umbrella of corporate social responsibility. Another example is the OECD-led initiative to deal with Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (Beps). This has involved over 100 countries, their tax administrations, the IMF, the UN, and the G20, and has produced an Inclusive Framework on Beps. Businesses and civil society organizations have been engaged in consultations. Yet another example comes from global efforts for tobacco regulation. The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is a global instrument for the transfer of global policy instruments dealing with the production, sale and distribution of tobacco, and the big companies — even while they are explicitly excluded from the conventions of parties to the agreement — do their best to lobby, and of course affect the implementation of regulations on the ground (Mamudu, Cairney and Studlar, 2015; Kalra et al., 2017).

This suggests a third avenue for analysis of the corporate sector and its role in policy transfer — implementation. Again, because the traditional focus of work on policy transfer has been on *policy*, that is, its design features and how it travels, there has been less work on the later phases of policy adoption once transfer has occurred, that is, implementation, a process that often requires partnerships or at least passive acquiescence by economic sectors that are affected by a new policy intervention. Particularly in policy fields that rely heavily on regulatory instruments — e.g., pharmaceuticals, IT, health, transportation — the need for cooperation by the economic actors in the sector is likely to lead to their influence over the detailed design of regulatory regimes (Walker, 2017). We can take this one step further in considering the field of non-market based regulation, such as coffee, fish, and forest products, where a significant amount of the “policy transfer” is among private actors (companies and non-profits). There has been significant research in this field, but it has not connected as of yet with the literature on transfer (Auld, 2014; Auld and Gulbrandsen, 2010; Cashore, Auld and Newsom, 2004).

3. INTERNATIONALIZATION OF DOMESTIC COALITIONS

The classic definitions of public policy is based on its technical elements — problem definition, goals and instruments. Naturally, the focus of the policy transfer literature has been on “policy”, understood as a package of solutions or interventions. It is just as easy and natural to slide into a technical analysis of the “fit” between the recommended policy intervention and the problem in the other jurisdiction. This, however, neglects an important sociological and political dimension of any given public policy. To the extent that it is a result of a policy process that has involved debate, alternate points of view, some element of compromise, and winners and losers, every public policy is a crystallized balance sheet of those wins and those losses, a rendering of the political debates and conflicts that shaped it. It is also, at some level, a reflection of the capacities and contours of the policy system that produced it. These are two distinct points, and deserve two distinct illustrations. For the first, (the idea of the balance sheet), imagine a country seeking a model for a new carbon tax. A model in country X levies

a broad carbon tax (households and firms); doesn't compensate by reducing taxes in other areas (say, the sales tax); and plows all the new tax revenue back into green technology research. The model in country Y imposes a much narrower tax (just on firms), introduces a reduction in corporate income taxes equivalent to the carbon tax, and funds no new green technology. Both are "carbon tax" regimes, but the one in country X was likely the result of a successful battle by environmental groups. The one in country Y was probably the result of a political environment with much stronger business interests, and weaker environmental lobbies. Which model is better technically, is beside the point. Transferring one model or the other is also a transfer of its political assumptions. Trying to transfer the first model (that was won due to the strength of the environmental sector) to a more free-enterprise policy context will be risky.

For the second example, we could imagine (this is actually happening, of course), the attempted transfer of Western models on gender and sexual equality as emblems of the highest standards of human rights. But these standards (and their accompanying policy instruments) will be alien to more conservative cultures, but more importantly will lack the traction in civil society organizations that would help move an agenda like this forward. Gay marriage, for example, is not necessarily the result of a majority coalition, but in part of the places where it has been adopted can be now considered an effusion of the political and social culture, it is as much a "policy" as it is a vindication of a broad political culture, with more social inclusion.

Of course, in the field of policy transfer and diffusion there is an increasing consensus about the importance of context, of translation and adaptation (as will be discussed below); but here we are pointing to a different phenomenon. To the extent that policies being transferred (or proposed for transfer at the international level) are expressions of the winning coalitions that supported them, it could be expected that this transfer dynamic has a more textured domestic and international connection. Policy transfer might be a type of "two-level" game (Putnam, 1988) where domestic coalitions will be a supportive network in the transfer process. What might appear as a space dominated by state actors might in fact have a more complicated "backstage" populated by the domestic actors who support a particular policy model and wish to see it spread more widely. This is seen most clearly in the recent turmoil in US foreign policy. Put crudely, US foreign policy in the last twenty years has been said to represent an internationalist, human rights, interventionist, and broadly globalist, neo-liberal framework that appealed to both Democrats and Republicans. It reflected a different type of "Washington consensus", a consensus among coastal elites about America's role in the world, and its example in terms of democracy, human rights, and open borders and markets. President Trump has simply kicked over the table with an "America First" rhetoric that seems to reflect a different coalition. The effects of this are rippling through American trade policy, its position in the UN, and immigration policy, to name just a few.

A similar example comes from countries that are typically seen to be the best examples of human rights regimes, the conscience of the UN, and role models: the Scandinavian countries and Canada. But when these countries go to international meetings to uphold key standards and practices, when they participate in good governance and democracy promotion activities, they have their domestic constituencies looking over their shoulder, staying at the same hotels as the delegations, attending briefings, and reporting back home (Pal, 1995). These are the coalitions that have "won" in their

domestic spaces, and they want to ensure that their governments advocate for their victories by turning them into standards worthy of emulation internationally.

Understanding a given public policy as marked by the process that produced it, as a congealed compromise or victory, sensitizes us to an additional aspect of the “two-level” game involved in policy transfer — it may be far more than dry negotiations among transfer agents and recipients. The domestic coalitions from country X that are peddling their transfer object will, in some cases, want that transfer to succeed because it reinforces their own domestic victory and spreads their preferred model. Domestic actors in the potential recipient country (see discussion of resistance below) who support and who oppose the model will be well aware of the stakes, not only for their domestic interests but for the dominoes that will fall afterwards. Indeed, to the extent that domestic actors see domestic policy as a move on an international chessboard, they will see their struggles in a game surrounded by a wider theoretical framework, especially if the chessboard is conceived more concretely as a contiguous geo-political region rather than the more abstract “world” or “globe”. These might include South America, the EU, Southeast Asia, etc.

As for policy resistance, the following situations may help to exemplify it: The current renegotiation within the Nafta between the US, Canada, and Mexico is clearly a two-level game, where the position of each country reflects the interests of their domestic coalitions (e.g., Canada and its lumber producers against the US and its lumber producers), which is expected in an international treaty negotiation and is a cause of resistance to move forward. The second example is the migration crisis in the EU, which shows a great complexity. Among the different situations in place: there is the EU Schengen agreement and its provisions for the registration of migrants; there have been very different policies announced for member states such as Hungary and Poland (with more restrictions), and for Germany and the Scandinavian countries (generally more open); the Brexit referendum was in part a vote related to the issue of migration and border control. While the crisis seems to have abated for the time being, the various domestic and state actors see this context as a clear struggle over which model will prevail and be accepted (transferred) by others. Beneath the surface of the debates in the European Union’s headquarter there is a sort of “battlefield”, with resurgent nationalist movements squaring off against a host of human rights groups, foundations, and cross-European players like the Soros Foundation. Unsurprisingly, the Hungarian government has directly challenged the Soros Foundation, the Central European University (funded by Soros), and even the media, as part of its resistance to EU standards.

Moreover, coalitions can operate on “multiple-levels”. There are a number of local practices being promoted all over the world, both to state level systems and at the international level. In fact, activists of the municipalist movement who advocate policy models have to deal not only with their national governments, but also with international organizations while defending certain ideas and practices to solve urban or subnational public problems. Another regional integration process example is Mercocities, which is emblematic of this movement. At a first stage, the network of cities created among mayors from the Southern Cone of America in the mid 1990’s was an attempt to mirror its European version, Eurocities. However, the underlying cause for their connection was to resist (discussed below) the process of regional economic integration, the Mercosur, which was developing under the umbrella of neoliberal ideas put forward by Presidents in office at that time and national elites. This

group of progressive mayors built the network advocating for the participation of the cities in the regional integration process. Notwithstanding, the network became an important platform for policy transfer about urban management techniques among members and it was progressively integrated in the development of Mercosur.

It is important to understand precisely the conflict that underlies a large part of the policy transfer process, and the ways in which domestic coalitions influence the transfer dynamic.

4. TRANSNATIONAL SPACES AND TRANSFER AGENTS

Research in the field has dedicated much attention to actors who promote policies and governments — both national and subnational — adopting them, focusing their fieldwork on specific territories and institutions, a city, a country, an international organization and so on. However, there is still an overlooked space, which is crucial for understanding contemporary policy flows: transnational arenas. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of these spaces in different areas, such as summits, conferences, meetings and workshops promoted by international organizations, private actors or transnational networks. They can have a large range of topics, such as the Rio + 20 Conference, the World Economic Forum and World Social Forum, World Urban Forum, or be more focused, such as the Global Child Nutrition Forum or the Metropolis World Congress, and regional ones such as the European Union and the Mercosur meetings, as presented in the article “Facilitated Governance in Mercosur”, by Pereira and collaborators, as well as “Migration governance in South America”, by Braz, both published in this issue of RAP. Also important are small-scale events such as training workshops, regional conferences and other meetings. The article by Saguin, Ramesh and Howlett “Diffusion of CCTs from Latin America to Asia”, included in this special issue, shows that a conference organized by the World Bank in Istanbul in 2006 was important for sowing the seeds for the adoption of a CCT program for education in the Philippines. As analyzed in these articles there are important dynamics of policy transfers that occur in such arenas.

“Unpacking and opening” these transnational events is crucial to move beyond territorially based analysis in public policy. In fact, several dynamics of policy transfer occur in these transnational spaces, which have no specific territory. In these events, transfer agents advocate for models and practices, which are legitimated through awards and other forms of recognition. Funding is raised for policy implementation, networks are established, principles are discussed and negotiated, cooperation documents are signed and statements are declared. In spite of these dynamics, few studies have concentrated efforts to analyze these spaces, and it is necessary to “open the box” of transnational arenas to understand why some policies are circulating more than others, who are the actors promoting policies at a global level, and how policy translation is taking place. Different avenues for reflection can be advanced on this matter: Who are the transfer agents operating in these spaces and how do they act (Hassenteufel, 2005; Stone, 2004)? Which models are being legitimized as good for transfers and which are not? Where do resistance dynamics occur?

From the analytical strategy point of view, there is already literature working with the ethnography, either individual or collaborative, of transnational events and this approach might benefit our understanding of policy transfer, diffusion and circulation dynamics. Aykut, Foyer and Morena (2017) analyze the climate change and environmental agenda, and have used collaborative ethnography

in different events, such as COP 21 and the Rio + 20 summit. They produced a cartography of climate spaces in their work. They also analyze “the circulation of information and people, between these spaces and the individual and collective strategies developed to facilitate — or restrict — this circulation” (Aykut, Foyer and Morena, 2017:278). In transnational events there are different policy alternatives set to fight global problems, such as climate change, gentrification or economic crisis. These alternatives take shape as policy solutions, which are frequently drawn from best practices gathered from around the world. Solutions for public issues are not only translated when adopted, but as Brosius and Campbell (2010) argue, they vary from time to time, from summit to summit. As the authors illustrate in the environmental domain, ideas about conservation can have dramatic shifts over time, moving from state-run parks to the inclusion of local communities and markets. In their study, the emphasis is on the link between the local practices and global processes.

Transnational events became an important space for transfer agents to act with a global impact (Porto de Oliveira, 2017). This is the moment where “actors’ performance becomes public”, where researchers can observe them in their “natural habitat” (Schatz, 2009). It is important to recognize who the main actors are in these processes. They are panelists, speakers, decision makers, as well as those funding or organizing the event. With the emergence of big NGOs such as Greenpeace, Human Rights Watch, or Handicap International, these summits became a central place for debate and deliberation over ideas, models and strategies. For example, in the Global Child Nutrition forum, Brazil, through the Center for Excellence Against Hunger, has an important space. Brazil’s main contribution to the debate is around its model for school meals that includes state purchasing from family farms.

These are not ‘conflict-free’ spaces. In the United Nations Habitat conference, for instance, there is a strong struggle between the representatives of cities and country delegates. The urban agenda in this conference is organized by the United Nations, and the participants are country delegates (ministers and diplomats), as well as international organizations’ staff. However, the urban agenda directly concerns the cities, and mayors are usually not able to deliberate in important parts of the conference. Moreover, mayors frequently disagree with country delegates — for different reasons from ideological to issues related to public action — and there is then a struggle over the power to decide and who should take part in the debates proposed by the event.

Reconfigurations of world power also occur in these arenas where actors have to show their position towards not only the international political community, but also to global public opinion. Some forums are more restricted to experts’ attention, because of the specificity of the issues they deal with, while others reach a wider public, due to the themes or the participants. The World Economic Forum — traditionally held in Davos, Switzerland since 1971 to discuss the state and development of global economy — is an example of such arena. In the February 2018 edition of the forum, there was anxiety over Donald Trump’s position towards the global economy, where possible isolationism could arise. A trend of a new configuration of relations was emerging, with Europe vindicating its necessity to have a more central role on world politics, as Angela Merkel claimed in her speech, insisting on increasing funding for military actions. France’s Prime Minister Emanuel Macron, brought to the debate the necessity of humanizing global economy. These configurations can alter the geopolitics of economic policy model transfers.

Resistance dynamics also occur in these contexts, in the form of counter forums. A striking example is The World Social Forum, which is a space that emerged in opposition to the World Economic Forum. The World Social Forum was created in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in opposition to the one in Davos, in order to bring together social movements from all over the globe to discuss the social agenda. On a smaller scale it is possible to observe counter forums in parallel to the official summits organized by international organizations. The UN-Habitat Conference, already mentioned, provides another example. During the third edition of the event, held in Quito in 2016, there was a parallel forum called “Resistance to UN-Habitat III”, claiming that the model of city presented by the UN in the official event was not the one social movements, intellectuals and citizens wanted. The event was organized by professors, students, leaders of social housing movements, peasant associations from the Andean region, and local and international NGOs. It took place in a local university, through different panels, workshops and activities. Participants tried to organize a public demonstration around the area where the official event was taking place, but the police strongly intervened.

Understanding these dynamics is an essential step towards the analysis of micro-dynamics of policy transfers and diffusion processes. However, we still need to organize the collective discussion in the field in order to raise new concepts and middle-range theories for the role of transnational spaces.

5. POLICY TRANSLATION

As we go deep into the micro-dynamics of policy transfers (Hadjiisky, Pal and Walker, 2017), diffusion and circulation, we understand that these are far from being technical, linear and rational. In order for models to travel from one place to another, they have to somehow be translated, and this requires the interpretation of policies by those who are taking, receiving and implementing them. In fact, the transfer of identical policies is rare. Even in cases where there is an institutional imposition that induces governments to adopt similar norms, as shows in the case of Brazilian State Constitutions in the article by Couto and Bellon published in this issue of RAP, there is space for translation and interpretation of norms. Translation can take place in different stages of the policy diffusion processes, in unexpected ways. This means that when policies are transferred in time and space, they go through changes and adaptation both in terms of material components (e.g., model, administrative arrangement, program, norms, etc.) and in the abstract dimension (idea, ideological or political content, causal belief, worldview, principles, etc.).

This debate is present in French studies that rely on the sociology of public action (Halpern and Le Galès, 2011; Delpeuch, 2009; Dumoulin and Saurugger, 2010), as well as the analysis inspired by the work of Latour and the sociology of science. Latour argues that within diffusion processes, actors provide interpretations of facts according to their interests, producing different narratives. Diane Stone (2017) highlights the role of governmental, non-governmental and private actors as intermediaries. The translation issue was brought to the debate by the discussion on policy mobilities (Peck, 2011), taking into account its mutation, as well as by the anthropologists' concern about public policies moving and meanings (Clarke et al., 2015). In the words of John Clarke and collaborators, as policy travels “it is revised, inflected, appropriated and bent into encounters of different kinds” (Clarke et al., 2015:15). The meaning attributed to the policy changes during the transfer.

In short, without some sort of translation, policies would simply not fit into different contexts or be accepted by heterogeneous groups. Actors frequently struggle over the content of the policy and, as mentioned previously, there are groups that might benefit more than others from a specific format. The idea that policies are in constant metamorphosis leads us to observe different dynamics of policy transfer that are worth highlighting. These dynamics involve actors, their interests and power relations, as well as the context of adoption. These translation processes can produce different narratives and instruments about apparently similar policies. There are two dynamics that we would like to highlight here. The first is translation as a strategy to persuade specific groups or to resist external imposition. The second is the translation of very broad — or in a certain way “empty” — principles.

Observing the role of actors is important to understand how policies are legitimated in different contexts. In fact, there can be multiple types of cleavages in how a policy should be designed and implemented, which model is more appropriate for a certain circumstance and context, and what are the political meanings that policies should carry with them. It is pertinent in this movement to set the question about how policies get onto the agenda of international institutions and what models are being promoted by those institutions. International organizations are not monolithic, instead, they are composed of different bureaucracies and groups, each one with its own interests (Barnett and Finmore, 1999). These groups of professionals are constantly scanning policies and best practices around the world that can be used in larger projects. However, in order to make these acceptable to heterogeneous groups, some kind of translation and simplification is necessary. These “best practices” are being shared without context, sometimes producing incomplete and inappropriate transfers.

There is an important role of political actors, such as the “policy ambassadors” (Porto de Oliveira, 2017) or brokers (Herring, 2010), on the promotion of policies inside international organizations and countries. In order for these actors to get a policy accepted by international organizations’ staff or even governmental authorities in a certain country, translations are inevitable. Policy simplification is also an important dimension to allow transnational transfer. Some examples include Participatory Budgeting (PB) or Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT), in their movement towards global diffusion.

First developed in Porto Alegre as an instrument to promote the radicalization of democracy, PB was adopted in more than 3000 cities (Sintomer, Herzberg and Allegretti, 2013) and is widely promoted by the World Bank. In order for this policy to get onto the World Bank agenda, it had to lose the radical democracy narrative and be adapted to a discourse of good governance and social accountability. Moreover, in some cases of implementation, in Europe for example, the model was adapted to a narrower version, losing some of the complex dynamics of the Porto Alegre methodology. In the case of Conditional Cash Transfer, it is interesting to observe how this policy in Latin America has been adopted by leaders with different political ideologies, from left to right wing governments (Osorio, forthcoming). The program has also been promoted by the World Bank in different latitudes, such as the Phillipines, as detailed in the article of Saguin, Ramesh and Howlett published in this issue of RAP. For both PB and CCT, there are degrees of intensity of the policy, which are identified by the way its components are put together while building the model. Policies can be complete and profound or more superficial, according to the interests of the governments adopting them. As for

Participatory Budgeting, it can be an instrument of government consultancy about citizen interests over budgeting, or of social direct participation and deliberation on public spending. These are two different proposals for the “same” policy.

Another dynamic of translation also occurs under the case of international induction. One of the strategies for policy adoption used by international institutions is to set mechanisms of conditionality for loans, where conditions can be state reforms and policy adoption. This operation was frequently done by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in the 1990’s in Latin America and Africa (Woods, 2006). Governments constrained to adopt policies could, in this situation, translate policies, rejecting certain components of the policy in order to resist external imposition.

Another dimension of translation regards general principles that are set by international organizations in order to coordinate public policies at the global level. In the past decades we have observed the production of different goals, agendas, and principles adopted by international organizations from the United Nations such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda. Condensed in documents, this set of principles impacts on different governments, both at the national and subnational level, and orients public policy agendas. However, both the proposals from the Sustainable Development Goals agenda such as “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” or “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (Sustainable Development Goals, N. 1 and N. 2 respectively), and the statement of the New Urban Agenda “Recognize the leading role of national Governments, as appropriate, in the definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies and legislation for sustainable urban development” (United Nations, 2017:8) remain vague. This opens the door to a wide range of heterogeneous possibilities for policy translation on the part of the promoters and adopters. In this sense, fighting hunger can vary, including on the one hand the implementation of policies designed to enhance family farming, urban agriculture and food security, food sovereignty for the emancipation of citizens, and on the other hand green revolution strategies, the promotion of profit-based farming benefiting corporations.

Different narratives are produced by agents defending a certain type of policy under these umbrellas of principles. It is important to understand the underlying meanings of the policies and their translation, when transfer occurs. Moreover, it is important to trace what is lost in policy translation.

6. RESISTANCE TO POLICY TRANSFER

Policy transfer is sometimes benign and technical. It is grounded in good intentions and is meant to solve problems. Good will on all sides, no hidden agendas, and a common-sense, business-like approach to the issues, but in reality, of course, policy transfer is often embedded in power relations, and so the process can be far from benign. It can appear as imposition, as coercion, and those who are receiving the transfer can be less than entirely enthusiastic. They will resist. Or, if they cannot completely defeat the transfer, they will fight guerrilla wars, erect barriers, impediments and blockages, or try to adapt (or translate policies, as discussed above) and blunt the transfer so that it is either harmless or, perversely, might end up actually reinforcing the status quo.

The literature on policy transfer and diffusion tends to concentrate on the benign side of the equation, fascinated by the nuance and detail about policy instruments and how they might be

adjusted or tweaked as necessary in order for something that has been borrowed, to actually work in a new context. Theoretically, the potential was always there to appreciate that transfer could be conflictual and contested, but this was rarely emphasized. Some of the recent work on policy mobilities has taken up this theme more directly, particularly when it frames the transfer process in the larger context of a neo-liberal order, and sees policy transfer as the blood transfusions needed to keep the system alive and integrated (Clarke et al., 2015; Peck and Theodore, 2015; Temenos and McCann, 2013). Indeed, the moment we admit power into the equation — whether it be the neo-liberal order, advanced global capitalism, West versus the rest, North against South, developed and developing — the moment we intuit that the road ahead will be rough and bumpy, we should in fact *expect* that transfer processes will be challenging at best, and intensely contested at worst. The article by Leite, Cruz and Rosin “Diffusion of cycling policy in the city of São Paulo” published in this special issue of RAP, shows evidence of how frequently resistance dynamics actually happen, and even a moment’s reflection will suggest that resistance should be a more universal feature of transfer to the extent that almost any transfer will affect at least some interests that benefit from the pre-transfer condition. In this article in particular, the case of resistance is portrayed by the role of elites, through the media, obstructing the implementation of cycle paths and rapid transit bus lanes in the city of São Paulo, resisting the attempt by the mayor to change the paradigm of car-centered transport in the city. If resistance is obvious, then how can we rise above the obvious and begin to think of how we can more systematically integrate this perspective into the study of policy transfer? We offer three avenues.

The first is simply to recognize the role of power in the policy process, particularly when that process goes global and involves (as policy transfer usually does) state and non-state actors, international organizations, and others, transferring and diffusing policy models across borders and across jurisdictions. We are agnostic on exactly what type or vector of power is the preferred frame of analysis. It can be an international political economy perspective, a realist international relations perspective, a policy mobilities and neo-liberalism perspective, North-South, gendered power (the masculinist paradigms around social protection, for example), etc. The possibilities are almost endless, but they all involve at least a dyadic, unequal relationship between the participants in the transfer process. Those who transfer do so because the process will benefit them in some way – maintenance of their own positions, or of the system itself that supports their superiority, or upholding important norms and principles that define them. The European Union (EU) is an excellent example. The accession process (and hence the transfer of the *acquis*) is obviously between unequal partners. The benefits that the EU receives through the accession are the expansion of the Common Market and other political benefits, but also (especially after the Maastricht Treaty of 1992) the spread of “European values”. Note that despite the unequal relationship, and the obvious pursuit of self-interest, there might indeed be substantial benefits for the accession states. In other words, the inequality of power between the actors, and the fact that transfer is motivated by one side for its own benefit, does not mean that the other side might not benefit as well. It is perhaps this dynamic of mutual benefit that has obscured the power relationship in a good deal of research on policy transfer. If everyone benefits, where is the resistance?

The second avenue we would recommend for an enriched “resistance perspective” is — and this is paradoxical — not to take resistance too seriously, or at least, not assume that it must be resistance

as open and visible conflict. Again, we are dealing with policy processes, with institutional actors like states and international organizations, with — for want of a better term — “polite society.” Policy transfer does not, usually, flow from the end of a gun, and so, neither will resistance. We suggest instead an approach that is open to the micro-dynamics of resistance, much as James Scott has written about “weapons of the weak” (Scott, 1985, 1990). If the relationship is a power relationship, then the recipients of transfer are by definition weak, disadvantaged, at least vis-à-vis the transfer agents. They might be the farmers affected by a new agricultural program sponsored by the World Bank and agri-companies; they might be groups that will lose their monopoly position in an economic sector; they might even be the government itself that is negotiating the transfer, but doing so unwillingly in order to get some other benefit such as loans. As an example, we can bring the case of the Mozambican peasant movement’s resistance towards the implementation of Brazilian techniques for plantation in the Nacala region with cutting-edge seeding technology for monocrops for dry soil (Aguiar and Pacheco, 2016). This is an episode that brings us to the traditional idea of North colonialism and transfer, but shows us that some of these dynamics can also be applied to South-South policy transfers.

If we are open to the notion that while weak, they still have capacities of resistance, then we can potentially see and trace the ways in which resistance will be episodic, low-intensity, ragged and even disorganized, but eventually wear away at the will and capacity of the transfer agents. In the end what might appear as a successful transfer will be hobbled and tied down by so many qualifications, exemptions, amendments, conditions — not to mention the concrete limitations of what might happen in actual implementation — that it will in effect have been deflected or defeated.

The third avenue builds on this last point. It is to pay attention to institutional arrangements, and particularly the logic of implementation. This, to some extent, is outside the realm of policy analysis and into public management and the machinery of implementation, but almost any policy transfer of any scale will involve institutions – either new agencies or actors of some sort, or new rules applied by old agencies. Institutions will be the crucibles for application, and at the street-level, bureaucrats can make a thousand cuts and bleed a policy initiative in its tracks. Bureaucracies and implementing agencies also have interests in the policy process, and will defend their interests — will resist — if they feel they must and they can.

7. SOUTH-SOUTH OR SOUTH-NORTH TRANSFERS

Much of the literature on policy transfer was dedicated to exploring transfers between Northern countries and from these to the South, as well as the role of international organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund or European Union in these processes. Policy models spread under the so-called “Washington Consensus” were a clear example of this dynamic. These movements have recently been turned upside down, with a fast-growing mass of experiences travelling from South to South, for example within Latin American countries and from these to Africa, as well as from South to North. This emerging empirical field is a great testing ground for established hypothesis, mechanisms and processes posited by the literature. Moreover, Southern experiences are important to reverse the geographic epistemic of knowledge production and build theories and concepts drawing on the empirical and theoretical background that comes from the South. It is necessary to understand, on one hand, what the new dynamics emerge from these movements and,

on the other hand, what is reproduced, when compared to North-North and North-South transfers. Jennifer Robinson's article in this special issue highlights the importance of exploring city connections from the South and network of governments in comparative fashion. We would like to advance two more avenues of reflection on these questions. First, the idea of policy innovation and export, and second, if these are new dynamics of domination and "neo-colonization".

For a long time, successful policies designed in Northern countries were considered models for Southern countries. Three forces — at least — contributed to this movement: (1) the action of development cooperation donors, (2) dependence on Northern states, and (3) past colonial relations. Bertrand Badie in his reflections of *l'État importé* (1992) presents the strategies of transfer from the "Occident" institutions to developing countries, analyzing the role of "exporters" from the North and "importers" from the South.

Another reason for Southern countries adopting Northern models is to gather international recognition and show that their institutions are similar to Northern ones, trying to transmit the image of a State that is politically reliable, organized and stable. Policy convergence also took place owing to imposition practices performed by international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which had conditionality clauses for loans to governments (Woods, 2006). The circulation of elites, from Southern countries to Northern countries, to study in prestigious universities, was an important mechanism for "importing" models from the North to Latin America (Dezalay and Garth, 2002).

In the past years a common perception emerged in the development cooperation and public policy transfer to Southern countries that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund proposals for these recipient countries were not producing outcomes they were supposed to, and in fact were leading to more social inequality. Experts and donors realized that models from the Global North, such as Scandinavian countries or Canada, or those designed by experts inside the World Bank, who received influences from economists (Guilhot, 2000) would not fit properly in states in the South. As a matter of fact, there is a significant gap between these countries in regards to the organization of the state and its capacity, as well as administrative and political culture, as well as in infrastructure, economic and social indexes. At the same time, a few social policy experiences in countries such as India, Brazil, Mexico and others were showing important results in fighting poverty and hunger, via Conditional Cash Transfer programs, for example, as we can observe in the article by Saguin, Ramesh and Howlett.

Rising Southern states developed, especially from the late 1980's on, important innovations in social and other policies to reduce poverty and inequality. These policies were not designed in a context with well-established institutions and good state capacity. On the contrary, if we consider Brazil, the country shows a very heterogeneous environment, from the geographical point of view it has different climates and soils, with a vast biodiversity on the Amazon forest and the dryness of the Cerrado region (similar to the Savannah), as well as a long coastal area. Demographically it has urban centers with dense population, such as the São Paulo metropolitan area with around 20 million inhabitants and the rural areas where population is more dispersed. The country has gone through a rapid and uncoordinated process of urbanization from the second half of the 20th century, when population migrated from the countryside to cities seeking jobs. We have to add to that the lack of

infrastructure in certain regions and the low level of state capacities. The scenario is similar for various countries in Latin America, as well as for others in the South. Yet, it was in this context, with the wave of democratization in the late 1980's, that Brazil developed an important set of public policies to deal with social issues. In the 2000's there were important policy innovations that were designed in this context showing results with social impact. Brazil did not only build policy innovations, but had a contingent of experts on public policies.

Examples of such innovations are PB, from Porto Alegre, and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, from Curitiba, and at the national level, there are the PTC *Bolsa Família*, the housing program *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* and the National Program of School Feeding. These policies were exported to both Southern and Northern countries, as we can observe today with Paris experiencing Participatory Budgeting and Yaoundé, Italy and the Philippines implementing Conditional Cash Transfer Programs (see Saguin, Ramesh and Howlett's article on this matter), in a movement that led policy learning from experiences in the South (Porto de Oliveira, 2017; Silva, 2017). There are three interesting dynamics that arise from this process, which are (1) the reversal of power relations with both Northern countries and international organizations, (2) competition for the best model, and (3) the circulation of individuals.

These solutions were considered more appropriate to fight poverty, promoting empowerment and accountability and dealing with urban issues in developing countries, than models designed in the North. Moreover, international organizations and development cooperation agencies endorsed these policies and included them in different aid projects. A new community of experts who worked in the South and had spent their careers in these countries emerged and started to work not only for national projects of development cooperation, but also for international institutions. This new dynamic promoted a circulation of individuals, information and policy technologies from the South. The expertise also represented a transformation in power relations. If, in the 1980's and 1990's, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund used conditionality strategies to push political reforms on these countries, this scenario changed with the development of policy expertise and the interest from these institutions. In short, technical knowledge on social policy increased the power of Southern countries *vis-à-vis* international institutions.

Another situation that emerged was that power relations also unfolded as regional and international dynamics of competition for transfer models. Brazil was not alone in producing policy innovations. In fact, different countries in Latin America and other parts of the world produced successful social policies, sometimes similar and simultaneously, for example the CCT programs, which were first implemented in Brazil and Mexico. The case of the BRT system is interesting insofar as Curitiba (Brazil) implemented a first model and later on, Bogotá reviewed this policy and produced another more sophisticated version. Bogotá's *Transmilenio* was the trademark of Peñalosa's government (Montero, 2017), who advocated these policies worldwide, contributing to their circulation in Latin American cities, such as Mexico City (Mejía-Dugand et al., 2013). International institutions started to recognize Southern models and recommend their adoption in other countries. The article by Saguin, Ramesh and Howlett shows the role of the World Bank staff in the adoption of CCT in the Philippines, as well as the training government employees received from Brazil. Adopting these models also became symbolic for those countries seeking international aid and to show that they were on the same path, looking for public policy modernization.

The last dynamic of power that needs to be better understood is how transfers from rising powers reproduced some logics similar to the mechanisms of North-South transfers. Again, the case of Brazil is interesting, insofar as this country focused on Lusophone nations as privileged partners. Different projects of development cooperation were established with Green Cape, Mozambique and Angola, for example in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, we still know little about the impact of these transfer projects on larger economic and political dynamics such as the exploitation of natural resources, access to the markets and so on. The question is if rising powers are replacing Northern countries in the policy transfer arena towards these states, are they doing so with the same “imperial” ambitions?

Finally, there is still not much work done on mutual learning dynamics (Constantine and Shankland, 2017). Transfer is considered both empirically and theoretically as a one-way movement of a government or institution moving a policy model to another. In the Brazilian case, current discussions on the field suggests that this country’s experts offer technical assistance to different governments, but are not concerned with what they could learn from African and other foreign experiences, where they go to transfer social policies. There is also an underlying understanding of power and domination, which is taken for granted. In spite of understanding transfers as a unilateral process we should pay more attention to how learning processes can occur in both directions.

8. CONCLUSION

Policy transfer and diffusion is a rich field of research and analysis. It seems that any coherent understanding of public policy must avoid the binaries of local/global, domestic/international, or of public policy/international relations. The field, as it has developed in the last twenty years, has already burst the binaries and cut a path toward thinking more clearly about how policy moves and migrates, how it is imposed and hawked, how it is promoted and resisted. As usual, Diane Stone and Stella Laidi were pioneers, in showing how theories developed to understand domestic public policy can be re-purposed to help us understand global policy making (Stone and Ladi, 2015).

This article and this special issue are a call to redouble our efforts to think more imaginatively about policy transfer and diffusion. These reflections rely on the discussions we had during the 2016 International Seminar on Policy Diffusion and will serve as a starting point for the conversations we will have in May 2018, during the International Conference on Policy Diffusion and Development Cooperation, to be held at the Federal University of São Paulo. This is not only a space for renewing and fostering the debate, but also a place to bring ideas, empirical information and reflections — from Southern and Northern experiences, as well as across areas of research — in an interactive way attempting to foster our knowledge production on policy diffusion research. Finally, it is a space where we aspire to build bridges between disciplines on policy diffusion phenomena, bringing scholars with different analytical approaches to boost our understanding of how policies travel.

Our six “frontiers” are an attempt to broaden our appreciation of the agents of transfer (the private sector, consulting firms, domestic coalitions), the spaces of transfer (transnational sites and events), and processes (translation, resistance, and south-south and south-north dynamics). Of course, the frontiers have been scouted by others already, and our arguments were supported by their conjectures and first impressions. We applaud these efforts (and they are reflected in the articles in this special issue), and vigorously support further exploration. There are several transversal points to keep in

mind as this research unfolds. The first is that our six frontiers all point beyond conventional political institutions, or the State as such. By this we mean that a focus on state institutions as the main channels of transfer has to be relaxed in order to understand the swirl of other transfer agents in the process. Ultimately, of course, policy is enunciated and implemented by state actors, but the transfer of ideas and models, their translation and their promotion, and even their fate, depends on a much wider range of agents. Those agents know very well that the state is their target, and the state often knows that it needs those agents as allies or needs to be prepared to have them as opponents. Without losing the importance of institutions, we need to accept the scope of coalitions and alliances.

Second, the arguments remind us of the “embeddedness” of public policy, its “sticky” quality. Those who study transfer have the occupational hazard of seeing transfer everywhere, and possibly assuming that it can be largely frictionless, a technical problem-solving process. Of course, this is a caricature, but it reinforces the need to see even the most technically unobjectionable policies or policy instruments as “embedded” in a culture, a set of institutions, resources, political compromises and past battles and victories. What “makes sense” — often so much so that it is “blindingly obvious” — is something that makes sense “in context”. It is commonplace, perhaps, but it is the foundation for understanding the need for translation and the reality of resistance and rejection. This leads to the third point, the importance of power in transfer. Again, we do not accuse anyone of ignoring this entirely, but there is often a beguiling “ordinariness” to policies, especially to minute policy instruments (e.g., a carbon tax, or conditional cash transfers), that shrouds their positioning in a field of contested power relations. We see this obviously with the famous Washington Consensus, perhaps less so with things like the equally famous European Commission regulation 2257/94 on the acceptable curvature of bananas. Our point is simply that power lurks and shimmers within and around almost all transfer processes, and researchers should be aware of its impact.

In closing, as researchers, we have to confront the existential question: will policy transfer be stalled or stopped, or even reversed, as globalization itself appears to be grinding down? If one looks carefully at the very earliest contributions to policy transfer theory, for example the work by Rose on lesson-drawing (Rose, 1991, 1993), there was an almost touching (from the perspective of 2018) wonder at how the world is opening up, and consequently, creating fertile ground for transfer and diffusion of public policies:

Internationally, the flow of information about public policies has been radically accelerated by modern technology moving people and information from one continent to another. ... In an era in which the average household contains goods from at least three continents — America, Europe, and Asia — public policies have also become part of the international flow of goods and services. [Rose, 1993:3]

Today, interdependence, not isolation, characterizes every jurisdiction of government... [Rose, 1993:6]

Our contacts with other cities, states, and nations are increasing. When dissatisfaction arises at home, there is no reason to ignore the way in which governments elsewhere respond to common problems. [Rose, 1993:156-57]

Our answer has to be brief. It is certainly true the post-1991 global neo-liberal order has been fractured. The United States is no longer the hegemon, nor is it clear that it wants to be. Regional power blocs and countries now seem to be solidifying, resistance and turmoil seems to be erupting regularly, trade and information flows are clogged and bent and no longer smoothly sail along rising uninterrupted lines of growth. And yet... transnational events and venues multiply, as do the problems of the global commons. Most importantly, the agents of globalization (nefarious or benign, depending on one's perspective) — such as international organizations, governments, NGOs, transnational corporations, consultancies, elites, etc. — themselves *realize* the reversals, and are working hard to reverse them in turn. For every critic and opponent of globalization, particularly its “Western” variant, there are fresh and ferocious defenders. Transfer and diffusion have not disappeared from this more contested terrain of globalization, but the stakes have certainly been raised, both for practitioners and for researchers.

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